BRITAIN AFTER THE ROMANS

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO THE POSSIBILITIES OF AN *ADVENTUS SAXONUM*

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Abstract

In the fifth century, after the departure of the Romans, according to tradition, which is based on the ancient written sources, Britain was invaded by the Angles and Saxons. This view has been questioned in the last century. The size of the 'invasion', and indeed its very existence, have come into doubt. However, this doubting school of thought does not seem to take into account all of the evidence. An interdisciplinary, nuanced approach has been taken in this thesis. Firstly, the question of Germanic raiding has been examined, with reference to the Saxon Shore defences. It is argued that these defences, in their geographical context, point to the likelihood of raiding. Then the written sources have been re-examined, as well as physical artefacts. In addition to geography, literature and archaeology (the disciplines which are most commonly used when the coming of the Angles and Saxons is investigated), linguistic and genetic data have been examined. The fields of linguistics and genetics, which have not often both been taken into consideration with previous approaches, add a number of valuable insights. This nuanced approach yields a picture of events that rules out the 'traditional view' in some ways, such as the idea that the Saxons exterminated the Britons altogether, but corroborates it in other ways. There *was* an invasion of a kind (of Angles – not Saxons), who came in comparatively small numbers, but found in Britain a society already mixed and comprising Celtic and Germanic-speaking peoples: a society implied by Caesar and Tacitus and corroborated by linguistic and genetic data.

Contents

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Introduction

The trouble with scholars

> "Of all the tribes of the Germanic race none was more cruel than the Saxons. Their very name, which spread to the whole confederacy of Northern tribes, was supposed to be derived from the use of a weapon, the seax, a short one-handed sword. Although tradition and the Venerable Bede assign the conquest of Britain to the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons together, and although the various settlements have tribal peculiarities, it is probable that, before their general exodus from Schleswig-Holstein, the Saxons had virtually incorporated the other two strains... The history books of our childhood attempted courageously to prescribe exact dates for all the main events. In 449, Hengist and Horsa, invited by Vortigern, founded the Jutish kingdom of Kent upon the corpses of its former inhabitants. In 477 Ella and his three sons arrived to continue the inroad. In 495 Cerdic and Cynric appeared. In 501 Port, the pirate, founded Portsmouth. In 514 the West Saxons Stuf and Wihtgar descended in their turn and put the Britons to flight. In 544 Wihtgar was killed. In 547 came Ida, founder of the kingdom of Northumberland. All that can be said about these dates is that they correspond broadly with the facts, and that these successive waves of invaders, bringing behind them settlers, descended on our unhappy shores."[1]

This is how Winston Churchill, writing in his monumental *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, described the 'received wisdom', that he was taught, pertaining to the supposed invasion and settlement of Britain by Germanic peoples in the 5th and 6th centuries (be they Jutes, Angles or Saxons). This view was largely based on interpretation of the written accounts of the period, especially as archaeological and other scientific approaches were still, to a degree, in their infancy.

As is clear in Churchill's own writing, the neat chronology set up by convention and Victorian antiquarians, that was prevalent in his childhood in the 1870s and 1880s, had already come under suspicion. However, his comment that "All that can be said about these dates is that they correspond broadly with the facts, and that these successive waves of

[1] Churchill, 1956, p. 51.

invaders, bringing behind them settlers, descended on our unhappy shores" is still broadly consistent with what one might call the 'traditional view', or the orthodox academic position.[2]

Tied up inextricably (in my view) with the idea of the 5th and 6th century Germanic[3] invasion and settlement is the notion of the Germanic piracy and raiding that we are given to understand preceded it, between the 2nd and 4th centuries. The received wisdom regarding this raiding, much like the later invasions, is based largely on the surviving historical accounts of it: notably in the *Notitia Dignitatum*[4], as well as in the writings of (among others) Ammianus Marcellinus[5], Aurelius Victor[6], Eutropius[7], Claudian[8] and Pacatus[9] all of whom were 4th century A.D. writers, and Zosimus[10], who was somewhat later (late 5th – early 6th centuries).

But the orthodox, historical view is in doubt. As opposed to a full scale invasion – resulting in the replacement of the majority of the population, there is a revisionist school of thought which argues in favour of a much smaller migration of Germanic peoples in the fifth century, perhaps constituting a ruling, military, elite; meanwhile, the basic population did not change. [11] This view is based largely, but not exclusively, on archaeology. The argument made is that there is little – to no – evidence from archaeology to support many of the aspects of this view of events. Among the proponents of this school of thought, Francis Pryor seems to suggest that the instability of the North Sea region, and the existence of the pirates and invaders, is probably an erroneous reading of events. The apparent behaviour of the remaining Romano-British people in the Late Roman period, he argues, seems inconsistent with that sort of situation, as they seem to have been experiencing a particularly prosperous time.[12] He is joined in this opinion by John Cotterill, who also questions the existence of North Sea piracy.[13] Andrew Pearson, likewise, questions the extent of the piracy, and even whether it existed.[14] Pryor, and the school of thinking whence he comes, doubt the plausibility of a large scale invasion, arguing rather that the changes that can be observed to have occurred in

[2] See Salway, 1981, pp. 415-500 and Davies, 1999, pp. 151ff. (on the accepted succession of events in late Roman Britain); Collingwood and Richmond, 1969, pp. 47-51 (on coastal raiding and the Saxon Shore); Esmonde Cleary, 1990, pp. 162-187 and de le Bédoyère, 2006, pp. 254-269 (for a discussion of the constituents and merits of this 'traditional view').
[3] I find it convenient to refer, here, to 'Germanic' raiders, pirates and invaders for the simple reason that, as is raised at a later stage in this thesis, the identification of these peoples as specifically Saxon, Angle, Frisian or Jute is unclear, and warrents some consideration.
[4] *Notitia Dignitatum*, 28
[5] *Historia Romana*, 27.8.
[6] *Liber de Caesaribus*, 39.20-1.
[7] *Breviarium Historiae Romanae*, 9.21.
[8] *Panegyric on the Fourth Consulship of Honorius*, 24-33.
[9] *Panegyric on Theodosius*, 5, 2.
[10] *Historia Nova*, 6, 5, 2-3.
[11] See Pryor, 2004; Cotterill, 1993; Pearson, 2006;
[12] Pryor, 2004, pp. 143ff.
[13] Cotterill, 1993, p. 227-239.
[14] Pearson, 2006, p. 337-353.

Britain after the end of the Roman period came about purely organically by means of contact and trade with the Continent. No further agency, they argue, is necessary.[15]

Work has been done on the linguistic aspect of the conquest, because, of course, the Germanic settlers are said to have brought a language with them: the language in which this is written. English does not appear to display much in the way of influence from the Brittonic language spoken in Britain before the Germanic invasion or settlement (or mere influence) came about. This has been used as evidence that (contrary to the archaeological interpretation) the Germanic settlers did invade Britain and displace the native population.

Scientific endeavour has also shed light on the issue – but with varying interpretations of events. Genetic testing has been used to argue in favour of both a total displacement and a much more gradual settlement.[16] On the whole, it seems, the genetic work does not rule out Germanic invasion.

What, then is one to think? Was there an invasion? Was there the piracy and raiding that established a pattern of behaviour which could have resulted in one? Or was neither of these true?

John Pattison, who wrote *Is It Necessary to Assume an Apartheid-Like Social Structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England?* one of the articles used in this thesis, applied Occam's razor: '*entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*'.[17] 'Entities must not be multiplied beyond necessity.' It is usually phrased 'other things being equal, simpler explanations are generally better than more complex ones'.[18] Occam's razor is not, of course, a hard and fast law – sometimes the more complicated hypothesis will eventually prove correct, but on logical grounds, it is better to choose the hypothesis which depends least on imponderables. I think that this form of thinking has influenced the school of thought that tends to question the history when the archaeology does not seem to support it. The archaeology does not offer up evidence of raiding and invasion. The simplest hypothesis must then seem to be that there was no raiding and no invasion. No event necessarily means no evidence.

Although I support the use of the razor in general terms, I think that Occam's razor can only be applied to a collection of hypotheses when they all satisfactorily and plausibly account for *all* the evidence. As soon as one hypothesis, however simple and elegant it may appear, fails

[15] Pryor, 2004, p. 221.
[16] See Chapter 5.
[17] Pattison, 2008, p. 2428.
[18] Occam's razor is a problem-solving principle which states that, among a number of competing hypotheses, the simplest hypothesis, with the fewest assumptions should be selected.

to account satisfactorily for *all* the evidence, one requires a different hypothesis – or an added layer of complexity.

Another concept, connected to Occam's razor, which is relevant in consideration of the past literature on the subject of this thesis is termed 'greedy reductionism'. Greedy reductionism occurs when:

> "in their eagerness for a bargain, in their zeal to explain too much too fast, scientists and philosophers ... underestimate the complexities, trying to skip whole layers or levels of theory in their rush to fasten everything securely and neatly to the foundation."[19]

Dennet introduces the ideas of 'cranes' (legitimate, plausible and necessary explanations) and 'skyhooks' (essentially false, unnecessary, or fanciful explanations). Good reductionists, he argues, suppose that things can be explained without skyhooks – greedy reductionists suppose it can be done without cranes either.[20] Dennet was referring originally to evolutionary theory, but his term 'greedy reductionism', I believe, can be made to have a much wider applicability to all sorts of academic argument. It functions as a sort of anti-razor – if Occam's razor is applied correctly, it is not going to be 'greedily reductionist' – but if the razor is applied in support of an argument which, in a quest for simplicity, has omitted to deal with certain evidence, it does become 'greedily reductionist'.

This is a problem I feel exists with the recent literature on the subject of the Germanic raiding and invasion. Explaining the archaeological evidence (or, more accurately, the lack thereof) by the hypothesis that the raiding and invasion never took place seems to me to be problematic. There is so much in the written record that supports it. Not all of it is in the purpose-written histories either – anecdotal evidence too, from various contemporary sources, exists. Certainly, sometimes it is necessary to disbelieve or ignore the opinions of individual writers. The ancient writers, like all people, were given to prejudices and inaccuracies. But, unless it can be demonstrated that *all* of the many accounts, be they formal or anecdotal, that seem to support the notion of raiding and invasion are false (which I do not believe to be either true or possible), one is making an error of greedy reductionism if one favours a hypothesis which does not account for them.

What is required then, is a more inter-disciplinary approach. To this end, this thesis will examine a wide range of evidence – archaeological, historical, linguistic and genetic, and will attempt to come to a new series of conclusions, drawing on all of these areas of evidence.

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[19] Dennet, 1995, p. 82.
[20] *Ibid*, p. 83.

Chapter 1

Germanic Raiding – the Defensive role of the Shore Forts

If one were to take the analogy of the Vikings, one might find a helpful parallel for the events in the Germanic raiding and later invasion of Britain.[21] The first Viking raid on the British coast took place in the summer of 793, when the Norsemen fell upon the important monastic centre of Lindisfarne, slaughtering and enslaving the inhabitants, and looting the church.[22] This presaged an extended period of raiding that would culminate in invasion. The first thirty years or so saw only small scale, loosely co-ordinated raiding, seldom involving more than a dozen ships at a time. These expeditions were designed for speed – they concentrated on the coasts and estuaries, not generally venturing further inland.[23] After 830, the raids became bigger and better co-ordinated. Thirty or forty ships were not unusual; over the next twenty years, though, this number became closer to a hundred – or more. With larger forces, more ambitious raids could be undertaken. Towns were no longer safe, and the navigable rivers gave easy access to the soft underbelly of the rich Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.[24] In the winter of 850, a new phase of Viking activity was hinted at, when a Viking force seized the Isle of Thanet, in Kent, and spent the winter there.[25] This seems to have been deemed successful, for in the winter of 852/3, the exercise was repeated on an island in the Seine. Until 865, the raiding continued not only along the coasts of England, but also the Atlantic coasts of Europe, and especially the estuaries of the major navigable rivers – the Thames, Seine, Loire, and Garonne.[26] In addition, by 865, the Vikings had started settling in the British Isles (mainly in the Shetlands, Orkneys and the Western Isles of Scotland). In 865, though, a major change occurred in their behaviour. A 'Great Army' of Danes launched a full scale invasion of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Northumbria fell first, followed by East Anglia and Mercia. Wessex was the last to remain, and in 875, even Wessex was on the brink of outright defeat.[27]

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[21] This is a parallel that has been discussed before (cf. Pearson, 2006), and will be explored further in this chapter.
[22] Cunliffe, 2013, p. 447.
[23] *Ibid*, p. 460.
[24] *Ibid*.
[25] *Ibid*, p. 461.
[26] *Ibid*, p. 462.
[27] *Ibid*, pp. 472-473. Fortunately for Wessex (and England), the new king, Alfred, was exceptionably able and succeeded in defeating the Danish armies. His son and daughter, and his grandson eventually went on to reclaim all of the land lost to the Danes, and establish England as a single political entity (see Wood, 2006, pp. 111ff).

This pattern of raiding followed by invasion is, to my mind, markedly similar to the accounts one is given of the behaviour of the seafaring Germanic tribes during and after the Roman period. There was a deal of raiding (or, at the very least its threat was perceived), followed, in the mid-fifth century, by an invasion of Germanic people into Britain.

The occurence of both the 2nd – 4th century raiding and the 5th – 6th century invasion is questioned (as discussed above), and they are often treated as separate entities. To my mind, however, they must be linked. The raiding was a precursor to the later invasion. The coincidence of seaborne raiders and seaborne invaders separated by merely a century or two, from the same area, seems to me too much to believe. It could perhaps be argued that the notion of this continuum of activity is a later interpretation, based on the 7th – 9th century events surrounding Viking raiding and invasion (which are, of course, much more clearly recorded). However, the earlier events are attested by authors, some of whom (notably both Gildas and Bede – see chapter 2) predated the Viking raiding, and so whose thinking cannot have been influenced by memories of them, I argue that what is indicated is a single pattern of behaviour that repeated itself some centuries later.[28]

In the argument about whether or not there was raiding in the first place, the great fortifications of the Saxon Shore are often mentioned. It is, however, often argued that the Shore Forts cannot have been defensive because there was no raiding – as there is very little tangible evidence of this raiding having taken place in the archaeological record. There are certain problems with this argument. If these Shore Forts were defensive in nature, and defending against a real threat, all one would need for that threat to be invisible in the archaeology would be for the defences to have worked. If the defences worked, however much *threat* there was of raiding, there would not actually have been many successful raids.

In this chapter I will argue the case for raiding, as it were, in reverse. That is, instead of using the evidence of raiding to comment on the Saxon Shore forts, the Shore Forts will be used as evidence for raiding. I believe that if it can be argued that the Shore Forts were essentially military – and defensive – in nature (and not to some extent fortified trading depots, as has been suggested[29]), then the raiding must have been real – or, at least, a real threat.

[28] It is worth making clear at this point that this thesis does not consider the occurrence of the Viking raids and invasion to be in doubt. Their inclusion (following Pearson, 2006) is merely illustrative as a plausible parallel, showing a similar pattern of behaivior.

[29] Pryor, 2004, p. 142. He cites excavations carried out at Porchester Castle (one of the Saxon Shore forts) to support, in part, his contention. It seems the excavations, carried out in the late 1960s and early 1970s, failed to discover anything approaching the concentration of formal Roman military building one might expect from a normal fort of the same size.

Barbarian piracy and the Roman Navy

This argument would fall flat immediately if it were to turn out that the Germanic tribes were incapable of carrying out these raids. John Cotterill writes:

> "The argument that the late Roman coastal forts were a part of a defensive system rests on the untested assumption that the vessel technology of the Germanic tribes gave them a high degree of mobility which allowed them to cross directly to Britain. It makes no allowance for the physical effort that would be required to row such great distances or the problems associated with North Sea crossings without navigational aids."[30]

Cotterill argues that there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that the barbarians in question (be they Saxons or some other tribal grouping) had sail technology. Thus, it would be too difficult to cross the North Sea without going around the coast.

As to the veracity of the idea of the Saxons as problematic raiders, evidence can be found in the following anecdotal (but substantially more contemporary) accounts, firstly in Ammianus Marcellinus' (c. 325 – after 391) *Historia Romana*:

> "No one could guard against their unexpected coming, since they did not assail previously chosen places, but various quarters and those that were far removed, breaking out wherever the wind took them — the same reason that makes the Saxons feared before all other enemies for their sudden raids. But although these confederate bands destroyed the property of many, and, driven by the gadfly of the madness which they had conceived, caused lamentable slaughter, being no less greedy for blood than for booty... it will suffice to tell of this one destructive and well-devised stroke of theirs. A united body of these godless men, disguised as the retinue of a state treasurer, and one of them as that official himself, in the darkness of evening, preceded by the mournful cry of a herald, entered a city and beset with swords the fine house of a distinguished citizen, as if he had been proscribed and condemned to death. They seized all his valuable furniture, and since the servants were struck with sudden fear, and in their bewilderment did not defend their master, they killed many of them, and before the return of daylight departed in haste."[31]

And secondly, in Sidonius Apollinaris' (c. 430 – c. 489) *Epistulae*:

[30] Cotterill, 1993, p. 227.

[31] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historia Romana*, 28.2.12-13 (see Appendix, passage 1 – in this appendix, in the interest of streamlining the text, the Latin of the chapter/s from which quotes are taken is given as a means of supplying the context to the passages quoted).

> "[I was told that] you had weighed anchor, and in fulfilment of those half military, half naval duties of yours were coasting the western shores on the look-out for curved ships; the ships of the Saxons, in whose every oarsman you think to detect an arch-pirate. Captains and crews alike, to a man they teach or learn the art of brigandage; therefore let me urgently caution you to be ever on the alert. For the Saxon is the most ferocious of all foes. He comes on you without warning; when you expect his attack he makes away. Resistance only moves him to contempt; a rash opponent is soon down. If he pursues he overtakes; if he flies himself, he is never caught. Shipwrecks to him are no terror, but only so much training. His is no mere acquaintance with the perils of the sea; he knows them as he knows himself. A storm puts his enemies off their guard, preventing his preparations from being seen; the chance of taking the foe by surprise makes him gladly face every hazard of rough waters and broken rocks.
>
> Moreover, when the Saxons are setting sail from the continent, and are about to drag their firm-holding anchors from an enemy's shore, it is their usage, thus homeward bound, to abandon every tenth captive to the slow agony of a watery end, casting lots with perfect equity among the doomed crowd in execution of this iniquitous sentence of death. This custom is all the more deplorable in that it is prompted by honest superstition. These men are bound by vows which have to be paid in victims, they conceive it a religious act to perpetrate this horrible slaughter, and to take anguish from the prisoner in place of ransom; this polluting sacrilege is in their eyes an absolving sacrifice."[32]

David Mason points out that Cotterill's view is extreme.[33] It is known, he points out, that Carausius (the great general, trouble-maker and pretender who, after being himself accused of piracy, went rogue and seized Britain, establishing the first 'British Empire'), was initially appointed *to fight piracy* in the English Channel and North Sea and from that we know that there must have been a fair amount of piratical behaviour in the affected areas. This sort of situation does not develop overnight.

> "It is true that there are no earlier references to this problem in the sources, but then surviving accounts from the middle decades of the third century are very few. Similarly, while attacks on the British coast are not

[32] Sidonius Apollinaris *Epistulae* 8.6.13-15 (see Appendix, passage 20). One might think that the horror expressed here at the abandonment of every tenth captive seems somewhat ironic in light of the Roman practice of decimation.
[33] Mason, 2003, p. 164.

> mentioned specifically, and none may actually have taken place, the threat was obviously real."[34]

Mason goes on to suggest that, while Cotterill is correct in pointing out that none of the Germanic ships currently known from the archaeological record can be proved to have possessed a mast and sails, these probably do not represent all of the types of ship of the period.

Mason argues that "It is inconceivable that the Saxons, Franks and others who indulged in piracy and raiding did not possess ships powered by both oars and sail"[35]. Even if they were equipped merely with primitive sails, the performance of the ships mentioned in Cotterill's argument would have been completely transformed. It has been estimated, Mason asserts, that by rowing alone a boat could travel some thirty-six nautical miles per day (albeit only under favourable conditions – i.e. no storms or even headwinds – and the crew rowing only during daylight, before landing on shore at night)[36]. With a sail (even a simple one) and a favourable wind the same boat could sail more than four times the distance, without the need for overnight stops – and achieving a distance in a matter of days that, if they were rowed, would have taken weeks. This would, of course, also mean that the risk of detection was less.[37] Mason comments:

> "Passing unseen through the Straits of Dover in the course of a single night would have been perfectly possible. It is surely this capability that explains both the initial inability of the Roman naval forces to counteract Saxon and Frankish sea-raiding and the scale of the measures eventually taken in response."[38]

In the light of this, it would seem that the best response would be for the Roman navy to maintain a series of small flotillas of warships stationed at the Shore Forts (the locations of which are significant, as is discussed below), with the capability to maintain a reconnaissance cordon around the key areas: the estuaries, the approaches to coastal settlements, and the commercial shipping lanes (such as they were).

Sure enough, evidence for this system can be found in the writings of Vegetius, the late Roman author of *De Re Militari*, who flourished in about the later 4th century.

> "So far as size is concerned, the smallest warships have a single rank of oars . . . to the larger warships are attached scouting skiffs, having about

[34] *Ibid*, p. 164.
[35] Mason, 2003, p. 166.
[36] *Ibid*.
[37] *Ibid*, p. 167.
[38] *Ibid*.

twenty oarsmen on each side; these the Britons call *Pictae* [painted ships]. They are used on occasion to perform descents or to intercept convoys of enemy shipping or by studious surveillance to detect their approach or intentions. Lest scouting vessels be betrayed by white, the sails and rigging are dyed Venetian blue, which resembles the ocean waves; the wax used to pay[39] ships' sides is also dyed. The sailors and marines put on Venetian blue uniforms too, so as to lie hidden with greater ease when scouting by day as by night."[40]

The locations of the Shore Forts

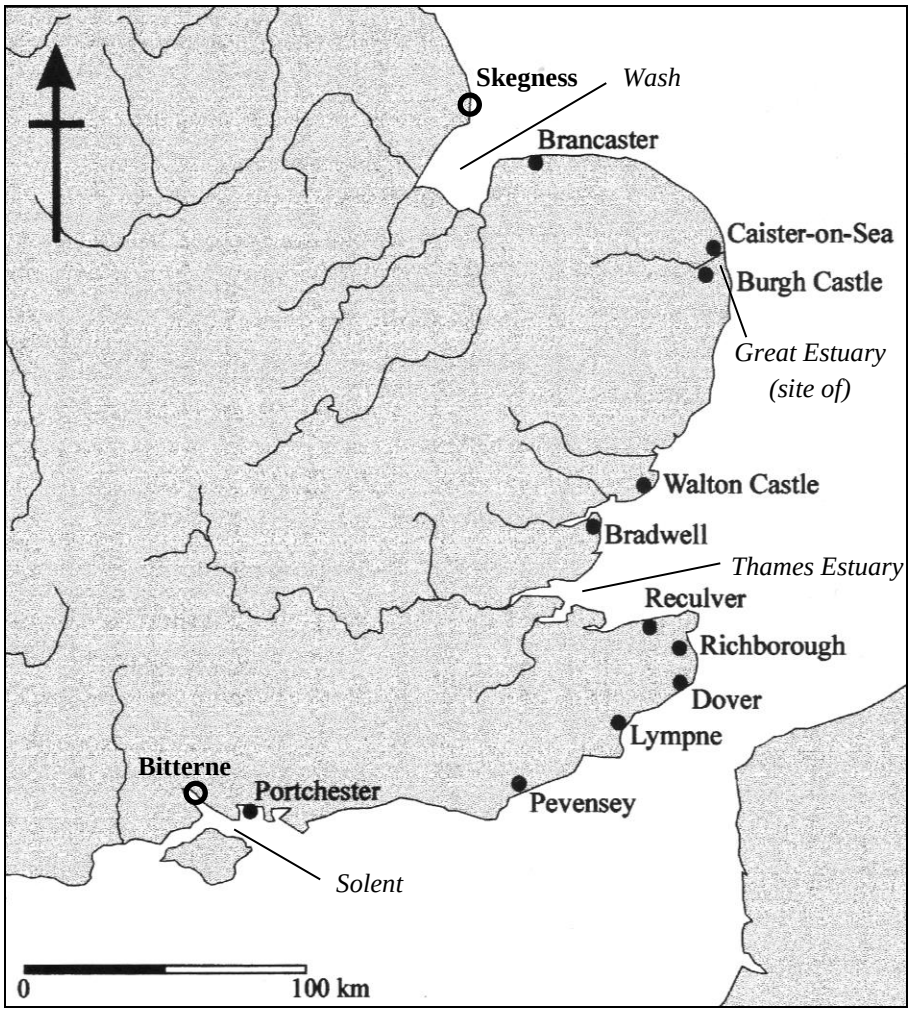

Fig 1. The eleven accepted Saxon Shore forts (solid dots), and the speculative ones (hollow dots). Note: this map represents modern coastlines. (Map adapted from Pearson, 2002).

[39] 'Paying' refers to the filling of seams between planks in order to waterproof them.
[40] Vegetius, *De Re Militari*, 4.37 (see Appendix, passage 22).

Now that it is established that the raiding was at least plausible, let us turn our attention to the Saxon Shore fortifications themselves. The notion of the Saxon Shore having been a specific and deliberate chain of fortifications, under the command of a *comes litoris Saxonici*, or 'Count of the Saxon Shore' comes from the *Notitia Dignitatum*[41], written after 420, which detailed the administrative organisation of the Eastern and Western Empires. It lists several thousand offices, from throughout the Roman state, including court officials, diplomatic missions and, importantly, military commands, and the units under each command.

The Shore Forts, very basically, comprise eleven commonly accepted forts, discussed in more detail below, placed along the coasts of East Anglia, and the South Coast, from Brancaster on the southern shores of the Wash in the north, to Portchester near modern Portsmouth on the Solent. Two further forts have been proposed, at the extreme ends of the line, at Skegness on the north coast of the Wash, and at Bitterne in modern Southampton (see figure 1).

If one is to come to any understanding about the uses of the *litus Saxonicum*, it would be advantageous to look first at the circumstances surrounding the appearance of the earlier forts in the system.

In the decades after 220 AD, it would seem that there was something of a change in the military situation of the province; other than the ongoing trouble with tribes north of Hadrian's Wall, and the risk of rebellion in modern-day Wales, a problem seems to have been surfacing. Sheppard Frere writes that Germanic pirates and raiders seem to have started making their appearance on the east coast of Britain, where two large inlets, the Wash and the Thames estuary, opened towards the most prosperous parts of the province, and must have seemed rather inviting.[42]Coin hoards increased sharply in numbers between the 160s and 180s in East Anglia, Kent, and along the south coast. This suggests a deal of insecurity here before the end of the second century: they do not occur in such numbers again in these parts until the 260s, when Postumus seized control of Britain, Gaul and parts of Germany.[43] The *Classis Britannica*, based in Boulogne and in British ports such as Lympne and Dover was not able to keep the seas clear, for ancient warships did not have the range or sailing capabilities for effective permanent patrol. Early in the third century a new fort was built at Reculver on the south coast of the Thames estuary. The fort is of a new transitional type, approaching the fully developed Saxon Shore forts of the late third century, and its area seems too large for the

[41] *Notitia Dignitatum*, 28 (see Appendix, passage 16).
[42] Frere, 1987, p. 169.
[43] *Ibid*.

attested garrison – we can then, according to Frere, suppose the additional presence of other forces, no doubt partly naval.[44]

Now, if the Thames estuary was protected in this way in the early third century, would it not be reasonable to expect similar precautions on the Wash? Sure enough, at Brancaster there is a fort of almost virtually the same size and type. A third site which is probably connected with these early measures lies at Caister-on-Sea at the mouth of the Great Estuary.[45]

The idea then, would seem to be that the estuaries and inlets, the Thames estuary, the Wash and the Yare-Bure estuary (hereinafter called the Great Estuary, in accordance with Pearson) are (or at least were regarded as being) especially weak points on the east coast. If one is then to look further at all of the rest of the forts, a pattern does start emerging.

> "The setting of the Shore Forts is an issue of major significance. At the outset of the construction process, the choice of the site on which to build was a crucial decision. This choice would influence, more than any nuance of the architectural design, how well the installation would fulfil the role for which it was intended. Over the longer term the Shore Forts may or may not have served as ports in a commercial sense, but it remains important to understand how each was situated, and why this may have been so. Considerations of defence, the spatial relationship with other Roman sites, accessibility and communications may all have played a part."[46]

The forts at Portchester, Bradwell-on-Sea, and Walton were all built in the vicinity of extant estuaries and inlets. The fort at Portchester, *Portus Adurni*, near modern Portsmouth, occupied a position commanding Porstmouth harbour, and the Solent. The fort at Bradwell, *Orthona*, occupied a position which was ideal for control of the Blackwater and Colne estuaries. Upstream on the Colne, it must be noted, was the important town of *Camulodunum* (modern Colchester). The fort at Walton, known for the most part as Walton Castle (it does not appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum*), near the modern harbour of Felixstowe, commanded approaches to the estuaries of the rivers Debden, Orwell and Stour, all of which are navigable inland.

The fort at Dover, *Dubris*, does not seem to be associated with any specific system of estuary or inlet. However, the *port* at Dover dates from a significantly earlier period to the *litus Saxonicum* system. And I would argue that, defensively, Dover fulfils a similar role to the

[44] *Ibid*.
[45] *Ibid*, p. 170.
[46] Pearson, 2002, p. 99.

above forts in that it also commands a point of particular strategic importance (even, arguably, especial importance), as it is located on the narrowest point of the Channel, between Britain and continental Europe.

The forts at Lympne, Pevensey, Richborough, and Burgh Castle (which is very close to the fort at Caister-on-Sea), at first impressions, do not seem to be following the pattern. On a modern map, these forts seem not to be associated with any particular coastal feature. However, we must remember that the geography of places can change significantly in two thousand years, as Pearson points out:

> "The physical settings of the Shore Forts, that is to say their landscape and topography, have been much changed since Roman times. The visitor to sites at Pevensey, Lympne and Richborough is often bemused by the fact that these 'Shore Forts' are in fact now firmly land-locked."[47]

And, sure enough, if one examines a reconstruction of the coastline during the Roman period, a rather different picture comes to light.

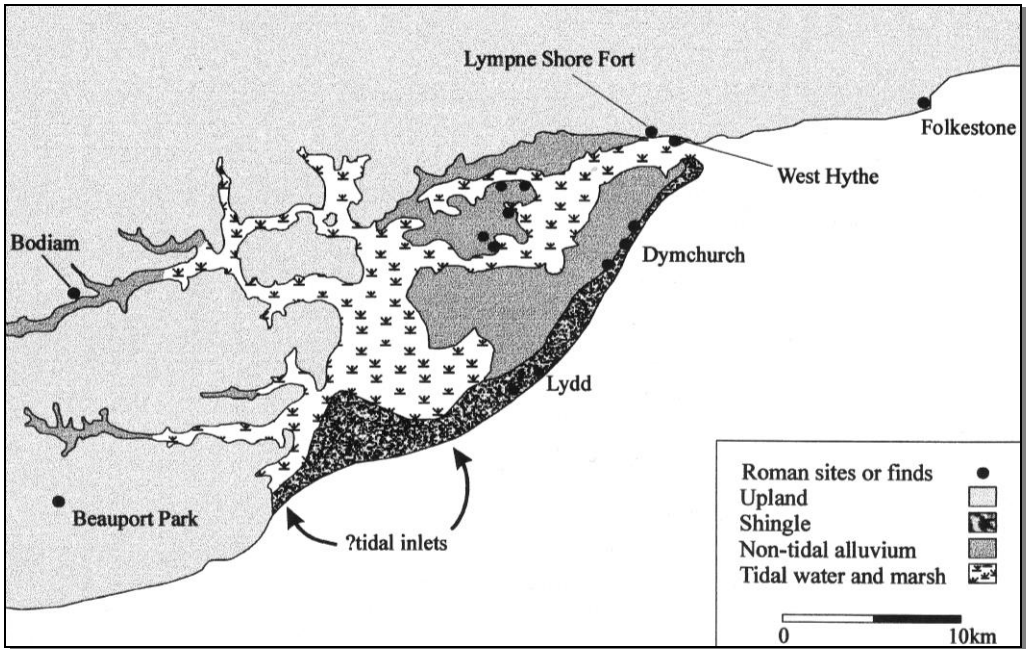

Fig 2. Romney Marsh as it would have appeared in the Roman Period. (Map taken from Pearson, 2002).

The fort at Lympne, *Portus Lemanis*, was built on the eastern margins of Romney Marsh, a region of saltmarsh and peats that stretches for some 30 km on the Kentish coast (see figure 2). It is surrounded by higher ground. The modern shape of the land is thanks largely to medieval land reclamation, undertaken, possibly among others, by monks from the Priory of Canterbury, who gained control of the Marsh in the 9th century, and who granted the earliest

[47] Pearson, 2002, p. 99.

recorded tenancy on the land to a certain Baldwin, sometime between the years 1152 and 1167, with the understanding that Baldwin could use as much land as he could enclose and drain.[48] Originally, however, at the end of the last Ice Age, before the efforts of generations of folk like Baldwin, the area was a large bay. During the Roman period, there was still significant open water, but "a substantial shingle bank was present, anchored on Fairlight Head (near modern Hastings) and extending eastwards to a cuspate head immediately to the south of West Hythe."[49] The water was still navigable at least as far inland as Bodiam (a distance of some 35 km). There was a major tidal inlet which was located at the eastern end of the Marsh at West Hythe, which is precisely where the Shore Fort was built.[50]

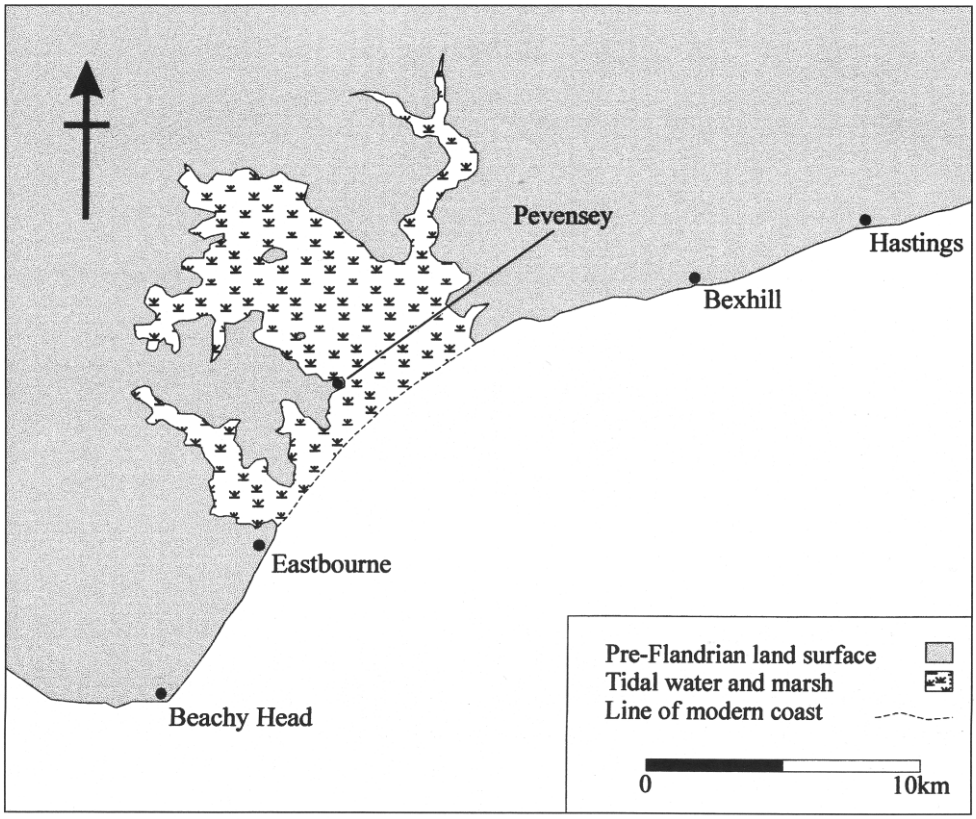

Fig 3. The Pevensey Levels as they would have appeared in the Roman Period. (Map taken from Pearson, 2002).

The fort at Pevensey, *Anderitum*, was built on what is now a slightly raised spit of land, approximately 1 km from the modern coastline, overlooking the Pevensey Levels (see figure 3).

The Pevensey Levels have a complex history of coastal change – advance and retreat – since the last Ice Age. The environment varied from a shallow marine environment to one of

[48] Silvester, 1999, p. 134ff.
[49] Pearson, 2002, p. 115.
[50] Pearson, 2002, p. 116-117.

freshwater.[51] During post-Roman times a shingle barrier had been created by the eastward longshore drift of debris from the chalk cliffs to the west – this barrier, now stretching from Eastbourne to Bexhill, gradually sealed off the levels, but during Roman times, it did not. Therefore, "it is possible to envisage the original setting of Pevensey Castle, positioned at the end of a raised peninsula and surrounded by a shallow coastal marsh."[52] This marshland would have been transected by the courses of deep-water channels; some tidal creeks, some the lower reaches of rivers, and by which it would be conceivably possible to navigate at least some 10 km inland.

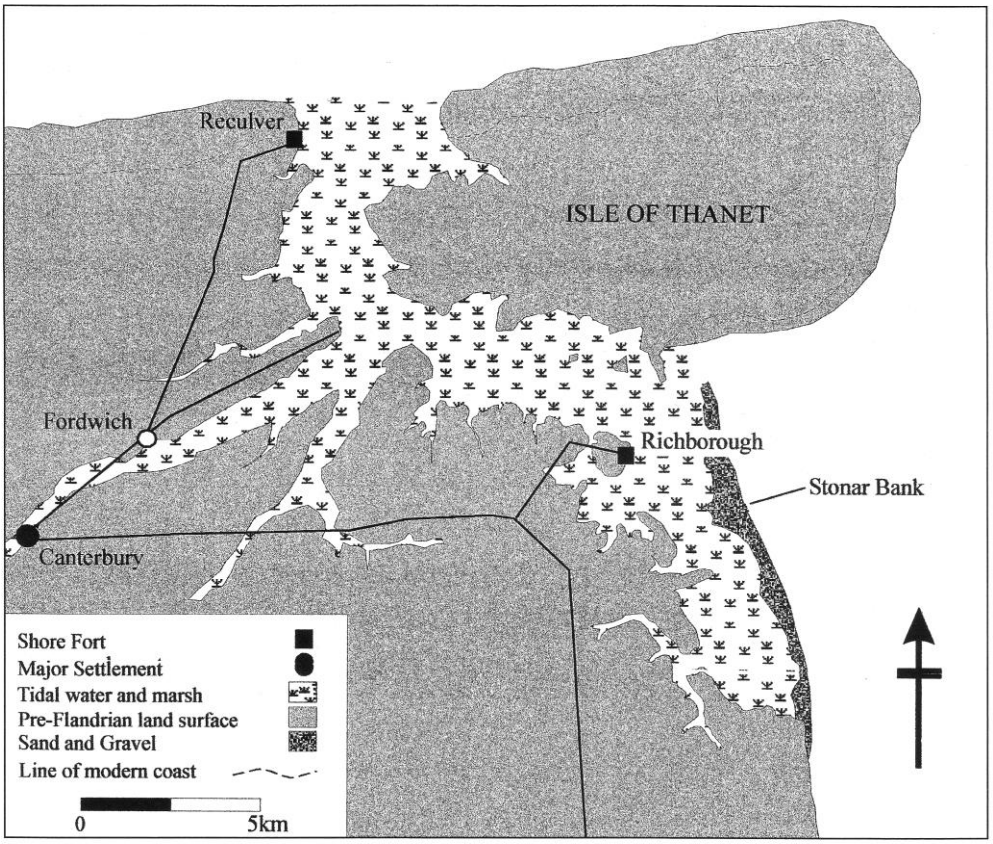

Fig 4. The Wantsum Channel as it would have appeared in the Roman Period. (Map taken from Pearson, 2002).

The fort at Richborough, *Rutupiae*, was built at the southern end of what in the Roman period was the Wantsum Channel (see figure 4), a tidal channel separating the Isle of Thanet from the mainland, in some ways, not unlike what the Solent does with the Isle of Wight, albeit on a significantly smaller scale. The fort at Reculver, *Regulbium*, stands on the northern end of this same channel.

[51] *Ibid*, p. 118.
[52] *Ibid*.

In the Roman period, while the Wantsum channel was still open at both ends it seems likely that the tidal scour, prevented the build up of alluvial deposits in the channel. The formation of the shingle barriers, however, would have started sealing off the channel, and would have led to such a build up, probably quite well advanced by the early Roman period, and more so by the third century.[53] Nevertheless, Roman wharves have been discovered as far inland as Fordwich, 5km from Canterbury, indicating that the River Stour remained navigable at least that far inland.[54]

It may be arguable that, to the smaller, flat-bottomed craft any would-be raiders might have been using (and their Viking successors did use), the Stour might have been navigable all the way to Canterbury, some 20 km inland. This would seem significant because Canterbury was the site of the Roman town *Durovernum Cantiacorum*, which was an administrative centre, at the southern end of Watling Street, and at the convergence of the roads from the forts at Reculver, Richborough, Dover and Lympne. In addition to this, seeing that the suggestion above is that *Regulbium* was built in order to control the Thames Estuary, in the event of any major need, forces from *Rutupiae* could easily offer reinforcement, as they would have been stationed merely 12 km away, by water (forces travelling by land between the two forts would have had a good deal more than double the distance to cover, as they would have had to move via *Durovernum Cantiacorum*).

The fort called Burgh Castle today, faced the fort at Caister-on-Sea across the southern mouth of the 'Great Estuary', which was a major tidal inlet that opened to the sea in the area which is now occupied by the port of Great Yarmouth (see figure 5). By Roman times the mouth of the Great Estuary had become partially blocked in its centre by a sandbank known as the 'Cerdic Sand' (it had once been about 7 km wide), which would have acted as a substantial breakwater.[55] Continued access to the estuary was enabled, however, by channels to the north and south of the sandbank. The lower reaches of the rivers Yare, Bure and Waveney, that constituted the Great Estuary, were much wider than they are now, and estuarine conditions extended (up the Yare) to within 7 km of Norwich.[56] "Siltation of the estuary was probably well advanced by the late Roman period, but navigation of the rivers and probably some of the tidal channels in the mudflats would have remained practicable."[57]

The Great Estuary would have constituted a very significant weak point along the coast. Not only, as mentioned above, could prospective raiding parties have made their way inland to

[53] Pearson, 2002, p. 112.
[54] *Ibid*, p. 112.
[55] Pearson, 2002, p. 107.
[56] *Ibid*.
[57] *Ibid*.

within easy striking distance of Norwich, or its nearby Roman counterpart, *Venta Icenorum*, some 30-odd km inland, but, through the Rivers Yare, Bure and Waverney and their numerous tributaries, those raiders could plausibly have had access to a vast swathe of agricultural land with its villas and minor settlements (roughly estimable to something in the region of 900 km^2).

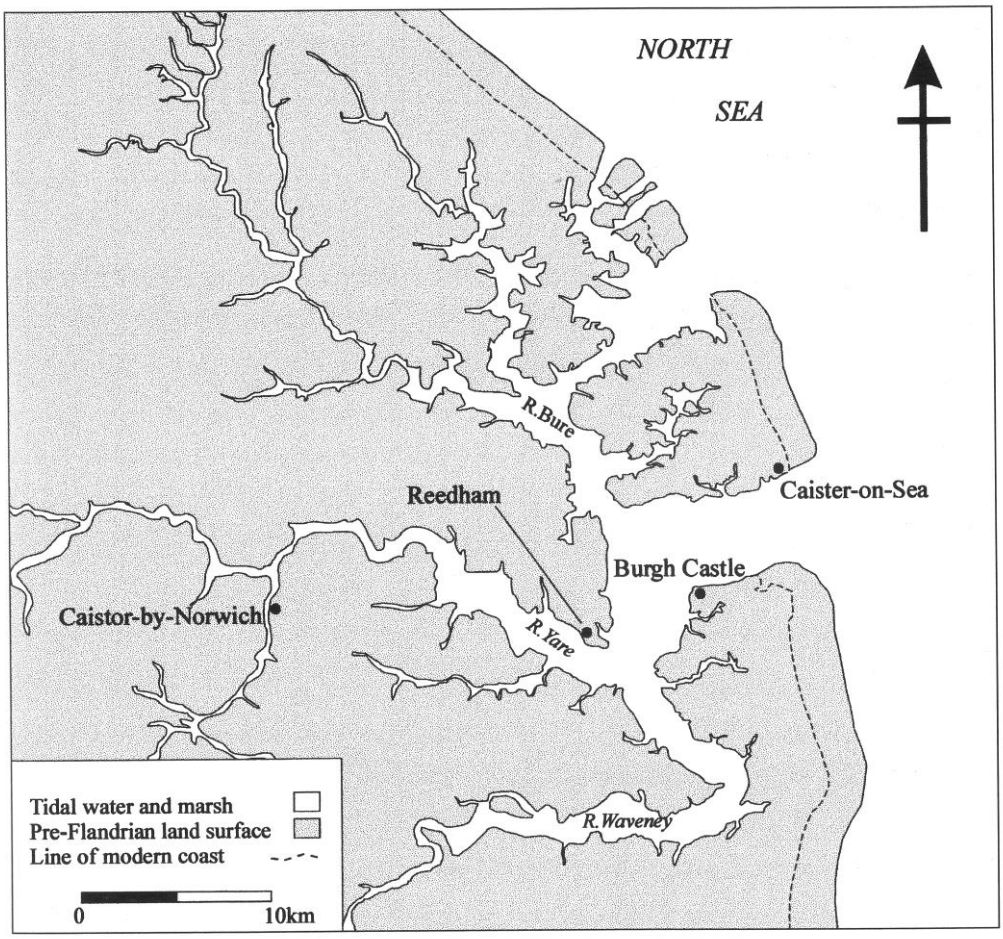

Fig 5. The Great Estuary as it would have appeared in the Roman Period. (Map taken from Pearson, 2002).

It is then clear that the Shore Forts were built in similar places. They all (with the exception of *Dubris*, at Dover, discussed above) were built in close association with extensive inlet and estuarine systems. What, then, does this mean? One possible reason for this was, as discussed by Pearson (and supported by Cotterill[58]), the use of the forts as harbour sites, because of the sheltered nature of the waters surrounding them:

> "They were positioned in sheltered, tidal environments that lay close to, but not directly on the open sea. In many cases they were protected by natural barriers, as at Brancaster, Reculver, Richborough, Lympne, and

[58] Cotterill, 1993, p. 227-239.

> possibly Walton castle and Bradwell. Only at Dover do we know of an instance where an artificial breakwater was provided, and given the natural protection afforded to most of the forts, such measures were probably deemed unnecessary. The physical situations of the Shore Forts are comparable with many other Roman coastal sites in Britain. The fort at Cardiff, positioned on the River Taff, a little removed from the Severn Estuary is but one pertinent example. This finding in itself is not surprising, because exposed harbours on the open sea have never been thought favourable, and the Roman period is no exception in this respect."[59]

Of course, as Pearson points out, the very largest ships of the Roman world might have gone exclusively to Dover, as some of the forts' harbours certainly would not have been able to accommodate them owing to the lack of reliable deep-water moorage.[60] As for smaller craft, however, as can be seen in some the 'harbours' of the Mediterranean, such as Sybaris, Metapontum, Selinous, Akragas and so on, sheltered anchorage is not a necessary precondition for a harbour – any open, shelving beach will do. With these considerations, this is, perhaps somewhat less likely than Pearson and Cotteril argue.

Is there, then, not another possible reason for choosing to build these strong defensive structures on estuaries and inlets? If one is to assume that the craft that might have been used by prospective raiders bore something of a resemblance to Viking craft from six to seven centuries later, in terms of their shallower draft which enabled them to travel significant distances inland up rivers, then these large systems of estuaries and inlets do seem to be the weakest and most vulnerable points along the coast.[61] As with the Vikings, early raiding may well have been against places along the coast[62], but why should it not move further inland, utilising these weak points? Were this to have occurred once, or even if the threat of such were to have been perceived, I believe this renders plausible a distinct strategic defensive value for the Shore Forts in the landscape they occupy.

The problem with the forts' interior layouts

One of the specific arguments levelled by the detractors of the notion of the military defensive role of the Shore Forts is that the forts do not seem to show the same concentration of military buildings as one might expect from ordinary forts of the same size. Francis Pryor argues that

[59] Pearson, 2002, p. 120.
[60] *Ibid*.
[61] See Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 3.13, for an account of flat-bottomed boats built by the people of northern Gaul – close neighbours to the 'Anglo-Saxon homeland', which includes Frisia.
[62] Pearson, 2006, p. 340.

the strangest aspect of the 'Saxon shore' forts is the apparent lack of archaeological remains inside their fortifications. This does not seem to be the result of inadequate excavation, as, at Portchester Castle, a large area within the walls was excavated by Sir Barry Cunliffe[63]. Cunliffe was able to divide the ancient features into a succession of phases. He demonstrated that there *was* a Roman presence in the third century, but that occupation did not seem to include the barrack blocks, granaries or headquarters buildings that one might ordinarily have expected.[64] According to Pryor, "if one did not know that the excavations were within the massive walls that surrounded them, one would doubt that Portchester was a military site."[65]

It is worth remembering, for reasons that will become clear below, that Portchester was among the later forts to have been constructed. The three earlier Shore Forts, Reculver, Caistor-on-Sea, and Brancaster do indeed show evidence of the sort of military architecture one might expect from forts of comparable size elsewhere.[66] This was borne out by excavations carried out at Brancaster in 2012, by the team from the Channel 4 archaeological television series 'Time Team'. They found nothing out of the ordinary, as far as architecture and its concentration were concerned. They did, however, find possible evidence of two previous forts on the site. There was speculation that the earliest could have been associated with the revolt of the Iceni tribe under Boudica in 60 AD[67] In general, however, the later forts seemingly follow the pattern of Portchester.

Sheppard Frere writes that during the third century, when the majority of these later forts were built, a change of tactics arose from the numerically greater and better organised barbarian enemies who were now on the frontiers. The Roman army had to adopt a more defensive stance, and the manning of defended forts such as the Shore Forts became more important[68]. He then goes on to write about civic defences to which the same sort of defensive design was applied in a somewhat later period (the second half of the fourth century):

> "The barbarian forces of this period were formidable enemies in the field, but they lacked the ability and means to take fortified places if these were defended. Moreover, invading barbarians lacked the elaborate supply-system of the Roman army and depended on forage during raids. If supplies of corn and livestock could be denied them by concentration within defended walls they could do nothing but starve and retreat."[69]

[63] Pryor, 2004, p. 139. Cunliffe's work at Danebury, Pryor argues, has shown that he and his team can locate even the most ephemeral of timber structures – and are thus unlikely to have missed anything.
[64] *Ibid*.
[65] *Ibid*.
[66] Pryor, 2004, p. 140.
[67] *Time Team*, 2013. Series 20, Episode 2.
[68] Frere, 1987, p. 247.
[69] *Ibid*, p. 248.

Now, this is referring to a later period, but it would seem to make sense if the Shore Forts had this capability. In that way, they could defeat the ends of any barbarian raiding not only militarily, but also logistically. Of course, it could then be argued that if the forts were to double as *de facto* fortified storehouses, it could account for the perceived paucity of strictly military remains (corn and, especially, livestock would require significant storage space) without necessarily negating the Shore Forts' role as defensive structures aimed at defeating barbarian raiding.

The inland fortifications

The military architecture of the majority of the Shore Forts was new when it was introduced to Britain. The walls were usually in the region of three and a half metres thick, and some seven and a half metres high. They did not, unlike in earlier fortifications, feature earthen banks behind the walls, and they possessed towers which projected out from the face of the wall, rather than internal towers.[70] Such a style of fortification was used in the construction of the town-walls of Gaul, which were constructed around the time of the reign of the emperor Diocletian (284 – 305). The British counterparts to the Gaulish towns date to a somewhat earlier time, to a programme of wall-building (improving and making permanent former fortifications, where they existed, and building afresh where they did not) begun in the first half of the third century, possibly as early as Caracalla.[71] Consequently, they exhibit somewhat earlier building practices, featuring internal banks, even in towns like Canterbury or St Alban's, where there had not been a previous system of fortification. There can be some certainty that most of the town fortifications were built before the main series of Shore Forts, which seem to date from around the reign of Probus (276 – 282). In some cases, however, they are not very much earlier. Coins and pottery have been used to date the fortifications at Canterbury, Brough-on-Humber, Dorchester-on-Thames, Silchester, Caerwent, Witherley, and Rochester to the period around 270.[72] While Canterbury, Brough-on-Humber, Caerwent, and Rochester are coastal towns, the others are not. So, presumably, any perceived threat which led to their construction was more general than mere coastal raiding (however, this could arguably have been a contributing factor).

There is, whatever the case, some suggestion that the improvements and alterations were in response to a crisis of some sort.

> "In the early third century, it was still possible to design gateways in the monumental style with double carriage-ways and two square towers... later

[70] Frere, 1987, p. 242.
[71] *Ibid*, p. 243.
[72] *Ibid*, p. 242.

> in the century the remaining towns were walled, but now the gate-designs showed an increased concern for security and were made as small as practicable."[73]

If the growth of some danger is suggested by the late third-century walls, confirmation can be found in a sudden "great and most striking increase"[74] in coin hoards buried during the period between 270 and 282; and by the construction of the main series of Saxon Shore forts which followed soon afterwards. "It is worth recalling also that the forum of Wroxeter was burnt down at some point about this period, and that the forum of Caistor by Norwich had to be rebuilt, whatever the cause."[75]

The succession of events here seems significant. Some perceived threat precipitates the reinforcement of town defences; this happens concurrently with a sharp upswing in the deposition of coin hoards, and then not long after, the main series of Shore Forts starts going up. I would argue that a certain amount of causality seems evident.

A comprehensive system

What one is left with, then, is a picture (albeit partly conjectural) of a complex and multilayered system of coastal defence, encompassing both land-based and naval forces, and stretching along the whole eastern coast from the Wall in the north, to the Isle of Wight. The backbone of this system, the *litus Saxonicum*, was the thirteen forts (if one includes Skegness and Bitterne, which, for the sake of argument, I will do). In addition to these were fortified fleet-bases on the Humber, the Tees and the Tyne (the major estuarine rivers between the Wash and the Wall).

The first tier of defence was naval. Based at the Shore Forts, the *Classis Brittanica* (the Roman Navy's 'Channel Fleet') provided a reconnaissance cordon. Each fort would have a small flotilla of military craft stationed there; among which would have been larger ships and small patrol boats. The patrol boats were painted blue as a form of camouflage, so as not to alert the enemy to their presence. If the patrols encountered an enemy, they would have had a number of options. Bearing in mind that these boats would only have in the region of twelve oars per side, but also carried marines, if they felt they possessed sufficient force to deal with the threat straight away, the patrols could engage the enemy. If such an action was not practicable because, perhaps, the enemy outnumbered them, I hypothesise that the patrol

[73] *Ibid*, p. 244.
[74] *Ibid*, pp. 244-245.
[75] Frere, 1987, p. 245.

boats would have had a system of signalling to the shore, and each other.[76] Once reinforcements were signalled, the larger ships would be deployed to deal with the threat, and the patrol boats could either offer what support they could, or else withdraw.

If the first tier of defence screened the particularly vulnerable areas – the estuarine inlets and the exposed coastal towns, the second tier of defence watched the less vulnerable areas – open, straight beaches and sea cliffs and the like. This second tier took the form of a series of fortified lookout towers.

> "The coast of Yorkshire and Durham was provided with a series of lookout towers running from Flamborough Head probably as far as the Tyne mouth. They occupy high headlands, and contained towers which may have risen to 90 or 100 feet, and were clearly intended to coordinate naval action by flotillas based on the estuaries of Humber, Tees and Tyne. They probably came under the Count of the Saxon Shore."[77]

These sites are small, and may not all have survived, so any assumptions about the extent of the chain are somewhat speculative. However, as Pearson points out about the signal stations:

> "groups of [these] remain on Yorkshire and Cumbrian coasts. However, the find of an isolated example at Shadwell (inner Thames) and the possibility of other similar sites, for example at Thornham (Norfolk), Corton (Suffolk) and Hadleigh (Essex), suggests that there may once have been a far more extensive chain of such sites, knowledge of which is now to a large extent lost."[78]

Bearing in mind that these sites are substantially smaller than the forts, and the fort at Walton Castle, and the possible fort at Skegness have both been completely eroded by the sea, there could very well have been a chain of them stretching all along the coast, the whole length of the system.

If that be the case, the second tier of defence could both have screened the less vulnerable parts of the coast, and, presumably, supplemented whatever reconnaissance information was gained by the patrol boats, should they be operating in the same region. Additionally, if one considers that the northern signal stations seem to have operated with the flotillas based on

[76] Suggesting the nature of such a system would be entirely speculative, and probably not of much probative value. However, it is known that the Romans did possess signaling technology not unlike the early nineteenth century's semaphore towers (Webster, 1985, pp. 254-256). Such a system was probably used to communicate on the Northern Frontier. I would hazard that any shipboard system would have utilized flags or inflated bladders run up the mast (or perhaps an extension to increase its height) during the day, and perhaps lanterns, or fire-arrows at night (if night-time operations were carried out).
[77] Frere, 1987, p. 345.
[78] Pearson, 2002, p. 48.

the Humber, Tees and Tyne (the southernmost known signal station is that at Flamborough Head, some 65-odd kilometres north of the Humber mouth), they must surely have had a fairly efficient means of communication with the flotillas. With such a system, assuming the ships themselves possessed a similar system, the signal stations could help in directing the naval forces in action, if necessary.

The third tier of defence would have been the Shore Forts themselves, and their garrisons. Even if raiding parties had penetrated this far into the defences (which seems somewhat unlikely, unless they were very lucky), once they reached land they would have to contend with there being precious little of any value in the immediate vicinity of the coastal regions, for it would be stored in the Shore Forts. If they were tempted to try further inland, they would have to contend with the forts blocking the estuaries. The forts themselves might well have had some form of artillery emplacements on the projecting towers, and one suspects that at least one ship in the flotilla at any given fort would be kept in reserve. So it would seem unlikely that the raiding parties would be able to slip past the forts. If, however, they got very lucky and they managed to penetrate the defences past the forts and inland, the forts' capabilities were not yet exhausted, for the garrison could still have sent out sorties to intercept the enemy on land. At least two forts, Brancaster, and either Burgh Castle or Caister-on-Sea were garrisoned with cavalry units, the *equites Dalmatae Branodunensis*, and the *equites Stablesiani Gariannonensis*[79] (and, of course, it is quite conceivable that other cavalry forces – be they part of the former two, or not – might have been stationed at the other forts, and just gone unrecorded in the *Notitia*). Such cavalry forces could, one assumes, have travelled fast enough for the most part to intercept any raiders who, on land, would have been on foot.

The fourth and final tier of the defences was the towns themselves. These, as we have seen, were also walled and would probably have held some form of garrison, which might well have been able to send out sorties to deal with any barbarians who were lucky enough to make it that far.

All in all, according to this model, I would argue that the *litus Saxonicum* represented a comprehensive, in-depth and secure system of defence.

Of course, the Romans were nothing if not pragmatic, so, once they had established the maritime infrastructure of the Shore Forts, I also find it eminently plausible that they might have come to use them in the secondary capacity of trading stations, and staging posts for

[79] *Notitia Dignitatum*, 28.

supplies. Also, one might expect (as suggested by Mason[80]) that, in the supply or trade capacity, once sufficient stores had been accumulated in a fort, a convoy of merchant craft could be arranged with an escort of military craft supplied from the flotilla based there. If they were going from fort to fort, the escort could be relieved for the next leg of the journey.

Evidence of raiding, and its lack

If this reconstruction is (more or less) accurate there must have been some perceived threat to encourage the Roman administration to go to such huge and ruinous expense to build these forts. And so, we are left with one last argument against the existence of widespread piracy, and thus the necessity for the Shore Forts as a defensive system: the simple lack of any discernible, and conclusive evidence in the archaeological record to support the historical writings. Pearson argues that, despite barbarian piracy being asserted by historians as far back as 1586 (with the publication of William Camden's *Britannia*)[81], indisputable evidence for destruction seems, in fact, extremely slight. It seems that the signal-stations at Goldsborough and Huntcliffe did meet with a violent end towards the end of Roman rule, but it is debatable whether either of them was the victim of Germanic attack, rather than of attack from the Picts.[82]

While, obviously, one cannot argue that the lack of evidence in the archaeological record is insignificant, it occurs to me that the 'problem', if problem it be, might not be quite as insuperable as it might initially seem.

During the period of Viking raiding and piracy, as mentioned above, a seemingly similar process of raiding occurred along the British coast. One might seem somewhat unwise to question the existence and scope of Viking raiding – it is so well attested in the written record (not that that has stopped some historians). Nevertheless:

> "There is some archaeological evidence to support the documentary assertions of violence during the eighth to tenth centuries, but it is far less than might be thought… despite the weight of historical evidence from the Viking period, physical traces of destruction are otherwise rather elusive. Whilst this situation might be attributed to a shortfall in the archaeological record, there are in fact data to suggest that in certain cases the level of damage was far less than the histories imply. Lindisfarne, for example, was notoriously attacked on several occasions during the late eighth and

[80] Mason, 2003, p. 170.
[81] Pearson, 2006, p. 345.
[82] *Ibid*.

> ninth centuries, to the extent that the monks and their famous gospel book embarked on a seven-year exile from the island after A.D. 875. However, recent excavations on the site have revealed a number of features that are likely to be early medieval and thus part of the monastic site. Although there was evidence for one building in this area having burnt down, this appears to be an isolated event and there are no indications of an all-consuming conflagration in this area of the village. A similar situation prevails at Nendrum Abbey (Co. Down) - one of the few Irish monastic sites to be subject to large-scale excavation. The site was raided in A.D. 974 and has yielded some archaeological evidence for destruction of certain buildings by fire. However, whilst it is tempting to ascribe the fire to a violent assault, the burning appears localised and it could equally have been caused by domestic accident."[83]

In other words, however virulent the piracy, there is not necessarily going to be anything left in the ground to give evidence of its occurrence. And, of course, if one is looking specifically for evidence of destruction and burning, one might well often come up short of finding it. I would question the notion of destruction as a diagnostic sign of raiding. For, it seems very possible for a raiding party to force entry into a building, steal all of its contents, and abduct all of its inhabitants, and not, on leaving, decide to burn it down. Equally, as with Nendrum Abbey, there is also a possibility that any destruction might just be accidental. In other words, I would be uncomfortable with using the lack of evidence of destruction as a reason to rule out raiding.

Additionally, there might be certain scraps of evidence already mentioned, which taken together might be of some significance. The first is the great up-swing in the number of coin hoards deposited during the period immediately before the construction of the Shore Forts.[84] Coin hoards are a much safer marker of unrest in a region, I would argue, for there must have been a reason that drove people to bury their worldly wealth. And, it also seems telling to me, (assuming they were not in some sense ritual depositions) the hoards were never recovered by their owners. Why would this be? The obvious, and bleak, answer seems to be that the owners were for some reason unable to do so. In addition to the coin hoards there was the intriguing necessity to rebuild the forum in *Venta Icenorum*[85]. This is also, of course, merely circumstantial, but it is contemporary with the coin hoards, and *Venta Icenorum* was accessible from the sea via the Great Estuary.

[83] Pearson, 2006, p. 342.
[84] Frere, 1987, p. 169.
[85] *Ibid*, p. 245.

It also seems to me that even if there were no physical evidence of raiding whatsoever, that would in itself not be conclusive. I would argue that it might mean (with equal probability to its meaning that there was simply no raiding to start with) that there is no evidence because there was no raiding, and there was no raiding for the simple reason that the defences worked. If it was as difficult for raiding parties to penetrate the defences as has been suggested above, then, surely, the lack of evidence of raiding having taken place is only to be expected. To take a 20th century analogy, had the Maginot Line worked in keeping the Germans out of France in early 1940, I would expect that the only evidence to be found of the German aggression against France in two millennia would be the written sources. It is precisely because the French defences failed that there is so much evidence of the events that followed (no doubt future historians will find some way of disagreeing about it anyway).

Conclusions

Is it sufficient evidence to support the idea of the Germanic raiding if the Saxon Shore forts were built as defensive structures? I believe so. The position of the forts, coupled with the nature and make-up of the contemporary Roman fleet seem to point less to trading posts, and more to a defensive chain; and why defend the coast if the threat was not from across the sea? One does not fortify a border which is not threatened.

If the raiding occurred, as – I believe – is suggested by the very presence of the Shore Forts, it makes it far more likely for the descendants of the original raiders (once the break-down of the Roman state had started) to have had another go at raiding Britain, and eventually to have embarked on a full-scale invasion.

Chapter 2

Britannia and the Saxons – Written Accounts

After the Romans departed from Britain in 410, as tradition goes, there was a period of political instability. The raiding discussed in the previous chapter raised its head again; this time, the raiders seem to have included Picts and Irish. In 449, the high king of the Britons, Vortigern, hired some Anglian (or Saxon) mercenaries to help defend against these raids. They came in three ships, led by two brothers: Hengist and Horsa, and landed in Kent. They rebelled against their paymasters and thus sparked the Germanic invasion of Britain. This sequence of events is based on written accounts. All subsequent work done on the possibility of the Anglo-Saxon invasions has been based, to some degree, on the written history. Three main sources exist upon which the sequence of events rests. Preeminent among these is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which records, year by year, the doings of the Anglo-Saxons. Then there are the works of two monks, separated by more than one-hundred and fifty years, and from either side of the British-Germanic cultural divide. The earlier was the sixth century Welshman, Gildas; the later, the late seventh and early eighth century Anglo-Saxon, Bede.

These three may be the main sources. But they are not the only written sources that deal with Britain during the period, or have relevance to this study.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is the most comprehensive and important historical source for history throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. It focuses, in the main, on genealogies and dates. The passage from Winston Churchill's *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, quoted at the beginning of the *Introduction* to this thesis, gives a close summary of the events surrounding the Germanic invasions of Britain, as they appear in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*:

> "In 449 Hengist and Horsa, invited by Vortigern, founded the Jutish kingdom of Kent upon the corpses of its former inhabitants. In 477 Ella and his three sons arrived to continue the inroad. In 495 Cerdic and Cynric appeared. In 501 Port, the pirate, founded Portsmouth. In 514 the West Saxons Stuf and Wihtgar descended in their turn and put the Britons to

> flight. In 544 Wihtgar was killed. In 547 came Ida, founder of the kingdom of Northumberland."[86]

There is not much more that is mentioned between these years in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, with the exception of certain genealogies.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is a detailed record of these events, but with what accuracy? It is later in date than both Gildas and Bede – the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was originally commissioned by Alfred the Great, in the late 9th century[87], perhaps as much as two centuries after Bede was writing. This means that it is hardly contemporary with the events it describes, though it clearly drew on earlier sources (among which Gildas and Bede were surely included).

Additionally, a case can be made that the account of the early years of Anglo-Saxon history was recorded not entirely in a purely historical, but in a slightly mythical manner. The reasoning here is based on the account of the genealogy of Hengist and Horsa: "Their leaders were Hengist and Horsa; who were the sons of Wihtgils; Wihtgils was the son of Witta, Witta of Wecta, Wecta of Woden. From this Woden arose all our royal kindred."[88] This Woden is most unlikely to be any other person than the Scandinavian god of the same name – a clearly mythical link, especially for a Christian country, which would not have regarded the pagan gods as 'real' any more.

Two things are worth mentioning. Firstly, the initial invasive force, led by Hengist and Horsa, is described as being composed of Angles, not Saxons (see Gildas' account, below). The Saxons, according to the *Chronicle*, came somewhat later, in 514. Secondly, where the traditional view of the period assumes a total replacement of populations – British by Anglo-Saxon (by means of exile, or extermination), the *Chronicle* makes no overt mention of such an event. Instead, it records, starting in 449, a series of battles fought between the various Anglo-Saxon leaders and the Britons.[89] It may be reasonable to argue that if such an extermination had taken place, there would have been insufficient enemies to keep the fighting going for more than a century.

Gildas

The most influential ancient writer for the history of the period in question is Gildas, a monk from what is now North Wales. He was probably born in about 500, and lived to *circa* 570,

[86] Churchill, 1956, p. 51; drawing from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, years 449 – 547.
[87] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 386.
[88] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, s.aa. 449.
[89] *Ibid*, s.aa. 449 – 591ff.

making him almost contemporary – the events he describes in his *De Excidio Britanniae* would have been in the experience of his grandparents' generation. This would, of course, be the equivalent of one, in their twenties in 2014, writing a history of the Second World War, without the aid of all the various books and documentaries, and based solely on personal accounts. While the chances of getting the broad facts fairly accurate are, I would imagine, reasonably high, any particular details outside the scope of the experience of the average individual might be difficult to achieve. However, in a broadly preliterate society, unlike ours, there is a strong chance of the oral tradition bearing significantly more detail of the past than it might now. In the 21st century, television and books have more or less obviated the necessity for an oral tradition, but the amount of knowledge that could have been passed on in a society in which story-telling was of more importance to our own might be surprising to us. This consideration might lend rather more credence to Gildas' work.

Gildas writes that, once the Romans departed from Britain for the last time, they made it known that the inhabitants must now look to their own defence, "the islanders, inuring themselves to warlike weapons, and bravely fighting, should valiantly protect their country, their property, wives and children, and, what is dearer than these, their liberty and lives."[90] In the same chapter, Gildas describes how the Romans, with the islanders' help,

> "built a wall different from the former [Hadrian's Wall], by public and private contributions, and of the same structure as walls generally, extending in a straight line from sea to sea, between some cities, which, from fear of their enemies, had there by chance been built... Moreover, on the south coast where their vessels lay, as there was some apprehension lest the barbarians might land, they erected towers at stated intervals, commanding a prospect of the sea; and then left the island never to return."[91]

[90] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 18 (see Appendix, passage 13).
Interestingly, Gildas makes no mention whatever of Alaric the Goth and the sack of Rome in 410. Had he not heard of it?

[91] *Ibid* (see Appendix, passage 13).
These are possible references to the Antonine Wall, and the forts of the Saxon Shore. In the case of the Antonine Wall, although it was reoccupied during the reign of Septimius Severus, who came to the throne in 197, and who campaigned extensively in Scotland for some years, in 213, following the death of Severus in 211 and the accession of his sons Caracalla and Geta (whom Caracalla had murdered before the year was out), the Antonine Wall was abandoned for good. After 213, there were no further major Roman expeditions north of Hadrian's Wall (de la Bédoyère, 2006, pp. 59ff.). This, would then be entirely mistaken on Gildas' part. Gildas may also be referring to the reoccupation and partial rebuilding of Hadrian's Wall (seemingly authorised by Theodosius), which was probably overrun in 367 during the Barbarian Conspiracy (a period of significant unrest and incursion). Either way, Gildas is vague here. The reference to the Saxon Shore, on the other hand is interesting, as it reinforces the *Notitia*'s (more or less) contemporary view of the forts as defensive structures.

As soon as the Romans were gone, continues Gildas, the Scots and the Picts fell upon the north of Britain. The Romano-British efforts to oppose them were frustrated as much by incompetence as by enemy action, and the defenders were put to flight, abandoning their towns, and abandoning the Wall. The effects of this were that factional in-fighting developed among the Romano- Britons in the north.[92] In response to this, the remaining British notables wrote a plea for military assistance to Flavius Aetius.[93] The plea, Gildas writes, was worded thus: "To Aetius, now consul for the third time: the groans of the Britons...The barbarians drive us to the sea; the sea throws us back on the barbarians: thus two modes of death await us, we are either slain or drowned."[94] The Romans, however, were powerless to help. A famine was beginning to be felt in Britain, and many of the Britons gave themselves up to the persecutors in the hope of gaining sustenance. But there were those who resisted; "And then it was, for the first time, that they overthrew their enemies, who had for so many years been living in their country; for their trust was not in man, but in God."[95]

There followed as period of factionalisation and the rise of the hedonistic Pelagian heresy.[96] Local kings rose and fell in no short order:

> "Kings were anointed, not according to God's ordinance, but such as showed themselves more cruel than the rest; and soon after, they were put to death by those who had elected them, without any inquiry into their merits, but because others still more cruel were chosen to succeed them."[97]

Meanwhile, a rumour had reached the kingdoms of Britain, that the former enemies were plotting further insurgencies, and council of the great and the (at least according to Gildas) not-so-good, was convened "to settle what was best and most expedient to be done, in order to repel such frequent and fatal irruptions and plunderings of the Picts and Scots."[98] The decision of the councillors, together with Vortigern, the high king, saw to it that:

> "they sealed [their country's] doom by inviting in among them like wolves into the sheep-fold, the fierce and impious Saxons, a race hateful both to God and men, to repel the invasions of the northern nations. Nothing was

[92] *Ibid*, 19.
[93] Aetius was a very capable military leader who, between 433 and 454, was the most influential man in the Western Roman Empire. One particularly noteworthy achievement of his was his strategic victory over Atilla in the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains in 451, ending the devastating Hunnic invasion (Frere, 1987, pp. 362-363).
[94] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 20.
[95] *Ibid*, 20.
[96] This was a school of thought that rejected original sin, and accepted the notion of people earning salvation through their own efforts, without the aid of Divine Grace. It led to a reinforcement of the luxurious lifestyles of its adherents (which seem to have included much of the aristocracy in Britain) (Frere, 1987, pp. 359-362).
[97] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 21 (see Appendix, passage 14).
[98] *Ibid*, 22.

> ever so pernicious to our country, nothing was ever so unlucky. What palpable darkness must have enveloped their minds – darkness desperate and cruel! Those very people whom, when absent, they dreaded more than death itself, were invited to reside, as one may say, under the selfsame roof."[99]

The Saxons came, in three ships, landing first in the east, and gaining a foothold. The first settlement thus successful, a larger company of Saxons from the Continent arrived and joined the first. They were to be paid for their services by an allowance of provisions, which, for a time, was sufficient to maintain them in their role. But after a while, this situation changed:

> Yet they complain that their monthly supplies are not furnished in sufficient abundance, and they industriously aggravate each occasion of quarrel, saying that unless more liberality is shown them, they will break the treaty and plunder the whole island. In a short time, they follow up their threats with deeds."[100]

Thereafter, according to Gildas, the Romano-Celtic survivors were pushed back into the mountains and inaccessible places, or else were murdered. Some were enslaved, and others fled overseas (to Brittany, one assumes). A number took up arms under Ambrosius Aurelianus, whose parents were of Roman stock and had been "adorned with the purple".[101] The campaign continued, the advantage going first one way, then the other, until the two sides met in battle at Badon Hill, forty-four years after the Saxon landing, where the Saxons were beaten.[102] But that peace also did not last, and the old cities of Britannia lay in ruins.

This is how Gildas describes the *Adventus Saxonum*. But how trustworthy is Gildas as a historical source? There are a number of things to consider. He was a near contemporary of the events, but, as was mentioned above, that is not necessarily a guarantee of absolute accuracy in all things. Gildas was also writing well after the collapse of the Roman administration, so his access to official records would have been limited. Also, as noted above, he failed to mention two important events on the Continent which might well have had

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[99] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 23 (see Appendix, passage 15).
One is irresistibly reminded of a similar series of events which occurred in Germany in 1933. The Nazi party, led by Adolf Hitler, was offered power to help stabilise a faltering economy. Hitler was offered the chancellorship, just as his voting strength was *declining*, by politicians led by aged President Paul von Hindenburg, who argued that they were hiring him, and would still be in charge. As it was put in the first episode of *The World at War* (1974): "Communists and socialists tried to take Hitler coolly: 'This wouldn't last', they said. Conservative anti-Nazis took comfort from the fact that their old war-leader Hindenburg, still head of state, was known to despise the 'vulgar little corporal'." Little did they know what was about to hit them, and the world.
[100] *Ibid*, 23.
[101] *Ibid*, 25.
[102] *Ibid*, 26.

a bearing on events in Britain: the Hunnic incursions under Attila, which involved Aetius and might have been a contributing factor for Germanic peoples to be leaving their homeland in the 450s; and, perhaps more importantly, the Sack of Rome in 410 by Alaric, which undoubtedly had something to do with the Roman decision in that year not to continue helping Britannia militarily. One feels that a historian whose aim was absolute correctness and detail would not have omitted these events from his work – assuming, of course, that he had heard of them; and if he had not heard of them, what else is there of which he had not heard?

Then one must consider Gildas' motives for embarking on this work. Gildas was two things that would not endear the Saxons (or Germanic settlers of whatever other description) to him. Firstly, he was a Celt (or Romano-Briton), having been born, according to tradition, on the river Clwyd in what would now be called North Wales; secondly, he appears to have been a monk, a Christian, and the invaders or settlers (or whatever else they might really have been) were pagan. That much one cannot argue with, as is the necessary precondition for the (somewhat later) episode involving Pope Gregory the Great, when he came across two Anglo-Saxon children in the slave market in Rome, and when asking who they were and being told that they were Angles responded: "*non Angli sunt, sed angeli*" (they are not Angles, but angels).[103] St Gregory then sent St Augustine of Canterbury to Britain in 597 to convert the pagans living there. Therefore, it is quite possible that he might have favoured the Romano-British/Celtic/Christian faction, and bent the truth to that end. Besides this, Gildas seems to have been more concerned in moralising and giving an explanation for what he saw as the moral degeneracy in Britain at the time. He writes:

> "It is my present purpose to relate the deeds of an indolent and slothful race, rather than the exploits of those who have been valiant in the field. I have kept silence, I confess, with much mental anguish, compunction of feeling and contrition of heart, whilst I revolved all these things within myself; and, as God the searcher of the reins[104] is witness, for the space of even ten years or more, my inexperience, as at present also, and my unworthiness preventing me from taking upon myself the character of a censor."[105]

[103] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2.1. The quote "*non Angli sunt, sed angeli*" appears to be a commonly quoted summary of what Bede writes that he said on being told the identity of the children: "*bene, nam et angelicam habent faciem, et tales angelorum in caelis decet esse coheredes*" (Well are they so called, for they have too an angel's face, and it is meet such men were inheritors with the angels in heaven.)

[104] 'Searcher of the reins' is a biblical idiom (see psalm 7: 9 or psalm 26: 2) – 'reins' referring to the kidneys, which symbolised the unknown depths of feeling and emotion.

[105] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 1 (see Appendix, passage 12).

Bede

The Venerable Bede lived in Northumbria from his birth in about 673 till his death in 735. He is widely regarded as a consummate historian, and his work was translated into Anglo-Saxon, from the original Latin, at the instigation of none other than King Alfred the Great. His best known work, and the one which is of relevance to this study is his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, (*An Ecclesiastical History of the English People*), which he completed in about 731. For the parts of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* in question, Bede was clearly using Gildas' *De Excidio Britanniae* as a source fairly closely.[106]

However, although the *Historia Ecclesiastica* bears significant similarities to the *De Excidio*, there are certain interesting and significant differences. Bede, for instance, seems to have had notably better access to historical sources (aside from *De Excidio*, that is).[107] For instance, while Gildas failed to make any mention of Alaric and the Sack of Rome in 410, Bede does mention it, and points out the causal link:

> "The 407th year of the Lord's incarnation, Honorius Augustus, younger son of Theodosius, being emperor in the 44th place after Augustus, two years before that Rome was invaded by Alaric king of the Goths (when the nations of the Alani, the Suevi and the Vandals, and many such other with them, having beaten down the Franks, passed the Rhine and raged throughout all the provinces of Gaul)... Rome was broken of the Goths the 1164th year after it was builded, after which time the Romans left to rule in Britain, being almost 470 years since Gaius Julius Caesar first entered said island."[108]

As well as this, as noted above, when Gildas wrote about the supplication for aid (the so-called 'Groans of the Britons') sent by the Britons to Aetius, he said merely that Aetius was "consul for the third time"[109] (making no mention of Attila or of the Huns). Bede, however, is abundantly clear on Aetius' involvement, going as far as saying that it was expressly because all his time, resources and troops were engaged in fighting the Huns that he was forced to deny the British the aid they were seeking:

> "And yet for all their suit they could obtain no aid of him, as he which had then both his hands full of grievous wars with Blaedla and Attila, kings of the Huns. And though, the year before, Blaedla was murdered by the wily

[106] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 364.
[107] As has been suggested to me by Professor Richard Evans, Bede must have had access to histories written by Eusebius, Eutropius and Orosius for 4th century material – perhaps also Zosimus.
[108] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.11 (see Appendix, passage 2).
[109] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 20.

> treason of his brother Attila, yet he alone remained so intolerable an enemy unto the commonwealth, that he wasted all Europe, assaulting and destroying both cities and castles."[110]

Here Bede demonstrates, if not a more assiduous desire for historical completeness, at the very least a greater access and exposure to a broader selection of sources than Gildas. What of the identity of the invaders themselves? Gildas identifies the occupants of the 'three ships' first to arrive on the east coast, following Vortigern's invitation, as Saxons.[111] He makes no mention of Angles or Jutes. On the other hand, Bede, although almost certainly using Gildas as his main source, writes this: "the nation of the Angles or Saxons, being sent for of the said king into Britain, landed there in three long ships."[112] The operative words here are '*Angles* or Saxons', which cast doubt on the identification of these invaders as Saxons. Could this represent Bede tactfully correcting a detail in Gildas to bring it into line with Bede's other sources, whatever they may have been? Oppenheimer seems to think so: "This is one of several places where Bede seems implicitly to doubt Gildas' accuracy, without saying so explicitly."[113] This view is supportable by other passages in Bede's work. The heading for chapter fifteen reads: "How the nation of the Angles being sent for into Britain did at first cast out the enemy to a farther distance, but shortly after joining themselves in league with them turned their weapons upon their allies."[114] In chapter sixteen, Bede describes the Battle of Badon Hill, almost exactly as Gildas described it, including the comment about the battle happening forty-four years after the initial landing of the 'three ships', but again, the identity of those ships' crews is given as 'Angles'. The title of this chapter is: "How the Britons obtained the first victory of the nation of the Angles, with Ambrose a Roman for their captain."[115]

In addition to those already mentioned, there is a passing reference in chapter fourteen which also might indicate a certain unease with the 'truth' recorded in the history according to

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[110] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.13 (see Appendix, passage 3).
[111] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 23.
[112] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.15.
In the original Latin: "*tunc Anglorum sive Saxonum gens invitata a rege praefato, in Brittaniam tribus longis navibus advehitur*"
The term *Anglorum* is often translated simply as 'English'. Etymologically, this is, of course, correct, and would usually suffice. However, I have (in accordance with Oppenheimer) opted to translate it as the specific 'Angles' throughout, rather than the general 'English'. The best justification for this is that the differentiation of "*Anglorum sive Saxonum*" seems to me somewhat artificial when read as 'English or Saxons', as 'English' is an altogether younger term, and would tend to include Saxons.
[113] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 364.
[114] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.15.
In the original Latin: "*ut invitata Brittaniam gens Anglorum, primo quidem adversarios longius eiecerit; sed non multo post iuncto cum his foedere, in socios arma verterit*."
[115] *Ibid*, 1.16.
In the original Latin: "*ut Brettones primam de gente Anglorum victoriam, duce Ambrosio Romano homine, sumpserint*."

Gildas. The decision of Vortigern and his council to invite the Saxons to come and provide defence to the islanders, as reported in Gildas[116], is reported by Bede intriguingly as: "they agreed all with their king Vortigern to call to their aid the nation of the Saxons beyond the seas."[117] It is not precisely clear what the intended meaning is here – it could mean, simply, 'the people, from across the sea, called Saxons', or it could, more interestingly (but, admittedly, with a degree of latitude), mean: 'those Saxons who were from across the sea', implying that there were already Saxons living in Britain during Vortigern's reign, *before* the arrival of the 'three ships'.

The evidence, then, might point to there having been a certain population of Saxons in Britain already, and that the people invited by Vortigern were not strictly speaking Saxons at all, but Angles (albeit closely related peoples, but nevertheless different). Indeed, Bede's deviations from Gildas might come from the fact that, while Gildas was Welsh, Bede was from Northumbria – and, as Bede writes:

> "of the Angles, that is, of that country which is called Angeln and from that time to this is said to stand deserted between the provinces of the Jutes and the Saxons, descendeth the East Angles, the Uplandish Angles, the Mercians and all the progeny of the Northumbrians, that is, of that people that inhabiteth the north side of the flood Humber, and the other nations of the Angles."[118]

One can then assume that Bede was an Angle by descent, and it becomes difficult to ascertain why Bede takes issue with Gildas about his

> "accusations that the Saxons were the fifth-century invaders, attributing the intrusion instead to the Angles, unless he knew otherwise and was honestly convinced that Gildas was plain wrong in this instance, (as Bede knew elsewhere)... Being a well-read, polyglot Angle in a senior ecclesiastical position, Bede should have known the truth about the Angles – gory or otherwise."[119]

Procopius

Procopius of Caesarea was an historian and courtier in the court of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. He was born between 490 and 507. Between 527 and 540 he served as an advisor to the general Belisarius in a number of campaigns in Persia, Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Not much

[116] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 22.
[117] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.14.
In the original Latin: "*placuitque omnibus cum suo rege Vurtigerno ut Saxonum gentem de transmarinis partibus in auxilium vocarent*."
[118] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.15 (see Appendix, passage 4).
[119] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 366.

more is known, with any certainty, of him after 540, although he may have been prefect of Constantinople in 562. His main works include *Polemon* (*De Bellis*, in Latin), which is a record of the military campaigns primarily of Justin I and Justinian I. The first two books focus on the war with the Persians under kings Kavadh and Khosrow I, until 549; the next two (III and IV) describe events surrounding the conquest of the Vandal kingdom, from 532 to 548; the next three books (V – VII) detail the Gothic War, fought between 536 and 551, against the Ostrogoths in Sicily and Italy; the eighth and final book contains a further summary of the important events down to 553.[120]

Procopius does not often mention Britain in the course of his *De Bellis* (Britain is mentioned only four times with any significance). He does not seem ever to have ventured further west than Italy, and his knowledge of Britain must have come, therefore, from what he read or what he was told. Possibly as a result of this, Procopius does not seem to understand a very great deal about the geography of Britain. As he writes:

> "The island of Brittia lies in the northern ocean, not far from the shore, rather about two hundred *stadia* away, approximately opposite the mouths of the Rhine; and it is between Britannia and the island of Thule. Whereas Britannia lies towards the West opposite the extremities of the land of the Spaniards, separated from the mainland by about four thousand *stadia*, no less, Brittia on the other hand faces the rear of Gaul, the parts of it facing the ocean – clearly, to the north of Spain and Britannia."[121]

What, precisely, he means by the distinction between 'Brittia' and 'Britannia' is not clear. Certainly, his is the only such distinction made in Classical writings known to the current author. On the whole, it would seem that 'Brittia' refers in fact to Great Britain (the island, not the Kingdom) as it is described as being close to the continent (two hundred *stadia* is roughly equivalent to twenty-three miles, or thirty-seven kilometres – approximately the width of the Straits of Dover), facing the mouth of the Rhine (in the Netherlands). This description is close enough to be certain. The description of Procopius' 'Britannia' is rather more obscure. It is, apparently, to the west of 'Brittia', and that suggests it is a mistaken reference to Ireland (known to the Romans as 'Hibernia'). The reference to 'Britannia' being "opposite the extremities of the land of the Spaniards, separated from the mainland by about four thousand *stadia*" appears to be rather similar to Caesar's and Tacitus' assertions that Britain lay near Spain, and indeed, that the Britons resembled Spaniards.[122] Additionally, four thousand *stadia* would be roughly equivalent to 740 kilometres, whereas the actual distance

[120] Procopius, *De Bellis*, 1-8 – for a summary, see "Procopius", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1979, pp.226-227.
[121] Procopius, *De Bellis*, 8.20.4-5 (see Appendix, passage 19).
[122] Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 5.13; Tacitus, *Agricola*, 11.

between northwest Spain and southern Ireland is closer to 852 kilometres – quite substantially out, but not too inaccurate when one remembers that Procopius would not have had accurate maps, and the measurement of such great distances over water must surely have been cruder than on land.

Procopius writes, also, about the events surrounding the exit of Britain from the Roman Empire. Firstly, he discusses how Constantine III was raised to Imperial aspirations by the garrison in Britain in 407:

> "The island of Britain revolted from the Romans, and the soldiers there chose as their leader Constantine, a man of no mean station. And he straightaway gathered a fleet of ships and a formidable army and invaded both Spain and Gaul with a great force, thinking to control these countries."[123]

He then goes on a while later, after discussing Alaric and the efforts against him, to suggest why Britain did not get reincorporated into the Empire:

> "Alaric died of disease, and the army of the Visigoths ... marched into Gaul, and Constantine, defeated in battle by Honorius, died with his sons. However the Romans never succeeded in recovering Britain, but it remained from that time on under tyrants."[124]

Although, undoubtedly, Procopius had no personal knowledge or experience of Britain, and his remarks are largely peripheral, he does seem to be reasonably accurate in what he says. The comments regarding Constantine III, Alaric and Honorius are clear enough, but even the remarks about Britain's geography have a certain accuracy to them, when one looks past his confusion about 'Brittia' and 'Britannia'. If one were, as suggested above, to substitute 'Britain' and 'Ireland' respectively, one would end up with a fairly accurate account of Britain, close to the Continent, and Ireland, further west.

If one is to assume a certain amount of accuracy in Procopius' remarks, what then is one to make of the following passage, discussing a visit to Justinian's court in Constantinople of a delegation sent by the King of the Franks?

> "Three very populous nations inhabit the Island of Brittia, and one king is set over each of them. And the names of these nations are Angles, Frisians, and Britons who have the same name as the island. So great apparently is the multitude of these peoples that every year in large groups they migrate from there with their women and children and go to the

[123] Procopius, *De Bellis*, 3.2.31 (see Appendix, passage 17).
[124] *Ibid*, 3.2.38 (see Appendix, passage 18).

> Franks. And they are settling them in what seems to be the more desolate part of their land, and as a result of this they say they are gaining possession of the island. So that not long ago the king of the Franks actually sent some of his friends to the Emperor Justinian in Byzantium, and despatched with them the men of the Angles, claiming that this island, too, is ruled by him. Such then are the matters concerning the island called Brittia."[125]

One thing that is noteworthy is the description of the 'multitude' of people that migrate to France. It may be speculation, but, is this perhaps an early account of the settlement of people in Brittany? To this day, the language of the Bretons is a Celtic tongue, more closely related to Welsh and Cornish (the descendants of the Celtic language spoken by the Ancient Britons[126]) than any other language. If this is indeed an account of this, it could be suggestive of the supposed exodus of Britons into Brittany in response to the influx of Germanic settlers. Of equal interest is that Procopius, a contemporary of Gildas, makes no mention of Saxons, but, in keeping with Bede, mentions Angles as living in Britain. It could be that his reference to Frisians could in fact refer to Saxons, but that still includes Angles being specifically said to be living in Britain – especially so, as Procopius writes that there were some 'men of the Angles' included in the delegation sent to Justinian, from whom, one imagines, Procopius got his information. One could argue that the information, coming as it did from an essentially Germanic source (Frankish or Anglian) might represent how the Germanic peoples referred to themselves, rather than how they may have been referred to by the Romans (Saxons).

The Life of St Germanus

Constantius' *De Vita Germani* was written in the 5th century. It is the earliest source yet dealing with these events, having been written not long after the events it describes. Germanus was a Bishop of Auxerre, who had been sent to Britain to deal with the Pelagian heresy, which was growing in influence in Britain.[127] Germanus made two visits to Britain: in 429 and in 446-7. These visits show clearly the contact that still existed between Britain with the wider Church and Empire, as is further evidenced by the convention of ascertaining the dates of Easter:

> "As late as 455 when the arrangements for fixing Easter were modified by Leo I, the change was duly adopted by the Celtic church, though by the

[125] Procopius, *De Bellis*, 8.20.6-10 (see Appendix, passage 19).
[126] See Chapter 4.
[127] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 21.

> time a further alteration was introduced some forty years later, communications had been broken."[128]

In keeping with Gildas, but somewhat more elaborated, Constantius deals with the Pelagian heresy, and discusses a meeting between Germanus and his colleague Lupus (also a bishop), and the Pelagian faction. In accordance with Gildas, the Pelagian faction is clearly comprised of the wealthy and influential. Constantius describes them: "gleaming with their riches, brilliantly clothed, and surrounded by much flattery."[129]

The most relevant aspect of the *De Vita Germani* occurs just after the conclusion of the meeting during Germanus' first visit to Britain in 429. Germanus and Lupus had gone to visit the shrine of St Alban, but:

> "In the meantime, the Picts and Saxons joined forces and made war on the Britons, whom the same need had brought together into the camp, and since in their fear the Britons judged themselves not quite equal to the enemy, they sought help from the holy bishops. They for their part hastened their promised coming and instilled such a feeling of security and confidence that one would have thought a great army had arrived."[130]

Germanus had been a general in the Roman Army before becoming a bishop, and took command of the British forces. After what would seem to have been a mobile campaign, he laid an ambush for the enemy force. The enemy was then roundly defeated. The victory itself became known as the 'Alleluia Victory', after the battle-cry of the British forces and their episcopal commander.[131]

While this doesn't speak directly to the Saxon (or Angle) *Adventus* in or about the year 450, it would seem to have a bearing on the question about whether or not there had been Saxons in Britain before the *Adventus*. The nature of the text, of course, means that there is a reasonably good chance that certain details, such as the details of the 'Alleluia Victory' and the events surrounding it might have been somewhat obscured. Constantius, the author, was, after all, aiming to use the story of Germanus firstly, to record the faith and exploits of Germanus, and secondly, to inspire similar faith in others. Thus, the "fierce host of the enemy"[132] might perhaps have been somewhat enlarged for narrative purposes, and the account of the battle, where, at the sound of the cry of 'Alleluia' the enemy forces

[128] Frere, 1987, p. 362.
[129] Constantius, *De Vita Germani*, 14.
[130] *Ibid*, 17 (see Appendix, passage 9).
[131] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I, 20.
[132] *Ibid*, 18 (see Appendix, passage 9).

> "were struck with terror and fear that both the rocks around them and the very vault of heaven threatened to overwhelm them... They fled in all directions, cast aside their weapons, were glad to have saved their unprotected bodies from the danger..."[133]

might be somewhat exaggerated. Even so, what Constantius does do is attest to the presence of Saxons in Britain in, or just after 429, which would seem to be in keeping with the implication in Bede that there were already Saxons in Britain during the *Adventus*. In addition, thanks to the near contemporaneity of the *De Vita Germani*, an attestation of Saxon presence in Britain before Gildas' *Adventus* would seem to be an important contradiction.

The Life of St Guthlac

Felix of Crowland's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, or, *Life of St Guthlac*, might, at first, not seem particularly relevant to this study. Guthlac was a monk and hermit who lived in the Fens (in East Anglia). He was born during the early reign of King Æthelred of Mercia (who reigned from 675 to 704), and in his early life he served as a soldier in the Mercian army, before turning his back on the world and taking to the cloistered life. He lived for some time in a monastery at Repton, before coming to the decision that he needed to live an even more austere life – so he resolved to become a hermit, and eventually settled on what was then an island in the Fens called Crowland (or Croyland). There, during the reign of King Cenred of Mercia (who reigned from 704 to 709, the successor and nephew of Æthelred):

> "Now it happened in the days of Coenred King of the Mercians, while the Britons the implacable enemies of the Saxon race, were troubling the English with their attacks, their pillaging, and their devastations of the people, on a certain night about the time of cockcrow, when Guthlac of blessed memory was as usual engaged in vigils and prayers, that he was suddenly overcome by a dream-filled sleep, and it seemed to him that he heard the shouts of a tumultuous crowd. Then, quicker than words, he was aroused from his light sleep and went out of the cell in which he was sitting; standing, with ears alert, he recognized the words that the crowd were saying, and realized that British hosts[134] were approaching his dwelling: for in years gone by he had been an exile among them, so that he was able to understand their sibilant speech."[135]

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[133] *Ibid*.
[134] A translation from the Anglo-Saxon version reads "a great host of the accursed spirits speaking in British," (*The Life of St. Guthlac, the Anglo-Saxon version*, 6).
[135] Felix of Crowland, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, 34 (see Appendix, passage 11).

This passage has been interpreted to mean that there was a remnant British population living in the Fens during Guthlac's lifetime:

> "[Some Britons], however, certainly remained [in Saxon-occupied lands]; this is suggested partly by the survival of place- and river-names, partly by archaeological evidence, and also by a few historical references, such as the *Life of St Guthlac* who encountered Celtic speaking Britons in the Fens as late as 700."[136]

This interpretation might seem somewhat simplistic – firstly, the British-speaking entities Guthlac encounters are described not as people, but as devils. Elsewhere, they are described in some detail as having

> "great heads, long necks, thin faces, yellow complexions, filthy beards, shaggy ears, wild foreheads, fierce eyes, foul mouths, horses' teeth, throats vomiting flames, twisted jaws, thick lips, strident voices, singed hair, fat cheeks, pigeon breasts, scabby thighs, knotty knees, crooked legs, swollen ankles, splay feet, spreading mouths, raucous cries."[137]

If these were indeed people, the author clearly did not like them and was trying to make them look as savage and barbaric as possible. However, one can probably be quite certain that these creatures were not intended to be representative of people, as they are elsewhere described as flying, "through the cloudy stretches of the freezing skies"[138].

But what of the claim that Guthlac could understand them, having been in exile among them? This must surely refer to people, and not devils. But which people? The obvious answer would appear to be the Welsh, who were, of course, Celtic-speaking. Furthermore, they were constantly engaged in cross-border raiding with Mercia throughout the period. This explanation would seem plausible. If this is the case though, one thing is intriguing. In the Anglo-Saxon translation of Felix of Crowland's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, these people and their language are referred to as '*bryttisc*' (British) rather than the '*wælisc*' (Welsh) which one might have expected.[139] It could then be argued that by using the term *bryttisc*, the implication is that they could not be described as *wælisc*, and thus might be evidence of a British remnant in England.

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[136] Frere, 1987, p. 367.
[137] Felix of Crowland, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, 31 (see Appendix, passage 10).
[138] *Ibid*.
[139] *The Life of St. Guthlac, the Anglo-Saxon version*, 6

On balance, however, it would appear that the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, when offered as specific evidence against the supposed extermination of the Britons by the Saxons, is rather too vague in its meaning to carry any heavy emphasis.

The Laws of Ine of Wessex

Much heavier emphasis can, however, be placed on the Law Code of King Ine of Wessex (who ruled from c.688 to 726[140]), most likely promulgated between c.688 and c.693[141] (making it roughly contemporaneous with Guthlac). It represents the earliest extant law code known from Wessex, where it survived as an appendix to the Law Code of King Alfred.[142] Ine's Law Code has particular relevance here because, in contrast to the very nebulous references to Britons possibly living in Anglo-Saxon England in the *Life of St Guthlac*, Ine's Code makes it quite explicit that such a population existed.

> "[Ine's Code] is the only surviving early Anglo-Saxon law code which includes explicit provision for Britons, granting them legal status. If it is assumed that laws can be defined as 'written statements of observed and enforceable social norms', then in codifying these social norms, Ine expected that there would be situations in his kingdom involving Britons that could be met by legal process. His Code thus unveils a West Saxon society which had Britons living within it, but in an inferior social position to their West Saxon counterparts."[143]

Among his laws, there are eight which deal specifically with Britons: five laws which regard free Britons[144], and a further three that deal with British slaves[145]. The laws are primarily concerned with compensation. The laws dealing with free Britons are about the value of their *wergild*[146]. The respective *wergilds* of Britons are, at their greatest, 600 shillings for a landowner of five or more hides; 200 shillings for a horseman in the service of the king (normally an indicator of nobility); 120 shillings for the owner of one hide, or a tax-payer; 100 for the son of a tax-payer; 80 shillings for the owner of half a hide; and 60 shillings for a

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[140] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* s.aa. 688, 726 E, 728 A.
[141] Grimmer, 2007, p. 102.
[142] Discussing the potentiality for the Law Code of Ine to have been edited before its inclusion into the Laws of Alfred, Grimmer points out that "some of Alfred's laws contradict those of Ine, which would indicate that Alfred did not tamper with the text as it had descended to him." (2007, p. 103).
[143] Grimmer, 2007, pp. 103-104.
[144] Ine 23.3, 24.2, 32, 33, 46.1.
[145] *Ibid.* 54.2, 74, 74.1.
[146] The *wergild* was a fine payable to the next of kin of a dead person by those responsible for the death – should it not be paid, a state of feud could then exist. If it were paid, however, any further vengeance taken by the family of the victim would be illegal, and would itself be subject to the payment of *wergild* (Grimmer, 2007, p. 104).

landless Briton. Compared to the *wergilds* of Saxons, this shows a distinct disparity in the perceived legal value of British and Saxon lives, as the minimum *wergild* among Saxons – that of a *ceorl* – was 200 shillings, and the maximum – that of a *geneat* (one of the king's household) – was 1200 shillings. A similar situation governed the slave population – British slaves were valued significantly less than Saxon slaves.

The situation with terminology here is the inverse of what it was in the *Life of St Guthlac*. In the *Life*, the term *bryttisc* was used, and the term *wælisc* was not. Here, the Britons are referred to as Welsh – with terms such as *wealh* or *wyliscmon*. This term originally meant 'foreigner', but came to mean 'Briton' specifically by the tenth century; it could equally be used to mean 'slave'[147].

> "It can be reasonably deduced that 'Briton' is the correct interpretation in this context as the Code makes use of other terms for foreigner and slave: *elðeodigan* and *ðeow*, respectively. And *wealh* could not yet stand alone to mean slave but had to be qualified by *ðeow*, i.e. *ðeowwealh*."[148]

What is most interesting about this legislation is not that it was unequal (although this will be discussed later), but that there was the need to legislate for the Britons at all. The very fact that they were included suggests that there was a large enough discrete population living within Wessex to have required legal protection[149].

Who, then, are these Britons to whom the Code refers? One possibility is that they were the descendants of the Romano-British population of the land that had now come to be called Wessex, as Faull argues:

> "It might be thought that Ine's laws dealing with *Wealas* were passed to cover the British inhabitants of the newly acquired areas in the far west of the kingdom, but there was not necessarily a large British population requiring such legislation in these areas. The place-name evidence for Devon, which was probably relatively unpopulated at the end of the British period owing to the migrations to Brittany, does not indicate stronger Romano-British survival there than in many areas in the east; indeed, the adjacent counties of Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset have many more Celtic place-names. The constant hostilities with Cornwall and Wales make it unlikely that immigrants from these two areas would have

[147] Grimmer, 2007, p. 104. The modern name of Wales derives from this distinctly pejorative term, and illustrates its eventual meaning. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the terms 'Wales' and 'Welsh' are not used in the Welsh language.
[148] *Ibid*.
[149] *Ibid*, p. 107.

> been able to settle or acquire land in Wessex, and much more probably the seventh-century *Wealas* of Ine's *Laws* descended from the original Romano-British inhabitants of southern England."[150]

On the other hand, seeing that Wessex saw a deal of expansion westwards in the seventh century, it would seem sensible to suggest that the Britons in the Code must, to a certain extent, be the remaining inhabitants of the newly conquered territory – farmers and land-owners who still identified themselves as Britons.[151] The notion put forward by Faull that the land was practically uninhabited owing to the migrations of Britons to Brittany does not ring true. Were that the case, surely the expansion of Wessex into the empty lands would have been earlier (the migrations to Brittany being sufficiently early to have possibly been mentioned by Procopius (see above) in the early 6th century[152]). In a predominantly agrarian society, the idea of prime agricultural land lying fallow for more than a century seems odd, to say the least. So, there could very well have been a British remnant in the east, and a newly incorporated British population in the west. Importantly, neither interpretation precludes the other.

Of course, if there was a British population, for them to be the subjects of specific legislation, there must have been some means by which they were significantly distinguishable from the Saxons. The sort of assimilation of culture that is evident by the time of the Danish invasions in the later 9th century and the spread of the idea of 'Englishness' in the 10th century, has clearly not yet happened. By this, one can fairly safely assume that there was a degree of cultural identity which persisted among the Britons, despite the Saxons, which, arguably may have included language.[153]

As for the purpose of the legislation, L. F. Rushbrook Williams (writing in 1915) argued that Ine introduced the laws to placate the Britons living within his domains on the verge of wars with his neighbours in Kent and Mercia:

> "for it is reasonable to conclude that Ine's attitude towards the alien population in his western dominions would depend, at any given moment, very largely upon his ability or inability to suppress a revolutionary movement on their part. If his whole attitude in the laws is marked by

[150] Faull, 1975, p. 23.
[151] Ward-Perkins, 2000, p. 523; Grimmer, 2007, p. 108.
[152] Procopius, *De Bellis*, 8.20.6-10.
[153] Grimmer, 2007, pp. 108-109. Any differentiation would, surely, have to have been on the grounds of culture, identity and language. Any racial differentiation, such as that in Apartheid-era South Africa, would be rendered next to impossible as both populations would have looked more or less the same.

> concession and redress of grievances, we may be sure that his hands are tied by war or by a prospect of war upon his eastern frontier."[154]

However, more modern scholars see this legislation not as something intended to be conciliatory. One aspect of this opinion hinges on the simple fact that the Britons were not accorded anything like legal parity with the Saxons. If the Code had been intended to appease British interests within Wessex, surely it would not have worked particularly well. Instead, the Code seems to set out a framework for dealing with potential disputes arising within Wessex which may have included British land-owners, and may have had the potential to disturb the peace.[155]

What the Code accomplishes is to put the Saxons in Wessex in a socially superior position, at least legally[156]. One gets an impression, and not without justification, of an Apartheid-style system where the ruling minority (one assumes) impose their laws and culture on a native population. However, there is at least one very important difference. That is, while in Apartheid-era South Africa, the idea was to *keep* the races separate, and to prohibit inter-racial marriages and cultural assimilation, there is nothing in Ine's Code that specifically forbids such interactions. Indeed, it has even been argued that the Code acted as a means by which society could be engineered in order that assimilation might take place[157].

> "It *was* a liability in Ine's Wessex to be identified as a Briton, given the inferior *wergild* and oath value. It may have been Ine's deliberate policy to enact laws which were designed to compel the Britons within his kingdom to abandon their separate identity and become Saxon. Thus a political and social imperative could have been embedded into his laws for the Britons."[158]

Conclusions

What can be deduced from all of these sources? As one might expect, and in accordance with the traditional account, they all seem to agree on there having been an invasion (whether it is mentioned, or merely implied).

Perhaps the major difference that comes to light between the traditional version of the events, and these written sources is that there seems to be very little to support the out-and-out extermination of the Britons in England – The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* seems to make no

[154] Rushbrook Williams, 1915, p.273.
[155] Grimmer, 2007, p. 107.
[156] *Ibid*, p. 112.
[157] Ward-Perkins, 2000, p. 523-4; Grimmer, 2007, p. 112.
[158] Grimmer, 2007, p. 112.

mention of it, and the *Life of St Guthlac*, and the *Law Code of King Ine* imply that there were Britons living in Anglo-Saxon-controlled regions.

Something else that may be of significance is the specific mention of Angles (as opposed to Saxons) as the initial invasive force. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Bede, Procopius, and the *Life of St Guthlac* all make this implication. This specifically Anglian role will be discussed in detail in following chapters.

Chapter 3

Traces in the ground – Archaeological Evidence

The study of archaeology has certain advantages over the study of written histories, such as those discussed in the preceding chapter. Chief among these is the simple fact that archaeology takes one a step nearer to the past than written history. With written histories, one always views the past through the lens of the personality, prejudices, and agenda of the author. One can then attempt to give some sort of interpretation of the author's words. With archaeology, on the other hand, the past is viewed through the much more concrete medium of the actual substance of history. Of course, this still requires interpretation – which, in itself, is never free from the academic conventions or fashions of its time – but that interpretation is a first-hand interpretation, rather than a second-hand one.

Much archaeological work has been done on the period of the ending of Roman Britain and the beginnings of Anglo-Saxon Britain, and there are certain obvious and important differences, as Barry Cunliffe writes:

> "The archaeological evidence for the Anglo-Saxon settlement of eastern Britain is stark. The material evidence of the Roman lifestyle disappears. Towns and villas are abandoned, centralized production all but collapses, and coins, once so crucial for taxation and marketing, cease to be minted."[159]

Settlement Patterns

Perhaps the most obvious difference one would notice, given the opportunity to travel back in time, would be the nature and architecture of the settlements.

Settlement in Roman Britain can, for the most part, be clearly classified as either urban or rural. Urban settlement took the form of towns or cities. These towns possessed various features which would be entirely familiar in towns of today. They were built on a street[160] grid, with rectangular blocks, or *Insulae*. The roads were paved; there was also a certain degree of drainage (from sewer networks to mere storm drains), and public water supplies – often supplied from aqueducts, carrying water from a source outside of the town itself. In

[159] Cunliffe, 2013, p. 413.
[160] Indeed, the word 'street', deriving from the Old English word *strǣt*, comes, in turn, from the Latin *via strata* (paved way).

addition to this, "these towns contained a suite of Roman-style public buildings, notably the forum (public square and meeting place), basilica (town hall and law courts), public baths, temples, amphitheatre, and theatre."[161]

All these features, with the exception of the amphitheatre (which was more commonly found in larger cities such as Londinium and Deva (London and Chester respectively), can be seen in Verulamium, or St. Alban's, as it is now known (see figure 6).

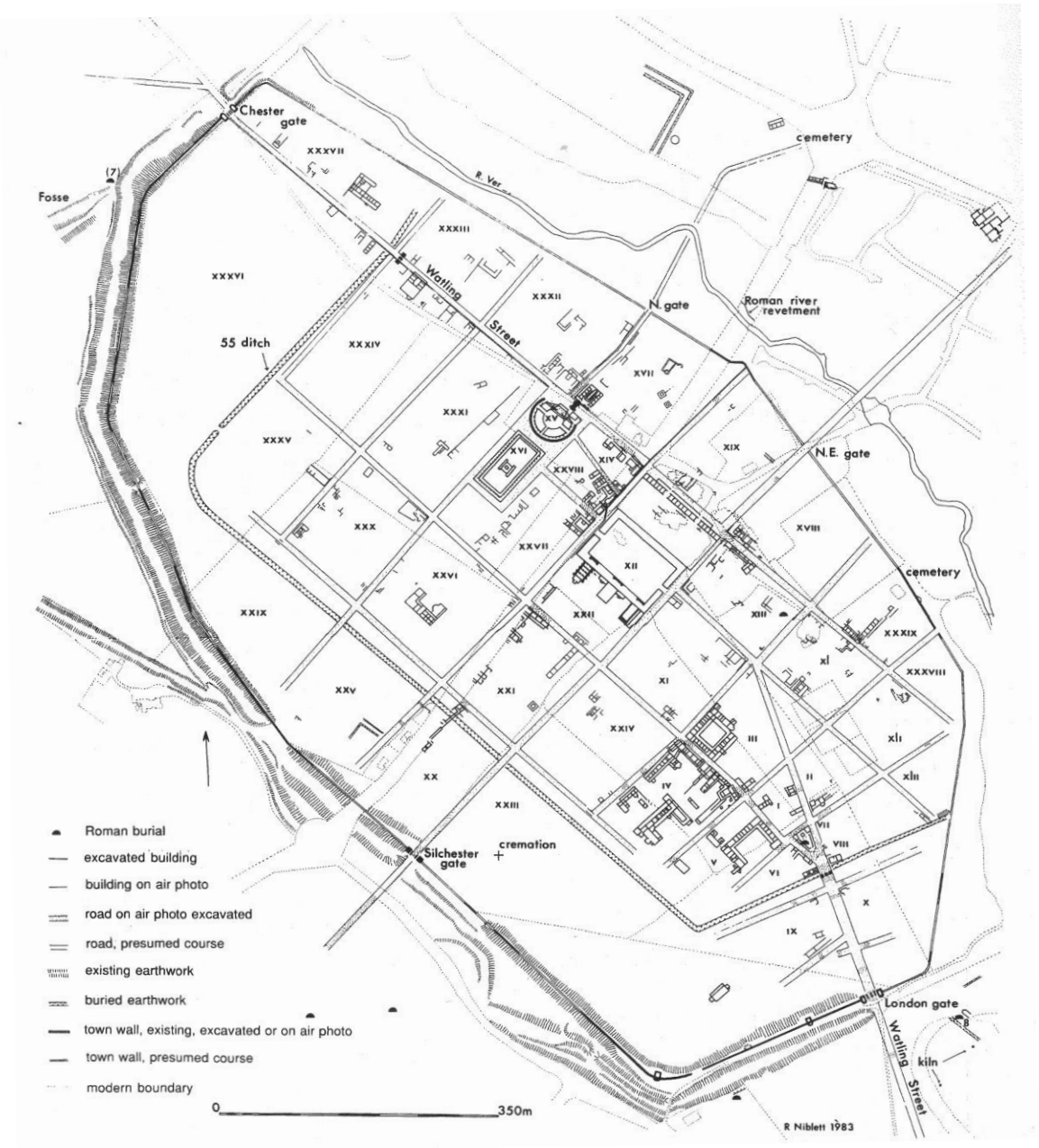

Fig 6. Roman Verulamium, showing the street grid, as well as the locations of the major buildings. (Plan taken from Millet, 1990).

[161] Millet, 1990, p. 69.

Rural settlement in Roman Britain usually took the form of the villa. These structures are, in use and significance, not unlike the stately homes that dotted the English landscape during the Edwardian era. As with the stately homes, the villas vary in size and importance – not all of them were a 'Downton Abbey' (that said, some were truly enormous, such as the palatial villa at Fishbourne near Chichester[162]). Most villas were of a more modest size (see figure 7).

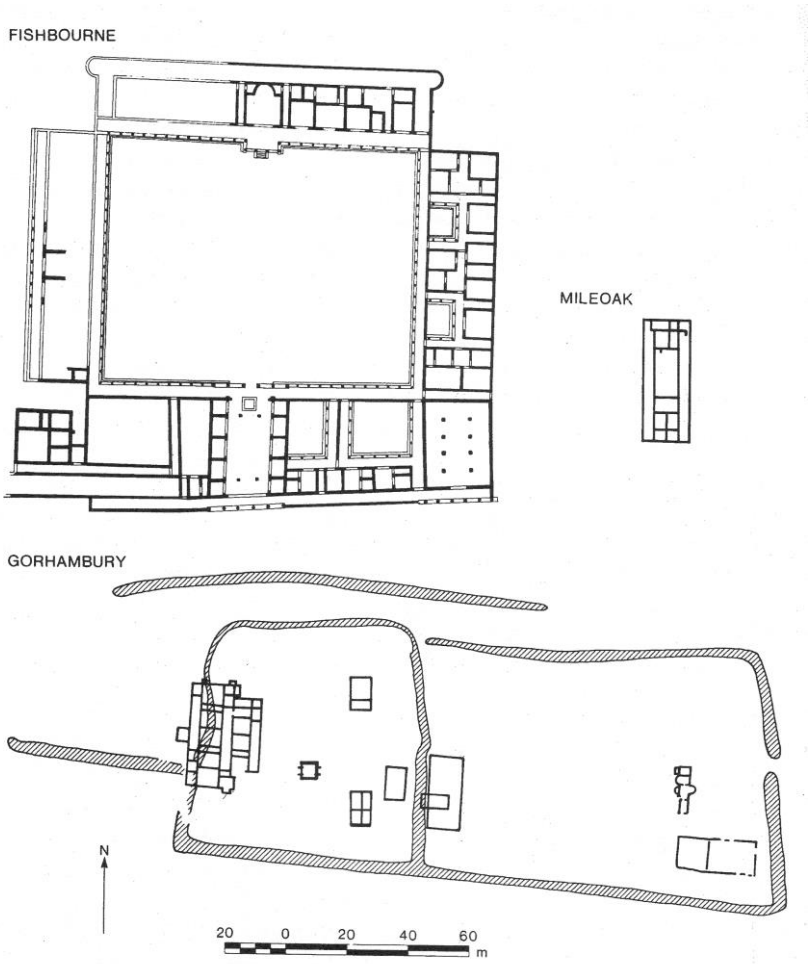

Fig 7. Comparative plans of three British villas: Fishbourne in Sussex, Mileoak in Northamptonshire and Gorhambury in Hertfordshire. The contrast in scale of Fishbourne to the others is clear, though all three are likely to have been built by local aristocrats. Gorhambury is shown in association with its outbuildings. (Plan taken from Millet, 1990).

In British archaeology, the villa has been defined in a number of ways – in effect, 'villa' is a catch-all term denoting a rural building, of sufficient size and status not to warrant the description 'cottage':

[162] The great palace at Fishbourne (with a footprint of 500 feet (150 meters) square – see plan above) was, in fact, huge even in the context of the whole Roman world: the size of Fishbourne rivalled even the roughly contemporary *Domus Aurea*, the pleasure palace built in Rome by the hedonistic Emperor Nero, the main building of which, has a total length of about 250 metres and a width ranging from a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 60 metres. (Il cantiere della Domus Aurea, c. 2012)

> "*Sensu stricto* it should be the centre of a farm or agricultural estate, but this has not been demonstrated in every case; and undoubtedly some country houses, indistinguishable from villas, derived their *raison d'être* from other forms of exploitation, such as potteries or quarries … Some villas are large and wealthy, others simple and furnished only with necessities. The former were clearly the centres of their own estates, but the latter may represent rent-paying units on the estates of others. One may have been farmed by its owner and his family; another by a bailiff and slaves."[163]

Whatever their original function, there are certain architectural features which are found commonly in many villas. Firstly, and most obviously, they were constructed (usually out of stone, although wood is not unknown) along rectangular lines, with multiple rooms. Often the floors in the main rooms were covered with mosaics, and included a hypocaust system, whereby the rooms could be effectively centrally heated.[164]

The typical 'Anglo-Saxon' settlement, on the other hand, is entirely different. Whereas the Roman settlement pattern is divisible into urban settlement (encompassing towns with their paved roads, water supplies, and stone-built public buildings) and rural settlement (villas and their associated outbuildings), early Anglo-Saxon settlements were mostly rural, hamlet-size villages[165] (see figure 8). For the most part, they were not built on former Roman sites such as those mentioned above; nor do the early Anglo-Saxon villages generally conform to any particular grid street-plan (although grid systems in fields would develop[166]).

In contrast, too, to the Roman settlements, the building types were also limited in their scope. In addition to the workaday outhouses, workshops, pens and pits which are common to both periods, the main building types seen in Anglo-Saxon settlements are the halls and the so-called sunken-featured buildings.[167]

Halls (see figure 9), widely accepted as living accommodation in Anglo-Saxon settlements, were single storeyed buildings, which had a simple rectangular footing, and contained a single room. The majority of halls are between six and twelve metres long and between three-and-a-half to seven metres wide and some may have had a separate sleeping area at one end (a bower, or *būr*).[168] Halls were constructed with a series of posts supporting the walls, between

[163] Frere, 1987, p. 259.
[164] Millet, 1990, p. 92.
[165] Sayer, 2008, p. 207.
[166] Blair, 2014, p. 17.
[167] Sayer, 2008, p. 207.
[168] *Ibid*.

which the rest of the wall would be made up of wattle and daub, planking or similar materials. These posts could be set in postholes, on stone pads, or on beams. The floor was usually simply of clay or earth, or perhaps, sometimes, wood.[169]

Fig 8. The Anglo-Saxon settlement on Chalton Down in Hampshire. It comprises a series of rectangular buildings, some with enclosed yards. There is a deal of rebuilding, which shows that the settlement developed over a number of generations. The contrast to the Roman street plan of Verulamium is obvious.
(Plan taken from Cunliffe, 2013).

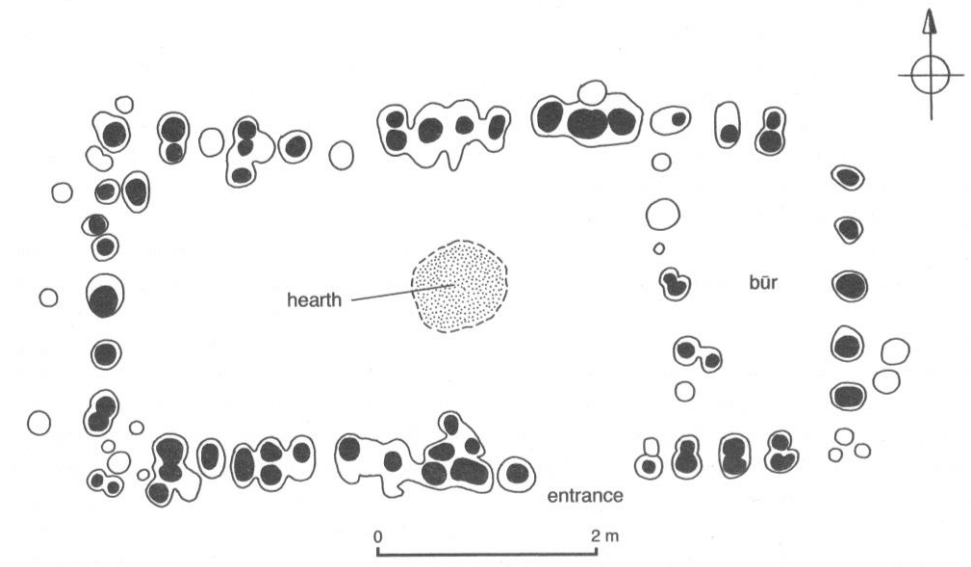

Fig 9. A plan of an excavated timber hall. The spots represent post holes. The rest of the walls, between the posts, would have been wattle and daub, or planking, or similar materials. (Illustration taken from Adkins, et al. 2008).

[169] Sayer, 2008, p. 209.

Sunken-feature buildings (or *Grubenhäuser*) are the other commonly found architectural form. An Anglo-Saxon village may have included a small number of halls, and a larger number of *Grubenhäuser* surrounding them, or in a separate area. These buildings were somewhat smaller than halls, and consisted of a pit, usually with one, or a number of postholes at each end.[170] Originally, it was thought that they were huts with the bottom of the pit forming the floor (as in the illustration). More recently, there is a school of thought which suggests a raised wooden floor.

> "It is unclear what the below-ground space would be used for, moreover, there were probably many types of floor spaces, including both raised and sunken varieties. Some may have been huts, while others are believed to have been weaving sheds or other types of workshop, and were rarely sleeping accommodation."[171]

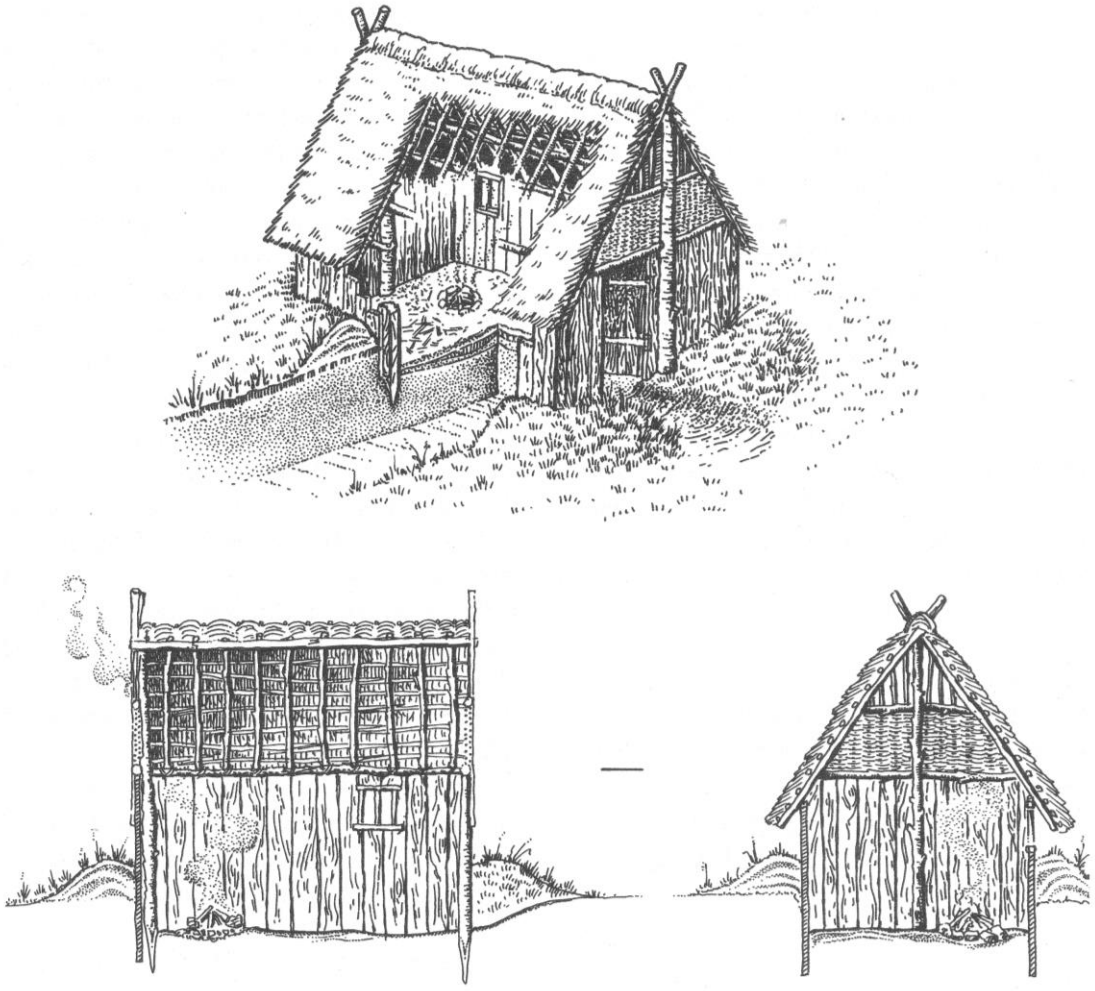

Fig 10. A reconstruction of a sunken-feature building. Note the single, central post in the end walls. (Illustration taken from Adkins, et al. 2008).

[170] Sayer, 2008, p. 207.
[171] *Ibid.*

The evidence of the change between the Roman and Anglo-Saxon patterns of settlement is indeed stark, especially when presented like this. But, while the differences are very noticeable in direct comparison, is that the most accurate way of considering them? One is tempted to imagine that Britain went from one state to the other in a short period of time, which, of course, would constitute a very dramatic shift. The truth, it would seem, is not as simple as all that.

The Roman settlement in the rural sphere, for instance, saw the development of small nucleated agricultural settlements (in a word: villages) in the later Roman period. These sites are very similar to small towns, and there would have been a degree of overlap. However, many of these villages are not located on or near the major roads, as towns would have been.[172] Although some settlements of this type probably did exist in the early Roman period, they are far more typical of the later period. Unfortunately, owing to limited excavation, not a lot can be said about them with any certainty. From what work has been done on them, however, it has been stressed that they became an important feature in the Fenland from the late second century, becoming increasingly distinct from the other settlement types.[173]

> "One of these villages, at Grandford (Cambs), has been excavated and shown to be a small agricultural centre with timber buildings and a little industrial activity... Similarly the Chalton survey... located three ridge-top villages, which were integrated with the field and track systems and existed alongside the individual farmsteads. One of these was subjected to limited excavation... and proved to have developed from an early Roman origin to achieve a village layout with cultivation plots by the end of the second century. Again the buildings were timber and rectangular."[174]

This sort of village-style settlement would not be altogether dissimilar to the sort of settlements built by the Germanic settlers, at least superficially. Of course, the diminishing of the towns and villas would seem to distinguish the Roman period from the early Post-Roman period. And, indeed, they do. But here also, things are not, perhaps, as simple as they may seem. A study conducted on the number of occupied rooms in villas shows the peak of occupation in the first half of the fourth century – between 300 and 350. After this, there is a

[172] Millet, 1990, p.205.

[173] Hallam, 1968, pp.19 – 32. Interestingly, if there was a particularly strong 'village-culture' in this area by the end of the Roman period, the new Anglo-Saxon settlements would not have looked altogether out of place. The Fens are, of course, in the East of England, where the Anglo-Saxon influence seems to have been heaviest.

[174] Millet, 1990, p.206. The Chalton survey was conducted by Barry Cunliffe in 1973. Aside from the Roman villages, Cunliffe also unearthed an Anglo-Saxon village dating to the early sixth century (see Figure 8), showing a certain degree of continuity of occupation (at least, in terms of location and settlement type, if not population).

marked decline by 375, which continues towards 400, and then an absolute collapse in the early fifth century.[175] In the towns, there is a similar pattern of seeming decline in the fourth century, before their practically complete abandonment in the fifth century.[176]

The difference in settlement patterns, then, is stark – but not as stark as it might at first appear. The towns and villas of Roman Britain were already in decline significantly before the supposed *Adventus Saxonum*. The village (a form of settlement of particular association with the early Anglo-Saxons) was to be found in Roman Britain with increasing frequency throughout the latter centuries of the Roman period. In short, while the change was swift – from the beginning of the decline, it was nearing completion in something under a century – there was not a single catastrophic abandonment of all Roman settlement patterns followed overnight by the establishment of purely Anglo-Saxon ones. Also, there was a small degree of continuity between Roman and Saxon:

> "In some places incomers occupied old Roman sites. Saxon houses with floors cut down into the earth have been found in Roman towns like Canterbury and Dorchester-on-Thames, and some Roman villas show continuity of use."[177]

It may be a frivolous speculation, but does the above perhaps imply a steady (albeit very slow at first and gradually increasing) settlement of Germanic peoples in Roman Britain throughout the period? The early settlers are acculturated (more-or-less) into the Roman world; and the later the settlers, the less acculturated they become as they settle into increasingly Germanic settlements. This view is supported by evidence gathered from burials, and burial practices.

Burial patterns

Whereas the settlements people inhabit can tell one a lot about the society and culture, the actual burials of the individuals themselves can reveal more. There is, once again, a substantial difference between the typical burials in Roman Britain, and Anglo-Saxon Britain.

Burials in Romano-British society were placed in cemeteries outside the boundaries of towns, often alongside roads. They took the form of both inhumations and urned cremations. Cremation was predominant until after the 150s, after which inhumation started becoming more and more common.[178] Burials are often found containing a range of grave goods, but by the fourth century, this had become very uncommon. Although not undisputed, there is a good

[175] Laycock, 2008, p. 136; Faulkner, 2000, p. 93.
[176] Millet, 1990, p. 221; Laycock, 2008, p. 136.
[177] Cunliffe, 2013, p. 414.
[178] Symonds, 2008, p. 200.

chance that both of these tendencies owe something of their occurrence to the rise of Christianity, which frowned on both cremation and grave goods.[179] Christian burials, furthermore, tend to be orientated west-east.[180]

Inhumations vary greatly based on social status. The lower *echelons* of society would probably have been buried merely in shrouds or sacking. Wooden coffins were also in use, as their iron fittings are sometimes found to have survived. The wealthier citizenry could look forward to burial in stone sarcophagi, lead coffins, and then either wooden or stone coffins with lead lining. The lead used, be it in coffins or their lining, was often decorated. Coffins, in turn, could be simply buried, or, more elaborately, be placed in cists of stone or brick, under barrows, or in mausolea.[181]

In the Anglo-Saxon period there is evidence of both inhumation and cremations, which are found in cemeteries in which either cremation or inhumation is found exclusively, or mixed rite cemeteries in which the two are found together. Individual burials, outside of cemeteries, however, are not unknown.[182]

The cremation cemeteries are found chiefly in northern and eastern England. In these cemeteries, the cremated remains were usually placed in earthenware pots (former thinking assumed this to be exclusively the case, but cremations buried without pots have also been found) and buried along with grave goods, albeit relatively few in number.[183] "Grave goods from cremation sites include: decorated pots, combs, toilet sets, beads, small brooches and buckles. Some of these grave goods were burned alongside the dead, others were placed in the pots unburned."[184]

Inhumations were also often inclusive of grave goods – usually weapons in the case of male burials, and dress items or jewellery in the case of female burials.[185] Inhumations were most often done with the body supine (lying on its back), although flexed, crouched or prone postures are not entirely unknown. The use of coffins, it seems, was rare. And the graves are

[179] The prohibition of cremation was due to the Christian belief of the physical resurrection of the body (1 Thess. 4: 16) – resurrection was believed to be rendered difficult if the body was no more. Grave goods, aside from being a feature of pagan practice, and thus an anathema in Christian observance, went against the passage in the Gospel of Matthew 6: 19-20, in which Jesus advocates storing up treasures in Heaven, rather than on earth.
[180] Symonds, 2008, p. 200.
[181] *Ibid*.
[182] Sayer, 2008, p.212.
[183] *Ibid*.
[184] *Ibid*.
[185] *Ibid*, pp.212 – 213. Sayer's full list of other common grave goods is fairly extensive, and includes drinking vessels, glass vessels, other pottery vessels, buckets, bone pins, beads, cosmetic brush holders, needle cases, Roman coins, spoons, spindle whorls, hanging bowls, combs, bone gaming pieces, purse-mounts, buckles, tweezers, strap-ends, belt-mounts, girdle-hangers, latch-lifters, keys, and toilet sets (consisting of miniature iron or bronze shears, knives and tweezers and ear-scoops).

found in any orientation (although east-west is more common – maybe a residual habit held over from Roman days).[186]

So, the differences between Saxon burials and Romano-British burials seem clear, and the comparative dating of these can give us a clue to the possible date range of the hypothetical first major settlement from the Germanic heartlands across the North Sea.

The earliest distinctly discernible Germanic settlers are represented by extensive cremation cemeteries found in eastern England, from East Anglia, through Lincolnshire and the east midlands, and into eastern Yorkshire. The urns in which the cremations were buried bear a close resemblance to cremation urns both in the Anglian region, north of the Elbe, and in the conjectural continental homeland of the Saxons between the Elbe and Weser. By which one can conclude that the initial immigrants were probably not of a single ethnic grouping.[187] Dating work done on such urns excavated on the continent suggests, tellingly, that they were common in the period 380-420, significantly before the dates suggested by Gildas for the *Adventus Saxonum*, but rather in keeping with other evidence of an earlier settlement. Cunliffe argues:

> "The implication, then, is that the earliest cremation cemeteries may well represent the mass movement of families into Britain in the period 408-9 that caused such consternation to the provincial administration and occasioned the plea to Rome for help. Once the pioneers had established themselves, friends and relatives would have followed."[188]

By the 450s, the culture of the communities in East Anglia, and the east midlands, centred on the marshland of the Wash (which, as mentioned in Chapter 1, was somewhat more extensive a body of water than now), had strong links with the regions of northern Germany home to the Angles and Jutes – evidence for which can be found in the form of the distribution of distinctively North-German women's brooches in female burials.[189] Within this region, however, Cunliffe argues, enclaves of Romano-British influence must have survived, especially around Lincoln itself and St Albans (Verulamium), the surrounds of which have so far remained entirely devoid of early Germanic cemeteries.[190]

[186] Sayer, 2008, p.213.
[187] Cunliffe, 2013, pp. 414 – 418.
[188] *Ibid*, p. 418.
[189] *Ibid*.
[190] *Ibid*.

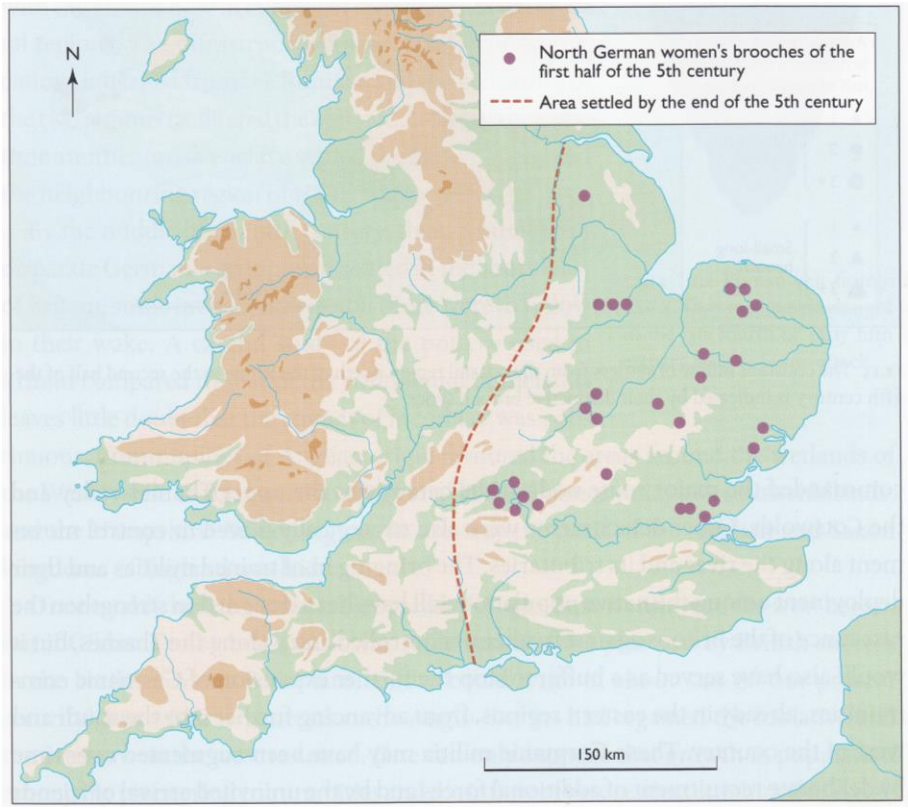

Fig 11. The distribution of distinctively north German brooches before 450. (Map taken from Cunliffe, 2013).

Germanic settlement seems to have begun in differing ways in different areas. Particularly of note here is the Thames valley. From its estuary to its source in the Cotswolds, on both sides of the river, inhumation burials of a distinctly Germanic character have been discovered (the men, in accordance with the pattern above, were buried with weapons and belt fittings derived from the equipment of the Roman army, while the women were buried with a mixture of Germanic brooches and other jewellery, and trinkets of a Romano-British origin).[191]

> "It is tempting to interpret this group as a deliberate settlement of fighting men recruited from among the Frankish and Saxon *foederati* who had previously served with the Romans in the Rhineland or northern Gaul brought into Britain to protect the approaches to London and the vital Thames route to the productive west. One group based at Mucking on the Essex coast was ideally placed to guard the upper estuary, while others based on Dorchester-on-Thames commanded the major route node at the gateway of the upper Thames valley and the Cotswolds. Other detachments were also strategically placed to control movement along the river and its tributaries."[192]

[191] Cunliffe, 2013, p. 419.
[192] *Ibid*, pp. 419 – 420.

The importation of such trained militias and their deployment among the local people may have been intended to strengthen the Romano-British resistance against uncontrolled entry up the Thames.[193] It could also arguably have provided something of a barrier to the further expansion of other Germanic communities southward and westward.[194]

The discovery of Anglian or Jutish brooches, such as those mentioned above, and pottery of the same origin, dating from the second half of the fifth century, in Kent, the very area supposedly settled by Hengist and his mercenaries, who came, via Frisia, from Jutland, would tend to give some corroborative support to the traditional historical story of Gildas and Bede.[195] In contrast to the Germanic militias of the Thames zone, Hengist's men had not served as *foederati* in the Roman army, and were differently equipped.

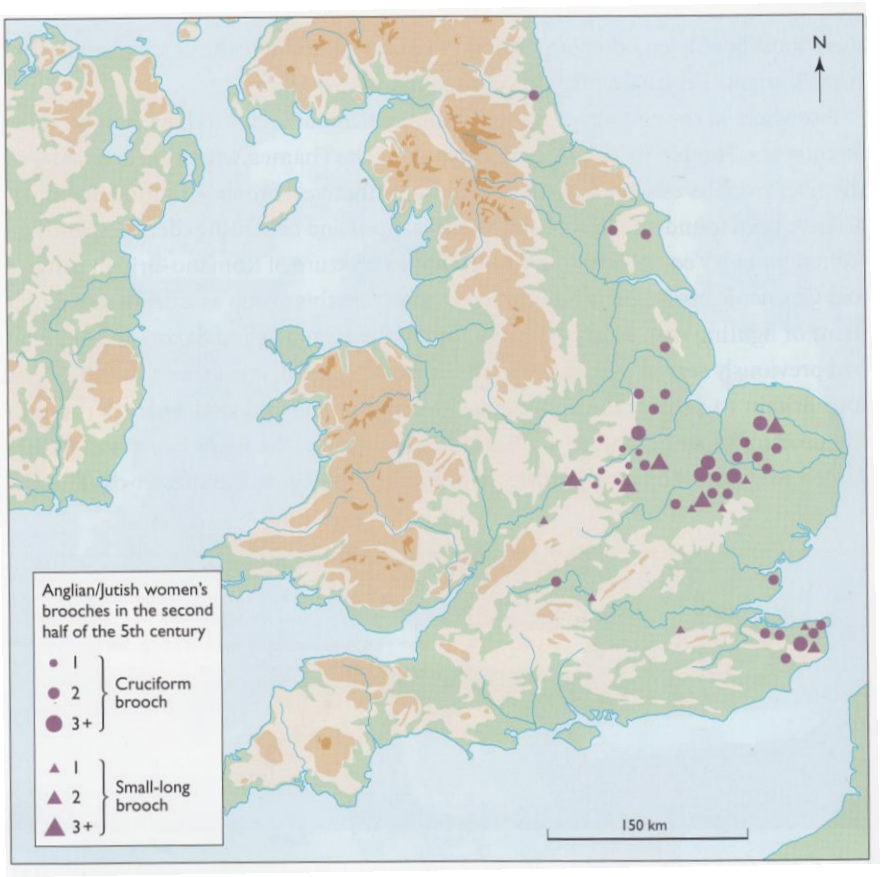

Fig 12. The distribution of distinctively north German brooches after 450. (Map taken from Cunliffe, 2013).

[193] It may be worth remembering that the Vikings did precisely this on a number of occasions in the 9th century. They rowed their ships up the Thames and proceeded to sack the city. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* includes, in the entry for 851, the following: "The same year came three hundred and fifty ships into the mouth of the Thames; the crew of which went upon land, and stormed Canterbury and London; putting to flight Bertulf, king of the Mercians, with his army; and then marched southward over the Thames into Surrey," (s.aa. 851). It is also noteworthy that the two Saxon Shore forts at Bradwell and Reculver, as argued in Chapter 1, might well have been built with this same sort of protection in mind – albeit more formally organised as a barrier to block incursions rather than merely a method of lessening their effect.
[194] Cunliffe, 2013, p. 420.
[195] *Ibid*, p. 421.

The archaeological work done on burials and grave goods, then, would seem to establish that a number of disparate Germanic groups had settled in the south and east of England by the 450s:

> "More were to follow in their wake. A careful study of the pottery used in Britain compared to that of the continental homelands leaves little doubt that the stream of incomers was continuous. Communities of Anglian origin favoured the areas around the wetlands of the Wash, while Saxons were concentrated in the Thames valley, the south midlands, and the Hampshire-Sussex region."[196]

The Germanic influence rapidly spread westwards over the latter half of the fifth and sixth centuries. So, so far, there seems to be a degree of truth in the written history. It is certain that Germanic influence was present significantly before Gildas' three ships landed in Kent, nevertheless, taken as a whole, the traditional view does not seem, yet, to have fallen as flat as one might have expected.

Among the grave goods mentioned above, weapons have been regarded as among the most significant. The Anglo-Saxons were, after all, supposed to have invaded, and the presence of weapons in graves has been used as evidence that those who died were warriors.[197] However, the truth might not be as simple as this. If these burials were indeed those of warriors, one might reasonably expect the numbers of warrior graves to increase during times of conflict and war. But, when compared with the dates of the major battles in the written record, the relative frequencies of 'warrior graves' over time does not conform to this. Härke argues that the peak of the weapon burial rite was around the middle of the sixth century, after which it declined slowly, but steadily.[198] He contrasts this with the historical record. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* lists only two possible battles in the period from 519 to 552, and precious few in the rest of the century. This ties in neatly with Gildas, who wrote that during his lifetime (probably during precisely this period – see Chapter 2) there was, if not peace exactly, at least a lull in Saxon aggression.[199] The attested aggression picks up again just as the weapon burials start decreasing. This would imply that there were few experienced warriors to be buried with weapons during the peak time of this burial practice, and that the warriors from the seventh and eighth centuries, who were experienced in war, were buried without their weapons.

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[196] Cunliffe, 2013, p. 421.
[197] Härke, 1990, p. 22.
[198] *Ibid*, p. 30. The earliest weapon-burials of the post-Roman period have been dated to the first half of the fifth century. Later in the century the numbers increase rapidly. The maximum is attained in the mid-sixth century, and then the slow decline happens – the last burials in the tradition were probably made in the early eighth century.
[199] Gildas, *De Excidio*, 26.

About this approach, however, he warns that:

> "archaeological dates are much less precise than historical dates; the dating of graves always involves a possible discrepancy between the time of the manufacture of the grave-goods, and the time of the actual burial; historical dates have influenced archaeological dating (although much less so now than in the past) so that there may be a danger of circular argument... Even so, the contrast between the archaeological picture... and the picture given by the (admittedly scanty) historical sources is striking."[200]

The notion that the weapon burials had little to do with actual fighting men is further reinforced by an examination of the weapons contained in the graves themselves. About a quarter of the known weapon burials included incomplete or non-functional sets of weaponry.[201] Accordingly, it is very unlikely that the burials contain the total personal weaponry of the person buried, further weakening the case for them being 'warrior burials'.

Examination of the buried individuals themselves further weakens the case. As one might expect, virtually all the weapon burials were for males. However, there are other factors that do not fit. The ages of the individuals, when they died, ranges from twelve months to sixty years.[202] To be fair, sixty-year-olds might well be able to bear arms, and certainly would have been able to have done so in their youth – but small children can certainly be ruled out.[203]

> "Other kinds of skeletal data confirm that the ability to fight was not a factor that differentiated individuals with weapons from those buried without weapons. Weak and strong build, severe osteoarthritis, malunited fractures of long bones, and even inherited disabilities were evenly spread among both groups. Perhaps the most convincing case to prove this point is a man with spina bifida who may never have been able to use the shield and spear buried with him."[204]

Visible wounds on the skeletons, also, bear only slight correlation with the inclusion of weapons in the burials. What, then, *was* a determining factor in weapon burials?

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[200] Härke, 1990, p. 31.
[201] *Ibid*, p. 33. A sword and shield would comprise a complete set; a spear and shield likewise – even a spear alone could. These combinations of weaponry could all be used effectively in battle. A shield alone, on the other hand, would be incomplete. The same could be said for a single javelin, or arrows without a bow – all of which have been found.
[202] *Ibid*, p. 36.
[203] *Ibid*. Fully 8% of the weapon-burials are of children below the age of 14. Of course, this may represent unfulfilled wishes as well.
[204] *Ibid*.

Firstly, there appears to be a wealth differential between weapon and non-weapon burials. There is a range of the wealth observable in both, and the wealthiest of the non-weapon burials can be wealthier than the average of the weapon burials. The very richest of male burials from the period, however, are always weapon burials.[205]

Burials	Epigenetic traits						Remarks
	Metopic suture	Wormian bones	Dental anomaly	Foramen olecranon	Sixth lumbar vertebra	Spina bifida	
With Weapons:							
24					X		
26					X		
28					X		
43/1							} disturbed double burial
43/2				X			
53				X			
61				X			juvenile
69				X			
110						X	
Without weapons:							
37			X				disturbed
67	X	X					
76		X					
101		X					
164		X					

Table 1. Epigenetic traits and weapon burial in the cemetery of Berinsfield (Oxfordshire), showing the distinct difference in the traits to be seen in the two groups. (Table taken from Härke, 1990, p. 41).

Differences are also found in the bodies themselves. On the whole, the average height in the two groups, in fifth and sixth century cemeteries, differs by between two and five centimetres – individuals buried with weapons are the taller.[206] This fact is coupled with two others. Firstly, the two groups exhibit different epigenetic traits: that is, they exhibit a different set of

[205] Härke, 1990, p. 37. The relative wealth reflected by burials is assessed by the comparative wealth of the grave-goods, and the furnishings of the grave. Individuals in weapon-burials were found to be twice as likely to be buried in a coffin or wooden chamber than those buried without weapons.

[206] *Ibid*, p. 39. In addition, the variation of stature in the weapon-burials is much smaller than the variation in the non-weapon-burials – suggesting the individuals in the weapon-burials are from a more homogenous ethnic group.

hereditary abnormalities and conditions (see table 1 – a sample of a single cemetery drawn up by Härke) – clearly pointing, he argues, to separate, unrelated, populations. Secondly, by the seventh and eighth centuries, the height differential seems to diminish, and the total average height of adult males drops slightly, by 1.5 centimetres, leaving a more even and homogenous population, stature-wise.[207]

Härke argues that these differences can be best accounted for if one assumes them to be the result of two separate populations: Indigenous and Germanic.[208]

Building on his 1990 work, in a 2002 study, Härke estimated the comparative numbers of settlers:

> "Archaeological and skeletal data suggest an immigrant-native proportion of 1:3 to 1:5 in the Anglo-Saxon heartlands of southern and eastern England ... but a much smaller proportion of Anglo-Saxons (1:10 or less) [in] south-west, northern and north-west England."[209]

What evidence, though, can burials and associated archaeology lend to the further assertions, in the historical and traditional account of events, that the *Adventus Saxonum* precipitated a series of armed conflicts and an effective genocide of Romano-British people?

Laycock points out that one possible objection to the hypothesis of war and extermination is the lack of bodies from the period which show signs of violent death. Following such a period of war, one might expect to find mass graves. However, it is difficult to gauge the numbers of dead one might be looking for. "In the Wessex law code of Ine from the Anglo-Saxon period, any group of more than 35 armed men could be termed an army."[210] This being so, it becomes likely that whatever individual armed confrontations occurred were not on a particularly large scale, and, as Laycock points out, it does not take massacres the size of the one at Srebrenica (where, during the Bosnian War in 1995, some eight-thousand Bosnians were killed) to persuade people to leave an area.[211]

In addition to this, it is worth remembering that the number of known Roman-period burials is far too small to be in any way representative of the whole population.[212] The existing burials, through whatever accident of circumstances, have survived. There must surely have been

[207] Härke, 1990, p. 40.
[208] *Ibid*, p. 42.
[209] *Ibid*, p. 150.
[210] Laycock, 2008, p. 166.
[211] *Ibid*.
[212] The population of Roman Britain, is, of course, rather difficult to estimate with any accuracy, but the consensus seems to be that the population was somewhere in between two to four million at any given time – a number far smaller than the current population, but also a number far, far in excess of the number of Roman burials that have been found. (Frere, 1987, p. 302).

many, many more that failed to do so. This diminishes the pool of available data. Moreover, what remains are found will be skeletal, and it is perfectly possible for violent death to occur without marking the skeleton – any injury that does not touch bone will be invisible on the skeleton (the body may be run through with a spear, or eviscerated, and, so long as the weapon did not nick the ribs or spine, there will be nothing to suggest the injury without the soft tissue). Thus, even the burials (that have survived) where there is not especial evidence *of* violence need not necessarily be evidence *against* violence.[213] There is also the possibility that any victims of any supposed battles or massacres would not receive any form of formal burial.[214] Laycock writes:

> "Broadly speaking, even when we do know of significant conflict in the historical sources, it is rare to find the skeleton evidence to back up a picture of large-scale killing. There are, for instance, only a very small number of corpses that have been specifically linked to the events of 60-61, and it is rare, even with later conflicts, to come across unequivocal evidence of more than a few violent deaths."[215]

Thus, it would seem that it would not be a safe assumption that, merely because there is little evidence of the violent aspect of the Saxon invasion, it did not happen. And, indeed, there are a number of instances which suggest violent death or, at least, a social emergency. There have been human remains found in some of the later villas in the west of England. Also, bodies have been found inside towns (something which would not usually have happened – see above – and this suggests that the burials took place *in extremis*).[216] In Canterbury, for instance, there is a burial of what appears to be a family – a man, a woman, two children, and two dogs – who seem to have been buried in a pit dug in what was probably a temple.[217]

Other interpretations

Francis Pryor offers a different interpretation of the locations and distribution of the 'Anglo-Saxon' cemeteries. If one is to accept that the area of Britain which was most densely distributed with villas and other substantial buildings (which happens to be the south and east) was the most significantly Romanised, it is interesting to note how closely the two distributions overlap (see figure 13). What this suggests, Pryor argues, is that the population

[213] Laycock, 2008, p. 168.
[214] This possibility brings to mind Gildas' statement (*De Excideo*, 24) "Human body parts, covered with bright clotted blood, looking like they had been mangled by a press, and with no hope of burial, except in ruined houses, or in the hungry bellies of wild animals."
[215] Laycock, 2008, p. 168. Cf. the total number killed in Boudica's revolt, according to Tacitus, which was 70 000 (Tacitus, *Annals*, 14.33).
[216] *Ibid*.
[217] Esmond Cleary, 1989, p. 159; Laycock, 2008, p. 168.

of the Romanised part of Britain accepted, more readily, the new fashions, social and political ideas of the post-Roman world than did the more traditional folk of the north and west.

> "It's not a question of invasion and takeover, but of attitude to life. On the side of the island where people had changed *less* during the Roman period, they resisted change *more* in post-Roman times... I do not suppose we will ever know precisely why communities in eastern England decided to lean towards the Continent as strongly as they did, following the end of the Roman Empire. I suspect it was as much the continuation of a process that had been underway for some time as anything else."[218]

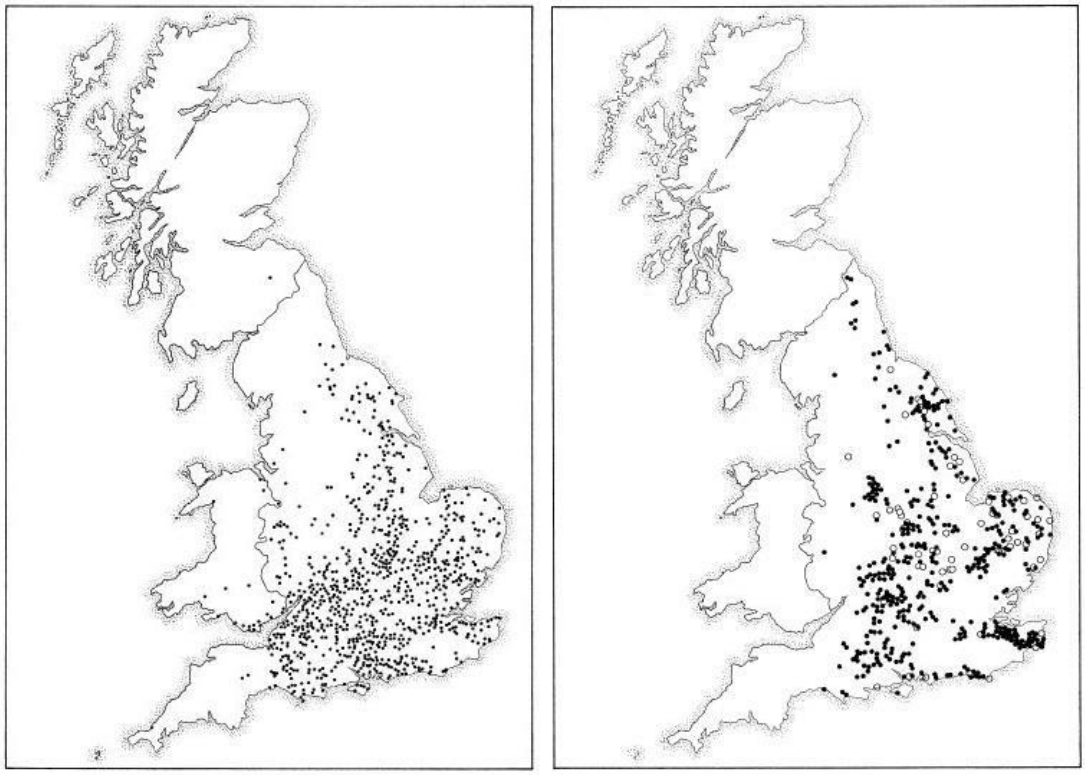

Fig 13. The distribution of Roman villas and their 'substantial buildings' (left), and 'Anglo-Saxon' cemeteries (right – filled circles represent cremations; open circles, inhumations). (Maps taken from Pryor, 2004).

Another perspective on the trend which Pryor highlights might be given by examination of the manufacture of coins from some four centuries earlier.

Early in the second century B.C., the Belgic tribes, who inhabited an area roughly encompassing modern Belgium, from the Seine to the Rhine, began to mint gold coins for use in diplomatic exchange.[219] These coins were the main influence on early British coinage, and

[218] Pryor, 2004, p. 221.
[219] Cunliffe, 2013, p. 325.

offer an insight into the degree of proximity in both culture and politics that existed between the Belgae and the tribes of Southern Britain.[220]

The Gallo-Belgic coins which have been found in Britain are divided into six classes: A – F. Classes A and B are of an early date, being minted and arriving in Britain between the years 175 to 120 B.C.[221] Classes C – F, especially E, probably entered Britain around the time of Caesar's war with the Belgae, in order to help fund the Belgic resistance.[222] This would show quite clearly the level of contact and cooperation between the tribes on either side of the Channel. But was it merely contact and cooperation?

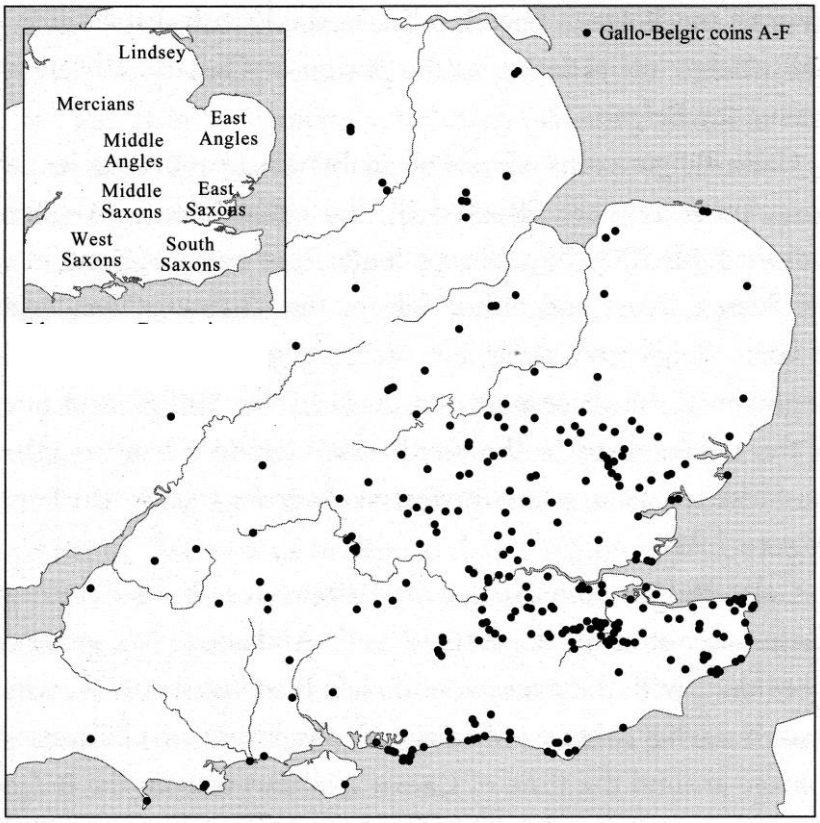

Fig 14. The distribution of Gallo-Belgic coins (all types),showing similarities in the distribution to figure 13. The inset shows the territories of the 5th century Germanic-speaking tribes. (Map taken from Oppenheimer, 2006).

Of particular interest, regarding these coins, is their distribution within Britain. They occur in Kent, along the South Coast, and up the Thames valley. They occur too, though in somewhat lower frequencies, throughout East Anglia and the East Midlands[223] (see figure 14). In short, their distribution mirrors almost exactly the areas supposedly affected most by the Saxon

[220] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 331.
[221] Cunliffe, 2013, p. 325.
[222] Cunliffe, 2013, p. 325; Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 331.
[223] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 332.

invasions; and, perhaps more interestingly, mirrors very closely both the distribution of Roman villas and their 'substantial buildings', and 'Anglo-Saxon' cemeteries in the same region (see figure 13). Even the comparatively empty area in Sussex, south of London, appears more or less the same in all three.

As is discussed more fully in following chapters, there is a case to be made for the tribes in the south of England to be related to the Belgae, if not actually descended from Belgic settlers. This was suggested by Caesar himself.[224]

Oppenheimer comments:

> "This suggests to me that the relationship between Belgic Gaul and what was later mainly Saxon England was more than just between treaty allies, and more as Caesar suggested – one of cultural continuity and common concern."[225]

When Pryor argues that the people in the east of Britain were more influenced by Roman rule, and thus were more open to cultural influences from the Continent in post-Roman times, I believe he has a point. But I (like Oppenheimer) would go further, and argue that the distributions point to a more concrete relationship.[226] Perhaps the people in the east adopted Germanic culture faster because, more or less, they always were more Germanic than British.

Conclusions

In light of the other work presented in this chapter, however, I would differ from Pryor's interpretation. I do not think that the invasion can simply be ruled out.

Cunliffe said, rightly, that the difference between the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods was stark; but this is more the case when viewed from a distance. The change-over from the Roman way of life to the Anglo-Saxon way of life was rather more gradual. Perhaps, as has been suggested, this shift was less the result, merely, of cultural and economic influence from the continent, as Pryor argues, and more the result of the settlement of Germanic peoples in eastern England which occurred slowly throughout the Roman period and increased thereafter. Härke's work suggests the existence of the separate, unrelated, populations. And, if some of the pre-Roman peoples of south eastern Britain were already 'Germanic', this trend is altogether more likely – and would go unnoticed for longer.

[224] Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 5.12.
[225] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 331-332.
[226] Cf. Chapter 5.

This slow settlement, at some stage in the mid fifth century is accelerated into full-out invasion from the Anglian regions (witness the brooches). As Laycock's work implies, the change from an essentially Roman region to an essentially Anglo-Saxon one might not have been entirely without conflict – there are a few signs of destruction and violent death from the period – not many, perhaps, but if an 'army' could be defined as any more than thirty-five men, is this altogether surprising?

From this chapter, one might conclude that there is more evidence from the archaeology to support an Anglo-Saxon invasion (or at least a degree of violence associated with their arrival) than to rule it out completely. However, very importantly, what the archaeology does show is that the traditional view of the Anglo-Saxons invading and exterminating, or driving out, the local populace, leaving behind no-one who was not Anglo-Saxon, is entirely unsupportable. After the invasion, the Germanic settlers lived among the remaining Romano-Britons. By the end of the settlement and 'invasion' process, they seem to have constituted between a fifth and a third of the population[227], before the society became more homogenous and the distinctions between Briton and Anglo-Saxon blurred by the eighth century.

[227] This figure of between a third and a fifth may be slightly overstating the case, considering the seeming propensity for acculturation and 'Anglo-Saxonisation' of the native populace. I would consider it possible for the real invasive group to constitute somewhat less than a fifth – a view supported by genetic studies (see chapter 5).

Chapter 4

The Linguistic Landscape of Post-Roman Britain

> The oppression of the tumult, wrath and scorn,
> The tribulation, and the gleaming blades,—
> Such is the impetuous spirit that pervades
> The song of Taliesin; ours shall mourn
> The unarmed host who by their prayers would turn
> The sword from Bangor's walls, and guard the store
> Of aboriginal and Roman lore,
> And Christian monuments, that now must burn
> To senseless ashes. Mark! how all things swerve
> From their known course, or vanish like a dream;
> Another language spreads from coast to coast;
> Only perchance some melancholy stream
> And some indignant hills old names preserve,
> When laws and creeds and people all are lost![228]

Thus William Wordsworth, writing in the early 1820s, explored the traditional notion of the Saxon invaders exterminating the local British population of England. His lines about "another language" spreading from coast to coast, with old names being preserved in "some melancholy stream" and "some indignant hills" are as good a summary as can be given for the subject of this chapter.

The situation with regard to archaeology is not altogether clear, but is probably indicative of a series of events that did not include genocide. The view from linguistics is very important in elaborating one's view of the period. On the face of it, it would seem that the traces left behind of Brittonic (the language spoken by the Britons) on Old English are so minutely insignificant as to, in effect, not exist at all. Only very few words were carried over from one language to the other, and of those, many are descriptive of geographical features. This has been seen as suggestive of an extermination scenario. For this reason, linguistic evidence has long been used in support of the traditional view of events.

[228] Wordsworth, *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, no. 12. (c.1821)

In this chapter, the merits of the linguistic evidence, as used to support the traditional view of events, will be examined. Some further suggestions about interpretation of the evidence will then be made.

Extermination Theory

The prime plank of the argument which uses linguistics as evidentiary to the traditional view of events is the minimal lexical borrowings from Brittonic in Old English. As Richard Coats argues:

> "There is an apparent paradox in the fact that the Angles and Saxons seem content to have taken some place-names from the Britons and yet took practically no Brittonic vocabulary in the earliest centuries of settlement. There was virtually no early lexical traffic in the other direction either, and all we have for sure is the talismanic word *cyulis* '(Saxon long) ships' in Gildas's *De Excidio Britanniae* which is actually just a mention, not a use – Gildas glosses it in the running Latin of his text – and therefore not a certain borrowing. This all appears to suggest little contact in which meanings were exchanged. The borrowing of vocabulary presupposes purposeful human interaction and is therefore a secure sign that has happened."[229]

As an example of how the lack of lexical borrowings might indicate little contact, Coates discusses the case of the European, especially British interactions with other languages and cultures during the period of colonialism and imperialism. On the two extremes of linguistic influence, there are the influences of the Indian languages, and the Australian Aboriginal languages on English.[230] In the case of the Indian languages, the influence is large, and widespread.[231] Many Indian words made their way into English and then proceeded to gain acceptance and general use throughout all of the English-speaking world, not remaining confined to the local vocabulary of the English speakers in India alone.[232] Further to this, the Indian-English borrowings belong to a wide range of semantic fields. The significance of this

[229] Coates, 2007, pp. 175-176.
[230] *Ibid*, p. 176.
[231] An estimate of the total number of Indian borrowings is difficult to establish. However, a glossary of Anglo-Indian terms was drawn up in 1886 (revised and expanded in 1903) which included over two thousand entries – and did not include Indian religious terms like *karma*, that only came into the language later (Yule & Burnell, 1903). Of these two thousand-odd words, it seems some seven hundred (the number in the Oxford English Dictionary) made it into universal usage.
[232] Coates, 2007, p. 176. A far from exhaustive list of these borrowings might contain such familiar terms as *amok*, *avatar*, *bandanna*, *bandicoot*, *bangle*, *Blighty*, *brahmin*, *bungalow*, *caddy*, *calico*, *candy*, *cashmere*, *cheetah*, *chit*, *cowrie*, *curry*, *cushy*, *dekko*, *dinghy*, *guru*, *gymkhana*, *juggernaut*, *jungle*, *karma*, *khaki*, *lilac*, *mahout*, *mantra*, *mongoose*, *nirvana*, *panda*, *pariah*, *polo*, *pukka*, *pundit*, *pyjama(s)*, *raj*, *raja*, *sari*, *sitar*, *swastika*, *tabla*, *thug*, *wallah*, and *yoga*.

stems from the fact, as discussed by April McMahon, that when a less prestigious language does contribute lexemes to a more prestigious language (at a very basic contact level), they tend to represent place names, terms referring to landscape and topography, and terms contributing 'local colour', like local flora and fauna, or cultural practices. In a nutshell, the borrowed lexemes will represent concepts for which the more prestigious language does not have its own terms.[233]

In the case of the Australian Aboriginal languages, on the opposite end of the Coates' scale of colonial linguistic influence, the contribution to English comprises merely some 200 words.[234] These words, many of which are confined to specifically Australian English and have not gained general usage, are more obviously representative of McMahon's categories of words adopted at a very basic level of contact: topographical features like *billabong*; native flora and fauna like *mulga*, *budgerigar*, *dingo*, *koala*, *wombat*, *wallaby*, *kangaroo* or *barramundi*; and culturally specific terms like *corroboree*, *boomerang* or *didgeridoo*.[235]

Coates argues that the presence of Indian and Australian Aboriginal words in English indicates a level of borrowing which did not take place in the case of Brittonic, and thus, that the contact situation between the peoples was not of any kind that required verbal communication (hence his support for the traditional 'extermination' view[236]). However, this view is perhaps slightly simplistic. In the case of India, the initial contact situation that existed when Indian terms first entered English was socially altogether different from that of the postulated Anglo-Saxon invasion. The first contact between British and Indian peoples was through trade. Britain's rule of India came about after an extended period in which English merchants met their Indian counterparts on very much even terms. The military conquest of India only came about somewhat later. Hence, I would argue that in the case of India, the analogy with post-Roman Britain is erroneous. At the initial point of linguistic contact, the Indian languages were *de facto* not less prestigious. Therefore, the large number of Indian terms in English is not surprising.

In the case of Australia, Coates' implication is that, if Australian Aboriginal languages contributed *least* to English, and the number of borrowings is still as high as two hundred, then the significantly smaller number of Brittonic borrowings looks significant. However, this

[233] McMahon, 1994, pp. 203-204.
[234] This makes the number of lexical borrowings from Australia rather less than a tenth of those from India
[235] Coates, 2007, p. 176.
[236] In the case of the term 'extermination', used by Bede to describe the Saxon interaction with the Romano-Britons, it is important to point out that it is a convenient translation of the Latin term *exterminare*, meaning, literally, to banish (out of the boundaries). In the original Latin, it does not necessarily imply genocide.

also seems to me to be somewhat misleading. Firstly, estimates of the number of Aboriginal languages at the time of the first significant contact with Europeans suggest about two hundred and fifty distinct languages, of which the number of distinct dialects would number many hundreds.[237] Secondly, the geographical area of Australia is some 7,692,024 km², whereas the area of England is only 130, 395 km², meaning that Australia has very nearly sixty times the land area of England. Even if one were to accept Coates' very conservative estimate of four generally accepted Brittonic terms borrowed into Old English[238], proportionally it seems to me that the concentration of Brittonic terms is greater than Aboriginal ones. If English adopted roughly two hundred terms from two hundred and fifty languages, the contribution is rather less than one term per language. And if, for the sake of argument, one were to assume a completely even geographical distribution of borrowed terms (which would not, of course, be the case), one would have an average of just over three terms from every area the size of England. In both cases, the Brittonic contribution is proportionally bigger.

Nevertheless, the quantity of lexical borrowings from Brittonic in Old English *is* very small, and comprises merely a small number of place-names, and an extremely small number of general terms.[239] On account of this, Coates argues that the Brittonic case appears:

> "consistent with withdrawal of speakers of the previously dominant language, rather than cultural assimilation of numerically dominant classes by the incomers. 'Withdrawal' can be achieved in a number of ways: murder ('ethnic cleansing'), enslavement (whence zero cultural impact), flight, exile, negotiated withdrawal. But eastern England … [shows] the lexical and onomastic (non-) evidence that the incomers moved into a landscape from which a major withdrawal had taken place."[240]

The most convincing argument to account for the minimal Brittonic impact on English, Coates concludes[241], is that, after an initial contact period in which nothing was achieved save for the transmission of a number of place-names, and of a few other words which contributed to the 'local colour', the seeming absence (or invisibility) of the Britons was due to any or all of three factors: firstly, that the Anglo-Saxon invaders were not obliged to borrow

[237] Walsh, 1991, p. 27.
[238] Coates, 2007, p. 177. Other less conservative estimates range from between fifteen to about thirty-five.
[239] *Ibid*, p. 181. A number of Brittonic terms which appear in English do so as parts of place-names, and have not made it into general generic usage. One example is the word *Avon*, which is the name of six rivers in England. The word is the Brittonic equivalent of the Welsh *afon*, meaning 'river'. But, whereas in Welsh it is the word *for* 'river', and appears in place-names the same way as 'river' does in English (e.g. *Afon Gwy* – River Wye), *Avon* appears in English only as a proper noun.
[240] Coates, 2007, p. 185.
[241] *Ibid*, p. 188.

topographical or toponymic terms; secondly that the Anglo-Saxons were not obliged to borrow terms for flora and fauna (in both cases, because – after one or two isolated examples – their own vocabulary sufficed); and thirdly that Brittonic social and cultural institutions were ephemeral or in some other way undetectable.[242] Of this third factor, Coates writes:

> "[It] can only mean that in the initial contact period Brittonic culture was either indistinguishable from that of the English (which is scarcely credible) or literally invisible (because it wasn't there). If it had been there, even marginalized, borrowed vocabulary would have betrayed its presence."[243]

British Latin

In order to account for this apparent invisibility of Brittonic culture and language, two interpretations will be examined. Both are based on the assumption that Brittonic was virtually unspoken in eastern England by the end of the Roman period. The first such interpretation focusses on the prevalence of Latin in the 'Lowland Zone' of England.[244]

Peter Schrijver argues that, by 400 AD, there is a distinction to be made between Lowland Brittonic, and Highland Brittonic[245]. The former, he argues, was heavily Latinised, and had closer connections to varieties of Celtic from Northern Gaul, than the Brittonic spoken in the Highland Zone.[246]

The main reason for the belief that Lowland Brittonic was different from its Highland counterpart can be found in one of the two extant Brittonic inscriptions from Roman Britain that are currently known. This is the so-called 'Bath pendant', a short inscription on a small, pewter disk found in Roman Bath.[247] The text reads *adixoui deuina deueda andagin uindiorix cuamiinai*. Of especial significance is the presence of the diphthongs *ou* and *ua* in *adixoui* and

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[242] Coates, 2007, p. 188. Referring to point three, Coates points out that even the Old English word for druid, *drý*, is, in fact, a borrowing from Irish, and not a Brittonic survival. On the other hand, since Roman Britain had been (at least officially) Christian since the early 4th century, this specific example might not be quite so surprising.

[243] *Ibid*.

[244] England is divisible into a Lowland Zone, comprising the south, east and midlands, and a Highland Zone, comprising the north, and west – including Wales, Devon and Cornwall (Schrijver, 2007, p. 165).

[245] Schrijver uses the terms Highland and Lowland British Celtic. For the sake of continuity with the rest of my argument, I have adapted these terms to Highland and Lowland Brittonic.

[246] Schrijver, 2007, p. 165. He points out that Highland British Celtic is the antecessor of Welsh, Cornish and Breton, Lowland British Celtic having no offspring.

[247] *Ibid*, p. 168. The usefulness of this inscription, as Schrijver acknowledges (p. 170) does, however, depend on the assumptions that, firstly, the Bath pendant was made in or around Bath, by a local – there is always the possibility it was deposited by a visitor from Gaul, in which case, the argument comes to naught – and secondly, that the analytic interpretations Schrijver gives for the inscription (and those from Châteaubleau and Baudecet) are valid – which is difficult to test owing to the lack of further contemporary Gaulish or Brittonic inscriptions.

cuamiinai. The diphthongisation of these sounds (from the long vowels **ū* and **ō*), shows parallels with Northern Gaulish inscriptions on a tile from Châteaubleau (in modern France), and a gold plate from Baudecet (in modern Belgium). Schrijver argues that the influence of late-spoken Latin of northern Gaul is evident, as diphthongisation seems to have been a feature of that particular dialect, in which, for instance, the Romance long-closed **ō* was diphthongised to *ou* (and thus to Old French *eu*).[248]

> "The important point is that the inscription from Bath agrees with late northern Gaulish (of which Châteaubleau and Baudecet are virtually our only testimonies) but differs from the geographically much closer Highland British Celtic, which shows no evidence of ever having undergone these diphthongisations. I suggest that diphthongisation marks a difference between Lowland and Highland British Celtic, on the one hand, and an agreement between Lowland British Celtic and northern Gaulish, on the other... [W]e may conclude that the influence of Latin on varieties of northern Gaulish and Lowland British Celtic had already become so strong during the period of Roman rule that phonetic features from late spoken Latin had begun to permeate the Celtic spoken in the area."[249]

The Latin influence on Lowland Brittonic would have occurred during the time when Roman authority still, more or less, held sway. As such, there is a good chance that Latin-Celtic bilingualism tended to lead to Latin monolingualism. The influence, therefore, to be seen in the inscriptions from Bath, Châteaubleau and Baudecet, could be argued to be indicative of Celtic language death as Latin phonetic and phonological structure gradually replaced that of Celtic. It can be further argued that Latin, rather than Brittonic, was more commonly spoken in the Lowland Zone by the end of the Roman period of government.[250]

As for Highland Brittonic, the early post-Roman period seems to show a number of changes in phonology and morphosyntax. Phonological changes include, by way of example, the replacement of phonemic vowel length with qualitative vowel oppositions; a shift in stress to the penultimate syllable; the loss of final nasals (*m* and *n*) except in monosyllabic words; and the voicing of postvocalic consonants (**p*, **t* and **k* become **b*, **d* and **g*).[251] Morphosyntactic changes, contemporary with the phonological changes, include the loss of

[248] Schrijver, 2007, p. 169.
[249] *Ibid*.
[250] *Ibid*, p. 170.
[251] *Ibid*, p. 166.

the case system via a process of reduction; the loss of the neuter gender, and the development of the pluperfect.[252]

Highland Brittonic had adopted many hundreds of loanwords from Latin during the years of the Empire. But, in the post-Roman period when the above changes happened, the loan of words from Latin all but stopped.[253] Schrijver suggests the following course of events: during the Imperial period, Highland Brittonic borrowed extensively from the lexicon of Latin, as Latin was a high-status language. After the ending of the Roman period, however, Latin had lost its high status. The Latinisation in Brittonic phonology and morphosyntax came about then, as Latin speakers shifted to speaking Brittonic, but maintained features of the phonology and morphosyntax of Latin.[254] This could be explained thus:

> "The picture that emerges… is one of masses of speakers of Latin [who carried little prestige but were so numerous that they swamped the native British Celts] arriving in the Highland Zone by the fifth century and rapidly, but not tracelessly, assimilating to their British Celtic environment. Where else could they have come from except from the Lowland Zone, where the collapse of Roman power and the incursions of the Anglo-Saxons left large numbers of people destitute who had previously been dependant on Roman society and its economy? If one accepts this conclusion, one must accept another: that the British Lowland Zone was largely Latin-speaking and that, as in the rest of the Western Roman Empire, the native language had all but died out."[255]

Schrijver's analysis and his proposed explanations fit well with those of Coates (above), when Coates argues that "Brittonic culture was either indistinguishable from that of the English (which is scarcely credible) or literally invisible (because it wasn't there)."[256] An advanced state of Latinisation among the Lowland Britons (followed by an influx of Lowland Britons into the Highland Zone) would explain the perceived invisibility of British Celtic culture and language in the Lowland Zone in the early fifth century.

[252] Schrijver, 2007, p. 167.
[253] *Ibid*. This can be safely concluded, as the loan words underwent the Brittonic, not Romance, versions of the above phonological and morphosyntactic changes (perhaps like the Welsh *ysgol*, from the Latin *schola*, showing the voicing of the postvocalic (in Welsh) **k*, becoming **g*).
[254] *Ibid*.
[255] *Ibid*, p. 168.
[256] Coates, 2007, p. 188.

Germanic-speaking Belgic tribes

But what of Coates's other possible (albeit, in his own estimation, scarcely credible) explanation that Brittonic culture was indistinguishable from that of the English?

This explanation is, perhaps, not as outlandish as Coates believes. Oppenheimer argues that there is a case to be made for the presence of Germanic-language speaking tribes in Britain before the Roman invasions.[257] Tacitus writes:

> "Who were the original inhabitants of Britain, whether they were indigenous or foreign, is, as usual among barbarians, little known. Their physical characteristics are various and from these conclusions may be drawn. The red hair and large limbs of the inhabitants of Caledonia point clearly to German origin. The dark complexion of the Silures, their usually curly hair, and the fact that Spain is the opposite shore to them, are an evidence that Iberians of a former date crossed over and occupied these parts. Those who are nearest to the Gauls are also like them, either from the permanent influence of original descent, or, because in countries which run out so far to meet each other, climate has produced similar physical qualities. But a general survey inclines me to believe that the Gauls established themselves in an island so near to them. Their religious belief may be traced in the strongly marked British superstition. The language differs but little."[258]

Quite apart from sounding rather startlingly like age-old (and still accepted by some) racial stereotypes (the Scots being burly and having red hair, the Welsh being dark of complexion with curly hair, and the English looking and sounding a bit like the Dutch) this passage is interesting – it would seem to suggest that, as will be discussed in the next chapter, however many social and political upheavals have taken place in the intervening two millennia, the peoples of Britain are genetically not so different now from what they were in the first century. Of especial interest in this chapter, is, of course, the comment that "the language differs but little". In the context of the passage, Oppenheimer points out, the region in which

[257] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 310ff.

[258] Tacitus, *Agricola*, 11 (see Appendix, passage 11). It is perhaps convenient, here, to point out a certain difficulty I encountered regarding commentaries on the ancient texts. As with most textual commentaries, the ones available to me focussed on aspects of textual interpretation. When they did venture to comment on the content of the text, I found them either to have nothing of substance to add to the discussion, or, in one or two cases, to be so antiquated in their interpretation and terminology as to be unhelpful – take for instance a commentary on Tacitus' *Agricola*, by R.M. Ogilvie and I.A. Richmond, published in 1967, which, commenting on this passage from *Agricola* 11, refers to the Celts as an invasive people, and the original indigenous population as 'non-Aryan'.

the language is similar to that of Gaul is the south east – and that the region of Gaul to which it is similar is north of the Seine, an area inhabited by the Belgae.[259]

Tacitus, here, reinforces Caesar's own, slightly earlier, assessment:

> "The interior position of Britain is inhabited by those of whom they say that it is handed down by tradition that they were born in the island itself: the maritime portion by those who had passed over from the country of the Belgae for the purpose of plunder and making war; almost all of whom are called by the names of those states from which being sprung they went thither, and having waged war, continued there and began to cultivate the lands."[260]

And about Kent, Caesar writes:

> "The most civilised of all these nations are they who inhabit Kent, which is entirely a maritime district, nor do they differ much from the Gallic customs. Most of the inland inhabitants do not sow corn, but live on milk and flesh, and are clad with skins."[261]

Caesar, then, locates the origin of the tribes of the 'maritime' or, in effect, south eastern region (the region on the shores of the English Channel) as being Belgic. He further differentiates between them and the aboriginal Britons.[262]

There would seem to be a certain validity to the argument that there was a reasonably significant Belgic constituent to the population of the south east of Britain at the time of the Roman invasion. However, what of their language? As has been mentioned above, there is evidence of Celtic place-names from the region in question – especially from north of the Thames. But, an important consideration is that place-names can fossilise in a language, and are very difficult to date effectively.[263] As such, if one is to assume a settlement of Belgic peoples in southern England, as Caesar suggests, the Celtic place-names may be survivals

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[259] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 312-313.
[260] Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 5.12 (see Appendix, passage 8).
[261] Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 5.14 (see Appendix, passage 8).
[262] I doubt, incidentally, Caesar's assertion that the aboriginal Britons were exclusively pastoralists, and did not have any agrarian farming practices – it would tend to go against the extensive evidence of Bronze Age field systems, which is common all over Britain (see Oliver, 2012, pp. 211-214, 224-225). But, that said, I would be uncomfortable with doubting the accuracy of any observations he made about the ethnicity of the peoples he encountered. Any information such as that might lead to militarily applicable intelligence: if tribe *A* lives next door to tribe *B*, but is culturally and linguistically different, the chances are less that those two tribes might form an alliance. That said, the possibility remains that Caesar may have elaborated his own observations later on when he wrote them down, by using sources like Posidonius, in which case, inaccuracies may have crept in.
[263] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 321.

from before even that date, and thus, may not be a particularly effective guide to the language of the Belgae.

Even though Caesar and Tacitus do not have very much to say about the language spoken by the Belgic tribes, there are a number of other references to them that help to place them in their context, and help define their relationship with the Germanic tribes.

Caesar, writing about the inhabitants of Gaul, notes:

> "Of these the Belgae are the bravest… and they are the nearest to the Germans, who dwell beyond the Rhine, with whom they are continually waging war … The Belgae rise from the extreme frontier of Gaul, extend to the lower part of the river Rhine; and they look toward the north and the rising sun."[264]

This description is fairly self-explanatory, but the remark at the end that 'they look toward the north and the rising sun' might require some interpretation. The context of the passage is, of course, geographical, and this comment serves to place them in their geographical context. But, I would ask, can there be an implication here that the Belgae were predominantly influenced *culturally* from the north and east – or, in other words, from the Germans?

In book II of his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, Caesar describes, after hearing that the Belgic tribes were forming a confederate alliance against the Romans, going north to ascertain the veracity of the news:

> "As he arrived there unexpectedly and sooner than anyone anticipated, the Remi, who are the nearest of the Belgae to Gaul, sent to him … ambassadors: to tell him that they surrendered themselves … to the protection and disposal of the Roman people: and that they had neither combined with the rest of the Belgae, nor entered any confederacy … and were prepared … to obey his commands, to receive him into their towns, and to aid him with corn and other things; that all the rest of the Belgae were in arms; and that the Germans, who dwell on this side of the Rhine, had joined themselves to them … When Caesar inquired of them what states were in arms, how powerful they were, and what they could do, in war, he received the following information : that the greater part of the Belgae were sprung, from the Germans, and that having crossed the Rhine at an early period, they had settled there, on account of the fertility of the country, and had driven out the Gauls who inhabited those regions."[265]

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[264] Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 1.1 (see Appendix, passage 5).
[265] *Ibid*, 2.3-4 (see Appendix, passage 6).

In a later list of the tribes comprising the Belgic confederacy, Caesar points out that four of the tribes: the Condrusi, the Eburones, the Caeraesi and the Paemani, were "called by the common name of Germans"[266]

Caesar then is fairly unequivocal in his assertion that the Belgae are partly German in origin. Tacitus adds to this, by writing that the Belgic tribes "such as dwell upon the Bank of the Rhine, the Vangiones, the Tribocians, and the Nemnetes, are without doubt all Germans."[267] Caesar and Tacitus also include in this description of 'Belgic Germans', the Nervii[268], and Treveri.[269] Oppenheimer points out that the whole region of the Lower Rhine, called Germania Inferior by the Romans, and including Luxembourg, the Ardennes, and eastern Belgium is still the location of a dialect of Low German.[270] The borders of modern Germany also include the west-Rhineland territories of a number of the 'Belgic German' tribes.[271]

Based on this, it is not difficult to assume a certain amount of Germanity among the Belgae.[272] But what of actual linguistic evidence? Tribes could descend from Germanic settlers and yet could have spoken Celtic languages.

Some of the Belgic tribes do seem to have been Celtic-speaking, based on the evidence of personal names: "While several personal and tribal names in Belgica described by Caesar have a clear Gaulish derivation, a larger proportion do not, and some may have belonged to the Germanic branch of Indo-European."[273] A survey conducted by David Ellis Evans, looking at the geographical distribution of Celtic names in Gaul, sheds important light on the argument. Evans points out that only one of the three regional dialects that Caesar mentions[274] – Belgic, Celtic and Aquitanian – can be securely located within the Celtic family of languages.[275] Also, the evidence for Celtic names from inscriptions, and the ancient authors, gets markedly stronger south of the Seine. Oppenheimer summarises the situation in Belgica: "So, for the Belgic part of Gaul, if there was a single or main language, the message from personal names is that it cannot be assumed to have been celtic."[276]

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[266] *Ibid*, 2.4.
[267] Tacitus, *Germania*, 28.
[268] Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 2.29.
[269] Tacitus, *Germania*, 28.
[270] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 318.
[271] *Ibid*.
[272] Of cource, culture and origin are not the same thing. The fact that the Romans differentiated between the Belgae and the Germans remains – and does indeed imply a discernable difference in culture. But need this culture include language?
[273] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 315.
[274] Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 1.1-2.
[275] Evans, 1967, p. 16.
[276] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 315.

A study of Celtic place-names from Belgic Gaul by Hans Kuhn used eight Celtic name-roots, and plotted the location of the resulting Celtic place-names on a map (see figure 15). There are, indeed, Celtic place names in Belgica, but they are more or less confined to the south of the region.

> "From Kuhn's map we can also see that the rest of Belgica, in particular the maritime regions, were devoid of celtic place-names. While the cluster of preserved celtic place-names spreads south of the Marne and the Seine into Celtica, it notably does not spread west of the Oise towards the Belgic coast (i.e. those parts nearest England, including Calais on the French side), where the emigrants to England were supposed to have come from."[277]

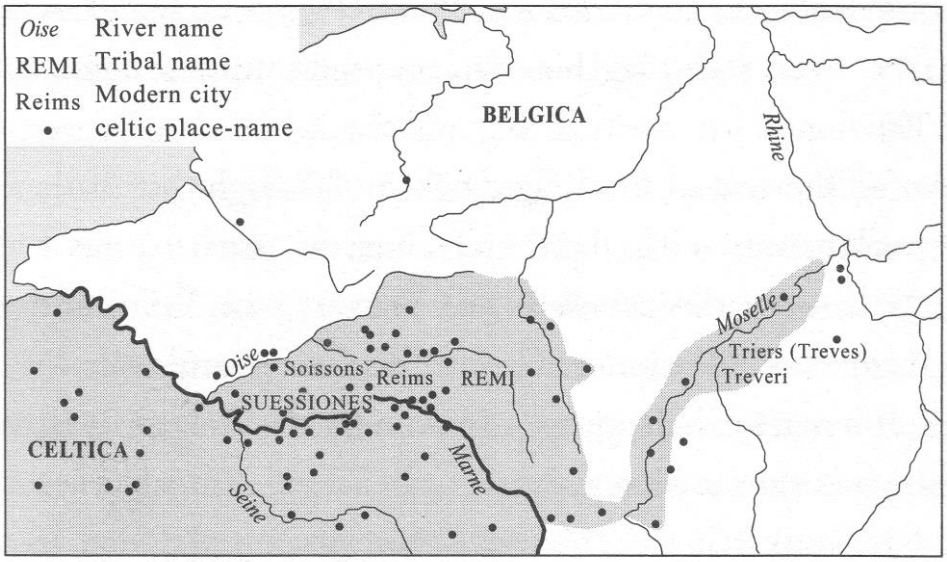

Fig 15. The distribution of Celtic place-names in Belgica.
(Map taken from Oppenheimer, 2006).

What one is left with, then, is this: the tribes of south-eastern Britain had a close relationship with the Belgae from across the Channel. Many of the Belgic tribes, in turn, were closely related to the German tribes from east of the Rhine. The language spoken by these 'Belgic Germans', or 'Germanic Belgae', judging by personal names and place-names, while it cannot incontrovertibly be defined as Germanic, was nevertheless probably not Celtic in origin. Accordingly, and bearing in mind the ethnic relationship with German tribes (which even the Belgae themselves believed to be true), it is quite likely that the language spoken by the non-Celtic Belgae was indeed Germanic. Thus, the language spoken by the Belgic tribes of south-eastern Britain, like the Atrebates (whose presence is attested on both sides of the

[277] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 322-323.

Channel), stands a good chance of also being Germanic in origin. If this were, indeed, the case, Coates' argument that Brittonic culture in the south-east was invisible because it was *de facto* indistinguishable from that of the Anglo-Saxon settlers (which Coates does not believe credible) becomes very credible.

Contact linguistics trends and mechanisms

If one were to put these possibilities aside for a moment, Coates' argument about the implications of the 'invisibility' of Brittonic culture and language is based largely on lexical evidence (or, more accurately, the lack thereof). But the lexicon is not the only important aspect of a language, the morphosyntactic and phonological aspects are equally important.[278] Could there be non-lexical influences from Brittonic on Old English?

The area of linguistics that deals with the interaction of languages (and is thus most useful in this study) is called contact linguistics. It "seeks to establish an understanding of the divers processes of cross-linguistic interaction based on the contact between speakers of different languages and the catalytic agency of bilingual speakers."[279]

There are two main types of contact scenarios[280] – borrowing scenarios and shift scenarios. In the borrowing scenario, both languages persist, and terms are borrowed. Most borrowing takes place between the languages of neighbouring populations, as the people living on the boundaries find ways of understanding one another. Borrowing also happens between societies that are not geographically adjacent – an example would be the extensive borrowing of terms from English into European languages.[281] The alternative to borrowing, shift scenarios, however, involves the death of the source language, and the restructuring of target languages.[282]

The two scenarios show different patterns of feature transference:

> "The *borrowing* gradient depends on the intensity and length of contact as well as the socio-economic structures involved. Nouns are commonly

[278] This was borne through to me while tutoring Classics 101. One of my students handed in work that was, though using English vocabulary, grammatically and syntactically Chinese (as such, there was very little indication of number – singular and plural – and verb tense was also largely absent, as were articles). The fact that the words were familiar did not really help in understanding the sense of her answers.
[279] Tristram, 2007, p. 193.
[280] Thomason and Kaufman, 1988, pp. 74ff.
[281] Tristram, 2007, p. 194. It may be arguable that, with the current state of globalisation, and the prevalence of English as a language of commerce and diplomacy, the European languages in question are *de facto* adjacent to English. The borrowings themselves are sometimes adopted merely for the sake of convenience to the speaker – many Germans, for instance, when speaking of herbicide, may choose to say '*Herbizid*'; this is perhaps not a surprising borrowing seeing that the pure German equivalent word is '*Unkrautvernichtungsmittel*'. (see Bragg, 2003b, episode 8)
[282] Tristram, 2007, p. 194.

> transferred first, then verbs and adjectives. Function words are only borrowed in cases of very intense contact."[283]

The different types of language shift, on the other hand, depend on the social status of the speakers of the languages in question, and the power relationships involved between such groups.[284]

In strata linguistics – i.e. the specialised study of these linguistic trends which depend on the strata of society – the terms for the languages in the various social positions are 'substrate', 'superstrate' and 'adstrate'. 'Substrate' refers to languages not in a position of power or prestige. 'Superstrate' is its opposite: a high prestige language imposed on speakers of a substrate. 'Adstrate' refers to the relationship between two or more prestige languages which are in mutual interaction.[285] A state of 'diglossia', where two languages (or dialects) co-exist within a population, can result when a superstrate is imposed onto a substrate.

> "The 'high' language of the political elite (L_H), which symbolizes wealth, power and prestige, dominates the 'low' language (L_L) spoken by most of the population; indeed, the speakers of L_H may actively seek to suppress L_L. The outcome depends on the strategies of linguistic norm enforcement wielded by the respective political elite. Situations of diglossia may remain stable for short or long periods of time. This depends on the social barriers between the two groups of speakers. The type of social barrier will also determine the number of bilingual speakers of the respective languages. When the social barriers erode, diglossia leads to language to language *shift*."[286]

There are two types of shift scenario: top down, and bottom up – that is, substrate speakers may shift to the superstrate language, or vice versa. Both are common. The rules governing these interactions, as well as adstratal contact were synthesised into three rules of thumb by the German linguist Theo Vennemann[287]:

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[283] *Ibid*.
[284] *Ibid*.
[285] Tristram, 2007, p. 195.
[286] *Ibid*, p. 196.
[287] Originally published in German in 1995, in the paper 'Etymologische Beziehungen im Alten Europa', (in *Der Ginkgo Baum*, Germanistisches Jahrbuch für Nordeuropa 13) but very helpfully summarised in English by Hildegard Tristram in 2007, p. 196-8.

1. Superstrate rule (top down): Superstrates tend to have more influence on the lexicon of substrates, especially in areas of social interaction. Superstrates, however, do not generally have any great effect on the morphosyntax and phonology of their substrates.[288]
2. Substrate rule (bottom up): Substrates tend to do the opposite of superstrates. Accordingly, they tend to have influence on their superstrates' morphosyntax and phonology, as well as their idiomatic structure. Substrates tend not to have any particular influence on the lexicons of their superstrates, with the exception of toponymy. Substrates tend to have a significant influence on what superstrate speakers call the places and geographical features around them (see McMahon's categories, above).[289]
3. Adstrate rule: Adstrates tend to influence all levels of their adstrates. However, lexical influence is most common.[290]

In the context of this chapter, then, Brittonic would have been a substrate, while Anglo-Saxon would have been its superstrate. Are there, then, any Brittonic influences on the morphosyntax and phonology of English?

Brittonic influences on Old English

The simple answer would seem to be yes, although this is not a view which has been universally accepted.[291]During the period of Old English, there was a particular set of changes which took place which turned English from a largely synthetic language (an inflected one – where meaning is constructed by means of word-endings), like most Germanic and Romance languages, to a largely analytic language (a non-inflected one – where meaning is constructed based on word order and prepositions etc.). It is important to remember that these changes are not universally accepted – much is attributed to the adstratal interaction of Old English with Old Norse during the period of the Danelaw:

> "When English came into contact with the not wholly dissimilar Danish language, a lot of the inflected endings began to lose their distinctive

[288] A good example of this interaction is Norman French and Anglo-Saxon. English adopted many terms from French (many giving a clear illustration of the social position of the respective speakers – for instance, when it's an animal in a field – 'sheep' or 'cow' – its referred to in Anglo-Saxon; on the other hand, as soon as it becomes food on a table – 'mutton' or 'beef' – its referred to in French), but English kept its morphosyntax and phonology.

[289] An example of this, which will be discussed in more detail later, would be the influence of Arabic in the Middle East and North Africa. In addition, as will also be discussed later, this is the category into which any hypothetical interactions between Brittonic and Anglo-Saxon would fall.

[290] A good example of the adstrate rule is, perhaps, the interaction between Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon (although this is not free from debate). This relationship has resulted in a certain amount of dual vocabulary in English: 'sick' is Anglo-Saxon, whereas 'ill' is Old Norse.

[291] Coates (2007, p. 177) writes that, to his knowledge, no one has demonstrated *conclusively* that Brittonic had any influence on Anglo-Saxon grammar, but acknowledges the influence of the Celtic languages like Welsh, Cornish, and Gaelic on later English over a longer time period. As will be argued later, it is perfectly conceivable that these changes happened during the time of Old English, and only manifested themselves in written form with the emergence of Middle English.

> nature. The new grammatical meld tended to happen in the borderland market towns; words followed the trade. Clarity for commerce may have been the chief driving force."[292]

Nevertheless, some examples of potential areas of Brittonic linguistic influence will be discussed.

Attrition of nominal inflections

The inflected nouns of Old English had largely disappeared by the end of the first millennium. This loss has usually been attributed to one of two possible causes. The first is the change in stress to the (first) stem syllable of lexemes, and the prosodic impact this may have had. The second is the adstratal contact between Old English and Old Norse (as mentioned by Bragg, above). According to Tristram, both these hypotheses can be refuted by means of cross-linguistic evidence. In the case of the strong initial accent causing the attrition of newly unstressed inflective syllables, the question that begs asking is why this same process did not affect High German, which had a similar stress-pattern, and yet kept its inflections.[293]

In the case of the attrition being caused by the contact between Old English and Old Norse, Tristram points out the following: spoken Old Norse made as much use of inflectional word-endings as written high-status Old English. It can therefore be argued that, even if the Viking speakers of Old Norse communicated exclusively with the Anglo-Saxon nobility (which, of course, would not have been the case), it would be unlikely for the contact of two equally inflected languages to cause attrition of those inflections. This is borne out by a cross-linguistic comparison with the groups of ethnic Germans (who spoke the equally inflected – and equally Germanic – German), living in Russia, who adopted Russian (again, strongly inflected) in the twentieth century. If they were to have followed the proposed pattern of contact-induced change, they ought to have dropped the Russian inflections – which did not happen.[294]

This attrition of nominal inflections does, however, have parallels in Old Welsh and Middle Welsh texts, and so another possible explanation is that the phenomena resulted from a 'bottom-up' shift from Brittonic.[295]

[292] Bragg, 2003a, p. 23.
[293] Tristram, 2007, pp. 206-207.
[294] *Ibid*, p. 207.
[295] *Ibid*.

The example given above of Germans in Russia is one I would treat with some caution. While it is true that German and Russian are both inflected, the two languages are very different in many ways – not least of which is simply how they sound. The differences between Old English and Old Norse were much more ephemeral; the inflections in either case shared a degree of similarity which Russian and German simply do not. This similarity could plausibly have resulted in confusion, and thus loss of functionality in the Old English inflections. This perception might be heightened by the fact that the attrition of nominal inflections seems to have happened predominantly in the north of England.[296]

Periphrastic aspect

The same cannot, however, be said for the attrition of verbal conjugations, and the consequent development of periphrasis, as this seems to have occurred in the south-west – i.e. in Wessex – the one area in Anglo-Saxon England which was not effectively conquered by the Danes.

The development of periphrastic aspect in Old English seems to have come about as Brittonic-speaking learners of Old English modelled the syntax of the verb phrase of their new language on the analytic construction of the verb phrase in Brittonic.[297] "These analytic constructions consisted of a form of the verb **BOT** [to be] + ***yn*** (construction marker) + **Verbal Noun** … in order to express the semantic category of aspect, here the imperfective aspect ('progressive') in the present tense."[298]

Tristram argues that Brittonic learners of Old English are likely to have felt it necessary to make a distinction between perfectivity and imperfectivity, in addition to the simple denotation of tense in Old English. To this purpose, they ended up having to use analytic constructions like the Late Brittonic present tense.

> "As Old English had no VN [verbal noun] as a distinctive grammatical category that could be used for calquing Late British aspect marking, the learners first seem to have resorted to the use of the OE present participle as the semantically closest infinite form. Such constructions occasionally surfaced in written OE_H [high-status (scholarly) Old English], as shown for instance in the OE *Orosius*: *swa hit* ***heofones tungul*** *on þæm tidun*

[296] *Ibid*. David White (2002, pp. 153-174) argues that this is due to *both* shift from substratal Brittonic, and the influence of adstratal Old Norse.
[297] Tristram, 2007, p. 208.
[298] *Ibid*. Celtic languages have verbal nouns instead of infinitives.

cyþende wæron (as **the stars of heaven were announcing** it in those times)"[299]

This use of the present participle seems to have had something of an effect on its appearance. In Old English, the present participle always appears with the ending *-ende*. In Middle English, it appears with four different endings: *-ende*, *-and(e)*, *-inde*, and *-ing(e)*.[300] These show a rather distinctive geographical distribution (see figure 16).

Kent and the east of England (arguably the most Germanic of any of the regions – see above) maintained the *-ende* ending. The West Midlands had *-inde*, and the north had *-and(e)* (showing probable influence from Old Norse). The major difference is in the south and west, a region centring on Wessex, where *-ing(e)* was used. It seems likely that this participle ending was, at least in part, derived from Old English action nouns ending in *-ung* (later *-ing*). The two non-finite verb forms in Old English, the present participle and action noun, then, seem to have been merged, with one dual-purpose ending serving for both: "This may again be due to substratum influence, as Late British/Old Welsh had no present participle and the OE action noun was the closest analogue to the Late British/Old Welsh VN."[301]

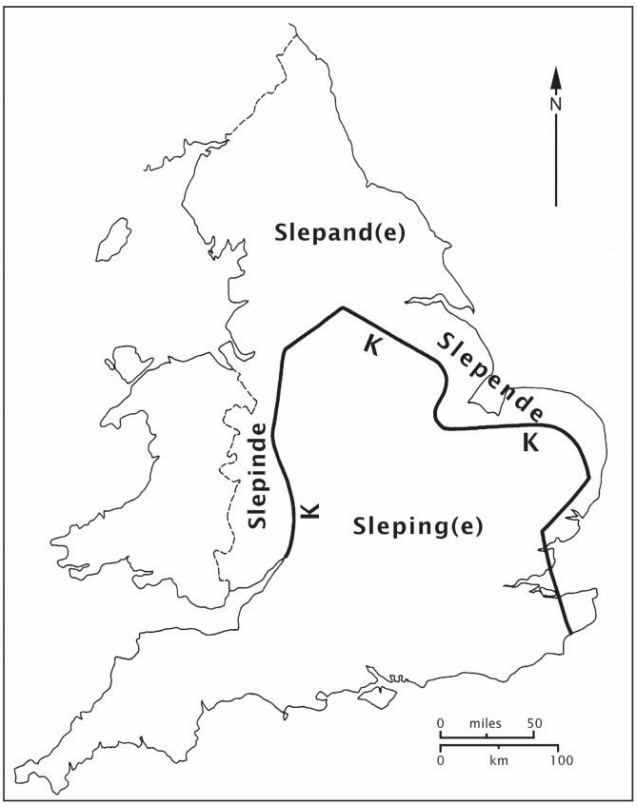

Fig 16. The distribution of the four endings of the present participle in written Middle English. (Map taken from Tristram, 2007).

[299] *Ibid*, p. 209. Orosius was a student of Augustine of Hippo. His work *Historiae Adversus Pagano* was freely translated into Old English around the time of King Alfred.
[300] *Ibid*, p. 211.
[301] Tristram, 2007, p. 211.

Periphrastic do

Another characteristic calque of South West England to become grammaticalised and gain usage in Standard English is the use in the verb phrase of the periphrastic *do*. In modern Standard English, this periphrastic *do* has two main areas of functionality which are distinguished by stress[302]. Stressed *do* is used to express particular emphasis: "I *do* want to," or, "I *did* know that." Unstressed *do* is used in support of negatory statements: "I *do* not know", and in question marking: "*Did* you know?" Additionally, though not in standard usage, *do* can be used to express habituality:[303]

> Student A: "It's raining again!"
>
> Student B: "Yes, it's Grahamstown. It *does* that."

In Middle English, it seems, the use of the periphrastic *do* went beyond those uses above, and also included, among other uses, indication of causativity,[304] as can be seen in this example:

> "*þi soule cnul ich wile* ***do ringe***. (I will make the knell of your soul ring)"[305]

Tristram points out that similar periphrastic *do* constructions are common in Celtic languages:

> "Welsh GWNEUTHUR 's/he does' in periphrastic constructions was extraordinarily common in Middle Welsh prose texts, much more common than in Middle English ones, especially in the form **VN** + **a** (construction marker) + **GWNEUTHUR** … it is important to note that this type of periphrasis involving a verb meaning DO also occurred in Middle Cornish and Middle Breton."[306]

Again, the implication is clear. This morphosyntactic trend in English, through its origins in English in the south west (Wessex again), and its parallel among the Celtic languages, can be interpreted to be further evidence of substratal influence of Brittonic on English.

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[302] Tristram, 2007, p. 213. The following modern standard uses of periphrastic *do* are elaborated from Tristram.

[303] This is a usage which, according to Tristram (2007, p.213), is common in South-West England, Ireland, and Newfoundland. I would add South Africa to that list, as the fact that this usage was not considered standard was something of a surprise to me.

[304] Tristram, 2007, p. 212.

[305] *The Fox and the Wolf*, 251, as quoted in Tristram, 2007, p. 212.

[306] Tristram, 2007, pp. 211-212.

Cleft construction

Another innovation in Old English that has been linked to possible origins in contact with Celtic languages is the cleft construction.[307] The cleft construction entails a complex sentence (in which a main clause and a dependent clause both appear), that has a sense that can also be expressed by a simple sentence. Cleft constructions are usually used for emphasis. Among the main forms in which the cleft construction appears, two are more common – the *it*-cleft and the pseudo-cleft. The *it*-cleft can be constructed thus: *it* + conjugated form of *to be* + noun phrase (or prepositional phrase) + subordinate clause; an example would be "It is Thomas who said it." The pseudo-cleft (also called the *wh*-cleft) is similar: "What he wanted to do was talk."

In both these forms, the cleft construction is undoubtedly an innovation in Old English and is also a feature which marks a notable difference between English and German.[308] Cleft constructions are rare in Old English, but not unknown. Examples of cleft-type constructions that have *þæt* as an anticipatory pronoun are to be found, such as:

> *Þæt wæs on þone monandæg … þæt Godwine mid his scipum to suðgeweorce becom* (That/it was on that Monday … that Godwin came with his ships to the south fortress.)[309]

Additionally, the following two examples show function and structure which are closer to the Modern English cleft constructions:

> *hit wære Swyðun se ðe hine lærde mid þære halgan lare and þone ðe he geseah on ðæare cyrcan swa fægerne* (It was Swithun who had provided him with the holy teaching and whom he had seen so beautifully in the church.)

> *Þa cwæð Iohannes to Petre þæt hit wære se hælend þe on ðam strande stod* (Then said John to Peter that it was the Saviour who stood on that strand.)[310]

Cleft constructions increased in frequency in Middle English, and diversified in syntax and function.

[307] Filppula, 2010, p. 441.
[308] Filppula, 2010, p. 441.
[309] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, year 1052. Referenced in Filppula (2010, p. 441), and Visser (1963-73).
[310] Filppula, 2010, p. 442.

When it comes to the origins of the cleft construction, it has been noted that it also appears in French (the *c'est*-cleft), and that its development in English might have been adstratal with French.[311] But a substratal Celtic origin (for both English and French) is preferred:

> "The Celtic hypothesis … seems to offer the most cogent explanation for the rise of the CC [cleft construction] in English. The main factors speaking for Celtic contact influence on English can be summarized as follows:
>
> 1. Cleft constructions are attested in English significantly later than in the Celtic languages.
> 2. Clefting is robust in even the earliest stages of the Celtic languages, probably going back to continental Celtic (Gaulish).
> 3. English and Celtic share other syntactic features that separate them both from languages such as German which are in the nucleus of Standard Average European. These features include so-called "internal possessors" and identical forms for intensifiers and reflexive pronouns.
> 4. Cleft constructions are both more frequently used and syntactically more versatile in present-day (and earlier) Celtic-influenced varieties of English than in other British Isles Englishes, including Standard English."[312]

Relative clause structures

Certain types of relative clause structures, Filppula argues[313], can also be argued to have Celtic roots. These are the 'zero relative' construction, also known as the 'contact-clause'; and two partly overlapping phenomena, closely associated with the contact clause: 'resumptive pronouns' and 'prepositional stranding'. The 'contact-clause' is a relative clause which is appended to the noun phrase to which it refers, without a relative pronoun (hence its being in 'contact'). The term 'zero relative' refers to the pronoun in contact-clauses, in which the relative pronoun is implied, but not actually written or spoken. An example might be "Cape Town is the city I was born in" (the zero relative pronoun is, here, an alternative for 'that'). The contact-clause occurs, albeit infrequently, in Old English. In Middle English and Early Modern English, though, its use was considerable. In current English, Filppula writes, it

[311] German, 2003, pp.390ff; Filppula, 2010, p. 443.
[312] Filppula, 2010, p. 443.
[313] *Ibid*, pp. 443ff.

has become archaic, and has begun dying out except where it is a particular feature of dialectical usage,[314] such as Irish, or Welsh Englishes.

Resumptive pronouns are "pronominal and anaphoric reflexes of the antecedent in the subordinate clause."[315] That is, they are expressions, the interpretation of which depends upon the context of the antecedent clause. They are not a feature of current Standard English, but are known in certain regional dialects – notably Welsh English, whence came this example: "That's the chap that his uncle was drowned."[316] Finally, 'prepositional stranding' happens in relative clauses when the preposition is left 'stranded' at the end of the relative clause. The above example of a contact clause, "Cape Town is the city I was born in", also contains a stranded preposition.

Both the contact-clause, and the resumptive pronoun are to be found in Old English. In Old English, contact-clauses are "usually found in relative clauses with predicates such as *hatan* 'to call, name', *wesan* 'to be', *belifan* 'to remain' *nyllan* 'to not want', verbs that are either stative or are used statively in the constructions."[317] Or, they can be found in translations from Latin:

> *…and sægdon him ða uundra dyde se hælend* (and told them those wonders the Saviour did), from the Latin: *et dixerunt eis quae fecit Iesus*.[318]

An example of a resumptive pronoun from Old English might be:

> *Se wæs Karles sunu þe Æþelwulf west Seaxna cyning his dohtor hæfde him to cuene*. (That was Karl's son that Æthelwulf, West Saxons' king, his daughter had as queen).[319]

Both the contact-clause and the resumptive pronoun are used in Middle English. "It was not until the *wh*-pronouns, which were capable of indicating case, had developed that resumptive pronouns gradually disappeared from standard language."[320]

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[314] *Ibid*, p. 444. Filppula is referring to Visser (1963-73). I am not certain that it is correct that contact clauses are dying out (unless, of course, they are another feature of South African English). Nevertheless, if one accepts the statement, as contact clauses often end with a stranded preposition, it might be accounted for by formal English tuition which discourages the practice. A quote commonly attributed to Winston Churchill (probably erroneously) springs to mind: "ending a sentence with a preposition is something up with which I will not put."
[315] Filppula, 2010, p. 443.
[316] Parry, 1979, p. 146; referenced in Filppula, 2010, p. 444.
[317] Traugott, 1992, p. 228; quoted in Filppula, 2010, p. 444.
[318] Filppula, 2010, p. 444.
[319] *Ibid*, p. 445; from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. In order to clear up the meaning here, Æthelwulf's queen was the daughter of Karl's son.
[320] *Ibid*.

In terms of origins, hypothetical substratal influence from Celtic is supported by the fact that in Welsh (both in current and earlier forms) the omission of the relative pronoun (creating a contact-clause) is very common. In Welsh grammar, this phenomenon is referred to as the 'proper relative clause'. The 'improper relative clause' involves resumptive pronouns.[321] Added to this, it is also interesting that resumptive pronouns are used frequently in English dialects in areas of particular Celtic linguistic influence: Wales, Ireland and Scotland.[322]

However, it is important to point out that the hypothetical Celtic origins of these phenomena are not fully accepted. Other origins have been suggested. Among these is the proposal of 'pan-Germanic' parallels to their development – pointing to apparent relative structures in Old Germanic. Nevertheless, as Filppula writes, even if relative structures from Old Germanic can be regarded as significant, it leaves unexplained

> "the gradual increase of this type of relative clause in later English, as opposed to German or Dutch, which lose it over time – not to mention the extension of the contact-clause to non-subject relatives in ME. Even under this scenario, then, English undergoes a clear typological change which distances it from its Germanic neighbours, which brings us back to the question of Celtic influence as a factor promoting such change."[323]

Phonology

Under the substrate rule (above), a substratal language tends to influence the morphosyntax and phonology of the target superstrate language. All the above points have been examples of possible morphosyntactic influence, but what of phonological influence?

One phonological feature which has been argued to have had its origins in Celtic is lenition (which is common to Western Romance languages, as well as English);[324] specifically, the loss of intervocalic consonants, followed later by apocope (the omission of the final sound of a word – such as 'kinda' from 'kind of'), or, more generally, the weakening of consonants (especially intervocalic) and the reduction of unstressed syllables.

This phenomenon is well documented in insular Celtic languages – an example that has already been mentioned above (though in a different context) is the Welsh word *ysgol* from the Latin loan-word *schola*, showing the lenition of the postvocalic (in Welsh) **k*, becoming

[321] *Ibid*.
[322] *Ibid*, p. 447.
[323] Filppula, 2010, p. 449.
[324] Hickey, 1995, p. 104.

**g*. The trend is observable in Old and Modern Irish as well as Middle Welsh (the oldest extant written form of the language).[325]

The effects of this can be seen in the tendency in English of phonetic blurring and loss in unstressed syllables. In the case of phonetic blurring, when the affixes to the word-stems lack stress (Old English stress was on the stem syllable of lexemes – see p. 15, above), they become less distinct.

> "the most obvious consequence of this is that the internal structure of words becomes less and less transparent with each generation of speakers. At some stage a morphologically complex word form is no longer analysable and henceforth regarded as an indivisible entity."[326]

An example of this trend would be the Modern English 'asleep', from the Old English *on slæpe*. This loss of distinctiveness in syllables is closely linked to the shift from syntheticity to analycity.

In most of the aforementioned instances of possible substratal Brittonic influence on superstratal Old English, there is not sufficient evidence, nor consensus, to conclusively say that any one of these instances is in itself enough to prove the point. I would, however, argue that, when taken together, they do seem to illustrate a trend in Old English. There was probably some level of adstratal influence (and reinforcement of pre-existing trends) from Old Norse in the Danelaw, but, as most aspectual tendencies arose in the south west, influence from Brittonic seems more likely. Accordingly, I think it is fairly clear that there was a significant substratal Celtic influence in the first centuries of Anglo-Saxon primacy in Britain. And so, one can say that the Anglo-Saxons did, during the period, certainly come into contact with Britons on more levels than mere violent conflict.

Tristram concludes:

> "My suggestion is that the English don't speak Welsh because the native Britons chose to give up their native varieties of Late British and shift to the emerging Old English dialects first in the British Lowland Zone and later in the Highland Zone over a period of some 300 years. In doing so, they are likely to have Brittonised spoken Old English on the level of phonology and above all morphosyntax. By shifting they produced OE_L, i.e. vernacular Old English or what we eventually encounter as 'Middle English' which only surfaced in writing after the Norman Conquest."[327]

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[325] *Ibid*, p. 107.
[326] *Ibid*.
[327] Tristram, 2007, p. 214.

Socio-political factors

In order, then, for this substratal influence of Brittonic on Old English to have occurred, it stands to reason that there were Britons living in Anglo-Saxon territories and speaking their Celtic mother tongue. But what sort of political or social situation would have prevailed in the centuries immediately after the Anglo-Saxon invasion, to cause the Britons to abandon this language and shift to Old English? Certainly not the same situation as prevailed in the England of the later Middle Ages. There, it was the ruling minority who shifted from Anglo-Norman French to the language of the ruled. In the latter case, it has been postulated that the language shift started with the children of the aristocracy learning English from their nursemaids, who, not being of the aristocracy, would not have spoken much French.[328] In the case of Anglo-Saxon England, it is obviously not going to be a case of Britons employing Anglo-Saxon nursemaids. One must look for another reason why the Britons felt compelled to adopt Old English.

One argument that has been popular (and ties in with the 'traditional view'), and which might account for this, is that the sheer number of Anglo-Saxon settlers entering Britain was so great that, in the area of present-day England, the Britons were simply ethnically swamped. So much so, in fact, that it became useless to speak Brittonic, as there would be no-one to understand it. This view was favoured by the prominent late-19th century historian Edward Freeman. He wrote: "there may doubtless be some little British and Roman blood in us, just as a few Welsh and Latin words crept into the English tongue from the very beginning. But we may be sure that we have not much of their blood in us…"[329] Some scholars from more recent times have supported this view, like Sir Frank Stenton, in whose view the racial and cultural swamping was achieved by means of a 'folk-migration'.[330] However, the thorough Anglo-Saxonisation of the Highland Zone, in the west and north (Cornwall is the only area in England where the inhabitants might think twice before calling themselves 'English' rather than 'Cornish'[331]) suggests that it is not necessary to assume that the natives were racially

[328] Bragg, 2003a, p. 54.
[329] Freeman, 1869, pp. 27-28. About Freeman, Bryan Ward-Perkins (2000, p. 520) writes: "Freeman was keen on this idea for good nineteenth-century reasons. In common with almost all thinkers of the time, he was certain that different moral and intellectual characteristics were biologically innate to different races. The shared certainty that nineteenth-century Englishmen had their immense and self-evident superiority over their Celtic subjects (in particular the Irish), therefore had to be provided with a racial and biological explanation. Furthermore, links with Germany were fashionable at the time, as was an ideal of cultural and racial 'purity'." In this connection it is also worth mentioning that the Victorian attitude to the Celtic languages was hardly one of admiration. Welsh, for instance, was banned from all schools in Wales – under pain of the lash. It was only in the government of the eminent Welshman David Lloyd George that this regulation was relaxed (Bragg, 2003a, pp. 278-279).
[330] Stenton, 1971, pp. 18 & 64.
[331] A fact borne out in April 2014 when the Cornish were given 'minority status' and would be fully recognised under European rules for the protection of national minorities.

swamped in order to explain the cultural shift: "Since cultural change on this scale could happen in those regions without massive immigration, it is clearly not essential to believe in a substantial movement of Germanic peoples, even in the south and east."[332] Besides this, as has been mentioned in previous chapters, the evidence against ethnic cleansing, while not necessarily entirely conclusive, is nevertheless persuasive – it would also be out of character given the behaviour of other invading Germanic peoples on the continent[333].

If ethnic swamping can be disregarded, one still needs an explanation for the language shift. For this, we must look at socio-political phenomena. It is, of course, telling that Brittonic was a *substrate* of Old English, not *vice versa* – ergo Britons were of a lesser social standing than the Anglo-Saxon newcomers. We require, then, a socio-political scenario which would encourage Britons to learn the language of the Anglo-Saxons, without the Anglo-Saxons feeling the need to reciprocate.

One such scenario is mentioned by Coates – enslavement. In this situation, the culture of the enslaved Britons is eroded. The notion of the Britons having been enslaved is not altogether implausible – the word *wealh*, as has been mentioned, though it originally meant foreigner, came to refer to both the Britons (Welsh) and *slaves*. He writes:

> "in enslavement in its classical form the masters make no effort to communicate in the slaves' languages; the onus rests on the slaves themselves to adopt, or adapt, the masters'. If slavery entails the breakup of communities, rapid mastery of the conquerors' language becomes necessary for individuals to form human relations of any sort; but if homogenous slave communities might have been retained, as is implied by the frequent place-name types *Walton* and *Walcot*, that would act as a retardant to language-shift and lead to possible 'slave-coloured' varieties of English."[334]

While this scenario would, indeed, explain the changes in Old English, it is not sufficient to explain the whole context. The assumption that the Britons were enslaved universally is not supported in the documentary evidence. The Law Code of King Ine of Wessex[335] does, indeed, make provision for Britons living as slaves[336], but it also makes provision for Britons living as free men, with the ability to own land.[337]

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[332] Ward-Perkins, 2000, pp. 521-522.
[333] *Ibid*, p. 522.
[334] Coates, 2007, p. 190.
[335] See previous chapter for a fuller discussion of this Law Code and its implications.
[336] Ine 54.2, 74, 74.1.
[337] *Ibid.* 23.3, 24.2, 32, 33, 46.1.

It is with reference to this Law Code that another possible scenario has been formulated to explain the language and cultural shift. The free Britons, mentioned in Ine's laws, were nevertheless very much second class citizens. They were accorded much less value in the law than the Anglo-Saxons – their *wergilds* being about half the value of those accorded to Saxons. It has therefore been suggested that these laws were written deliberately to incentivise assimilation of Britons into Anglo-Saxon culture.[338] If the Britons wanted to have parity with their Anglo-Saxon neighbours, they would have to adopt their culture, and, in effect, become Anglo-Saxons themselves. In order for this to happen – for the Britons to become Anglo-Saxons – they would have to have adopted both the culture (including religion[339]) and the language.

Ward-Perkins points out that:

> "the distinction that appears in Ine's Laws seems to be between '*Englisc*/English' ('us') and '*Wylisc*/Welsh' ('them'). Since Ine's people were Saxons/*Seaxe*, this very early use of the word 'English' (unless it is a later introduction into the text) suggests that it was the speaking of a particular language (already recognised as a single language and called 'English'), that, for Ine's Saxon Wessex, was the crucial determinant in ethnic identity."[340]

The scenario that is suggested here (where an invasive force moves into a region and after military conquest sets about changing the religion, culture, and language of the native people by means of legal and economic incentives, rather than at sword-point), is not without parallels in other regions.

Perhaps the most striking example of such a parallel came about as a result of the Arabic conquest of North Africa[341], and the accompanying spread of Islam, in the seventh and early eighth centuries. In North Africa, after the wars of conquest, the Muslim Arab rulers did not set about forcing the people to convert to Islam, or to adopt Arabic culture. Rather, and in keeping with historical Muslim tolerance of fellow 'peoples of the Book', Christians and Jews were permitted to keep their religion. This was, however, under the condition that they pay a

[338] Ward-Perkins, 2000, pp. 523-524; Grimmer, 2007, p. 112.
[339] Late Roman Britain was largely Christian (as witnessed by the likes of Gildas and St Germanus), and, by 597, the region of modern England seems to have largely abandoned Christianity, as the Pope clearly thought, because he thought it necessary to despatch Augustine (later to be called Augustine of Canterbury) to evangelise the Anglo-Saxons. Some Christianity had to remain in isolation among British communities in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, though, as the continuance of the cult of the Romano-British martyr, St Alban, illustrates (Ward-Perkins, 2000, p. 524).
[340] Ward-Perkins, 2000, p. 524.
[341] Initially suggested by Ward-Perkins (2000).

poll-tax.[342] As no such tax was payable by Muslims, this situation is very similar to the one implied in the Ine's Laws. Christians and Jews were given legal protection, but their social and economic status was inferior to that enjoyed by Muslims. The stimulus to change – to abandon Christian or Jewish culture and religion and conform to Islam – appears to have come from the Christians and Jews themselves, rather than from the Muslim rulers.[343] Of course, financially, as long as they paid their taxes, the Christians and Jews were not only unthreatening, but fiscally beneficial to keep around.

A parallel of this nature would be incomplete if the social and cultural phenomena were not accompanied by linguistic change. Arabic was introduced with the Muslim ruling class, and was imposed as a superstrate on the indigenous languages – Coptic and Berber (Arabic replaced Greek and Latin in this superstratal role). Assuming the situation in Islamic North Africa followed the same linguistic pattern as that in Britain, one might expect spoken Arabic to undergo a certain amount of structural change in the regions it was in contact with its substrates. And, sure enough, in the newly conquered territories, new Arabic vernaculars developed which differ significantly in their structure from the Arabic spoken by the original Bedouin tribes in Arabia.[344]

Again, the point is not undisputed. There are scholars who assign the changes to natural processes within the language – any changes that happened independently in different dialectical regions, including ones where a hypothetical substratal-influential language was not spoken, clearly had nothing to do with that substrate, and are thus examples of such a natural process.[345] Nevertheless, there are some trends in North African Arabic vernaculars which can be assigned to substratal influence. In the region of influence from Berber there are the affrication of /t/ and certain nominal patterns which are clearly not Arabic in origin. In Egypt, where Coptic was a substrate (Coptic died out, unlike Berber, but like Brittonic in England) but it was probably responsible for "some features of Egyptian Arabic, for instance, the *in situ* position of the interrogative and the construction of the comparative with the preposition *'an* 'from'."[346]

As with the substratal influence of Brittonic on Old English, the lexical influence from Berber and Coptic on Arabic is minimal. Again like the situation in Britain, the terms that were

[342] Speel, 1960, p. 382.
[343] Ward-Perkins, 2000, p. 525.
[344] Versteegh, 2010, p. 635. It is important to distinguish between Classical Arabic, also called Quranic Arabic, and spoken vernacular Arabics. Classical Arabic is the Arabic in which the *Qur'ān* was written, and was also the language of literature and scholarship in the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates (seventh to ninth centuries). Spoken Arabic was of a lesser status, and existed alongside Classical Arabic. Spoken Arabic is the language which would have undergone the structural changes.
[345] Versteegh, 2010, p. 636.
[346] *Ibid*.

adopted were more often than not related to some form of local speciality – flora, fauna, etc. In Egypt, the Arabs encountered the crocodile. They ended up calling it *timsāḥ* (after the Coptic *ti-msah* with the feminine article). In Morocco, when the Arabs encountered the lobster, similarly, they ended up calling it *azzefan* (after an identical term in Berber).[347]

Conclusions

By this comparison with the well documented situation in North Africa, it is clear that the idea that a similar situation could have prevailed in Britain is not implausible. I would, therefore, suggest the following series of events, based on the linguistic evidence. Before the Romans invaded Britain, the Lowland Zone of Britain had been partly settled with Germanic-speaking Belgic tribes, especially in the south east. They contributed their own place names, with a few exceptions, and language to the region. During the era of Roman rule, many of those speakers of Brittonic living in the Lowland Zone adopted, or were at least influenced by, Latin. After the departure of the Romans, there was some form of Anglo-Saxon invasion (however limited in numbers) I argue that, in order for the Anglo-Saxons to have become the social elite in British society during the period, there must have been some exceptional set of circumstances that caused them to replace the existing elite. An invasion scenario seems most likely[348]. There was a deal of displacement of population from the Lowland Zone into the Highland Zone – but this was by no means a wholesale movement. A substantial population remained under Anglo-Saxon rule. A portion of this population, those in the south east, might well already have been speaking a Germanic language not unlike Old English which was merely subsumed into the latter without significant trace. A further portion of the remaining population must have been enslaved (in sufficient numbers for the term for 'Briton' to become synonymous with that for 'slave'). A certain amount of substratal influence on Old English must have occurred in this context, as the slaves tried to learn the language of their masters. The remainder of the original population were neither displaced, nor enslaved (nor, indeed, already Germanic-speaking). They must then have lived under Anglo-Saxon rule (or come to do so by means of the expansion of Anglo-Saxon rule) in a socially inferior situation (even though they far outnumbered the invaders). Through a postulated series of laws (of which those in the the Law Code of Ine of Wessex are the only extant example) they were gradually caused to assimilate with the Anglo-Saxon culture, language and way of life. In the process of their adopting Old English, they exerted significant substratal influence on the

[347] *Ibid*, p. 637.

[348] In other situations, like contemporary South Africa, lawful immigration of populations (such as those from the rest of Africa) tends not to result in the immigrant communities attaining a social status above that of the locals. Individual immigrants may, but for the most part, the communities as a whole do not. In the case of the immigrant communities that *did* attain a higher social status than the native peoples, like the European settlers from Britain and the Netherlands, it was by means of military conquest and legislative enforcement that this situation was brought about.

morphosyntax and phonology of Old English. Some of this influence showed through in written Old English (OE_H), but for the most part, the influence (as with the Arabic world) was felt on the lower status vernacular Old English (OE_L). This finally became obvious when, after the imposition of a new superstrate language (Norman French), this lower status Old English vernacular was what survived and, while also being influenced by French (albeit mostly lexically), carried the Brittonic influences into Middle English.

Chapter 5

The Genetics of Conquest and Settlement

The written and physical records, and the linguistic picture are all (to use Aristotelean terminology) accidental properties of the inhabitants of Britain during the period.[349] What of the essential nature of the very people themselves? Who were they and how were they related to populations in Continental Europe? This is a question to which, until less than a century ago, it was impossible to provide any coherent answer. But one branch of the biological sciences has been used to shed light on the question. This is, of course, the study of genetics, and specifically, population genetics.

Broadly speaking, population genetics looks at the distribution and changes in allele frequency in a population. Alleles are alternative forms of the same gene – the different genes governing blood groups in humans are all variations on the same basic genes, and thus constitute alleles. Allele frequency, in turn, is the comparative proportion of alleles among all allele copies under consideration. The causes of the changes and distribution of allele frequencies are governed by a number of important evolutionary processes: mutation, natural selection, genetic drift and gene flow.[350]

Mutation is the process by which errors are made in the copying of genes during DNA replication and transmission, and result in new alleles. Natural selection governs the transmission of alleles to the next generation, considering the consequences of allele functionality – survival and reproductive success.[351] Genetic drift governs the transmission of alleles to the next generation, considering the consequences, this time, of random sampling of parents' alleles – this process has the greatest potential effect on small populations. Finally,

[349] According to Aristotelian ontology, a distinction can be made between the essential (*καθ' αύτό*) and accidental (*κατὰ συμβεβηκός*) properties of a thing. An accident, then, can be defined as is a property which has no necessary connection to the essence of the thing being described (see Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 1.4). To take an example, a chair can be made of various materials, may be tall or short, have three or four legs, etc. but these are accidental to its being a chair: that is, it is still a chair regardless of any of the variation. This holds true in this context especially if one is to accept the suggestion in the previous chapter that Britons living in England adopted Anglo-Saxon culture and language more or less of their own volition. These do not affect their biology: their essential properties.

[350] Hamilton, 2007, p.2.

[351] Of course, when one comes to hypothetical genocides and ethnic cleansing, one may be left with a case of artificial, rather than natural, selection – people from population *A* survived to pass on their genes because they did not look like the stereotypical *A*-type individual, for instance.

gene flow is a process by which alleles are spread from one population to another by means of the migration of individuals.[352]

In the context of the population of post-Roman Britain, I doubt that natural selection would be a particularly important consideration. New alleles, formed by mutation, however, would be very important if they could be conclusively traced to a specific population and time: if a new allele can be demonstrated to have arisen in southern Denmark not long before the end of the Roman period, and that allele is later found in Britain, then the obvious conclusion is that it was brought there by means of gene flow. Gene flow is important in general terms also, because if 'donor' populations have particular allele frequencies, and the target population's allele frequency is affected in a way that can be demonstrated to be the result of interaction with the other population, then the obvious conclusion is that there was a degree of migration.

There are three main possible models to account for the possible differences in the genetic makeup of England and Wales (that one must assume, if there is to be any chance of there having been an invasion). The first is, following the historical sources, the idea of a 100% replacement of indigenous Britons by Anglo-Saxons (who come from either Frisia or Northern Germany and Denmark – possibly both). The second is the notion of recurrent invasions of England from the Anglo-Saxon homelands over the whole period since the Last Glacial Maximum, after which the resettlement of Europe commenced. Thirdly, there is the possibility of parallel, long-term, settlement of *both* England *and* the Anglo-Saxon homelands from the same two sources: the Ice Age refuges in the Balkans and the Basque Country in northern Iberia. Of course, as with much in this study, the hypothetical genetic differences could very well come from a combination of these: parallel settlement, followed by a series of smallish invasions, and maybe some population replacement in affected areas.

Early genetic testing techniques

The idea of testing and categorising the composition of the population of Britain is not new – and dates from the 1920s. One of the first genetic marking systems that became accessible to physical anthropologists was blood groups. Oppenheimer notes that:

> "their lack of variety and their presence, at different proportions, in all populations make them generally useless for looking in a detailed way at differences and migrations. One of the earliest studies, conducted over eighty years ago, foundered in a morass of absurd relationships, such as

[352] Relethford & Harding, 2001, p. 1.

> Russians linked to Madagascans. Blood groups are still used in population genetic studies, but only as an adjunct to many other marker systems."[353]

Even so, there was an immediately apparent difference between England and Wales; Arthur Mourant, one of the earliest practitioners of modern physical anthropology, noted that there seemed to be higher rates of blood group O, as opposed to A, among the 'Celtic' peoples: the Welsh, Irish, Scots, Bretons, and Basques. He attempted an explanation:

> "there appear to us reasonable grounds for the belief that, prior to the advent of Celtic-speaking immigrants the British Isles were inhabited by a people whose domain had at one time extended over a considerable part of Europe and North Africa but who under ever increasing pressure from the east had been driven from their homelands."[354]

This view is, to a certain degree, compatible with some of the more recent work done involving mitochondrial DNA and Y-chromosomes.[355] However, not all blood group studies have been all that successful or useful.

Wolfgang Viereck set about trying to establish "whether there are correlations between the structure of the blood groups of the population and dialectical patternings within English."[356] He based his work on a map (figure 17) showing the relative frequency of blood groups A and O. A, he says, is "said to be the younger Germanic blood group"[357], whereas O is the 'Celtic' original. The map shows what looks like evidence of significant intrusions of blood group A.

Viereck concludes that "the correlations between blood group diffusion and the diffusion of traditional dialectal features are indeed striking."[358] But this conclusion is not without its problems. Oppenheimer points out that the basis for his argument is problematic for a number of reasons:[359] firstly, it is impossible to date blood groups. Secondly, it refers simply to blood group frequencies – not the more useful blood group gene frequencies.[360] Then, group A cannot be assigned the label 'Germanic', just as group O cannot be assigned the label 'Celtic'; group A genes are no more common in Germany than anywhere else in continental western

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[353] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 405-406.
[354] Mourant & Watkin, 1952, p. 31. His inclusion of the Basques in this category is interesting because it prefigures more recent studies which have found a close relationship between the Basques and the 'indigenous' or 'Celtic' population of Britain.
[355] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 407.
[356] Viereck, 1998, p. 169.
[357] *Ibid*.
[358] *Ibid*, p. 178.
[359] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 409.
[360] *Ibid*, pp. 410. The difference is important because whereas O type genes are more common, group O is recessive. Seeing that group A is dominant, one's blood type will be A if only one parent had group A genes. In order to inherit group O blood, both parents need also to carry O type genes.

Europe. Group O, on the other hand, is the most common blood group gene type anywhere in the world, and outnumbers group A genes practically universally.[361]

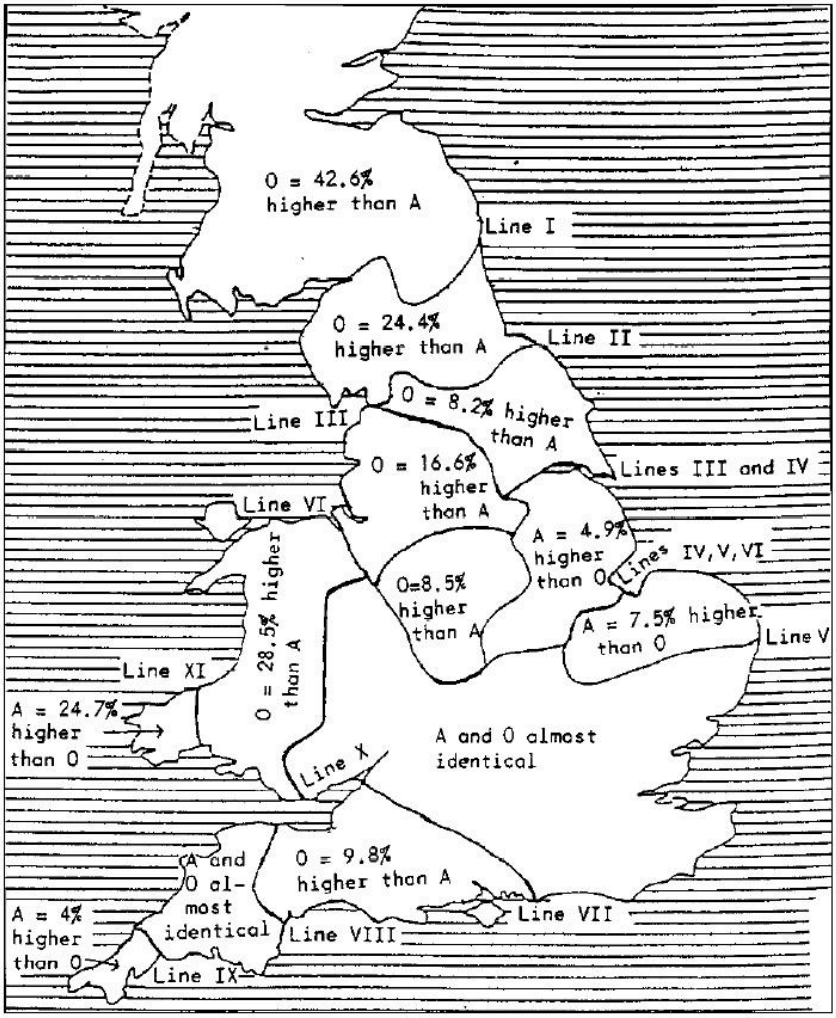

Fig. 17. Viereck's map, purportedly showing the intrusion of 'Germanic' blood group A into 'Celtic' blood group O. (Map taken from Viereck, 1998).

Oppenheimer delivers his verdict on Viereck's argument in this scathing comment:

> "He … builds a castle of cards… while the dialect variations are interesting, the genetic-linguistic correlations will inevitably end on the heap… [W]here Viereck's map misleads is in presenting blood group data (phenotypes) rather than gene frequencies (genotypes). Even in England, where blood groups A and O appear to be neck and neck, the group O gene actually still outnumbers A in frequency by up to 2:1… This argument would still be a statistical fallacy, even if the A gene were

[361] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 409. He writes: "In Western Europe, the O gene type dominates at 60-70%, and at slightly higher frequencies of 70-80% in the Atlantic fringe. The O gene type in fact greatly outnumbers the A throughout Britain, including England."

specifically Germanic or the most common gene in Germany were A – neither of which is true."[362]

Recent genetic testing techniques

The more recent work done, largely since 2000, on the subject has for the most part focussed on Y chromosomal data. The Y chromosome is very useful in the study of populations. This is because the Y chromosome is passed on uniparentally (down the patrilineal line), and is nonrecombining along most of its length.[363] This means, in effect, that the Y chromosome is passed from father to son exclusively, and stays more or less the same. The Y chromosome I inherited from my father will be practically identical to the Y chromosome his great-great-grandfather inherited from his father and so on. Because the Y chromosome changes so little over the generations, any changes (as a result of mutation) that do occur are usually easily traceable, and can be dated. Individual changes cannot, perhaps, be dated with any conclusivity on their own, but in the context of human migrations over time, the age of certain haplotypes can be estimated by observation of their distribution and prevalence. More or less the same is true of mitochondrial DNA, which is passed down along the matrilineal line. Tracing the Y chromosome changes back in time has led to the formulation of a family tree (see figure 18), at the stem of which is the most recent common ancestor of all modern humans – so called 'Y chromosomal Adam' who lived something in the region of 200 000 years ago.[364]

The first major study using Y chromosome data that will be discussed here is one conducted by Michael Weale and his team from University College London.

100% population replacement

Weale's team set about exploring three possible population processes: the simple splitting of the population and then subsequent divergence over time, a single mass migration, and continuous background migration.[365] In order to do this, they gathered and analysed data from a transect line that ran east-west across England and Wales from North Walsham in Norfolk to Llangefni in North Wales, and compared their results with further samples taken from Friesland and Norway[366] (see figure 19). Their choice of these towns was informed by the fact that they are more or less equidistant from one another, and have small and stable populations

[362] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 407, 410.
[363] Pritchard *et al*, 1999, p. 1791.
[364] *Ibid*, pp. 1791ff. This approach does give one by far the most highly defined genetic information (Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 412) but, by its very nature, looks only at male migration. Any female presence in the migrations or invasions can only be inferred.
[365] Weale, 2002, p. 1009.
[366] *Ibid*.

– they are mentioned in the Domesday Book, and are unlikely to have been affected by the results of recent population movement.[367]

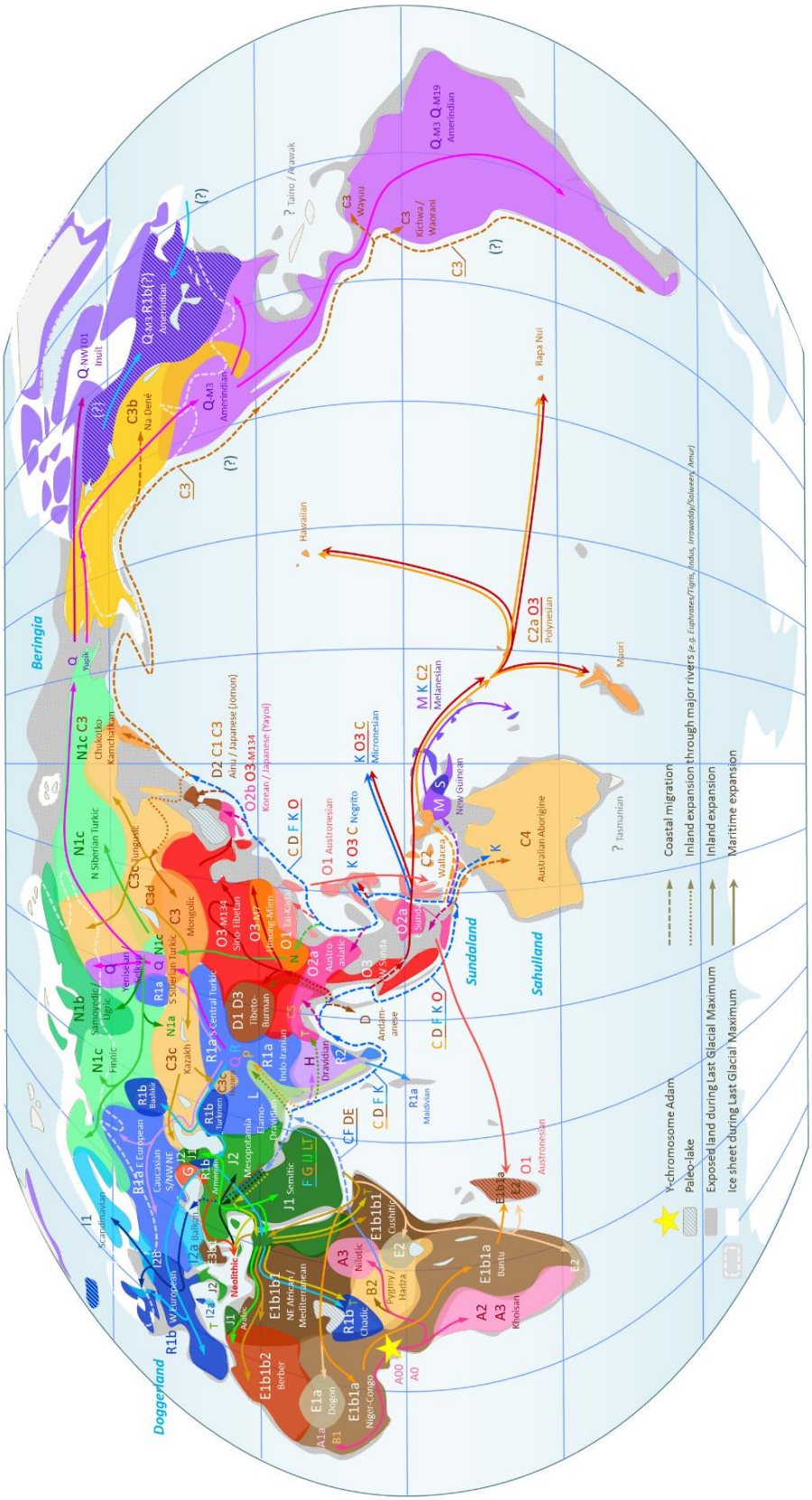

Fig. 18. World map of Y-Chromosome haplogroups: showing the distribution of the dominant haplogroups before colonialism, with proposed migration routes. The R1b group covering Western Europe represents the descendants of the Basque Ice Age refuge – see p. 104. (Map taken from Wikipedia).

[367] Weale, 2002, p. 1009.

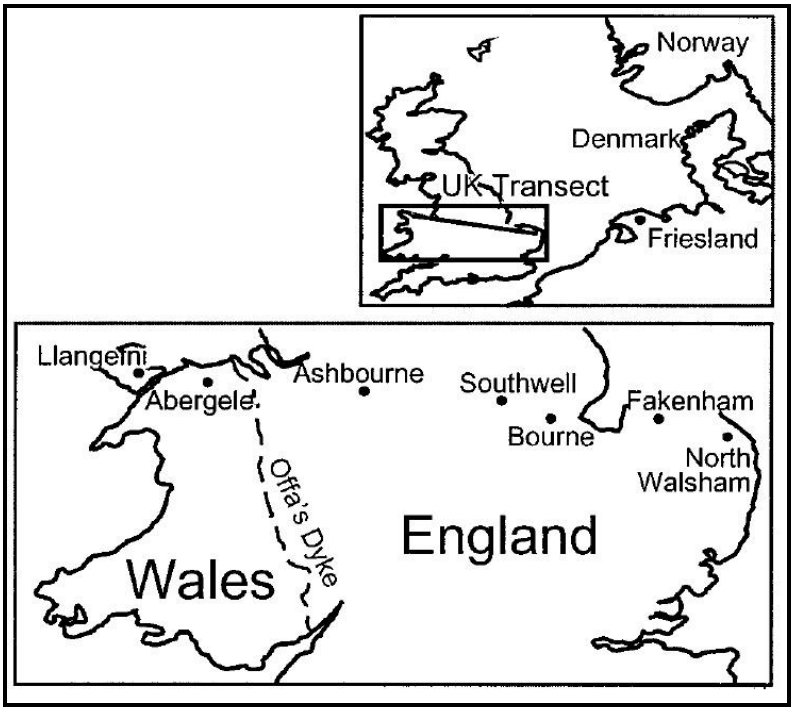

Fig. 19. A map, showing the transect used in Weale's study, in its European context. (Map taken from Weale, 2002).

They plotted their results, using Principal Components Analysis[368], comparing two 'principal components' of the Y chromosome in England and Wales, on a graph (figure 20). This led them to the conclusion that their findings indicated

> "the presence of a strong genetic barrier between Central England and North Wales and the virtual absence of a barrier between Central England and Friesland… The Central English-North Welsh barrier cannot be explained purely as a simple isolation-by-distance phenomenon because it contrasts strongly with the lack of evidence for a cline among the five widely separated English towns… The best explanation for our findings is that the Anglo-Saxon cultural transition in central England coincided with a mass immigration from the continent. Such an event would simultaneously explain both the high Central English-Frisian affinity and the low Central English-North Welsh affinity."[369]

They do note that their results could also be interpreted as the result of continuous migration from Friesland, assuming a level of bidirectional migration equivalent to 0.3%, sustained over thousands of years, and equivalent, they argue, to one in every six modern English males

[368] Principal Component Analysis is "a method that allows the graphic display, in a few dimensions, of the maximum amount of variance within a multivariate data set, with minimum loss of information" (Rosser, 2000, p. 1535).
[369] Weale, 2002, p. 1018.

being descended from Frisian stock, and vice versa. Given unidirectional migration (as would be implied by an invasion event), that figure rises to 0.6% over the period.[370]

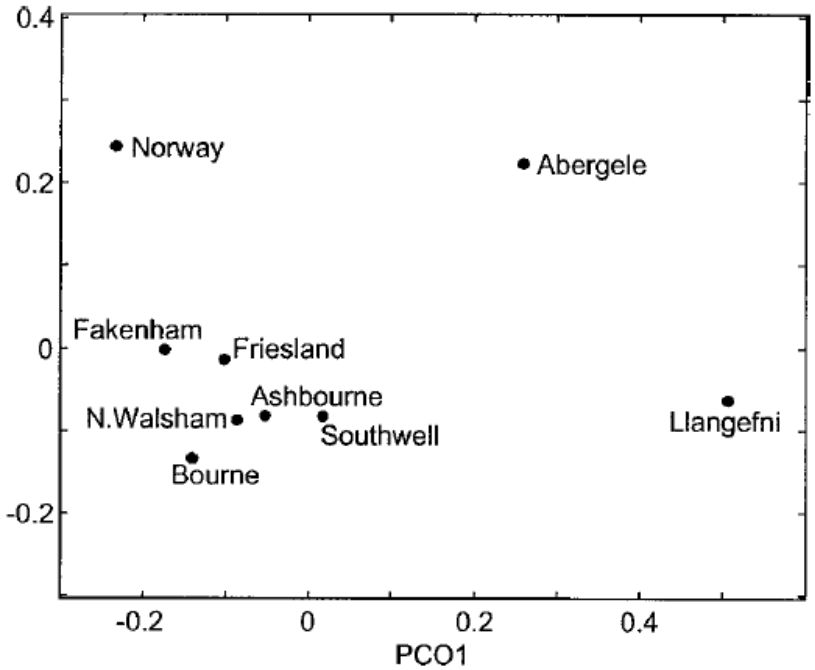

Fig. 20. Weale's genetic distance map, showing what appears to be a distinct affinity between Friesland and the Central English towns, as well as the lack thereof in the North Welsh samples. (Graph taken from Weale, 2002).

Weale's conclusion is, like that of Viereck, not without its problems. First among these is the small size and number of sample sites in Wales – two sites is probably not a large enough sample to get an accurate image of the Welsh Y chromosome pattern (unless the population really is very homogenous indeed – but judging by where Abergele and Llangefni are plotted in the above graph, this is not the case: Abergele is only slightly closer to Llangefni than it is to Southwell, which is in Nottinghamshire, in the Midlands).

Weale argues for Friesland and Norway being alternative primary sources for invasion and migration from the Continent. Interestingly, they do not include northern Germany and Denmark – a region often associated with the Anglo-Saxons, as the homeland of the Jutes (Jutland) and the Angles (Schleswig-Holstein). They also do not seem to have made allowances for the distinct possibility that the populations in these source-regions were already mixed.[371] Oppenheimer comments:

> "[T]he main Basque refuge group. R1b[372]... dominated Western Europe because [it] was the first colonizer to arrive after the Ice Age... [The Balkan refuge group] did not arrive in north-west Europe until much later,

[370] Weale, 2002, p. 1018.
[371] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 417.
[372] See figure 18.

> during the Mesolithic or Neolithic, and seems to have spread as a relative minority rather evenly across north-west Europe... In other words, Frisia, Saxony and England could have received rather similar secondary admixtures of specific Neolithic [Balkan] intruders, and then retained the same mix ever since."[373]

Another paper, written by Mark Thomas – one of Weale's team for the previous paper – takes the 100% replacement conclusion of Weale's study as a starting point and sets about trying to explain how that might have come about. In doing this, Thomas attempts to bridge the apparent divide between the archaeological school of thought (which, in his words, favours an 'elite replacement model' in which a small group of invaders achieved social, military and economic ascendancy over the far more numerous indigenous peoples), and the apparent 'substantial migration of Anglo-Saxon men into England', proposed by Weale.[374] Thomas argues that the proportion of 'Germanic' Y chromosome haplotypes in England could be arrived at by a means other than wholesale invasion. In his alternative model, he suggests an apartheid-like social situation

> "in which elevated social and economic status grant higher reproductive success to the immigrants when compared to the native population and a degree of post-migration reproductive isolation is maintained among ethnic groups for several generations."[375]

In this model, the currently advantaged group would see a proportional increase of their Y chromosome haplotypes, until the population became homogenous. Thomas proceeded to develop a statistical simulation to plot the course of such a situation as described above over time. In each generation, as the reproductive success took effect, the proportion of invasive to indigenous Y chromosomes increases. He concluded that, under the presupposed conditions, the proportion of immigrant Germanic Y chromosomes could plausibly rise from 10% to more than 50% in the space of, at most, fifteen generations (or, assuming twenty-five years per generation, roughly 375 years).[376]

In addition to the simple social situation, Thomas notes three factors that could have exacerbated the replacement of indigenous Y chromosomes: firstly, according to Thomas, when intermarriage does occur, the children are more likely to adopt the cultural identity of the father, and so decrease the effective rate of intermarriage. Secondly, any extra-marital procreation is more likely to occur between higher status men and lower status women (i.e.

[373] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 417.
[374] Thomas, 2006, p. 2651.
[375] *Ibid*. Whether or not this comparison is an accurate one is discussed below.
[376] *Ibid*, p. 2654.

Anglo-Saxon men, and British women). Thirdly, there is the notion that males in 'good condition' tend to reproduce more than females in a similar good condition, whereas, in 'poor condition', the opposite seems true – females out-reproduce males.[377] In all of these three cases, the tendency would be to favour, and speed up, the transmission of Anglo-Saxon Y chromosomes: any male children with Anglo-Saxon fathers, having adopted the culture of their fathers, would themselves be in the same privileged position to pass on their Y chromosomes; any male children born as the result of extra-marital matings would probably bear the Anglo-Saxon Y chromosome; and, assuming that the putative high social status of the Anglo-Saxons ensured that they were in 'good condition', as opposed to Britons whose more lowly status implies their 'poor condition', that also would ensure greater proportions of the Anglo-Saxon Y chromosome being passed on.

All in all, this argument has a certain degree of persuasiveness. It does tie in with both the genetic work of Weale, and the current archaeological consensus, without invalidating either; which seems very diplomatic. Thomas' suggestion of a social mechanism to account for the difference, and his fixing on an apartheid-like system, also ties in neatly with the *Law Code of King Ine* – a fact that is not lost on Thomas. He comments:

> "The laws of Ine, the late seventh-century ruler of … Wessex, distinguish clearly between Saxons and 'Welsh' (native Britons) and accord them different legal status even though the laws imply they live in close proximity… Such a distinction is unlikely to have arisen in the seventh century, two centuries after the initial contact. It is much more likely to have originated in the immigration situation of the fifth and early sixth centuries. On the other hand, this ethnic distinction of two intermingling populations and its formalization in law cannot have survived for such a long period without some mechanism that perpetuated the distinction. Physical segregation could have this effect, but this is not what the laws of Ine imply; therefore an apartheid-like social structure seems to be the most obvious mechanism."[378]

Thomas' reading of the situation is in keeping with my own to a certain extent. But, yet again, his analysis and conclusions are not free from their own share of problems. The most glaring of these to me, living in South Africa, (albeit possibly of lesser significance to others) is Thomas' understanding of the term 'apartheid'. In the above passage, Thomas seems to draw a comparison with physical segregation and what he calls 'apartheid'. I dare say Thomas' definition of 'apartheid' focusses more on the economic and social aspects of the segregation,

[377] Thomas, 2006, p. 2655.
[378] *Ibid*, p. 2654.

but I believe this needs to be made plain, as, in its original South African context, 'apartheid' meant very much the *physical* segregation of the races. Society and economics followed on.[379] Another aspect of the South African 'apartheid' which does not fit quite so comfortably in Thomas' apparent definition is the prohibition of mixed marriages which was enforced by law – rather different a situation from the one upon which the very crux of Thomas' argument rests.

John Pattison, in his 2008 paper on the subject, "Is it necessary to assume an apartheid-like social structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England?", pointed out a number of other issues which Thomas' study did not address. Firstly, Pattison argues that Thomas' approach to the problem (which did, indeed, involve evidence from archaeology and the written record – work done on burial practices and Ine's Laws) did not adequately consider the broader migration context, and required "a more detailed consideration of the historical, archaeological and linguistic evidence."[380] Similarly to my own concerns about the *specific* definition of 'apartheid', Pattison also takes issue with certain terms that require clarification: 'Briton' and 'Anglo-Saxon' specifically. Britons, as Pattison writes: "were not homogenous people, but a mixture of tribes of Palaeolithic Britons, Neolithic 'Celts' and Belgae."[381] It is worth noting, as is done above, that Weale's data (upon which Thomas' work was based) do not suggest that the Welsh population is in any way homogenous – the two Welsh samples are significantly more unlike one another than all the English samples taken collectively. 'Anglo-Saxon' also is problematic. The term 'Saxon', Pattison argues, was used generically by contemporary historical writers to refer to all Germanic settlers – this is certainly true of Gildas – and Pattison points out that, just like the Britons, the various Germanic tribes were not genetically homogenous either.[382] "It is misleading to talk of the Britons and Anglo-Saxons as two clearly different, homogenous groups: in reality, the situation was much more complex."[383]

The genetic nature of the peoples inhabiting Britain at the end of the Roman period, Pattison argues, must have been further complicated by the Romans themselves. The contingent of the

[379] The very term itself: 'apartheid', is an Afrikaans word descriptive of a state of being *apart*. The various policies enacted by the Apartheid-era government highlighted this fact: for instance, the Group Areas Act, which physically separated the races in terms of where they were allowed to live.
[380] Pattison, 2008, p. 2423.
[381] *Ibid*. It is perhaps worth adding a cautionary note here: Pattison seems, himself, to have fallen inadvertently into the same trap as the one into which he accuses Thomas of falling. His use of the term 'Celt' (albeit including the inverted commas) is problematic, as there is very little consensus that the Neolithic settlers were Celts – some scholars, including Barry Cunliffe, believe the notion of 'Celts', as a distinct Central European people who settled in Britain and are ancestral to the Irish, Scottish and Welsh, to be a modern invention. The Britons certainly spoke a Celtic language, and there were certainly settlers in the Neolithic period, but assigning the term 'Celt' to these settlers is potentially misleading, and takes one or more steps past what is evidentially sound (Cunliffe, 2013, pp.235ff.).
[382] Pattison, 2008, pp. 2423-2424.
[383] *Ibid*, p. 2424.

Roman army garrisoned in Britain in the first two centuries A.D. numbered between 45 000 and 60 000, of which some 10 000 men were drawn from the provinces of Belgic Gaul and Lower Germania.[384] This garrison force was maintained with drafts from the Rhine provinces, and Germanic mercenaries were used more and more throughout the period. They even attained high office in the army, as evidenced by the position of Stilicho, the general and power behind the throne of the Emperor Honorius (reigned 393 – 423). The presence of all these Germans in the Roman army in Britain must have had an effect on the genetic make-up of the province. Once marriage was permitted in 197 AD, and owing to the long period of service (somewhere in the region of twenty years) many soldiers lost contact with their homelands and settled rather in the communities in which they were garrisoned, marrying and raising families.[385]

Finally, Pattison argues that it is a mistake to focus on inter*marriages*:

> "the emphasis should be on inter*breeding*, inside or outside of marriage, such as that due to fornication, adultery, prostitution or rape. In these cases, it is unlikely that any resulting child would have taken the identity of the father, as stated by Thomas."[386]

Weale and Thomas both concluded that there was a large-scale replacement of indigenous 'British' DNA with invasive 'Germanic' DNA. There are problems with both, however, in that their genetic dataset was firstly very limited and their interpretation of it, as well as their presentation of the historical events was overly simplistic.

One clearly requires a more nuanced approach, with a much larger dataset with samples taken from over all of the British Isles, and other relevant locations such as Northern Germany and Denmark.

Less than 50% population replacement

This is precisely what Christian Capelli and his team, also from University College London, attempted. They radically increased the sample area. As opposed to the seven samples from Britain that Weale used, Capelli used fully twenty-five sample areas from Britain, and whereas Weale used a sample from Friesland and one from Norway, Capelli used samples from two sites in Norway, and from sites in Denmark and north-west Germany.[387] Interestingly, Capelli chose this combination of samples from Northern Germany and

[384] Pattison, 2008, p. 2425.
[385] *Ibid*. And extra-marital sex is, of course, also a factor. In the *vici* attached to the garrison forts, prostitutes must surely have been common – until 197 marriage was forbidden, but there was no expectation that the soldiers would be celibate.
[386] *Ibid*, p. 2424.
[387] Capelli, 2003, p. 979.

Denmark as the putative Anglo-Saxon homeland, and rejected Friesland, which went unexamined in his study.

Capelli's view, in general terms, is at variance with those of Weale and Thomas.[388] He is in favour of a substantial retention of Palaeolithic Basque-refuge gene types throughout the indigenous population of Britain – including England.[389] In his analysis, Capelli and his team chose Castlerea in County Roscommon in central Ireland ("a site in central Ireland that has had no known history of contact with Anglo-Saxon or Viking invaders"[390]) to represent the indigenous population of Britain.

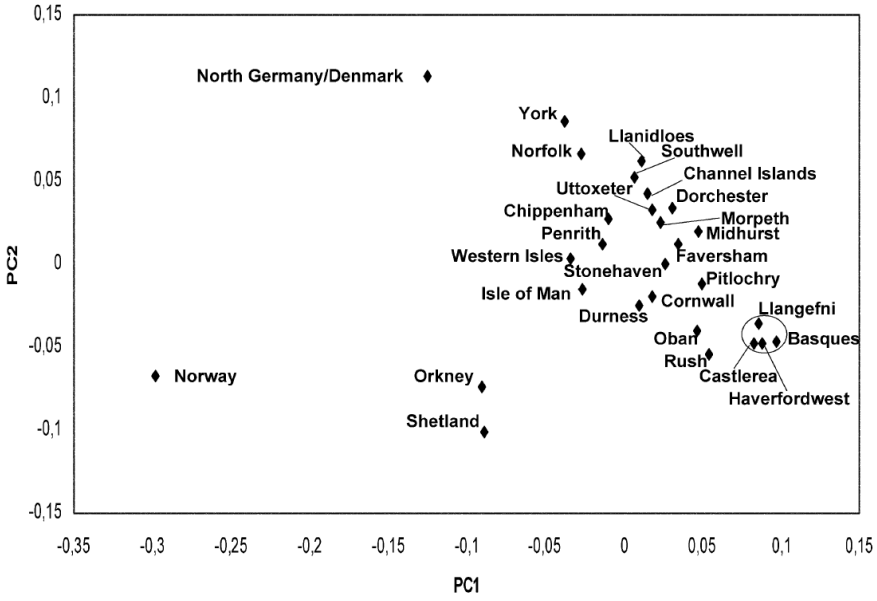

Fig. 21. Capelli's genetic distance map, showing the degree of Anglo-Saxon male invasion or indigenous survival, ranged from the indigenous Ireland, Wales and 'Basque' on the bottom right (circled), and the 'Anglo-Saxon' North Germany/ Denmark at the top. (Graph taken from Capelli, 2003).

Like Weale, Capelli also plotted his findings on a genetic distance map (see figure 21) by means of Principal Component Analysis. Capelli notes three poles in his distribution: the indigenous pole, including Castlerea and the Basques; North Germany and Denmark, representing the Anglo Saxon homelands, and Norway, by means of comparison (the Orkneys and Shetland Isles fall, as one might imagine, about halfway between Norway and the indigenous pole). All in all, there are similarities between the distribution maps of Weale and Capelli – the English sites are all relatively close to one another – but perhaps more

[388] I find it interesting that Mark Thomas is listed as a co-author in both Weale's and Capelli's studies. The conclusions the studies reach are significantly at variance. Thomas' own paper (which is later than both of the others) does bridge the gap slightly, but seems not to take into account the greater resolution of data available from the Capelli study.
[389] Capelli, 2003, p. 979.
[390] *Ibid.*

noticeable are the differences. Notably, the representation of the 'indigenous' population – they form a pole in Capelli's distribution, while in Weale's the two Welsh samples were widespread and showed no discernible relationship. Additionally, the rest of the samples from England show a closer relationship to the indigenous pole than they do to the 'Anglo-Saxon' pole, demonstrating that there has not been a complete population replacement.

Capelli's study shows a certain degree of Norwegian influence in the far north of Scotland and the islands, dealing with the 'Anglo-Saxon' Y chromosomes, Capelli writes: "perhaps the most surprising conclusion is the limited continental input in Southern England, which appears to be predominantly indigenous and, by some analyses, no more influenced by the continental invaders than is mainland Scotland."[391] Over the whole of England, then, Capelli and his team estimate the degree of Continental intrusion as about 37%. This figure rises to in excess of 70% in Norfolk and Yorkshire, and falls to somewhat lower than 22% in Sussex (see figure 22).

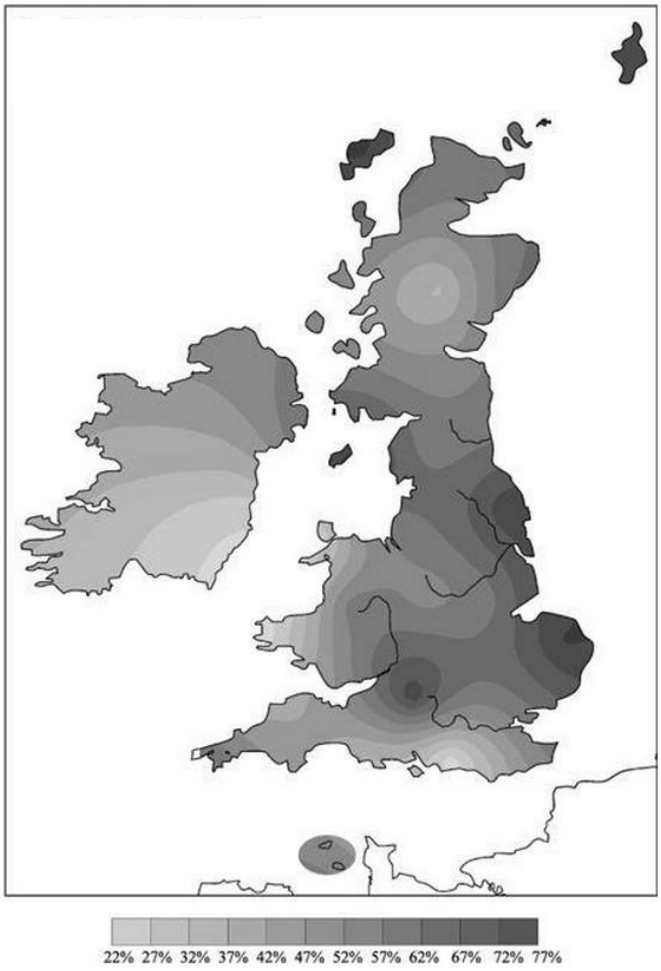

Fig. 22. A map showing the degree of north German and Danish male genetic intrusion into the British Isles, based on Capelli's results.
(Map taken from Oppenheimer, 2006).

[391] Capelli, 2003, p. 982.

After delivering his conclusions, however, Capelli goes on to issue the following caveat regarding his results:

> "It is interesting to note that the areas in southern England were historically, mostly occupied by Anglo-Saxons, while the activities of the Danish Vikings were mainly in eastern England. The results seem to suggest that in England the Danes had a greater demographic impact than the Anglo-Saxons. An alternative explanation would be that the invaders in the two areas were genetically different and that we cannot see this difference reflected in the Continental areas corresponding to Anglo-Saxon and Danish homelands. This would seem a difficult distinction to make, and it should be emphasized that our analyses assume that we have correctly identified the source populations."[392]

In the light of this admission, it is very surprising that Capelli and his team seem to have ignored Friesland as a potential source for Anglo-Saxon immigrants. They do not even include Friesland as a point on their genetic distance map. As it happens, although they did choose to reject a Friesian sample, they decided this because, after examining it, they concluded that the Friesian samples were not significantly different from those from North Germany and Denmark.[393]

In Weale's paper, the conclusion was that there was a total replacement of population after the Anglo-Saxon invasion, owing to there not being a significant difference between Frisian and English samples. Capelli's paper states that the lack of significant difference is between Frisian and north German and Danish samples, and then constructs an estimate of the size of the invasion based on the degree of difference they observed between the English and German samples. Oppenheimer poses the obvious question:

> "If groups of researchers with overlapping memberships decided to use Frisia as the source for migration in one study and obtained wipeout, and used [North Germany and Denmark] as the source in another study and less than 50% replacement, we may well be left wondering just why they chose different sources and different inference methods and why they obtained different results."[394]

[392] Capelli, 2003, p. 982.
[393] *Ibid*, pp. 982-983.
[394] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 420-422.

Towards a broader picture

What we need, then, is a broader-scale study which will allow us to put the various contenders for the 'Anglo-Saxon homeland' – Friesland, Saxony, the Netherlands, Belgium, Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark – into their proper context in the rest of Western Europe.

Of use, here, is a colossal study conducted in 2000 by Zoë Rosser and her team (comprising some sixty-three co-authors from at least thirty-seven universities from all over Europe) based at the University of Leicester. They used a vast dataset – far in excess of either of the datasets from Weale or Capelli's studies. Whereas Weale used fewer than ten sample areas, and Capelli used fewer than thirty, Rosser's team took fully 3 616 individual samples from forty-seven distinct populations, including a number from Britain and the Low Countries.[395]

The aim of their investigation was to determine whether geographical proximity or linguistic relation was the prime factor in the genetic relations of European populations with one another. They concluded that, on the whole, geography played the greater role than language. Thus, the fact that peoples spoke related languages – Germanic, or Romance, or Slavic, for instance – was no guarantee that the peoples themselves would be related. Of course, this is relevant here because, should the population of England, speaking a Germanic language, be more closely related to the indigenous population, and less to the Germanic settlers, that would be entirely normal in the European context.

The study's particular use here is in its creation of a genetic distance plot of European male gene groups, similar to those already discussed (see figure 23). It shows a clear and simple triangular distribution of populations, diverging from three poles. These three poles correspond with the predominant early settlers into Europe. The pole most predominantly represented in Western Europe is the Iberian refuge (Basque) pole; the second is also from the Black Sea/ Balkan refuge (from which immigrants moved into Western Europe up the Danube in the Mesolithic or early Neolithic[396]), while the third represents later immigration to north-east Europe and Scandinavia, originating from the Ukrainian refuge (which influence was mainly felt in Western Europe during the Neolithic).[397]

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[395] Rosser, 2000, p. 1529. The full list of sample populations includes: Icelandic, Saami (from Lapland in northern Scandinavia), Northern Swedish, Gotlander, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Mari (an ethnic group who traditionally lived along the Volga and Kama rivers in Russia), Chuvash (a Turkik ethnic group native to the region east of the Volga), Georgian, Ossetian, Armenian, Turkish, Cypriot, Greek, Bulgarian, Czech, Slovakian, Romanian, Yugoslavian, Slovenian, Hungarian, Polish, Italian, Sardinian, Bavarian, German, Dutch, French, Belgian, Western Scottish, Scottish, Cornish, East Anglian, Irish, Basque, Spanish, Southern Portuguese, Northern Portuguese, Algerian and North African.

[396] Cf. Cunliffe, 2013, pp. 86ff.

[397] Rosser, 2000, pp. 1539ff; Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 424-425.

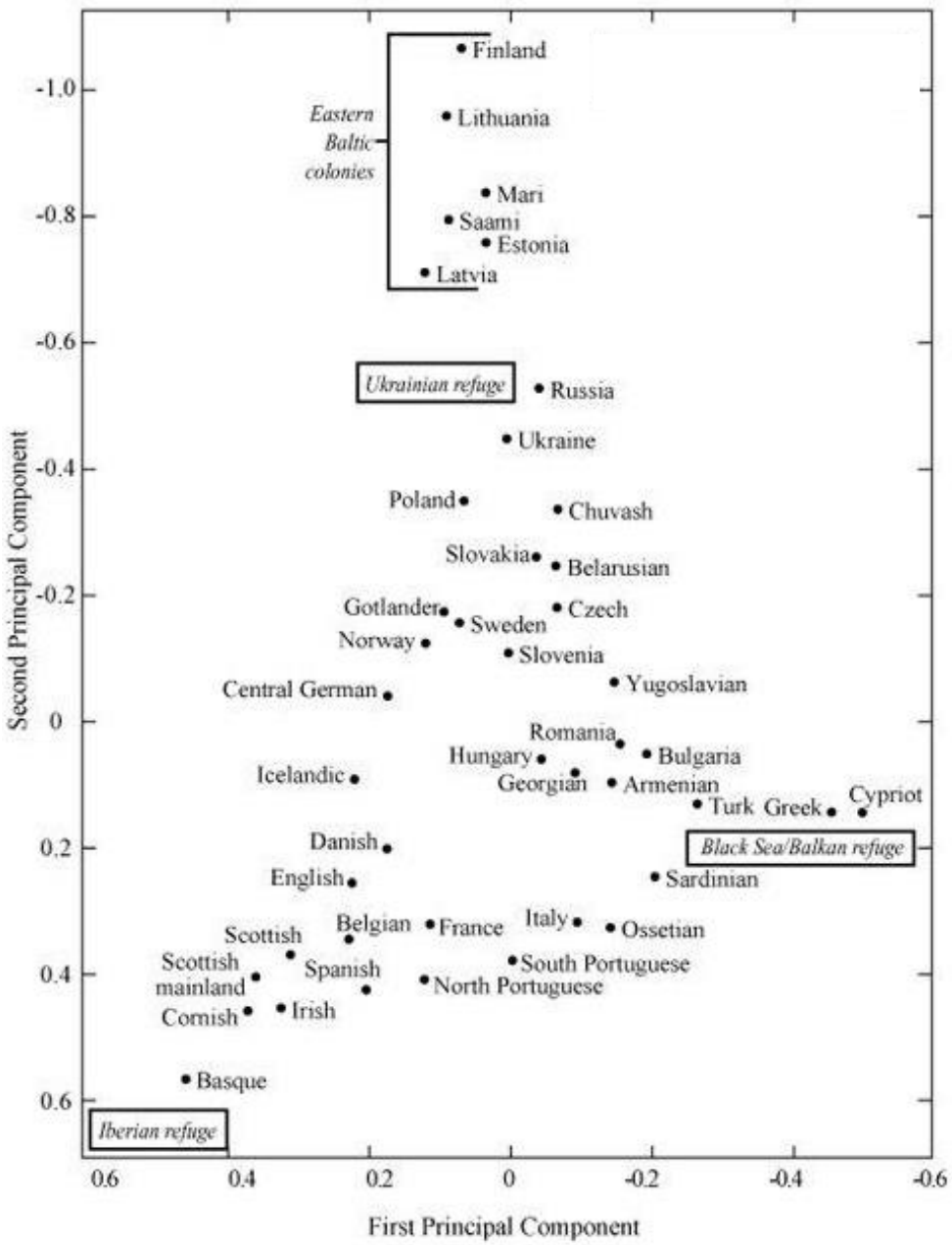

Fig. 23. Rosser's genetic distance map, showing the genetic distribution of Europe. Three poles are evident: Basque, Balkan and Ukrainian refuges. British samples are clustered close to the Basque pole. (Graph taken from Oppenheimer, 2006, based on data from Rosser, 2000).

On the distance map drawn up following Rosser's data, the closest populations to the Iberian refuge (other than the Basques themselves) are the Cornish, followed by the Irish, Scottish, Spanish, Belgian and English. The Norwegians, Gotlanders, and Swedes cluster quite closely together between the Iberian and Ukrainian poles. Germany, interestingly, is closer to the Norwegians than to the Danes and the British group. Perhaps more interestingly, the East Anglians (called simply 'English' on the graph) appear to be no more Germanic that the French, and rather more than the Belgians.

This lack of proximity made Oppenheimer decide to re-analyse the English dataset to study in more detail the genetic mix in the Low Countries.[398] In so doing, he included not only Frisia (absent from Rosser's study), Norway, northern Germany and Denmark (the 'usual suspects' as it were, when it comes to 'Anglo-Saxon homelands'), but also all other North Sea countries for which Rosser's study gathered information. He proceeded to use gene group markers common to the studies conducted by Weale, Capelli and Rosser, and included all the available data sets from the British Isles. He also plotted his results on a genetic distance map (figure 24).

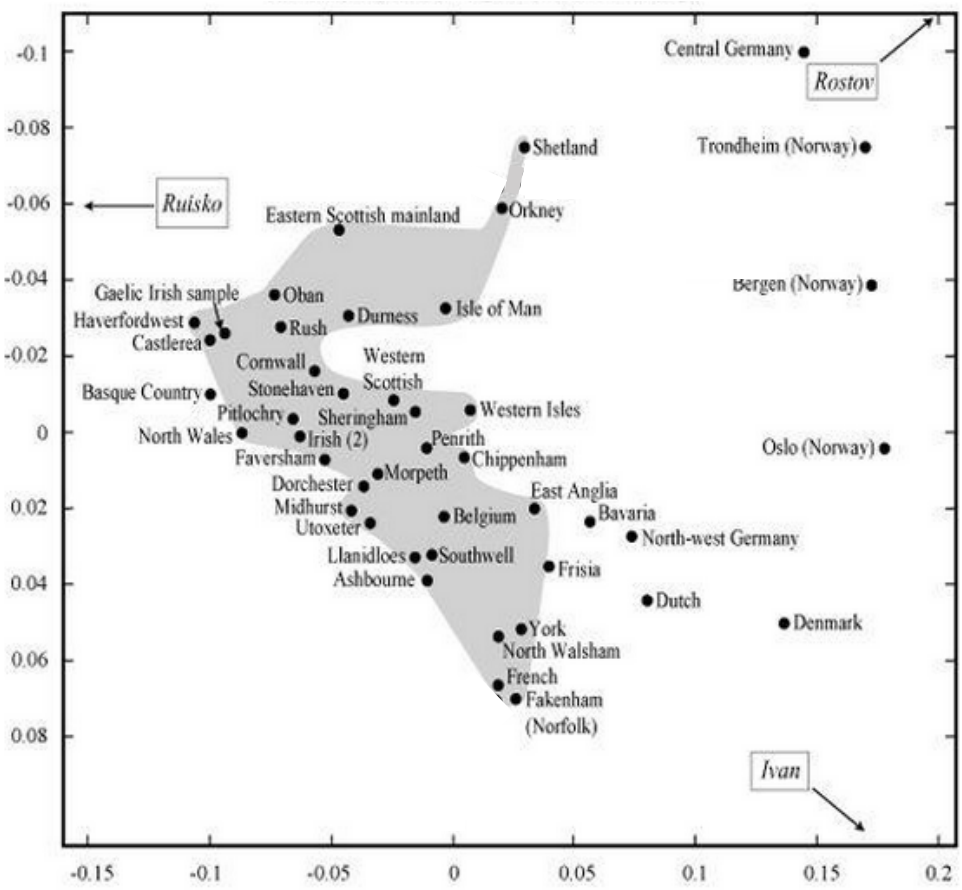

Fig. 24. Oppenheimer's genetic distance map, showing the genetic distribution of Western Europe and especially Britain (the shaded area represents the genetic envelope of the British Isles). 'Ruisko' represents the Iberian refuge pole, 'Rostov' represents the Ukrainian refuge pole, and 'Ivan' represents the Balkan refuge pole.
(Graph taken from Oppenheimer, 2006).

Oppenheimer's results tie in with all previous work, but shed considerably more light on the situation. Frisia, as we now might expect, shows very close connections with the samples from Norfolk and the sample from East Anglia. In stark contrast to Capelli's findings, Frisia had considerably closer affinity with the English samples than with samples from the 'Anglo-Saxon homeland' of Schleswig-Holstein and north-west Germany – which, in turn, was

[398] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 425.

further from Denmark than Capelli's study found (Denmark seems about as distant from north-west Germany as it does from southern Norway – and closer to the Dutch). If one redefined the 'Anglo-Saxon homeland' to include Frisia, north-west Germany and the Netherlands, this region is very close to eastern Britain – closer than it is to Denmark.[399]

Further to this, Oppenheimer's plot demonstrates an exceedingly close affinity between Belgium and the eastern English samples. So much so, in fact, that if one approached the graph with no knowledge of European geography, one might be forced to conclude that Belgium was, in effect, somewhere in the East Midlands, in the vicinity of Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire. This would seem to give a certain degree of credence to the ethnographic work of Caesar. His assertion that the Belgae settled in eastern England would appear to be supportable with this evidence – either that, or the Belgae were very closely related to the Britons to start with.

Oppenheimer comments:

> "So many independent indications of Continental similarity with England are what we should expect if the Low Countries of north-west Europe all had very similar colonization histories. This view of parallel regional development makes much more sense than Weale's interpretation of 'cleansing' by similarity which, if extended, would conclude that each and any of the Low Countries could have wiped out Britons, as was claimed for Frisia."[400]

It is essential, Oppenheimer argues, to try to develop an understanding of the deeper historical context of the Western European populations. To do so, he ignored all assumptions from the written historical record, and took a phylogeographic approach, aiming at reconstructing the genetic history of individual genetic lines and their movement from source to target regions.[401] His conclusions were that there were three 'broad aspects' of the colonisation of Western Europe and Britain since the end of the last Ice Age. The first of these is that all but a few per cent of genetic lines (male and female) seem to have been present in Britain before the historical period. Secondly, most of the British ancestors, including some two-thirds for England, were immigrants from the Iberian refuge. Thirdly, most of the colonisation of Britain in the Neolithic and Bronze Age was complex, but came mostly from the North Sea.[402] Eastern and southern England experienced a deal of immigration from the Balkan refuge (via the Danube and North European Plain) during the Mesolithic – this increased considerably in

[399] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 426.
[400] *Ibid*, pp. 427-428.
[401] *Ibid*, p. 428.
[402] *Ibid*, p. 429.

the Neolithic (and also involved settlement from southern Scandinavia). The trend continued into the Bronze Age.

After Oppenheimer's estimation of the ages for all the main British haplogroups, there were only three that were datable to the period after 1 AD. Of these, two were from Scandinavia. None, however, could be identified as either originating in the Anglo-Saxon homelands, or settling in Norfolk.[403]

The case for an actual invasion event in the post-Roman period might look somewhat weak; however, Oppenheimer comments:

> "This does not necessarily mean that there was no invasion from those homelands, Anglo-Saxon or otherwise; merely that I could not detect it by looking for and dating specific recent genetic founding events... There are several possible reasons for this lack of evidence, the main one being the short time period available to create detectable founding lineage clusters in Britain by random mutation. The existence in England of members of a common founder line originating on the Continent does not necessarily tell us when it came, unless there are unique new mutations in England that can be used for dating."[404]

At the very least, it can now be said with a degree of certainty that the old idea of Anglo-Saxons exterminating the Britons living in England is now discredited. There was no genocide.

Considering his search for specifically Anglo-Saxon immigrants by the above method practically exhausted, Oppenheimer then decided to approach the question from one last avenue. This was "to look for exact gene type matches"[405] between the British samples and those from each of the possible sources on the Continent by means of STR analysis[406]

This approach has pros and cons. The cons include the fact that this approach cannot make full use of available information regarding date, and there would be a deal of overlapping material between the various 'source' regions. The advantages, though, include the fact that they offer very detailed information from gene matches – which recent mass migrations would probably produce.[407] One other advantage of this approach is that STRs can also be

[403] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 432.
[404] *Ibid*.
[405] *Ibid*.
[406] STR (short tandem repeat) analysis is a method used to compare specific loci on DNA from two or more samples, measuring the exact number of repeating units. Short tandem repeats are repeating sequences of 2-5 base pairs of DNA. (Hamilton, 2007, p. 22).
[407] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 433.

passed on autosomally. Autosomal DNA (atDNA) is DNA that is not allosomal (that is, it is not passed on in the sex chromosomes – the Y chromosome and the mitochondria). Autosomal DNA recombines every generation, and is inherited from all ancestors (the proportion inherited from each individual halves with each successive generation)[408]. The benefit of this approach is that there is a chance to pick up ancestry other than that observable in Y chromosomal and mitochondrial DNA. To take an example of the implications, 'Y chromosomal Adam' is the most recent common ancestor of all living human males, by the direct patrilineal line. He was not, however, the only male alive at the time, from whom modern people descend. The other males merely failed to maintain the *direct patrilineal line* – they certainly passed on their genes to us, but not in any way that makes them identifiable individually. As there is a chance that more recent population movements might have left still extant STRs in common between the descendant populations, it was worth checking to see if this happened, in case, by some freak coincidence, there was an invasion but the men involved did not leave descendants in the direct patrilineal line.

Oppenheimer notes that he did not have much hope in getting any particularly noteworthy results, but he was surprised.[409] In order to validate the approach, he started off by testing samples from the Iberian refuge. Sure enough, the results he obtained were what they should have been, and did not disagree with previous conclusions: by far the majority of the ancestry from all of Britain and throughout Western Europe was Iberian (see figure 25). Trondheim in Norway represents the low point (25% Iberian ancestry). In Britain, the lowest percentage comes from the Fakenham sample area in Norfolk (59%), and the highest percentages are, as one might expect, in Ireland and Wales (the highest single sample area was Llangefni on the Isle of Anglesey, with 96% Iberian ancestry).[410] Conversely, the *total* immigrant population (from all time periods since the first settlement of Britain after the last Ice Age) varies from about 15% (or 4% in Llangefni) to 42% in Norfolk – an average of 30%. 30% is similar to Capelli's estimate of 40% immigration, but his estimate was of 'Anglo-Saxon' immigration – in reality, then, there is a wide gap.

[408] Hamilton, 2007, p. 42.
[409] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 433.
[410] *Ibid*, pp. 435-437. Interestingly it was Anglesey that was one of the last and most important refuges of British resistance to Roman rule and the spiritual home of Druidism (as witnessed by Tacitus in his *Annals*, 14.29). Perhaps, in the light of this consideration, such a high percentage of 'indigenous' descent is not surprising. Anglesey might not be the heartland of British culture it once was, but of descent from the Britons, it remains a stronghold.

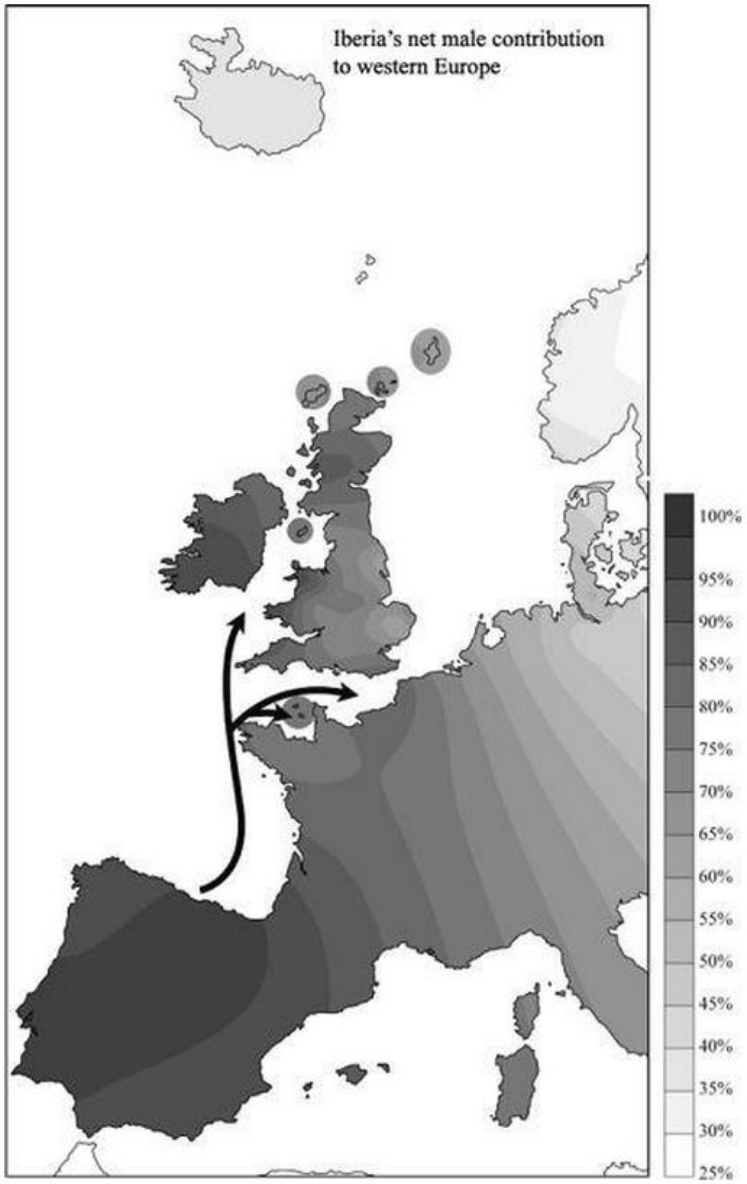

Fig. 25. A map showing the degree of genetic intrusion into the British Isles, from the Iberian refuge (for all intents and purposes, the indigenous population). (Map taken from Oppenheimer, 2006).

Looking then at the samples from the Anglo-Saxon homelands of Schleswig-Holstein and north-western Germany (the putative homeland, in particular, of the Angles),[411] as would be expected, the 30% falls away. But one is left with a not inconsiderable average of 3.8% across Britain, with that average rising to 5.5% in England (see figure 26).[412] These exact STR matches were found in England mostly at frequencies between 5% and 10%. This figure rose to between 9% and 15% in parts of Norfolk, in the Fen country around the Wash, and in the

[411] Denmark was omitted as one of these homelands on the strength of the evidence from the genetic distance plot (figure 24).
[412] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 438.

Anglian and Murcian towns of Weale's transect.[413] On the western side of Britain, the figures are much lower: Wales has an average of 1.5%, and Ireland 0.8%.

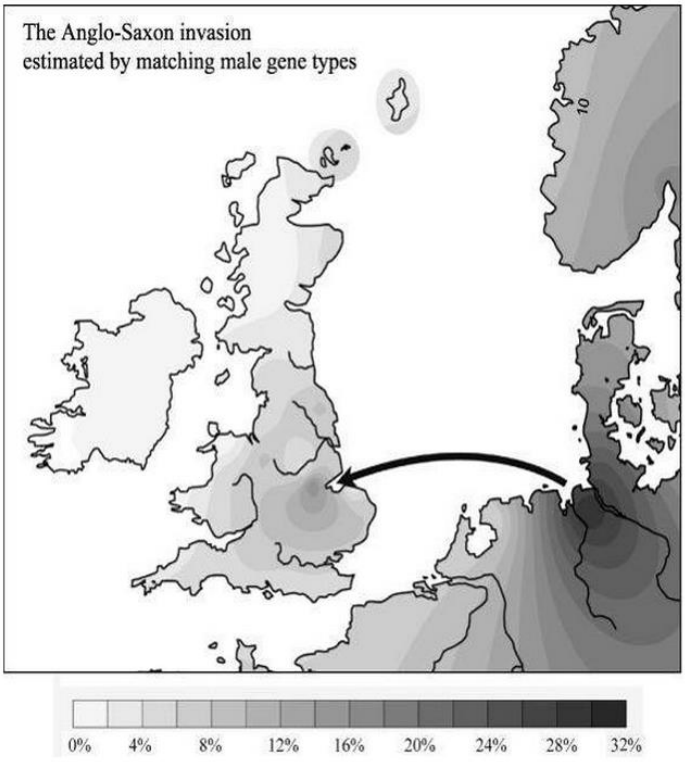

Fig. 26. A map showing the degree of genetic intrusion into the British Isles, from the Anglo-Saxon homelands of Schleswig-Holstein and north-west Germany. (Map taken from Oppenheimer, 2006).

However, perhaps strangely, the counties along the 'Saxon Shore' (c.f. Chapter 1) have a more or less uniformly lower rate of matches than the Anglian regions. They have an average of 5%, which is slightly lower than the national average for England.[414] The genetic evidence for earlier intrusions from north-west Europe into Wessex and the south coast during the Neolithic and Bronze Age would be consistent with a longer-term presence of peoples, in these counties, who – for want of a better term – one might as well describe as Germanic.[415]

Oppenheimer's ultimate finding (which I find convincing), is that there was an invasion of Germanic people (Angles, specifically) into eastern Britain in the early Dark Ages. He concludes:

> "Overall, 4% of Anglo-Saxon male intrusion into the British Isles (maximum 9-15% in those areas of eastern England which from the archaeology would have been expected to bear the brunt) seems more

[413] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 438.
[414] This is very reminiscent of Bede's correction of Gildas' assertion that the invaders were Saxons. Bede explicitly says they were Angles (cf. Chapter 2). Like Caesar and Tacitus, again, it would seem that Bede knew what he was talking about – we ignore the ancient historians at our peril (albeit we follow them *blindly* at greater peril).
[415] Oppenheimer, 2006, p. 440.

> reasonable than the wipeout theory. Assuming that it is a true reflection, 4% overall should still not be regarded as a minor event. That is a higher figure than [the] estimate of 3% ... for the entire Bronze and Iron Ages put together, and would represent ancestors for more than a couple of million of today's population."[416]

Conclusions

And so, the picture one is left with, after the genetic evidence is considered, is that, after the initial settlement from the Iberian refuge after the end of the last Ice Age, there was a background of low-level immigration from north-west Europe throughout the later pre-historic period (Neolithic and Bronze Age). By means of this process, the peoples who ended up inhabiting eastern and southern England and the Low Countries by the Roman period, were already very closely related. This, I would argue, would include the Belgic tribes, who were sufficiently closely related to their neighbours across the Channel to be basically one people, with one aristocracy.

With some notable exceptions, the tribes in the south east – especially the Belgic ones – were probably Germanic-speaking (one of the exceptions – at least at the time of the Roman conquest – would have to be the Boudica's Iceni who lived in Norfolk). The Iceni, had they kept their 'Celtic' identity until the end of the Roman period, would have been the tribe most likely to have borne the brunt of the Anglian invasion when it came. If they retreated into a refuge in the less hospitable Fenlands, on the western edge of their territory, that would place them exactly where St Guthlac encountered his 'British-speaking devils' (cf. Chapter 2). Could this be another coincidence?

Then, after the departure of the Romans, as Oppenheimer has demonstrated – and Bede recorded, there was an invasion of Angles from Schleswig-Holstein and north-west Germany. It seems possible to me that they may have had allies from among the peoples of the Low Countries, but these people were already so similar to the English, that their limited presence does not show up. After gaining a foothold in Norfolk, I hypothesise that the Angles allied themselves with the Germanic-speaking 'Saxons' who already lived in the south east. The combined forces of the Germanic-speaking peoples of the East then proceeded, over the next few centuries, to conquer the rest of England and impose their language and culture onto the locals. At no point would the Anglo-Saxons have been more than a ruling elite. I favour this explanation because, by the time the *Laws of Ine* are recorded, the Saxons clearly are in a

[416] Oppenheimer, 2006, pp. 440-441. Oppenheimer notes (p. 442) that mitochondrial DNA (passed matrilineally) would tend to support his conclusions; although less work has been done on mtDNA.

position of status and privilege, with the Britons very much an underclass. Something must have happened to put the Saxons in this position – if they piggy-backed on the successful invasions of the Angles, this would be a plausible explanation.

This chapter, and its conclusions, has dealt with genetic work that *has* been done, obviously, and not with work that has not. But it occurs to me that one possible shortcoming of all the genetic studies discussed here is that, however accurate the modelling, they are based on the genetics of the current population. It might well prove that a large study of the genetics of the actual remains of the individuals from the period could shed more light on the issue. I am not aware than any such study has been (or is in the process of being) done, and there are difficulties – the scarcity of remains and the fact that DNA degrades over time. However, should any such study be done in the future, it may well provide a more accurate picture, and remove the element of uncertainty that is unavoidable in statistical modelling.[417]

[417] A paper published after the initial submission of this thesis in March 2015 in the journal *Nature* by a team led by Stephen Leslie agreed broadly with the findings of Oppenheimer's work. Indeed, they estimated the percentage of Germanic descent in England to be somewhat larger – up to 40 % in some areas (Leslie *et al*, 2015, pp. 309-314).

Conclusion

An inter-disciplinary approach

What conclusions can be drawn from this broad-spectrum study of the various aspects of the available evidence?

What stands out to me, to my not inconsiderable relief, is that all the branches of evidence do seem to be more or less in agreement. They all tell pretty much the same story. If there had been one area of evidence which differed radically from the others (as, for instance, the linguistics appeared, at first glance, to do), coming to these conclusions would be altogether more difficult, and my objections to the 'greedy reductionism' exhibited by recent work would be more or less invalidated.

One can then postulate a reconstruction of the events. Following the retreat of glaciation after the last Ice Age, Western Europe, including Britain was colonised initially by people who had survived the Ice Age in the refuge in the Iberian Peninsula – from whom are descended, still, the majority of people in Western Europe. Peoples who had survived in two separate Ice Age refuges, started appearing. First came settlers from the Balkan refuge, who moved up the rivers (notably the Danube and Rhine) and arrived in the Mesolithic period. Later, during the Neolithic period, there arrived further settlers who came south from Scandinavia (originating in a third, Ukrainian, Ice Age refuge). Britain, then, long before the Roman period, was already culturally and ethnically diverse. At some stage, probably during the Bronze or Iron Age, the cultures coalesced into a more or less homogenous group that spoke a Celtic language.

During the later Iron Age, Britain was further settled by Germanic-speaking peoples from modern-day Belgium. These Belgic tribes settled predominantly in the south and east – where the mix of ethnicities from the similar original post-Ice Age settlement had produced a population that was genetically already very similar to the Belgic settlers. When Caesar was campaigning in Gaul and Belgica, the Belgic tribes facing him had support from Britain – and the Belgae paid for it by means of gold coinage – and when Caesar made his abortive attempts to invade Britain, it was predominantly Belgic tribes he encountered.

During the period of Roman occupation, in the later second century, the coast of Britain started experiencing raids from Germanic pirates from across the Channel. This precipitated a sharp increase in the deposition of coin hoards, as the people living in the affected region came to fear for their livelihood. The Roman state also seem to have regarded this raiding as a

threat, because they soon started the construction of the massive chain of fortifications along the coast, guarding, in the main, the particularly weak points of the estuaries and navigable rivers. This chain, I suspect, was rather more elaborate than is apparent, and was complemented by a string of lookout towers and local flotillas.

The system was called the *litus Saxonicum* (or Saxon Shore). If a slight but pertinent digression is permitted at this point, it is important to consider what is meant by the term 'Saxon'. I would argue that Churchill was correct when he wrote that: "[the Saxons'] very name... spread to the whole confederacy of Northern tribes..."[418] The term 'Saxon' seems to have been (in Roman usage anyway) general in its applicability. It is important to stress that the name *litus Saxonicum* was Roman in origin. It is known that even the modern Celtic languages use the term 'Saxon' as a generic term for the north-west European ('Germanic') inhabitants of England – in the sixth century, Gildas certainly did, and in modern Scotland the pejorative term 'Sassenach' is still used to refer to certain people from south of the border. Is it not reasonable, then to surmise that the Romans themselves developed this habit? It is worth pointing out that, among the historical sources discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the term 'Saxon' appears in the sources that were Roman or Celtic in origin. The sources which had authors, or at least information, from the Germanic-speaking peoples themselves, are very careful to differentiate between the Germanic peoples. The Romans, then, seem to have simply called anyone who fitted the broad description of Germanic-speakers from the Low Countries 'Saxons'.

It also seems reasonable that, if the Romans called these people 'Saxons' after the Continental Saxons of Saxony, the British 'Saxons' might just have adopted the label – they had lived under Roman rule for long enough after all. A similar situation might apply to the Americas. When the European settlers first came to interact with the native peoples, owing to their appearance, they mistakenly assumed them to be Indian. They were, of course, nothing of the sort, but the label stuck. Admittedly, it is not an exact parallel, because the 'Indian' label is bitterly resented by the Native Americans. However, the English Saxons would have been much more closely related to the Continental Saxons than the two peoples assigned the label 'Indian' – the English 'Saxons' probably spoke a Germanic language not unlike that spoken by their Continental counterparts.

During the Roman period, then, it seems reasonable to me that the affinity between peoples from either side of the Channel led the coastal areas of the South East to start being called the 'Saxon Shore'. When a coastal defensive network was established along this stretch of coast, it inherited the common Roman name. In addition, it seems reasonable to expect a certain

[418] Churchill, 1956, p. 51.

degree of low-level immigration of Germanic soldiery over the period (perhaps significantly low-level, and ethnically diffuse, so as not to leave a distinguishable trace).

Returning to the reconstruction, the raiding that had begun in the late second century was frustrated by the defensive network that was developed to guard against it. However, as the Roman state started collapsing, and the coastal defences declined, the threat of raiding increased.

In 410, the Roman state abandoned the Romano-Britons to their fate, telling them to see to their own defences. Raiding continued. St Germanus was able to ameliorate the situation briefly by winning the so-called 'Alleluia victory', but this did not last long. Gildas and Bede tell us that Vortigern, chief among the tribal kings in post-Roman Britain, invited Anglian mercenaries to come and help defend the kingdom against the raiders. It is recorded that these mercenaries then turned on their paymasters. Whether or not that happened in reality is a matter of debate, but what can be said with certainty is that there was an invasion (of some sort) of Angles from northern Germany into Norfolk. As mentioned before, I suspect that after gaining this foothold, the Angles allied themselves with the other Germanic-speaking people already on the island: the Saxons. The combined forces of the Germanic-speaking peoples of the East then proceeded, over the next few centuries, to dominate the rest of England, spreading their culture, language and architecture. The regions they controlled retained their conquerors' specific identities for a while – Wessex, Sussex and Essex were Saxon; Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria were Anglian.

These Germanic victors became the ruling class. There was no extermination – merely a change in the rulers. As exhibited in the *Laws of King Ine*, the Anglo-Saxons (as they might as well now be called) lived with Britons in the same society, but were of an upper class. They were not, however, against the idea of acculturation and assimilation, and accepted as 'Anglo-Saxon' anyone who was willing to abide by their culture and speak their language. The language itself started undergoing a series of morphosyntactic and phonological changes, as people who previously spoke Brittonic brought their old grammatical structures and accent to their new language. By the time Alfred the Great led Wessex to victory against the Danish invaders, these ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences had all but disappeared – the process of acculturation and assimilation was complete.

The last legacy of the Germanic conquest of England did not truly come into historical records until the development of Middle English after the Norman Conquest in the late eleventh century. When the influence of the new ruling class and the new aristocratic French language stripped away the veneer of Old English (which was by that time a scholarly language used in high-status surroundings and official records – but not by the common

people themselves), it left behind the vernacular language that the majority of the people themselves spoke – in which those Celtic influences were to be seen.

It may seem that this reconstruction, together with many of the conclusions of this thesis, is similar to the traditional account of events. There are important differences, but there are also many similarities. What then have we learnt? I would argue that the conclusions reached are no less valid for their similarity to the traditional view, as they are based on the study of a number of very different areas of evidence. Coming, as I do, from a background of the Classics, where a good deal of emphasis is placed on the literature of the ancient world, I am essentially conservative in my approach to ancient written sources. I tend not immediately to assume the historian was mistaken, or lying, merely because evidence has yet to be found to confirm what he says. I find it satisfying, therefore, that my conclusions reached from other disciplines do tally with these written sources. Of course, it must be stressed that, as (especially) archaeology and genetics are rapidly advancing fields, while the current available information does seem to support my argument, it is possible that future studies in these fields may not support it to quite the same extent. If this does occur, then, of course, the question will need to be re-examined.

Appendix

Extracts from the Original Sources

1. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historia Romana*, 28.2.12-13.

[12] nec quisquam adventum eorum cavere poterat inopinum, non destinata sed varia petentium et longinqua, et quoquo ventus duxerat, inrumpentium: quam ob causam prae ceteris hostibus Saxones timentur ut repentini. et quamlibet coniurati multorum opes attriverint, oestroque concepti furosis exagitati caedes edidere luctificas, sanguinis nihilo minus avidi quam praedarum, sed ne per minutias gesta narrando ...operis inpediam cursum, id unum sufficiet eorum exitiale poni commentum.

[13] quaesitus in unum impiorum [hominum] globus, imitatus rationalis officium ipsumque iudicem, vespertinis tenebris lugubre clamante praecone civitatem ingressi, ambitiosam domum cuiusdam primatis ut proscripti iussique interfici cum gladiis obsederunt, raptaque suppellectili pretiosa, quia subito perculsi familiares hebetatis sensibus non defenderant dominum, caesis pluribus ante revolutam lucem gressu discessere veloci.

2. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.11.

Anno ab incarnatione Domini CCCCVII, tenente imperium Honorio Augusto, filio Theodosii minoris, loco ab Augusto X.LIIII, ante biennium Romanae inruptionis, quae per Halaricum regem Gothorum facta est, cum gentes Halanorum, Sueuorum, Uandalorum, multaeque cum his aliae, protritis Francis, transito Hreno, totas per Gallias saeuirent, apud Brittanias Gratianus municeps tyrannus creatur, et occiditur. Huius loco Constantinus ex infima militia propter solam spem nominis sine merito uirtutis eligitur; qui continuo, ut inuasit imperium, in Gallias transiit. Ibi saepe a barbaris incertis foederibus inlusus, detrimento magis reipuplicae fuit; unde mox, iubente Honorio, Constantius comes in Galliam cum exercitu profectus, apud Arelatem ciuitatem eum clausit, cepit, occidit; Constantemque filium eius, quem ex monacho Caesarem fecerat, Gerontius comes suus apud Uiennam interfecit.

Fracta est autem Roma a Gothis anno milesimo CLXIIII suae conditionis, ex quo tempore Romani in Brittania regnare cessarunt, post annos ferme CCCCLXX, ex quo Gaius Iulius Caesar eandem insulam adiit. Habitabant autem intra uallum, quod Seuerum trans insulam fecisse commemorauimus, ad plagam meridianam, quod ciuitates, farus, pontes, et stratae ibidem factae usque hodie testantur; ceterum ulteriores Brittaniae partes, uel eas etiam, quae ultra Brittaniam sunt, insulas iure dominandi possidebant.

3. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.13.

Anno dominicae incarnationis CCCCXXIII, Theodosius iunior post Honorium XLV ab Augusto regnum suscipiens, XX et VI annis tenuit; cuius anno imperii VIII Palladius ad Scottos in Christum credentes a pontifice Romanae ecclesiae Celestino primus mittitur episcopus. Anno autem regni eius XXIII, Aetius uir inlustris, qui et patricius fuit, tertium cum Simmacho gessit consulatum. Ad hunc pauperculae Brettonum reliquiae mittunt epistulam, cuius hoc principium est: 'Aetio ter consuli gemitus Brittanorum;' et in processu epistulae ita suas calamitates explicant: 'Repellunt barbari ad mare, repellit mare ad barbaros; inter haec oriuntur duo genera funerum, aut iugulamur, aut mergimur.' Neque haec tamen agentes quicquam ab illo auxilii impetrare quiuerunt, utpote qui grauissimis eo tempore bellis cum Blaedla et Attila regibus Hunorum erat occupatus; et quamuis anno ante hunc proximo Blaedla Attilae fratris sui sit interemtus insidiis, Attila tamen ipse adeo intolerabilis reipuplicae remansit hostis, ut totam pene Europam, excisis inuasisque ciuitatibus atque castellis, conroderet. Quin et hisdem temporibus fames Constantinopolim inuasit; nec mora pestis secuta est; sed et plurimi eiusdem urbis muri cum LVII turribus conruerunt; multis quoque ciuitatibus conlapsis, fames et aerum pestifer odor plura hominum milia iumentorumque deleuit.

4. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.15.

anno ab incarnatione Domini CCCCXLVIIII Marcianus cum Ualentiniano XLVI ab Augusto regnum adeptus, VII annis tenuit. Tunc Anglorum siue Saxonum gens, inuitata a rege praefato, Brittaniam tribus longis nauibus aduehitur, et in orientali parte insulae, iubente eodem rege, locum manendi, quasi pro patria pugnatura, re autem uera hanc expugnatura, suscipit. Inito ergo certamine cum hostibus, qui ab aquilone ad aciem uenerant, uictoriam sumsere Saxones. Quod ubi domi nuntiatum est, simul et insulae fertilitas, ac segnitia Brettonum; mittitur confestim illo classis prolixior, armatorum ferens manum fortiorem, quae praemissae adiuncta cohorti inuincibilem fecit exercitum. Susceperunt ergo, qui aduenerant, donantibus Brittanis, locum habitationis inter eos, ea condicione, ut hi pro patriae pace et salute contra aduersarios militarent, illi militantibus debita stipendia conferrent.

Aduenerant autem de tribus Germaniae populis fortioribus, id est Saxonibus, Anglis, Iutis. De Iutarum origine sunt Cantuarii et Uictuarii, hoc est ea gens, quae Uectam tenet insulam, et ea, quae usque hodie in prouincia Occidentalium Saxonum Iutarum natio nominatur, posita contra ipsam insulam Uectam. De Saxonibus, id est ea regione, quae nunc Antiquorum Saxonum cognominatur, uenere Orientales Saxones, Meridiani Saxones, Occidui Saxones. Porro de Anglis, hoc est de illa patria, quae Angulus dicitur, et ab eo tempore usque hodie

manere desertus inter prouincias Iutarum et Saxonum perhibetur, Orientales Angli, Mediterranei Angli, Merci, tota Nordanhymbrorum progenies, id est illarum gentium, quae ad Boream Humbri fluminis inhabitant, ceterique Anglorum populi sunt orti. Duces fuisse perhibentur eorum primi duo fratres Hengist et Horsa; e quibus Horsa postea occisus in bello a Brettonibus, hactenus in orientalibus Cantiae partibus monumentum habet suo nomine insigne. Erant autem filii Uictgilsi, cuius pater Uitta, cuius pater Uecta, cuius pater Uoden, de cuius stirpe multarum prouinciarum regium genus originem duxit.

Non mora ergo, confluentibus certatim in insulam gentium memoratarum cateruis, grandescere populus coepit aduenarum, ita ut ipsis quoque, qui eos aduocauerant, indigenis essent terrori. Tum subito inito ad tempus foedere cum Pictis, quos longius iam bellando pepulerant, in socios arma uertere incipiunt. Et primum quidem annonas sibi eos affluentius ministrare cogunt, quaerentesque occasionem diuortii, protestantur, nisi profusior sibi alimentorum copia daretur, se cuncta insulae loca rupto foedere uastaturos. Neque aliquanto segnius minas effectibus prosequuntur. Siquidem, ut breuiter dicam, accensus manibus paganorum ignis, iustas de sceleribus populi Dei ultiones expetiit, non illius inpar, qui quondam a Chaldaeis succensus, Hierosolymorum moenia, immo aedificia cuncta consumsit. Sic enim et hic agente impio uictore, immo disponente iusto Iudice, proximas quasque ciuitates agrosque depopulans, ab orientali mari usque ad occidentale, nullo prohibente, suum continuauit incendium, totamque prope insulae pereuntis superficiem obtexit. Ruebant aedificia puplica simul et priuata, passim sacerdotes inter altaria trucidabantur, praesules cum populis sine ullo respectu honoris, ferro pariter et flammis absumebantur; nec erat, qui crudeliter interemtos sepulturae traderet. Itaque nonnulli de miserandis reliquiis in montibus conprehensi, aceruatim iugulabantur; alii fame confecti procedentes manus hostibus dabant, pro accipiendis alimentorum subsidiis aeternum subituri seruitium, si tamen non continuo trucidarentur; alii transmarinas regiones dolentes petebant; alii perstantes in patria trepidi pauperem uitam in montibus, siluis, uel rupibus arduis suspecta semper mente agebant.

5. Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 1.1.

Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur. Hi omnes lingua, institutis, legibus inter se differunt. Gallos ab Aquitanis Garumna flumen, a Belgis Matrona et Sequana dividit. Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae, propterea quod a cultu atque humanitate provinciae longissime absunt, minimeque ad eos mercatores saepe commeant atque ea quae ad effeminandos animos pertinent important, proximique sunt Germanis, qui trans Rhenum incolunt, quibuscum continenter bellum gerunt. Qua de causa Helvetii quoque reliquos Gallos virtute praecedunt, quod fere cotidianis proeliis cum Germanis contendunt, cum aut suis

finibus eos prohibent aut ipsi in eorum finibus bellum gerunt. Eorum una pars, quam Gallos obtinere dictum est, initium capit a flumine Rhodano, continetur Garunna flumine, Oceano, finibus Belgarum, attingit etiam ab Sequanis et Helvetiis flumen Rhenum, vergit ad septentriones. Belgae ab extremis Galliae finibus oriuntur, pertinent ad inferiorem partem fluminis Rheni, spectant in septentrionem et orientem solem. Aquitania a Garumna flumine ad Pyrenaeos montes et eam partem Oceani quae est ad Hispaniam pertinet; spectat inter occasum solis et septentriones.

6. Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 2.3-4.

[3] Eo cum de improviso celeriusque omnium opinione venisset, Remi, qui proximi Galliae ex Belgis sunt, ad eum legatos Iccium et Andebrogium, primos civitatis, miserunt, qui dicerent se suaque omnia in fidem atque potestatem populi Romani permittere, neque se cum reliquis Belgis consensisse neque contra populum Romanum coniurasse, paratosque esse et obsides dare et imperata facere et oppidis recipere et frumento ceterisque rebus iuvare; reliquos omnes Belgas in armis esse, Germanosque qui cis Rhenum incolant sese cum his coniunxisse, tantumque esse eorum omnium furorem ut ne Suessiones quidem, fratres consanguineosque suos, qui eodem iure et isdem legibus utantur, unum imperium unumque magistratum cum ipsis habeant, deterrere potuerint quin cum iis consentirent.

[4] Cum ab iis quaereret quae civitates quantaeque in armis essent et quid in bello possent, sic reperiebat: plerosque Belgos esse ortos a Germanis Rhenumque antiquitus traductos propter loci fertilitatem ibi consedisse Gallosque qui ea loca incolerent expulisse, solosque esse qui, patrum nostrorum memoria omni Gallia vexata, Teutonos Cimbrosque intra suos fines ingredi prohibuerint; qua ex re fieri uti earum rerum memoria magnam sibi auctoritatem magnosque spiritus in re militari sumerent. De numero eorum omnia se habere explorata Remi dicebant, propterea quod propinquitatibus adfinitatibus quo coniuncti quantam quisque multitudinem in communi Belgarum concilio ad id bellum pollicitus sit cognoverint. Plurimum inter eos Bellovacos et virtute et auctoritate et hominum numero valere: hos posse conficere armata milia centum, pollicitos ex eo numero electa milia LX totiusque belli imperium sibi postulare. Suessiones suos esse finitimos; fines latissimos feracissimosque agros possidere. Apud eos fuisse regem nostra etiam memoria Diviciacum, totius Galliae potentissimum, qui cum magnae partis harum regionum, tum etiam Britanniae imperium obtinuerit; nunc esse regem Galbam: ad hunc propter iustitiam prudentiamque summam totius belli omnium voluntate deferri; oppida habere numero XII, polliceri milia armata L; totidem Nervios, qui maxime feri inter ipsos habeantur longissimeque absint; XV milia Atrebates, Ambianos X milia, Morinos XXV milia, Menapios VII milia, Caletos X

milia, Veliocasses et Viromanduos totidem, Atuatucos XVIIII milia; Condrusos, Eburones, Caerosos, Paemanos, qui uno nomine Germani appellantur, arbitrari ad XL milia.

7. Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 3.13.

Namque ipsorum naves ad hunc modum factae armataeque erant: carinae aliquanto planiores quam nostrarum navium, quo facilius vada ac decessum aestus excipere possent; prorae admodum erectae atque item puppes, ad magnitudinem fluctuum tempestatumque accommodatae; naves totae factae ex robore ad quamvis vim et contumeliam perferendam; transtra ex pedalibus in altitudinem trabibus, confixa clavis ferreis digiti pollicis crassitudine; ancorae pro funibus ferreis catenis revinctae; pelles pro velis alutaeque tenuiter confectae, [hae] sive propter inopiam lini atque eius usus inscientiam, sive eo, quod est magis veri simile, quod tantas tempestates Oceani tantosque impetus ventorum sustineri ac tanta onera navium regi velis non satis commode posse arbitrabantur. Cum his navibus nostrae classi eius modi congressus erat ut una celeritate et pulsu remorum praestaret, reliqua pro loci natura, pro vi tempestatum illis essent aptiora et accommodatiora. Neque enim iis nostrae rostro nocere poterant (tanta in iis erat firmitudo), neque propter altitudinem facile telum adigebatur, et eadem de causa minus commode copulis continebantur. Accedebat ut, cum [saevire ventus coepisset et] se vento dedissent, et tempestatem ferrent facilius et in vadis consisterent tutius et ab aestu relictae nihil saxa et cautes timerent; quarum rerum omnium nostris navibus casus erat extimescendus.

8. Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 5.12-14.

[12] Britanniae pars interior ab eis incolitur quos natos in insula ipsi memoria proditum dicunt, maritima ab eis, qui praedae ac belli inferendi causa ex Belgio transierunt (qui omnes fere eis nominibus civitatum appellantur, quibus orti ex civitatibus eo pervenerunt) et bello illato ibi permanserunt atque agros colere coeperunt. Hominum est infinita multitudo creberrimaque aedificia fere Gallicis consimilia, pecorum magnus numerus. Utuntur aut aere aut nummo aureo aut taleis ferreis ad certum pondus examinatis pro nummo. Nascitur ibi plumbum album in mediterraneis regionibus, in maritimis ferrum, sed eius exigua est copia; aere utuntur importato. Materia cuiusque generis ut in Gallia est, praeter fagum atque abietem. Leporem et gallinam et anserem gustare fas non putant; haec tamen alunt animi voluptatisque causa. Loca sunt temperatiora quam in Gallia, remissioribus frigoribus.

[13] Insula natura triquetra, cuius unum latus est contra Galliam. Huius lateris alter angulus, qui est ad Cantium, quo fere omnes ex Gallia naves appelluntur, ad orientem solem, inferior ad meridiem spectat. Hoc pertinet circiter mila passuum

quingenta. Alterum vergit ad Hispaniam atque occidentem solem; qua ex parte est Hibernia, dimidio minor, ut aestimatur, quam Britannia, sed pari spatio transmissus atque ex Gallia est in Britanniam. In hoc medio cursu est insula, quae appellatur Mona: complures praeterea minores subiectae insulae existimantur, de quibus insulis nonnulli scripserunt dies continuos triginta sub bruma esse noctem. Nos nihil de eo percontationibus reperiebamus, nisi certis ex aqua mensuris breviores esse quam in continenti noctes videbamus. Huius est longitudo lateris, ut fert illorum opinio, septingentorum milium. Tertium est contra septentriones; cui parti nulla est obiecta terra, sed eius angulus lateris maxime ad Germaniam spectat. Hoc milia passuum octingenta in longitudinem esse existimatur. Ita omnis insula est in circuitu vicies centum milium passuum.

[14] Ex his omnibus longe sunt humanissimi qui Cantium incolunt, quae regio est maritima omnis, neque multum a Gallica differunt consuetudine. Interiores plerique frumenta non serunt, sed lacte et carne vivunt pellibusque sunt vestiti. Omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt, quod caeruleum efficit colorem, atque hoc horridiores sunt in pugna aspectu; capilloque sunt promisso atque omni parte corporis rasa praeter caput et labrum superius. Uxores habent deni duodenique inter se communes et maxime fratres cum fratribus parentesque cum liberis; sed qui sunt ex his nati, eorum habentur liberi, quo primum virgo quaeque deducta est.

9. Constantius, *De Vita Germani*, 17-18.

[17] Interea Saxones Pictique bellum adversus Brittanos iunctis viribus susceperunt, quos eadem necessitas in castra contraxerat; et cum trepidi partes suas paene inpares iudicarent, sanctorum antestitum auxilium petierunt. Qui, promissum maturantes adventum, tantum securitatis ac fiduciae contulerunt, ut accessisse maximus crederetur exercitus, itaque apostolicis ducibus Christus militabat in castris. Aderant etiam quadragesimae venerabiles dies, quos relegiosiores reddebat praesentia sacerdotum, in tantum, ut, cotidianis praedicationibus instituti, certatim ad gratiam baptismatis convolarent; nam maxima devoti exercitus multitudo undam lavacri salutaris expetiit. Ecclesia ad diem resurrectionis dominicae frondibus contexta conponitur et in expeditione campestri instar civitatis aptatur. Madidus baptismatis procedit exercitus, fides fervet in populo, et contempto armorum praesidio, divinitatis expectatur auxilium. Interea haec institutio vel forma castrorum hostibus nuntiatur, qui victoriam quasi de inermi exercitu praesumentes, adsumpta alacritate, festinant; quorum tamen adventus exploratione cognoscitur. Cumque, emensa sollemnitate paschali, recens de lavacro pars maior exercitus arma capere et bellum parare temptaret, Germanus ducem se proelii profitetur. Elegit expeditos, circumiecta percurrit et e regione, qua hostium

sperebatur adventus, vallem circumdatam editis montibus intuetur. Quo in loco novum conponit exercitum ipse dux agminis.

[18] Et iam aderat ferox hostium multitudo, quam adpropinquare intuebantur in insidiis constituti: cum subito Germanus signifer universos admonet et praedicit, ut voci suae uno clamore respondeant, securisque hostibus, qui se insperatos adesse confiderent, Alleluia tertio repitatam secerdotes exclamant. Sequitur una vox omnium, et elatum clamorem, repercusso aere, montium conclusa multiplicant. Hostile agmen terrore prosternitur, et ruisse super se non solum rupes circumdatas, verum etiam ipsam caeli machinam contremescunt, trepidationique iniectae vix sufficere pedum pernicitas credebatur. Passim fugiunt, arma proiciunt, gaudentes vel nuda corpora eripuisse discrimine. Plures etiam timore praecipites flumen, quod sensim venientes transierant, devoravit. Ultionem suam innocens exercitus intuetur et victoriae praestitae otiosus expectator efficitur; spolia colliguntur exposita, et praedam caelestis victoriae miles religiosus adipiscitur. Triumphant pontifices, hostibus fusis sine sanguine; triumphat victoria fide obtenta, non viribus. Conposita itaque opulentissima insula securitate multiplici superatisque hostibus vel spiritalibus vel carne conspicuis, quippe qui vicissent Pelagianistas et Saxones, cum totius merore regionis reditum moliuntur. Tranquillam navigationem merita propria et intercessio Albani martyris paraverunt, quietosque antestites suorum desideriis felix carina restituit.

10. Felix of Crowland, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, 31.

Per idem fere tempus, paucis intervenientibus dierum cursibus, cum vir beatae memoriae Guthlac adsueto more vigil inintermissis orationibus cuiusdam noctis intempesto tempore perstaret, en subito teterrimis inmundorum spirituum catervis totam cellulam suam inpleri conspexit. Subeuntibus enim ab undique illis porta patebat; nam per criptas et cratulas intrantibus non iuncturae valvarum, non foramina cratium illis ingressum negabant; sed caelo terraque erumpentes, spatium totius aeris fuscis nubibus tegebant. Erant enim aspectu truces, forma terribiles, capitibus magnis, collis longis, macilenta facie, lurido vultu, squalida barba, auribus hispidis, fronte torva, trucibus oculis, ore foetido, dentibus equineis, gutture flammivomo, faucibus tortis, labro lato, vocibus horrisonis, comis obustis, buccula crassa, pectore arduo, femoribus scabris, genibus nodatis, cruribus uncis, talo tumido, plantis aversis, ore patulo, clamoribus raucisonis. Ita enim inmensis vagitibus horrescere audiebantur, ut totam paene a caelo in terram intercapedinem clangisonis boatibus inplerent.

11. Felix of Crowland, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, 34.

Contigit itaque in diebus Coenredi Merciorum regis, cum Brittones, infesti hostes Saxonici generis, bellis, praedis, publicisque vastationibus Anglorum gentem deturbarent, quadam

nocte, gallicinali tempore, quo more solito vir beatae memoriae Guthlac orationum vigiliis incumberet, extimplo, cum velut imaginato sopore opprimeretur, visum est sibi tumultuantis turbae audisse clamores. Tunc dicto citius levi somno expergefactus, extra cellulam, qua sedebat, egressus est, et arrectis auribus adstans, verba loquentis vulgi Brittannicaque agmina tectis succedere agnoscit; nam ille aliorum temporum praeteritis voluminibus inter illos exulabat, quoadusque eorum strimulentas loquelas intelligere valuit. Nec mora; per palustria tectis subvenire certantes, eodem paene momento omnes domus suas flamma superante ardere conspicit; illum quoque intercipientes acutis hastarum spiculis in auras levare coeperunt. Tum vero vir Dei tandem hostis pellacis millenis artibus millenas formas persentiens, velut prophetico ore sexagesimi septimi psalmi primum versum psallebat: Exsurgat Deus, et reliqua; quo audito, dicto velocius eodem momento omnes daemoniorum turmae velut fumus a facie eius evanuerunt.

12. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 1.

in hac epistola quicquid deflendo potius quam declamando, uili licet stilo, tamen benigno, fuero prosecutus, ne quis me affectu cunctos spernentis omnibusue melioris, quippe qui commune bonorum dispendium malorumque cumulum lacrimosis querelis defleam, sed condolentis patriae incommoditatibus miseriisque eius ac remediis condelectantis edicturum putet, quia non tam fortissimorum militum enuntiare trucis belli pericula mihi statutum est quam desidiosorum, silui, fateor, cum immenso cordis dolore, ut mihi renum scrutator testis est dominus, spatio bilustri temporis uel eo amplius praetereuntis, imperitia sic ut et nunc una cum uilibus me meritis inhibentibus ne qualemcumque admonitiunculam scriberem.

13. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 18.

igitur Romani, patriae denuntiantes nequaquam se tam laboriosis expeditionibus posse frequentius uexari et ob imbelles erraticosque latrunculos Romana stigmata, tantum talemque exercitum, terra ac mari fatigari, sed ut potius sola consuescendo armis ac uiriliter dimicando terram substantiolam coniuges liberos et, quod his maius est, libertatem uitamque totis uiribus uindicaret, et gentibus nequaquam sibi fortioribus, nisi segnitia et torpore dissolueretur, inermes uinculis uinciendas nullo modo, sed instructas peltis ensibus hastis et ad caedam promptas protenderet manus, suadentes, quia et hoc putabant aliquid derelinquendo populo commodi adcrescere, murum non ut alterum, sumptu publico priuatoque adiunctis secum miserabilibus indigenis, solito structurae more, tramite a mari usque ad mare inter urbes, quae ibidem forte ob metum hostium collocatae fuerant, directo librant; fortia formidoloso populo monita tradunt, exemplaria instituendorum armorum relinquunt. in litore quoque oceani ad meridianam plagam, quo naues eorum habebantur, quia et inde barbaricae ferae bestiae

timebantur, turres per interualla ad prospectum maris collocant, et ualedicunt tamquam ultra non reuersuri.

14. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 21.

ungebantur reges non per deum sed qui ceteris crudeliores exstarent, et paulo post ab unctioribus non pro ueri examinatione trucidabantur aliis electis trucioribus. si quis uero eorum mitior et ueritati aliquatenus propior uideretur, in hunc quasi Britanniae subuersorem omnia odia telaque sine respectu contorquebantur, et omnia quae displicuerunt deo et quae placuerunt aequali saltem lance pendebantur, si non gratiora fuissent displicentia; ita ut merito patriae illud propheticum, quod ueterno illi populo denuntiatum est, potuit aptari, 'filii' inquiens 'sine lege, dereliquistis deum, et ad iracundiam prouocastis sanctum Israel. quid adhuc percutiemini apponentes iniquitatem? omne caput languidum et omne cor maerens: a planta pedis usque ad uerticem non est in eo sanitas.'

15. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 23.

tum omnes consiliarii una cum superbo tyranno Vortigerno caecantur, adinuenientes tale praesidium, immo excidium patriae ut ferocissimi illi nefandi nominis saxones deo hominibusque inuisi, quasi in caulas lupi, in insulam ad retundendas aquilonales gentes intromitterentur. quo utique nihil ei usquam perniciosius nihilque amarius factum est. o altissimam sensus caliginem! o desperabilem crudamque mentis hebetudinem! quos propensius morte, cum abessent, tremebant, sponte, ut ita dicam, sub unius tecti culmini inuitabant: 'stulti principes', ut dictum est, 'Taneos dantes Pharaoni consilium insipiens'… tum erumpens grex catulorum de cubili laeanae barbarae, tribus, ut lingua eius exprimitur, cyulis, nostra longis nauibus, secundis uelis omine auguriisque, quibus uaticinabatur, certo apud eum praesagio, quod ter centum annis patriam, cui proras librabat, insideret, centum uero quinquaginta, hoc est dimidio temporis, saepius uastaret, euectus, primum in orientali parte insulae iubente infausto tyranno terribiles infixit ungues, quasi pro patria pugnaturus sed eam certius impugnaturus. cui supradicta genetrix, comperiens primo agmini fuisse prosperatum, item mitit satellitum canumque prolixiorem catastam, quae ratibus aduecta adunatur cum manipularibus spuriis. inde germen iniquitatis, radix amaritudinis, uirulenta plantatio nostris condigna meritis, in nostro cespite, ferocibus palmitibus pampinisque pullulat. igitur intromissi in insulam barbari, ueluti militibus et magna, ut mentiebantur, discrimina pro bonis hospitibus subituris, impetrant sibi annonas dari: quae multo tempore impertitae clauserunt, ut dicitur, canis faucem. item queruntur non affluenter sibi epimenia contribui, occasiones de industria colorantes, et ni profusior eis munificentia cumularetur,

testantur se cuncta insulae rupto foedere depopulaturos. nec mora, minas effectibus prosequuntur.

16. *Notitia Dignitatum*, 28.

Comes litoris Saxonici per Britanniam.

Sub dispositione viri spectabilis comitis litoris Saxonici per Britanniam:
Praepositus numeri Fortensium, Othonae.
Praepositus militum Tungrecanorum, Dubris.
Praepositus numeri Turnacensium, Lemannis.
Praepositus equitum Dalmatarum Branodunensium, Branoduno.
Praepositus equitum stablesianorum Gariannonensium, Gariannonor.
Tribunus cohortis primae Baetasiorum, Regulbio.
Praefectus legionis secundae Augustae, Rutupis.
Praepositus numeri Abulcorum, Anderidos.
Praepositus numeri exploratorum, Portum Adurni.
Officium autem habet idem uir spectabilis comes hoc modo:
Principem ex officiis magistrorum militum praesentalium parte peditum.
Numerarios duos ut supra ex officio supradicto.
Cornicularium.
Adiutorem.
Subadiuuam.
Regrendarium.
Exceptores.
Singulares et reliquos officiales.

17. Procopius, *De Bellis*, 3.2.31.

Βρεττανία δὲ ἡ νῆσος Ῥωμαίων ἀπέστη, οἵ τε ἐκείνῃ στρατιῶται βασιλέα σφίσι Κωνσταντῖνον εἵλοντο, οὐκ ἀφανῆ ἄνδρα. ὃς δὴ αὐτίκα στόλον τε ἀγείρας νηῶν καὶ στρατιὰν λόγου ἀξίαν ἐς Ἱσπανίαν τε καὶ Γαλλίαν ὡς δουλωσόμενος στρατῷ μεγάλῳ ἐσέβαλεν.

18. Procopius, *De Bellis*, 3.2.38.

Βρεττανίαν μέντοι Ῥωμαῖοια νασώσασθαι οὐκέτι ἔσχον, ἀλλ᾽ οὖσα ὑπὸ τυράννοις ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἔμεινε.

19. Procopius, *De Bellis*, 8.20.4-10.

[4] Βριττία δὲ ἡ νῆσος ἐπὶ τούτου μὲν Ὠκεανοῦ κεῖται, τῆς ἠϊόνος οὐ πολλῷ ἄποθεν, ἀλλ΄ ὅσον ἀπὸ σταδίων διακοσίων καταντικρὺ τῶν τοῦ Ῥήνου ἐκβολῶν μάλιστα, Βρεττανίας δὲ

καὶ Θούλης τῆς νήσου μεταξύ ἐστιν. [5] Ἐπεὶ Βρεττανία μὲν πρὸς δύοντά που κεῖται ἥλιον κατὰ τῆς Ἰσπανῶν τὰ ἔσχατα χώρας, ἀμφὶ σταδίους οὐχ ἧσσον ἢ ἐς τετρακισχιλίους τῆς ἠπείρου διέχουσα, Βριττία δὲ ἐς τῆς Γαλλίας τὰ ὄπισθεν, ἃ δὴ πρὸς Ὠκεανὸν τετραμμένα, Ἰσπανίας δηλονότι καὶ Βρεττανίας πρὸς βορρᾶν ἄνεμον. [6] Θούλη δὲ, ὅσα γε ἀνθρώπους εἰδέναι, ἐς Ὠκεανοῦ τοῦ πρὸς τῇ ἄρκτῳ τὰ ἔσχατα κεῖται. Ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ἀμφὶ Βρεττανίᾳ καὶ Θούλῃ ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθέν μοι λόγοις ἐρρήθη· Βριττίαν δὲ τὴν νῆσον ἔθνη τρία πολυανθρωπότατα ἔχουσι, βασιλεύς τε εἷς αὐτῶν ἑκάστῳ ἐφέστηκε. [7] Καὶ ὀνόματα κεῖται τοῖς ἔθνεσι τούτοις Ἀγγίλοι τε καὶ Φρίσσονες καὶ οἱ τῇ νήσῳ ὁμώνυμοι Βρίττωνες. [8] Τοσαύτη δὲ ἡ τῶνδε τῶν ἐθνῶν πολυανθρωπία φαίνεται οὖσα, ὥστε ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος κατὰ πολλοὺς ἐνθένδε μετανιστάμενοι ξὺν γυναιξὶ καὶ παισὶν ἐς Φράγγους χωροῦσιν. [9] Οἱ δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐνοικίζουσιν ἐς γῆς τῆς σφετέρας τὴν ἐρημοτέραν δοκοῦσαν εἶναι, καὶ ἀπ΄ αὐτοῦ τὴν νῆσον προσποιεῖσθαί φασιν. [10] Ὥστε ἀμέλει οὐ πολλῷ πρότερον ὁ Φράγγων βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ πρεσβείᾳ τῶν οἱ ἐπιτηδείων τινὰς παρὰ βασιλέα Ἰουστινιανὸν ἐς Βυζάντιον στείλας ἄνδρας αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν Ἀγγίλων ξυνέπεμψε, φιλοτιμούμενος ὡς καὶ ἡ νῆσος ἥδε πρὸς αὐτοῦ ἄρχεται. Τὰ μὲν οὖν κατὰ τὴν Βριττίαν καλουμένην νῆσον τοιαῦτά ἐστι.

20. Sidonius Apollinaris *Epistulae* 8.6.13-15.

[13] exceptis iocis fac sciam tandem, quid te, quid domum circa. sed ecce dum iam epistulam, quae diu garrit, claudere optarem, subitus a Santonis nuntius; cum quo dum tui obtentu aliquid horarum sermocinanter extrahimus, constanter asseveravit nuper vos classicum in classe cecinisse atque inter officia nunc nautae, modo militis litoribus Oceani curvis inerrare contra Saxonum pandos myoparones, quorum quot remiges videris, totidem te cernere putes archipiratas: ita simul omnes imperant parent, docent discunt latrocinari. unde nunc etiam ut quam plurimum caveas, causa successit maxuma monendi.

[14] hostis est omni hoste truculentior. inprovisus aggreditur praevisus elabitur; spernit obiectos sternit incautos; si sequatur, intercipit, si fugiat, evadit. ad hoc exercent illos naufragia, non terrent. est eis quaedam cum discriminibus pelagi non notitia solum, sed familiaritas. Nam quoniam ipsa si qua tempestas est huc securos efficit occupandos, huc prospici vetat occupaturos, in medio fluctuum scopulorumque confragosorum spe superventus laeti periclitantur.

[15] praeterea, priusquam de continenti in patriam vela laxantes hostico mordaces anchoras vado vellant, mos est remeaturis decimum quemque captorum per aequales et cruciarias poenas plus ob hoc tristi quod superstitioso, ritu necare superque collectam turbam periturorum mortis iniquitatem sortis aequitate dispergere. talibus se ligant votis, victimis

solvunt; et per huiusmodi non tam sacrificia purgati quam sacrilegia polluti religiosum putant caedis infaustae perpetratores de capite captivo magis exigere tormenta quam pretia.

21. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 11.

Ceterum Britanniam qui mortales initio coluerint, indigenae an advecti, ut inter barbaros, parum compertum. Habitus corporum varii atque ex eo argumenta. Namque rutilae Caledoniam habitantium comae, magni artus Germanicam originem adseverant; Silurum colorati vultus, torti plerumque crines et posita contra Hispania Hiberos veteres traiecisse easque sedes occupasse fidem faciunt; proximi Gallis et similes sunt, seu durante originis vi, seu procurrentibus in diversa terris positio caeli corporibus habitum dedit. In universum tamen aestimanti Gallos vicinam insulam occupasse credibile est. Eorum sacra deprehendas ac superstitionum persuasiones; sermo haud multum diversus, in deposcendis periculis eadem audacia et, ubi advenere, in detrectandis eadem formido. Plus tamen ferociae Britanni praeferunt, ut quos nondum longa pax emollierit. Nam Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse accepimus; mox segnitia cum otio intravit, amissa virtute pariter ac libertate. Quod Britannorum olim victis evenit: ceteri manent quales Galli fuerunt.

22. Vegetius, *De Re Militari*, 4, 37.

quod ad magnitudinem pertinet, minimae liburnae remorum habent singulos ordines, paulo maiores binos, idoneae mensurae ternos uel quaternos interdum quinos sortiuntur remigio gradus. nec hoc cuiquam enorme uideatur, cum in Actiaco proelio longe maiora referantur concurrisse nauigia, ut senorum etiam uel ultra ordinum fuerint. scafae tamen maioribus liburnis exploratoriae sociantur, quae uicenos prope remiges in singulis partibus habeant, quas Britanni picatos uocant. per has et superuentus fieri et commeatus aduersariorum nauium aliquando intercipi adsolet et speculandi studio aduentus earum uel consilium deprehendi. ne tamen exploratiae naues candore prodantur, colore Veneto, qui marinis est fluctibus similis, uela tinguntur et funes, cera etiam, qua ungere solent naues, inficitur. nautaeque uel milites Venetam uestem induunt, ut non solum per noctem sed etiam per diem facilius lateant explorantes.

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[419] The Latin in this online version contains a number of errors. An attempt has been made to correct them in the quotes taken from this version in the Appendix (passages 12-15).

Translations

All the quotes from the ancient written sources in this thesis come directly, or have been slightly adapted by the author, from the following translations:

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