

SIR JOHN RHYS MEMORIAL LECTURE

THE COLONIZATION OF BRITTANY FROM
CELTIC BRITAIN

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THE natural form for the study of a colony is that of a triad. We want to know first the nature and history of the country in which the new colony is formed; second, the nature and background of the new colonists, and the reason for their immigration; third, the nature and the result of their occupation of their new home.

I. *The Armorican Background*

Brittany has always been a Celtic country as far back as our earliest written records carry us. That is to say that from the time when she first appears in the works of Greek and Roman writers a Celtic language was spoken in Brittany, and has left its seal on the name by which she was known to the outside world, *Armorica*, a Celtic word, meaning 'the country beside the sea'.¹ We have no early vernacular records, and so we do not know what name the Armoricans gave themselves. The Celtic name *Armorica* suggests that it was given to them by their nearest neighbours, the Gauls, perhaps as their own western peninsula. The Celtic language spoken in *Armorica* from early Classical times certainly belonged to the Gaulish branch of the Brythonic family of the Celtic languages; and on the whole the earliest traces of Armorican culture conform to those of continental Gaul. They make it clear that she was a poor relation, the western extremity of the great Gaulish nation.

This had not always been so. In the prehistoric period of the great Atlantic sea-ways—that is to say, in the Neolithic and early Bronze Ages—*Armorica* had been the home of some of the great megalithic builders of Europe. In this small peninsula

¹ The original form was *Aremorica*, 'the country beside the sea', or 'in front of the sea'.—*Aremorici* Antemarini quia *are*, "ante", *mare*, "mare", *morici*, "marini" (Endlicher). Caesar (*De Bello Gallico*, v. 53; vii. 75) seems to translate *Armorici*, 'qui Oceanum attingunt'. *Armorica* is a secondary development with syncope of the unstressed *e*, though found already in Caesar.

the great single stones standing in groups or alignments, or in majestic isolation, many of them of great beauty, number nearly 5,000, more than one-third of the *menhirs* ('long stones') of France.¹ The single *menhirs* alone number about 1,000² and are witnesses to the high technique of the stonemason. The groups of avenues of standing stones at Carnac and the neighbourhood of Quiberon Bay rank among the wonders of the world for the mystery and vast scale of their execution. Incomplete as they are today the alignments of Carnac comprise nearly 3,000 standing stones and extend for 3½–4 miles.³ Their origin and purpose are totally unknown. The superb 'passage grave', the beehive-shaped tomb on the tiny island of Gavv Inis in the Golfe du Morbihan, which Dr. Glyn Daniel has described as 'one of the most remarkable tombs in western Europe',⁴ is a structural link between the great beehive-shaped 'Treasury of Atreus' in Greece and the much older prehistoric chamber tomb of New Grange⁵ on the Boyne in Ireland, the home of the Irish god Oengus mac Óc, son of the Dagdá, the greatest and probably the oldest of the Irish gods.

When these great monuments were erected Armorica must have had great wealth, powerful rulers, and highly developed political organization, and it was evidently concentrated along the coasts. It is lost to history, but it has been justly claimed that the Age of the Dolmens, that of the prehistoric tombs of the Carnac area and that of Locmariaquer in the Morbihan, was a religious, intellectual, and commercial centre of influence to the whole of the western and north-western European coastal areas.⁶ The great wealth of gold deposited in the chamber tombs has earned for this period of the third and second millenniums B.C. the name of the Golden Age of Armorica.⁷ Two-fifths of the prehistoric gold deposits of France, and the richest, have been discovered in Brittany.⁸ We are still in the Neolithic Period, for Brittany is

¹ A. Rébillon, *Histoire de Bretagne* (Paris, 1957), p. 12.

² *Ibid.*; also *id.*, *Manuel d'histoire de Bretagne* (Rennes and Quimper), p. 11.

³ G. Daniel, *The Megalith Builders of Western Europe* (London, 1958), p. 16. According to Z. Le Rouzic the Carnac alignments extend for 3,900 metres, and comprise 2,934 standing stones. See Z. Le Rouzic, *Carnac, les monuments mégalithiques* (13th ed., Rennes, 1960), p. 17.

⁴ *The Megalith Builders of Western Europe*, p. 100.

⁵ The Irish name of this great monument is *Brugh na Boinne*. The most recent study is that by Sean O'Riordáin and Glyn Daniel, *New Grange and the Bend of the Boyne* (London, 1964).

⁶ Z. Le Rouzic, *Bijoux en Or découverts dans les dolmens du Morbihan* (Dijon, 1931), p. 7. ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6. ⁸ A. Rébillon, *Manuel d'histoire de Bretagne*, p. 13.

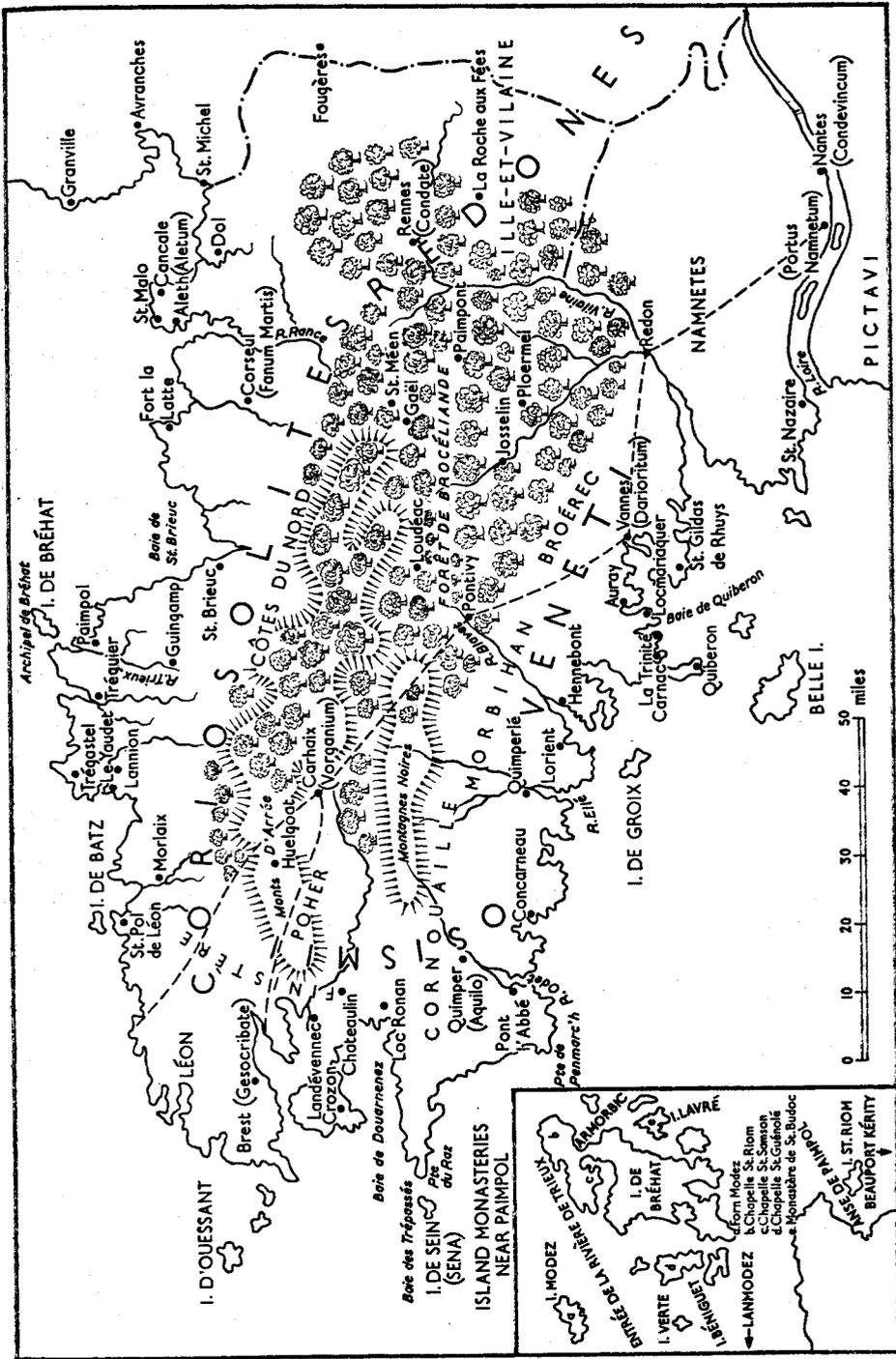


Fig. 1

always a conservative area, and the dawn of the Bronze Age overlaps with this splendid Neolithic culture, and still gives us huge and impressive mounds, covering a central closed funerary chamber without any passage leading to it, but sometimes with multiple burial chambers,¹ thus resembling structural cemeteries. The first true metal civilization of the Bronze Age had a simpler type of burial chamber, with only a single grave, but of special interest to us because comparable to our own Wessex culture,² and because its distribution in western Armorica indicates the English Channel as the highway route of a shuttle service.³ Our sea-links with Armorica are drawing in. One of these Breton tombs has been dated by radio-carbon to *c.* 1350 B.C.⁴

The last echo of the prehistoric Armorica of the Atlantic sea-route comes to us indirectly from the Carthaginians, who established themselves at Cadiz and explored the shores to the south under a certain Hanno, and to the north under a certain Himilco. Pliny refers to both these expeditions as having been made *Punicis rebus florentissimis*⁵ and therefore before 480 B.C. Himilco coasted along both Spain and Armorica, but no written account from his hand has survived, and our knowledge of his northward voyage is derived from references to him in a poem dating from the fourth century A.D. by a Latin poet Rufus Festus Avienus, who flourished in the fourth century A.D., and who refers to Himilco⁶ in the extant 703 lines of his poem known as the *Ora Maritima*, chiefly relating to southern Gaul and Spain, and containing interesting matter derived from earlier Greek and Carthaginian accounts of Atlantic voyages of *c.* 500 B.C. Avienus professes to be deriving his information from Himilco's written reports.⁷

Our earliest classical geographical tradition of Armorica is an echo of Pytheas of Marseilles, who flourished in the middle of the third century B.C. and is reported by later geographers to have

¹ Giot, *Brittany* (London, 1960), pp. 109 ff.; cf. Daniel, *Prehistoric Chamber Tombs of France* (London, 1960), p. 95; Le Rouzic, *Carnac* (13th ed., Carnac, 1960), p. 25.

² Giot, *Brittany*, pp. 128, 143.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, II. lxxvii, 169: 'Hanno Carthaginis potentia florente circumvectus a Gadibus ad finem Arabiae navigationem eam prodidit scripto, sicut ad extera Europae noscenda, missus eodem tempore Himilco.' Cf. also *ibid.* v. i. 8: 'Fuere et Hannonis Carthaginiensium ducis commentarii Punicis rebus florentissimis explorare ambitum Africae iussi.'

⁶ *Carmina* (ed. A. Holder, 1887), Book IV, ll. 117, 383, 412 f.

⁷ See the *Ora Maritima* (ed. cit.), IV, ll. 412 f.

claimed that he had made a voyage northward beyond Britain.¹ No account of these voyages has survived from Pytheas himself, and our knowledge is very imperfect, being derived from very varying reports by later writers. It appears, however, from the report of Strabo,² writing in the first century B.C., that Pytheas voyaged along the western coast of Gaul, and represented the *Ostimii*³ as inhabiting the part of Armorica which formed a promontory, extending far out into the ocean. The tribe mentioned by Strabo, on the authority of Pytheas, is evidently the Gaulish tribe known to Caesar as the *Osismi* (cf. p. 240 below). Strabo also gives an interesting account of the *Veneti* whom he knew as the foremost tribe of Armorica, and as having opposed Caesar in a naval battle in order to hinder his voyage to Britain because the *Veneti* were using it as an emporium.⁴ Caesar, Pomponius Mela, Pliny, and Ptolemy increase our knowledge of Armorica in the centuries immediately before and after the beginning of the Christian era.

The introduction of the Celtic (Gaulish) language into Armorica is generally believed to have taken place on a wide scale during the Iron Age, and the first Celtic elements in the population to have been increased by the arrival of the Belgae in the third century B.C. Strabo, in fact, speaks of the population of Armorica as Belgic,⁵ so they must have formed an important element in the population by his time. But we must not oversimplify the problem of the Celtic arrival. The Belgae are believed to have been part Celtic, part Teutonic; and the Teutons themselves are now thought to have been an earlier offshoot of the Celtic peoples, their name perhaps related to the Celtic word, *tuath*, 'a tribe'.⁶

The first Celtic peoples recorded by classical writers as occupying Armorica were the Gauls, whose chief empire was in France. Although they were not wholly ignorant of writing in the Greek alphabet⁷ they have left no written narrative records

¹ For an account of Pytheas himself and the reports of his voyages as interpreted by later writers see E. H. Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography* (ed. 2, New York, 1883), i. 590 ff., and references.

² *Geographia*, iv. iv. 1.

³ For the various forms of the name in the existing manuscripts, see Bunbury, op. cit. i. 592, n. 5.

⁴ Strabo, loc. cit.

⁵ *Geographia*, loc. cit.

⁶ H. M. Chadwick, *The Nationalities of Europe* (Cambridge, 1945), pp. 148 f.

⁷ A certain minority among the Gaulish tribes, especially the chieftain and the trading class, had some knowledge of Greek, as can be seen from the numerical data on the tablets found in the camp of the *Helvetii* in Caesar's

of their own. We have, however, much information about them from classical writers, especially Polybius, Caesar, and from archaeology, place-names, and, above all, from coins. These material sources of information are rapidly increasing today, and enable us to realize that the Gaulish civilization in Armorica had reached a relatively high level before the Roman conquest by Caesar in 56 B.C. Many centuries have been added to Armorican history in recent years by the studies of Couffon, Merlet, Merlat, and others, based on documents; of Giot and Waquet in all fields of archaeology, and of Sir Mortimer Wheeler and his colleagues in the native Gaulish defensive concentrations. For the period of Armorican independence, and the period during and after the Roman conquest, the wealth of coins has been brilliantly interpreted by the eminent numismatist, Mr. J.-B. Colbert de Beaulieu. He has proved to us that the history of Gaulish Armorica lies underground.

At the time when Armorica first enters the pages of written history in the Gaulish period she consisted of a number of independent states. Caesar speaks of them as 'cities' (*civitates*),¹ which we should describe as 'city states', that is to say tribal territories over a wide area, each with its own tribal centre, which takes its name from its tribe. The system was universal among the Celtic people. Five of these Armorican tribes were later included in Brittany.

At the western extremity the largest, the Osismii,² occupied the whole of the modern department of Finistère. In Roman times the capital was *Vorgium*, or *Vorganium*,³ which is certainly to be identified with the medieval *Carès* (in modern times Car-

time, written in Greek characters. The blade of a sword of La Tène type from Port in Switzerland has an inscription in Greek letters. See Jan Filip, *Celtic Civilization and its Heritage* (Prague, 1960), English translation by R. F. Samsom (Prague, 1962), p. 82. Caesar tells us that the druids of Gaul were not unlettered, and that although they would not commit their learning to writing they made use of the Greek alphabet for almost all other matters and for public and private correspondence (*Gallie War*, vi. 14). Origen also, writing in the third century A.D., comments on the absence of survivals of their writings (*Contra Celsum*, i. 16). There exist some fifth-century Gaulish inscriptions (see G. Dottin, *Manuel pour servir à l'étude de l'antiquité celtique*, Paris, 1915, pp. 90 ff. and the references there cited). Cf. in particular the Gaulish Calendar from Coligny in Latin characters, *id.*, pp. 96 ff.

¹ *De B.G.* v. 53; vii. 75.

² Caesar, ii. 34. According to F. Lot the true form is *Osismii*; Ptolemy *Ἰσισμιοί*; cf. *Notitia Galliarum*, ed. Mommsen, p. 587.

³ On the identity of *Vorganium* or *Vorgium*, cf. Falc'hun, *L'Histoire de la langue bretonne* (Rennes, 1951), pp. 14 f.

haix),¹ and was in Breton *Poher* (from *Pou-Caer*). On the Breton occupation the territory was cut into two, with Léon to the north and Cornouaille to the south. Next in size to the *Osismii* come the *Veneti*, with their territory corresponding to the Morbihan, and their capital, Vannes, once *Darioritum*. Their name becomes by metathesis *Vetenes*, and developed into *Vannes*. Next in size are the *Coriosolites*, whose region comprised the Côtes-du-Nord and whose name survives in that of their former capital *Corseul*. In the east are the *Namnetes*, at the confluence of the Erdre and the Loire in what is now the Ille-et-Vilaine, far south of the later historical frontier. Their capital was *Condevincum*, the modern Nantes. Smallest of all are the *Redones*, in the extreme east, at the confluence of the rivers Ille and Vilaine. Their capital was *Condate*, the modern Rennes.

Of all these people only the *Redones*, the continental people, in the basin of the Vilaine, have a name which is believed to be definitely Celtic. It is doubtful if the names of the *Namnetes* or the *Veneti*, and very improbable that the *Osismii* or the *Coriosolites* are Celtic. Probably, therefore, these four coastal people are pre-Celtic, and were already in possession before the arrival of the Celts, and it is by mingling with these people that the Celts became sailors in the country to which they gave its first historical (Celtic) name, *Armorica*, 'The country opposite the sea'. It would seem that the Celtic invasions had not changed the chief features of the activity of the region. Of these coastal peoples the *Veneti* of the area of the southern Morbihan coast formed a kind of thalassocracy in Caesar's day, with a superb fleet. They are believed to have been the least Celticized people of *Armorica*.

It is an interesting fact that in the fourth century A.D. the names of these Gallo-Roman cities had acquired their names from the names of peoples, in place of their old city denominations.² In general it is impossible in the present state of our knowledge to define precisely the limits of the Gaulish states.³

¹ On the name *Carhaix* see F. Lot, 'Le roi Hoël de Kerahès', *Romania*, xxix (1900), 380 ff. See the discussion between J. Loth and F. Lot, 'Le nom de Carhaix', *Romania*, vol. cit., 604 ff.

² F. Lot, op. cit., pp. 880 ff.

³ The following articles form a sequence, roughly chronological, of the principal contributions to this problem. R. Couffon, 'Limites des cités gallo-romaines et fondation des évêchés dans la péninsule armoricaine', *Bulletin et Mémoires de la Société d'Émulation des Côtes-du-Nord*, lxxiii (1942), 1 ff.; F. Merlet, 'La formation des diocèses et des paroisses en Bretagne, période antérieure aux immigrations bretonnes', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, xxx (1950), 5 ff.; *ibid.* xxxi (1951), 137 ff.; P. Merlat,

Merlet is doubtless right in suggesting that the boundaries of the early Gaulish states in Armorica were natural ones.¹ Attempts have been made to indicate the Gaulish states as representing a system corresponding to that which the Roman administration adopted in relation to earlier ecclesiastical dioceses of northern France, as defined by the Gaulish tribes. In Armorica, however, the ecclesiastical system of the British Church introduced by the Breton immigrants in the fifth and sixth centuries, according to which bishoprics carried with them no local dioceses, makes it impossible to equate the precise boundaries of the five pre-Roman tribes in relation to the nine dioceses recognized by the Roman ecclesiastical system adopted after the Council of Tours. The controversy has been most active in regard to the south-eastern limits of the Osismii, and the early ecclesiastical history of the city of Quimper. No unanimity has been reached, and the evidence of coins seems to offer the most likely approach to a solution.²

Merlet has pointed out that the areas of the Armorican states are more extensive the further we move westwards from the Gaulish frontier, and apart from the eastern cities of Rennes and Nantes the capitals all occur in the eastern part of the states. Thus the density of population decreases from east to west, reaching its minimum on the coast of Finistère, which perhaps helps to explain the course taken by the Breton immigration later.³ The coin evidence shows no central mint of the Osismii, and the circulation of certain of their issues is restricted to only one part of this state, while others were in more general use. This seems to suggest that this wide western state of the Osismii was not a close political unit before the Roman epoch, but separated into two or three regions, each with its own *atelier* and each more autonomous than the other tribal centres, because more isolated;⁴ but the best and earliest coins indicate the general unity of the *civitas*.

The evidence of the coins is also our best guide to both the cultural level and the internal economy of independent Armo-

'Notice sur la limite sud-est de la cité Osismés', *Annales de Bretagne*, lix (1952), 93 ff.; Merlet, *ibid.* 105 ff.; P. Merlat, s.v. 'Veneti' in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 2nd series, viii. 1.

¹ 'La formation des diocèses et des paroisses en Bretagne', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, xxx (1950), 29.

² For a bibliography of the principal relevant studies see *ibid.*, p. 61.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴ J.-B. Colbert de Beaulieu et Louis Pape, 'Notices de numismatique celtique armoricaine (XIV)', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxx (1963), 34.

rica. After the fall of the Gaulish hegemony of Auvergne in 121 B.C. individual mints were established in the city-states, from which the coinage circulated chiefly regionally within the orbit of the tribe and its own mint. In fact the city states gradually regained their sovereignty, the Veneti being probably the earliest in Armorica to adopt a coinage, which exercised an important influence on the rest.¹ All show unmistakable traces of the stater of Philip of Macedon, from which they have been ultimately derived through Gaulish intermediaries. Almost all show on the obverse a head which in far-away Macedonia was the head of Apollo, crowned with a laurel wreath. The obverse shows a horse-drawn *biga*, with an *auriga* above. But the Armorican coins have modified their models with the striking originality and beauty characteristic of native Celtic art everywhere. The laurel wreath has become a coiffure of barbaric splendour, and the face has sacrificed Greek realism for design. There are some startling innovations. Of these the most interesting and distinctive are the tiny decapitated human heads attached to beaded cords issuing from the mouth and surrounding the head of this strange yet still beautiful Apollo.² Inevitably one calls to mind Posidonius's description of the Gaulish custom of cutting off and preserving the heads of their enemies;³ and again the famous passage of Lucian describing the picture of Ogmios, the Gaulish god of eloquence, drawing after him an eager group of men whose ears are attached to his tongue by fine gold chains.⁴ These issues of the Veneti were imitated by coins of an inferior standard by the remaining Armorican tribes, but with local modifications in design, especially on the reverse.

The most impressive remains of Gaulish Armorica are the fortifications. Of these the most spectacular are the *oppida* which appear to have been thrown up under the threat of Caesar's invasion in 56 B.C.⁵ We can still live again the tension of that desperate

¹ J.-B. Colbert de Beaulieu, 'Notices de numismatique celtique armoricaine (XIII)', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxi (1962), 63 ff.; cf. earlier id., 'Une énigme de la numismatique armoricaine. Les monnaies celtiques de Vénètes, II—L'or', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, xxxiv (1954), 5 ff.; cf. especially pp. 33 f. The type is thought to belong to a category localized almost exclusively in the north of the Department of Finistère. For some details see Sir Mortimer Wheeler and K. M. Richardson, *Hill-Forts of Northern France* (Oxford, 1957), p. 38.

² Colbert de Beaulieu, 'Une énigme', etc. (see n. 1 above).

³ Strabo, iv. 4. 5.

⁴ Lucian, *Heracles*.

⁵ On the Gaulish *oppida* see Sir Mortimer Wheeler and K. M. Richardson, *Hill-Forts of Northern France*.

crisis as we climb laboriously up to their great hill-forts of the north and west, or walk or sail along the coast of the south and south-west, close inshore, exploring one by one the little earthen forts which fringe the promontories and islands from the mouth of the Loire, through the Morbihan and western Finistère, as far as to the west of Brest. Both these types of fortifications seem to be roughly contemporary, and to have as their main object the defence of Armorica against Roman attack, the great *oppida* by land, the little promontory forts by sea.¹ The promontory forts are merely headlands, defended from attack on the landward side generally by earthen banks and ditches, enclosing only a few acres, and exclusively coastal. They seem to correspond with the Veneti hegemony, a response to the Roman threat to southern Armorica.² A valuable preliminary survey by the Threiplands was published in 1943,³ and a recent survey by Bernier⁴ has added much to our knowledge of the simpler and more modest examples of these little entrenched forts, and Sir Mortimer Wheeler has summed up their nature and purpose as:

‘The tiny refuges of a folk whose livelihood lay scattered upon the sea rather than focused on the land; . . . essentially of the Atlantic, the eyries of deep-sea sailors’;⁵

and he points out that in the whole 200 miles of coast there is hardly a fortress like the *oppida*, designed to stand a siege. The chief weapons are sling-stones.

The inland *oppida* are a complete contrast, massive hill-top citadels surrounded by stone walls of great thickness often interlaced with timbers—the type known as *muris Gallicus*.⁶ They are distributed throughout north-western France, and seem to have been hastily thrown up on the threat of Caesar’s invasion, and to have been occupied for only a short time. They appear to

¹ Wheeler and Richardson, *Hill-Forts*, pp. 4 ff.

² *Ibid.* They are well described by Caesar, *De B.G.* iii. 12.

³ See Leslie Murray Threipland, ‘Excavations in Brittany’, *Archaeological Journal*, c (1943), 127 ff.

⁴ G. Bernier, ‘Les promontoires barrés des îles Vannetaises du Mor Bras’, *Annales de Bretagne*, lxii (1964), 67 ff.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 4 f. For a brief notice and some interesting details see also P. R. Giot, *Brittany*, p. 198.

⁶ Cf. Caesar, *De B.G.* vii. 23. It is defined by P. R. Giot as ‘a wall of interwoven stones and beams, these fixed to one another by iron nails’ (*Brittany*, p. 199). For a fuller account see M. Aylwin Cotton in Wheeler and Richardson, *Hill-Forts*, Appendix, pp. 159 ff. A good example of this kind of structure is that of the Camp d’Artus. See R. E. M. Wheeler, *Antiquity*, xxxii, Plate VI.

have been intended as both forts and rallying points, and as refuges for the whole tribe, being centrally placed and of great area. Camp d'Artus, the great *oppidum* of the Osismii near the little town of Huelgoat, is seventy-five acres in extent. The great size of the enclosure is unapproached in western Brittany, indicating a deliberate intention of sheltering a concentration of tribes with their animals for food supply. As Wheeler observes, it is impossible that a region so barren can have supported a population large enough to inhabit permanently so extensive an area, or to use it for an occasional refuge. The camp reflects some abnormal occasion when the scattered population of a large region was rallied in emergency under strong central discipline. The Caesarian campaign of 56 B.C., when the Veneti stirred their neighbours to active resistance, is the natural context. In origin the Camp d'Artus is to be regarded as the focus of the Osismii of that year.¹ Wheeler places the Camp d'Artus beside four other *oppida* excavated in 1938-9 in north-western France, the most typical of which was 'Petit Celland' near Avranches in western Normandy. He points out that it is not likely that these two great fortifications were the only reaction of the kind in north-western France to the events of 56 B.C.,² and that in fact something of a tribal pattern may be traced in the disposition of the major *oppida* throughout the region. Although the question of the Gaulish tribal boundaries still remains unsettled (cf. p. 242 above), the principle seems to be tentatively established from the Seine to the Atlantic that under the threat of Roman conquest each tribe—with three possible reservations—rallied to a central point armed on a formidable scale, making use of the *muris Gallicus* as the standard anti-Roman device.³ Of these reservations the Veneti depended on their fleet. The earthwork of Guégon, seven miles west of Josselin, is a likely candidate for the stronghold of the Coriosolites not yet ascertained. Excavations planned for the present summer may elucidate the *oppidum* of the Namnetes at the mouth of the Loire.

In the Camp d'Artus, as it survives today, nothing is changed. We are back in Gaulish Armorica as we climb steeply through a part of the forest such as once covered the whole of central Brittany. Even the stream below the precipice on our right is strewn with primeval boulders of a size and polish which stun

¹ Wheeler and Richardson, *Hill-Forts*, p. 2.

² Op. cit., pp. 2 f. Cf. the map of the 'Large Oppida' in Wheeler and Richardson, *Hill-Forts*, Plate I.

³ Ibid., p. 4.

the imagination. The stillness too speaks of a land long deserted save by a secret fox crossing our path. Then suddenly at the top of the climb we come on the vast encircling rampart of the fort, and find ourselves in the entrance, which had been violently destroyed. A Gaulish coin of the first half of the first century B.C., found on an occupation site within the north-east entrance, told its own tale to the excavators.

Our brief glance at the Armorican defences has served to underline both what we learn from Caesar's account of the thalassocracy of the Veneti¹ and of the Armorican league by which the whole coastal people of Armorica entered into an agreement with the Veneti to act together, 'choosing death rather than slavery'.²

For what follows we are dependent on three Latin authors (Caesar, Florus, Orosius) and one Greek (Dio Cassius). Of these Caesar alone is contemporary. Orosius is merely a résumé. Florus and probably Dio also, are dependent on a lost text of Livy, who may have had before him an account made by an eye-witness serving in the fleet.³ It is no part of our subject to relate in detail the great naval battle by which, in Caesar's words, 'the war with the Veneti and the whole of the sea-coast was finished'. He tells us that 220 ships of the Veneti took part, and he describes their lofty beaked ships, with sails of skins of thin dressed leather, the ships built of oak, the benches made of planks 'fastened with iron nails as thick as a man's thumb', the anchors fastened by chains instead of cables. Evidently the Veneti were wealthy in iron and experienced in its use. The battle lasted for eight hours and ended in a complete Roman victory. The conduct of the conquered Veneti amply justified the original appeal of their leaders, calling to arms those who preferred death to slavery. Dio tells us, perhaps ultimately on the report of an eyewitness:

Some killed themselves to avoid being taken alive, and others leaped into the sea with the idea that they would in any event not perish at the hands of the Romans. For in zeal and daring they were not at all behind their opponents.⁴

There are grounds for believing that the Veneti suppression was not as immediate or as absolute as Caesar seeks to claim, and that the occupation of the terrain by the conquerors was not so rapid or easy as his narrative suggests. The late Professor Merlat

¹ Caesar, *De B.G.* iii. 8 ff.

² *Ibid.*

³ M. Denis, 'La Campagne de César contre les Vénètes', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxi (1954), 126 ff.

⁴ *Roman History*, xxxix. 43.

has pointed out that the survival of the name *Darioritum*, the capital of the Gallo-Roman 'city' of the Veneti, can only be explained by the survival of a fairly important Veneti population. Merlat also suggests that Caesar's own narrative seems to indicate, moreover—although he omits to tell us of their subsequent fate—that a certain number of ships escaped destruction (iii. 15. 5), and perhaps the escaped Veneti managed to flee finally to Armorica.¹ Both Merlat and his pupil M. Denis,² in a further article on the subject, follow Dio Cassius (xxxix. 43. 5) in holding that the Veneti who were put to death or sold into slavery were only the prisoners taken in the course of the naval battle, and that Dio's account differs from Caesar's and follows a different tradition. It may be added that Merlat entirely endorses Denis's views.

The account of the whole campaign, including a discussion of the site of the battle, has been examined in a further series of valuable studies by F. Le Roux and C. Guyonvarch³ and by Paul Emmanuelli,⁴ and an interesting technical study of the Veneti fleet has been contributed by Creston.⁵ It is suggested in general that we have no sufficient grounds for admitting that the ships were destroyed; and that neither these ships nor the land troops should be included in the unconditional surrender claimed by Caesar.

These conclusions are supported by the evidence of coins. The find at Brech (Morbihan) of thirty-two *petits billons* of silver and alloy, proves conclusively the circulation of coins of the Veneti after the conquest of 56. These Brech *billons*, in part of Veneti tradition, are now comparable with those which were circulating among the Osismii and other tribes of the Celtic and Belgic west. These pitiful coins offer a great contrast to the gold money of a people who had struck the most beautiful Armorican staters, and silver alloys hardly less remarkable.⁶ On the other hand, the

¹ P. Merlat, 'César et les Vénètes', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxi (1954), 154 ff., 168.

² M. Denis, loc. cit.

³ 'César et la destruction des Vénètes', *Ogam*, vi (1954), 51 ff.

⁴ 'César et les Vénètes: le combat naval de 56 av. J.-C.', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxi (1956), 55 ff.

⁵ R.-Y. Creston, 'Considérations techniques sur la flotte des Vénètes et des Romains', *ibid.*, pp. 88 ff.

⁶ See J.-B. Colbert de Beaulieu, 'La trouvaille de Brech', *Bull. de la Soc. polymathique du Morbihan* (1953), Procès-verbaux, p. 16; *id.*, sup. note, 1954, p. 56; *id.*, 'Contribution de la numismatique à l'étude de la catastrophe des Vénètes', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxi (1954), 192-6. See further *id.*, 'Les monnaies

treasure of Port-Haliguen in Quiberon, hidden about the beginning of the first century A.D.,¹ shows that the Roman régime was already imposed by that time. The Veneti money had now disappeared. Here as always, we must accept the claim made a century ago, and endorsed today by J.-B. Colbert de Beaulieu, that the history of Gaul is not in our libraries; it is in the earth.²

Meanwhile the Pipriac hoard³ of about 600 coins (found in 1908), and the Amanlis hoard⁴ of about 10,000 coins (discovered in 1835), both in the territory of the Redones, enable us to trace the route of the retreating army. These hoards are too big to be the property of an individual and were probably the army and state treasury. De Beaulieu concludes that these and other associated hoards afford proof of a resistance movement on land offered to the Roman armies by the Armorican coalition, comprising the Veneti and the Redones, and its defeat following a great unrecorded battle.⁵ His further conclusion is that the rarity of hurriedly buried treasure on Veneti territory presumes organized flight by refugees, carrying their money with them, and permitting the circulation of the staters later after the immediate departure of the Romans northwards. Meanwhile the *petits billons* continued to circulate for years, being a temporary convenience permitted by the new government.⁶ The Veneti money so far north in the Brech hoard is evidence against the annihilation of the Veneti population, and points to the organized removal of their state treasury, and also shows the reality of the active participation in the war on land with the Armorican coalition. Other hoards indicate the path taken by the Osismii fleeing west after the defeat, and further suggest that this state took a comparatively late and moderate part in the war. But the

celtiques des Vénètes, I: Le Billon', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, xxxiii (1953), 10-14.

¹ P. Merlat, *Gallia*, ix (1951), 85; G. Fabre and M. Mainjonet, *Revue numismatique*, xv (1953), 130 ff.

² François-Jules Filleul de Petigny (1801-58), *apud* de Beaulieu, *Annales de Bretagne*, lxi (1954), 200.

³ J.-B. Colbert de Beaulieu, 'La trouvaille de monnaies vénètes de Pipriac', *Revue Belge de Numismatique*, 99 (1953), 31 ff.; cf. id., 'Une énigme de la numismatique armoricaine: les monnaies celtiques des Vénètes, I: Le Billon', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, xxxiii (1953), 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵ 'Contribution de la numismatique à l'étude de la catastrophe des Vénètes', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxi (1954), 184 ff.; cf. especially p. 186.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

number of hoards buried and never recovered by their owners makes it clear that the Osismii were not spared by the conquerors.¹ Armorica was a conquered country and became part of Gaul. In the words of Camille Jullian, whose rhetoric is not misplaced:

This strong and vigorous nation of the Veneti, whose origins and power go back to the builders of the dolmens, the most ancient and original of all Gaul, ended in slavery and death.²

America now found herself incorporated into the administrative system of Roman Gaul, being included in Lugdunensis III. The new centres of Roman administration here, as in Gaul, were still the old tribal centres, which survived, though not as large cities, for Armorica was more devoted to agriculture than to commerce and industry; but the number of villas built by wealthy Armoricans suggests a measure of prosperity.³ This is especially marked in the Morbihan, where villas flourished on an ambitious scale, such as that of Le Lodo, a villa with baths, heated by a hypocaust and hot-water pipes, and rooms similarly heated by a hypocaust. The coin finds showed that this luxurious villa had been occupied for more than 250 years.⁴ Near Carnac the Scotsman James Miln excavated from 1874 to 1877 a very important estate, Les Bosséno, which had Roman amenities, such as baths, extensive outbuildings, a smithy, workshops, a small temple or shrine, the whole estate amounting almost to a little urban town.⁵ A model of the whole domain and many of the contents are in the museum at Carnac. In the north the shrine of Mars near Corseul is the only Roman building surviving intact; but Roman Corseul can be largely revived with a little imagination in the outdoor museum in the *mairie* of the town of this ancient Gaulish capital. Roman antiquities from Carhaix, the ancient capital of the Osismii, furnish the nucleus of almost every modern Breton museum.

The most eloquent records of Roman administration, however,

¹ Id., 'La trouvaille de Penguilly', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxii (1955), 153 ff.; cf. especially pp. 165, 166. ² C. Jullian, *La Gaule* (Paris, 1909), iii. 300.

³ For Roman amenities, see P. Merlat, 'Notices d'archéologie armoricaines', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxii (1955), 300 ff.; cf. J. André, *ibid.*, lxvii (1960), 103 f.

⁴ Plan of the villa given by Y. Rollando, *La Préhistoire du Morbihan* (Vannes, 1961), p. 124.

⁵ See James Miln, *Fouilles faites à Carnac: Les Bosséno et le Mont Saint-Michel* (Paris, 1877); original English version by the author, *Excavations at Carnac*, etc. (Edinburgh, 1877). Cf. Rollando, *op. cit.*, p. 125 and plan, p. 124.

are her roads¹ and milestones, the former recently studied afresh by the late Professor Merlat.² The study of the map of their distribution and routes has led to the important conclusion that the population of Armorica was denser and certainly more Romanized than had formerly been realized, especially in the Morbihan; and Merlat emphasized that the routes here are an undoubted indication, which is confirmed by archaeology, of a relative concentration of population in this maritime zone, and of the role which the sea must have continued to play in the activities of the Veneti even after 56 B.C. Trunk roads connected the west of the peninsula with Lyons, and there were also roads for routine purposes between one tribe and another, and local roads between estates. Some have stretches of metalled causeways, and, as in Gaul, appear to follow the ancient network of Gaulish roads.³ Already in the seventeenth century it had been remarked that seven metalled causeways radiated from Carhaix 'like the points of a star', and the Abbé Falc'hun tells us that archaeology has recently distinguished far more than seven.⁴ Its commanding central position on high ground marked it out as a natural centre of Roman administration in the west. On the other hand, Merlat has pointed out that at least six roads connect Vannes with the other capitals of the city-states, and he has emphasized the density of population in this area, and the important relations of the Veneti with the rest of Gaul.⁵ These far-flung relations with remote Gaul are to be inferred by objects now in the museums of Carnac and of Vannes—the fine sculp-

¹ See R. Kerviler, *Armorique et Bretagne*, I. *Armorique* (Paris, 1892), Map, Plate IV; cf. Plate III; cf. Picquenard, 'L'expansion romaine dans le sud-ouest de l'Armorique', *Bulletin de la Société de Finistère*, i (1923), 127 ff.

² P. Merlat, 'Encore Vorganium et Vorgium', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxii (1955), 181 ff. and fig. 1, p. 196, 'Carhaix (Vorgium) carrefour de voies romaines' (carte établie par P. Merlat et dessinée par R. Dalbiez); id., 'Considérations générales sur l'établissement d'une carte du réseau routier en Armorique ancienne et observations particulières sur une carte des voies romaines de la cité des Vénètes', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxii (1955), 300 ff. and fig. 1, p. 317, map of the Gallo-Roman roads of the Veneti. Cf. Yannik Rollando, *La Préhistoire du Morbihan*, pp. 126 f.

³ Merlat points out (*Annales de Bretagne*, lxii. 313) that one of the most reliable criteria for verification of Roman roads is an examination of their structure.

⁴ F. Falc'hun, *L'Histoire de la langue bretonne d'après la géographie linguistique*, I. Texte (Rennes, 1951), p. 18. Cf. P. Merlat, 'Encore Vorganium et Vorgium', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxii (1955), 181 ff., and map of Roman roads, fig. 1, p. 196.

⁵ Op. cit., pp. 321 f.

tured marble head from Crach, probably part of a statue of Venus;¹ the mortar of volcanic lava from Auvergne;² and pieces of Samian ware.

Recent studies by Merlat have shown that the Roman milestones are as eloquent as the road system,³ but even more difficult to interpret because they have often been moved from their original sites. Out of the thirteen milestones from the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41–54) two have been claimed for Armorica, an area which was important for Claudius with an eye to communication with Britain. Waquet points out that the inscription on the milestone of Kerscao—‘one of the most beautiful in Gaul’, now in the museum at Quimper—gives us an indication of the little ports of La Manche when the conquest of Britain took place in the reign of Claudius (43–51).⁴ From an inscription on the base of an altar to Neptune from near Douarnenez, we learn of a maritime college, apparently having relations with Britain, in the charge of the family of the Voltinii of Narbonne,⁵ and doubtless in touch with another maritime site on the Pointe du Van, on the northern tip of the Baie des Trépassés.⁶ Some of these milestones bore inscriptions dedicated to the emperor responsible for the construction of the road. A number of examples of these are now in the museum at Vannes.⁷ From these inscriptions we can derive important conclusions about the Veneti under the Roman régime. All these Roman stations, roads, milestones, amenities, including aqueducts and even bridges, however, leave us in no doubt that on the whole Armorica had become merely an outlying province, the Cinderella of Roman Gaul.

Then the crash came. In the third century Roman Gaul was invaded by a number of Teutonic tribes who forced the frontiers, attacked the coasts, and overran the country. Gaul set up an independent empire, which of course included Armorica, and the effect of these disturbed times can be traced in Vannes by the burial of thousands of coins, those at Surzur alone as many as 50,000,⁸ bearing the effigies of Postumus, Victorinus, and Tetri-

¹ See Rollando, *op. cit.*, p. 129 and plate opposite, p. 128.

² *Ibid.*, p. 129.

³ P. Merlat, in collaboration with L. Pape, ‘Bornes milliaires osismiennes’, *Mémoires de la Société d’Histoire et d’Archéologie de Bretagne*, xxxvi (1956), 5 ff.

⁴ *Histoire de la Bretagne* (Paris, 1958), p. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ See the *Catalogue du Musée archéologique James Miln-Zacharie le Rouzic* (Vannes), nos. 3030, 3031, 3039.

⁸ Y. Rollando, *La Préhistoire du Morbihan*, p. 130.

cus. However, on the abdication of Tetricus in 273 the unity of the Empire was renewed precariously under Aurelian, but as a precaution against further raids defensive measures were taken.¹ A personal touch is added to our distant view of these events by the recollection that the grandfather of Ausonius was banished to the neighbourhood of the Adour in southern Aquitaine in consequence of his part in the rebellion of the Aedui under Victorinus (A.D. 267–8) and the two Tetrici, father and son, who succeeded him.² Of the defensive measures the most important were the building of defensive walls round the towns, at the same time reducing their area.³ In Armorica only the three eastern cities were walled—Nantes,⁴ Rennes,⁵ and Vannes⁶—all close to the eastern border. Other forms of fortification were erected, e.g. at Aquilonia, near the modern Quimper, in the south-west; and at Le Yaudet, ‘the eagles’ nest’, on the coast north-west of Lannion, in the Roman province of Lexovia, a walled fortress was built in the third century on the site of the former Gaulish *oppidum*.⁷ In Gaul in general, however, the building of the town walls was not restricted to the period of the Great Invasion (250–75), and those of Angers and Nantes were probably built after 280, in the period when peace and order had been restored.⁸

Already in the late third century the attacks of Saxons and Franks on the north-western shores of Gaul were necessitating maritime defence measures. These attacks were not merely piratical, but aimed at permanent settlement. Place-name evidence proves that already before the settlement of Britain the Saxons had established themselves around Boulogne and Calais, and the place-names of Lower Normandy still retain traces of them.⁹ These barbarian depredations attained such formidable

¹ Cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1964), i. 135.

² Cf. Ausonius, *Parentalia*, iv.

³ See C. Jullian, *Histoire de Bordeaux depuis les origines jusqu'en 1895* (Bordeaux, 1895), pp. 43 ff.

⁴ Cf. n. 8 below.

⁵ See P. Merlat, ‘Rapport sur la portion du mur d’enceinte gallo-romain de Rennes, découverte 18, Quai Duguay-Trouin’, *Annales de Bretagne*, lxxv (1958), 97 ff.

⁶ See Y. Rollando, *op. cit.*, pp. 120 f., 122.

⁷ Abbé L. Le Clec’h, *Le Yaudet* (1956), p. 38.

⁸ J. Mallet and H. Engelhard, ‘L’enceinte Gallo-Romaine’, *Annales de Bretagne*, lxxv (1958), 97 ff.

⁹ F. Lot, *Les Invasions germaniques* (Paris, 1935), p. 95; A. Longnon, ‘Les noms de lieu de la France’ (Paris, 1920–9), p. 188; M. Gysseling, *Toponymisch Woordenboek van België, Nederland, Luxemburg, Noord-Frankrijk en West-Duitsland voor 1226*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1960). See especially vol. ii, pp. 1127 ff. For a recent discussion of this linguistic problem see L. Musset, *Les Invasions: Les Vagues germaniques* (Paris, 1965), pp. 171 ff.

dimensions that at a date probably in 286, or conceivably 287, Carausius, a Roman officer of Menapian origin, was charged with the function of suppressing Saxon pirates in the English Channel.¹ Of the defence measures against barbarian attacks by sea the most important are the chains of forts, mostly built about this period in both Britain and Gaul, which undoubtedly served—whatever their original purpose—to protect the shores of the ‘Germanic Sea’.² Lists of both the British and the Gaulish forts (called *castella*) are recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a Roman civil and military inventory of the Empire compiled, probably officially, in the early fifth century.³ The Gaulish *castella* extend from Calais to the estuary of the Garonne, and include Aleth, Vannes, and Nantes. Professor Demougeot points out that the object seems to be to protect the river and road nucleus of northern Gaul,⁴ and we shall see that this concentration on the estuaries, vital to the defences of the interior, is a constant feature of Roman defence tactics against Saxon attacks in Armorica also. Indeed the work of all the emperors of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries was directed to maintaining and tightening the union between Britain and Gaul, with the main object of maintaining the integrity of western Gaul against barbarian penetration.⁵

Despite all these precautions the barbarians overran much of western Gaul and were certainly responsible for the widespread destruction of Roman buildings throughout Armorica. Except the three eastern cities of Nantes, Rennes, and Vannes all the

¹ The chief ancient sources for Carausius are to be found in the works of Eutropius, Sextus Aurelius Victor, and in the Latin Panegyrics, nos. II, III, IV, and VII (ed. and French translation by Galletier, in 3 vols., Paris, 1949–55).

² The most authoritative modern study is that of Donald A. White, *Litus Saxonicum* (University of Wisconsin, 1961), chapter 2. With the latter, cf. the reviews by J. K. St. Joseph, *Antiquity*, xxxvi (1962), 240; cf. also E. Demougeot, cited in n. 4 below.

³ Professor A. H. M. Jones, after a careful recent study of the document, suggests that the date of composition was between 395 and 413 for the western part of the text. See his *Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1964), iii. 347, 350. Earlier valuable studies are those by C. E. Stevens, ‘The British Sections of the *Notitia Dignitatum*’, *Archaeological Journal*, xcvi (1940), 125 ff.; and Eric Birley, ‘The Beaumont Inscription, The *Notitia Dignitatum*’, etc., *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, xxxix, n.s. (1939), 190 ff.

⁴ E. Demougeot, ‘Les invasions germaniques et la rupture des relations entre la Bretagne et la Gaule’, *Le Moyen Âge* (1–2), 1962, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

towns were destroyed. Corseul, the former capital of the Coriosolites, and Carhaix, the chief Roman administrative centre of the west, were reduced almost to the level of villages. The houses had disappeared.¹ Brest lay in ruins, Locmaria (Quimper) was reduced to a heap of rubble. The *fana* and the villas were violently burnt. The villas and estates which the Romans had established in the territory of the Veneti, such as Le Lodo and Les Bosséno, have left traces of violent burning. Cinderella was left sitting in her ashes, with little hope of the glass slipper.

Excavations made in 1890-1 in the village of Ploufragan, near Saint Brieuc on the Roman road from Corseul to Carhaix, give us some idea of the sufferings of the wealthy Gallo-Roman nobility during the Saxon raids. Here were found the debris and tiles of a destroyed Roman villa, and in 1854 not far away a prehistoric chamber tomb (an *allée couverte*) had been revealed which had been adapted as a make-shift dwelling of a wealthy Gallo-Roman (possibly the owner of the destroyed villa). He had entered the prehistoric chamber-tomb by removing one of the roof-slabs of the middle chamber, and inside he had constructed a room with a tiled floor, *c.* five metres in area, and here were still the remains of a hearth with cinders and carbon, and fragments of fine pottery. A wealthy Gallo-Roman had built this room and made his dwelling inside the prehistoric structure, and had taken with him some utensils of good quality.² His fate is unknown.

Roman defence measures were tardy, but not wholly ineffective, as we can see from the fact that in contrast to Britain no large-scale Saxon settlement was made in Armorica. We learn from the *Notitia Dignitatum*³ that here, as elsewhere in western Gaul, the troops of the interior were largely composed of *laeti*, that is to say, barbarian settlers subject to military duties. These included a corps of Frankish *laeti* at Rennes, 'prefects' of Moorish soldiers at Vannes and at 'Osismis' (i.e. Carhaix), while traces

¹ For a general account of the destruction see Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*, s.v. *Bretagne Mineure*, col. 1248 from *Vita S. Mevenii* ('Life of St Méen'), MS. lab. 9889, Bibl. Nat. 102 v^e and v. 103 v^e. For a fuller treatment see Arthur Le Moyne de La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i (Paris, 1896), 221 ff.

² Geslin de Bourgoyne and A. de Barthélemy, *Anciens Évêchés de Bretagne* (Paris, Saint-Brieuc, 1855-64), ii. 263 ff. See also de La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 262.

³ In *Partibus Occidentis*, xlii. 33-44. See the *Notitia Dignitatum*, edited by Otto Seeck (Berlin, 1827), pp. 261 ff. For the most recent study of this document see A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, iii. 225 ff. (and cf. p. 253, n. 3 above).

of troops of Egyptian origin have been found at Corseul and in the Monts d'Arrée.¹ But the main problem confronting the Roman authorities, naval and military alike, was to prevent the sea-rovers from penetrating western Gaul in force. The protection of Armorica was wholly subordinated to this end. With this object, however, the Armorican coasts and the estuaries of the Armorican rivers leading into Gaul must be well guarded. Accordingly the Armorican tribal capitals were transferred from the interior to the coasts, and the population and defences were concentrated as nearly as possible on the Gaulish border—an obvious economy of resources. The west of the peninsula was left largely unprotected, and this greatly facilitated the immigration of the Celtic population from Great Britain, which began about this time, and continued with increasing impetus throughout the fifth and sixth centuries. This is, in fact, the period when Armorica was in process of becoming Brittany. Why did it not become Germania? The studies of three Breton scholars, Couffon, Merlet, and Merlat, on the Roman defensive measures, have helped to solve this question. The earlier studies by Couffon² form the subject of papers which embody a new approach and fresh research, following on the work of nineteenth-century scholars. The more recent work of F. Merlet³ and Merlat⁴ consists of studies following, and in general supporting, the main lines laid down by Couffon, but differing in some respects, and adding new important researches of their own.

Two periods of changes about this time have been distinguished in the Roman defensive measures in their military system in Armorica. In the document known as the *Notitia Galliarum*,⁵ drawn up in the reign of Honorius (395–423), the

¹ See H. Waquet, *Histoire de la Bretagne*, p. 13; cf. *ibid.*, p. 18.

² R. Couffon, 'Limites des cités gallo-romaines et fondation des évêchés dans la péninsule armoricaine', *Société d'Émulation des Côtes-du-Nord*, lxxiii (1942), 1 ff.; *id.*, '“Les Pagi” de la Domnonée au IX^e siècle d'après les hagiographes', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, xxiv (1944), 1 ff.

³ 'La formation des diocèses et des paroisses en Bretagne', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne*, xxx (1950), 5 ff.; *ibid.* xxxi (1951), 137 ff.

⁴ P. Merlat, 'Encore Vorganium et Vorgium', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxii (1955), 181 ff.

⁵ *Notitia Galliarum*, edited by Otto Seeck in his edition of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, pp. 261 ff. This document has recently been defined as 'a civil register . . . roughly contemporary with the *Notitia Dignitatum*' (A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, iii. 225). The Armorican provinces are listed in the section *In Provincia Lugdunensi tertia Civitates* (p. 264). Mommsen had regarded

city-states remain substantially as they were in Caesar's day (cf. pp. 240 f. above); but in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, compiled roughly c. 400, with a ten years' margin before or after, the situation has changed.¹ By a series of military measures the Roman command has transferred the authority of the ancient tribal capitals from the interior to the estuaries and the coastal areas. The *Notitia Dignitatum* reveals Lugdunensis III, and incidentally other neighbouring provinces, as divided into two regions, one in the interior of the country, under the command of the *Magister militum praesentalium*, with command of the troops at Le Mans and Rennes; the other on the coasts, under the command of the *Dux tractus Armorici et Nervicani*, with command of the troops at Vannes (*Venetis*), at Carhaix (*Osismiis*), at Nantes (*Mannatias*), and at Aleth (*Alethum*).² Corseul, the old capital of the Coriosolites, has given place to Aleth at the mouth of the Rance; and Rennes has been partitioned, since it had been organized for land defences, but now required to have both its littoral and also its approaches up the Rance defended. At the same time, in the south, modifications took place in the territories of Vannes to protect the entry to the River Vilaine. Nantes already ensured the defence of the entry of the Loire into Gaul. Thus all the commands of the *Tractus Armorici* were now on estuaries except Carhaix; but at this first reorganization, which probably took place c. 410, the west was unaffected.

The protection of the western coast has left no traces in the *Notitia Dignitatum* save the command of troops at Carhaix, in the interior;³ but Merlet traced a second series of changes at a later date in the same century affecting chiefly the west. The ancient *civitas* of the *Osismii*—almost certainly Carhaix—has disappeared from the register, but two new cities appear—one in the south-west at Locmaria near Quimper on the estuary of the Odet, probably a Gallo-Roman city in origin;⁴ the second in the *Notitia Galliarum* as an ecclesiastical document, but Duchesne has proved that it was administrative. See his article in the *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquités de France* (1892), pp. 247 ff. Duchesne's text is quoted almost complete by Leclercq in the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*, xii, cols. 717 ff.

¹ *Notitia Dignitatum*. Professor A. H. M. Jones suggests a date between 395 and 413 for the Western part of the document. Cf. p. 253, n. 3, above.

² Merlet, *op. cit.* (1950), p. 34. For the principle guiding such changes see Masselin, 'Les Garnisons du Littus Saxonicum dans la *Notitia Dignitatum*', *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, xxxii (1917), 40; cf. F. Lot, *Mélanges d'Histoire bretonne* (Paris, 1907), Appendix III, 'Alet et Corseul', pp. 200 ff.

³ See especially Merlet, *op. cit.* (1950), pp. 50, 52.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44; H. Waquet, 'De Coriosopitum à Conflans-Saint-Corentin', in *Mélanges bretons et celtiques offerts à M. J. Loth* (Rennes et Paris, 1927),

the north-west at Le Yaudet, on the estuary of the Leguer. These two new cities, created apparently simultaneously, one on the north coast, one on the south, would seem to have replaced Carhaix for purposes of defence against the barbarians.¹ Instead of the five cities of Caesar's day we now have six, and their distribution at the end of the sixth century is quite different from the earlier five. All are now coastal except Rennes, whose protection has been ensured at the estuaries. The administration of the interior has become quite secondary.

Many reasons can be adduced to account for the tardy Roman defences on the west. Armorica had been in a state of insurrection during most of the fifth century, especially 435-50, and Gaul had serious troubles elsewhere. But the fact that the Saxons had not been able either to displace the earliest Breton immigrants, or to effect a permanent occupation, suggests strongly that the Roman organization still prevailed. Merlet is inclined to attribute the creation of the two new western cities to a period of relative order, possibly under the authority of some Gaulish chief, such as Syagrius, the last of the Gallo-Roman official nobility, *c.* 470.²

My own belief is that the west was deliberately relegated to the immigrant Britons by the Roman authorities. The fact that we have no direct evidence is surely of little moment in view both of the sparsity of evidence for the period as a whole, and of the fact that we have no evidence to the contrary. On the other hand, we have ample analogy for such a policy elsewhere on the Roman borders at this period. In expressing regret for the lack of information for the manner in which the Britons were installed in Armorica the late Professor Ferdinand Lot asks the question:

Were they installed, being still juridically subjects of the Empire, by the Roman authorities, anxious to re-populate the Armorican coasts, devastated by Saxon pirates; or on the other hand, did they occupy by force regions where the Roman authority was undermined by the Bagaudae and the perpetual revolt of the Gaulish Armoricans?³

I have little hesitation in accepting the former alternative. Not only is it incredible that the Celtic immigrants could have succeeded otherwise in entirely 'dominating' the country which the Saxons had failed to penetrate in force; but it is equally incredible that the Romans could have permitted their penetration and occupation unopposed, even as far as the very borders of Gaul. pp. 12 ff.; *id.*, 'Encore quelques réflexions sur Coriosopitum et Coriosolium', *Annales de Bretagne*, lii (1945), 55 ff.

¹ Merlet, *op. cit.*, pp. 43 f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³ F. Lot, *La Gaule* (Paris, 1947), p. 483.

II. *The British Immigration*

As the Roman centres of population and the Roman defences moved eastward a new population entered Armorica from the sea, concentrating on the coastlands and occupying large tracts of the interior, especially in the west. The entire peninsula except the eastern border states of Nantes, Vannes, and Rennes changed its character and its language from Gallo-Roman to the form of Celtic most closely related to Cornish and Welsh, Cornish especially. The country gradually changed its character from *Armorica*, a peripheral Gallo-Roman province, a shabby outpost of the Empire, facing east, to *Brittany*, a country with its back to Gaul, and with its contacts, its culture, and its relations and political sympathies, its Church and its population closely united with that of the British Isles. But the process lasted over several centuries and was never uniform throughout the country. The Welsh of Wales were well aware of the close affinities of both language and people between themselves and the Breton settlers, and the kinship is frankly proclaimed as late as the early tenth century in the greatest of all Welsh patriotic poems, the *Armes Prydein*, calling upon the Celtic peoples, including those of Brittany, to aid them in hurling the Saxons back across the North Sea.

The infiltration from Britain is generally held to have begun in the fifth century, more especially in the second half, and to have reached its height in the sixth, and to have largely spent itself in the seventh. My own view is that it probably began much earlier, at least as early as the late fourth century, and perhaps as early as the late third century.

What set the ball rolling? What is the traditional evidence, first of all? We cannot fairly ignore Geoffrey of Monmouth, who had close contacts with both Breton and Welsh tradition. He states¹ that after Maximus—whom he erroneously calls Maximian—had taken his fleet and his troops into Armorica, he placed Conan Meriadoc in charge of it as his vassal; and before his subsequent conquest of Gaul, he imported large numbers of the civil and military population of Britain into Armorica, and thus created 'a second Britain'. And he also tells us that after his death his British soldiers 'betook themselves to their fellow-countrymen in Armorica that now was called "The Other

¹ *Historia Regum* (v. 12-16). For Conan Meriadoc and the traditions relating to him and the settlement of Brittany by Maximus see R. Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein (The Welsh Triads)* (Cardiff, 1961), pp. 316 ff. See also the Welsh Triad 35 (*ibid.*, p. 79).

Britain'''. The unsupported evidence of a tradition recorded by Geoffrey of Monmouth could certainly not stand alone in a matter of this kind,¹ and his story is obviously confused; but we have reason to believe that in regard to early British, especially South Welsh, history Geoffrey was in possession of some oral traditions not otherwise recorded. After all, the tradition echoes that of Nennius to the effect that the soldiers taken by Maximus to the Continent 'are the Armorican Britons, and they never returned to this day';² but indeed the tradition is perhaps as old as Gildas who tells us that Maximus's soldiers never returned.³ This at least is almost certainly correct. What other course was open to them after the débâcle at Aquileia in 388 than to be adopted as *laeti* in the Roman army, like other foreign auxiliaries, e.g. those posted at Rennes, recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*?

Our earliest authority for the emigration from Britain is Gildas, even if we hesitate to accept the entire document of the *De Excidio Britanniae* as a sixth-century document from his pen. His references to the exile of his countrymen overseas,⁴ and to the *ferocissimi Saxones*⁵ who have come at the invitation of *omnes consiliarii una cum superbo tyranno*,⁶ and to the period immediately preceding that of the Siege of Badonicus Mons which the writer seems to imply took place in the year of his birth, suggest a date about the close of the fifth century. He does not hint at any other national threat to Britain, but expands the horrors of the *adventus* with elaboration, and manifestly regards these Saxons as responsible for the emigration. His estimate has been accepted almost universally down to our day. Immediately before this passage he has referred to a deadly pestilence⁷ which had attacked the country, causing widespread death. This is generally identified with the noted plague⁸ which is believed to have attacked the country about this time.

¹ See Dom Antoine de Galois, 'Réfutation de la fable de Conan Meriadoc' (Rennes, 1902).

² *Historia Brittonum*, cap. 27. On the passage in question see the edition by F. Lot, *Nennius et l'Historia Brittonum* (Paris, 1934), p. 167 and notes.

³ *Gildas De Excidio Britanniae*, edited and translated by Hugh Williams (London, 1899), chapters 13, 14. ⁴ *Transmarinas petebant regiones*, cap. 25.

⁵ Cap. 23.

⁶ Loc. cit.

⁷ Cap. 22.

⁸ The *mortalitas magna* is referred to in the Welsh annals as having caused the death of King Maelgwn Gwynedd s.a. 547. Late sources, such as the *Life of St. Teilo*, bishop of Llandaff and abbot of its *llan* (monastery), speak of a temporary evacuation led by the saint and his followers fleeing to Cornouaille, i.e. the southern 'kingdom' of Brittany. It is interesting to note the persistence of the evacuation tradition in a letter written between 1141 and 1147 from the Chapter of St. David's Cathedral to Canterbury, in which

In referring to the exile of his countrymen Gildas does not mention Armorica specifically as the goal of these emigrants; but as the period is approximately that of the early Breton settlement it is generally believed that the writer has Brittany in mind. Breton eighth- and ninth-century traditions recorded by Eginhard¹ and Ermold le Noir² claim that the Britons established themselves in Armorica as fugitives from the Saxon invasion. Their testimony, however, is of no independent value, being in all likelihood derived from the tradition recorded by Gildas, whose work was well known in Brittany before the ninth century. It must nevertheless be borne in mind that Britons also made settlements in Galicia in north-west Spain, where a Celtic monastic foundation is known to have been in existence since the sixth century, and apparently for two centuries later (below, pp. 281 ff.).

A different tradition, which seems to lie behind the British immigration into Armorica, comes from Procopius of Caesarea, a younger contemporary of Gildas, to which our attention was first drawn by E. Phillimore and more recently by Sir Frank Stenton.³ In Procopius's history of Justinian's wars a chapter has been inserted about Britain, here stated to be inhabited by three races, *Angiloi*, *Frissones*, and *Brittones*, each ruled by its own king. It is stated that each race was so fertile that women and children were sent in large numbers about this time to the land

the writers claim that they had always had the pallium from St. David's time till St. Samson, 'fleeing from the plague', took the pallium to Dol. See J. Conway Davies, *Episcopal Acts relating to Welsh Dioceses*. No. 1. *Historical Society of the Church in Wales*, 1946, p. 262.

¹ *Einhardi Annales* (ed. Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist. Script.*), t. i, p. 169, s.a. 786.

'Cum ab Anglis ac Saxonibus Britannia insula fuisset invasa, magna pars incolarum eius mare traiciens, in ultimis Galliae finibus Venetorum et Coriosolarum regiones occupavit. Is populus a regibus Francorum subactus ac tributarius factus, inpositum sibi vectigal, licet invitus, solvere solebat.'

² *Ermoldi Nigelli carmina*, *Mon. Germ. Hist., Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini* (ed. Duemmler), t. ii, p. 41.

Hic populus veniens supremo ex orbe Britanni
 Quos modo Brittones Francica lingua vocat.
 Nam telluris egens, vento iactatus et imbri,
 Arva capit prorsus, atque tributa parat.
 Tempore nempe illo hoc rus quoque Gallus habebat,
 Quando idem populus fluctibus actus adest.
 Sed quia baptismi fuerat hic tinctus olivo,
 Mox spatium licet, et colere arva simul.
 Ut requies sibi cessa, movent mox horrida bella.

³ In a note to p. 75 of 'The Settlement of Brittany' by W. Edwards, *Y. Cymrodor*, xi (1892); cf. F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1947), pp. 4 ff.

of the Franks, who planted them as colonists in the more sparsely inhabited parts of the country.¹ The reference to the Britons relates to the period when the colonization of Armorica was at its height in the first half of the sixth century, and Procopius himself was writing shortly after the middle of the century.

The date and circumstances of the notice about the Britons point clearly to Armorica. About the year 551 an embassy had been sent to Constantinople from the Frankish king Theudeberht to assert his claim to Britain as a result of the migration, and had included among envoys some of the *Angiloi* themselves. Although the chapter in question contains some strange and unacceptable statements about Britain it was pointed out by the late H. M. Chadwick that these do not invalidate the historical basis of the nucleus of the story of the mission, which has manifestly been acquired from a barbarian informant from northern Europe.² In addition to the affinities of some elements in Procopius's narrative with Teutonic heroic poetry, I would also stress the affinities of one of the marvels here attributed to Britain with poetry of the *mirabilia* type, and it may be added that the authorship of these features is not necessarily to be attributed to Procopius personally. Apart from these considerations the passage relating to the three nations is reported, as Stenton observes, by an author in a position to ascertain the facts, and the reference to the Britons is clearly of historical value in regard to the contemporary British migration to Armorica.

For our purpose the statement of Procopius with regard to the *Angiloi* and the *Frissones* is hardly less important, and suggests that some kind of repatriation was found necessary. Again I refer to Stenton:

Whatever may have been the English frontier after the battle of Mons Badonicus, it cannot have been materially extended against the Britons during the long peace that followed. Historically, the statement of Procopius is important because, if it can be trusted, it shows that after the war the invaders were restricted to a territory which gave them no adequate opportunity of providing for a growing population by the establishment of new inland colonies. It becomes, in fact, a warning against the assumption that the war left the English in possession of the centre as well as the east and south-east of Britain.³

I regard the passage from Procopius as an interesting hint that legal, or at least diplomatic, proceedings must have played a

¹ Procopius, Book VIII (*The Gothic War*), xx.

² H. M. Chadwick, *The Heroic Age* (Cambridge, 1912), pp. 97 f.

³ Stenton, op. cit., p. 6.

part in the foundation of these overseas settlements, including the British settlements in Armorica, and we shall find that this hint is not without echoes in later traditions.

This tradition, recorded in the *Gallic War* of Procopius, which implies the hold-up in the Saxon penetration from south-eastern into central Britain, and an over-population in the parts already in Saxon possession, receives support from another early tradition, the oldest version of which is recorded in a ninth-century work by a monk of Fulda.¹ The tradition records the Angles and Britons as joining Theuderich (*Thiotricus*), king of the Franks, who was then at war with the Thuringians. When the war was over Theuderich settled them in the conquered territory. This tradition corresponds exactly with that of Procopius, and with the situation in Britain as described by Gildas. The Thuringian war of Theuderich took place in 531.

These traditions seem to me to dispose of the claim that the Britons migrated under pressure from the Saxons. Some more immediate cause must be sought. Indeed tradition and language alike lead to the conclusion that the earliest immigrants to Armorica came almost wholly from the Devon-Cornish peninsula, apparently mainly under Welsh leaders. This western part of Britain was as yet virtually untouched by Saxon aggression.

My own conviction is that the emigration to Armorica began at an earlier date and is due to a different cause. Tradition and archaeology alike suggest that the initial impetus was due to Irish pressure from the west.² The evidence is completely consistent, and cumulatively very considerable, and its relevance is recognized by a growing body of opinion among French scholars. The late Professor F. Lot expressed himself emphatically on this point:

Depuis la fin du III^e siècle . . . les côtes de l'Ouest sont la proie des pirates venus d'Irlande, les Scots. Vers l'an 400 ces Scots³ paraissent s'être établis dans toute la partie occidentale de la Bretagne.⁴

¹ In the *Translatio Sancti Alexandri* (Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist. Script.*), ii. 673 ff.; cf. cap. 1, Stenton, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

² References to the view of earlier scholars on the nature of Irish influence on western Britain are given by F. Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain* (Oxford, 1923), pp. 80 ff.; cf. also F. Haverfield and G. Macdonald, *The Roman Occupation of Britain* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 282 ff. The view held by Sir John Rhŷs (*Celtic Britain*, London, 1904, pp. 218 ff.) that such Irish traces are a relic of an earlier Goedelic population in Britain, however, can no longer be maintained and has been wholly abandoned.

³ At this period the word *Scot* always indicates *Irish*.

⁴ *Les Invasions germaniques* (Paris, 1935), p. 94. Cf. more recently L. Musset, *Les Invasions* (Paris, 1965), pp. 164 ff.

A number of Irish traditions and other references to Irish relations with Britain were enumerated as early as 1895–6 by Kuno Meyer,¹ and have since been augmented by Cecile O’Rahilly,² and more recently by Professor Wrenn,³ the latter especially in regard to early ecclesiastical and literary relations, and the significance of the place-name evidence for south-western Britain.

First the evidence of tradition. Space makes it impossible for me to deploy in detail this class of evidence which is very extensive. I will confine myself to a few references and comments, beginning with traditions relating to south-western Britain, since this is the area from which the Breton immigrants are believed to have come. First we may note the remarkable entry in the Irish Glossary of Cormac mac Cuilennáin, bishop of Cashel in Munster (d. 908).⁴ He tells us that in much earlier times there had been joint kingdoms in Ireland and Britain, ruled by Irish kings, and that they had held that power till long after the coming of St. Patrick. He instances certain of their royal forts including the fort (*dinn*) of the Map Lethain in the ‘lands of the Cornish Britons’. These names, and the reference to the ‘lands of the Cornish Britons’ would seem to suggest that *Dind Map Lethain*⁵ is on or near the northern shore of the Domnonian Peninsula.

The ‘Sons of Liathán’ are probably to be identified with the Irish tribe, the *Uí Liatháin*, a unit of the *Érainn* of Munster living east of Cork and in the neighbourhood of the Déisi⁶ (cf. p. 264 below), who may, as Jackson notes,⁷ have come to Britain as part of the Déisi migration. Cormac’s references receive some support from the catalogue of the ‘Cities of the Britons’ in the material appended to Nennius in MS. Harl. 3859 in the British

¹ ‘Early relations between Gael and Brython’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1895–6), pp. 63 ff.

² *Ireland and Wales* (London, 1924). See especially pp. 40 ff.

³ C. L. Wrenn, ‘Saxons and Celts in South-west Britain’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (Session 1959, London, 1959), pp. 38 ff.

⁴ *Sanas Cormaic*, edited by Kuno Meyer in the series ‘Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts’ (Halle-a-Saale, 1912), no. IV, pp. 75 ff. The text had been previously edited by Whitley Stokes, and translated by John O’Donovan, *Cormac’s Glossary* (Calcutta, 1868); also edited by Whitley Stokes from a different manuscript in *Three Irish Glossaries* (London, 1862), pp. 1 ff. Our passage is translated on p. xlvi, s.v. *mug-eime*.

⁵ For a discussion of the form of these names see K. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), p. 154.

⁶ O’Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin, 1946), p. 81.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 156.

Museum. Cormac seems, in fact, to be using a British source, for he translates for his Irish readers the British form of the name *dind maþ Lethain*. i. *dún maic Líatháin*, and Nennius may be using the same Welsh source, for he refers in cap. 14 to the *Filii Liethan*, i.e. the well-known ancient Irish tribe of the *Uí Liatháin*, as occupying Dyfed¹ (Pembroke in the wider sense), Gower, and Kidwelly.

The sons of Liathan occupied (*obtinuerunt*) the region of the *Demeti* (Dyfed) and other regions, that is to say *Guhir* (Gower) and *Cetgueli* (Kidwelly), until they were expelled by Cuneda and by his sons from all British districts.

In their Irish home the *Uí Liatháin* occupied a part of Munster near the Déisi. They may indeed have come to Britain with the migration of the Déisi,² who are now thought to have settled in Dyfed (Pembrokeshire and the immediately surrounding country) perhaps in the fourth or fifth century. The story of the migration of the Déisi is preserved in an Irish saga in a number of versions.³ The story itself relates to the Irish tribe of the Déisi who were traditionally originally settled in Co. Meath but were compelled by King Cormac mac Airt to emigrate.⁴ One branch moved south to Munster, and another across the Irish Sea to Dyfed. The literary tradition is exceptionally good. The earliest text is believed on linguistic grounds to have been written down c. A.D. 750.⁵ It includes a genealogy of the rulers of the kingdom of Dyfed, of which we are fortunate in having also a Welsh version preserved as a part of the ancestry of Owen, son of Hywel

¹ *Dyfed*, earlier *Demet*, included, about the time when the story in question took form, modern Pembrokeshire with much of southern and western Wales beyond its border.

² See K. H. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

³ Kuno Meyer, *Y Cymmrodor*, xiv (1901), 101 ff. Cf. also *id.*, 'The Expulsion of the Déssi', *Ériu*, iii (1907), 135 ff. For other versions and a brief note on the dates of the versions and the historical event narrated in the saga see Séamus Pender, 'Two unpublished versions of the Expulsion of the Déssi', in *Essays and Studies presented to Professor Tadhg ua Donnchadha*, edited by Séamus Pender (Cork University Press, 1947), pp. 209 ff.

⁴ According to O'Rahilly the story is without foundation, and the Déisi were originally Érainn, vassals of the Eoganacht of East Munster who conquered and settled in Co. Waterford and south Tipperary. See *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin, 1946), p. 64. O'Rahilly's conclusion appears to be accepted by K. H. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁵ H. Zimmer, *Nennius Vindictus* (Berlin, 1893), p. 88; cf. K. Meyer, 'The Expulsion of the Dessi', *Y Cymmrodor*, xiv (1901), 102; *id.*, *Ériu*, iii. 135.

Dda. This Welsh genealogy¹ traces Owen's pedigree through his mother Elen, the grand-daughter of Hyveidd, who was ruling in Dyfed when Asser wrote his *Life of King Alfred*. Kuno Meyer evidently believed the Irish and the Welsh pedigrees to have been preserved independently, and to indicate a date for the migration in the late third century;² but a comparison of the various versions of the genealogies, and allowing only thirty years to a generation—Meyer reckoned thirty-three—has convinced me that the Welsh and the Irish genealogies are basically identical, and that both were originally preserved in the same written form. Therefore, as this is a Dyfed genealogy, we may probably assume that the original document was of Dyfed provenance, and had probably been recorded by the Irish community, or at least the bilingual Irish-Welsh community, which we believe to have occupied Dyfed from the close of the Roman period. This would help to account for 'the endeavour', which Meyer noted as apparent in the Déisi text, to give the forms of the Irish names 'a more Irish look', as when the Welsh form *Guortepir* appears as *Gortbar*, *Aircol* as *Achoil*.³

I find it possible to agree with Meyer in assigning so early a date to the Déisi migration⁴ but not in believing that the Welsh and Irish pedigrees are independent of one another.⁵ The last twelve generations are practically identical. A comparison of all the available evidence would seem to point consistently to a date in the late third, or probably the fourth century, for the historical arrival of the Déisi, and the beginning of their pedigree. Whatever date we accept for the beginning of Déisi rule in Dyfed, however, there can be no doubt that all the traditions of the Déisi and the Uí Liatháin imply an Irish kingdom or kingdoms commanding all the approaches to the south-west of Britain, the Devonian peninsula, and the Bristol Channel, or, as we

¹ Preserved in Jesus College, Oxford, MS. XX, and in the Harleian MS. 3859 in the British Museum, the latter dating from the eleventh century. The Harleian text of the genealogy was edited by E. Phillimore in *Y Cymmrodor*, ix (1888), 171, and more recently by J. Loth in *Les Mabinogion* (Paris, 1913), vol. ii, Appendix II, pp. 326 f. The Welsh texts are in substantial agreement.

² 'Early relations between Gael and Brython', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion* (1895-6), pp. 55 ff. Meyer had accepted the date 270 offered by the Irish *Annals of the Four Masters* as the starting-point for his calculation of the historical pedigree; but the precise dating of the Irish annals is quite untrustworthy.

³ Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵ A further sceptical note has been sounded recently by Grace Simpson, *Britons and the Roman Army* (London, 1964), pp. 156 ff.

may call the area, the whole of South Wales and the Severn Sea.

It is curious to find indisputable traces of Irish influence also in the little mountain kingdom of Brecon, far inland, but clearly in touch with Dyfed, for it has more ogam inscriptions—a characteristic Irish form of writing—than any other kingdom except Carmarthen, and the only example of a *crannog*—a typically Irish form of lake-dwelling—in Wales. Moreover, the genealogy of its ruling House is not included among those recorded in MS. Harl. 3859 (cf. p. 265, n. 1 above), and the version in Jesus College, Oxford, MS. XX. 8, has been thought to be confused with the royal House of Dyfed. The traditional genealogy of its ruling house is preserved in a text, known as the *Cognacio Brychan*.¹ It relates that Brychan, the eponym of the country and the reputed progenitor of many saints, was the son of one Anlach, son of Coronac,² the king of Ireland, who had married Marcella, daughter of Teudric, king of Carmarthen. The marriage is said to have taken place in Ireland, where Brychan was born; but the three returned to Wales. In the Welsh *Life of St. Brynach (Bernacus)*, Brynach's companion and confessor is called *Gwyddel* ('the Irishman'). No confidence can be placed in these traditions, of course, but the Irish origin of the ruling House and the other Irish features mentioned above suggest that the Irish dominant element had penetrated from the coast and established itself in mid-Wales.³

To these traditions of Irish elements in South Wales we could add those of the neighbouring kingdom of Ceredigion.⁴ I have

¹ The text has been published by A. W. Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* (Cardiff, 1944), pp. 315 f. For the date of the text see *ibid.*, Introduction, xix. The text is also translated by Wade-Evans in *Y Cymmrodor*, xix (1906), 31 ff.

² In the text in Jesus XX. 8 his name is given as *Chormuc*, son of Eurbre, 'the *Goidel*' (i.e. 'the Irishman'). Other variant texts have *Garmuc*, *Gormac*. The name is doubtless the Irish *Cormac*.

³ Was it possibly fear of penetration to the English-Welsh Border by this route that at a later date prompted Æthelflæd's raid on *Brecenan Mere* (Llangorse Lake, near Brecon) recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, s.a. 916, text C?

⁴ These relate principally to St. Carannog or Carantoc. See J. Armitage Robinson, 'St. Carantoc in Somerset', *Downside Review*, xlvi (1928), 234 ff. The *Lives* are extant in several versions of very varying quality. The British version of the *Life* is contained in MS. Vespasian A XIV, edited and translated by A. W. Wade-Evans, *Vit. Sanct.*, pp. 142 ff. The date is early twelfth century. The fragment contained in the *Léon Breviary* is perhaps the earliest. Cf. G. Doble, *S. Carantoc* ('Cornish Saints' Series, Long Compton, Shipston-on-Stour, 1928; re-edited by D. Attwater, and printed Oxford, 1965).

dwelt on the traditional evidence for an early *Adventus Scotorum* from Ireland because it is too often ignored by historians. Yet nearly forty years ago Sir Mortimer Wheeler pointed out that from c. 270 onwards

the pressure of pirates and invaders upon the western coasts of Britain was second only to that of the Teutonic peoples upon the eastern and southern shores¹

And he emphasized that tradition and archaeology alike testify to a continuous immigration into Wales from Ireland.

The invading Irish [he wrote] of the fourth century A.D. may thus have been welcomed by friends and relatives upon the coasts of Anglesey, Lleyn and Pembrokeshire.²

And he concluded his study of *Prehistoric and Roman Wales* with an appeal that we should make fuller use of traditional evidence to interpret archaeology, and urged that

we may profitably turn now and then from our catalogues and maps to the pages of Ammianus Marcellinus or the Welsh and Irish saga-literature.³

Jackson has shown that the funeral inscriptions, ogam and Latin, support the tradition of a flourishing Irish colony in South-western Wales down to the second half of the sixth century and very likely into the seventh century, and he gives evidence that the Irish language was still living and spoken, both there and in the Dumnonian peninsula.⁴

The Irish who settled on the west coasts of Britain shortly before the end of Roman rule lived side by side with the British-speaking population on terms of close companionship.⁵

The fear of an *adventus Scotorum* certainly lies behind the tradition of the coming of Cunedag and his sons from the north of Britain to drive the Irish out of North Wales, as related to us by Nennius.⁶ The Irish possession of the Caernarvonshire peninsula of Lleyn (Irish *Laigin*, n. pl. 'the Leinster men') appears from many place-names, e.g. *Porth Dinllaen*, 'the harbour of *Dun Laegen*' (gen. pl.), 'the harbour of the fort of the Leinstermen'.⁷ At the head of *Afon Lledr* in Caernarvonshire is *Llyn Iwerddon*, 'Lake of the Irish' (? or 'of Ireland'). Lower down the river is a hill or place called *Iwerddon*, 'Ireland', and about half-way

¹ R. E. M. Wheeler, *Prehistoric and Roman Wales* (Oxford, 1925), p. 234; cf. pp. 256 f. ² *Op. cit.*, p. 291. ³ *Op. cit.*, p. 292.

⁴ *Language and History in Early Britain*, pp. 170 ff.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

⁶ *Historia Brittonum*, cap. 62.

⁷ W. J. Gruffydd, *Math vab Mathonwy* (Cardiff, 1928), p. 343 and n. 90.

between is *Dolwyddelan*, 'Gwyddelan's meadow', *Gwyddelan* being a derivative of *Gwyddel*, a Gael.¹

Archaeology has supplied solid links to tradition and place-name evidence in our own day. The rebuilding of the coastal fort of Cardiff at the close of the third century is now recognized as a part of a system of defence against Irish raiders in the Bristol Channel and along the Glamorganshire coast.² The late Sir Ian Richmond has recently shown that the late fortified site of Caer Gybi on Holyhead belongs to a system of fortified coastal patrols;³ and Richmond has suggested that the fortified landing, and the rebuilding of Segontium (after 350) on a lower site nearer the sea, were probably designed to protect the wealthy Roman copper mines of Anglesey against Irish raiders.⁴ But the fear of an *adventus Scotorum* was not confined to the coasts. Richmond excavated a fort at Lancaster designed for protection against Irish penetration,⁵ and he suggests that much further inland the very large forts at Piercebridge and Elslack represent a concentration of great tactical importance to prevent penetration by raiders landing in the Ribble or Morecambe Bay, blocking Middle Teesdale and the Vale of York. Their function was to prevent disorganization of the rearward economy by sea-raiders and to counter deep thrusts.⁶ The Irish penetration of Argyll in the fifth century beyond the last Roman defence line is the final consummation of an Irish effort along our entire coastline. No Gildas has left us a record of the Irish settlements, but they cannot have been effected without considerable displacement of population and hardship to western British princes. They must, in fact, have played a very important part in the emigration and the colonization of Brittany.

Moreover, they help to account for three important facts which Gildas and his report of the Saxon invasions leave unexplained:

¹ W. J. Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1926), p. 228.

² R. E. M. Wheeler, *Prehistoric and Roman Wales*, pp. 234 f.; V. E. Nash-Williams, *The Roman Frontier in Wales* (Cardiff, 1954), p. 142; cf. G. Simpson, *Britons and the Roman Army* (London, 1964), p. 159. I. A. Richmond, 'Roman Wales' in *Prehistoric and Early Wales*, eds. I. Ll. Foster and G. Daniel (London, 1965), pp. 169 f.

³ Sir I. A. Richmond, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

⁴ *Roman Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1955), pp. 154 f.; cf. V. E. Nash-Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 96 f.

⁵ I. A. Richmond, *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, cv (1953), 8 f.; cf. *id.*, *Roman and Native in North Britain* (Edinburgh, 1958), p. 113.

⁶ *Id.*, *Roman and Native in North Britain*, loc. cit.

1. That according to tradition the majority of the leaders of the emigration seem to have come from east central Wales, where no Saxon threat was felt.
2. While traditions of Irish saints are not lacking, even for the earliest period, the majority are from Wales.
3. The linguistic evidence suggests that the majority of the settlers came from the Devon-Cornwall peninsula.
4. Most important of all, none of the early Breton settlers seem to have come from eastern or south-eastern, or even from mid-southern, England.

The conclusion is surely unavoidable that the Britons of the west and south-west found themselves from the third century onwards under a growing danger from Ireland, which became acute in the fourth century, and so they took to their boats to seek or respond to more favourable conditions overseas.

The most recent French opinion now inclines to the view that the Irish menace was the earliest and the principal cause of the emigration.¹ As early as 1900 F. Lot had pointed out² that if the first emigration had been caused by the Saxons the Britons of the east would have been the first to save themselves in the direction of Boulogne; yet no names from eastern Britain are found in Armorica, while traditions of the saints and immigrants all point to the west. Again half a century later he emphasized that the immigrants came from south-western Britain, and that:

Cette région était plus que menacée, elle était occupée par les Scots d'Irlande, depuis la fin du IV^e siècle. Il se pourrait donc que l'émigration bretonne soit antérieure au milieu du V^e siècle et que les émigrés, du moins les premiers, aient fui les Irlandais plutôt que les Anglo-Saxons.³

Duchesne even suggested that the apparent correspondence in name between the Breton kingdoms of Cornouaille and Domnonia and the British Cornwall and Dumnonia, districts which hardly felt the Saxon impact till the middle of the fourth century, may be due to displacement following on the departure of the Romans from 387-407.⁴ The Saxons, he held, could not in any case have been the cause of the exodus, which occurred a century or a century and a half earlier than the accepted date

¹ See, e.g. H. Waquet, *Histoire de la Bretagne* (Paris, 1958), p. 16; Y. Roldando, *La Préhistoire du Morbihan* (Vannes, 1961), p. 131.

² *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, lxi (1900), 548. Cf. also L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule* (Paris, 1899), ii, 250 f.; d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Revue celtique*, xxi (1900), 243 f.

³ *La Gaule* (Paris, 1947), p. 483.

⁴ *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, ii, loc. cit.

of *c.* 450, and may in fact be placed at the close of the fourth century, becoming formidable from the second half of the fifth.

If my conclusions, based on traditions, place-names, and archaeology, are correct, they dispose of the argument which would base the date of the earliest settlements in Brittany on the evidence of either Gildas, or of the first records of the change of name *Armorica* to *Brittany*.¹ Changes in the name of a country are not likely to take place till long after the first entry of a new population, and the new colony must have been well established before a change of name would become current. This would be especially the case where the transformation of population was only gradual and partial. In the fourth century Gregory of Tours uses the name *Britannia*, but the ninth Metropolitan Council of Tours distinguishes sharply between *Britannia* and *Romania*. The *Life of St. Samson*, of later date (cf. pp. 280, 284 below), specifically distinguishes the eastern part as *Romania* from the rest of Brittany, while referring to the northern province of Domnonia as *Prettonland*. When therefore Sidonius Apollinaris (d. *c.* 489) refers to *Britanni* under their king Riothamus *c.* 470 situated on the Loire (then a part of *Armorica*) we cannot be sure whether the reference is to an unattached mass migration, or to an actual colony, or even to a fleet of shore patrol. We cannot in any case assume from these recorded usages of the name *Britanni* that *Armorica* was only then recognized to have had British or 'Breton' settlements. These writers were not concerned with strictly legal terminology, but with current usage—surely fluid throughout the period of immigration.

III. *The Settlement*

Before settling the newcomers in Brittany, a word must be said on the language which they established in the country. This is a disputed question which has occupied the researches of a number of expert scholars and linguists for many years. They have not yet reached agreement. The debate continues, and it would be worse than presumptuous of me to do more than refer to some of the principal points at issue. It is, however, universally agreed that the Breton language as it is spoken in Brittany today is a Celtic language of the Brythonic Group, most closely related to modern Cornish.

¹ I venture, with diffidence, to dissent from the interpretation on the usage of this nomenclature favoured by D. Fahy, 'When did Britons become Bretons? A note on the Foundation of Brittany', *The Welsh History Review*, ii (1964), 111 ff.

The question of the survival of the speech of the Gallo-Romans and its possible relationship to the modern Breton dialects is one which has interested scholars particularly of late years, though until recently it has been generally accepted that Breton is a purely British importation. J. Loth,¹ following the researches of De Courson,² pointed out last century that even as late as the fifth century, in the territories not colonized by Britons, such as Rennes, Nantes, and eastern Vannes, the place-names are Gallo-Roman, and the personal names are Latin or Teutonic, whereas in the parts colonized by Britons the personal names correspond to those of Wales and Cornwall, and the place-names generally have a British prefix, *tref*, *plou*, *plou*, *pleu*, *plo*, *caer*, *lan*, etc.

In 1958 M. Fleuriot³ extended Loth's study on Roman *îlots* in Bretonizing territory, insisted on place-names of Roman development in Lower Brittany, and concluded that Roman (spoken Latin) survived till the ninth century in a wide range around Vannes, and that other *îlots* existed in the west around Quimper and even on the north coast to the west of Morlaix.

In 1951⁴ the Abbé Falc'hun published a brilliant and highly original study of the history of the Breton dialects based on linguistic geography and the part played by the ancient Breton road system in the development of dialects. He claimed an ancient linguistic division of the peninsula into two zones, one throughout ancient Domnonia and western Cornouaille, the other to the south-east from Quimper to the River Vilaine. The former had received a larger element of immigrant Bretons, the latter, having received less immigration, had been forcibly influenced by the former occupants. He argued that to this ancient distinction of dialects, due to ethnic causes, a later distinction between east and west had succeeded due to economic causes, especially to the road system and the developments of the ports of Landerneau and Morlaix. He stressed what he believed to have been the persistence of the pre-Breton language, by which he had in mind Galloromance.

In 1962 he published a brief study⁵ in which he claimed that the Breton language is a modern form of Gaulish; and in 1963

¹ *L'Émigration bretonne* (Paris, 1883), pp. 84 ff.

² *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Redon* (Paris, 1863), Prolégomènes, ccxxiv f.

³ 'Recherches sur les enclaves romanes anciennes en territoire bretonnant' *Études celtiques*, viii (1958), 164 ff.

⁴ François Falc'hun, *Histoire de la langue bretonne d'après la géographie linguistique*, I Texte, II Figures (Rennes, 1951).

⁵ 'Le Breton, forme moderne du Gaulois', *Annales de Bretagne*, lxi (1962), 413 ff.

he developed this thesis with an added conviction that the pre-Breton substratum was simply a Gaulish survival, and that the Breton dialects were Gaulish, influenced in varying degrees by the Breton language of the colonists.¹ In his preface to Falc'hun's second book M. Le Roux expresses his view that it is difficult to believe that Gaulish would not have persisted; and adds his belief that it had indeed been pushed westwards.

In an article published in 1961,² and therefore before Falc'hun's latest book, Professor Kenneth Jackson, while generously recognizing Falc'hun's first book as 'epoch making', differs fundamentally from his conclusions.

It is highly doubtful [writes Jackson] whether Gaulish still existed anywhere as late as the fifth century, and virtually certain that it did not in the sixth, consequently the possibility that Breton was affected by Gaulish at all cannot be assumed.

And he gives his own opinion unequivocally:

Vannetais and the other dialects form one single, Brittonic language, as a detailed comparison of the phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary of the Breton dialects with each other and with Welsh and Cornish readily shows.³

Professor Jackson has devoted many years of research to the study of the Breton language, particularly the dialects, and we await with keen interest his further comments on Falc'hun's most recent work, and Jackson's own forthcoming book—now complete—on the same subject. In the meantime it may be confidently stated as his view that the idea that Breton or any dialect or important aspect of Breton 'is' Gaulish is without any foundation.

In the meantime in a fresh approach to the subject M. Fleuriot has produced two major works⁴ on the earlier period of the Breton language as it can be reconstructed and studied for the ninth–tenth centuries from early glosses (cf. p. 296 below) and other written documents. He points out incidentally that the differentiation between Welsh and Breton was a gradual process, and still so incomplete by the second half of the ninth century that a Welsh prince, Guidnerth, went to Dol to fulfil public penance:

For Guidnerth himself and the Bretons, and the archbishop of the country, were of the same language and the same nation, although

¹ The title and the arrangement of Falc'hun's second book into I Texte, II Figures, correspond to those of his previous book.

² 'Linguistic Geography and the History of the Breton Language', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, xxviii (1961), 272 ff. ³ Op. cit., p. 284.

⁴ Léon Fleuriot, *Le Vieux Breton, Éléments d'une grammaire* (Paris, 1964); id., *Dictionnaire des Gloses en Vieux Breton* (Paris, 1964).

separated by distance . . . and he was able the better to proclaim his transgression and beg indulgence because his language was known.¹

By the middle of the sixth century we are no longer in Armorica but in Brittany, and the Breton language was spoken throughout the western part of the peninsula, and indeed throughout those parts of the country so far colonized by the Britons, that is to say, the districts not included in the cities of Rennes, Vannes, and Nantes, which still remained 'Roman'. The portion of Armorica occupied by the Bretons is referred to by the poet Fortunatus (d. 600?) and by the chronicler Marius of Avenche (d. 593) and by Gregory of Tours (d. 595) as *Britannia*. As Waquet observes² Brittany is already a recognized country in its own right. We have, however, no written records in Breton from so early a date, and we have indeed no direct contemporary records even in Latin to help us to picture the conditions in which the colonization took place. From the time when Armorica became Brittany our principal sources for the history of the country are ecclesiastical, especially the *Lives* of the Breton saints, all in Latin.³ Additional valuable information is to be derived from the study of place-names,⁴ but these can only be used as sources for the earliest period when we know the date of their earliest occurrence. Otherwise they are only relevant for the earliest occurrence of the cult of the saint. Liturgical records are invaluable but again only so far as their early origin is known.

By far our richest material is that which is contained in the Latin texts of the earliest *Vitae* of the Breton saints.⁵ These relate for the most part to the great traditional saints of the sixth century, who are believed to have been responsible for the foundations of the principal monasteries of later Brittany. They

¹ *The Text of the Book of Llan Dav*, script by J. G. Evans (Oxford, 1893), p. 181. Cf. Fleuriot, *Dictionnaire*, p. 13.

² *Histoire de la Bretagne* (Paris, 1958), p. 18.

³ See F. Duine, *Catalogue des sources hagiographiques de l'histoire de Bretagne du X^e au XII^e siècle* (Paris, 1923); cf. also R. Largillière, *Les Saints et l'organisation chrétienne primitive dans l'Armorique Bretonne* (Rennes, 1925), *passim*.

⁴ The most important study of this type of evidence is that of Largillière, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁵ For a catalogue and notes of the most important see Duine, *Mémento des sources hagiographiques de l'histoire de Bretagne du V^e au X^e siècle* (Rennes, 1918); *id.*, *Inventaire liturgique de l'Hagiographie bretonne* (Paris, 1923). Still valuable is the list of J. Loth, *L'Émigration bretonne en Armorique* (Paris, 1883), *Appendice*, pp. 242 ff.

are therefore comparable to the saints of the *Second Order*, to use the classification drawn up by the *Catalogus Sanctorum* of the Irish Church, which dates from the eighth or even the ninth century, according to the late Père Grosjean.¹ These *Vitae*, however, were mostly committed to writing by ecclesiastics at a later date, and have to be examined and interpreted in the light of a later milieu, that of the medieval conditions in which they were recorded. This is not easy. The Gauls were already Christians, their organization being that of the Roman Church, and they were under the ecclesiastical authority of the Metropolitan of Tours. The Britons brought with them their own conservative form of the Celtic Church, though they also were nominally under Tours.² For several centuries the Churches existed side by side, apparently with little mutual interference. Gregory, bishop of Tours, ignores the Celtic Church, and although we hear of occasional statutes passed by the Council of Tours providing for closer conformity in the practices of the Celtic Church, such statutes are rare, and largely concerned with certain conservative institutions of the latter, which the Roman Order regarded as out of date.

As examples we may refer to the custom known as *conhospitae*, still current in the Celtic Church at the beginning of the sixth century, related to an ancient custom known as *mulierum consortia*. The custom is referred to as current in Celtic Armorica in a letter addressed between 515 and 520 by three bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Tours to two Breton priests, Lovocat and Catihirn, accusing them of abuses in permitting women to take part in the administration of the Eucharist.³ The Council of Tours also took exception to the practice among the Bretons by which episcopal consecrations seem to have been ratified without reference to the Metropolitan of Tours. The Ninth Canon of the Council of Tours in 567 felt it necessary to issue a proclamation on this head.

¹ For the text of the *Catalogus* see A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. ii, Part II (Oxford, 1878), pp. 292 ff. For a study of the contents and date of the document, see P. Grosjean, 'Édition et commentaire du Catalogus sanctorum Hiberniae', etc., II (suite), *Analecta Bollandiana*, lxxiii (1955), 289 ff.

² For a brief account of the ecclesiastical situation in Brittany during the early years of the British immigration and occupation see R. Merlet, 'L'émancipation de l'église de Bretagne', *Le Moyen Âge*, 2nd series, ii (Paris, 1898), 2 ff.

³ Dom Louis Gougaud, *Christianity in Celtic Lands*, translated from the author's manuscript by Maud Joynt (London, 1932), pp. 87 f., and the references there cited. For a fuller account see de La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 370 ff.

Let no pontiff presume to give episcopal consecration in Armorica either to a Briton or a Roman without the sanction of the Metropolitan or the bishops of the province, on pain of excommunication.¹

For our knowledge of early Brittany in general, however, and of the Celtic Church to which the colonists adhered, we are chiefly dependent on the records made by the Celtic monks in the ninth century and later. It is only natural that in these circumstances religious bias will have played a considerable part in our sources of information. We have also to realize at the outset that these Celtic records are not only late, but that they have come down to us through a long period of oral tradition. In these traditions, however, we can at times trace earlier records, both oral and even sometimes written, on which the later narratives have been based, as will become clear in the pages relating to Breton saints which follow below.

The monastic origin of these sources ensures the emphasis being on the peaceful nature of the colonization. Nevertheless the general veracity of this ecclesiastical tradition is demonstrated by the place-names, which are ecclesiastical in origin to an extent probably unique in any country.² An astonishingly large proportion consists of two elements denoting a place or settlement, such as *plou*-,³ *tref*-,⁴ *lann*-,⁵ *loc*-,⁶ to which are added the names of early Celtic saints. The implication of these place-names,⁷ and the prominence of the ecclesiastical element generally, suggest that, apart from the country of Bro Érech (see below), the tradition left by the foundation of the Breton colony is very different from the picture presented for us by J. Loth⁸ of

¹ See Gougaud, *op. cit.*, pp. 121 ff.

² On this subject our most important study is still that of René Largillière, *op. cit.*

³ A word derived from L. *plebs*. Largillière regards the *plou* as indicating the territory of a parish. It is found throughout Brittany.

⁴ *Tref* is common to the Insular Brythonic languages, and is specially common in Cornwall, and denotes simply a hamlet, in which sense it occurs commonly in the Welsh Laws. Like *plou* and *lann* it is found throughout Brittany.

⁵ *Lann* is cognate with Anglo-Saxon *land* and denoted first land, then land in a specialized sense associated with or belonging to a monastery; in Brittany often used of a simple chapel or oratory.

⁶ *Loc*, etymologically from L. *locus*. Names compounded with *loc* are believed to be of later origin than the three preceding, and are probably not earlier than the eleventh century in origin. See Largillière, *op. cit.*, pp. 21 ff.

⁷ For the antiquity of these place-names and their relative chronology and significance see Largillière, *op. cit.*, pp. 17 ff.

⁸ *L'Émigration bretonne*, pp. 176 ff. For a more recent view see A. Rébillon, *Histoire de Bretagne* (Paris, 1957), p. 24.

invasion by fire and sword. The rarity of early military occupation by force is remarkable. How is this to be accounted for?

The preponderance of the saints' names in the pattern of Breton place-names, and indeed the wealth of hagiological traditions generally, has very naturally given rise to the belief that the Breton colonization had its origin either from *peregrini*, recluses seeking solitude, and joined later by numbers of disciples; or from ecclesiastics leading their flocks, their congregations, to new ecclesiastical settlements abroad, for whatever reason. There is some truth in both pictures, but the lens is distorted. Some of the Breton saints were in fact *peregrini*, as we shall see—recluses, seeking a solitude in the fringing islands, like the saints of Skellig Michael and Irishmurray off the west coast of Ireland, or of North Rona and Sula Sgeirr off the north-west coast of Scotland; but these were not the leaders of the immigrant founders responsible for the majority of the place-names.

There is again little justification for the widespread assumption that the saints came primarily as shepherds of their flocks. Indeed, pastoral work does not appear prominently in the traditions. This interpretation of conditions prevalent in the Age of the Saints is natural enough to scholars versed in the terminology of the Medieval Church. Of course the settlers followed the archaic pattern of the Celtic Church still prevailing in the British Isles. Armorica, as we have seen, was already a Christian country. The three cities of Nantes, Rennes, and Vannes had episcopal sees before the Bretons arrived. On the other hand, the Breton saints were in no sense missionaries. It does not appear that they made, or sought to make, any converts among the Gallo-Roman population. What then was their principal function in regard to the colonists?

It is evident from our traditions that the 'saints' were the leaders of the migration. They formed the hard core of the settlers. Place-names and traditions alike prove it. But to understand their function it is of the first importance to realize that at the period of the immigration—as distinct from the period of the ninth century when some *Lives* of the saints were written—a 'saint' (*sanctus*) was primarily and literally merely an ecclesiastic, and as such an educated man. In fact the ecclesiastics were the only educated men of the time. Our traditions represent almost all the leaders of the immigration as close relatives of the princely leaders and as members of the princely families of Wales. They were the educated members of these families. We may compare the royal origin of St. Columba, a member of the most illustrious

royal family in Ireland about the same period, who emigrated to a neighbouring colonial country to found a monastic settlement. In Brittany, as in Argyll, the educated members of the community were, in fact, the pioneers of the new Celtic community. As the most recent writer on the history of Brittany expresses it:

The immigrants organised themselves, and in this essential task everything conspires to give the impression that the spiritual leaders enjoyed the principal role.¹

In these late hagiological traditions we cannot fail to be struck by the rarity of military occupation. Of course these late traditions are monastic records; but close association is implied between the 'saints'—that is to say, the educated ecclesiastics—and the princely leaders by whom the colonizing parties are led. St. Sulien is said to be a son of Brochmael of Powys in eastern Wales, from the monastery of Meifod; St. Tudual, a nephew of Rhiwal, the traditional leader of the migration into Domnonia; St. Judicaël, one of the best attested of the Breton saints, himself a king of Domnonia, descended from Welsh kings through his mother; St. Gurthiern and St. Ninnoc of Quimperlé both of royal parentage in eastern Wales.² It would seem that at least some of the Breton saints are traditionally descended from Welsh kings. We may again compare the royal origin and colonizing of St. Columba. There is no touch of democratic sentiment in our traditions of these founding saints.

Further, the close relationship implied in the traditions of the saints and the princely leaders suggests an organized, political, rather than an indiscriminate and individual, immigration. We may well believe that certain legal elements entered into the pattern, as Procopius has hinted (see above). And in accordance with the traditional connexion between the secular and the ecclesiastical leaders of the colonization we have traditions of the saints acting in a legal, or at least a diplomatic, capacity. We may point to the famous story—possibly historical—of the mission of St. Samson, founder of the great abbey and Church of Dol in Domnonia, to the court of the Frankish king, Hildeberht, to enlist his help on behalf of Judual, the youthful king of Domnonia, imprisoned by the usurper Cunomorus. Again, St. Méen, one of the earliest and best attested of the Breton founding saints, and traditionally a relative and follower of St. Samson, was sent

¹ Waquet, *Histoire de la Bretagne*, p. 20.

² See N. K. Chadwick, *Studies in Early British History* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 43 f.

on a diplomatic mission from St. Samson to the court of Bro Érech, and this mission eventually resulted in the foundation of the greatest of all forest monasteries in Gaël in Brocéliande. I shall have more to say of St. Méen and his monastic foundation later. The saint claimed descent from the royal family of Archenfield located in eastern Wales, and all his associations are royal, including his life-long friendship with King Judicaël of Domnonia.

These and other relatively early stories of the diplomatic functions of the saints find an echo in the late *Life* of St. Leonorus,¹ traditionally a near relative of King Rhiwal, the first royal settler of Domnonia, according to legendary history. In the process of organizing the clearing for his settlement Leonorus found a golden ram, thrown up by the moles, doubtless of Roman workmanship. He took it to King Hildeberht, who made him great promises, but Leonorus insisted that he 'wanted nothing but the value of the ram in land, and security of tenure'. The district had been a wilderness, he argued—'We have cleared it, and it is only fair that we should be allowed to occupy it without hindrance.'

Note the legal terminology. The points of interest are:

1. The saint's functions as diplomat and lawyer.
2. The direct diplomatic relations between the settlers and the Frankish king.
3. The steps taken by the colonists to secure tenure.
4. The virtual purchase of the land. Leonorus bargained for the exact value of the golden ram in land—no more and no less.²

An interesting element in these early traditions is the joint rule sometimes stated or implied between the old kingdom in Britain and the new colony. This same *Life* of Leonorus claims that King Rhiwal 'took possession of Little Britain, and ruled jointly on both sides of the sea, and continued in that rule till his death'.³ Further traditions in the *Lives* of St. Sulien and St. Méen suggest that relations between the original British founding kingdom in eastern Wales and the Breton colonies continued

¹ For an account of the saint, and texts, see Baring Gould and Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints*, iii. 342 f. The chief authority is a *Vita* in *Bibl. Nat.* at Paris, *MS. Lat.* 5317, of which De Smedt has given extracts in his *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum Bibl. lat. in Bibliotheca nationali Parisiensi*, ii. 153 ff.

² The story is related in detail by de La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 406 f.

³ *Vita* in De Smedt, *Catal. cod. Parisiis* (cf. n. 1 above).

for centuries. These traditions of double kingdoms, united rather than divided by the narrow seas, are of special significance in view of the literary evidence considered above for joint kingdoms between Southern Ireland and South Wales about this time (cf. p. 263 above). The most interesting Breton example is that which identifies the Breton tyrant Cunomorus of *Carhaix*, Count of Poher, the King Mark Cunomorius of the *Life of St. Pol de Léon*, with the owner of the fifth-century fort at Castle Dore, at *Carhays*, near Fowey in Cornwall, known locally as 'King Mark's Castle'. Is it possible that Cunomorus, Count of Poher, the 'tyrant' who usurped the rule of Domnonia from King Judual till defeated by the diplomacy of St. Samson, was at some period a ruler of a joint kingdom on both sides of the English Channel? The evidence is worth a closer scrutiny.

In Cornwall, near Fowey, stands a pillar stone, over 7 feet high, bearing a much worn Latin inscription believed to be of a date probably about the middle of the sixth century. The inscription has been read

Drustanus hic iacit Cunomori filius.¹

The penultimate sign in the first name is a ligature which can be read AU or AN. In the *Life of St. Pol de Léon*, written in 880 by a monk of Landévennec,² we read (cap. 8) of a 'King Marc whose other name is *Quonomorius*' ('*quem alio nomine Quonomorium vocant*') and who is referred to as a powerful monarch under whose rule lived people of four different languages. The association of King Mark of Cornwall with the Breton Marcus-Cunomorus is rendered highly probable by the name *Drustanus* on the inscription, which is philologically identical with *Tristan*,³ the hero of Bérout's Old French poem of *Tristan*. In this, the oldest extant version of the story, the site of King Mark's dwelling is not at Tintagel, as in later versions, but at Lancien. The site has been identified with the modern Lantyne,⁴ now a farm two miles north of Castle Dore, but in the Middle Ages an important manor.

The coincidence of these names, together with that of *Carhays*, and of the Church of St. Samson in Golant hard by,⁵ makes

¹ For the site and inscription and date of the stone see C. A. Raleigh Radford, 'Report on the excavations at Castle Dore', *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, n.s. i (1951), 117 ff.

² For the *Life of St. Pol de Léon* cf. p. 285, n. 7 below.

³ For a note on the form of the name see R. Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* (Cardiff, 1961), pp. 329 f.

⁴ J. Loth, *Revue celtique*, xxxiii (1912), 270 ff. Cf. C. Henderson, *Essays in Cornish History* (Oxford, 1935), pp. 26 f., 42 f.

⁵ On the Cornish *Carhays* see C. Henderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 185 ff. A map

an early association with Cunomorus extremely probable, and suggests that he may in fact have traditionally held a joint kingdom in both Cornwall and Brittany. That the tradition of the local identifications is continuous from the sixth century is, to my mind, highly doubtful, however. The ninth century would seem to be more probable in view of the reference in the *Life of St. Pol de Léon*. Until 1507 the church of St. Samson in Golant was a chapelry dependent on the priory of Tywardreath,¹ and it may be suspected that the local identifications were fostered in the Middle Ages by the priory of Tywardreath, in whose interests pilgrimages from Brittany would be profitable. The Cornish localization of the whole story has been carried out minutely. Even the cave in which St. Samson slew the serpent (*Life of St. Samson*, cap. 50) is shown today near the church which bears his dedication.

By the middle of the sixth century three great political divisions of Brittany are recognized, commonly spoken of in later records as 'kingdoms'; and traditionally the rulers inherited from father to son; but after the death of Clovis the Bretons were always regarded by the Franks as under Frankish suzerainty, and in Frankish records their rulers were called *comes* (L. *comites*).²

1. The wide realm of Domnonia covered all the north, including, after 530, the province of Léon in the north-west, which had at first been independent. The reference to Domnonia as *Prettona-land* in the early *Life of St. Samson of Dol* is a clear indication of its early prominence as a Breton settlement, and also of the fading prestige of the Roman power in the peninsula, for the same text distinguishes sharply between *Britannia* and the parts which still remained outside the sphere of the colonists, and which were referred to as *Romania*. So also the texts of the Second Council of Tours held in 567 distinguish between Bretons and Romans.³

2. The kingdom of the south-west is Cornouaille, which stretched south from the Monts d'Arrée and east to the River Ellé. Its origin is quite unknown.

of Cornwall appended to the article by J. Loth cited above shows the close proximity of the sites which we are discussing. For a more detailed plan of the country round Lantyan see the sketch map by C. Henderson in G. Doble, *Saint Samson in Cornwall* (no. 36 in his 'Cornish Saints' Series), p. 25.

¹ See J. Loth, loc. cit., p. 272.

² Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* iv. 4. Thus Conomer, who had relations with Chanao and Macliau, *comites Britannorum*, and the Conomer who had relations with the Frankish prince Hrafn, is referred to by Gregory of Tours as *comes Britannorum* (*Hist. Franc.* iv. 20).

³ Waquet, *Histoire de la Bretagne*, p. 18.

3. The whole of the rest of southern Brittany, including the western part of Vannes, was known as *Bro Érech* (*Bro Weroc*), 'the land of Weroch'. It is believed that it was Waroch II (c. 577–94) who gave his name to the country, and under whom Vannes first became Breton. He acquired Vannes in 579, and ravaged the Frankish territory as far as Rennes. The rulers of Bro Érech seem to have been very violent and carried on warfare with the Frankish kings for centuries. For this period and this area we have the contemporary authority of Gregory of Tours.

It is almost invariably assumed, on the very slender evidence of the names, that Domnonia and Cornouaille were colonized directly from the corresponding regions in Britain; but the names may have been acquired later, when intercourse between these regions was undoubtedly very close. We have to reflect how widespread the name *Domnonia* is in the British Isles in early Celtic times, including, besides the Cornish–Domnonian peninsula, the west of Ireland and central Scotland, while the name *Cornwall* was unknown in both Britain and Brittany before the ninth century. In fact no early accounts of these Breton settlements can be regarded as strictly historical. They are merely legends, chiefly contained in the *Lives* of Saints, none of them earlier than the ninth century, with the possible, but uncertain exception of the *Life* (anonymous) of St. Samson, founder of the monastic Church of Dol, to which I shall return later. As already stated, a number of these *Lives* are known to have contained earlier elements, traditional and liturgical, and they are still being studied critically by Breton scholars. And as we are largely dependent on them for such knowledge as we possess of early Brittany, it is important to emphasize that they are both earlier, and of a higher quality, than any Latin *Lives* of local Welsh saints which we possess from Britain.

I have said nothing of the Celtic form of Christianity which established itself in Galicia in north-western Spain about the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century,¹ founding the diocese of Bretoña and the Celtic monastery of Santa Maria de Bretoña, Pastoriza, near Mondoñedo. This interesting theme lies outside my subject, but is not wholly divorced from it, for the presence of the Celtic Church in Galicia at this time raises the question of its relationship to Brittany, whether direct or only indirect. The Council of Lugo, held by King Thiudemir in 567, records a division of the realm into two provinces, each with its own metropolitan; and in the list which follows, specifying the

¹ See L. Duchesne, *L'Église au VI^e siècle* (Paris, 1925), pp. 562 ff.

thirty dioceses of the realm, nine belong traditionally to the metropolis of Galicia.¹ Survivals of this redaction were copied at Cordova in the eighth century from a seventh-century original which forms the basis of all the later divisions of the Spanish Church into episcopal sees. Entry XIII in the *Parochiale* of the *Divisio Thiudemiri* refers to the *sedes Britonorum*, attributing it, not as a diocese to a district, but to groups *intro Britones* with a *monasterium maximum* as its centre—an arrangement typical of fifth-century Celtic Christian organization.²

The bishops of Galicia took part in provincial and national councils. In 572 the *Acta* of the Second Council of Braga, which was held under Mir, Thiudemir's successor, are signed by a certain *Mahiloc* (Celtic *Mailoc*) *Britonensis ecclesiae episcopus*, and the bishop of the Bretons is represented in the Fourth (633), Seventh (646), and Eighth (653) Councils of Toledo, and in the Third (675) Council of Braga. We have no clear testimony to bishops bearing names certainly Celtic after Mailoc, though it is not impossible that Celtic names occur later in a form too corrupt to be recognizable.³ The bishopric of Bretoña lasted from Suevic times till at least 830, perhaps till the Council of Oviedo in 900.⁴ The see still occurs under the province of Braga and the name of *Britona*, or *Britonia*, or *Britonacensis sedes* in lists dating from A.D. 962 and later. The last of these assigns to it,

Ecclesias quae in vicino sunt inter Britones, una cum monasterio Maximi usque in flumen Ovae,

and the place is called *Britonia* as late as 1156 in a *Privilegium* of Alphonso VII.⁵ The see is ultimately merged in that of Mondoñedo.⁶

The monastery of Santa Maria of Bretoña is to be identified with the *Monasterium Maximum*, the centre of the Breton diocese, two leagues south of Mondoñedo. Its jurisdiction, more personal than territorial, extended to all Celtic groups as they were established in Galicia and the Asturias.⁷ Many of the usages of this Celtic ecclesiastical institution are conservative, such as the relatively late acceptance of the Vulgate, the form of the peni-

¹ For the list, and its authenticity, see P. David, *Études historiques sur la Galice et le Portugal* (Paris, 1947), p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 44, 45, 57. Cf. Duchesne, loc. cit.

³ See David, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴ For interesting later references see Haddon and Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, ii (Oxford, 1873), 100, 101, note a. See further *Revue celtique*, xxii (1901), 256.

⁵ Haddon and Stubbs, loc. cit.

⁶ David, op. cit., p. 62.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 60 f.

tential system, and the ascetic practice of eremitism which prevailed till the influence of St. Fructuosus in the seventh century.¹

The *Life of St. Fructuosus*,² believed to be a contemporary seventh-century document, retains certain features characteristic of the Galician form of the Celtic Church. As examples we may refer to the saint's love of solitude and habit of retirement into retreats, and to his foundations of island and sea-coast monasteries in Galicia (cap. 7), and on the island of Cadiz (cap. 14), perhaps another also in Galicia by his disciple Teudisclus.³ On the whole, however, the numerous monasteries attributed to him in the *Life* and elsewhere (e.g. in the *Regula Monachorum*) seem to have been 'structures of considerable size, certainly not mere cells or huts'.⁴ But while the Celtic origin of the Galician Church is certain, we have no clue as to its foundation, or to the identity of its earliest recorded bishop Mailoc. In the seventh century Galicia had something of a literary tradition,⁵ and already in the fifth century Orosius speaks of *Brigantia* in Galicia to which he ascribes relations with Ireland.⁶ Was the Church founded directly from Ireland, or from Britain, or indirectly from Brittany, perhaps from Landévennec? Any of these are possible, but the question remains unsolved.

While the Bretons were establishing themselves in the Armorican peninsula the Frankish kings were establishing themselves in Gaul, and before the end of the fifth century they had reached Armorica.⁷ The Frankish kings always looked upon themselves as inheriting the Roman administration, and refused to recognize Breton independence. According to Gregory of Tours⁸ the successors of Clovis forced the Breton chiefs to accept officially the title of 'counts' (*comes*) instead of 'kings' (cf. p. 280 above); but the Bretons, for their part, refused to admit the Frankish claims, and so far from recognizing the authority of the Frankish

¹ For some further details and references to the Celtic Church in Galicia see N. K. Chadwick, *The Age of the Saints in the Early Celtic Church* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 58 f.

² *Vita Sancti Fructuosi*, text edited with English translation, introduction and commentary by Sister Frances Clare Nock (Washington, 1946).

³ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 47, n. 46.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁵ C. J. Bishko, 'The Date and Nature of the Spanish *Consensoria Monachorum*', *American Journal of Philology*, lxi (1948), 388 f.

⁶ Book I, cap. ii.

⁷ For a brief outline of the Frankish and Breton relations at this period see E. Durtelle de Saint-Sauveur, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 4th ed. (Rennes, 1957), i. 45 ff.; cf. also H. Waquet, *Histoire de la Bretagne*, pp. 25 ff.

⁸ *Historia Francorum*, iv. 4.

kings, sought to extend their own territory. In 799 under Charlemagne the country was temporarily subdued, but in 818 a particularly violent insurrection took place during the reign of his son Louis the Pious, who marched through the country, accompanied by the poet Ermold le Noir (cf. p. 260 above), and in an interview with Matmonoc, the abbot of Landévennec, the great monastery of Cornouaille, Louis persuaded the monks to abandon their Celtic usage and accept the Order of St. Benedict (cf. p. 289 below). In 824 Charles bestowed the title of 'duke' on a native Breton Nominoë, who had quelled yet another Breton revolt in Bro Érech. Nominoë preserved his loyalty while Louis the Pious reigned; but on the accession of his son, Charles the Bald, he threw off the Frankish yoke, and in 845 forced Charles at the point of the sword to recognize Breton independence.

The majority of the founding saints traditionally held to be responsible for the early Breton foundations are claimed by Domnonia—a claim which is implicit in the name *Prettonalund* to denote Domnonia in the *Life of St. Samson of Dol*.¹ While the traditions ascribe these saints to the sixth century, the period of the height of the colonization, the *Lives* are not earlier than the ninth century, with the possible exception of the *Life of St. Samson of Dol*,² which many believe to date from the seventh century.³ It is, however, anonymous, though written by an ecclesiastic of the Church at Dol, and it contains material earlier than the eighth or ninth centuries, the date to which M. Fawtier would assign it. The most interesting of these ninth-century Breton Saints' *Lives* is the earliest *Life of St. Guénolé*,⁴ the founder of the monastery of Landévennec in the peninsula of Crozon. This

¹ Edited by R. Fawtier, *La Vie de Saint Samson, Essai de critique hagiographique* (Paris, 1912). English translation by T. Taylor, *The Life of St. Samson of Dol* (London, 1925).

² Cf. R. Fawtier, op. cit.; cf. further, id., *Saint Samson, abbé de Dôl: Réponse à quelques objections*, *Extrait des Annales de Bretagne*, xxxv (1921), 137 ff. My own opinion is in favour of Fawtier, at least as regards the date of the *Life* in its present form.

³ So Duine, *Questions d'Hagiographie et Vie de S. Samson* (Paris, 1914), pp. 25 ff. For further references to views supporting the earlier date see the references cited by Fawtier, *Réponse*, p. 3, n. 2.

⁴ The principal texts of Gourdestin's *Life of St. Guénolé* were edited by C. de Smedt, *Vita S. Winwaloei* (Liber Primus, Liber Secundus et Vita Posterior seu Secunda) in *Analecta Bollandiana*, vii (1888), 167 ff. The text of the Liber Primus as edited by de Smedt is reproduced by R. Latouche, *Mélanges d'Histoire de la Cornouaille, v^e-xi^e siècle* (Paris, 1911), Appendice III, 'La plus ancienne vie de Saint Guénolé' (1), pp. 97 ff.

Life was written by Gourdestin, monk and abbot of Guérolé's own monastery, between 857 and 884, partly on the basis of earlier written information,¹ notably that by a monk Clement of the same monastery;² but the oral material in Gourdestin's *Life* of St. Guérolé is likely to have been well preserved for the intervening centuries in his own monastery, where the educational standard has been shown to be of a high order, especially in the recent article (1961) on Landévennec by M. du Cleuziou.³ At the beginning of the tenth century the monks were obliged to leave Landévennec and take refuge in the abbey at Montreuil-sur-Mer (cf. p. 291 below) which subsequently took the name of St. Guérolé. *Lives* of the saint written later than that of Gourdestin are therefore naturally devoid of independent value.⁴

Important ninth-century *Lives* of saints of Domnonia are those of St. Tudual, traditional founder of the important monastery, later the bishopric,⁵ of Tréguier; of St. Malo written by Bili, a clerk of Aleth;⁶ and the most important of all the *Life of St. Pol de Léon*⁷ by Wrmonoc, a monk of Landévennec, and a disciple of

¹ For a valuable study of the *Life* see R. Latouche, *Mélanges d'Histoire de Cornouaille, v^e-x^e siècle*; see especially pp. 1-39; and Appendice III, p. 97. Cf. more recently J. R. Du Cleuziou, 'De quelques sources de la Vie de Saint Guérolé', *Société d'Émulation des Côtes-du-Nord, Bulletins et Mémoires*, lxxxviii (1960), 29 ff., and the Bibliographie appended.

² A brief but valuable study is also that by G. H. Doble, *Saint Winwaloe* (Shipston-on-Stour, second edition, 1940). Clement's hymn in honour of St. Guérolé was written when King Salomon was ruling the Bretons. As his reign began in 857 Clement's death must have been after this date, and Gourdestin's work still later. R. Latouche, *Mélanges*, p. 8, n. 2.

³ Du Cleuziou, 'Landévennec et les destinées de Cornouaille', *Société d'Émulation des Côtes-du-Nord, Bulletins et Mémoires*, xciii (1965), 7 ff.

⁴ Cf. Latouche, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁵ Duine, *Mémento*, pp. 303 ff. The *Life* exists in three redactions of unequal length composed in the ninth-eleventh centuries. The *Vita Prima*, which is very concise, was assigned by Duchesne and Duine to the ninth century. The *Lives* were edited by de La Borderie (Paris, 1887).

⁶ Duine, *Mémento*, pp. 293 ff.; cf. de La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 43. The *Vita* is believed to have been composed c. 869 or 870. It was edited by F. Lot, *Mélanges d'histoire de Bretagne* (Paris, 1907), pp. 97 ff.; cf. also id., *Annales de Bretagne*, xxiii (1908), 553 f. See further Dom Louis Gougaud, *Christianity in Celtic Lands*, translated by M. Joynt (London, 1932), p. 114. For Bili see Latouche, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁷ Two manuscript versions of this *Life* exist, one at Fleury, incomplete, dating from the tenth century, and another in a hand of the eleventh or early twelfth century, but complete, at Paris. The *Life* was edited from the Fleury MS. by M. Cuissard in the *Revue celtique*, v (1883), 413 ff., the missing sections being supplied by the editor from the Paris manuscript. The Paris manuscript was printed by Dom Plaine with a short introduction and a few

Gourdestin. One of the most reliable and interesting of the *Lives* of the early Breton saints is that of St. Méen,¹ founder of the great abbeys of Gaël and St. Judicaël in the Forest of Brocéliande, which were important in later times, and to which we shall return again. These and others of the later *Lives* are known to have incorporated earlier material, and the critical work still in progress on the hagiological traditions is yielding valuable material for the history of early Brittany. The recent study of Landévennec by M. C. R. de Cleuziou² has thrown light, not only on the literary form of Gourdestin's *Life* of St. Guénolé and on the person and interests of the writer, Gourdestin himself, but on the history and the social contacts of the abbey, and indeed of western Brittany as a whole, and above all on the intellectual level of the monks of the abbey of Landévennec at this period. Particularly impressive is the number of secular Latin authors, including Classical Latin authors, read at Landévennec in the ninth century. These considerations make it desirable to trace the origin of the intellectual life of this monastery. I shall return to this later.

Before doing so some further brief considerations are due to the great saints of Domnonia. Breton scholars have suggested³ that three principal foyers are responsible for sending the founding saints to Brittany: 1. Glamorgan; 2. Brecon; 3. Cardigan. But Wales is a small country, and I think it is an over-simplification to isolate these centres.

1. According to the accepted Breton traditions, fostered by the leading churches of Domnonia, the greatest centre of the founding saints was Glamorgan, and the monastery of Llantwit—the name is derived from the *Llan of Illtud*, 'the church (monastic) of St. Illtud'.⁴ Welsh tradition would seem to suggest that this monastery was originally founded by St. Cadoc as a daughter House of his own monastery of Llancarfan; but the

notes in *Analecta Bollandiana*, i (1882), 208 ff. For further details see G. H. Doble, *Saint Paul of Léon* (Lampeter, 1941).

¹ It is edited with a brief introduction by Dom Plaine 'Vita S. Mevenni abbatis in Britannia Armoricana', *Analecta Bollandiana*, iii (1884), 141 ff.

² 'Landevenec', etc., *op. cit.*

³ See, for example, G. H. Doble and L. Kerbiriou, *Les Saints Bretons* (Brest, 1933), pp. 24 ff.

⁴ For the *Life* of St. Illtud and its date, its manuscripts, and its literary relations to the *Lives* of St. Pol de Léon and of St. Samson, see the valuable study by G. H. Doble, *Saint Illtud* (Cardiff, 1944). The *Life* is a purely literary work (anonymous) by a monk of Llantwit, of the second half of the twelfth century, roughly contemporary with the work of Caradoc of Nantcarvan.

Breton *Life of Illtud* has nothing to say of this, and represents Illtud as a native of Brittany, the only early founding saint—except Oudoceus—of Breton origin. All Illtud's ecclesiastical and cultural life is spent in Wales, at Llantwit in Glamorgan, however, and here the *Vitae* represent him as founding a school of learning of such lofty pretensions as would have been impossible even many centuries later. We may believe, however, that it was something of an intellectual centre according to the standards of the day. Glamorgan was the most Romanized part of Wales. But Illtud's favourite disciple, destined by him to be his successor, was St. Samson, the founder of the great monastic Church of Dol which became first a bishopric, and later for a time an archbishopric (cf. p. 288 below). Samson's father was traditionally a nobleman of Dyfed (south-western Wales), an area largely under Irish influence, as we have seen; and the *Life* represents him as so deeply impressed by the learning of certain distinguished (*peritissimi*) Irishmen who visited him on their way from Rome that he accompanied them to Ireland, and eventually established his uncle as abbot in the Irish monastery where he had himself sojourned. We need not accept the facts, but the prominence of the Irish tradition in Brittany's greatest and earliest foundation is interesting.

2. The numerous missionary saints throughout Celtic lands claiming descent from Brychan, king of the little Welsh kingdom of Brecon, is too well known to need discussion here. I will only emphasize that, as we have seen (p. 266 above), the whole early history and archaeology of Brecon is redolent of Irish elements, and that all versions of the ruling dynasty claim that the founder of the kingdom was the son of a native princess and an Irish father; and that Brecon has other features of pronounced Irish origin. St. Méen, founder of the great forest monastery of Gaël in Brocéliande in eastern Brittany (cf. pp. 278, 286 above and 297 below), was traditionally stated to be an immigrant from the kingdom of *Ercing*, Archenfield, close to the Brecon border.¹

3. The *Lives* of both St. Brieuc,² founder of the abbey of

¹ De La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 423, n. 3.

² Duine, *Mémento*, pp. 326 ff. This *Life* was edited by Dom Plaine, *Analecta Bollandiana*, ii (1883), 161 ff.; and xxiii, 264 f. Duine thought that the *Life* was probably written by a clerk of Angers in the eleventh century. For a useful critical study of the *Life* see G. H. Doble, *Saint Brioc* (Exeter, 1928), pp. 29 f. Doble points out that the *Life*, which is primarily a literary composition, was based on a few hints from an older *Life*, and that the writer's knowledge of the neighbourhood of St. Brieuc suggests that he was probably a native of that place.

Tréguier, later the bishopric, and of St. Carantoc (cf. p. 266, n. 4 above), claim that both saints were natives of Cardigan, where again we have seen Irish tradition to be very strong. Carantoc visited Ireland early in his career, and the *Vitae* of both saints are believed to give evidence of Irish influence on early Brittany. The *Life of St. Magloire*¹ claims that he migrated to Brittany with his relative, St. Samson, by whom he was appointed as his successor in the abbey and the bishopric of Dol, but who preferred the life of a recluse and retired to the island of Sark where he became founder of an important monastery.

To these Irish traditions a number of those of other saints could be added. The most important is *St. Budoc*,² born of Breton parents, but said to have become monk and abbot of Beauport, near Waterford, in Ireland and later to have returned to Brittany, and ultimately to have become abbot of Dol when St. Magloire retired into solitude. The tradition of Budoc's early life is worthless as it stands, but the Irish element is again to be noted.

It is difficult to account for this persistent tradition of Irish elements in the early education of the Breton saints. It is commonly said that Ireland had hardly any part in the original ecclesiastical elements of early Brittany, and that any influence from Ireland came at a later date, and largely through literary channels. This may well be true; but how has this consistent tradition come about? It is a fact that Irish-born saints are virtually absent from the more important Lives; but the frequency of visits to Ireland and the references to Irish culture are too consistent to be ignored. On the other hand, references to Welsh learning and education are almost wholly concentrated on Llantwit, whose founder Illtud, was not traditionally a native Welshman by birth, but a Breton. The problem of Irish origins

¹ The *Life of St. Magloire* was written by a monk of the Abbey of St. Magloire, near Dinan, in the reign of Nominoë, who died in 851. It is known from manuscripts of the beginning of the eleventh century edited by Mabillon. See de La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 459 ff., especially p. 400, n. 1.

² For St. Budoc see pp. 292 f. below. The most important source for the life of St. Budoc is Gourdestin's *Life of St. Guénolé*; cf. also the *Life of St. Maudez*. To the former we shall return later. In the latter we are informed that St. Tudy (Tudual) and Bothmael (Budoc) are disciples of St. Modez on Gueld Enès (the *Ile Modez*). Other sources for the Life of St. Budoc are to be found in the *Vita Maglorii*, and in the *Chronicle of Dol*, written in the second half of the eleventh century, where we are informed that Budoc was for a time appointed bishop of Dol in place of Maglorius, the successor of St. Samson. These notices are chiefly of interest for the early history of the cult.

cannot be treated in isolation, and involves also the early Celtic Church in Spanish Galicia, established in the sixth century, with an *episcopus Mailoc* in the *monasterium maximum* of *Santa Maria of Bretoña*, near *Mondoñedo*. To this subject reference has already been made above, pp. 282 f.

The consistent modern view held of the ninth-century *Lives* of the great founding saints of the north is that they were either Welshmen or of Welsh provenance, and that those who became the most important in the history of the Church in the north of Brittany were trained in the Glamorgan monastery of Llantwit. St. Illtud's extant *Life* was composed in the twelfth century, but from much earlier materials, which include a Welsh *Life* earlier than that of St. Pol de Léon by Wrmonoc, and which was used by both Wrmonoc himself and the author of the *Life* of St. Illtud, but which was later than the *Life* of St. Samson. Our extant *Life* of St. Illtud pictures him as a monk of Breton birth, baptized by St. Germanus of Auxerre, presumably in the fifth century, and as endowed with fantastic learning and as the abbot of a famous monastic school at Llantwit. Here his disciples are trained. The most important claimed are St. Samson of Dol; St. Paulinus, who has been identified with St. Pol de Léon in the ninth-century *Life* of this saint; St. Dewi or David, the patron saint of Wales; and St. Gildas of Rhuys, the south-eastern peninsula of Brittany.

Up till the time when the ninth-century *Lives* were being composed Brittany still adhered to the monastic form of church organization known as the 'Celtic Church'. Bishoprics with defined local territories had not as yet developed. Under Charlemagne and his successors, however, the Breton Church was incorporated into the usage of the Roman Order. Charlemagne took steps to substitute territorial bishoprics for the archaic form of monastic bishoprics still prevalent in the Breton parts of the colony.¹ When in 818 his son, Louis the Pious, induced Matmonoc, abbot of Landévennec in Cornouaille, to abandon the Celtic monastic usage, and to accept the monastic Rule of St. Benedict one by one the other Breton monastic foundations followed. Shortly after the middle of the century the Metropolitan authority of Tours was imposed on the Breton bishops; but it was not till the end of the twelfth century that the claim of Dol to the archbishopric was finally rejected.²

¹ See R. Merlet, 'L'émancipation de l'église de Bretagne et le Concile de Tours (848-51)', *Le Moyen Âge*, 2nd series, tome ii (1898), 1 ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Several of the early large northern religious foundations became cathedral sees in later times, when the Celtic Church became incorporated in the Roman organization under the Carolingian kings. Notable examples are Dol, St. Malo, St. Brieuç, Tréguier, St. Pol de Léon. It is, of course, a marked characteristic of the early Celtic Church that the jurisdiction of a bishop was not strictly territorial, but monastic. The transformation of the great Domnonian monastic foundations into territorial bishoprics of the later type is therefore a highly complicated problem (cf. pp. 241 f. above, and see especially n. 3). Looking backwards, it is natural to suspect that our ninth-century *Lives* of the leading Domnonian saints, especially those whose foundations became bishoprics at this time, were composed with a view to establishing the claim of their foundations to pre-eminence in the new régime established at the period of this literary activity.

The Church of Cornouaille claims a different origin.¹ Two of the principal monasteries of southern Brittany, those of Landévennec and Redon, never became cathedrals. The Church of Cornouaille and south-western Brittany was founded at Quimper, with St. Ronán² as its traditional first bishop. The Welsh element is absent from these foundations, but appears in the late traditions of St. Gurthiern and St. Ninnoc, saints claiming royal origin in eastern Wales, whose *Lives* are preserved in the Preamble to the twelfth-century Cartulary of Quimperlé.³ The twelfth-century *Life* of St. Gildas de Rhuys⁴ also claims that the saint was an inmate of the monastery of St. Illtud at Llantwit. None of these south Breton monastic foundations became episcopal sees, however.

To form an idea of the early Breton form of Christianity it will be helpful to take a closer view of three typical monastic foundations: first the ascetic island foundation of Lavré off the north coast; then the great cenobitic monastery of Landévennec on the

¹ See R. Latouche, *Mélanges d'Histoire de Cornouaille, v^e-xi^e siècle* (Paris, 1911), p. 2.

² Traditionally an Irish settler. The traditions of St. Ronán are related by de La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 313 ff.

³ The earliest form of these *Lives* are included in the opening pages of the Cartulary of Quimperlé, edited and translated into French by Léon Maître and Paul de Berthou, *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Sainte-Croix de Quimperlé* (Paris, 1896). The cartulary is of uncertain date, but the *Life* of St. Gurthiern is ascribed in its present form to the eleventh century. For further details see N. K. Chadwick, in *Studies in Early British History* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 39 ff.

⁴ This *Life* is edited and translated by Hugh Williams in *Gildas De Excidio Britanniae* (London, 1899), pp. 322 ff.

west coast, at the eastern end of the Crozon peninsula; and, finally, the forest monasteries of Gaël and St. Méen in the east. Of these the northern island monastery of Lavié is the earliest, and was apparently superseded by the neighbouring monastic foundation on the mainland. The eastern monastery of St. Méen le Grand, which also claimed a northern founder, lasted till the Revolution. Landévennec was founded early, probably from this little island sanctuary of Lavré, and flourished till the monks were forced by Viking perils to leave and take refuge in the monastery of Montreuil-sur-mer in Picardy. The monastery of Landévennec is in occupation in modern times, however, and is perhaps the loveliest spot in Brittany, a little jewel in an exquisite setting, its blue waters sheltered by a crescent of hills, fringed with sub-tropical foliage. Enough of the ruined medieval abbey and church still remains to enable us to realize why its founder, St. Guénolé, readily left his first settlement on the neighbouring island of Tibidy ('House of prayer') to found his monastery in this little terrestrial paradise; we can readily accept the assurance of his biographer that other saints had been buried there before him.

In the little archipelago of Paimpol in the neighbourhood of the Bay of St. Brieuc in the north we still have traces of a little group of early island sanctuaries. They point to less grandiose beginnings than those of the chief Domnonian founding saints, and recall the 'solitudes' of the Third Order of Saints in the Irish *Catalogus Sanctorum*¹ and closely resemble the tiny humble ascetic settlements on the islands of North Rona and Sula Sgeir north of Cape Wrath off north-western Scotland, and the more famous ones off the west coast of Ireland, Inishmurray, the Aran Islands, and the most famous monastic settlement of all, Skellig Michael off the Kerry coast. An important difference, however, is that these Scottish and Irish island sanctuaries are anonymous, while the Breton group, like that of St. Seiriol on Ynys Seiriol off the coast of Anglesey in North Wales,² claims to have been founded by well-known saints of the sixth century, who have numerous dedications on the mainland.

¹ For the text of the *Catalogus* see A. W. Haddon and W. Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, vol. ii, Part II (Oxford, 1878), pp. 292 ff. See especially p. 293. For a study of the contents and date of the document see P. Grosjean in *Analecta Bollandiana*, lxxiii (1955), 197 ff. A brief note on the island sanctuaries of Britain and Ireland, with recent bibliographical references, is given by N. K. Chadwick in *Celtic Britain* (London, 1963), pp. 145 ff., 184 ff.

² For Ynys Seiriol and other Welsh ascetic retreats see N. K. Chadwick, *ibid.*, p. 146.

Two of these islands of the Paimpol group are of especial interest. The first is the island of Modez, sacred to the memory of St. Maudez, whose *Life*,¹ composed in the eleventh century by a clerk of Tréguier, claims that the saint was born in Ireland. This is a claim generally accepted by modern scholars. He retired to the island called *Gueld Enès*, the 'Ile Sauvage', which then became *Enès-Modez* the (*Ile Modez*), and here he is reported to have formed a monastery of the early Celtic type, with St. Bothmael (Budoc) and St. Tudy (possibly Tudual) as his disciples, perhaps others also. The Isle, known today as *Ile Modez*, is still locally known as the *Ile Sauvage*. The unique interest of this little settlement is that one cell, known as the *Forn Modez*, 'Modez's oven' is still intact, in appearance somewhat resembling a diminutive round tower, and is still easily visible from the adjoining shore.² It probably owes its preservation as a useful landmark to sailors on the difficult coast.³ Remains of a second cell still stand up to 2 feet above ground.

In Gourdestin's *Life of St. Guénolé*, to be considered later, we are told that St. Guénolé was a disciple of St. Budoc⁴ on the

¹ The texts of the two *Lives of St. Modez* are published by Arthur le Moyné de La Borderie in *Mémoires de la Société d'Émulation des Côtes-du-Nord* (1890), also published separately at Rennes, 1891. Cf. also id., *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 363 f. De La Borderie assigned the first *Life* to the eleventh century and regarded the second *Life*, which is later, as much less authentic. According to Duine (*Mémento*, pp. 339 f.) the first *Life* was composed by a clerk of Tréguier in the eleventh century, who has made use of ancient documents. See Pierre Barbier, 'Les Vestiges monastiques des Iles de l'embouchure du Trieux: l'Ile Saint-Maudez et l'Ile-Verte', *Extrait des Mémoires de la Société d'Émulation des Côtes-du-Nord* (tome lxxx, 1951), published separately by Les Presses Bretonnes, Saint-Brieuc, 1952. See especially pp. 6 ff.; cf. also id., *Le Trégor Historique et Monumental* (Saint-Brieuc, 1960), pp. 49 f., 246 f. See further the note in the *Revue celtique*, xii (1891), 411.

² See Gaultier du Mottay, *Répertoire Archéologique* (*Mémoires de la Société Archéologique et Historique des Côtes-du-Nord*, 1883), p. 288. See further n. 3 below.

³ De La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 363 f., and the further references there cited. See also Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie*, tome ii (Paris, 1910), s.v. *Bretagne (Mineure)*, v, cols. 1256 ff., where de La Borderie's account of both the *lann* of the Island of Lavré (cf. below) and the *Forn Modez* of the Ile of Modez (*Gueld-Enès*) are reproduced verbatim, together with his illustrations, and the plan of the ruins on the former island.

⁴ No early *Life* of St. Budoc has survived. His legend was compiled in the seventeenth century by Albert Le Grand from the legend contained in the *Chronique de Saint-Brieuc*, combined with traditions of the Cathedral of Dol and others of the parish of Plourin in Léon. These legends are in origin completely independent of one another and the *Life* is quite unhistorical, and

island of Lavré,¹ another island in this Paimpol group off Bréhat. The story of St. Budoc, derived from the *Chronicle of Saint Briec* (before 1420), records a wholly fantastic legend of Budoc's early life in Ireland. We recall the tradition (cf. p. 292 above) according to which St. Budoc had been a disciple of St. Modez on the neighbouring island of St. Modez. The island of Lavré (*Laurea insula*) is of extraordinary interest, for the site contains the remains of an early Christian monastic settlement which would seem to go back to the time to which St. Budoc is assigned. Excavations were carried out in 1890-1,² partly because of the traditions noted by Gourdestin, partly because enough of the early ruins were still visible above ground to make further investigation imperative.

The church had been constructed in a ruined Roman villa of the middle of the fourth century. The villa itself was securely dated by three Roman medals (*médailles*), carefully placed between³ two Roman tiles and completely intact—a small bronze of Crispus (A.D. 317-26), a medium and a small bronze of Constantine, whether I (d. 337) or II (d. 361).⁴ These were still *in situ*, cemented into the Roman bricks in the east end of did not appear in Le Grand's first edition of his *Vies des Saints de la Bretagne Armorique* (1636), but in a separate work. For a study of the legends and their relationship to the legends in the *Life of St. Magloire*, the *Life of St. Modez*, and to Gourdestin's *Life of St. Guénolé*, see G. H. Doble, *Saint Budoc* (Shipston-on-Stour, 1937). See further Duine, *Memento*, no. 18.

¹ For the island of Lavré see the references cited above for the island of Saint Modez, p. 292, nn. 1 and 3. The island of Lavré was an enclave of the bishopric of Dol, and early medieval traditions represent Budoc (Bothmael) as bishop of Dol (see Doble, *Saint Budoc*, p. 16).

² For our account of the excavations we are indebted to de La Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, i. 295 ff. His report is quoted verbatim by Cabrol in his *Dictionnaire*; cf. p. 292, n. 3, above.

³ De La Borderie's account appears to be our only report, and though it is careful and detailed, it can hardly be pressed on all points. His words in the relevant passage are:

'Cette ruine est évidemment celle d'un bâtiment ayant d'abord fait partie d'une villa gallo-romaine; nous avons même la date de sa construction, car dans les fondations du pignon Est, à un mètre environ au-dessous de l'aire primitive de l'édifice, au fond d'une sorte d'entonnoir formé de briques romaines unies avec du ciment on a trouvé, placées avec soin entre deux tuiles romaines bien intactes, trois médailles romaines: un petit bronze de Crispus (317-26), un moyen et un petit bronze de Constant 1^{er} (337-61). Cette villa fut donc construite dans la première moitié du iv^e siècle.' Op. cit., p. 296.

⁴ There is an error here. De La Borderie says Constantine I (337-61) and Cabrol repeats it. But the dates of Constantine I were 306-37. Constantine II, d. 361.

the villa wall. Portions of this wall of the Roman villa were in small Gallo-Roman layers of regular courses of square ashlar work, and fine herring-bone work had been incorporated into the wall of a small rectangular church. The villa had been longer than the church and this Roman wall continued for some distance eastwards beyond the limits of the church. The Roman courses of the base of the church building had been continued upwards and repaired by crude masonry, very ancient, but much less regular than that of the Gallo-Romans. De La Borderie, who had instituted the excavations, concluded that St. Budoc, landing on Lavré *c.* 460, found this Gallo-Roman villa partly ruined by the barbarians of the fifth century. He had restored it and installed his monastery there.

But this is only a part of the story. To the east of the church was a cemetery, still known locally by the name of the *beret ar chapel*, 'the cemetery of the chapel', though no one has been buried there within living memory. Here the limited excavations revealed sixteen skeletons all buried head to west, feet to east, a certain criterion of Christian burial. They were modest monkish burials—no coffins, only large flat slabs separating the skeletons, with very few objects, Merovingian, and a few fragments of Samian pottery, all confirming the occupation and repair of ruins of a Gallo-Roman villa by Breton immigrants of the fifth century. Hard by were the remains of eight round cells in a row, three nearly touching, the rest separated by a few yards. Circular marks in the dry grass in late summer trace the site of other cells here and there, as yet unexcavated.

The island sanctuary on Lavré is of unique interest. The dates of the Roman ruin and the Celtic reconstruction are apparently not separated by any long interval. M. Pierre Barbier, in his most recent studies (1952 and 1960),¹ assures us that the Christian settlement may be assigned to the second half of the fifth century. The monastic plan corresponds closely with those of the early Syrian lauras, which date from the fourth and fifth centuries. If, with P. Barbier and most modern scholars, we accept the identification of St. Budoc's island with the island of Lavré, as against the Ile Verte favoured by earlier scholars,² the former

¹ See 'Les Vestiges monastiques des Iles de l'embouchure du Trieux: l'Ile Saint-Maudez et l'Ile-Verte' (Saint-Brieuc, 1952), pp. 7 f., and the references there cited (cf. p. 292, n. 1 above). Cf. more recently, but less fully, *id.*, *Le Trégor Historique et Monumental* (Saint-Brieuc, 1960), pp. 104, 247 ff., and photographs on pp. 213, 248.

² See Barbier, 'Les Vestiges monastiques', pp. 7 f.

island probably owes its name to the word *laura* (Greek *λαύρα*), the name of the early monasteries of Syria, with which the monastic plan corresponds closely, the period also being approximately the same. The occupation of the Roman villa recalls St. Antony living in the derelict Roman fort at Pispir near the Red Sea in the early fourth century, as pictured for us by his biographer, St. Athanasius.

In all probability, therefore, it is the early Christian church on the island of Lavré which has been associated by a continuous tradition from at least as early as the ninth century with the name of its traditional founder, St. Budoc, and his disciple, St. Guénolé. The tradition may well be historical. At this period the *Life* of the founder of Landévennec claimed categorically that St. Guénolé had been trained by St. Budoc on the island of Lavré. The main points of the founder's life are likely to have been carefully preserved in Guénolé's own monastery, and recorded by his successor in the abbacy little more than 250 years later, partly, as he tells us (cf. p. 285 above), from materials already in writing and probably in some form of written *Life*, as well as in the hymn in honour of Guénolé by the monk Clement who was already dead when Gourdestin wrote the *Life* of Guénolé.¹ Gourdestin's knowledge of the Paimpol area shown in his *Life* of Guénolé is beyond doubt. We may take it as highly probable that we are here in close personal touch with one of the earliest Christian island sanctuaries of the west. The early training of Guénolé on the island of Lavré may well be an historical fact, and with it the Paimpol origin of the monastic tradition of Cornouaille and south-western Brittany.

Whatever the original formative influences in the abbey of Landévennec, it is certain that before the middle of the ninth century she was the most intellectual centre of early Brittany.² The collection of the Canons known as the *Collectio Hibernensis*, which appeared in Gaul in the eighth century, was current and copied in Brittany, and one important group of extant manuscripts is of Breton origin,³ and Landévennec is the most likely

¹ For a recent study of Gourdestin's *Life*, and a valuable analysis of the sources see J. R. Du Cleuziou, 'De quelques sources de la Vie de Saint Guénolé', *Société d'Émulation des Côtes-du-Nord. Bulletins et Mémoires*, lxxxviii (1960), 29 ff. This study and its references and brief up-to-date bibliography are indispensable.

² For a critical account of the early historical and traditional literary sources of the abbey see the article by Leclercq in Cabrol, *Dictionnaire*, s.v.

³ See J. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland* (New York, 1929), p. 248.

centre of their record. Bradshaw found Breton glosses and names of the ninth and tenth centuries in manuscripts of Amalarius (*De Divinis Officiis*); Euty chius, *De conjugationibus verborum*; the *Hisperica Famina*; and scores of Breton glosses and names in the *Collectio Canonum* (p. 482, and see above); Juvencus, as well as those of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹ Many of these have been found in manuscripts from continental monasteries such as those of Fleury, Fécamp, Corbie, and even further afield, having been carried out of Brittany as a result, both direct and indirect, of the Viking raids.² Bradshaw's account of his travels through French and Breton libraries in search of Breton glosses³ is a fascinating Odyssey in its own right. The wealth of material which he collected, and the new horizons which he opened up of Breton scholarship in the early medieval period, is justly summarized by himself:

All these results seem to me to point to a time when there were schools of learning in Brittany, such as we read of in the lives of the Breton Saints, and that after the decay and extinction of these, many of their books passed into the hands of others who knew how to treat them with the reverence which they deserved.⁴

By about the middle of the ninth century, the abbey had become a partaker in the European scene and the European cultural world. She looked eastwards. In his recent study, Mr. J. R. du Cleuziou reminds us that for Landévennec Rome is now no longer an unknown city. Many of the religious have been there on pilgrimage, and we have a reference to the fact in a letter from Gourdestin himself to the bishop of Arezzo. But it is above all in the range of Gourdestin's literary knowledge that Landévennec shows herself as sharing in the Carolingian renaissance. He was familiar not only with the works of Gildas and Gregory the Great, but also with works of Isidore of Seville, Juvencus, Sedulius, and Aldhelm; and Duine long ago pointed to many reminiscences of the Classics in his writings, to Latin legends, to Ovid, above all to Virgil. At Landévennec, on the far western Atlantic seaboard, Brittany once again turned eastward to be a partaker in the great Classical centres of civilization.

¹ See *Collected Papers of Henry Bradshaw* (Cambridge, 1889), pp. 485 ff. A much fuller recent account of old Breton glosses has been published recently by L. Fleuriot, *Dictionnaire des Gloses en vieux Breton* (Paris, 1964). See especially § 5, *Liste Sommaire des 'manuscrits à gloses en Vieux Breton'*, pp. 4 ff.

² Bradshaw, *op. cit.* The Appendix to this book (pp. 453 ff.) is particularly illuminating. See especially pp. 464, n. 1, 468, n. 1, n. 2.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 453 ff.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 474.

By the time when Gourdestin wrote the *Life of Guénolé* the intellectual and the literary supremacy of Landévennec is beyond question. The literary quality of the *Life* alone would demonstrate it. It is not so much a biography as a prose and verse 'lyric' on the abbey, its setting, its history, and the character of the monks. It does not spare their shortcomings, and in its censure it owes much to Gildas whose works the author knew well. But the work is inspired throughout by a wider outlook, a deep reverence for Landévennec and its spiritual heritage and promise.

At the remote eastern end of Brittany, however, there was an important monastery which apparently had no share in this eastward classical outlook. It was situated in the forest of Brocéliande. While all the other great Breton monasteries are either on or near the sea, this eastern monastery is far inland. It remained a forest monastery of outstanding importance throughout the Middle Ages. As we have seen (pp. 277 f. above), it was founded by St. Méen, whose family came traditionally from the Forest of Archenfield, a westward extension of the Forest of Dean on the Welsh Border. Is it fanciful to see a certain appropriateness in the founder of the great Brocéliande forest monastery with a background in the Forest of Dean, and its supernatural traditions? St. Samson, Méen's relative, is said to have finally set out to Brittany from this same district. Now Samson's *Life* (chapter 26) relates that as he and his deacon were passing through a forest, an attack was made on Samson's deacon by a sorceress, armed with a trident. The story reads like an echo of the encounter of the hero Peredur in the Welsh romance with the Seven Witches of Gloucester, of which Sir John Rhŷs has left us an illuminating study.¹ Is our Breton story a story of the Welsh forest Border transferred to Brittany?

The great monastery of St. Méen became one of the most famous and important in Brittany in the Middle Ages. Its importance has three principal causes.

Perhaps the first, and certainly the earliest, is its position as a Christian effective protection against the evil spirits and the magic of Brocéliande. These beliefs in magic were located in the Breton forests from earlier times and lasted throughout the Middle Ages. In Tours, the Metropolitan city of the Breton bishoprics, a Council was held in 567 which solemnly condemned fairies as messengers of the devil. It will be remembered that in the medieval Arthurian romances located in Brocéliande, Mer-

¹ 'The Seven Witches of Gloucester', in *Anthropological Essays presented to Edward Burnett Tylor* (Oxford, 1907), pp. 285 ff.

lin and Vivian are commonly referred to as 'fairies'. In 658 the Council of Nantes again proscribed fairies, and the cult of woods, stones, and fountains, all of which survived and played their part in the later romances located in Brocéliande.

A second reason is that the site of the monastery makes a natural halting place on the route from St. Malo south to Bro Weroc (*Bro Érech*). It was, in fact, as a halt on just this journey that St. Méen first received the site for his monastery. It will be remembered that the saint went on an embassy from St. Samson to the king of Bro Weroc (*Bro Érech*), and he had to pass through Brocéliande. On his way he received hospitality from a local chieftain named Caduon, who had made a settlement here, and this he offered to the saint and his monks. Méen first founded his monastery at Gaël c. 600.

The third reason for the growing fame of the abbey was undoubtedly the safety afforded by its position in the great central forest. For a time it became the famous place of residence of the bishops of St. Malo, because it was separated from the coast by forest, and much less exposed to piratical raids. The district of Gaël was known as *Poutrocoet* ('The land beyond the wood'). Sometimes the bishop of Aleth was called the 'Bishop of Poutrocoet'. The district afterwards became the 'arch-deaconry of Poutrocoet'.

As St. Méen is one of the most authentic of the Breton saints, the history of his abbey is well known to our own day. His life-long friend, and relative, King Judicaël of Domnonia, ended his life in the great abbey of Gaël, and a charter of Louis the Pious of 816 speaks of the Abbey of Gaël, as 'the house of the church of St. Méen and St. Judicaël which is in the place called Wadel' (i.e. Gaël). The monastery of Gaël was destroyed by the Frankish invasion of 786, but so valuable was it that Charlemagne had it rebuilt in 791. Another monastery only two and a half miles north of Gaël is also believed to have been founded by St. Méen, at the village known today by the name of St. Méen-le-Grand, on which Gaël became a dependency. St. Méen-le-Grand rapidly grew into a famous abbey which survived into modern times. Part of the medieval church still stands, a very impressive building of fine Gothic of the twelfth century. The thirteenth-century tomb of the saint is in the church.

But the magic of the forests of Brittany is perennial—Laudéac, Brocéliande,¹ and the forests of the Loire. It preceded and has

¹ The most comprehensive study of Brocéliande is that of Félix Bellamy, *La Forêt de Bréchéliant*, 2 vols. (Rennes, 1896). A valuable more recent study

outlived the Church's efforts to suppress it. In popular etymology it has left its imprint on the word 'druid', 'the people of the "oak" (*δρῦς*) forests'. And as late as the fourth century the Gallo-Roman scholars of Bordeaux were proud to claim that they were 'descended from the druids of Armorica'.¹ Throughout the fourth and fifth centuries, and even longer, the strange rebel community of the *Bagaudae* held themselves immune from state control in the forests of the Loire. As late as the twelfth century the tragedy of the magician and heretic Eudes (*Éon*) de l'Étoile,² and his devoted followers in their secluded retreat in western Brocéliande, perpetuated the ancient warfare between the Church and magic till death at the stake and in prison ended all. Here we are back once more on the threshold of the Ancient World, where the border-line between religion, heresy, and magic is blurred. But the magic remains. It is a part of Éon's gift to his martyred followers that he spread the fame of the magic of Brocéliande far beyond Brittany. The surviving Breton poems and romances of King Arthur and Merlin all have the Forest of Brocéliande as their principal setting. Merlin, the magician, was born in north Britain, and had sojourned in Wales with the Arthurian romances; but it was the magic of Brocéliande which finally gave him as a priceless gift to romantic literature—the richest store of magical traditions in the literary world.

is that of the Marquis de Bellevue, *Paimpont* (Rennes, 1912). A delightful brief article on Brocéliande and its magic is that of C. Foulon, 'Enchanted Forests in Arthurian Romance', *Yorkshire Celtic Studies*, v (*Transactions*, 1949–52), pp. 3 ff.

¹ Ausonius, *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium*, iv, l. 7; x, l. 5.

² The fullest English contemporary report on Éon is that of William of Newburgh, *De Rebus Anglicis*. This is a highly prejudiced account by a monk writing of a heretic, but is full of valuable information. For a modern enlightened and excellent study of Éon see the article by F. Vernet, s.v. in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique*, v (1924), cols. 134 f. A recent note and useful bibliography is included in *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London, 1962), chapter 2, by Norman Cohn. I am indebted to Miss C. Blacker for calling my attention to Professor Cohn's book.