

'playing' according to them, and much of the book—the croquet scene especially—seems to press towards this insight. Even so, there is nothing in *Alice* quite as explicitly ideological as the Red Queen's famous comment in *Through the Looking Glass* that in this country you had to run very hard just to stay where you were. Carroll's children readers no doubt thought this a delightful piece of nonsense, but to a Victorian manufacturer it surely read like plain common sense.

By Law Established

The Beginnings of the English Nation and Church

by J. P. Brown

When I was a youth in England, a favourite anti-Protestant argument ran: 'We were here first.' 'We' meant St Augustine of Canterbury. When I came to Wales, this would not do, for as Bede tells us, there were Christians here before St Augustine, and, when he met them, they rejected his authority. To the argument that these Christians were obviously not Roman Catholics, we used to reply: 'Yes, they were, but cut off by barbarian Saxon invaders of England, they were unaware of Roman liturgical changes and were so attached to old Roman ways that they quarrelled with Augustine.'

I began to study the validity of this reply and hence, twenty years later, this article.¹ My amateur thesis is based on the work of the late Rev. A. W. Wade-Evans,² complemented by that of three *Blackfriars* contributors: Mr Donald Nicholl,³ Professor Finberg⁴ and, especially, Mr Eric John.⁵

'Gildas' as we have it

That barbarian Saxon invaders cut off Wales from the Continent rests entirely on the story of the Loss of Britain, which forms part of a work⁶ ascribed to the Welshman⁷ Gildas. Bede made important

¹Which is an unsolicited prologue to a solicited article on Christianity in Wales.

²*The Emergence of England and Wales*, 2nd edition (EEW), Heffer and Sons, 1959. The eccentric and polemical style may be the reason why many historians have treated the argument of the book with scorn or silence (cf. D. P. Kirby, *Bulletin*, Board of Celtic Studies, 23, 1968-70, pp. 37-59). Mrs N. K. Chadwick (e.g. in *Angles and Britons*, University of Wales, 1963, pp. 120-121) is an exception.

³'Celts, Romans and Saxons' in *Studies*, Autumn 1958, pp. 298-304.

⁴*Lucerna*, Macmillan, 1964.

⁵*Orbis Britanniae*, Leicester, 1966 (OB). These last three authors have also helped me personally, but are not, of course, accountable for errors in this article.

⁶Text and translation: Cymmrodorion Record Series, No. 3, 1899 (G).

⁷I shall use 'Saxon' as Romans and Welsh used it; to denote all Germanic peoples in Britain, and 'Welsh' as those Saxons came to use it; to denote the Welsh-speakers of modern Wales, Cornwall and Southern Scotland. But they first used 'Welsh' to mean 'Roman'.

changes in this story and also wove into it independent traditions of a Saxon advent in Kent. He interpreted the whole in the light of his knowledge that the Saxons were of Germanic stock.

'Gildas' begins with a chapter of introduction for an open letter to the sinful secular and church leaders of Britain. The chapter ends with a hope that the unusual frankness of the letter will do good. Chapter 2, after six words: '*Sed ante promissum, Deo volente, pauca*'¹ is a mere contents list of chapters 3 to 26: 'About the situation (of Britain); about contumacy; about subjection; about rebellion; etc.' These twenty-four chapters are a denunciatory history of Britain² ending, in the author's own day, with a peroration: 'Concerning those who serve not only their belly, but also the Devil, rather than "Christ, who is God, blessed for ever", I shall not so much have discussed as have wept'. Chapter 26 contains one further sentence, however: 'For why will (our) citizens conceal what surrounding nations not only know already, but reproach us with?', which would seem to fit better at the end of chapter 1. The rest of 'Gildas' is the open letter: in chapters 27-63, five named kings are rebuked and urged to repent and scripture is then cited at great length for their edification. In chapters 64 to 110, corrupt ecclesiastics (not named) are similarly treated.

The two parts of 'Gildas'

It has been denied that the history of chapters 2 to 26 (here called 'The Loss') is an interpolation in the rest (here called 'The Open Letter') on various grounds: similarity in vocabulary, syntax and style, lack of motive for forgery and 'If the spurious *De excidio* (The Loss) was grafted . . . the graft was very cunningly achieved'.³ The decisive point, however, is that the contents of the two parts show them to have been written in different centuries about different geographical areas.⁴

The Open Letter is sixth-century. Two of the kings are certainly of that date. The work is so allusive that it would only be fully understood by a contemporary and its huge scriptural content and lack of information of interest to succeeding centuries also tell against forgery. Its *Britannia* is not the familiar *geographical* entity. All the kings are Christian, two certainly from what is now Wales and a third probably. A fourth is of Devon⁵ and the fifth seems to be of Cornwall. One king, of north-west Wales, is said to be superior to almost all the kings of Britain and, even more oddly, at a time when eastern England at least was ruled by pagans, to have been instructed by the Christian teacher of 'almost the whole of Britain'. Finally,

¹But before beginning, God willing, a few things. . . .

²Cf. Stephen's history of Israel. Acts, 7.

³Leslie Alcock: *Arthur's Britain*, Allen Lane, 1971 (AB), p. 25. Cf. F. Kerlouégan in *Christianity in Britain 300-700*, ed. Barley and Hanson. Leicester, 1968. p. 151.

⁴EEW, chapters III and IV.

⁵Just possibly of Clydeside.

because of the sins of the clergy, 'a sort of thick mist and black night sit upon the *whole island*'.

In the Loss, however, Britain is at once defined as the familiar entity, to which the historical data then given, in chapters 5 to 20, clearly refer. These data are so erroneous for the period 388-*ca.* 450 that one suspects that 'Gildas' would have had little respect without Bede's backing. But the writer implies that he has before him a copy of a letter from the end of this period and he quotes: 'To Agitius, thrice consul, the groans of the *Britanni*.' Aëtius, the Roman leader in Gaul, was consul for the third time in 446 and for the fourth in 454. This letter asked for help against the Picts and Scots but the *Britanni* 'do not obtain any aid'. Nevertheless the 'citizens' gradually defeat the Picts and Scots and 'kings were anointed'¹ during a time of unprecedented prosperity in 'the island' (chapter 21). In chapter 22, the final section of the Loss begins, a campaign by Saxons² which the writer relates to his own life (see below). This begins in 'the eastern part of the island' with three shiploads, who are soon joined by a 'second and larger pack'. These are the only landings reported.

The first fleet had omens that 'they should occupy for 300 years' but for '150, i.e. for half the time, they should more frequently ravage'. The 'eastern band' then ravages 'almost the whole surface of the island'. Eventually, effective resistance begins; and, after fluctuating fortunes, the 'citizens' win the decisive Siege of the Badonic Hill in the year of the writer's birth, 43 years previously. After this 'almost very last slaughter', leaders with 'experience only of the present serenity' have forgotten truth and justice. Since the writer would hardly have refrained from noting that the heathen omens had been wrong, it seems that Badon was 150 years after the Saxon arrival, which was itself long after 446 (Aëtius). Hence Badon was well into the seventh-century, where, at 665, the Welsh Annals note *Bellum Badonis secundo*.³

Hence 'Gildas' falls into two parts: (1) The sixth-century Open Letter, in which *Britannia* is not our Britain even though it is an island. (2) The eighth (possibly seventh) century Loss, in which Britain *is* our Britain but which ends with an attack by Saxons 'in the island', in which ending Britain is not mentioned by name.

¹The first Western king whose anointing has been recorded was the Spanish Goth, Wamba, in 672. L. Musset: *Les Invasions: les vagues germaniques*. Paris, P.U.F., 1965, (VG), p. 91.

²The name 'Saxon' occurs once only. An earlier reference to the third-century Saxon pirates is veiled. Was open criticism of Saxons as a whole not politic?

³The Latin of the phrase referring to forty-three years is obscure, but only the above interpretation seems to make sense. Bede had no grounds for his referring the forty-three years to the year of the Saxon advent. It seems likely then that the Loss was written about 708 (665+43) by a contemporary of Bede. The late date is supported by the note that the heathen idols of the *patria* survive only in some cases and then deserted and decayed. (G, chapter 4). If *patria* means all Britain, then Earconberht of Kent (640-664) was the first English king to persecute pagans and destroy idols (Bede H.E., III, 8), while the Gewisse in the West Country were pagan in 635 (H.E., III, 7).

The 'Island of Britain'.

The earlier work is the key to the later. We first note: In late Latin and old Welsh, an 'island' need not be surrounded by water.¹ Secondly, the last name of Roman Britain, the political entity, was *Britanniae*, i.e. the plural, 'Britains', for it comprised five provinces: *Britannia Prima* (in the West, including Cirencester), *Britannia Maxima*, etc. Hence the singular *Britannia* in the sixth-century Open Letter may well refer to a single province of Britain.

A mass of early Welsh material refers to *Ynys Prydein*: 'The Island of Britain.' This was later understood as all Britain, but the term looks like a political formula, unless we suppose an obsession with geography.² One document³ headed: 'These are the names of *Ynys Prydein*' preserves data on the true Island of Britain, though data conforming with the later misconception have been added. Thus 'The three chief rivers of *Ynys Prydein*: Thames, Severn and Humber' and 'It has three archbishoprics: one at St David's, the second at Canterbury and the third at York' contrast with 'Three chief ports of *Ynys Prydein*: Portskewett in Monmouthshire, Cemais in Anglesey and Gwyddno's port in the North' and '(It has) three Fore-Islands: Anglesey, Man and Wight'. The first pair include modern England in Britain, the second pair seem to exclude both eastern England and the Scottish islands. We are also given the dimensions of the island, its breadth being measured from Crigyll in Anglesey to *Soram* for which Sarre in Kent has been suggested.⁴ I propose Old Sarum (Roman *Sorviadunum*). Such a territory from Wight and Salisbury halfway along the English Channel, then up through Cornwall, Wales and Man to southern Scotland, not necessarily with a continuous eastern land frontier, fits the Britain and the 'island' of the Open Letter. We shall see that it also fits the 'island' attacked by Saxons in the Loss.

The Saxons of the Loss are the Hampshire Jutes

Taking 150 years from 665 (*Bellum Badonis secundo* above) we are close in time to a Saxon Chronicle entry about an alleged third Saxon invasion of Hampshire: '514. Here came the West Saxons to Britain with three ships, in the place which is called Cerdicesora, Stuf and Wihthgar, and they fought against the Britons and put them to flight'. The first Saxon invasion, at 495, is said to have been led by Cerdic and Cynric and at 519: 'Cerdic and Cynric . . . fought against the Britons, where it is now named Cerdicesforda' (i.e. Charford, 9 m down the Avon from Sarum). In 530 the same two take Wight and in 552, Cynric 'put the Britons to flight at Sarum'.

The Chronicle is not mere barbarian boasting: 'We always won and the Britons always lost' but an Orwellian re-writing of

¹EEW, p. 23, note 4. OB, p. 55.

²Who speaks of the Island of Australia?

³*Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, ed. Rachel Bromwich, University of Wales 1961 (TYP), p. 228.

⁴TYP, p. 228. The figure given: 500 m., is far too long for either place.

history for present political purposes. To foster 'national unity' the editor sought to show that the people of Wessex were all descended from West Saxons who had first landed under Cerdic and Cynric. In fact, they were descended from at least three peoples.¹

Firstly, Cerdic and Cynric have Welsh names and the details of their 'invasion' seem to be doublets of the invasion of Stuf and Wihtgar.² Two independent sources³ show that the Charford district was Jutish. Secondly, Stuf and Wihtgar were Jutes.⁴ Thirdly, when a Welsh kingdom is conquered in 658 the Chronicle notes that the Welsh 'are put to flight as far as the Parrett' yet we have a record of Welsh rulers at Glastonbury (east of the Parrett) till about 900 and Ine's laws confirm the presence in Wessex of Welsh of high status. The Chronicle should read: 'The Welsh kingdom of Glastonbury, which stretched to the Parrett, was made subject to Wessex'.⁵ The events in the Chronicle may be interpreted in the light of the above and other evidence: Cerdic was of the Gewisse, a people of mixed Welsh-Saxon origin ruling a part of the 'Island of Britain' who were attacked about 514 by the Saxon Jutes (and later by the true West-Saxons of Berkshire) and later participated in attacks on established kingdoms (Saxon, Welsh and, possibly, mixed) to the north and west.

Instead of the grand invasion of all Britain which Bede deduced from the Loss we are thus left with a local attack⁶ which can reasonably be identified with the only genuine seaborne attack in the Wessex section of the Chronicle. (The attack probably involved two bands.)

Bede and the Loss

Early Saxon sources describe only two other 'invasions': in Kent and in Sussex⁷ Bede naturally uses the Kent traditions to supplement the story in the Loss about the attack on the *east* of the 'island'. But, about 800, the Welsh historian, Nennius 'heaping together (*coacervavi*) all he could find' includes obviously contradictory data about Kent; on the one hand, quotations from the Loss and from Bede, together with embroidered tales by the Welsh professional

¹Gf. the use of 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' for British and Irish in Ulster.

²EEW, p. 81. AB, p. 117.

³EEW p. 43, note 1.

⁴Asser's *Life of Alfred*, chapter 2.

⁵EEW. pp. 77, note 1; and 86.

⁶After allowing for rhetorical exaggeration, the account of the Saxon attack in the Loss needs no revision to accord with the Jutish attack deduced from the Chronicle, provided the Roman, Ambrosius Aurelianus, who counter-attacks the Saxons, is *not* identified with the Ambrosius who was active between 420 and 440. Even if the chronology based on the heathen prophecy is rejected, it is plain from the Loss that this counter-attack was long after 440.

⁷The 'invasion' of Northumbria by Ida is a later addition to Bede's strangely terse note that Ida 'began to reign' there in 547. Data given by Nennius put the names of the two Saxon kingdoms of Northumbria into the mid-fifth century and archaeology shows a large Saxon settlement at York at that period. Cf. P. H. Blair, *Roman Britain and Early England*. Nelson, 1963, p. 164.

⁸EEW, chapter VII.

story-tellers based on this material⁸ and on the other hand, a hagiographical account of dealings in Wales between Vortigern (the alleged British ruler in Kent), Ambrosius and Germanus and, most interestingly, data relating to Saxon Northumbria. One item of the last reads: 'But on the death of Hengist (i.e. Bede's Saxon invader of Kent), Octha his son crossed over from the northern part of Britain to the kingdom of the men of Kent (*Cantorum*) and from him are sprung the kings of the men of Kent'. This suggests that Octha (Bede's 'Octa'), the true founder of Kent, was a Saxon soldier moving from a post in Northumbria to a post in Kent, where the Roman 'Count of the Saxon Shore' had had his H.Q. at Richborough.¹

The third invasion story, Aelle's attack in Sussex, is best explained as a record of war between Octha's people and the established South Saxons under Aelle the *Bretwalda*. (The nature of the office of *Bretwalda* [see below] makes it extremely unlikely that a late invader could first hold it.)

Archaeology

Since the three invasion stories of the Chronicle seem inadequate to explain the 'conquest' of England, many have argued that other unrecorded invasions must have occurred. Archaeological findings, however, are inconsistent with general warfare. Friendly Saxon settlements, military and civil, in eastern England are dated not only to the early fifth but, sometimes at least, to the fourth century, i.e. to the Roman period proper. They range from York through East Anglia, Berkshire and Kent to Portchester, the last mainland fort of the Saxon Shore and very near to the frontier here ascribed to the Island of Britain. Moreover, nothing has been found in the east of the widespread sacking and burning of cities described in the Loss.²

Contemporary evidence refutes Bede

Especially relevant to this article is the *contemporary* written evidence which, though consistent with archaeology, has been rejected or 'amended' on Bede's authority. Critical are the letter to Aëtius (446 to 454, see above) and the 'Gallic Chronicle to 452' which reads: 'The Britains, up to this time torn by various disasters (*cladibus*) and occurrences (*eventibus*) are subjected to the dominion (*dicionem*) of the Saxons'. The 'Gallic Chronicle to 511' has the same event: 'The Britains, lost (*amissae*) by the Romans, yield to the dominion of the Saxons'. Mr Alcock³ interprets the dates of this event as 441 and 440 for the two chronicles and notes an earlier dislocation of five years in them both. This leaves it highly probable

¹Archaeology suggests that Octha found both Romano-Britons and Saxons living peaceably in Kent. AB, pp. 183 and 294. One MS. reading Octha 'came here' (*advenit*) to the 'Cantpariorum' (Cantware, with a runic 'w') suggests that the story was accepted in Kent.

²Outside the Loss, there is nothing of such disasters in early Welsh tradition, nor of any mass flight (or even flight of nobles), into Wales, except from west Shropshire about 640; i.e. the Welsh nation did not arise from dispossessed refugees.

³AB, p. 106.

that Saxon rule preceded the appeal to Aëtius, so that it was not Britons but Saxons who begged a regular Roman official for help against the Picts and Scots. Note that the letter is from the *Britanni*, i.e. probably the provincials of Roman Britain, the hill peoples from whom the Welsh derived were called *Brittones*¹ and that they use a possibly English spelling of Aëtius (Agitius)—the Saxons were literate before Augustine, of course.

Romano-Saxons

A Saxon appeal to a Roman implies mutual recognition, though Aëtius probably accepted a Saxon take-over *post facto* and with reluctance.² Archaeology indicates that Saxon dispositions in eastern England were such as to ease the conversion of the Romano-British cantons into the Saxon kingdoms to which they closely correspond. This correspondence itself argues for a simultaneous and fairly peaceful take-over.³

But the obvious objection to the Gallic Chronicles is that western Britain stayed Welsh for at least a century. Outside present Wales and Cornwall and parts of the West Country and southern Scotland, the situation is actually not clear-cut, but these four districts are enough basis for the objection. Historians have simply rejected the Chronicles' obvious meaning, even Wade-Evans, relying on the imprecision of Latin, translates *Britanniae* as 'some Britains'. I propose that it should stand. The *dicio* of the Saxons extended to the whole of Roman Britain, including the Welsh kingdoms.

Vicar to Bretwalda—the Welsh change overlords

Many of the Welsh dynasties had been set up in Roman times, when Magnus Maximus rebelled in 383, or even earlier. They were thus used to allegiance to the Roman 'Vicar of Britain', based almost certainly in London. They had little reason to reject this remote authority if it changed hands. The very term 'Island of Britain' suggests that this territory was subject to Britain proper.⁴

Bede, the reporter of invaluable scraps of data, may now be invoked to confirm the Gallic Chronicles and to reject Bede, the commentator on the Loss. He lists seven Saxon kings who had power outside their

¹Bede uses *Brittani* when following other writers (except that he is inconsistent when retelling the Loss) and *Brittones* elsewhere. One writer is particularly interesting, the author of the epitaph of Caedwalla (died 689 in Rome) who has this Saxon king come *ex orbe Britanni*.

²Cf. Rhodesia today.

³The kingdoms around London which entitle themselves '— Saxons', not because of a racial difference, may mark the limits of a particular *Britannia*. Cf. EEW, p. 60.

⁴Our Welsh source may reflect this: 'There should be held (in the Island of Britain) a Crown and three coronets. The Crown should be worn in London and one of the Coronets. at Penrhyn Rhionydd in the North (possibly Dunragit, Wigtown), the second at Aberffraw (Anglesey) and the third in Cornwall' (TYP, p. 229). The Island probably owed immediate allegiance to a ruler whose formal title '*Insularis Draco*', Island-Dragon, may have been kept for us in the Open Letter (G, chapter 33). Cf. the *Pendragons*, Head Dragons, of Welsh legend.

Faced with troop shortages, it was common late Roman practice to set up what amounted to autonomous states on the frontiers, bound by a treaty (*foedus*) and aided by centrally-based armies of regular troops (see VG, p. 69 and *passim*).

own kingdoms of Sussex, Kent, etc. Adomnan (*ca.* 700), an Irishman, calls the sixth of them *totius Britanniae imperator*.¹ The English term for these kings was *Brytenwealda* or *Bretwalda*, meaning Britain-ruler, *not* 'broad-ruler'.² Bede probably lists only seven kings because of Nennius' tradition of seven ancient British kings, but, at least from the sixth century, the title was often fought for, so that there may have been long intervals between generally-accepted Bretwaldas.³ Bede notes that his last three Bretwaldas ruled Welsh as well as English.

The Roman origin of the Bretwaldas was reflected in their courts. Bede's fifth Bretwalda, Edwin, has the Roman standard, the *tufa*, borne before him. In the Sutton Hoo ship, which may be a memorial to the fourth, Raedwald, there was a 'wrought-iron standard, which recalls the *thuuf* carried before the great king Edwin'.⁴ The sixth, Oswald, has a personal banner of purple and gold. The use of such regalia in remote Northumbria suggests the imitation of the earlier southern Bretwaldas rather than innovation. Bede's first Bretwalda, Aelle of Sussex, can hardly have been a new invader from Europe, especially if the later Bretwaldas' right to tax the other Saxon kings was original.⁵

Early Welsh culture

A second objection to Roman-Saxon continuity arises from the Saxon use of 'Welsh', i.e. Roman, for *Brittones*. But at this time many continental districts were ruled by Germans who professed allegiance to Rome, but retained their own customs and, in particular, their Arian or pagan religion.⁶ They ruled descendants of the Roman provincials, who kept the name 'Roman' and, generally unmolested, the Roman way of life and the Catholic religion. 'Roman' had thus become a *cultural* term. The crucial difference between Britain and the Continent was that, due to the establishment of the Welsh kingdoms about sixty years before the take-over and to the large Saxon immigration into eastern Britain in Roman times, the cultural division was associated with a territorial division, so that in the Saxon-ruled state, two distinct nations, English and Welsh, rapidly developed.

Welsh-Saxon interaction

There was probably however, very considerable co-operation and intermingling of Welsh and Saxon in fifth- and sixth-century Britain: military co-operation, probably some intermarriage, use of British officials by the new Saxon kings and special local political settlements

¹'Emperor of all Britain' (see OB, pp. 6-13).

²Cf. *Bretwalas*, 'Britain-Romans', i.e. Welsh. These *Bret* terms are probably formed from *Brittia*, a variant attested by Procopius (*ca.* 550), via **Brettia*, which has also given *Breizh*, where *zh* succeeds earlier *th*, the native name for Brittany.

³'Walda' is cognate with *W. gwlad*, country, whose derivative *gwledig* seems to be confined, as a formal title, to Magnus Maximus, who was probably in charge of the regular garrison of the West Coast, and to Welsh rulers of the immediate sub-Roman period.

⁴AB, p. 299.

⁵OB, p. 13.

⁶E.g. in the old Burgundian kingdoms (see VG, pp. 113-115).

in the West Country (i.e. in the Island of Britain) and the West Midlands.¹ And *pace* Bede, there were Saxon Christians before Augustine. Adomnan names two, Pilu and Genere, who joined Columba at Iona.²

In most cases of such intermingling, however, the Welsh element would gradually fade, because of the Saxon hegemony. Such gradual processes must replace the war-maps of our textbooks where the Saxon line moves westwards and the 'decisive' battles of Deorham and Chester are boldly marked.³

The Roman Mission

It is, not surprisingly, a mission from the Bishop of Rome to the Saxons which reveals Roman-Saxon continuity most clearly. Aethelberht, Bede's third Bretwalda, whose personal kingdom was Kent, was able to convey Augustine safely right across pagan-ruled England to the Bristol Channel and then, probably, to Chester. Augustine summoned (*convocavit*) the Welsh bishops with the help (*adiutorio usus*) of Aethelberht and threatened (*minitans*) that if they refused unity—under Augustine as Archbishop—they would be attacked by the English. It is very probably that this was not a prediction to be fulfilled by the pagan Aethelfrith⁴ but a simple threat, with reference to the Christian Aethelberht.

The Catholic Directory A.D. 601

Augustine's claim to be Archbishop over the Welsh, based on an express instruction of Pope Gregory, is a very strong argument for my thesis that Saxon Britain was a legalized successor-state of Rome, which included self-governing but subordinate Welsh kingdoms. The unity of Britain is shown by Gregory's detailed plan for its ecclesiastical organization.

This plan is often cited as proof of Gregory's ignorance of the isolated northern barbarians. Firstly, they were not isolated. Procopius (*ca.* 550) tells us that they sent diplomats to the Continent, in one case backed up by a successful expeditionary force. He also notes that, because of over-population, people from the three nations

¹The Bretons, often taken to be refugees from the Saxons, seem to have many Germanic words in their language, which may indicate friendly intermingling at some period. Wade-Evans' suggestion (EEW, p. 61) deserves study.

²*Life of Columba*, Book III, chapters x and xxii. Plotting the progress of the Saxons by pagan burial-sites is therefore unreliable.

³Warfare was endemic in sub-Roman Britain. The critical struggle was Welsh and Saxon against Pict and Scot. There followed 'civil wars', mostly intra-Welsh or intra-Saxon though Saxon and Welsh against other Saxons was also possible. Civil wars somewhat resembled modern professional football, with the fame and wealth of the Bretwalda-ship corresponding to the First Division Championship.

⁴Bede's calm note that the prediction was fulfilled by the slaughter of 1,200 heretical *perfidii* monks contrasts with his bitterness at the harrying of Christian Northumbria by the Welsh Christian, Cadwallon, and his pagan ally, Penda, which, Bede omits to note, followed a hot pursuit after the eventual defeat of the Christian Edwin's attacks on Christian North Wales, attacks which almost certainly involved trespass on Penda's lands. This bias of Bede, reinforced by the Saxon-Welsh wars within Northumbria, in which the Welsh of southern Scotland were probably the aggressors, seems to be the origin of the myth of a general Saxon-Welsh war.

of *Brittia*, the *Angiloi*, *Frissones* and *Brittones* were settling among the Franks and that the Frankish king (Theudebert) sent some of the *Angiloi* on an embassy to Byzantium 'seeking to establish his claim that this island was ruled by him.'¹ Note also that Aethelbert had a Frankish Catholic wife, with a personal bishop, Liudhard, residing at Canterbury, and that this gave Gregory his chance of approaching the Bretwalda (whom he styles *rex anglorum* not *cantuariorum*.) Secondly, even if Gregory had been ignorant beforehand, the plan was only drawn up after Augustine had reported back.²

The plan calls for Archbishops at London and York, each with twelve subordinate bishops and thus reflects the highly important political boundary, presumably Roman since it divided both Welsh and Saxon land, formed by Humber and Mersey.³ In Augustine's day, Northumbria did not accept the Bretwalda, though the boundary was not important enough to prevent her putting up her own successful candidate thirty years later. Note that the southern Archbishop was to be at London, the Roman capital, not at Canterbury. Temporarily, York was to be subject to Augustine and, as we have seen, so were all the British bishops. York at this time could hardly have found twelve subordinate bishops without including the Welsh bishops of Northumbria.⁴ The plan resembles that then in operation in Gaul, where at Arles, the last Roman capital, there was a primate, whose great importance is clearly shown by Bede.⁵

Law but not order

The Church thus tried to use the *de iure* situation. The *de facto* situation nearly brought Augustine's enterprise to complete failure. Beside the apparatus of Roman jurisdiction and boundaries, there also existed differences based on linguistic, cultural, religious and racial differences, cf. the enduring colonial boundaries of Africa: Nigeria is a prime example. In Britain, too, the State has had the

¹*History of the Wars*, VIII, xx. Theudebert's imperialist designs on other Germanic peoples are attested by one of his own letters (VG, p. 132n). Perhaps he saw himself as successor of the Gallic Prefecture of which the Britains were a 'diocese' and of which the last leader, Syagrius, a successor of Aëtius, had been supplanted by Theudebert's ancestor Clovis, with Catholic approval.

²P. H. Blair: *The World of Bede*, Secker & Warburg, 1970, p. 63 (but contrast p. 62).

³'*Mers*': boundary. The river has no Welsh name.

⁴And possibly the Picts and Scots of the Highlands, for Augustine would know of Columba. The next Archbishop, Laurentius, even 'sought to extend his pastoral care' to Ireland, 'the next island to Britain'.

⁵There were also Archbishops in provincial cities. Those of Tours plainly thought that the Bretons, who had settled in Gaul with Roman consent, but had kept their identity as far as using *Romania* for the rest of Gaul, were under their jurisdiction. Thus Mansuetus, *episcopus Britannorum*, went to the Council of Tours in 461. Licinius, Archbishop of Tours, 509-521, wrote to two Breton priests to condemn breaches of clerical discipline and the Council of Tours of 567 decreed that 'bishops should not be ordained in Brittany without the consent of the metropolitan and his co-provincials' (G, p. 155n). But it seems that the Bretons took as little notice of Tours as the Welsh did of Canterbury—and there were similar attitudes among the Irish continental missionaries. Yet all these 'Celts' belonged to churches who had received, *ca.* 430, either Palladius or Germanus, envoys who were known and approved by Pope Celestine I, and they had not lost physical contact with Europe meanwhile. The later disagreements arose because a period of automatic slackening (not breaking) of bonds was followed by deliberate tightening to an apparently unprecedented degree.

best of it, though tension still exists: thus Wales still precariously keeps her own territory, language and religious outlook though she now has no formal political power worth mentioning.

Augustine's dispute with the Welsh was followed by a new approach: the much-neglected Roman bishop, Birinus, co-operated with Bede's sixth Bretwalda, Oswald, and his 'Celtic' clergy, without requiring from them any of the disciplinary conformity demanded by Augustine. (Bede's treatment of this deserves study.) However, the next Bretwalda, Oswiu, whose wife was from Kent, intervened in the dispute about the date of Easter and, by royal decree, established the *Ecclesia anglicana* as a church in full disciplinary conformity with Canterbury and Rome (A.D. 664). In spite of his nominal sovereignty over the Welsh, their clergy did not accept his decision.

Two kinds of Saxons

Finally, it is interesting to note that it was *de facto* differences among the Saxons themselves which were the greatest threat to the Roman mission. Aethelberht seems to have been the first and last Kentish Bretwalda, and it seems likely that Kent did not recognize the other Bretwaldas.¹ Bede speaks of Angles, Saxons and Jutes. It is plain even from Bede himself that the first two terms could be exchanged to describe the same persons. It is equally plain that Jutes were distinct from Angles. Bede says that the people of Kent were 'of Jutish stock'—Jutes proper were in Hampshire. We have seen that Procopius named *Angiloi* and *Frissones*—Frisians—and it is reasonable to identify Jutes and 'Jutish stock' with the latter. Racial differences between Angles and Jutes were small—both were 'Saxons' to the Romans and Welsh—and Old English has Old Friesian has its nearest neighbour. When the Jutish stock had seized the Bretwaldaship, the Pope wrote to their king as *rex anglorum* (possibly because because this was now the usual Latin title of the Bretwalda). Nevertheless, the connection of the Roman mission with the Kentish power meant that, on Aethelberht's death, the Angles of Southumbria were no longer accessible and Bishop Mellitus of London had to leave Essex—which is why we still have Archbishops of Canterbury, not of London as Gregory wished.

A struggle between Angle and Jute can be traced through most of the seventh-century (e.g. the seizure by Wulfhere of Mercia, evidently a rival of Oswiu for the Bretwaldaship, of the lands of the Meonware (eastern Hampshire) and of Wight in 661). The decisive battle of Badon in 665 and the massacre of the pagans of Wight by Caedwalla in 686 finally solved the Jutish problem, so that basic uniformity was established in England almost simultaneously in the political and ecclesiastical spheres.

¹Bede states that they did not accept the last three, though the Kentish wives of two of these made possible the Paulinus mission and the Whitby synod. The second was on fighting terms with Kent, as was possibly the fourth, after the death of Aethelberht, his overlord; while the first, Aelle, may have resisted Oetha, the founder of Kent.