The Chester 'Command' System c. 71-96 C.E.

by

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

This thesis centres on the operations of the Chester 'command' system in the region of North Wales, roughly from the first year in which Petilius Cerialis served as the governor of Britain to the death of Emperor Domitian. Despite the several auxiliary forts that were occupied simultaneously during this period, seven military stations have been selected to demonstrate the direct application of Roman rule in the region imposed by a fortified network of defences and communications: the legionary fortress of Chester, the fortress at Wroxeter, the fort at Forden Gaer, along with Caersws II, Pennal, Caernarfon, and Caerhun. After the fortress at Wroxeter was abandoned c. 90 C.E. the fortress of Chester held sole legionary authority and administered control over the auxiliary units stationed in North Wales and the Welsh midlands. Each fort within this group was strategically positioned to ensure the advantages of its location and environment were exploited. The sites of Wroxeter, Forden Gaer, Caersws II, and Pennal were not only placed on the same road (RR64) to maintain a reliable communications system across the Severn valley, but the paths through which indigenous people could travel north or south were limited as each military post controlled access to the preferred land routes over the River Severn and the River Dyfi. The fortress at Chester, and the forts of Caerhun and Caernarfon, however, were northern coastal sites that utilised large ships for transport and for their garrisons to exchange goods between one another. While no naval base has been officially identified on the west coast of Wales, Pennal was accessible to ships and a 17th century description of a potential Roman port facility near the site suggests provisions were also imported by this fort. Each military station described here was designed to preserve Roman political and military supremacy in North Wales beyond the late-1st century C.E.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those individuals who have always shown genuine interest in my topic and have offered sound advice related to the quality and improvement of my work, not least of all my committee members, Professor D. Porreca, Professor A. Sherwood, and my advisor Professor A. Çoskun for their helpful comments. The foundation of my thesis began during my first semester at the University of Waterloo, and since that time my work has gradually matured into this final product. I am content to have produced a thesis of this quality in the time allotted by the institution which has provided me with the honour and privilege to make a respectable contribution to academia.

To

my mother, my darling, and all those who made this thesis possible.

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List of Abbreviations

RCAHMW   Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales

RIB   Roman Inscription of Britain.

RR   'Roman Road' following the standard listing of Roman roads in Britain devised by I. D. Margary, often supplementing the number with letters (a, b, c, etc.) to distinguish further sections of the road normally between forts.

per aspera ad astra

Introduction

The aim of this work is to provide an updated review and interpretation on the direct application of Roman rule over the landscape of North Wales amid the late-1st century. As such, the concept of the Chester 'command' system will serve as the basis of this paper. I discovered that there is a long tradition of scholarship dedicated to Wales in late antiquity, which was founded in the previous century, to the extent that an unofficial series developed on the matter.[1] The foundation of my thesis was inspired by the latest instalment *Roman Frontiers in Wales and the Marches* (Burnham & Davies 2010) given that it served as the most relevant source of information. Through a subsequent reading of its predecessors *The Roman Frontier in Wales* by Nash-Williams published in 1954, and the second edition of 1969, I noticed the way in which the subject was continuously appraised by each generation. With my thesis work, however, I intend to enhance the conventional approach to understanding the Roman occupation of Wales.

This work has adhered to the common 'gazetteer of sites' format as each fort has been allocated its own chapter.[2] Traditionally this isolated approach has caused each station to be viewed independently from its contemporaries. In contrast, the present approach tries to contextualise them all within the framework of the Flavian administration of Northern (England and) Wales.[3] From a total of fifteen campaign bases and forts in the region, seven Roman military stations have been selected for this project: the legionary fortresses of Chester and Wroxeter, followed by the forts of Forden Gaer, Caersws II, Pennal, Caernarfon, and finally Caerhun (see Fig. 1 = Map 1 below on p. 4). The existing forts were selected because of their interconnectivity within the Chester 'command' system.

My intention is to present a refined approach to the Chester 'command' system during the Flavian era. The site of each military station was strategically chosen to ensure the advantages of its location and environment were exploited. Important river-crossings or the banks of major waterways were favourable places to ensure the fluidity of communication and transportation;

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[1] For a complete review of the most essential publications on Roman Wales, see Burnham & Davies 2010: 13-19. Cf. Nash-Williams (1954) and Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) (1969).

[2] For the purpose of clarity and continuity I follow the format of each of the books mentioned above centred on a descriptive survey of the most notable Roman military stations in their exclusive chapters.

[3] The legionary fortresses of Chester and Wroxeter are the two sites of this paper located in northern England. Chester was also connected to its counterpart at York during the late 1st century but the relationship between these sites is not discussed beyond this point because it is peripheral to this thesis.

control over such sites inevitably limited the routes through which indigenous people could also travel. The direct application of Roman rule in North Wales was, therefore, imposed by a fortified network of defences and communication.

The Infrastructure of North Wales

It must be understood that the 'Wales' of late-antiquity was not a land whose people nor its borders were distinct from that of its British neighbours as it is today; for the Roman period, the term 'Wales' is merely a simple geographical expression. There is no indication that the inhabitants of this region were significantly different in race, culture, nor language from those who lived in the non-Belgic areas of southern Britain.[4] Separation did not occur until centuries after the conclusion of the Roman occupation; in the late-12th century Gerald of Wales commented that the course of the river Dyfi divided the country into its North and South districts, while the river Dee marked the northern border between Wales and England, just as the river Wye indicated the southern border.[5] One who studies the Roman occupation of the region of Wales, however, ought to consider the courses of the Dee and the Severn as the eastern boundary of the region. Though this paper is centred on the Roman administration of the North, the term 'Wales' will henceforth conform to the traditional geographical range of Wales and Monmouthshire, including the whole of Herefordshire, swathes of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, and Shropshire.[6]

The region of Wales was gradually conquered by the Roman army throughout the latter half of the 1st century. Under Agricola the imperial administration ruled through a pragmatic network of new garrison bases and auxiliary forts intended to dominate the subdued native population and monitor recently conquered territory.[7] The development of the all-weather Roman road network in the region of Wales provided the army with the foundation of a communications infrastructure.[8] Roads that were effectively surveyed and engineered expanded the influence of the Roman army across the Welsh landscape facilitating the needs of military transport and supply.[9] Agricola's network was defined by four major stations that formed a defensive quadrilateral: the fortress at Chester (*Deva*) in the northwest and Caerleon (*Isca*) in the southeast stood as the legionary bases; the two inner stations were Caernarfon (*Segontium*),

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[4] Jarrett 1969: 1. On the name *Belgae*, see Rivet & Smith 1979: 267-268.
[5] Thorpe 1986: 230.
[6] Jarrett 1969: 1.
[7] Burnham & Davies 2010: 44.
[8] Burnham & Davies 2010: 48; Arnold & Davies 1993: 35. For an image of the Roman road system in Wales, see Fig. 1 = Map 1 on p. 4.
[9] Arnold & Davies 1993: 35.

directly west of Chester on the coast of Caernarfon Bay, and Carmarthen (*Moridunum*) northwest of Caerleon on the bank of the Afon Tywi.[10]
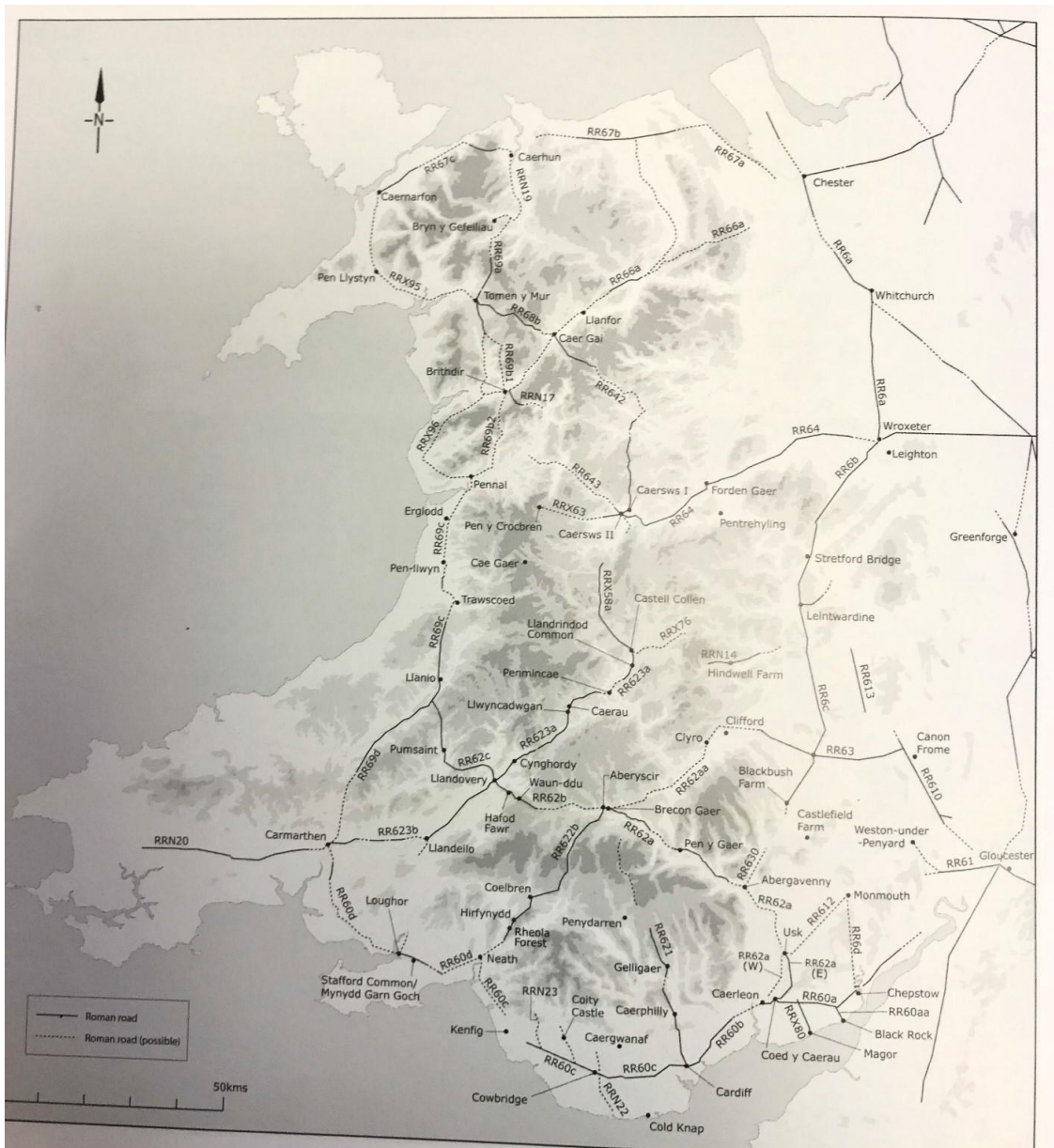

Figure 1 = Map 1. *Map of the Roman road network as presently understood.*

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[10] On the origin of the place-names see Rivet & Smith 1979: 336-337, 378, 454, 422 respectively; Ptol. *Geog*. 2,3; 19; 23; 30.

Internal communications were supplemented by several forts and centred on two large auxiliary stations at Caersws II and Brecon Gaer.[11] The Welsh frontier was thus organised into a system of two 'commands' – a northern and a southern sphere of Roman influence – governed respectively by Chester and Caerleon.[12] The range of each 'command' district may have conformed roughly to the modern conception of a North and South Wales, separated by the area between the forts of Caersws and Castell Collen.[13] The tiles bearing the stamp of *Legio XX* recovered from the forts at both Caerhun and perhaps Caersws II, however, suggest a degree of interaction between their garrisons and that of Chester towards the end of the 1st century.[14] It is through this model of the Chester 'command' system that I present a revision of the Roman governance of North Wales in the late-1st century.

Each of the forts central to this thesis fell under the administrative control of Chester during the late-1st century evidenced by the course of the associated road network. Though over fifty roads are known or reasonably suspected in the region of Wales not a single road line is complete.[15] The British sections of the antique road maps of the Roman Empire, the *Antonine Itinerary* and the later *Ravenna Cosmography* dated to the 8th century, however, enhance one's conception of road routes and stopping points with a statement of miles between each.[16] The fortress of Wroxeter (*Viroconium*), placed on the east bank of the river Severn, is located 48 Roman miles (71km) south of Chester on RR6a.[17] Forden Gaer (*Lavobrinta*), an auxiliary fort of a possible early-Flavian origin, was built 46km west of Wroxeter along RR64 in the upper Severn valley, and the contemporary fort of Caersws II was built another 27km southwest on the

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[11] RCAHMW 1986: 135-146.
[12] Burnham & Davies 2010: 43, 47.
[13] Nash-Williams 1954: 8-9. Castell Collen (SO 055 628). The interval of which is 48km.
[14] On the Roman name of Caerhun see Rivet & Smith 1979: 297 with *RIB* 2265; Hopewell 2010: 217-218; Jones 2010a: 226-229.
[15] Silvester & Toller 2010: 95.
[16] Rivet & Smith 1979: 150-151, 154. The British section is placed at the end of the land section and immediately before the *Maritime Itinerary*. The figures given for 'true' mileages are rounded to the nearest Roman mile of 1480m and measured from the centre of a town or fort, but inaccuracies are in the itinerary mileages are to be expected.
[17] Margary 1967: 296-299; Evans, *et al*. 2010: 316; On the Roman name of Wroxeter see Rivet & Smith 1979: 157; *It*. *Ant*. II. 469.2-6.

same road.[18] The course of RR64 continues across the Welsh midlands for another 43km presumably to the fort of Pennal which stands on the banks of the river Dyfi.[19]

A land route of 99km was probably established between the coastal forts of Pennal and Caernarfon but its course is mere speculation because of the infrequent physical evidence; however, the most likely course of such a road would have included the stations of Brithdir and Tomen y Mur – both placed in the mountains of Snowdonia – and the fort of Pen Llystyn built 17km south of Caernarfon.[20] The road that ran east from Caernarfon to Chester through St. Asaph and Caerhun (RR67) is confirmed by *Iter XI* of the *Antonine Itinerary* and is the best known road in North Wales.[21] A distance of 24 Roman miles (35.5km) separates Caernarfon from the fort at Caerhun; another 18 Roman miles (27km) divided Caerhun from St. Asaph which was placed 34 Roman miles (50km) from Chester.[22] It is evident that the road network of the Chester 'command' system formed a closed circuit around a large portion of North Wales and her midlands.

Roman military stations were concentrated in regions which the Flavian emperors deemed to be most problematic, and the Chester 'command' system seems to have enveloped most of the territory inhabited by the Ordovices and the Deceangli.[23] Because all forts in Wales were established on or near the course of the roads which their auxiliary garrisons were expected to maintain and patrol, the fortified road network of the north demonstrates the transition from a mobile force to an army of occupation.[24] North Wales was thus subject to a 'fort-fortlet-fort' method of control.[25] As the term suggests, the direct application of Roman rule in Wales during the Flavian period was exercised through interval forts placed at regular distances on the roadways.

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[18] Jones 2010b: 244; On the Roman name of Forden Gaer see Rivet & Smith 1979: 207; *RC* 106.40(79)-106.40(80); Margary 1967: 344-345; Evans, *et al*. 2010: 321.
[19] Margary 1967: 345-346; Evans, *et al*. 321; Hopewell 2010: 272.
[20] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 94, Fig. 4.3; 331. The modern A487 road is the most direct route between Pennal and Caernarfon and seems to represent the proposed Roman road course rather well.
[21] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 321-322; Silvester & Toller 2010: 96; Rivet & Smith 1979: 172; *It. Ant*. Iter XI 482.5-8.
[22] Rivet & Smith 1979: 172; *It. Ant*. Iter XI 482.5-8.
[23] Burnham & Davies 2010: 46. The geographical disposition of the Welsh tribes and their political relations with the Romans in the 1st century is discussed below.
[24] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 146; Burnham & Davies 2010: 44. The role of the garrisons is discussed in the following paragraph.
[25] Refer to Fig. 1 = Map 1 and Fig. 2 = Map 2; Davies 1979-180, 726 cited by Symonds 2018: 59.

It is an accepted rule of Roman fort studies that within a frontier area military stations were built about a day's march apart, roughly 22km to ensure the deployment of effective military aid in the event of an emergency.[26] The intervals between forts in Wales varied by region, however, proven by Nash-Williams who had shown that the average distance between stations in the south and the midlands was between 24km and 27km, while the distances grew along the west coast and in the north to 41km and 35km respectively.[27] Some Roman forts, however, have been found to lie in close proximity to one another which reinforces Jarrett's comment that the maximum distance between posts remains uncertain.[28] Still, separated by a distance of 37km (true length), the exchange of reliable aid between Caernarfon and Caerhun cannot be entirely ruled out given that there could perhaps be an undiscovered fort close the strategically important Menai Strait.[29] Though defence was a concern of the imperial army, it seems likely that this fortified communications system was also used to ensure the rapid transmission of military couriers.[30]

The *cursus publicus* (the 'state passage') offers insight to the utility of land-based transportation methods and how they might have been employed in the region of Wales of the late-1st century. This 'postal service' was an institution, established by Emperor Augustus, by which state officials transmitted important messages.[31] In the beginning letters were delivered by a relay system of runners spread out along the military roadways; the system later introduced vehicles such as horses and chariots that could be exchanged at posting stations to accelerate transmission time.[32] Other vehicles such as pack animals, boats or wagons were eventually utilised to carry people as well as a limited amounts of baggage and or freight.[33] Horses themselves were initially burdened with no more than 10kg above the weight of the rider and gear, though the limit gradually increased until about 385 C.E. when saddle bags were to weigh no more than 20kg; sometime later, the limit for saddle bags was raised to around 27kg.[34]Adding

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[26] Breeze 1997: 73. Cf. Burnham & Davies 2010: 46.
[27] Nash-Williams 1954: 109-110.
[28] See Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 145, cited by Burnham & Davies 2010: 67.
[29] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 145. Cf. Silvester & Toller 2010: 93.
[30] Symonds 2018: 63.
[31] Kolb 2001: 95-96; Suet. *Aug*. 49.
[32] Kolb 2001: 96; Suet. *Aug*. 49; Symonds 2018: 63.
[33] Kolb 2001: 96.
[34] See *Cod. Theod. 8.5.8*; *Cod. Iust.* 12.50.12 cited by Lemcke 2016: 55, n. 15-151. One Roman pound = 327.45g according to Hitzl 1998 on the same page.

these weights to an average male rider of 66kg, the greatest load that a horse of the *cursus publicus* was expected to bear would be at c. 110kg. Such a load would allow for an average daily progress of at least 40km/day at 4km/hour which fits well with the travel speeds attested for couriers in antiquity.[35]

The army communicated by similar means to the *cursus publicus*. Provincial governors entrusted their messages to members of their personal staff such as *beneficiarii* and guard cavalrymen (*equites singulares*).[36] Morning reports and strength returns of individual units indicate that it was common for soldiers to be away delivering messages.[37] In Wales *mansiones* (lodgings) provided overnight accommodation and fresh horses for such military personnel whose locations have been confirmed by several inscriptions that date mostly to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.[38] A tombstone (*RIB* 293) recovered from Wroxeter, however, identifies the presence of a *beneficiarius* of *Legio XX* likely before the year 61 C.E. which suggests that there was a correspondence between the legions of Gloucester (*Glevum*) and Wroxeter during the Neronian period.[39]

As for Rome's regular military force, each legionary cohort (besides the first) consisted of roughly 480 infantry and a small contingent of cavalry.[40] In the event of an emergency a man on horseback would certainly be the most efficient means of communication between nearby forts. A rider delivering a message in haste would have alerted the garrison of a neighbouring fort at a much faster rate than the horses of the *cursus publicus* travelling 40km/day. One, however, cannot reasonably expect a horse under saddle to sustain a fast pace over great distances, and by the time the message is received it would take even longer for a detachment of infantry to make the return trip. The time in which it would take reinforcements to arrive, however, suggests the garrison of each fort was prepared to rebuff a siege; even Agricola himself boasted that he never lost a fort to surrender nor flight under his command, and, in fact, each fort

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[35] Lemcke 2016: 55, n. 152 and 167.
[36] A *beneficiarius* (*consularis*) is a legionary chosen for special duty on the staff of the legionary legate or provincial governor). Three inscriptions from Chester, *RIB* 505, 532, 545, and one from Wroxeter *RIB* 293 indicate the presence of a *beneficiarius*.
[37] Kolb 2001: 99.
[38] Burnham & Davies 2010: 127.
[39] Tomlin 1992: 141-158. The details inscribed on this tombstone do not confirm the presence of *Legio XX* but rather communication between the garrisons of Gloucester and Wroxeter; Rivet & Smith 1979:368-369.
[40] The first cohort consisted of 800 soldiers. See Veg. *Epit*. 2.6, Milner 1993: 36, n. 1, and Gilliver 2011: 189-190.

contained enough supplies to last a year.[41] Nonetheless, the distribution of the forts supports the existence of a reliable system of transportation, communication, and defence. Though several forts were rebuilt in stone during the Trajanic period in Wales, the fortlets appear to have been abandoned under a stagnant military situation. This development suggests that the swift communications system was exclusive to regions that were actively pacified under the Flavians.[42]

All the forts central to this thesis were strategically placed on the banks of major waterways in Wales, significant because they either limited the crossing points available to the indigenous people or as an alternative means of military transportation. When the Roman army was on campaign, forts were built on the banks of rivers to provide the garrison with a fresh water supply.[43] Rivers of nearby forts were also advantageous because they supplemented the road system as the movement of goods was achieved by a combination of road and river transport.[44] Permanent military stations were increasingly built on the banks of major waterways as well.

The chain of Roman forts in the Severn valley: Wroxeter, Forden Gaer, and Caersws II demonstrate effective control of important fords. The Severn, Britain's longest river, begins on the northeastern slopes of the Plynlimon mountains in the west of central Wales and flows east across the midlands passing Llanidloes, Newtown, and Welshpool before continuing south through the English towns of Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, the city of Worcester and then through Gloucester before it empties into the Bristol Channel.[45] The fort Caersws II was placed on the floodplain near the confluence of the Severn and its tributary the Carno.[46] Forden Gaer was also built on the floodplain above the east bank of the Severn but had access to an important ford across the river.[47] For both Caersws II and Forden Gaer to have been built on floodplains contradict Roman strategic practice, but their respective garrisons regularly patrolled the

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[41] Tac. *Agr*. 22. 2. Woodman & Kraus 2014: 208, 22.2 caution that Tacitus' praise for Agricola is very general and completely overshadows the few sentences on actual campaigning (22.2-4).
[42] Symonds 2018: 63.
[43] Veg. *Epit*. 1.22, 3.8.
[44] Campbell 2012: 290.
[45] For a short description of the course of the Severn by Gerald of Wales in the late-12th century see Thorpe 1987: 225.
[46] Jones 2010a: 228.
[47] Rowley 1986: 49; Jones 2010b: 244. Veg. *Epit*. 1.22, 3.8.

important areas of the adjacent river. In addition, Wroxeter dominated the central Severn valley by controlling the large ford only a couple hundred metres to the west which served as the main access route to the region.[48] These three stations not only formed a fortified line of communication (as discussed above) across the Severn valley, but maintained a constant, powerful interference in the activity of the indigenous people who inhabited the Welsh midlands.[49]

The Romans likely used the coastal stations of Chester, Caerhun, Caernarfon and Pennal for maritime transportation.[50] Through these sites the British fleet supplied the province with men and provisions from the Continent.[51] Sea-travel was also advantageous for its swiftness compared to the slow and arduous alternative of land-based transportation, even though only about 25 percent of the garrison posts could be supplied by ship.[52] Roman naval forces would have been active on the Bristol Channel within a short time of the Claudian invasion of 43 C.E., assisting with the conquest of the southwest of England and the southeast coast of Kent where it undertook patrol duties to prevent incursions by the Silures.[53] There is only slim evidence, however, supporting the view that the *classis Britannica* was operating outside the province in the year 70 C.E. and later c. 80-83 C.E. under the command of Agricola in Scotland.[54] Three possible ferrying points have been identified on the south coast of Wales at Sudbrook, Magor, and Black Rock all located southeast of the fortress of Caerleon.[55] The presence of the British fleet along the north coast of Wales during the late-1st century is suggested by the placement of the existing northern forts on navigable points of major rivers, thus the analysis of the Roman navy in these chapters is largely speculative.

The fortress of Chester, placed on a low ridge in a bend of the river Dee flowing south from its source of Lake Bala (Llyn Tegid), imported supplies by sea.[56] Only minimal evidence of

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[48] White 2010: 194. For a representation of the proximity of the fortress to the ford see Figure 5.
[49] Hodgson 1995: 61. The purpose of Roman forts is discussed below.
[50] Consider elsewhere the forts at Cardiff, Neath, Loughor, Carmarthen, and even Chepstow as Roman naval bases. See Evans, *et al*. 2010: 99.
[51] Starr 1960: 153.
[52] Burnham & Davies 2010: 48.
[53] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 98. Cf. Starr 1960: 152-153, n. 96, 97.
[54] Tac. *Hist*. 4. 79; *Agr*. 24-25.
[55] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 99.
[56] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 172; Thorpe 1987: 230. In the early medieval period, the Dee marked the northern border between Wales and England, just as the Wye also indicated the southern border. See Thorpe 1987: 198, n. 405.

a dock projecting into the Dee west of the fortress, dated by associated material to the early Flavian period, has been documented despite being at the navigational limit for boats.[57] At the beginning of the 2nd century the Dee was also used to transport tile-stamps of *Legio XX* crafted at the work depot of Holt located 12km south of the fortress. The suggestion that Chester exported goods and provisions to the forts of Caerhun and Caernarfon is supported by such tile-stamps recovered from these sites.[58]

Caerhun, Caernarfon and Pennal were also placed on the banks of waterways at points navigable by ship, however, the first site is the only one of this group to have produced evidence of a dock of possible Roman origin.[59] Caerhun was, however, placed 83km west of Chester and though it was accessible by RR67 such a distance probably encouraged provisions to be transported on barges by sea; on the banks of the river Conwy, Caerhun was accessible to ships bearing a maximum load of 100 tons.[60] The fort of Caernarfon, moreover, placed at the tidal mouth of the Afon Seiont, not only provided shelter for the ferries crossing the Menai Strait from the island of Anglesey but likely received provisions from Chester as well.[61] While no naval station on the west coast of Wales has been discovered, it has been suggested that Pennal was built on the tidal limit of the river Dyfi and its first good crossing point likely to import supplies by sea.[62] Such conclusions of the existing forts demonstrate the complexity and effectiveness of the Roman administration in the region of Wales during the late-1st century.

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[57] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 98. See p. 23 below.
[58] See below on pp. 23-24, and 45.
[59] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 99. See p. 45 below.
[60] Casey 1969: 56. For a brief description of the course of the Conwy see Thorpe 1986: 230.
[61] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 99; Frere & St. Joseph 1983: 3-4. See pp. 41-42 below.
[62] Starr 1960: 153; Hopewell 2010: 272.

Historical Overview

The conquest of the region of Wales followed upon the Roman invasion of Britain orchestrated by Emperor Claudius in the year 43 C.E. The island had not been a theatre of Roman military affairs for nearly a century since the initial expedition led by Julius Caesar.[63] The majority of the expeditionary force was comprised of four legions: *Legio II Augusta* was drawn from Strasburg, *Legio XIV Gemina* from Mainz, *Legio XX Valeria* from Cologne, and *Legio IX Hispana* from Pannonia.[64] A fleet of warships and transports manned by skilled sailors from the Mediterranean also made three landings on the southeast coast of Kent to support the progress of the infantry on land.[65] Both *Annales* and *Agricola* survive as the most informative literary sources on the events of the Roman occupation of Wales during the latter half of the 1st century. The following outline of events closely reflects Tacitus' accounts.

P. Ostorius Scapula (47-52 C.E.) was the first to create a temporary frontier supported by legionary forts (*castra*) within the central and lowland regions of Wales between the rivers Trent and Severn.[66] The army was led into the territory of the Deceangli, which presumably occupied Flintshire and perhaps dwelled on both sides of the river Dee.[67] It may be inferred that *Legio XIV* was primarily involved in this expedition having been stationed at Wroxeter by this time.[68] The Roman forces subsequently marched even further north to put down a Brigantian revolt, and the governor maneuvered to the far south of Wales into Silurian territory where he pursued the fugitive Belgic king, Caratacus, and founded a legionary camp at Gloucester.[69] Caratacus soon fled to Ordovician territory where he was defeated near the upper Severn, and ultimately captured by the Brigantian queen Cartimandua presumably in the year 51 C.E.[70]

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[63] Suet. *Claud*. 17.

[64] Parker 1971: 98. Rome retained a total of twenty-seven legions until 66-67 C.E.

[65] See Dio. 69. 19 cited by Starr 1960: 152.

[66] Nash-Williams 1954: 1; Tac. *Ann*. 12.31.2. Cf. Rivet & Smith 1979: 450-451, 'Avonam' ought to be emended as 'Tristantonam' (*i.e.* the Trent), and thus intended to subsume the Welsh midlands.

[67] Furneaux 1907 (1974): 99, n. 8. Tac. *Ann*. 12. 32. 1-3; Ptol. *Geog*. 2,3,19. The towns held by this tribe were *Deva* (Chester) and *Viroconium* (Wroxeter). The proper spelling of the name of this Welsh tribe ought to be emended as *Dec(e)ang(l)os*, see Rivet & Smith 1979: 331; Furneaux 1907 (1974): 2, 99-100; Jarrett & Mann, *WHR*, 4 (1968): 165-166; Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 5.

[68] *RIB* 294.

[69] Tac. *Ann*. 12. 32. 3-4; Yardley 2007: 469, Caratacus fled to Wales after the death of his brother and achieved heroic status; Jones 1984: 35; Ptol. *Geog*. 2,3,16; Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 13.

[70] Tac. *Ann*. 12. 33. 2-3; 36. 1; Ptol. *Geog*. 2,3,18; Rivet & Smith 1979: 415-416; Yardley 2007: 469.

Roman military efforts were concentrated on the subjection of the Silures. There was a serious reverse in military policy, however, as Aulus Didius Gallus (52-57 C.E.) merely retained part of what Rome had conquered. Quintus Veranius (57-58 C.E.) subsequently engaged in minor battles with the Silures but resolved in his will that he would have subdued the entire province had he lived for another two years.[71] Suetonius Paulinus (58-61 C.E.) later enjoyed two successful campaigns, the first presumably against the Silures, while the other may have been against the Ordovices or the Deceangli.[72] In 61 C.E. he led an initially successful invasion of the island of Anglesey (*Mona*), yet he was abruptly required to supress the revolt of the Iceni led by queen Boudicca.[73] Paulinus assembled a fighting force comprised of *Legio XIV* stationed at Wroxeter, vexillations of *Legio XX* Gloucester and some auxiliaries of nearby settlements, which won a decisive victory over the Britons in a pitched battle most likely near Mancetter, on Watling Street, in the English midlands.[74] Afterwards, three concurrent governors were installed to placate the Britons and all campaigns ceased for nearly a decade.[75] In the year 67 C.E. *Legio XIV* was relocated for service in the Caucasus and *Legio XX* was moved north from Gloucester to Wroxeter.[76]

A new forward policy was sustained in Britain by its governors under the Flavian dynasty. The main priorities were to complete the subjugation of the Brigantes and the warlike Silures. Petilius Cerialis (71-74 C.E.) at the helm of the newly formed *Legio II Adiutrix* overran most of Brigantia and at least some land was integrated into the province.[77] The task of conquering the remainder of Wales, however, fell to his successor Julius Frontinus (73/4-77 C.E.), who ensured the complete subjection of the Silures.[78] During Frontinus' final year in office, however, a band of Ordovices overwhelmed a cavalry regiment under his command which suggests he also occupied northern Wales to some degree.[79] The Ordovices were ultimately overcome by Cn. Julius Agricola (77-83 C.E.) in his inaugural year. Late in the

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[71] Tac. *Ann*. 14. 29. 1; *Agr*. 14. 3; The date of his appointment is generally taken to be 52 C.E. Furneaux 1907 (1974): 109, n. 1; 269, n. 7.
[72] Tac. *Ann*. 14. 29. 1-2; *Agr*. 14. 3.
[73] Tac. *Ann*. 14. 29-39.
[74] Yardley 2007: 487.
[75] Tac. *Ann*. 14. 39. 4-5; *Agr*. 16. P. Turpilianus (61-63 C.E.), Trebillius Maximus (63-69 C.E.), Vettius Bolanus (69-71 C.E.). Cf. Nash-Williams 1969 (2nd ed.): 5.
[76] Burnham & Davies 2010: 42.
[77] Tac. *Agr*. 17. Petch 1987: 117.
[78] Tac. *Agr*. 17-18; Burnham & Davies 2010: 42.
[79] Tac. *Agr*. 17. The Ordovices were not conquered by Frontinus contrary to M. G. Jarrett 1969: 5.

campaigning season Agricola conducted his own invasion of the island of Anglesey.[80] This act was a prerequisite for control of northwest Wales since the island harboured rebels and served as the granary of the region.[81] The successful invasion marked the complete subjugation of the region of Wales. Under Emperor Domitian (81-96 C.E.) the Roman administration consolidated the northern landscape by means of a fortified communication network. Following the departure of *Legio II Adiutrix* from Chester to fight in the Chattan war, *Legio XX* occupied the fortress in c. 87 C.E.[82]

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[80] Tac. *Agr.* 18. 1-4.
[81] Burnham & Davies 2010: 43.
[82] See *ILS* 9200 cited by Burnham & Davies 2010: 47.

Roman Forts and their Garrisons

Forts and fortresses represent the authority of the Roman military over the occupied landscape. The examples of forts provided in the introduction above have shown that the posts held during the Flavian period were established in intermediate positions along roadways to support communications for military and administrative personnel; forts were also frequently built at important river crossings, or on the banks of major waterways to exchange supplies by ship.[83] Sites such as Forden Gaer and Caersws II which were placed on the floodplain of the river Severn contradict Roman strategic practice, but their garrisons were likely expected to monitor the use of transportation along the course of the river and perhaps govern the indigenous people in the midlands.[84] Whether Roman forts in Wales accurately map the territorial distribution of the hostile tribal communities is still unresolved, however, the archaeological and literary evidence suggests that forts were strategically placed to govern the recently conquered territories (discussed below on pp. 18-22 and at the end of each chapter).[85]

Shape

The enclosure of Roman *castra* (camps) and *castella* (fortlets) could be square, circular, triangular, oblong, or a quadrilateral, according to the site.[86] The archaeological evidence indicates, however, that it was customary for the army to lay out a camp of either square or rectangular plan, which was the standard of the Republican period onwards. The result was an enclosure forming a rectangle with rounded corners provided with four or more gates coined by posterity as the 'playing card' style.[87] It is the rectangle rather than the square that predominates in England, Scotland, and Wales.

Fort Sizes and Troop Accommodations

Roman camps typically varied in size according to their type, strategic function, and the garrison which they held.[88] The land-surveyors (*agrimensores*) ensured that the square footage

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[83] Burnham & Davies 2010: 46.
[84] Veg. *Epit*. 1.22, 3.8.
[85] Burnham & Davies 2010: 46.
[86] Veg. *Epit*. 3.8. Welfare & Swan 1995: 12-13 give plenty of examples of various fort enclosure designs.
[87] Davies & Jones 2006: 16.
[88] Nash-Williams 1954: 112.

(*podismus mensurae*) of the enclosure was appropriate for the number and type of occupants.[89] Vegetius explains that these considerations were important in terms of both living and defence to avoid congestion among the soldiers and from spreading them too thinly in a large space.[90] Archaeologists often rely on the area of the enclosures as an aid to infer the size of the garrison, however, the identity of the original garrison is often unknown.[91] The largest forts in this study are Forden Gaer and Caersws II both enclosing 3.2ha (8 acres), followed by Caernarfon – the largest fort in northwest Wales – 2.27 ha (5.6 acres), Caerhun 1.97 ha (4.86 acres), and Pennal 1.8 ha (4 acres).[92]

The evidence of *diplomata* indicates that between 98 and 105 C.E. a minimum of thirty-one auxiliary units were posted in the region of Wales and parts of northwest England. There were eight *alae* (cavalry units); three *cohortes milliariae* (800 infantry), but only one was an *equitata* (800 infantry and 256 cavalry); thirteen *cohortes quingenariae equitatae* (480 infantry and 128 cavalrymen); and seven *cohortes quingenariae peditatae* (480 infantry).[93] The list of unit strengths here presented is datable to within thirty years of the complete subjugation of the region of Wales by Frontinus and Agricola.[94] Since large-scale garrison reductions were not implemented in this period, one ought to consider all full-size forts (2.3-2.4ha) as candidates suited to accommodate such military units.[95]

The area of Roman forts and the evidence of troop facilities ought to be considered to infer the identity of the founding auxiliary unit. Despite this information, however, some military stations may have held either elements of two or more different units, but the fort presumably stood as the base of operations for many, if not all, the soldiers brigaded within its walls.[96] The strength of most Roman military units in the 1st century was limited to 480 infantrymen (*quingenaria*), while milliary units were rare and probably did not exist before the Flavian period.[97] A *cohors quingenaria peditata* was an infantry battalion consisting of 6 centuries of 80

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[89] Veg. *Epit*. 3.8.
[90] Veg. *Epit*. 1.22.
[91] Davies 2009: 46.
[92] Casey, Davies & Evans 1993: 10. Cf. Burnham & Davies 2010: 67.
[93] See both Jarrett 1969: 14-17 and Burnham & Davies 2010: 70, Fig. 3.2.
[94] Jarrett 1969: 16-17.
[95] Burnham & Davies 2010: 70.
[96] Symonds 2018: 7.
[97] See Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 9, fn. 5.

men each, a total of 480 troops; an *ala quingenaria* was a cavalry regiment composed of 16 *turmae* each of 32 men, totalling 512 soldiers; finally, a *cohors quingenaria equitata* was a partly-mounted battalion possibly consisting of 6 centuries of 80 men plus 4 *turmae* of 32 men each, resulting in 480 infantry and 128 cavalry.[98] Nevertheless, the original garrison of Caerhun is still unknown despite being one of the most thoroughly excavated Flavian sites.[99] Three-quarters of the enclosure contain facilities that seem appropriate for a *cohors quingenaria equitata*, but without evidence of the stables the fort seems better suited to a *cohors quingenaria peditata*.[100]

<center>Plan</center>

The internal layout of legionary fortresses and auxiliary forts conformed to the standard of Roman castrametation of the mid-1st century onwards.[101] Marching-camps were supposed to be oriented in such a way that the principal gates would be influenced by topography and the direction of the march.[102] Vegetius and Hyginus state that the *porta praetoria* (front gate) was to either face east or the enemy while the *porta decumana* (rear gate) indicated the direction of movement.[103] The first rule was more important when two armies were encamped close to one another in the field prior to battle.[104] Whether permanent forts in Wales were constructed facing east depends on the evidence that survives of them.

The interior was divided into three segments by means of two parallel transverse roads, the *via principalis* (main road) and the *via quintana* which ran at right angles to the axis of the fort, the previous road linking the *portae principales dextra* (right gate) and *sinistra* (left gate), while the *via praetoria* and the *via decumana* subdivided the front (*preatentura*) and rear (*retentura*) divisions leading to the *porta praetoria porta decumana* respectively. Another road, the *via sagularis* or *intervallum* road conformed to the perimeter of the defences.[105] To one side of the central, undivided, area (the *latera praetorii*) in both the fortress and fort stood the

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[98] Burnham & Davies 2010: 70; Veg. *Epit*. 2.6; Ps.-Hyg. 16, 26-28; Milner 1993: 35-36, 2. Cf. Casey, Davies & Evans 1995: 10-11.
[99] Hopewell 2010: 218.
[100] See p. 50.
[101] Burnham & Davies 2010: 70.
[102] Veg. *Epit*. 1.23; Ps.-Hyg. 56. Cf. Milner 1993: 23, n. 2.
[103] Veg. *Epit*. 1.23.
[104] Davies & Jones 2006: 14.
[105] Burnham & Davies 2010: 70. Cf. Jones 2012: 39; Ps. Hyg. 1-2, 8-19.

headquarters (*principia*) flanked by the commandant's quarters (*praetorium*) on one side and the *horrea* (granaries); in a fort a hospital (*valetudinarium*) might also be included in this range. While the barracks of the first cohort would typically occupy the centre of the enclosure as well, the *praetentura* and *retentura* was entirely reserved for the barracks or stable-barracks which were either arranged *per scamna* (on a right-angle to the axis of the fort) or *per strigas* (on the same axis).[106] Any other usable space was generally allocated to the pack animals and equipment.[107]

The legionary fortress was designed on a larger scale according to a similar, but less standardised, plan. For example, administrative buildings took precedence and bathhouses were commonly built within the enclosure.[108] Towards the end of the 1st century the west rampart at Wroxeter was demolished perhaps to increase the living space for the soldiers, emphasised by the unfinished baths built on the line of the former wall within the annexe. The legionary fortress of Chester was built 20 percent larger than either Caerleon or York because the larger *latera praetorii* was occupied by a highly unusual group of buildings.[109] In addition, the site of the *principia* has been confirmed, but while the *praetorium* has not it is suspected to be immediately to the east of the *principia*.[110] Though granaries might be placed at convenient points near the gates to reduce congestion, at Chester four stone-built granaries stood near the west gate between the *via principalis* and the barracks in the southwest corner.[111] At Chester four stone-built granaries stood near the west gate between the *via principalis* and the barracks in the southwest corner.[112]

<center>Defences</center>

The *castra* defences corresponded to its function. Marching camps designed to hold a small contingent of soldiers temporarily only required minor fortifications. Vegetius states that in the absence of immediate danger a short wall is formed using the earth dug from the ground and a trench or *fossa* is simultaneously dug along the perimeter of the enclosure conforming to the

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[106] Veg. *Epit*. 3.8.
[107] Welfare & Swan 1995: 22.
[108] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 152-153.
[109] Burnham & Davies 2010: 71.
[110] Burnham & Davies 2010: 71.
[111] Veg. *Epit*. 1.22.
[112] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 173-174, Figure 7.9.

angles of the defences.[113] By contrast permanent establishments (*stativa castra*) were built with greater diligence, especially in a potentially threatening environment.[114] A timber palisade or rampart was then built on the inner side of the ditch which was filled with the clay and earth gathered from the previous step.[115] The defences of all Flavian camps in Britain and Wales were composed exclusively of earth and timber, but stakes were also driven into the rampart to strengthen the defences.[116] Such evidence is often used to help contextualise the period in which a fort was built. In the reign of Trajan forts were often rebuilt in stone as the army became increasingly accustomed to maintaining their posts or upon the advent of a new garrison.[117] Forden Gaer, however, is unique in this group because its defences were never rebuilt with stone.

Legionaries

The Roman army of the early Principate was composed of two branches, the legions and the auxiliaries (*auxilia*). The legions constituted the iconic heavy infantry and were composed exclusively of Roman citizens whose careers spanned twenty-five years.[118] These groups of soldiers were organised into *legiones* (or divisions) with a strength of roughly 4,800 infantry rather than an ideal 5,000 men; the basic unit of a legion was a century composed of 80 men led by a centurion assisted by an *optio* (second-in-command) and several others filled the chain of command.[119] These centuries themselves were formed of 10 sets of 8 messmates, called a *contubernium*, a subdivision which is often recognised in the barrack-blocks of military stations. In addition, each legion contained 10 cohorts, each of these had 6 centuries besides the first cohort which consisted of five double centuries. [120] These figures indicate that the infantry within a legion was closer to a total of 4,800 men.

A detachment of 120 horsemen (*equites legionis*) also accompanied each legion, who were employed as messengers or scouts since the majority of the cavalry was provided by the auxiliary units, but is unclear whether they were included in the legion's notional strength of

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[113] Veg. *Epit*. 1.24.
[114] Veg. *Epit*. 3.8.; Milner 1993: 77, n. 10.
[115] Veg. *Epit*. 1.24.
[116] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 154. See Polyb. 38.18.8 and Livy 57 cited by Welfare & Swan 1993: 17.
[117] Burnham & Davies 2010: 54-55.
[118] Pollard & Berry 2012: 36.
[119] Gilliver 2011: 189.
[120] Symonds 2018: 6.

4,800.[121] Symonds, however, suggests the 120 cavalry ought to be included in the ideal strength of 5,000 and increase it to 5,120 but a total of 4,980 may be more realistic.[122]

<p style="text-align:center">Auxiliaries</p>

In contrast to their legionary counterparts the auxiliaries were non-Roman citizens conscripted among the provincials and allied communities of the Empire. The tribal or geographical origin of the unit is often reflected in its title, but local recruitment where the units were stationed gradually diluted its ethnic identity to the extent that in the 2nd century citizens served in both branches of the army.[123] Following twenty-five years' service and an honourable discharge they earned the privilege of Roman citizenship, which was signified by a bronze diploma filled with informative evidence. For example, the only epigraphic hint concerning the garrison of the fort at Caersws II is a tile stamped CICF, which could be expanded to *cohors I Celtiberorum fecit*.[124] This cohort was levied in northeast Spain (indicated by its title), and is attested on British *diplomata* for 105, 122, and 146 C.E. These are rare examples that indicate the presence of this unit though the identity of the primary garrison of a fort is often unknown.[125]

The auxiliaries were a dynamic branch of the Roman army. The legionaries were often on campaign or a proportion of them periodically out on field operations.[126] The auxiliaries, however, were responsible for consolidating recently conquered territory and were expected to partake in routine policing and patrol of the area in proximity of their base forts.[127] The auxiliaries were complementary to the legions given they performed unique duties when on campaign.[128] For example, in 77 C.E., Agricola selected a group of Batavians renowned for their swimming ability to cross the Menai Strait to initiate the invasion of Anglesey.[129] In 83 C.E. four cohorts of Batavians and two of the Teucrians formed the vanguard against the Britanni at the battle of Mons Graupius.[130]

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[121] Gilliver 2011: 189; Pollard & Berry 2012: 36.
[122] Symonds 2018: 6.
[123] Gilliver 2011: 193.
[124] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 10, n. 4.
[125] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 10; Jones 2010a: 229; *RIB* 2471; Davies 2009: 46.
[126] Davies & Burnham 2010: 39.
[127] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 8.
[128] Gilliver 2011: 193.
[129] Tac. *Agr.* 18.4; *Ann.* 2.8.3.
[130] Tac. *Agr.* 36.1.

The Geographical Disposition of the Welsh Tribes

It is nearly impossible to determine the territories of the indigenous Welsh tribes with precision. Tacitus' *Annals* and *Agricola* contain incidental references to the ways in which the Romans engaged with members of these communities, but their locations are either imprecisely known or inferred through context; nor are the names of British towns mentioned frequently. The vagaries of the historical narrative are supplemented by Book 2 Chapter 3 of Ptolemy's *Geography* – a 2nd century attempt to precisely list the distribution of the legions, places and towns (*poleis*) held by indigenous communities of Britain.[131] The details concerning southern Britain, however, may reflect the 70s C.E. while those of northern Britain may date to the 80s C.E. When reading Ptolemy's work, each *polis*, whether a military post or civil settlement, ought to be perceived as the town in the region that acts as an agent in the local government and exerts authority over a specific area and community.[132] The geographical coordinates provided by Ptolemy also help to clarify the location of each site.

The British section of the later *Antonine Itinerary* provides a practical representation of the Roman road network and its many stations in the province.[133] This itinerary appears to be a compilation of earlier mapping sources used to create an account of the geography of the entire empire.[134] An understanding of the geography of Roman Britain may also be supported by the latest but most detailed itinerary, the *Ravenna Cosmography*.[135] Each of the documents here listed complement the information presented by the other. The details within each of the document can be used to contextualise the approximate extent of the lands inhabited by the Welsh tribes.

In the 1st century, Roman forts in the region of Wales presumably indicated the areas theorised to be most difficult to govern; conversely the argument that the absence of forts from a certain area represents the peaceful attitude of the local population is no longer acceptable given sparse habitation may justify fewer forts.[136] The region was defined by several tribal

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[131] Rivet & Smith 1979: 114-147. See Fig. 2 = Map 2.
[132] Laurence 2001: 71.
[133] Rivet & Smith 1979: 150-184. *Iter II*, *XI*, and *XII* are the most useful for this examination.
[134] Laurence 2001: 75.
[135] Rivet & Smith 1979: 185-215.
[136] See, Burnham & Davies 2010: 47; Jarrett & Mann, *WHR* 4 (1968): 164.

communities, but only the few directly affected by the Roman administration in the north are discussed briefly below.[137]
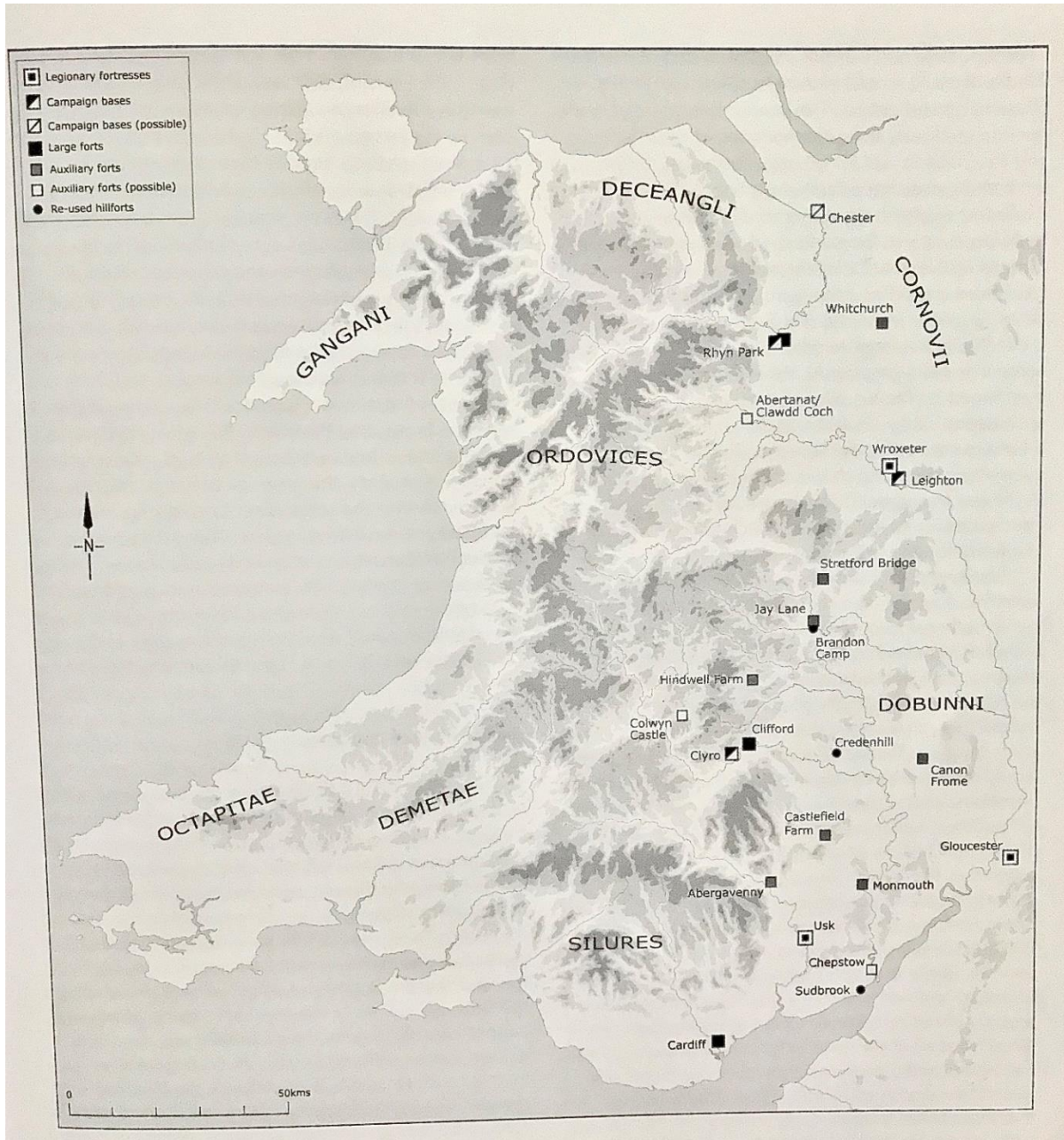

Figure 2 = Map 2. *The presumed geographical disposition of the indigenous Welsh tribes with pre-Flavian military bases.*

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[137] See Fig. 2 = Map 2 on p. 22 for a complete map of the presumed geographical disposition of the Welsh tribes.

The Roman campaigns against the bellicose Silures were frequent, but their geographical location is ambiguous in the historical narratives.[138] Ptolemy states this community was situated east of the Demetae but the territory of this group is also unclear.[139] The Demetae certainly occupied some portion of the southwestern promontory maybe as far as Pumsaint and Carmarthen, while the rest of the peninsula was held by the Octapitae whose identity is solely indicated by the Roman name of St. David's Head, Pembrokeshire (*Octapitarum Promontorium*).[140] The Silures were perhaps the dominant tribe in South Wales down to the Bristol Channel.[141] The only town attributed to them is *Bullaeum* which may be reasonably equated with *Burrium*, the Roman fort at Usk.[142] The name of Caerwent (*Venta Silurum*), however, indicates that Ptolemy was unaware it was incorporated in Silurian territory, possibly because it was annexed after his publication or his sources predated this development.[143] The lower extent of the river Wye up to Kenchester likely indicates an eastern boundary with the neighbouring Dobunni.[144] The territory of the Silures is relevant to the Chester command system because the distribution of Roman forts north of their territory implies the demarcation of Ordovician territory.

<center>Ordovices</center>

The Ordovices are suspected to inhabit territory generally north of the Silures and the Demetae but south of the Brigantes, a location implied by the events of *c*. 49-51 C.E. as Caratacus carried the war from the land of the Silures into that of the Ordovices.[145] He was defeated by the governor Ostorius Scapula on a hilly area overlooking a river of varying depth identified by Jarrett and Mann as the river Severn presumed to be inside Ordovician territory.[146] This tribe also revolted in 77 C.E. shortly before the arrival of Agricola in the late summer, when some of the Ordovices nearly destroyed an entire cavalry regiment stationed in their territory.

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[138] Tac. *Ann*. 12.32-40, 14.29; *Agr*. 17.3.
[139] Ptol. *Geog*. 2,3,23-24.
[140] Jarrett 1969: 4; Ptol. *Geo*g. 2,3,23. Cf. Rivet & Smith 1979: 430.
[141] Jarrett 1969: 4.
[142] Jarrett & Mann, *WHR* 4 (1968): 170; *AI* 484.5; Ptol. *Geog*. 2,3,24. Cf. Rivet & Smith 1979: 285.
[143] Jarrett & Mann *WHR* 4 (1968): 170; *AI* 485.9, probably not founded by the date of Ptolemy's source.
[144] Jarrett & Mann *WHR* 4 (1968): 170; *RIB* 2250. The Wye also formed the southern boundary between Wales and England in the early medieval period. See Thorpe 1978: 225-226.
[145] Tac. *Ann*. 12.33-36.
[146] Tac. *Ann*. 12.33.2; Jarrett & Mann, *WHR* 4 (1968): 167.

The new governor subsequently avenged this attack.[147] Tacitus' account of these events is the only literary indication that the previous governor Julius Frontinus dispatched military units to what was presumably north Wales.

The Ordovices probably settled across the Welsh midlands and the north. The core of their territory centred on the Severn valley between Newtown and Caersws.[148] This presumption is based on the location of the Deceangli east of this region and the Decanti to the northwest (discussed below). Furthermore, a rapid Roman invasion of the island of Anglesey immediately followed the defeat of the Ordovices.[149] This expedition was hastily conceived at the end of the campaigning season in 77 C.E., but the sequence of events suggests there was enough time for a feasible invasion. In turn the timing of the invasion suggests that the centre of Ordovician territory lay in the Snowdonia region, but this suspicion may be unlikely given the inclement nature of the terrain.[150] Perhaps the Ordovices were compelled to inhabit the periphery of this region, their western limit indicated by the Llyn peninsula occupied by the Gangani.[151] An important hillfort, Braich y Ddinas on Penmaen Mawr near Caerhun, enclosing 4.4 ha (11 acres) provides some hint of local native habitation. All datable evidence reported at the site has been assigned to *c.* 100-400 C.E.[152] It would be unlikely for a hostile community to be permitted to hold a site which could have been defended against the Romans.[153] This location, however, might have fallen in the territory of the Deceangli.[154] This thin literary evidence at least provides the general eastern extent of their territory.

Ptolemy lists two places within Ordovician territory, *Mediolanum* and *Brannogenium*.[155] His coordinates (16˚ 45', 56˚ 40') and (16˚ 45', 56˚ 15') respectively, are relative to those of Wroxeter (16˚ 45', 55˚ 45') which implies they were in the north. The former is listed in the *Antonine Itinerary* (*Iter X* 482$_4$) as a station on the northern route to *Segontium* (Caernarfon), *Canovium* (Caerhun), *Varis* (St Asaph), and *Deva* (Chester), but taken as the *Mediomano* of the

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[147] Tac. *Agr.* 18.1.
[148] Jarrett & Mann, *WHR* 4 (1968): 167.
[149] Tac. *Agr.* 18.1.
[150] Jarrett & Mann 1968: 168. Cf. Rivet & Smith 1979: 330-331, 365.
[151] Rivet & Smith 1979: 365-366.
[152] RCAHMW *Caernarvonshire*, 1 (1956): 85-86, site 252. Cf. Davies, J. L. *Aspects of Native Settlement in Roman Wales and the Marches*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cardiff. 1980: 360-371.
[153] Hanson 1987: 48.
[154] Furneaux (2nd ed.) 1974: 99, n. 8.
[155] Ptol. *Geog.* 2,3,18.

Ravenna Cosmography (106[41]) located between *Viroconium* (Wroxeter), *Lavobrinta* (Forden Gaer), Caernarfon, and Caerhun.[156] According to the road map these places ought to be found near Caernarfon. The coordinates give its location slightly north of the Cornovian town of Wroxeter (16 45, 55 45).[157] Therefore, a suitable identification of the site would be the intermediate station of Whitchurch on the road to Chester.[158] Both Roman road maps indicate that the other destination, *Brannogenium*, stood between *Magnis* (Kenchester) and Wroxeter.[159] The site is most likely identifiable as the modern village of Leintwardine located in north Herefordshire, England, near the border of Shropshire.[160] Based on this information the Ordovices inhabited North and Central Wales, and a sliver of the English midlands, emphasised by the distribution of Roman forts which appear to encircle most of their presumed territory.

Deceangli

The name of this tribe is given in the historical literature and attested on lead pigs.[161] In 50 C.E. the Deceangli were defeated by the Roman army led by Ostorius Scapula. Tacitus states the army nearly reached the shore facing Ireland when their attention was turned to a revolt among the Brigantes, a sequence of events dictates the tribe was settled in the far north of Wales. [162] This notion is supported by the name of the tribe abbreviated on two lead pigs recovered from the legionary fortress at Chester dating to 74 C.E.[163] According to Ptolemy, however, it was the neighbouring tribe to the east, the Cornovii, who held both *Deva* and *Viroconium*.[164] The Deceangli are, therefore, taken to live in the lead-mining district of Flintshire and perhaps on both sides of the Dee.[165]

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[156] *It. Ant.* 482.4-8; *RC* 106.40-44. On *Lavobrinta*, See Stückelberger & Grasshoff 2006: 155; Jones 2010b: 243.
[157] *It. Ant.* 484.9; Ptol. *Geog.* 2,3,19.
[158] Rivet & Smith 1979: 415-416; Webster 2010: 289.
[159] *It. Ant.* 484.7-9; *RC* 106.27-40.
[160] Rivet & Smith 1979: 173, 207; Stückelberger & Grasshoff 2006: 155; Berry 2010: 306.
[161] A lead pig is an ingot. For an example of one that bears the name of the Deceangli, see Wright & Richmond 1955: no. 197, pl. 44. For an explanation of the tribal name see Jarrett & Mann 1968: 165-166; Rivet & Smith 1979: 331
[162] Tac. *Ann.* 12.32.1-4.
[163] Wright & Richmond 1955: no. 196, pl. 44.
[164] Ptol. *Geog.* 2,3,19.
[165] Furneaux (2nd ed.) 1974: 99, n. 8; Rivet & Smith 1979: 331.

Chester

The legionary fortress of Chester was integral to the northern command sphere in Wales during the Flavian period. The numismatic evidence suggests the Roman army first accessed the area while it was on campaign in Brigantia, but more intensively occupied it during the reign of Vespasian. This observation supports the arrival of *Legio II Adiutrix* under Petilius Cerialis (71-74 C.E.), but Chester gradually took on an administrative role under his successors. There is some evidence of a dock at a navigable point of the river Dee in proximity to the fortress which suggests that this was a terminal through which supplies were imported and probably exported to neighbouring coastal forts; the accompanying road system was certainly utilised for transportation. The fortress was also positioned on a point of the presumed borders shared by the Brigantes to the north, the Ordovices and Deceangli to the west, and the Cornovii to the east. As the first two remained unconquered until *c*. 74 and 77 C.E. one may speculate that the legion stationed at Chester mitigated a concerted offence by the neighbouring tribes.

Although the legionary fortress was established inside an acute angle of the course of the river Dee, the context in which the fortress at Chester was constructed is unclear.[166] The earliest campaigns around the county of Cheshire were undertaken by Ostorius Scapula in 50 C.E. but the literary evidence does not indicate whether any forts were established in the area.[167] A considerable number of pre-Flavian *aes* distributions have been gathered from coastal and river valley locations as well as Chester, evidence that supports the presence of pre-Flavian Roman forces on site.[168] Alternative circumstance for a pre-fortress foundation is the invasion of Anglesey in 60 C.E. led by Suetonius Paulinus.[169] Ships were used for this campaign but the site from which the invasion was launched is unknown.[170] Chester was strategically important in

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[166] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 172. The fortress environment is show in Fig. 3 on p. 27 below.
[167] Tac. *Ann*. 12. 32. 1-4.
[168] Shotter 2002: 25.
[169] See Tac. *Ann*. 14. 29-30.
[170] Tac. *Ann*. 14. 29; *Agr*. 17.

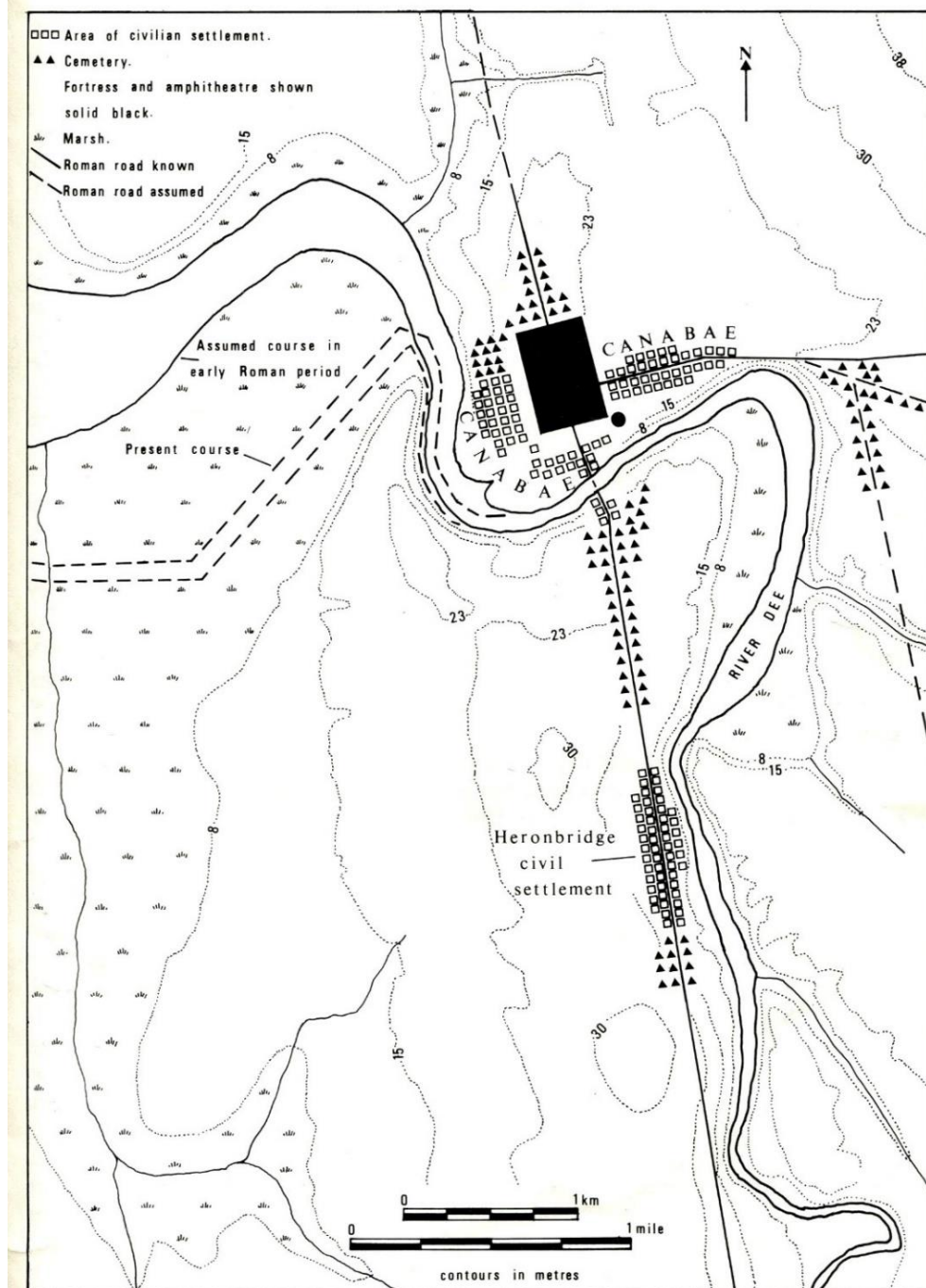Figure 3. *Chester: The legionary fortress and its environment.*

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northwest Wales because its control of a supply-base at Heronbridge placed 2km south of the fortress was useful for this expedition.[171] The first signs of a Roman military presence, resting

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upon a pre-fortress Roman settlement are suggested by two distinct phases of construction. Suetonius Paulinus' expedition to Anglesey could account for the earlier period which is distinguished by a short ditch probably a *clavicula* of a marching-camp or fort gateway. The later phase is shown as the foundations of a box-rampart which was an uncommon and generally pre-Flavian style of construction, aligned on an angle to the fortress buildings.[172] Given the arrangement of cremation burials presumably of a pre-Flavian date and the traces of military structures of the same period, a possible sequence arises which begins with a camp or fort of auxiliary size succeeded by a much larger installation covering an area of at least 10 ha (24.7 acres).[173]

Petilius Cerialis' campaigns against the Brigantes in 71-72 C.E. present a possible scenario for the second phase of construction. An examination of the coin distributions in northern England firmly suggests the governor penetrated deep into Scotland and simultaneously conquered swathes of Brigantian territory.[174] The existing primitive fort suggests it played a limited role in the penetration, but its location in the far northeast of Wales on the river Dee, allows for the possibility that it was associated with the movement of troops by sea.[175] The governor was accompanied by *Legio II Adiutrix* whose presence is indicated by a series of tombstones.[176] As marines this unit of soldiers was experienced in naval warfare, and would have been appropriate for Cerialis to have placed at least a detachment of them at Chester to patrol the main river estuaries perhaps – in light of the certain presence of Roman activity at Carlisle – as far as the Solway.[177] The present numismatic evidence is also consistent with the suggestion of early Flavian activity at Chester.[178] The fortress itself, however, was not built until later in the reign of Vespasian.

Julius Frontinus (74-77 C.E.) likely supervised the construction of the legionary fortress at Chester. Two lead pigs from the territory of the Deceangli, datable by their cast consular

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[171] Petch 1969: 35. Cf. Rowley 1986: 46 states that there was a small manufacturing settlement with stores and workshops and tile and pottery production centres nearby.
[172] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 172. Cf. Hanson 1987: 53; Jones 1975, 82-83.
[173] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 172. Cf. Petch 1969: 35.
[174] Shotter 2005: 28.
[175] Shotter 2002: 25.
[176] *RIB* 475-487; Wright & Richmond 1955: 19-22, nos. 23-33; Jarrett 1963: 210.
[177] Shotter 2002: 26, 30. This is confirmed by dendrochronological evidence of structural timbers felled in 72 C.E.
[178] Shotter 2002: 26.

inscriptions to 74 and 76 C.E., not only mark the beginning of the construction work on the fortress but confirm Roman activity in Flintshire at this time.[179] With the Brigantes having been conquered, *Legio II Adiutrix* would have been garrisoned at Chester as Frontinus prepared to subdue the remaining Welsh tribes. These lead pigs also indicate the Romans were exploiting the lead deposits of the county since the early-70s. It was here that *Legio II Adiurtix* remained here until 83 C.E. when it was relocated to Germany to fight in the Chattan war. Still, a Roman military presence was continued by *Legio XX*, as indicated by another collection of tombstones.[180]

The fortress was completed while Agricola was in office and his presence is attested by a lead water-pipe bearing his name. The water-pipe, found beneath the fountain in the centre of the courtyard, suggests it was installed prior to June 79 C.E. when the fortress was nearly complete.[181] The water-supply for the fortress was obtained from natural springs 2km to the east in the modern suburb of Boughton, where traces of a possible reservoir were found in 1821 along with an altar dedicated to the Nymphs and Springs.[182] The reservoir was probably set up by *Legio XX*, while the water-supply was managed by the earlier *Legio II Adiutrix* at least.[183] In 1863 a fragmented building inscription was found on the site of the Feathers Inn, Bridge Street, and the remnants of a large Roman building which includes the bases of two large columns.[184] The inscription contained two rows of writing: the upper row bore the lower parts of the letters O G, and the first limb of an A; the lower displayed the upper halves of the letters DOM, with a point before the D.[185] Brushfield proposed that the inscription formed a dedicatory tablet regarding the erection or restoration of a public office.[186] A rereading of the inscription led to new identification of some letters and the restoration: [… | *imp*(*eratori*) *Tit*]*o Ca*[*es*(*ari*) | *Augi*(*usti*) *f*(*ilio*)]*Domi*[*tiano*…, which led Wright and Richmond to propose a dedication to the emperor Vespasian and his sons in early 79 C.E. which would agree with the existing water-pipe

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[179] Wright & Richmond 1954: nos. 196-197; Mason & Wilmott 2010: 172. Vespasian was cos. V-IX in 74-79 C.E. according to Kienast 1996: 109.
[180] *RIB* 489-516.
[181] *RIB* 2434 (Set to be digitised by Spring 2020); Wright & Richmond 1955: 48-49, no. 199, pl. 14. Cf. Mason & Wilmott 2010: 176.
[182] *RIB* 460; Richmond & Wright 1955: 48-49 no. 199, pl. 47*a*; Petch 1969: 35 n. 4.
[183] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 178.
[184] *RIB* 463; Wright & Richmond 1955: 16, no. 14, pl. 2. Cf. Petch 1969: Appx. II, no. 5; Brushfield 1885: 80.
[185] Brushfield 1885: 81.
[186] Brushfield 1885: 86. It is possible the inscription commemorated the emperor Domitian or Julia Domna.

of that year.[187] Petch was not convinced that this evidence signified the completion of the fortress.[188] Mason and Wilmott, however, have recently confirmed that this inscription attests the completion of the baths late in the reign of Vespasian.[189]

The coin depositions in the graveyards around Chester provide additional chronological evidence for the occupation of the fort. The largest concentration of Roman burials near the fortress is found south of the Dee in the cemetery of Handbridge. As this area grew into a suburb in the mid-19th century several discoveries were made along Eaton Road. The coins here were reported to be abundant ranging in date from Vespasian to Constantine I, although along Queen's Park Road casual finds included coins of Nero and an *aureus* of Titus.[190] In the Infirmary Field an interment of a young girl was accompanied by various items including a coin of Domitian.[191] The inhumation cemetery south of Watergate Street also produced some interesting evidence. A certain grave contained *denarii* of Otho (69 C.E.) and Nerva (96-98 C.E.). An additional discovery was a Roman inhumation burial of a certain Flavius Callimorphus aged 42 and Serapion aged three and a half: the tombstone was set up by Thesaeus for his brother and son. The associated finds were a gold ring and a worn coin of Domitian. Another burial seen in a garden in or around Grey Friars contained a *denarius* of Vespasian.[192] Finally, a coin of Domitian was found in a grave site several hundred metres southwest of the fortress. The grave was 1.8m deep and its floor lay about 3.5m above Ordnance Datum. This is important because it shows that this area was dry land in the early Roman period and that there was already considerable silt accumulation along the east side of the Roodee when Chester was founded.[193] These several finds indicate that the fortress continued to be held in the reign of Domitian.

The fortress-enclosure and its adjuncts are mostly concealed beneath the modern city but the 'playing-card' outline of its walls has been traced accurately. The early fortress defences consisted of a turf and timber rampart, wooden interval and corner towers and gate-houses, and a

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[187] *RIB* 463; Wright & Richmond 1955: 16, no. 14, pl. 2; 17.
[188] Petch 1969: 35. The argument is not made very clear, but it may centre on a comparison between the baths at Inchtuthil which were incomplete in the time that it was occupied from *ca.* 84-87 C.E.
[189] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 173; Nash-Williams 1954: 15.
[190] Petch 1987: 182-183, and 186, Fig. 30.
[191] Petch 1987: 180.
[192] Petch 1987: 181-182.
[193] Mason 2002: 66.

single V-shaped ditch measuring 3.66m wide and 1.52m deep.[194] The greatest surviving height of the rampart is 2.7m but it could have originally been as high as 4.42m. The dimensions of the defences over the ramparts are 592.8m by 411.7m enclosing an area of 24.4 ha (60.28 acres) making it 20 percent larger than its contemporaries at Caerleon (*Isca*) and York (*Eboracum*).[195] The length and width of the fortress was designed according to a ratio of 3:2 instead of the regular 5:4 to account for two additional *scamna* in the *latera praetorii* (central division which held the *principia* and the barracks of the first cohort). There were enough barracks for ten cohorts: two were in the forward outer *insulae* of the *praetentura* (front division); the existing barracks were placed at both ends of the first *scamnum* in the *latera praetorii*, west of the *principia* was reserved for five double-centuries of the first cohort; one at each end of the third *scamnum* in the *latera praetorii*; and four held in the *retentura* (rear division). These structures were initially composed of timber, and while some ramparts were later rebuilt in stone upon the arrival of *Legio XX* c. 87 C.E. the barracks were not renovated until late in the reign of Trajan.[196]

Towards the end of the 1st century Chester operated as a supply-depot rather than a military base. The county of Flintshire was attractive for its lead caches at an early stage in the conquest. An ingot recovered from Carmel, near Holywell names a certain C. Nipius Ascanius, presumably the same man engraved on an ingot from Bossington (Hants) dated to 60 C.E. While the second item comes from the Mendips, it has been suggested that Ascanius was permitted to mine in the territory of the Deceangli before it was conquered by Rome.[197] Several work-depots have been documented near the fortress. A small site is on Pentre Farm 1.6km southeast of Flint, a short distance from the marshes that skirt the river Dee. The finds suggest that industrial activity began here around 85-90 C.E, a military connection to the fortress is established by stamped tiles that attest the presence of *Legio XX*.[198]

The work-depot of Holt (*Bovium*) was also operated by *Legio XX*.[199] Holt lies beside the river Dee 12km south of Chester positioned on the west bank of the Dee bordering the floodplain and covers an area of roughly 8 ha (20 acres). The presence of *Legio XX* has been confirmed by

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[194] Nash-Williams 1954: 12; Petch 1969: 36; Mason & Wilmott 2010: 172.
[195] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 172, 176.
[196] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 172-173, 176-177.
[197] Petch 1987: 227-228. Cf. *Britannia* 13: 119-122.
[198] Silvester 2010: 308.
[199] Rivet & Smith 1979: 274.

stamps on several centurial building-stones, tiles and antefixes which suggest the work-depot was built *c*. 90 C.E.[200] Four kilns at the site were used for firing pottery while two others were reserved for making tiles. Pottery production does not precede the Flavian era, however, and is unlikely to have begun before *c*. 100 C.E. The river Dee was used to transport products downstream to the fortress, and the legionary tiles were subsequently delivered to Caernarfon, Caerhun, and Caersws by sea-going vessels and along the road network.[201] In addition, it is evident that the lead resources of Flintshire were increasingly exploited towards the end of the reign of Domitian. Such activity emphasises the centrality of the fortress in the Chester command system.

Products and supplies were probably exchanged in large quantities by ships on the Dee estuary. These estuary operations implied by a Roman inscription that commemorates a certain *optio* (second-in-command) who died by shipwreck.[202] Although the sea-level of the early Roman period might have been significantly lower than the present levels, the main river channel resembles its current route.[203] Nevertheless, remains of seaborne vessels have not been recovered and only minimal evidence of the port facilities have been found. In the potential location of docks that would have been accessible from the sea despite being at the limit of navigation for boats, archaeologists have found some early Flavian pottery sherds, a lead pig corresponding dated to 74 C.E., and several wrought oak timbers with sharpened points clad in iron 'shoes' which might represent the main supports for a stage or wharf.[204] Excavations for a sewer at Watergate in 1874 also revealed a collection of Roman pottery with eight antefixes. Finally, the infilling of a channel 91.5m wide at the corner of Black Friars dates from the Roman period indicating that this route was an open waterway during the late 1st century.[205] Such evidence of a Roman port emphasises the importance of the Dee as a means for connecting the fortress to other coastal sites that were simultaneously garrisoned.

The resident legion of Chester exercised control over the landscape of North Wales. Its connection to the coastal forts of Caerhun and Caernarfon has already been demonstrated by the

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[200] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 181; *RIB* 439-441.
[201] Petch 1987: 225-226, n. 37.
[202] *RIB* 544.
[203] Mason & Wilmott 2010: 180.
[204] Shrubsole 1887: 77, 79-80; *RIB* 2404. Cf. Mason & Wilmott 2010: 180; E. M. Evans, *et al*. 2010: 98.
[205] Shrubsole 1887: 77-78.

presence of legionary tiles. Provisions were perhaps shipped along the north coast to overcome the respective distances of 79km and 116km on land, and the fort Caersws II was certainly accessed through the road network. Although the most direct modern route is the A483 which runs for 98km would have involved travelling south along RR6a for 77km past the intermediate stations of Whitchurch (*Mediolanum*) and Harcourt Mill (*Rutinum*) to the fortress at Wroxeter, before progressing west along RR64 for 69km.[206] Several auxiliary forts were under the command of *Legio XX*. Certain *diplomata* dated to 98 and 105 C.E. respectively, name sixteen units which seem to have been in contact with Chester in the early Trajanic period.[207]

The existing land route seems to suggest the territorial limits of several neighbouring Welsh tribes, and the inscriptions of the existing lead pigs indicate that Chester was in proximity to the territory of the Deceangli. The Ordovices presumably inhabited the centre of North Wales and as far south as Leintwardine (*Brannoganium*), yet the road course between Wroxeter and Caersws II ran through this region, which suggests this area of Ordovician territory was regularly patrolled. Likewise, the Cornovii who settled near Chester and Wroxeter were perhaps held to the east by RR6a. Evidently Chester occupied such a strategically divisive position that it prevented concerted military action by the Brigantes to the northeast and the Ordovices – the final Welsh tribe to be conquered.[208] It is apparent that the Roman defence system was designed to restrict the indigenous people to the interior while excluding the Brigantes. Under Agricola this scheme appears to have enabled the Romans to impose their military dominance over the northern part of the region.

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[206] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 316, 321; Margary 1967: 296-299, 344-345; Rivet & Smith 1979: 157 *It. Ant*. 469$_{2-6}$.
[207] Petch 1987: 119, n. 20-21.
[208] Petch 1987: 118.

Wroxeter

Wroxeter was among the earliest areas to host a permanent Roman military establishment in the Severn valley. *Legio XIV Gemina* built and occupied the fortress where it remained until 67 C.E., when it was withdrawn for service in the Caucasus. Before its departure, the legion was probably involved in the northern campaigns under Ostorius Scapula and Suetonius Paulinus. *Legio XX* subsequently inherited the fort before moving further afield to the legionary fortress at Chester *c*. 87 C.E. As a nodal point in the Chester command system Wroxeter assisted in the consolidation of northern Wales under Agricola.[209] It not only helped to create a defensive barrier around the northern tribes but initiated a line of communication across the Severn valley by a road to Forden Gaer.

The legionary fortress at Wroxeter was probably built under Quintus Veranius (56-57 C.E.) when Nero's decision to conquer Wales led to a rise in military activity and *Legio XIV* had to be relocated from Mancetter to the area for the offensive.[210] Three early inscriptions that lack the title *Martia Victrix* awarded to the legion in 60 C.E. for its role in suppressing the Boudiccan revolt are the evidence for the transfer.[211] A military presence at this time is emphasised by the numismatic evidence recovered from the later *macellum* (provisions building) and bathhouse.[212] These are post-military buildings but the items found derive either from disturbed military phases or from the brief presence of soldiers.[213] It is problematic, however, to rely on a tiny sample of evidence to understand the whole occupation of the fortress.[214] The excavations revealed sixty coins of Claudius issued between 41-50 C.E, eight Neronian coins minted from 64-68 C.E. and a Julio-Claudian *as* of an unknown date.[215] This isolated find probably reflects the military context of the site in this period, which is when military campaigns ceased in Britain as the Roman administration committed to a policy of pacification following the revolt.[216] When *Legio XIV* was relocated for service in the Caucasus in 67 C.E. the Romans, however,

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[209] See Burnham & Davies 2010: 40-48.
[210] Webster 2002: 80.
[211] *RIB* 292, 294, and 296. Tac. *Ann*. 14.32.
[212] The figures are drawn from Ellis 2000: 91-108.
[213] Brickstock & Casey 2002: 85.
[214] White 2010: 195.
[215] See, Brickstock & Casey 2002: 88.
[216] Tac. *Ann*. 14.4-5; *Agr*. 16.3-5; Brickstock & Casey 2002: 86.

maintained their military presence on the border of Wales as the fortress was subsequently inherited by *Legio XX*.

The coin deposition indicates an increase in military activity in the area under the emperor Vespasian. *Legio XX* held the fortress for the next five years conducting regular policing and governing duties until the arrival of Petilius Cerialis (71-73 C.E.).[217] Under the command of Julius Agricola the legion accompanied Cerialis at the helm of *Legio IX* through successful campaigns in Brigantia.[218] Eleven coins recovered from Wroxeter were possibly issued while Cerialis was in office, a total indicative of a renewed Roman military presence in northern England.[219] The action by Cerialis and Agricola might also coincide with the time at which two barrack-blocks and centurial quarters were completely rebuilt which have been recovered by excavation of G. Webster; these barracks were almost on the same alignment but with some differences in the internal partitioning. G. Webster suspects these renovations were complete before the end of Phase 4, that is *c*. 79 C.E.[220] The arrival and subsequent residency of *Legio XX* then, might be reflected in the prevalence of early Flavian coins. In contrast a total of seven coins of Vespasian were issued while Julius Frontinus was in office from 74-77 C.E.; not as large a deposition as his predecessor's but it does indicate the continuity of a military presence at Wroxeter.[221] Frontinus completed the subjection of the Silures and campaigned in the Severn valley.[222] Still, the extent of the involvement of *Legio XX* in these campaigns and the way in which its fortress was affected are uncertain.[223]

The fortress at Wroxeter underwent its greatest adjustments while Agricola was in office. Once the conquest of Wales was complete by 78 C.E., *Legio XX* was led to the north and eventually beyond the Pennines into Scotland to establish a permanent frontier in the subsequent years.[224] Therefore the responsibility of ensuring security in Wales was now transferred to *Legio II Adiutrix* who was stationed at Chester, although part of this legion might have also pressed

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[217] Webster 2002: 86.
[218] Tac. *Agr*. 7-8, 17.1-2; Webster 2002: 82.
[219] See, Brickstock & Casey 2002: 88-89.
[220] Webster 2002: 36, 37-39.
[221] Note that these may potentially overlap with those attributed to Cerialis or Agricola.
[222] Tac. *Agr*. 17.2.
[223] Webster 2002: 86.
[224] Tac. *Agr*. 18.

north into Scotland by sea.[225] Fewer coins of Domitian were recovered from the baths and the *macellum* of the fortress but Brickstock and Casey state this trend is not reflected in the coinage of Wroxeter as a whole. None were issued before 84 C.E. and one *denarius* was certainly struck in 89 C.E.[226] The *denarius* is important because it coincides with the governor's final year in office, and it is possible that the lack of coins minted in 79-83 C.E. reflects the absence of *Legio XX* who was away on campaign.[227] At this time, however, Wroxeter transitioned from a legionary fortress to a storage depot, which might have affected the coin count.

A CAD (computer-aided drafting) plan indicated the fortress ultimately measured 441.3m by 362.7m enclosing an area of 16 ha (39.5 acres).[228] The shift from fortress to storage depot began with the demolition of the legionary barrack blocks and their centurial quarters (Phase 4b), which were replaced by a large timber stores building measuring 29m by 40.4m (0.29 acres).[229] Such a development indicates the reordering of the fortress, no longer dedicated to housing the fighting strength, but transformed into a rearward depot for provisions, administration and training (Phase 5). Later the rampart was reduced, the ditches filled, and the west defences dissolved. Logically this would have occurred simultaneously with the removal of the rampart and the demolition of the barrack blocks.[230] Possibly the latter act was done to permit access to the double-ditched annexe formed between the fortress and the river cliff. One reason why this extension to the west was required was for the construction of the fortress baths on the site of *insula* V, but the rate at which these renovations occurred under Agricola remains speculative.[231] It is possible that the coin deposition not only reflects the period the garrison of the fort was absent, but the period when military personnel returned to affect the transition. The date of the abandonment provided by the pottery finds, however, coincides with the final phase of construction *c*. 90/100 C.E.[232]

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[225] See Shotter 2002: 28; Webster 2002: 82; Tac.*Agr*.24.
[226] Brickstock & Casey 2002: 87.
[227] Tac.*Agr*.39-40.
[228] White 2010: 194. See Fig. 4 below on p. 38.
[229] Webster 2002: 39.
[230] Webster 2002: 56.
[231] Webster 2002: 82-83. For a representation of the fortress baths within the annexe see Fig. 4 below on p. 38.
[232] Webster 2002: 83; White 2010: 195.

The fortress at Wroxeter was strategically founded in the central Severn valley, as demonstrated by the several other military forts located within 6km of the fortress.[233] The chronology of these camps is uncertain but they emphasise the high strategic value of the environment amid the campaigns of the 1st century.[234] In addition to these sites, an auxiliary fort 1km south of the fortress at Cound Hall measures 157m by 143m, encloses 2.3 ha (5.8 acres) and lies 500m south of the ford across the Severn near Wroxeter.[235] This site may be pre-Flavian or Flavian in date.[236] An abundance of Julio-Claudian coins and the tombstone of a certain Tiberius Claudius Tirintius of a *Cohors I Thracum* found within Wroxeter coincide with this period and perhaps hint at the earliest Roman military unit in this location.[237] The importance of this area must have been appreciated at an early stage as a base from which forces could launch west into central Wales by the Severn valley. A military unit here could also prevent any hostile force approaching from the foothills and control the north-south route from the Dee to the Severn estuaries.[238]

Wroxeter was essential to the consolidation of northern Wales. The legionary fortress was placed at a junction of three Roman roads that led in four directions. RR6a-c road ran south-south-west along the eastern extent of Wales to Leintwardine (*Bravonium*) before it concluded at Kenchester (*Magnis*) on the bank of the River Wye.[239] RR6a, the main north-south route, was connected to the legionary fortress at Chester.[240] An intermediate station was founded at Whitchurch (*Mediolanum*) which attests to the development of Chester into the dominant military base in north Wales.[241] Finally, by the late 70s C.E. RR64 ran the breadth of the country periodically crossing the Severn until it concluded at Pennal. The forts of Forden Gaer and Caersws I are proposed to have been founded in the early Flavian period which suggests this line of communication began with the foundation of these sites west of Wroxeter. The subsequent foundation of Caersws II 1km southwest of its predecessor represents the gradual extension of

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[233] Welfare & Swan 1993: 164. The fort environment is shown well by Fig. 5 below on p. 39.
[234] White 2010: 193; Welfare & Swan 1993: 150-164.
[235] White 2010: 193; Welfare & Swan 1993: 158.
[236] See, St Joseph 1951: 53-56.
[237] Webster 2002: 87-89; *RIB* 291.
[238] Webster 2002: 79.
[239] Margary 1967: 291-292; Rivet & Smith 1979: 407, 275.
[240] White 2010: 196; Evans, *et al*. 2010: 93, Figure 4.3.
[241] Webster 2010: 289; Margary 1967: 293.
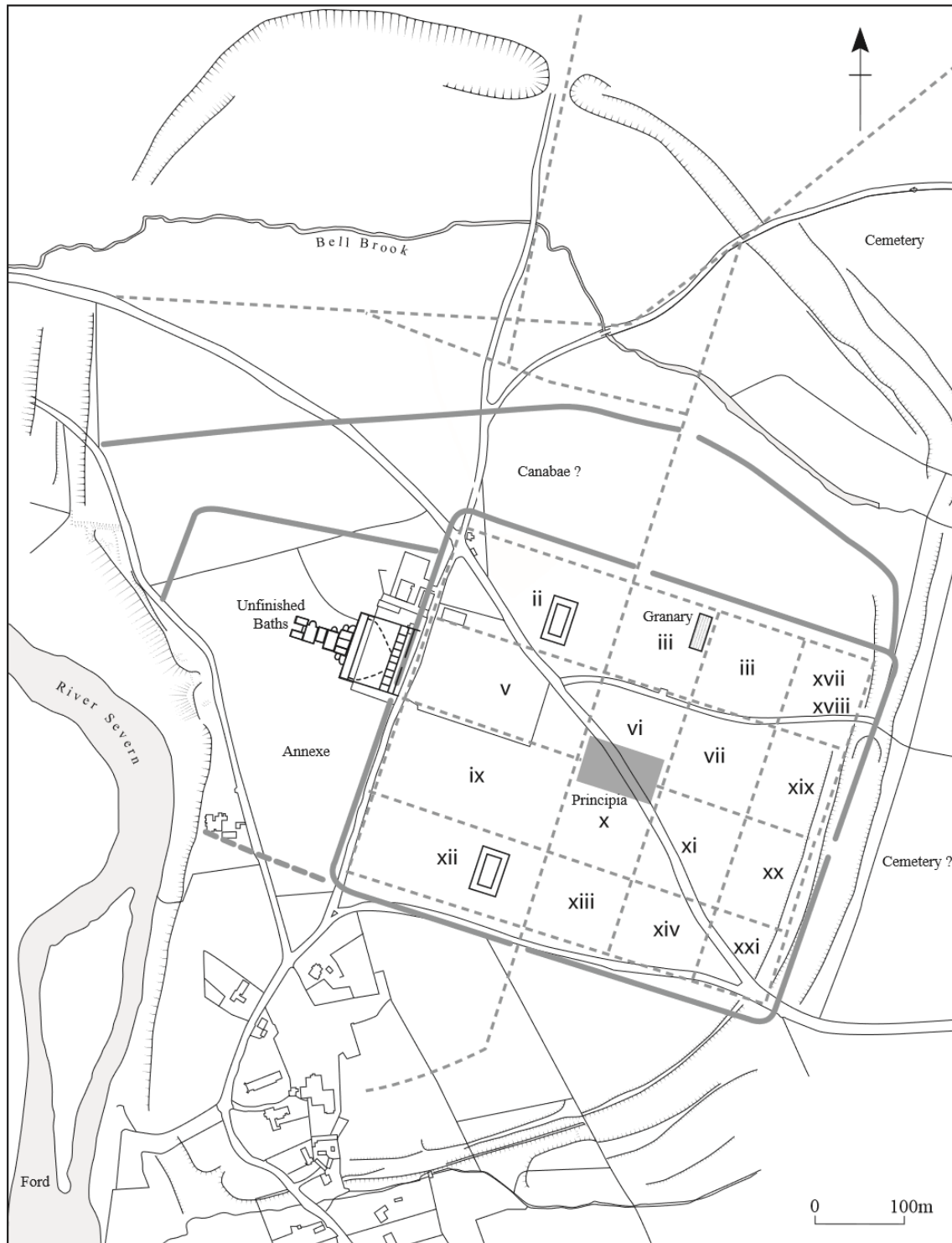
Figure 4. *Wroxeter: plan of the fortress showing known features, its relationship to environment and later town (shown by outline).*

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communication across the Severn valley.[242] These sites were intensively garrisoned simultaneously from *c*. 80 C.E. until they were abandoned in the early or mid-2nd century. Wroxeter thus stood as a pivotal site within the Chester command system towards the late-1st century.
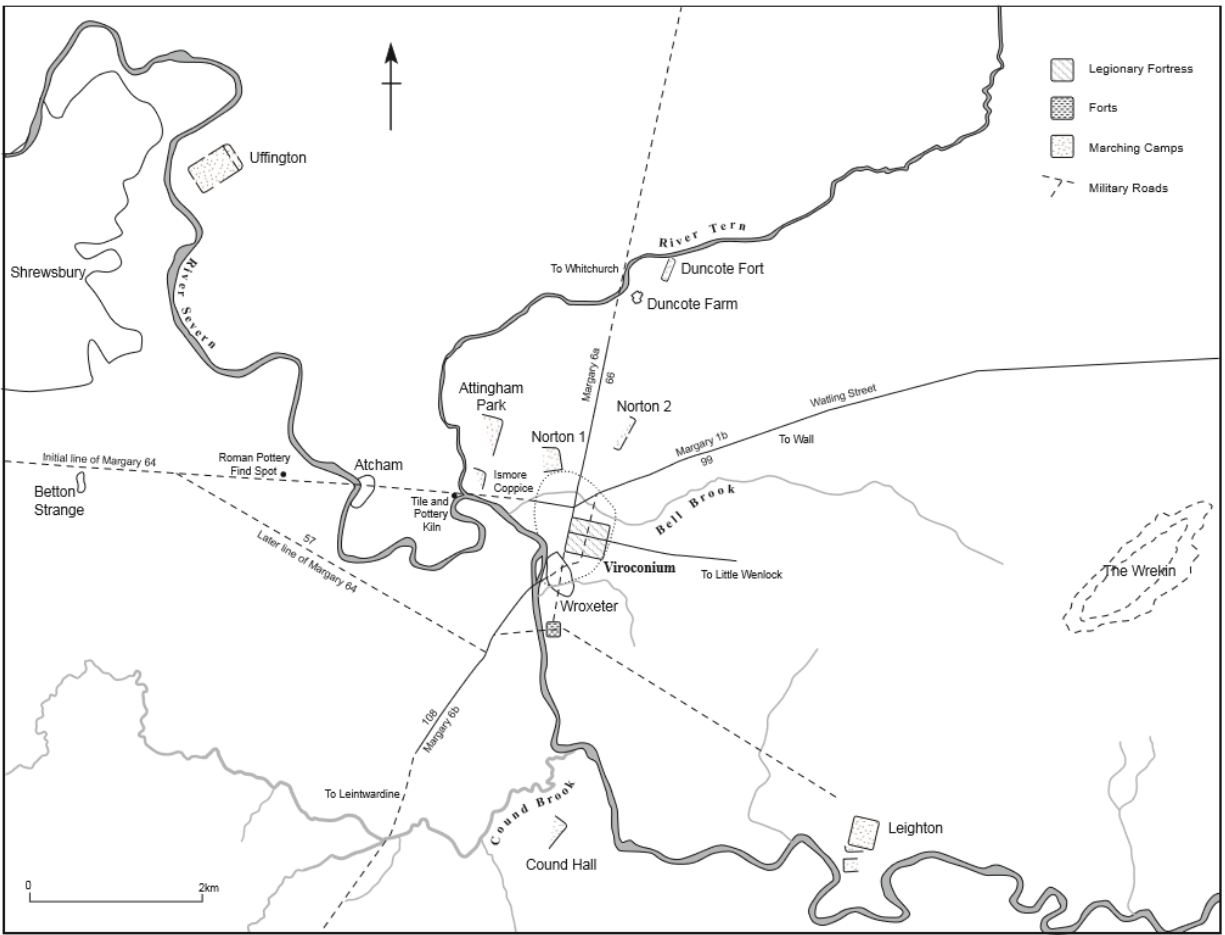
Figure 5. *Wroxeter: The location of the fortress; its satellite forts are shown strategically placed in the Severn valley.*

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[242] Burnham & Davies 2010: 46; Davies 2010: 224; Jones 2010a: 228.

Forden Gaer

Forden Gaer was multifunctional in the Chester command system. It was established as the first major auxiliary fort west of Wroxeter, but the site gradually developed into an intermediate station on the road from Wroxeter to Caersws II. This fort had not only occupied a position near a ford over the River Severn, but its garrison would have been able to lend effective military aid to its neighbours in distress in either direction. As Wroxeter ceased to operate as a military base, it is likely that a reliable defensive partnership continued with the fort of Caersws II.

Forden Gaer displays some unique features among the forts of thesis. The modern town of Forden lies near the B4388 road which connects the towns of Welshpool to Montgomery, 7km south of Welshpool. The site occupies a slight rise above the east bank of the river Severn less than 2km south and this is next to the Camlad tributary.[243] The only significant excavations were undertaken from August 1926 until 1929 by F. N. and T. D. Pryce, whose work remains foundational to modern scholarship.[244] Although the site has the three distinct phases of activity common among other Roman forts in Wales, the physical remains demonstrate a marked difference since the defences were perpetually made of earth and timber.[245] This is remarkable because Roman forts were often rebuilt in stone during the reign of Trajan as the army became increasingly sedentary.[246] Only parts of the internal structures here were ever built in this way. For example, a single block of dressed sandstone suggest that this material was used at some point, and this is supported by the stone foundations for two of the four barrack blocks in the southwest corner.[247] Its timber defences resemble the style commonly employed elsewhere until the late-1st century when they were replaced with stone.

Although the results of the initial excavation of the site supported a foundation date of 80 C.E., examination of the ceramics led to the conclusion that the pottery was "earlier than anything found elsewhere in mid-Wales, at Caersws or Brecon", which supports the comparatively recent suggestion that Forden Gaer and Caersws I (Llwyn y Brain) are among the

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[243] CPAT – Montgomeryshire 2010: 244.
[244] Fox. *BBCS* 4, 3 (1927): 97. Cf. Jones 2010a: 243.
[245] Casey, 1969: 85. See Fig. 6 below on p. 41.
[246] Fox *BBCS* 4, 1 (1927): 97.
[247] Casey 1969: 85.

earliest forts in the region that represent the transition from a mobile force to a stationary army of occupation with the conquest of Wales in 79 C.E.[248] Nonetheless, it is difficult to assign a pre-Flavian origin to either site in the absence of numismatic evidence; thus it would be safer to propose a very early Flavian date to both.[249]

The ramparts measure 186m by 167m enclosing an area of nearly 3.11 ha (7.6 acres) and consisted of a clay-and-turf rampart 10.6m thick built on a gravel foundation and reinforced by wooden corner towers. The enclosure itself was large enough for an *ala quingenaria* (480 infantry and 128 cavalry), but it is equally likely that the fort was built to support a detachment of legionaries (*vexillationes*), yet no epigraphic proof of any military unit has been recovered.[250]

Figure 6. *Forden Gaer: the fort from the south showing cropmarks of the ditch system, the internal street network and the road leading south to the crossing of the River Severn.*

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[248] Fox *BBCS* 4, 1 (1927): 97; *BBCS* 4, 3 (1928): 278; Burnham & Davies 2010: 44.
[249] Davies 2010: 226. I am treating Forden Gaer like Caersws I because of their association.
[250] Casey 1969: 85.

Archaeological evidence suggests that its initial period of occupation did not last long. The fort shows signs of intensive occupation down to the end of the 1st century. Excavation of the western rampart was found to be in excellent condition and consisted of layers of clay with an intervening stratum of gravel, which itself was lying above an artificial bed of gravel. The Flavian stratum, however, was very thin which suggested to the team that the initial occupation was brief.[251] This conclusion is reinforced by the defences which appear to have been burnt *c*. 100-120 C.E., although the final stratum suggested that the fort hosted an intense reoccupation during the Antonine-Severan period with the rampart strengthened and eventually enlarged sometime in the 3rd century.[252] For the purposes of this examination it is reasonable to suggest that the fort was actively garrisoned throughout the Flavian period and the early years of Trajan's reign.

The site was almost certainly chosen for its proximity to a ford over the River Severn. Placed within the floodplain measures were taken to prevent the fort from becoming submerged. A berm was observed outside the south rampart and southwestern corner, along with a circumvallate ditch system. The final and most striking feature is a high-saddled bank of clay on the east and south sides of the fort which continued part of the way down the western side doubtlessly intended to protect the interior from Severn floods.[253] Against this conclusion Simpson suggested the feature was evidence of an earlier fort on the site, which is not convincing for building a complete fort within the same area would be an odd strategy. Instead, the discontinuity of the clay bank and its orientation in the direction of the flow of the Severn further suggests that it was intended as a dyke to halt the water.[254] This position was tactically important for surveillance concerns, for supplying the garrison with a source of fresh water and for providing access to a ford.[255]

The location of the fort seems to contradict Roman strategic practice. The site was observed via aerial reconnaissance in the dry summers of 1975-1976 Frere and St Joseph noticed that the site was certainly positioned close to a ford across the river at Rhydwhyman, despite several other crossing points. The fort is susceptible to floods, as proved between the years 1945

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[251] Pryce *BBCS* 5, 1 (1929): 90. Cf. Nash-Williams 1954: 52.
[252] Fox *BBCS* 4, 1 (1927): 97.
[253] Fox *BBCS* 4, 1 (1927): 97-98; Casey 1969: 85-86. See Fig. 5 for an image of the environment of the fort.
[254] Casey 1969: 85.
[255] See Veg. *Epit*. 3. 8.

and 1980. The fort itself was placed in the shadow of a ridge 91m high located 600 m north –
perfect for surveillance over the landscape, especially when looking northwards down the
Severn. The value of such a position would be challenging to match elsewhere, and these
features would have been advantageous during routine patrol and policing duties by
auxiliaries.[256] In addition, the fort's earthworks form an impressive platform designed to prevent
the interior from flooding, while the berm created in between the fort and the river acts to deter
any encroaching water.[257] Therefore, two distinct measures were taken to keep the fort
hospitable, and if Forden Gaer was originally designed for a cavalry cohort then access to a
convenient water supply was all the more a necessity.

At the time of its foundation Forden Gaer stood as an important Roman military base
nearest Wroxeter. The fort, probably identifiable as the *Lavobrinta* of the *Ravenna
Cosmography*, was set on the line of the road 43km west of Wroxeter.[258] Suh a distance was
tactically problematic since that it was double the average interval between stations in south and
mid-Wales.[259] The problems caused by this great distance were soon remedied when, c. 75 C.E.,
Caersws II was founded only 27km further west on the same road.[260] Later, when under Agricola
the Roman army entered a period of consolidation, the fortress of Wroxeter ultimately lost its
status as a legionary base and was subsequently abandoned presumably late in the reign of
Domitian. Such a development illustrates the way in which the Roman army became increasingly
dependent on auxiliary garrisons to maintain and survey recently conquered territory. Therefore,
Forden Gaer was probably established to ensure reliable cooperation among military cohorts
stationed in the Severn valley.

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[256] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 8. Legionaries were often out on campaign and not responsible for these duties.
[257] Frere & St Joseph 1983: 103-104.
[258] *RC* 106.40 (80). See Rivet & Smith 1979: 207 and Jones 2010b: 244.
[259] Nash-Williams 1954: 110, n. 3.
[260] Jones 2010a: 227.

Caersws II

The village of Caersws has two Roman military sites: Caersws I and Caersws II both built on the road that ran west from Wroxeter and eventually to Pennal. Though the exact chronology of these Roman forts is unknown, save for the legionary fortress, the archaeological evidence suggests Caersws II slightly post-dated its neighbour at Forden Gaer. Therefore, it seems a fortified line of communication was gradually constructed across the Severn valley in the late-1st century.

The area that is now the county of Montgomeryshire was explored by the Romans in the early Flavian period. The pottery recovered from Caersws I (Llwyn y Brain) suggests this site may have been established around this time.[261] Jones, however, argued that the site is most easily interpreted as pre-Flavian in date.[262] Davies proved to be more reserved with his conclusions. Field surveys have only produced a small amount of pottery, including material from southern Gaul and a jar of Severn valley ware. Davies supports the notion that Caersws I was the precursor to its supposed successor, but he cautions that the interval between the dates they were founded is mere speculation, but a very early Flavian date is possible.[263] The foundation of Caersws I thus coincides with the military phase of Wroxeter which suggests that Roman interests were growing in Central Wales when Petilius Cerialis was appointed as governor of Britain.[264] It is a reasonable assumption that the forts of Caersws signal the physical path through which the Romans penetrated the interior of Wales.

Caersws II probably took over from its predecessor strategically placed 1km downstream on the bank of the Severn. Its rectangular remains are marked by Pendre Farm located on the floodplain near the confluence of the Severn and its tributary the river Carno which forms the southern boundary of the modern town.[265] The site's importance is emphasised by its size, which makes it one of the largest Roman forts in Wales, along with Brecon Gaer in the south and its

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[261] See Jones 1969: 66. Cf. Davies 2010: 226.
[262] Hopewell 2005: 253.
[263] Davies 2010: 226.
[264] Tac. *Agr* 17.
[265] Jones 1969: 66. Cf. Jones 2010a: 228.

neighbour to the east at Forden Gaer. The walls measure 188m by 177m and enclose an area of 3.2 ha (8 acres).[266]

This site has been surveyed since the mid-19th century, but modern infrastructure now limits access to the fort, and the A470 road separates the entire northeast corner from the fort; and the bathhouse covering the southwest corner defences that was discovered in 1854 has been bisected by the Newtown-Machynlleth railway and covers the southwestern corner defences.[267] The fort defences and internal structures indicate an early Flavian date.

The fort was among the earliest permanent military posts established in the northern Welsh midlands. Excavations in 1966-1967 by Daniels, Jones, and Putnam, began with a trench across the northwest corner of the fort.[268] In addition to the discovery of various internal structures a series of defensive features were recovered that were all built at the same time. A berm outside the northwest corner was identified as a barricade to deter the floods that would pour in from the River Carno.[269] This feature seems practical but the risk of floods was also contrary to Roman strategic practice.[270] A triple-ditch system was found behind the berm that completely encircles the perimeter of the fort. Jones described the outermost ditch as Punic in style but later altered to a V-shape, the middle ditch is V-shaped with one re-cutting, and the innermost ditch 5m wide with evidence of at least eight re-cuttings.[271] The berm itself is 1.8m wide and is located between the large rampart which sealed the original ditch.[272] The earliest defences were comprised of a laminated clay rampart faced with turf, about 8.8m wide, based on a corduroy of logs and fronted by at least a single internal ditch 4.1m wide; the upper portion of the rampart was deliberately slighted and the ditch partially infilled.[273] The rampart was deliberately slighted and the ditch partially infilled while the innermost ditch was 5m wide with

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[266] Jones 2010a: 228.
[267] Jones 2010a: 227-228; Jones 1969: 66. See Fig. 7 below on p. 46.
[268] Jones 2010a: 227; Jones 1969: 69.
[269] Jones 1969: 69. Such an innovation was also installed at Forden Gaer.
[270] Veg. *Epit*. 3. 8.
[271] A 'Punic-style' ditch deceived an assailant through the impression that the gap could be crossed. Although, by leaping into such a ditch one would realise the inner ridge was lower and the ditch-face now at one's back was sheer, thus attackers became trapped within the trough.
[272] Jones 1969: 67. The widths of the outer and middle ditches were not provided.
[273] Jones 2010a: 228.

evidence of at least eight re-cuttings.[274] The berm itself is 1.8m wide and is located between the large rampart which sealed the original ditch.[275]

Figure 7. *Caersws II. An aerial view of the remains of the fort enclosure. The modern road and railway are clearly seen cutting directly through the defences.*

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The composition of the original garrison of the fort is uncertain. The area of Caersws II suggests it was designed to host an *ala quingenaria* (512 cavalry), and few epigraphical finds provide some sparse suggestion of other elements.[276] Three tiles were stamped with the abbreviations, C. I. F./S. P. P., C. I. C. F., and C. I. F, and Davies suggested the first may represent the complete name of the governor C. Julius Frontinus who was in office while Vespasian was emperor.[277] The fort may have been built during Frontinus' campaigns in

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[274] Jones 2010a: 338. A 'Punic-style' ditch deceived an assailant through the impression that the gap could be crossed. Although, by leaping into such a ditch one would realise the inner ridge was lower and the ditch-face now at one's back was sheer, thus attackers became trapped within the trough.

[275] Jones 1969: 67. The widths of the outer and middle ditches were not provided.

[276] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 16; Jones 2010a: 229.

[277] Jones 2010a: 229. These tiles were found within the fort and the bathhouse; Davies *AC* 3 (1857): 160.

Ordovician territory.[278] The other tiles indicate the presence of at least one of two auxiliary units that perhaps occupied the fort; *Cohors I Celtiberorum* whose name is attested in British *diplomata* for the years 105, 122, and 146 C.E. is a favoured choice among scholars today.[279] This cohort was a 'composite' unit of 500 members defined as a *cohors quingenaria equitata*, and the cohort may have occupied the site in the early 2nd century when there is an implicit change in number of troops present.[280] The fort was large enough to hold an *ala quingenaria* until a likely change in strength occurred in the 3rd century when the size of the fort was reduced to a size suitable for a quingenary cohort.[281] Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to suspect that the fort was designed for a composite quingenary cohort.

Caersws II occupied a nodal site within the Chester command system. The site was once the suspected location of the *Mediolanum* listed in the *Ravenna Cosmography*, but this has since been discredited.[282] Its location was advantageous for communication. The site of the fort was protected by surrounding hills on all sides and a collection of four streams, the River Severn, the Carno, the Cerist, and the Taranon.[283] The fortress at Wroxeter enjoyed the security of similar natural defences and it is likely that the Roman surveyors intended to exploit the proximity of these waterways, especially the confluence of the Carno and the Severn, for both security and maritime transportation to the west. More importantly, the fort supports a total of no fewer than five roads which were certainly designed to streamline communication for members of the local Roman administration.[284]

Despite issues in the chronology of Forden Gaer and Caersws II, their foundation along the same road suggests that a line of communication was gradually developed across mid-Wales. Forden Gaer was deliberately placed in the Severn valley to permit members of the imperial governing body to traverse the landscape with ease. This was a significant addition to the infrastructure of the Chester command system since once the legionary status of Wroxeter

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[278] Tac. *Agr*. 18.
[279] Jones 2010a: 229; Jarrett 1969: 16-17. For the alternative, See Nash-Williams 1954: 53, 107-108.
[280] Nash-Williams 1954: 107; Jones 1969: 69-70.
[281] Jarrett 1969: 17.
[282] Jones 2010a: 228. Cf. Davies *AC* 3 (1857): 168-171; Nash Williams 1954: 52. Cf. Rivet & Smith 1979: 415-416.
[283] Davies *AC* 3 (1857): 151; Nash-Williams (1954): 52.
[284] See Fig. 2 = Map 2.

diminished, the existing auxiliary forts maintained a reliable system of defence and communication.

On the other hand, the various other roads leading from Caersws II emphasise its capacity to enable travel across the northern landscape. For example, the northern interior was accessed through two other roads. Since the mid-19th century the course of RR643 was suspected to have progressed to Machynlleth and Pennal. Its course has been generally accepted in modern scholarship but based on slim evidence, and thus it remains a proposed road rather than one known with certainty.[285] The same function was probably achieved by the existing road to Pennal, an alternative that provided a more useful route into the north and still accounts for some of the best-preserved lengths of Roman roads in Wales. After disappearing as a result of various natural conditions, the conclusion of RR642 is discernible at Gyrn immediately before the road descends to the fort at Caer Gai in the Dee valley.[286] The road was used for transportation through the centre of northern Wales in the late 1st century.

RR642 is probably continued by RR66a, which is thought to run northwest through the fort at Llanfor through the Ffrith directly to the legionary fortress at Chester, but since nothing survives beyond the first half-kilometre stretch, it is only a conjecture that the road ultimately ran from Pennal to Chester.[287] The significance of Caersws II is realised through its proposed connection to the legionary fortress in the northeast. The Roman road that runs directly through the landscape (RR642) would have enabled efficient transportation through the interior as the hypotenuse of the Roman communication system in North Wales. Its course would have certainly reduced the effort to relay messages down the southern route by Wroxeter including the coastal road that passes through Caerhun and Caernarfon. The ways in which Caersws II was inextricably bound to the Chester command system ought to account for the impressive duration of its use into the late-3rd or early-4th centuries.[288]

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[285] Davies *AC* 3 (1857): 169; Margary 1963: 346; Evans, *et al*. 2010: 94, 327.
[286] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 327.
[287] Evans, *et al*. 2010: 94, 321, 331. Margary 1963: 346-347. Neither of these proposed routes have produced signs of Roman engineering. Cf. Bowen & Gresham 1967:252-253; Jones 1959: 211-212; RCAHMW 1921: 93-94; St Joseph 1961: 129-130.
[288] Jones 2010: 228.

Pennal

The Roman fort at Pennal (Cefn Caer), probably built to allow seaborne provisions to enter from the west coast, is situated on the north bank of the confluence of the River Dyfi. The site stood as the western outpost of the fortified belt along RR64 initiated by Wroxeter on the eastern border of the region. There are also signs of two other Roman roads that ran north-south along the coast: certainly, the RR69b ran north to the fort at Tomen y Mur, and it is inferred that the course of RR69c probably reached the fort at Llanio further south. The fort itself enabled streamlined transportation for Roman troops north along the coast of Wales and helped to create a defensive line across the northern midlands.

The siting of the Roman fort at Pennal was strategically beneficial. The name of the Welsh town Cefn Caer – interpreted as 'camp upon the ridge' – has aptly lent itself to the site since the fort sat perched upon a low spur 15m above the high-water mark in the tidal reach of the river roughly 450m northeast of the marshy floodplain of the river Dyfi.[289] Commanding a view of the highest tidal point of the river and its first favourable crossing point beyond the confluence at Cardigan Bay, the position must have given the site special importance.[290] Although minimal physical evidence survives of the defences, its proximity to the ford, like the fortress at Wroxeter and its counterpart of Forden Gaer, emphasised the necessity for the Romans to tighten control over preferred land routes. The site was also established as a port to accept supplies brought in by boat.[291]

Maurice Jones, rector of Dolgellau, enclosed a detailed account of the area in a letter to Edward Lhuyd in 1693. He observed a path of 200 yards (183m) from the fort to the bank of the river, 10 to 12 yards (9.14 to 10.97m) wide and strengthened with stones on a straight course through the marsh ground and meadow.[292] If this was a Roman pathway it perhaps led to a platform to receive seaborne provisions.[293] Similar to the port facilities near Chester, the garrison at Pennal would have had direct access to its docks, but unlike Chester no evidence of a port has been discovered near the site nor of any inscription that suggests seafarers accessed the interior

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[289] Margary 1967: 314; Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 189-190. Cf. Hopewell 2010: 272; Gresham 1969: 104. The name of the river is alternatively given as Dovey.
[290] Hopewell 2010: 272; RCAHMW 1921: 19.
[291] Hopewell 2010: 272. Cf. RCAHMW 1921: 158.
[292] Bodleian Library, Ms. Ashmole, 1815, fo. 265. See, Hopewell 2010: 272, 275; RCAHMW 1921: 157-158.
[293] This metalled pathway has not been identified hitherto. See, Hopewell 2010: 272; RCAHMW 1921: 157.

via the Dyfi. Once again probability must be employed to posit the physical relationship between the fort and the river.

The outline of the earthworks remains upon the ridge. The farmhouse of Cefn Caer takes up the west corner of the fort, and a minor road leading west from Pennal bisects the north corner. Although the site has unfortunately been significantly denuded by agriculture and stone-robbing, the complexity of the site was revealed through a trial excavation of the *vicus* outside the northeast rampart and three geophysical surveys conducted on the fort and its environment by the Gwynedd Archaeolgical Trust between 2001 and 2006.[294]

The results suggest that the site was the location of two successive Roman forts. The original larger fort itself measures 163m by 161m, covering an area of 2.6ha (6.4 acres), its rampart likely made of earth and timber enclosed by two or three ditches.[295] Dating the foundation of the fort accurately is difficult, however. The only datable evidence is an early 3rd century stamped tile of *Legio II Augusta* (*c.* 212-222 C.E.) and two Central Gaulish lead-glazed bottles and a mortarium fragment that are dated both pre- and early-Flavian.[296] Although the evidence is best interpreted as a product of the campaigns led by Frontinus, the pre-Flavian date cannot be totally discarded. Later ceramic material suggest activity in the *vicus* beginning around 80 C.E., is presumably unrelated to the earlier phases of occupation, but suggests a peak of activity here at times when elsewhere most of the forts in Wales were abandoned or reduced.[297] At a local level it fits into a general trend of later occupation among Caersws II and Forden Gaer.[298]

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[294] Hopewell 2010: 272. Cf. Bosaquet 1921: 158. The fort environ is shown in Fig. 8 on p. 51 below.
[295] Hopewell 2010: 272-273.
[296] Hopewell 2005: 228. This evidence was recovered from the bank of the farm lane by the owner Mr. E. Rowlands and analysed by R. Brewer of the National Museum of Wales.
[297] Hopewell 2005: 228.
[298] Hopewell 2005: 267.

Figure 8. *Pennal. An aerial view of the fort, its northwestern corner defined by the farmhouse, looking south to the confluence of the River Dyfi.*

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The second fort is described as a visible earthwork placed at an off-centre position inside the defences of its predecessor. It measures 140m by 129m covering an area of 1.8ha (4.2 acres) surrounded by a single ditch.[299] The area between the defences of the two forts were kept clear of any buildings save for the southwest side, which suggest that some of the earlier defences proved to be useful for the duration of its use.[300]

The second fort was intended to be permanent suggested by the stone defences it received likely after the turn of the century. Gelligaer II in Glamorgan had been the first Roman fort to receive stone defences epigraphically attested in 102-103 C.E., so the stone walls of Pennal,

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[299] Hopewell 2010: 273; Gresham 1969: 106.
[300] Hopewell 2010: 273.

possibly early Trajanic, are quite revealing and have been noted for some time.[301] A report from 1693 stated the defences were 'of Brick, in that they are very common. All the out walls were built of a rough hard stone'.[302] Later in 1804 Fenton suggested these were remnants of a 'very considerable Station, Bricks of every sort occurring everywhere'.[303] Most recent scholarship has stated the stone buildings show signs of intense burning in several areas, perhaps as a result of slighting at some point in time.[304]

The *principium* (headquarters building) measuring 28m by 26m is reasonably well preserved. The entrance on the southwest rampart (*i.e.* adjacent to the farmhouse) leads into a courtyard with a portico on four sides bounded by a cross-hall at the rear. A set of five buildings is clearly visible at the back of the building – the outlines of which are well-defined in the geophysical survey as a column in the centre of the second fort. The details of other buildings are less clear, but one barrack that can also be discerned in the southeast side of the *retentura* (rear section), however, and another is likely beside it. A second pair seem to have stood in the southeast side of the *praetentura* (front section).[305]

It is inferred that the reduction of the site suggests that it was held by a military unit smaller than the first, but it is unclear when this development occurred. The original dimensions of the fort at Pennal indicate that it was suited for an auxiliary unit. Its earth and timber defences measure 163m by 161m enclosing an area of 2.6 (6.4 acres). The second fort was also nearly square measuring 140m by 129m, enclosing 1.8 ha (4 acres), defended by a single ditch.[306] The size of two comparable forts of Caerhun (4.8 acres) and Tomen y Mur I (5 acres) suggest they were large enough to hold a *cohors quingenaria equitata* (480 infantry and 128 cavalry).[307] Geophysical survey revealed six barrack-blocks arranged *per strigas* (same axis as the base) in the fort at Tomen y Mur, but a conclusive interpretation of the troop facilities within the stone

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[301] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 154, 178 suggests 103-111 C.E. I follow Kienast 1996: 123. Cf. *RIB* 397-399. It was suggested by Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 17 that we lack any evidence indicating that the forts excluding Pen Llystyn and (probably) Forden Gaer were reduced in area (and probably garrisoned) before 103 C.E. See below.
[302] Bodleian Library, Ms. Ashmole, 1815, fo. 265; Cf. Bosaquet 1921: 158.
[303] See RCAHMW 1921: 158.
[304] Hopewell 2010: 273. The site may have been intentionally destroyed when it was no longer in use by the latter half of the 2nd century. See below.
[305] Hopewell 2010: 274.
[306] Hopewell 2010: 272-273.
[307] See Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 16, 150-152; Crew & Webster 2010: 282.

enclosure of Caerhun remains to be published.[308] A geophysical survey at Pennal has identified four potential barrack-blocks.[309] The dimensions of the original fort were sufficient to accommodate a cavalry unit despite there being two less barracks than at Tomen y Mur.[310]

The role of the Roman fort at Pennal was integral to the Chester command system. By 80 C.E. the site expanded communications across the midlands and North Wales predominantly through the road system, which included links with Chester via three roads.[311] The most important (RR64) ran east across the midlands to the fortress at Wroxeter. This succession of forts is a strong indication that a continuous line of defence was required to consolidate mid-Wales. When the legionary fortress at Wroxeter fell out of use, the duties of supervising the midlands increasingly fell to the garrisons along this line. The distribution of these forts formed a line across Ordovician territory which presumably extended to Leintwardine. A permeable barrier was perhaps formed by this fortified line of communication, but the avenues by which the indigenes could travel north, or south was limited as each fort had control of the preferred land routes over the River Severn.

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[308] Crew & Webster 2010: 283. The arrangement of the barracks was unaffected between Phase I and II; Hopewell 2010: 218.

[309] Recall that one barrack is clearly seen in the southeast side of the *retentura*, which is likely partnered with another, and two more are thought to occupy the southeast side of the *praetentura*.

[310] On Tomen y Mur see Brew & Webster 2010: 282-286.

[311] Wright & Richmond 1955: 48, no. 199 signals the completion of the legionary fortress by the first half of the year 79 C.E., and no datable evidence found at Pennal was earlier than the year 80 C.E. Therefore, both military bases were operational in North Wales under Agricola by the year 80 C.E. See Fig. 1 = Map 1.

Caernarfon

Caernarfon occupied a nodal position in the Chester command system. As the largest coastal station in the northwest of Wales it supported local defence and communication, and guarded access to an important crossing-point over the Menai Strait to the island of Anglesey, which was a simple course for resources to be transported directly to the Welsh mainland. Through the channel other provisions were probably brought in from the fortress at Chester or southwest England which was perhaps a more efficient method than transporting supplies on land. The abundant resources gathered from Anglesey suggests that it is unlikely the garrisons in the northwest, other than Caernarfon, required additional crops to be imported from eastern sources. Therefore, a partnership centred on defence likely prevailed between this fort, Pen Llystyn and Caerhun in the late-1st century.

The Roman fort at Caernarfon was founded in a strategic area atop a broad rounded hill rising 45.5m above sea-level between the valleys of the River Cadnant to the northeast and the confluence of the River Seiont to the west with the best approach along an eastern route into the valley. The site has a clear view over the western entrance of the Menai Strait, the island of Anglesey to the north, the Snowdonia *massif* southeast, and the Llyn peninsula to the west.

The remains of its rectangular defences, now encompassed by urban settlement, are well preserved with stone foundations of several internal buildings while other elements are overlapped by residential properties. The modern A487 road runs directly through the northwestern and southeastern rampart separating the western rampart from the rest of the enclosure. Despite these encumbrances, the site remains the most intensively studied auxiliary fort in Wales.[312]

The physical evidence suggests a foundation in the reign of Vespasian, given no signs of Roman activity before Nero have been identified.[313] As of 1993, 420 Roman coins were recovered from Caernarfon, eight were found between 1976 and 1979 support a foundation shortly after the conquest of Anglesey in 77 C.E.[314] Of the identifiable coins, three were

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[312] Davies & Casey 2010: 220-221. See Fig. 8 for a good view of the enclosure of the fort.
[313] Casey, Davies & Evans 1993: 10.
[314] Davies & Casey 2010: 220; Tac. *Agr.* 18.

Vespasianic (one corroded, one post 71 and one 75 C.E.), and five Domitianic (85-87 C.E.).[315] Although the numismatic evidence suggests the site was not held for the entire reign of Domitian, the physical remains of the fort does not have evidence of abandonment and the barracks were rebuilt in the Trajanic period.[316] Subsequent coin finds strongly suggest the fort was intensively garrisoned well into the 2nd century while the 382 coins minted throughout the 3rd and 4th centuries, however, implies that it was in the late-Roman period that the site was most actively garrisoned.[317]

The primary defences resembled the typical 'playing card' shape with rounded corners measuring 166m by 137m enclosing an area of 2.27 ha (5.6 acres).[318] Its ramparts were comprised of turf and gravel, revetted by a clay bank 1.5m high. Two external W-shaped ditches (i.e. with a central berm unlike the V-shape) 4.5m apart, each about 3m in depth and up to 5m wide completed with four symmetrically-placed gates.[319] Part of the southeast *porta principalis sinistra* which lies beneath the modern road was uncovered in 1971, followed by the recovery of two posts of an interval tower on the southeast defences in 1975.[320] Post-holes for the frame of the timber-period *porta decumana* (rear gate) were discovered, as well as other post-holes which ought to belong to the *principia* (headquarters) and *praetorium* (commanding officer's house).[321]

The arrangement, number and types of buildings provide the evidence to establish the type of garrison of the fort. The size and number of *contubernia* (soldiers' mess) in one of the Period 5 barracks (at least eight have been identified) suggest that it was designed to accommodate a *centuria* (80-100 men). The presence of infantry is supported by a *graffito* on a sherd of Flavian pottery identifying a Ianuarius *b*(*ucinator*?) (a bugler) in the century of a certain Victor.[322] In the unexplored *retentura* (rear of the fortress) enough space also exists for at least six more barracks and two store-buildings or workshops arranged *per scamna* (right-angle to the fort axis) providing as many as fourteen barracks inside the fort; sufficient facilities to support a

[315] Casey 1993: 133.
[316] Casey, Davies & Evans 1993: 38. For an explanation on the structural periods see, Casey 1993: 81.
[317] Casey 1993: 133-161.
[318] Boon 1969: 60.
[319] Nash-Williams 1954: 30; Boon 1969: 60-61.
[320] Davies & Casey 2010: 220.
[321] Boon 1969: 61; Davies & Casey 2010: 220. The latter were recorded by Wheeler in 1921-1923.
[322] Davies & Casey 2010: 222; Boon 1969: 61. Cf. Milner 1993: 55, n. 6.

cohors milliaria peditata (800 infantry).[323] The size of the garrison was then reduced at the end of the Trajanic period when the excavated barracks were demolished and never restored a reduction also indicated by the decline of coin finds from the Hadrianic and Antonine periods.[324] The barracks themselves were renovated at least three times up to the reign of Hadrian, but each iteration was appropriate for the same unit strength.[325] Caernarfon evidently held a large garrison for an extended period.[326]

Caernarfon was founded to safeguard the route through which resources were imported from Anglesey. Here at the tidal mouth of the Seiont, the Menai Strait is 1.6km wide but partially blocked by sandbanks. Today the Strait can only be forded near Caernarfon when the water level is low, thus the location would have not only provided a sheltered roadstead for the shipment of supplies, but a ferry to transport resources across the Strait.[327] Anglesey although known for its the Romans ensured stations in the region could be readily supplied with foodstuffs.[328] Nevertheless, the heavily-populated garrisons of the Flavian and early-Hadrianic period could not solely depend on locally grown crops, however, a condition which likely applied to north Britain as well. For example grain, probably of a northeastern origin, was transported to Chesterholm (*Vindolanda*) in the early-2nd century, but by the late-3rd or early-4th century supplies of spelt wheat needed to be supplemented by bread wheat possibly from northern Gaul.[329] Since transport by land of bulk food was generally avoided, agricultural production was encouraged on the military land around the forts (the *prata* or *territorium*); the function of mineral resources, is regarded as the granary of northwest Wales; by exerting their control here, Anglesey in this case.[330] Nevertheless, it is possible that Caernarfon required additional provisions from elsewhere in Britain.

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[323] Davies & Casey 2010: 222; Casey, Davies & Evans 1993: 11. However, milliary cohorts were either very rare or did not exist under the Flavians. See, Jarrett 1969: 9.
[324] Casey 2010: 221; Casey, Davies & Evans 1993: 133-134.
[325] Casey, Davies & Evans 1993: 11-12.
[326] Casey, Davies & Evans 1993: 12. The fort enclosure and the modern urban sprawl can be seen in Fig. 7 below on p. 59.
[327] Frere & St Joseph 1983: 3-4.
[328] Casey, Davies & Evans 1993: 1.
[329] Tab. Vindol. II 343; Bidwell & Peake 1994, 249-250; Van der Veen 1992, 154-155.
[330] Groenman-van Waateringe 1995: 263.

Figure 9. *Caernarfon. An aerial view of both the Roman fort (centre) and the Edwardian castle (top right corner) of Caernarfon from the south placed on the banks of the Afon Seiont. The ford can be clearly seen in the centre of the top half of the image.*

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A few fortlets on the island of Anglesey were probably involved in guiding ships to port. For instance, Cemlyn fortlet is 600m southwest of Cemlyn Bay on the north coast of Anglesey. Probably built shortly after Agricola's successful invasion of Anglesey, the earliest datable items are two coins one of Nerva (96-98 C.E.) and the other of Hadrian (117-138 C.E.), which suggest the fortlet and Caernarfon were occupied simultaneously in the late-1st and early-2nd century. A rare good docking site on the north coast, Cemlyn stood on the main shipping route to and from Chester and very likely served as a navigational aid for vessels, simultaneously overseeing the passage of raw materials, such as grain and copper, by sea from the island's north coast. [331]

The tiny fortlet at Mynydd Eilian, 1km inland from the northeast coast, was probably also involved in maritime transport. Its Roman origins are supported by coins of Domitian and Trajan

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[331] Hopewell 2018: 319-320.

and an 'Aesica-type' brooch from the late-1st or early-2nd century. Mynydd Eilian is also only 3km from Parys Mountain, the main copper deposit on the island, the fortlet has been regarded as another point of control for resources on the island like its counterpart at Cemlyn. The presence of such sites indicates how keen the Romans were to occupy the island and exploit its natural resources. Mynydd Eilian with a direct line of sight to the island Ynys Seiriol off the eastern tip of Anglesey at the mouth of the Menai Strait.[332] Evidently a late-1st century system of coastal fortlets was implemented to direct ships to the shore near Caernarfon.

As a nodal point of the defensive quadrilateral Caernarfon enabled communication along the principal roads of northwest Wales. The primary land route (RR67a-c) runs along the northern fringes of Snowdonia from *Deva* (Chester) to *Segontium*, passing *Canovium* (Caerhun) along the way, for a length of roughly 116km.[333] Each of these sites are situated well beyond the average interval required for effective aid to be delivered to one another. While Chester was garrisoned by *Legio XX* after 83 C.E. it took on an administrative role and managed the distribution of supplies. The distance of 79km from Chester to Caerhun suggests it is unlikely that either station depended on the other for military aid.

No intermediate stations have been reported along the road from *Segontium* to *Canovium*.[334] Therefore, the interval of 37km (true distance) between Caernarfon and Caerhun represents the absolute limit of what was considered reasonable for effective military aid.[335] Auxiliary units were expected to patrol land routes to control subdued tribes – here the Deceangli and the Ordovices.[336] The garrison of Caernarfon was probably responsible for surveillance along the coast of Caernarfon Bay and the Menai Strait while the unit of Caerhun would be responsible for patrolling the coast of Conwy Bay. In turn, the short distance of 17km between Caernarfon and Pen Llystyn was certainly manageable for units to provide assistance to each other when needed. Pen Llystyn also occupied a commanding position east of the Llyn Peninsula and west of the Snowdonia *massif*, which signified a brief effort among the Romans to patrol this narrow region inhabited by the Ordovices and the Gangani.

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[332] Hopewell 2018: 320-321.
[333] See Margary 1967: 348-350; Evans, *et al*. 2010: 322; Rivet & Smith 1979: 172.
[334] *It. Ant*. 482.5-6 (Iter XI)
[335] Nash-Williams (2nd ed.) 1969: 145; Burnham & Davies 2010: 46.
[336] Jarrett 1969: 8.

Caerhun

The Roman fort at Caerhun stood as an intermediate station on the route between the fortress at Chester and Caernarfon in the late 1st century.[337] The fort was established on the west bank of the river Conwy near a natural crossing point for RR67. Caerhun also supported direct access to the forts further inland at Bryn y Gefeiliau and Tomen y Mur by RR69a. It was thus an important intersection for land and sea interactions.

The defences of Caerhun are visible as an embanked area measuring 140m by 140m, which encloses 1.97 ha (4.86 acres), with an additional annexe of 0.23 ha (0.57 acres) on the south side.[338] St. Mary's parish church and its graveyard cover the entire northeast quarter of the fort, but the remaining area of the site was excavated by Baillie Reynolds in 1926-1929.[339] The coin deposition included finds struck under the Flavians, Nerva, and Trajan which suggest that the fort was a contemporary of Caernarfon.[340] The primitive defences of the fort consisted of a single outer ditch (with low midrib) 4.9 to 7.3m wide and nearly 3m deep in some areas.[341] These dimensions show that the nature of the fort was not a legionary fortress, but larger than a marching camp and the labour required implies a permanent settlement.[342] Behind a berm 1.7m wide stood a rampart of clay and gravel 7m wide that was probably capped by a timber palisade.[343] The defences were modified at some time in the 2nd century but the size and type of garrison of the fort remains undefined.[344]

Although insufficient evidence has been recovered regarding the initial garrison, the original defences were certainly remodelled at a later date. The renovations are clear as the rampart was cut back and fortified in stone 2.1m thick and supplemented by detached corner towers; the gates rebuilt, and the ditches recut to conform to the enclosure. The placement of these towers suggest that they were built prior to the stone wall, however.[345] The internal

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[337] For the spelling of the name, see Rivet & Smith 1979: 297; *RIB* 2265 a milestone of the fifth year of Hadrian (122 C.E.). See Kienast 1996: 128. *AI* 482.6 (Iter XI); *RC* 106.43.
[338] Hopewell 2010: 217. See Fig. 10 below on p. 61 for an image of the fort enclosure.
[339] Casey 1969: 56; Hopewell 2010: 218.
[340] Casey 1969: 56; Hopewell 2010: 218; Gardner *BBCS* 4, 3 (1928): 276-277.
[341] Nash-Williams 1954: 25; Casey 1969: 56.
[342] Vag. *Epit*. 3. 8. Cf. Milner 1993, n. 9; 1. 24.
[343] Casey 1969: 56.
[344] Hopewell 2010: 218.
[345] Hopewell 2010: 218.

buildings were arranged according to the standard layout, with the *principia* being flanked by the *praetorium* and two *horrea*.[346] Three barracks arranged *per scamna* were located in the southern part of the *praetentura*, and the *retentura* contained two other barracks on the north side and two long buildings on its south, from which the officer's quarters are absent. The two long buildings are now regarded as *hemistrigia* (stables) with paired rooms – the inner (*papilio*) and the outer (*arma*) – which together hold sixteen men.[347] Concrete evidence for the usual internal divisions in the barracks and potential stables has not been documented, but even so Casey proposes that the range of accommodations (five barracks and *hemistrigia*?) indicates the fort was designed for a *cohors quingenaria equitata*.[348] This proposal is reasonable since such a unit of 500 men would require six barracks plus two stables for their mounts and double that amount for a *cohors milliaria*.[349] The current evidence suggests that Caerhun was probably appropriate for an *ala cohors*, although even if the potential for stables was excluded, the discovery of a sixth barrack beneath the parish of St. Mary would firmly suggest that the facilities were suited to at least a *cohors quingenaria peditata* (480 infantry).[350] Since the area of the fort was not reduced when it was reconstructed in stone, it is likely that such a garrison held the fort until it was ultimately abandoned c. 150 C.E.[351]

Caerhun was likely designed as an intermediate naval base between Chester and Caernarfon. At roughly 9km from the coast in the Conwy valley the fort was situated atop a low spur on the tidal limit of the west bank of the River Conwy, a significant position since the river is navigable to this point and the site was accessible to sea-craft bearing up to an estimated 100 tons.[352] Clearly visible on the banks of the Conwy is a dock that was used until the 19th century and that could be of Roman origin.[353] The transportation network in north Wales was certainly not restricted to land routes but only tentative evidence the legionary fortress at Chester exported to Caerhun: a single tile with the stamp of *Legio XX* was documented in a visit to the Roman bathhouse of Caerhun in 1696.[354] Such tiles were produced in the works-depot of Holt just 12km

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[346] Casey 1969: 57; Hopewell 2010: 218.
[347] Hopewell 2010: 218; Burnham & Davies 2010: 86, 334.
[348] Hopewell 2010: 218; Richmond 1955: 305; Breeze & Dobson 1974: 14; Hassall 1983; 116-118; Casey 1969: 57.
[349] Casey, Davies & Evans 1993: 11.
[350] See explanation above on accommodations.
[351] Casey 1969: 58-59; Hopewell 2010: 218-219.
[352] Nash-Williams 1954: 25; Casey 1969: 56; Hopewell 2010: 217. Cf. Veg. *Epit*. 3. 8.
[353] Hopewell 2005: 242.
[354] Hopewell 2010: 217-218. The description of the legionary tile come from the journal of Edward Lhuyd.

south of Chester, but it would have been more practical for products to be shipped along the north coast than carried on land for 80km.

Figure 10. *Caerhun. An aerial view of the fort enclosure and the River Conwy to the north.*

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The garrison of Caerhun also patrolled coastal roads, perhaps utilising the main north-south road between the Welsh highlands and the coast which began at Caernarfon and ran south as RR68a beyond Pen Llystyn as far south as Tomen y Mur.[355] The alternative branch off RR67 that runs south from Caerhun was probably developed later to permit swift access to the forts in the hills of Snowdonia. The exact course of RR69a from Caerhun to Tomen y Mur has yet to be identified.[356]

Knowledge of the siting of Bryn y Gefeiliau and its road access are largely based on supposition, but the evidence supports the following conclusions. The fort at Bryn y Gefeiliau, is located 20km south of Caerhun placed on a bend of the Afon Llugwy, and was founded either on

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[355] Margary 1967: 353; Evans, *et al.* 2010: 322.
[356] Evans, *et al.* 2010: 323.

or near the line of RR69a as an intermediate station shortly before 100 C.E.[357] Its location was selected in order to guard Roman interests in the supposed local mining operations nearby.[358] The road is presumed to continue for another 30km until arriving at Tomen y Mur. This auxiliary fort standing 275m above Ordnance Datum provided broad views across the Vale of Ffestiniog and the rolling hills to the south.[359] Ultimately this fortified line of communications weaved through the mountains of Snowdonia and across the territory of the northern Welsh tribes. The Ordovices, who held *Mediolanum* (Whitchurch), were settled east of these forts, while the territory of the miniscule Gangani presumably included the Llyn Peninsula (*Ganganorum promontorium*).[360] Perhaps by the end of the 1st century the Romans had established a fortified communications network that not only encircled northern Wales but provided streamlined transportation for military personnel between important internal sites.

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[357] Hopewell 2010: 206; Caerns. III: lxxxiii
[358] Caerns. III: lxxxiii; Hopewell 2010: 207-208.
[359] Crew & Webster 2010: 282.
[360] Ptol. *Geog*. 2,3,2. Rivet & Smith 1979: 365-366.

Conclusion

In the Flavian period, the Chester 'command' system was the means by which the Roman administration exercised direct rule over the landscape of North Wales. As an army of occupation all garrison posts were established on or near lines of the Roman road network at regular intervals to maintain a practical system of defence and communication. The administrative scheme of the region also seems to outline the presumed territory of the recently conquered Welsh tribes; to this end the course of the road circuit from Chester to Pennal (RR6a and RR67) is most explicit. While the roads appear to envelope several northern indigenous communities, the territory of the Ordovices was divided given Leintwardine was located south of this line. Therefore, the courses of such roads stood as permeable fortified barriers regularly patrolled by auxiliary cohorts. Several other examples have shown that the success of the imperial administration relied on the strength of its army across a dependable network of communication.

As the sole legionary fortress in the region after the closure of Wroxeter c. 90 C.E., Chester administered its satellite auxiliary garrisons by routes on both land and sea. Its location was immediately valued for control of a supply-base used to provision the expeditionary force to the island of Anglesey led by Suetonius Paulinus in 61 C.E.; a decade later, however, Chester served as a military naval base from which *Legio II Adiutrix* launched its fleet into Scotland under the command of Petilius Cerialis. After the final conquest of the region of Wales, Chester occupied a divisive position that presumably enabled its garrison to prevent any concerted attack from the indigenous tribes. While the fortress operated as a supply-depot rather than a military base towards the end of the 1st century, its authority was maintained by the resident *Legio XX* confirmed by stamped legionary tiles found at Caersws II and the coastal sites of Caerhun and Caernarfon. Such evidence firmly suggests provisions and supplies were exchanged with Chester along the roadways to the midlands, and on ships used to overcome the great distances that separated the sites along the north coast. It is evident that the legionary fortress at Chester stood as the nucleus of Roman governance in North Wales during the late 1st century.

Wroxeter proved to be instrumental in the transmission of Roman rule to the northern region of Wales. The fortress was strategically founded in in the central Severn valley, the value of its position is emphasised by the several marching camps that surround the site. Though the

fortress was most intensively occupied by *Legio XIV* under Claudius, given the results of the numismatic evidence, the most important military phase came under the governorship of Julius Frontinus (74-78 C.E.). At this time the resident garrison of Wroxeter helped to secure the midlands. The subsequent foundation of the fort at Forden Gaer indicates that the imperial administration aspired to create a line of communication stemming from the fortress at Wroxeter. Towards the end of the 1st century, however, the fortress was no longer required to provide a military function as it took on the status of a supply-base and the Severn valley was militarised by auxiliary forts. The legionary fortress at Wroxeter was integral to the conquest and consolidation of North Wales until the site was ultimately abandoned c. 90 C.E.

Forden Gaer was strategically founded west of the fortress of Wroxeter on the banks of the River Severn to not only extend Roman communications across the midlands, but to control access to a useful ford over the river as well. Though the fort was built on the floodplain of the Severn, the creation of a berm used to deter water from the enclosure attests to the permanence and value of the site as a military station. Despite the complete absence of numismatic evidence recovered from Forden Gaer, the analysis of the ceramics led to the conclusion that the site was most likely of an early-Flavian date which coincided with the foundation of Caersws I. Such a foundation date for both forts indicates a growing interest among the Roman army to permanently settle the Welsh midlands. Though Forden Gaer was founded 43km west of Wroxeter – twice the average distance between most other military stations in Wales held simultaneously – the much shorter interval of 27km between the fort and Caersws II suggests reliable communications were maintained in the Severn valley.

Caersws II signals the progressive development of a fortified line of communication spanning the width of the region. The foundation of this site and its predecessor, in conjunction with Forden Gaer, suggest Roman interests peaked in central Wales at an early period under the Flavian dynasty. Its position on the confluence of the Carno and the Severn was optimal for maritime transportation to the west. Moreover, the associated road system not only provided access to the fort at Pennal, but communication presumably extended to Chester along an alternative route through the interior. Such connections ought to account for the duration of its use.

The line of communication across mid-Wales concluded at the fort of Pennal on the bank of the confluence of the river Dyfi. The only relevant examples of datable evidence are two lead-glazed bottles from Central Gaul and a mortarium fragment which have been assigned a pre-Flavian or early Flavian date. Its location suggests it operated as a rare naval station on the west coast of Wales, but physical supporting evidence has yet to be identified. By 80 C.E. the southern extent of the Chester command system was completed by the foundation of this fort.

The Roman fort at Caernarfon was involved in the transportation of provisions along the northwest coast of Wales. The numismatic finds support a foundation shortly after the conquest of Anglesey in 77 C.E. Its primary function was to guard the point at which resources were imported from the island, predominantly crops and minerals. It has been conveyed that the presence of a legionary tile stamp of *Legio XX* strongly suggests the garrison of Chester exported to Caernarfon. The relationship between these two sites is supported by the existence of the contemporary coastal fortlets of Cemlyn Bay and Mynydd Eilian, both installed to direct ships to port near Caernarfon. On the mainland, the proximity of the fort and that of Pen Llystyn suggests both sites relied on the other for military defence. By contrast, though Caernarfon was so distant from Caerhun their garrisons might have cooperated to ensure thorough surveillance of the coast.

Caerhun stood as an intermediate station on the coastal route between the legionary fortress at Chester and Caernarfon. Placed 9km inland at a navigable point on the river Conwy, this fort was accessible to vessels bearing a limit of 100 tons. Its garrison was presumably responsible for maintaining the flow of supplies into North Wales by ship from Chester. This method of transportation was probably implemented to overcome the protracted distance of 80km on land. Furthermore, besides the existing route to Caernarfon, Caerhun permitted transportation to the northern interior. By the end of the 1ˢᵗ century this station was connected to the fort at Bryn y Gefeiliau placed 20km south in a bend of the Afon Llugwy; the fort at Tomen y Mur could also be accessed after an additional 30km. This final station within the Chester command system emphasises the extent to which each fort was interconnected under the Flavian dynasty.

Evidently the Roman administration of North Wales in the late-1ˢᵗ century evolved according to the contemporary political situation. A military foothold was established at strategic sites in the Severn valley as a result of the new forward policy enacted by emperor Vespasian.

Towards the end of his reign the country was completely subdued and thus consolidated. Still, it is difficult to measure the development of the infrastructure of the Chester 'command' system when the evidence of the physical remains exceeds the scope of the historical narrative. While this thesis represents an attempt to contextualise the administrative function of the most important Roman military stations of North Wales, some aspects require further attention. For example, to know the speeds at which the various military units could travel per kilometre on land would enable one to draw more informed conclusions about the practicalities of the communications system. Furthermore, the great distance between Caernarfon and Caerhun is also unusual. I would, therefore, encourage further archaeological research to be conducted near the strategically important Menai Strait in search of perhaps an undiscovered fort.[361] While my work is a revision of the scholarship on select Roman forts in North Wales, I urge the story of other sites to be preserved through continuous field work and in the pages of future academia.

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[361] The potential for an undiscovered fort in this area was proposed by Hopewell 2007: 3, cited by Silvester & Toller 2010: 93.

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