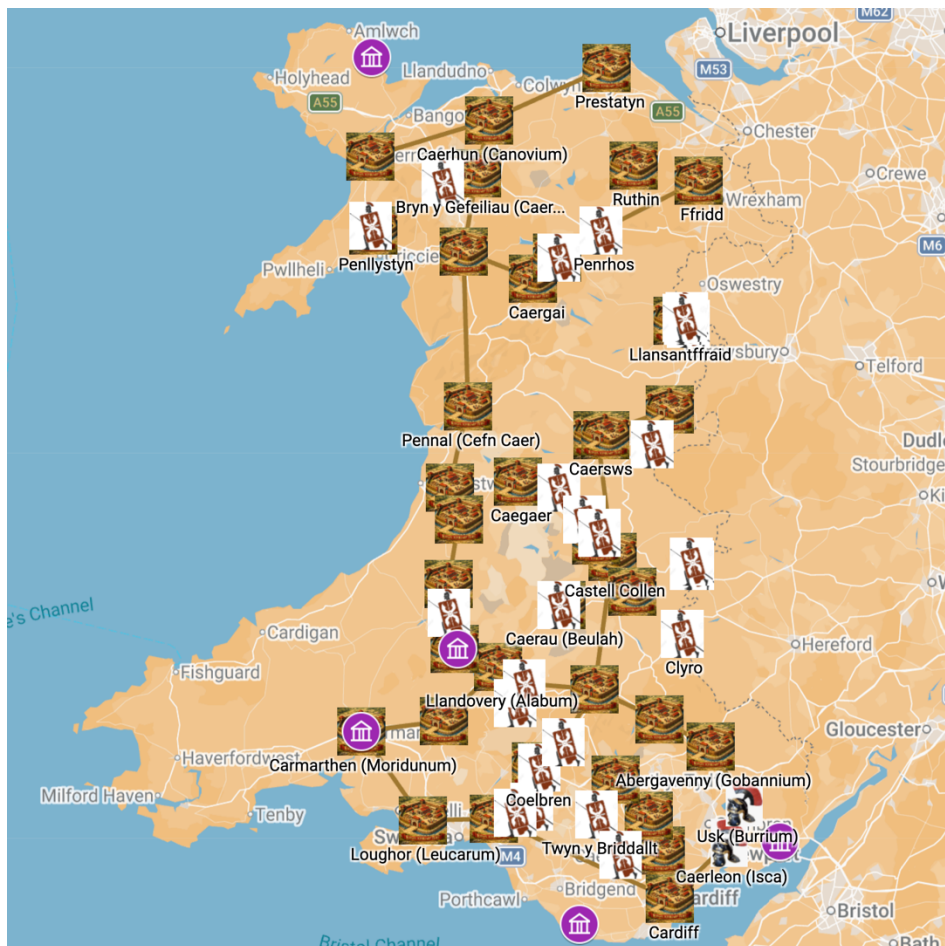


# ROMAN WALES

The Forts, Roads and Settlements of the Occupation, AD 47 to 410

*An interactive map and layered history of the Roman military and civilian landscape of Wales*



Interactive map: [tinyurl.com/ https://tinyurl.com/Roman-Wales-Map](https://tinyurl.com/Roman-Wales-Map)



Graham Tudor Emmanuel, Kidwelly

## About This Map

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This map records the Roman occupation of Wales from the first campaigns against the Silures in AD 47 to the departure of the last regular troops in the early fifth century. Across that time the Roman army built in Wales one of the densest military landscapes anywhere in its empire: two legionary fortresses, a net of auxiliary forts threaded along new roads so that no valley lay more than a day or two's march from a garrison, and in the quieter lowlands towns, villas and mines that carried Roman life on long after the garrisons had gone.

Much of that landscape survives, as standing walls at Caerwent and Caerleon, as green earthworks on the moors, as shadows in the grass visible only from the air, and as roads that have never gone out of use. The map gathers these places together with a location for every site, so that each one can be found, visited where access allows, and understood as part of a single connected system rather than as scattered ruins.

The map is organised in five layers, and this volume follows the same plan, one part for each layer. Layer One holds the legionary fortresses, the anchors of the whole occupation, told through Usk, Caerleon and the shadow of Chester over the border.

Layer Two holds the auxiliary forts, thirty seven garrison stations from the Menai Strait to the Severn Sea, the net that held the country.

Layer Three holds the temporary marching and practice camps, the overnight entrenchments of armies on campaign, most of them discovered from the air.

Layer Four traces the roads as honest corridors from station to station, with Sarn Helen and its legend at their heart.

Layer Five gathers the civilian and industrial landscape, the towns of Caerwent and Carmarthen, the gold of Dolaucothi, the villas of the south east and the native settlements that carried the older way of living through the Roman centuries.

A note on accuracy runs through the whole work. Every site on the map carries an Ordnance Survey grid reference from the published record, and each entry states plainly the precision of its reference and its verification status against Coflein, the national database of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

Road lines are drawn as schematic corridors joining attested stations, not as surveyed alignments, and are described as such on the map itself. Where the evidence allows only a broad date, a broad date is given. Where a site's classification is uncertain, the uncertainty is recorded rather than smoothed away. Traditions, from Arthur's Round Table at Caerleon to Lleu's court at Tomen y Mur, are reported as tradition and never as history, though they are part of the story too, for they show how thoroughly Wales absorbed these places into its own memory.

The occupation of Wales ended not with a battle but with a long quietening, and its true ending belongs to another map. The Conflicts in Wales map, a companion to this one, opens in AD 616 beneath the walls of Chester, at the gates of the fortress where this story closes. Between them the two maps carry the record of Wales at war from the coming of the legions to the end of the Middle Ages.

# Roman Wales: A Timeline

*Four centuries at a glance, from the crossing of the Severn to the silence at Segontium.*

Date	Event
<b>AD 43</b>	Rome invades Britain. The Second Augustan Legion lands under the future emperor Vespasian
<b>AD 47</b>	The legions cross the lower Severn. The war with the Silures begins
<b>AD 48</b>	First Roman campaign in the north east of Wales, against the Deceangli
<b>AD 51</b>	Caratacus fights his final battle and is betrayed to Rome. The Silures fight on without him
<b>c. AD 52</b>	The Silures maul a legion in the field. Rome learns the price of Wales
<b>c. AD 55</b>	A legionary fortress is founded at Usk, Burrium, in the heart of Silurian country
<b>AD 60</b>	Suetonius Paulinus storms Anglesey and destroys the druids' sanctuary, then is recalled by Boudica's rising
<b>AD 74 to 78</b>	Julius Frontinus finally conquers the Silures. The great marching camps stride across the Glamorgan uplands
<b>AD 74/75</b>	The legionary fortresses of Isca at Caerleon and Deva at Chester are founded. Usk is given up
<b>AD 77/78</b>	Agricola destroys the Ordovices and retakes Anglesey. The conquest of Wales is complete
<b>c. AD 90</b>	The amphitheatre is built at Caerleon, seating for a whole legion
<b>c. AD 100</b>	Venta Silurum is founded at Caerwent. The Silures begin governing themselves in Latin. Forts are rebuilt in stone
<b>2nd century</b>	Garrisons thin as the army's weight shifts north to the Wall. Carmarthen becomes Moridunum, town of the Demetae. Villas spread in the south east
<b>Late 3rd century</b>	Sea raiding becomes the new danger. A massive stone fort is built at Cardiff. Caerleon is run down by about AD 300
<b>AD 383</b>	Magnus Maximus, remembered in Wales as Macsen Wledig, bids for the empire and strips the western garrisons
<b>c. AD 400</b>	Segontium at Caernarfon, held longer than any fort in Wales, stands to almost the very end
<b>Early 5th century</b>	The last regular troops leave. By about AD 410 Rome's rule in Britain is over. The roads, towns and names remain
<b>AD 616</b>	The Battle of Chester is fought at the gates of Deva, where the Conflicts in Wales map takes up the story

# ROMAN WALES

## LAYER ONE

The Legionary Fortresses

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*Burrium, Isca and the shadow of Deva*



Graham Tudor Emmanuel, Kidwelly

## **The Anchors of the Occupation**

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A legion was the heaviest instrument the Roman state possessed. At full strength it numbered upwards of five thousand citizen soldiers, and behind the fighting cohorts came the engineers, surveyors, medics, armourers, clerks and craftsmen who made a legion less an army than a movable city. Rome kept about thirty of them for the whole of an empire stretching from Scotland to the Euphrates, and Britain, an awkward and expensive province, held three.

That two of the three came to rest on the borders of Wales says everything about how the Romans judged this country. The Brigantes of the north of England were watched from York. The Silures and the Ordovices, tribes who had fought the empire to a standstill for a generation, required Caerleon and Chester between them, with a web of auxiliary forts strung across every valley from one to the other.

This layer of the map holds the fortresses themselves, the fixed points from which the whole occupation hung, and the story of Roman Wales is at bottom the story of these three places: the fortress that failed, the fortress that endured, and the fortress over the border whose shadow lay across the whole of the north.

## **Burrium: The First Attempt**

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The story begins at Usk. In around AD 55, with the war against the Silures at its most bitter, a legionary fortress of some forty-eight acres was laid out on the low ground where the valley opens, most likely as the base of the Twentieth Legion.

The choice made campaign sense. Burrium sat at the meeting of routes into the hills, at the highest point the river could readily be crossed, in the heart of the enemy's country. It made poor sense in every other way. The site was cramped against the river and prone to flooding, and the army seems to have known it, for within twenty years the decision had been reversed.

When the final conquest of Wales came under the governor Julius Frontinus in the mid 70s, the legion was moved eight miles down the valley to a fresh site, and Burrium was run down to a works depot and stores base, then to a modest civilian settlement on the road north.

The excavations of the 1960s and 70s, which established this sequence, found the great timber granaries of the fortress still legible in the ground, provision for an army that had already decided to be elsewhere.

Almost nothing shows above the fields of Usk today, which is precisely why it belongs on the map. The fortress that failed explains the fortress that succeeded, and every later choice at Caerleon was a correction of a lesson learned at Usk.

## **Isca: The Fortress of the Second Augustan Legion**

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Caerleon is the great survivor. In AD 74 or 75 the Second Augustan Legion, a formation that had landed with the invasion of Britain in AD 43 under the command of the future emperor Vespasian, was brought forward to a rise above the tidal reach of the Usk.

The new fortress took its name, Isca, from the river itself, the same old British word that survives in the Welsh Wysg and the English Usk. It was laid out in the standard playing card plan at around fifty acres, first in earth and timber, then rebuilt in stone from around the turn of the second century, and

within the circuit stood everything a legion required to function at the end of the world: the headquarters building at the crossing of the two main streets, the commander's house, granaries, workshops, a hospital, and row upon row of barracks, each block housing a century of eighty men with the centurion's quarters at its head.

Two monuments outside the walls show what a legion carried with it beyond weapons. The fortress baths, raised within the first years of the foundation, offered heated halls, cold plunges and an open air swimming pool longer than many modern ones, engineering the Silures can scarcely have imagined before it rose among them, and its remains can be visited today under cover in the heart of the village.

Beside the west corner stood the amphitheatre, built around AD 90 with seating for some six thousand, the whole legion at once, and used for weapons training and spectacle alike. It is the most completely excavated Roman amphitheatre in Britain, dug in 1926 and 1927 by Mortimer and Tessa Wheeler in a campaign famously paid for by a national newspaper, drawn to the site by its older name.

For centuries the grassed oval had been known as King Arthur's Round Table, and the Welsh tradition is older still. Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century set Arthur's plenary court at the City of the Legions on the Usk, and the romances of the Mabinogion bring Arthur to Caerllion ar Wysg again and again. Folk memory had kept hold of a Roman truth, that this grass bank had once held thousands of men in ordered ranks, long after the Romans themselves were forgotten.

In the Prysgr Field, along the western angle of the defences, the barrack lines excavated in the late 1920s by V. E. Nash-Williams remain open to the sky, the only Roman legionary barracks visible anywhere in Europe.

A visitor can walk the verandah line where the men of a century cooked, quarrelled and slept, four such blocks side by side, with the ovens and latrines that served them. The legion's grip loosened in the third century as detachments were drawn away to other frontiers and coasts, and by around AD 300 Isca had effectively been given up.

Its stone was quarried for over a thousand years afterwards, some of it, in time, into the walls and castle of the medieval borough, and the name the Welsh gave the place recorded plainly what it had been: Caerllion, the fortress of the legion. The finds of a century of excavation are gathered in the National Roman Legion Museum in the village, which stands, fittingly, inside the old fortress walls.

## **Deva: The Shadow from the North**

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The third presence in this layer stands just over the border and carries no pin, only a note. Deva at Chester, named from the river the Britons called the goddess, was founded in the same great forward movement of the mid 70s, first held by the Second Adiutrix Legion and then, from around AD 87, by the Twentieth Valeria Victrix, the same legion that had once camped at Usk.

Deva was laid out larger than the standard legionary plan, and it has been seriously suggested that it was intended as the base for further ambitions across the Irish Sea that were never pursued.

Its amphitheatre is the largest yet found in Britain. For the purposes of this map, what matters is its reach. Every fort in north Wales, from Caerhun in the Conwy valley to Segontium above the Menai Strait, answered ultimately to Chester, just as the forts of the south answered to Caerleon.

No map of Roman Wales is honest without acknowledging that its northern half was governed from a fortress in England, and the Welsh never ceased to reckon the place part of their story.

They called it simply *Caer*, the fortress, and it was beneath its walls in about the year 616 that the battle was fought which opens the next map in this series, when the king of Northumbria destroyed the men of Powys and the monks of Bangor Is y Coed who had come to pray for them. The Conflicts in Wales map begins, quite literally, at the gates of Deva.

## What This Layer Shows

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Seen on the map, the two Welsh pins of this layer look almost modest, a pair of marks in the southeast corner. Their meaning lies in the layers that follow. Every auxiliary fort in Layer Two was garrisoned, supplied, and commanded from a legionary base, every road in Layer Four ran in the end to a fortress gate, and the towns of Layer Five grew where legionary money was spent.

The fortresses were the fixed points of a system built so that no part of Wales lay more than a few days' march from overwhelming force, and their afterlife proved as long as their service. One became a medieval borough and an Arthurian legend, one became the English city that still bears the plain Welsh name of the fortress, and the third, the one that failed, became a quiet market town that hardly knows what lies beneath it. That is the shape of the occupation, and it begins here.

## Sources

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This account rests on the published record of the fortresses at Usk, Caerleon and Chester, including the excavation reports of the Usk fortress, the Wheeler excavation of the Caerleon amphitheatre and the Nash-Williams excavations in the Prysg Field, together with Cadw's published accounts of the Caerleon monuments in its care and the collections of the National Roman Legion Museum.

The Arthurian associations are reported from Geoffrey of Monmouth and the *Mabinogion* as tradition, not history. Site records are held in Coflein by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, and grid references used on the map remain pending verification against Coflein, as recorded in the project ledger.

# ROMAN WALES

## LAYER TWO

### The Auxiliary Forts

*The net that held a country*



Graham Tudor Emmanuel, Kidwelly

## **The Net That Held a Country**

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If the legionary fortresses were the anchors of the occupation, the auxiliary forts were the net. The auxiliaries were not legionaries but provincial soldiers, infantry cohorts and cavalry wings of nominally five hundred men, sometimes a thousand, recruited from every corner of the empire and posted deliberately far from home, Spaniards, Gauls, Germans and Thracians serving out twenty five years in the Welsh rain for a soldier's pay and the prize that came at the end of it, a bronze diploma of Roman citizenship for the man and his descendants.

Each fort was a legionary fortress in miniature, a playing card enclosure with a headquarters building at its heart, the commander's house beside it, granaries raised on pillars against the damp, barracks in ordered rows, and outside the gates a vicus, the straggling civilian settlement of traders, smiths, innkeepers and soldiers' families that gathered wherever the army's pay chest settled.

Thirty seven such stations appear in this layer, and the pattern they make on the map is the true shape of the conquest. They sit at intervals of roughly a day's march, each commanding a valley mouth, a river crossing or a road junction, so that the whole country lay inside a mesh from which no rising could spread. Most were founded in the great consolidation of the AD 70s under Frontinus and Agricola, held in strength for a generation or two, and then thinned out as the country quietened and the garrisons were drawn north to the Wall. A handful were kept, and one was still manned when the occupation itself came to an end.

## **The South Coast Road**

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The busiest line on the map runs west from Caerleon along the coastal plain. At Cardiff the first fort of the Flavian conquest was succeeded, remarkably, by a last one: in the late third century, when Irish sea raiding had become the new danger, a massive stone fort was built on the old site, its ten foot thick walls belonging to the same coastal defence thinking as the Saxon Shore forts of southern England.

The medieval castle was planted inside it, and in the 1890s the third Marquess of Bute had the Roman circuit rebuilt to full height on its surviving foundations, with a band of red stone laid into the masonry to mark honestly where the ancient work ends and the Victorian begins. Anyone who has walked past Cardiff Castle has walked past a Roman fort without necessarily knowing it.

Beyond it the road ran through Neath, the Nidum of the ancient itineraries, whose stone gateways were found beside a school on the edge of the town, and on to Loughor, Leucarum, at the crossing of the estuary, where the Norman castle mound was later raised directly on the corner of the Roman rampart, one conqueror borrowing another's judgement.

The line ended at Carmarthen, Moridunum, founded in the earliest phase of the conquest and garrisoned into the Severan period, which then made the most complete journey of any site in this layer, laying down its ramparts to become the civitas capital of the Demetae, a fort that turned into a town. Its fuller story belongs to Layer Five.

## **Silurian Country: The Usk and the Uplands**

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The heaviest concentration of forts lies where the fighting had been hardest, in the lands of the Silures. The Usk valley itself was pinned at Abergavenny, the Gobannium of the road books, its remains buried beneath the medieval town, and at Pen y Gaer above the middle river, and the line ran up over the

watershed to the greatest of the inland stations, Y Gaer near Brecon. Cicucium, as the record names it, covered close to eight acres, the largest inland fort in Wales, held from the Neronian period onwards, and for part of its life it housed a cavalry regiment raised among the Vettones of central Spain, horsemen from the Iberian plateau patrolling the upper Usk, one of whose troopers is known from his tombstone found at the site.

The fort was excavated in the 1920s by Mortimer Wheeler, fresh from his work at Segontium and on his way to the Caerleon amphitheatre, so that a single archaeologist's decade ties together three of the principal sites on this map. Parts of the walls and gates of Y Gaer still stand taller than a man in the farmland beside the Usk.

South of the mountains the valleys of Glamorgan carried their own garrisons. Gelligaer, held from the Flavian to the Severan period, was rebuilt in stone in the early second century and was excavated with such care in the first years of the 1900s that it became, and remains, one of the textbook auxiliary forts of Roman Britain, its complete plan recovered building by building, with the practice earthworks of its garrison still traceable on the common above.

Nearby stood Pen y Darren, whose fort came to light beneath the ground that is now, of all things, the football ground of Merthyr Tydfil, a garrison lying under a century of Saturday afternoons, and Caerphilly, where the Roman fort preceded the greatest medieval castle in Wales by a thousand years on almost the same ground. Westward again, Coelbren guarded the head of the mountain road where Sarn Helen comes up out of the Vale of Neath, a bleak and boggy posting held from the Flavian to the Antonine period, its earthworks still plain on the moor beside the marching camp of Layer Three.

## **The West: Gold, Garrisons and the Tywi**

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The western forts follow the Tywi and the roads beyond it, and this is the stretch of the map closest to home. Llandovery, the Alabum of the record, held the junction where the mountain road from Brecon came down off Trecastle Mountain to meet the valley, its fort lying under and around the churchyard of Llanfair ar y Bryn on the edge of the town.

Downstream a fort stood in Dynevor Park at Llandeilo, possibly of Agricolan date, unsuspected until recent times and a reminder of how much of this layer lay unknown within living memory. At Pumsaint the fort of Luentinum had the most particular duty of any garrison in Wales, standing watch over the Dolaucothi gold mines a mile away, the only place in Britain where the Romans are known for certain to have mined gold, the workings and the fort recorded together by Ptolemy the geographer.

North again the road ran to Llanio, the ancient Bremia, where inscribed stones attest a cohort of Asturians from the mountains of northern Spain, then to Trawsgoed in the Ystwyth valley, a fort found from the air in 1959, and on to Penllwyn near the Rheidol, a chain of stations built to hold a west that had scarcely been mapped before the army arrived.

## **The Middle March**

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Mid Wales carried a spine of forts along the upper Wye, the Ithon and the Severn. Castell Collen near Llandrindod Wells was the key to the middle country, a Flavian foundation later reduced in the Antonine period as garrisons everywhere were trimmed, its ramparts still standing green and legible above the Ithon. Its garrison left a signature found nowhere else in Wales: on the common above Llandrindod survive some eighteen small practice camps, soldiers' homework, the corners and

gateways of textbook camps dug over and over on exercise, one of the densest groups of such works anywhere in the Roman Empire.

Around Castell Collen lay the forts at Caerau near Beulah, Colwyn Castle, where a medieval castle later took over the enclosure, and Dolau Gaer, with Caegaer high on the moorland road to the west. On the Severn the fort at Caersws held the junction of five valleys, a position so obviously right that a substantial vicus grew at its gates and the modern village sits directly on top of both, with the large early station at Llwyn y Brain close by its side marking the first campaign's choice before the permanent fort settled the matter. Downstream Forden Gaer, the Levobrinta of the record, watched the Severn where it opens towards the English plain.

Northward the chain reached Llanfor near Bala, where the fort and the great camp of Layer Three lie side by side, and Caergai above Llyn Tegid, a Flavian to Hadrianic post whose name alone, the fort of Cai, carried it into legend as the home of Arthur's foster brother, Cai of the old tales, Sir Kay of the later romances.

## **The North: From the Dee to the Menai**

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The northern forts answered to Chester, and they begin almost at its gates. Ffridd near Wrexham and Llansantffraid in the Tanat valley covered the approaches to the Dee, while Ruthin held the Vale of Clwyd beneath the modern town and Prestatyn stood near the shore at its mouth, where an excavated Roman bath house can still be seen.

From there the coast road ran west to Caerhun, the ancient Canovium, at the tidal crossing of the Conwy, where the parish church of St Mary and its yard sit neatly inside one corner of the fort, many centuries of worship conducted within a Roman rampart. The road climbed on over the mountains by Bryn y Gefeiliau in the Llugwy valley near Capel Curig, a station deep in what is now Eryri. South of the mountains lay Tomen y Mur above Trawsfynydd, the most storied earthwork in this layer.

The fort keeps the small amphitheatre of its garrison, the only one known at an auxiliary fort in Britain, a Norman motte was later planted on its rampart, the tomen that gives the place its name, and Welsh tradition made it Mur Castell, the court of Llew Llaw Gyffes in the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi, where Blodeuwedd was conjured out of flowers. Archaeology and mythology share a single grid reference.

The western coast was held at Penllystyn in the approaches to Llyn and at Pennal on the Dyfi, where the farm called Cefn Caer keeps the fort in its fields, and above the Menai Strait stood the greatest of them all, Segontium at Caernarfon. Founded in the Flavian conquest, excavated by Wheeler in the early 1920s, and listed in the empire's final order of battle with a unit named the Segontienses, it was still garrisoned around AD 400, held for longer than any other fort in Wales.

When the medieval Welsh told the Dream of Maccsen Wledig they set the emperor's bride and her court there, in the fort above the strait, and when Edward the First built his great castle below it he was, knowingly or not, refortifying a Roman judgement. The Romans left, and Wales kept the memory.

## What This Layer Shows

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Read together, the thirty-seven pins of this layer answer the question the legionary fortresses only pose. Two anchors could not hold a country of mountains; a net could. The forts trace every practicable route through Wales, and in doing so they drew the first true map of the country, for the roads that connected them became the roads of every later age. And the sites themselves kept being chosen. A church stands in the corner of Canovium, a Norman motte on the rampart of Tomen y Mur and another on the corner of Leucarum, castles at Cardiff, Caerphilly and Colwyn, a football ground over Pen y Darren, whole towns over Carmarthen, Abergavenny and Ruthin.

A fair share of this layer lies beneath something later that mattered, which is its own quiet lesson. The Romans chose their ground so well that Wales has been choosing the same ground ever since.

## Sources

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This account is drawn from the published gazetteers of Roman military sites in Wales, from *The Roman Frontier in Wales* by V. E. Nash-Williams and its successors, from the published excavation reports including Wheeler's work at Segontium and Y Gaer and the early excavations at Gelligaer, and from Cadw's published accounts of Roman Wales, cross checked against the site records held in Coflein by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

Unit identifications are given only where inscriptions or the published record attest them, statements of occupation date follow the published record in broad period terms, and the traditions attached to Caergai, Tomen y Mur and Segontium are reported from the Mabinogion and the later tales as tradition, not history. Grid references used on the map are four figure and pending verification against Coflein, as recorded in the project ledger.

# ROMAN WALES

## LAYER THREE

### The Marching and Practice Camps

*The footprints of armies on the move*



Graham Tudor Emmanuel, Kidwelly

## The Footprints of Armies

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The forts of Layer Two show where the Roman army chose to stay. This layer shows where it merely passed a night. A Roman column on campaign never slept in the open. At the end of each day's march, however hostile the country and however tired the men, the army dug. Surveyors went ahead to choose and mark the ground, and behind them the column arrived to a plan already pegged out: a ditch cut around a great rectangle, the spoil thrown up into a rampart, and along its crest a palisade built from the sharpened stakes that every soldier carried as part of his load.

The gateways, the weak points of any camp, were guarded by curved extensions of the rampart or by detached lengths of bank thrown up in front of the gap, and these details, still traceable at several Welsh camps, are among the small signatures that prove a bank on a hillside Roman. Inside, the leather tents went up in the same ordered rows as the night before, eight men to a tent, streets and headquarters in their appointed places, so that a soldier could find his way around a camp he had never seen. In the morning the army marched on and the night's work was abandoned to the weather.

Nearly two thousand years later these single nights are still written on the Welsh uplands as low banks in the moor grass, and the manner of their rediscovery is a story in itself. A few were always known, but most of this layer was found from the air, first by the pioneers of aerial archaeology flying over Wales after the Second World War, and steadily since by the Royal Commission's own flying programme, which in dry summers still adds new sites as buried ditches show through ripening crops and parched grass. The drought of 2018 alone revealed sites across Wales that no one had suspected. Twenty nine entries make up this layer, and each records not an occupation but a movement, an army caught mid stride.

A note on reading them. The size of a camp is a rough measure of the force that dug it, since tent rows were laid out to rule. A camp of six acres might hold a single cohort on exercise. A camp of sixty could hold the better part of two legions with their auxiliaries and baggage train. The dates are harder, for a bank of earth carries no coins or pottery to speak of, and most attributions rest on size, alignment and position along known campaign routes. Where the published record ventures a campaign, this account repeats it in the same cautious spirit, and no further.

## The Great Camps of the Frontinus Campaign

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The most dramatic group lies across the uplands of Glamorgan, and it is generally attributed to the final conquest of the Silures by Julius Frontinus between AD 73 and 78. Frontinus was one of the most capable men Rome ever sent to Britain, an engineer and administrator who later wrote the standard Roman works on aqueducts and on military stratagems, and the campaign this group records bears his stamp: not a dash up the valleys but a methodical occupation of the high ground between them, the ridgeways the drovers would use for the next seventeen centuries.

At Blaen-cwm Bach, on the ridge above the Vale of Neath, the banks enclose sixty-two and a half acres, the largest camp in this layer, ground enough for a battle group of many thousands with its train. Its companions stand at Pen y Coedcae above Pontypridd, at thirty-seven and a half acres, and at Twyn y Briddallt above the Rhondda Fach at sixteen. Read together on the map they show a very large army working westward across the heads of the valleys, dividing and camping as it went, the campaign that finally broke the tribe which had resisted Rome for over a generation. Carn Caca, a smaller camp of nearly twelve acres above the same valley, likely belongs to the same theatre of operations. It is worth

standing at any of these places and considering what a Silurian scout would have seen from the opposite ridge: a town of leather appearing on the mountain in an afternoon, gone the next day, and closer.

## **Trecastle Mountain and the Roads West**

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The best known camps in Wales stand on Trecastle Mountain between Brecon and Llandovery, on the very line of the Roman road, at a place the Ordnance Survey maps mark as Y Pigwn. Here two camps lie one inside the other, a first camp of thirty seven and a half acres and a second of twenty five and a half dug later across it on a different alignment, proof that the same commanding ground was chosen twice by armies of different size, perhaps years apart.

The gateways of both show the protective curved banks of the field manuals, and the later Roman road cuts across a corner of the earlier camp, which is its own quiet piece of dating, the single night older than the permanent line. Two Roman milestones were found beside that road on the mountain, and in the Norman age a small castle motte was raised within the camps' northern ground, so that a walker on Y Pigwn today crosses the military judgement of three separate ages without ever leaving the sheep pasture.

Further west along the same route lies Arhosfar Garreg at over forty five acres on the Usk headwaters, and near the fort at Coelbren a camp of thirty four and a half acres shows a major force pausing where the mountain road from the Vale of Neath, the southern Sarn Helen of Layer Four, came up onto the moor. At Ystradfellte a moorland camp of twenty two acres sits on the route between Coelbren and Y Gaer, and at Pant-teg Uchaf near the fort at Llanio the earthworks once counted as a camp are now reclassified as practice works, ground where a garrison rehearsed the digging rather than needed it.

The practice habit shows elsewhere too, most famously on the common above Llandrindod Wells described in Layer Two, and at Dolddinas near Tomen y Mur, garrisons keeping the skill sharp through the long peaceful decades when it was never once required in earnest.

## **The Middle Country and the Border**

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Through mid Wales the camps follow the same corridors as the forts. At Beulah a camp of thirty six and a half acres lies close to the fort at Caerau, and northward across the high ground stand Esgairperfedd in the Elan uplands and St Harmon near the upper Wye, seventeen and nineteen acres of bank and ditch in country that is still among the emptiest in Wales, camps that can never have been comfortable and were never meant to be. Trefal is carried on the map as a possible camp only, its classification uncertain, and it stays on the map for exactly that reason, so that the uncertainty is recorded rather than quietly dropped.

On the Severn side, Glanmiheli holds the Mule valley near the later fort at Forden, and the border itself is crowded. At Clyro on the middle Wye a camp of nearly twenty five acres guards a crossing associated with the hardest early years of the war, when the campaign base at Clyro was one of the army's forward positions against the Silures in the age of Caratacus.

And in the Walton Basin of old Radnorshire the air photographs have revealed a whole cluster: three small camps of five to eight acres lying almost side by side and, close to Hindwell Farm, a giant of nearly forty four acres. The basin is one of the great natural inland routes into Wales, and the Romans were not the first to know it, for the same few fields hold one of the largest Neolithic gathering enclosures in

Britain, built of oak posts three thousand years before the legions came. Armies and assemblies had been using that ground for longer than Rome had existed.

## The North: Camps in the High Passes

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The northern camps trace the campaigns against the Ordovices and the road building that followed. At Llanfor near Bala a camp of nearly twenty nine acres lies beside the ground later chosen for the fort, the reconnaissance and the decision recorded side by side in the same field, and at Penrhos in the Dee valley the banks enclose forty one and a half acres, the largest camp in the north, a full battle group moving on the Bala corridor.

On the Tanat and the upper Vyrnwy a remarkable cluster of five camps, two at Clawdd Coch and three at Abertanat, crowds a few kilometres of valley floor, armies passing the same way often enough to leave the ground scarred five times over, which is what a standard invasion route looks like in earthwork. Deepest of all lies Pen-y-Gwrhyd, a ten acre camp at the meeting of the high passes beneath Yr Wyddfa itself, pitched at the spot where the mountain roads from Llanberis, Nant Gwynant and Capel Curig meet, the same crossroads where, eighteen centuries later, the hotel in the pass became the training base for the team that first climbed Everest. Soldiers have always recognised that ground.

The small camp at Derwydd-bach Farm marks the route on towards Llyn. Anyone who has stood at Pen-y-Gwrhyd in the rain can supply the rest of that story without help.

## What This Layer Shows

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Forts show strategy, camps show events. Each entry in this layer is a specific army on a specific piece of ground, dated to a single night or a few seasons of exercise, and the pattern they make is the conquest itself in motion, columns pushing across the heads of the Glamorgan valleys, along the Trecastle road, through the Walton Basin and into the passes of Eryri. They are also the most fragile sites on the whole map. A fort leaves stone; a camp leaves a shadow in the grass, legible from the air and easily lost to the plough or the forestry, and several in this layer survive only as marks in a photograph. Recording them with a grid reference and a public pin is a small act of protection in itself, which is much of what this map is for.

## Sources

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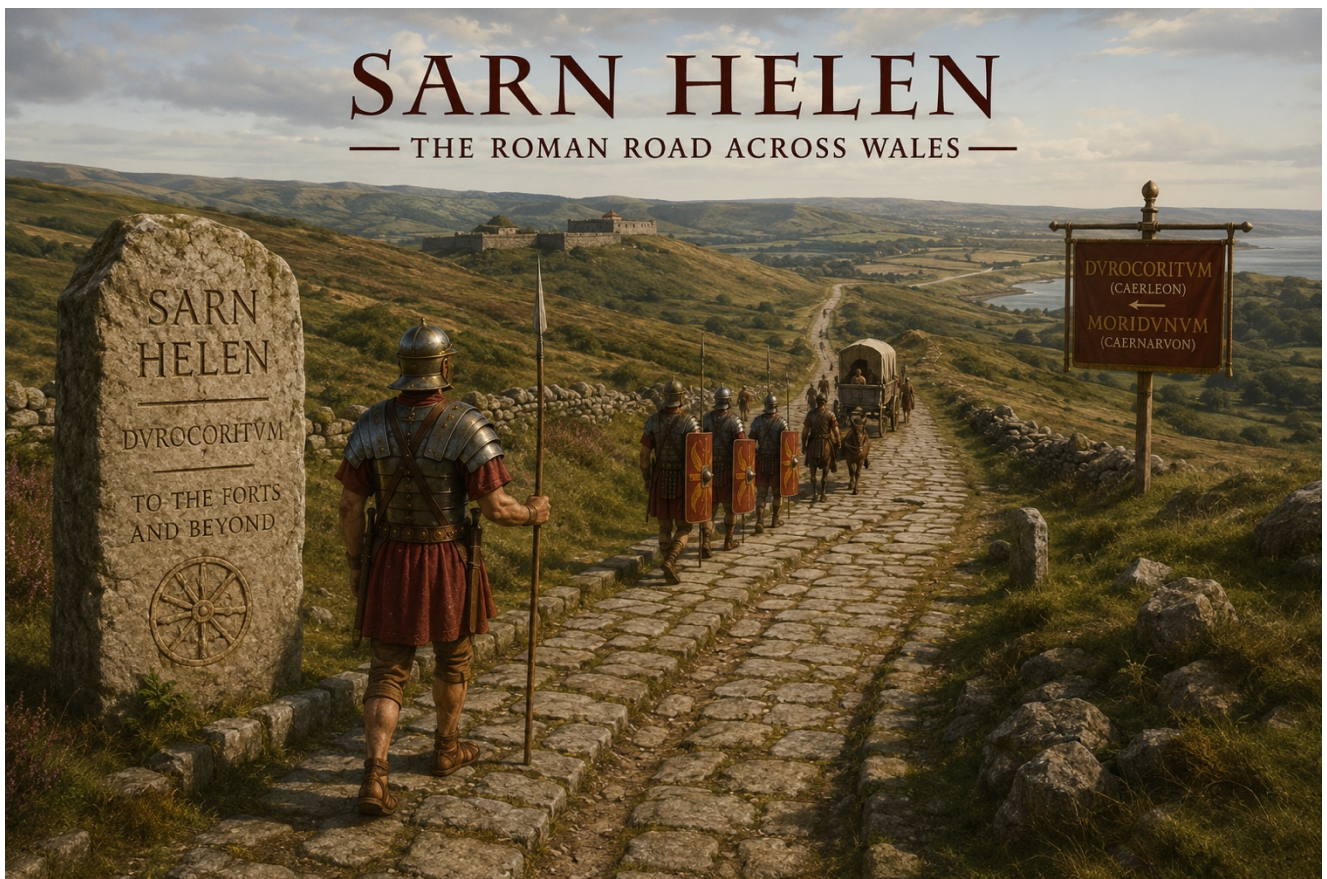
The camp list, dimensions and areas are drawn from the published gazetteer of Roman temporary camps in Wales, which itself rests on *The Roman Frontier in Wales* by V. E. Nash-Williams, the Royal Commission inventories, and the programme of aerial reconnaissance that first revealed most of these sites and continues under the Royal Commission today. The standard modern study is *Roman Camps in Wales and the Marches* by Rebecca H. Jones and Jeffrey L. Davies. Campaign attributions are repeated only where the published record makes them, the Trefal and Pant-teg Uchaf entries carry their uncertain and reclassified status openly, and grid references, mostly at six figures, remain to be verified against Coflein, as recorded in the project ledger.

# ROMAN WALES

## LAYER FOUR

The Roads

*Sarn Helen and the lines that drew the map of Wales*



Graham Tudor Emmanuel, Kidwelly

## How to Read This Layer

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A word of honesty before anything else, because this layer is drawn differently from the other four. Forts and camps are points, and a point with a grid reference is either right or wrong. A road is a line a hundred miles long, and only stretches of any Roman road in Wales have been traced on the ground with certainty. The lines on this layer are therefore corridors, drawn as straight segments from one attested station to the next, showing which places the roads connected without pretending to show every bend of the surveyed alignment.

Each line carries that caution in its own description on the map. The true alignments are being recovered all the time, by fieldwork, by aerial photography and increasingly by lidar, the airborne laser survey that can read the low ridge of a buried causeway through pasture and even through forestry, and as stretches are confirmed in the published studies and in Coflein the corridors will be refined in later editions. It is better to show an honest corridor than a confident fiction.

## Why the Roads Mattered Most

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Of everything the Romans built in Wales, the roads worked hardest and lasted longest. A fort held a valley, but a road held the country together, moving cohorts, orders, pay chests, gold from Dolaucothi and grain from the coastal plain at a steady pace in all weathers, something no army in Britain had ever been able to rely on before.

The engineering was straightforward and ruthless. The surveyors set out long straight alignments from high point to high point, and the soldiers built an agger, a raised causeway of rammed stone and gravel dug from pits alongside, cambered to shed water and ditched on either side, generally wide enough for two carts to pass. Where the mountains forbade the straight line the road climbed in deliberate zigzags and took the gradient head on, for a marching column, unlike a modern lorry, cared more about distance than slope.

Distances were marked by milestones, and Wales has kept a respectable number of them, including the pair found beside the road on Trecastle Mountain and a stone of Hadrian's reign from the north coast road, several of them re-cut and re-dedicated by later emperors, the same stone doing duty for a century of regimes.

The names of the stations along these roads survive because the empire wrote them down: the Antonine Itinerary, the official road book of the third century, is the reason we can still say Nidum, Leucarum, Gobannium and Bremia with any confidence at all. Ten corridors make up this layer, and together they form a rough figure of eight laid over Wales, a southern circuit and a northern one, hung between the fortresses of Caerleon and Chester and crossed in the middle by the north to south spine.

## The Southern Circuit

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The southern circuit begins with the coast road from Caerleon, running west through the fort at Cardiff, Nidum at Neath and Leucarum at Loughor to end at Moridunum, Carmarthen. It is the ancestor of every later road along that shore, and the modern trunk roads to west Wales still shadow its corridor, as anyone driving from Cardiff to Carmarthen effectively retraces a first century decision. Its partner runs inland: up the Usk from Caerleon through Gobannium at Abergavenny and Pen y Gaer to Y Gaer near Brecon, then over Trecastle Mountain to Alabum at Llandovery. This Trecastle stretch is among

the best preserved Roman roads in Wales, still walkable for miles on the open mountain, its agger plain underfoot, passing directly by the Y Pigwn camps of Layer Three and the two milestones found beside the line.

From Llandovery the Tywi valley road returns the traveller to Carmarthen past the fort in Dynevor Park, closing a great loop around the old heartland of the Silures and the Demetae. Two further roads hang from this circuit. The Gold Road runs north west from Llandovery past Luentinum at Pumsaint, where it served the Dolaucothi mines and carried their product away under guard, then on to Bremia at Llanio and the forts of the Ystwyth and Rheidol. And from Neath the most famous name in this layer sets out: Sarn Helen, climbing past Coelbren and the moorland camp at Ystradfellte to Y Gaer, a stretch where the made road can still be walked across the moor.

## **Sarn Helen and the Name of a Road**

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Sarn Helen deserves a section of its own, as much for its name as its stones. Sarn is plain Welsh for a causeway or paved way, and the name Helen's Causeway attaches to several stretches of Roman road running through the western mountains.

Tradition ties it to Elen Luyddog, Helen of the Hosts, the British wife of Maccsen Wledig in the Mabinogion tale *The Dream of Maccsen Wledig*, who asked that roads be built across the country of her people so that soldiers could defend it, and who was remembered afterwards as a saint, with churches dedicated to her along the western routes. Scholars have offered soberer derivations, a corruption of sarn y lleng, the causeway of the legion, or of sarn halen, the salt road, but the tale is the older companion of the road and it remembers exactly what the road was for.

On this map the name is carried by two corridors: the southern stretch from Neath to Y Gaer, and the northern mountain road from Canovium at Caerhun up the Llugwy past Bryn y Gefeiliau, then south by Tomen y Mur and Pennal to meet the Gold Road near Penllwyn. Between them they trace the idea of a single western route from sea to sea, the hardest country in Wales stitched together, and it says something that when the Welsh finally gave a Roman road a name of its own, they named it after a Welsh woman who ordered it built, not after the empire that built it.

## **The Northern Circuit and the Middle Spine**

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The north was hung between Chester and Caernarfon. The coast road entered Wales near Prestatyn and ran west through Canovium at the Conwy crossing to Segontium above the Menai Strait, hugging the narrow shelf between the mountains and the sea that every later coast road and railway has had to share, which is why the Hadrianic milestone from this line was found where it was, on a corridor that has never once gone out of use.

It is the road the medieval Welsh remembered when they set the *Dream of Maccsen Wledig* at Caernarfon. Inland, the Dee valley road came down from the Chester approaches past the great camp at Penrhos to Llanfor and Caergai, then over the mountains to Tomen y Mur, tying the lake country into the network.

And through the middle of Wales ran the spine that made the whole system one: from Y Gaer north through Castell Collen to Caersws, where five valleys meet, and on down the Severn past Levobrinta at Forden towards Wroxeter. A soldier could leave the amphitheatre at Caerleon and reach the walls of Chester without ever losing a made road beneath his feet, and a message riding the network with relays

of horses could cross Wales in a day or two, which, more than any sword, is what made rebellion hopeless.

## What This Layer Shows

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Lay this layer over the other four and the map explains itself. Every fort of Layer Two sits on one of these lines, every camp of Layer Three lies along a line of advance that became one, and the towns and mines of Layer Five grew where the lines met the coast or the gold. The roads outlived it all, and their afterlife runs directly into the other maps of this series.

The drovers whose ways are traced on the Drovers' Ways of Wales map walked Roman aggers over the same mountains, the pilgrims of the Pilgrim Ways crossed them on the way to Tyddewi and Ynys Enlli, the turnpike trusts metalled them afresh, and more than one modern trunk road follows them still. A walker on Trecastle Mountain today is using a piece of first century military engineering for its original purpose, getting across Wales on foot in bad weather. The Romans left, and the lines stayed.

## Sources

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The network described here follows the published studies of the Roman roads of Wales, above all *The Roman Frontier in Wales* by V. E. Nash-Williams and its successors, the standard national survey tradition founded by Ivan Margary's *Roman Roads in Britain*, and the road records held in Coflein by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, whose aerial and lidar survey work continues to refine the alignments.

Station names are those preserved in the Antonine Itinerary and the Ravenna Cosmography as reported in the published scholarship.

The Sarn Helen tradition is given as tradition, with the alternative derivations noted as scholarly suggestion and nothing more. The corridors on the map are schematic, joining attested stations in straight segments, and will be refined against the surveyed alignments in the national record stretch by stretch in later editions of the map.

# ROMAN WALES

## LAYER FIVE

Towns, Industry and Civilian Life

*What grew up when the fighting stopped*



Graham Tudor Emmanuel, Kidwelly

## **The Other Half of the Story**

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Four layers of this map are military, and that balance is honest, for Wales was held rather than settled. But the occupation was never only soldiers. Around every fort a straggle of traders, craftsmen, veterans and local families grew up at the gates, and in the lowlands of the south east, where the ground was kind and the fighting had ended earliest, something more grew: towns, villas, farms and mines, a small but real Roman Wales that paid taxes, spoke some Latin and buried its dead in Roman fashion. Industry reached further than comfort ever did.

Lead was taken from the hills of the north east, where cast pigs of the metal stamped with the name of the local tribe, the Deceangli, have been found, copper was worked on the Great Orme and on Anglesey, and gold, the rarest prize of the whole British province, came from a single valley in Carmarthenshire. This layer holds the civilian and industrial landscape, and though it is the smallest layer in pins it carries the largest share of the legacy, because it is here that Rome outlived Rome.

## **Venta Silurum: The Town of the Silures**

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Caerwent is the most remarkable Roman place in Wales, and among the most remarkable in Britain, precisely because so little ever happened to it afterwards. Venta Silurum, the market town of the Silures, was founded around the turn of the second century as the tribal capital of the very people who had fought Rome hardest, now governing themselves as a Roman civitas with their own elected council.

Within its walls stood a forum and basilica, shops, courtyard houses, baths and a Romano-Celtic temple, laid out on a street grid that the village lanes still loosely follow. And the town can still speak. In the porch of the parish church stands the Paulinus stone, the base of a statue put up by decree of the council of the Silures to honour Tiberius Claudius Paulinus, once commander of the Second Augustan Legion at Caerleon, and it is one of the very few surviving voices of local self-government anywhere in Roman Britain: the grandchildren of Caratacus's warriors, passing resolutions in Latin.

The town walls, strengthened in the fourth century with projecting bastions against the new sea raiding, still stand to a height of several metres along the southern circuit and are commonly reckoned the best-preserved Roman town defences in Britain. Nor did the place simply stop. An early monastery associated with Saint Tathan stood here in the centuries after Rome, and the name did not die either. Venta lived on in Gwent, a Roman market town's name becoming the name of a Welsh kingdom, and it is entirely possible that the ordered world of the Silurian gentry, farming the same estates, carried on under its own princes long after the last official left.

## **Moridunum: The Fort That Became a Town**

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Carmarthen made the opposite journey to every other site on the western map. The fort of Layer Two, founded in the earliest campaigns, gave way in the second century to a town, Moridunum, the civitas capital of the Demetae, making Carmarthen a serious claimant to the title of oldest continuously occupied town in Wales.

The name is honest Welsh geography dressed in Latin, the sea fort, and its later history is one of the best stories on this map. Moridunum became in Welsh Caerfyrddin, and when the old meaning was forgotten the name was re-read as the fort of Myrddin, so that the town appeared to be named after a man, and the man duly appeared: Myrddin, the wild prophet of Welsh tradition, whom Geoffrey of

Monmouth reshaped into Merlin and gave to the world. Scholarship has long suggested that the wizard may owe his very name to the town rather than the town to the wizard, which would make Merlin, in a sense, a son of a Roman survey point.

The Roman street grid, defences and houses lie beneath the modern streets, found piece by piece whenever the town digs a cellar, but one monument stands in the open air: the amphitheatre on Priory Street, cut into the hillside with its seating banked above an oval arena, brought back to light by excavation in the twentieth century, the most westerly amphitheatre in the entire Roman Empire. There is nothing between it and the Atlantic. For anyone from the Gwendraeth or the Tywi, this is the local entry in the whole story of Rome, and it is a considerable one.

## **Luentinum: The Gold of Dolaucothi**

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At Pumsaint on the Cothi the Romans did the thing that may explain their interest in west Wales altogether: they mined gold. Dolaucothi is the only place in Britain where Roman gold mining is certain, recorded by the geographer Ptolemy under the name Luentinum, and the scale of the enterprise still shows.

The ore was won by opencast working at the great pits called the Ogofau and by galleries driven into the hill, and the water to strip the ground and wash the crushed rock was brought in by leats cut along the hillsides for miles from the Cothi and the Annell, feeding tanks whose platforms can still be traced above the workings, hydraulic engineering of a kind described by Pliny in the gold fields of Spain and nowhere better preserved in Britain.

From the deep workings came one of the site's treasures, part of a wooden drainage wheel of Roman type, worked by men treading in the dark to lift water out of the mine, now in the national collection. The fort of Luentinum stood a mile away to guard the workings and the road that carried the metal away, for gold from these hills travelled to the imperial mints, which means there is a fair chance that coins struck from Carmarthenshire gold passed through hands across the whole breadth of the empire. Mining returned to the valley more than once, the last company closing between the wars, and the site is now in the care of the National Trust, where a visitor can go underground into workings first opened nineteen centuries ago.

## **The Villas and the Old Way of Living**

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In the Vale of Glamorgan and the lowlands of Gwent the countryside itself turned partly Roman. Villas, the estate houses of the Romanised gentry, appeared along the good land, and the courtyard villa at Caermead near Llantwit Major is the principal example on the map, a substantial farming establishment ranged around its yards, floored in part with mosaic, that would not have looked out of place in Gaul.

Its later history carries a suggestion worth recording carefully: the villa estate lies beside the ground where, within a couple of centuries of the occupation's end, Illtud's great monastic school arose at Llanilltud Fawr, one of the earliest centres of learning in Britain, and it has long been suggested, though it remains a suggestion, that the one inherited the lands and even the household of the other, a Roman estate flowing into a Welsh monastery without ever quite emptying. But the villas are a south eastern story, and the map must say so honestly.

Across most of Wales the people carried on in the settlements their grandparents had known, round stone houses inside walled yards, buying a little Roman pottery and metalwork and otherwise living as before. Din Lligwy on Anglesey stands for all of them, a walled native settlement whose round and rectangular stone houses, still standing shoulder high in a quiet wood near Moelfre, yielded Roman coins and pottery of the fourth century, prosperity at the empire's farthest edge, Roman period without being Roman.

It shares its few fields with a Neolithic burial chamber and a medieval chapel, five thousand years of Anglesey in a single short walk. Between Llantwit Major and Din Lligwy lies the whole truth of the occupation: two ways of living in the same empire, three days' walk apart.

## What This Layer Shows

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The civilian layer answers the question the military layers leave hanging, which is what all that force was for. The answer on the ground is modest: two towns, a scatter of villas in the south east, the mines, and a countryside that mostly kept its own habits.

Yet this thin layer proved the durable one. The forts emptied, but Carmarthen and Caerwent are still there, the name of a Roman market town became the name of Gwent, the name of a Roman sea fort may have fathered Merlin himself, and a Roman estate in the Vale of Glamorgan perhaps handed its fields to one of the first great schools of Welsh Christianity.

When the map is read layer upon layer, the story runs in one direction: armies made roads, roads made towns, and the towns made the beginning of the Wales whose later story the Conflicts map takes up in 616.

## Sources

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This account follows Cadw's published accounts of the monuments in its care at Caerwent, Caerleon and Carmarthen, including the published record of the Paulinus inscription, the published record of the Dolaucothi mines and their water system together with the National Trust's account of the site, the excavation reports of the Llantwit Major villa, and the site records held in Coflein by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

The lead pigs of the Deceangli and the Roman working of the Orme copper follow the published record of Roman industry in Wales. The Merlin derivation and the villa to monastery suggestion at Llanilltud Fawr are reported as scholarship and suggestion respectively, not as fact, and statements about the survival of Silurian institutions after the occupation follow the published scholarship and are given as likelihood, not certainty. Grid references on the map remain pending verification against Coflein, as recorded in the project ledger.

## The Occupation in Summary

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The conquest of Wales took Rome the better part of thirty years, longer than the conquest of most of England. The legions crossed the lower Severn in AD 47 and met in the Silures an enemy that defeat did not discourage, led first by the fugitive king Caratacus and then, after his final battle in AD 51, by no one in particular and everyone at once. It took the governorships of Julius Frontinus and Julius Agricola, between AD 74 and 78, to end the war, and the manner of the ending is written across this map: the enormous marching camps striding over the heads of the Glamorgan valleys, the new legionary fortress at Caerleon, the auxiliary forts planted at every valley mouth, and the roads driven between them until the whole country lay inside the net.

What followed was slower and stranger than the war. The garrisons thinned within a generation or two as the country quietened and the army's weight shifted north to the Wall. The Silures, unconquerable in the field, were given a town at Caerwent and governed themselves in Latin. Carmarthen grew from a fort into the market town of the Demetae. Gold went out of the Cothi valley under guard, lead out of the north east, and in the Vale of Glamorgan villa estates farmed in the Roman manner. Most of Wales, meanwhile, carried on in the round houses and walled yards it had always known, inside the empire without being greatly changed by it. The end, when it came, was a fading rather than a fall. Troops were drawn away to fight for the ambitions of men like Magnus Maximus, remembered in Wales as Maccen Wledig, whose bid for the empire in AD 383 stripped the western garrisons, and by the early fifth century the last regulars were gone. Segontium, held to almost the very end, was left to the wind off the Strait.

Yet the occupation never entirely ended, because so much of it was simply absorbed. The roads became the roads of the drovers, the pilgrims, the turnpikes, and the trunk routes. The towns became towns still, and a Roman market's name became the kingdom of Gwent. The forts became churchyards, castle mounds and legends: Arthur's court at Caerllion, Cai's home at Caergai, Llew's court at Tomen y Mur, Maccen's dream at Caernarfon, and at Carmarthen the very name of the town may have conjured Merlin into being. When Edward the First raised his castle at Caernarfon below Segontium, and when the Normans planted their mottes on Roman ramparts at Loughor and Tomen y Mur, they were confirming judgements made in the first century. Wales kept what Rome built, renamed it, and told its own stories about it, which is perhaps the most complete victory over an empire that any people can have.

## The Map and Its Making

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The interactive map that accompanies this volume was built layer by layer in the order of the parts above, with every site located by Ordnance Survey grid reference converted to map coordinates. Positions are given at the precision the published record supports, mostly to the kilometre square for forts and to the hundred metre square for camps, and each entry on the map states its own precision and its verification status against the national record. The road lines are schematic corridors joining attested stations and are labelled as such. The map is intended to grow: grid references are being verified and refined against Coflein site by site, road corridors will be replaced by surveyed alignments as they are confirmed, and further verified sites, among them the lead and copper workings of the north, will be added in later editions.

## Sources

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The site gazetteer underlying the map is drawn from the published lists of Roman military sites in Britain, cross checked against Cadw's published accounts of Roman Wales and the monuments in its care at Caerleon, Caerwent, Carmarthen and elsewhere. The foundation study of the subject is *The Roman Frontier in Wales* by V. E. Nash-Williams, in its revised edition by Michael G. Jarrett, and the standard modern study of the temporary camps is *Roman Camps in Wales and the Marches* by Rebecca H. Jones and Jeffrey L. Davies. The road network follows the national survey tradition founded by Ivan Margary's *Roman Roads in Britain*, with station names as preserved in the Antonine Itinerary and the Ravenna Cosmography and reported in the published scholarship. Site records are held in Coflein, the online database of the National Monuments Record of Wales maintained by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, and in the regional Historic Environment Records maintained by Heneb, the Trust for Welsh Archaeology. The Designated Historic Asset data of the Welsh Historic Environment Service (Cadw) is published under the Open Government Licence. The account of the Dolaucothi mines draws additionally on the published record of the site and the National Trust, which cares for it today, and finds referred to in the text are in the collections of Amgueddfa Cymru, the National Roman Legion Museum at Caerleon among them. Traditions from the Mabinogion, Geoffrey of Monmouth and the later tales are reported throughout as tradition, not history.