THE OXFORD
HISTORY OF BRITAIN

牛津英国史

(英) Kenneth O. Morgan 主编
钟美荪 注释

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THE OXFORD
HISTORY OF BRITAIN

Kenneth O. Morgan is Research Professor at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and Honorary Fellow of The Queen's College, Oxford. From 1966 to 1989 he was Fellow and Praelector of Queen's; from 1989 to 1995 he was Vice-Chancellor of Aberystwyth, and also Senior Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales, 1993–5. He is the author of many major works on British history including *Wales in British Politics, 1868–1922* (1963); *The Age of Lloyd George* (1971); *Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist* (1975); *Modern Wales: Politics, Places and People* (1995); *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880–1980* (Oxford paperback, 1982); *Labour in Power, 1945–1951* (Oxford paperback, 1985); *Consensus and Disunity: the Lloyd George Coalition Government, 1918–1922* (Oxford paperback, 1986); *Labour People: Leaders and Lieutenants, Hardie to Kinnock* (Oxford paperback, rev. edn., 1992); *The People's Peace: British History, 1945–1990* (Oxford paperback, 1992), reissued as *Britain since 1945: The People's Peace* (Oxford paperback, 2001), and *Callaghan: a Life* (Oxford paperback, 1999). He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1983, and became a life peer in March 2000.

The ten historians who have contributed to *The Oxford History of Britain* are all distinguished authorities in their field. They are:

PETER SALWAY, The Open University. *Roman Britain*

JOHN BLAIR, The Queen's College, Oxford. *The Anglo-Saxons*

JOHN GILLINGHAM, London School of Economics and Political Science. *The Early Middle Ages*

RALPH A. GRIFFITHS, University College of Swansea. *The Later Middle Ages*

JOHN GUY, University of Bristol. *The Tudor Age*

JOHN S. MORRILL, Selwyn College, Cambridge. *The Stuarts*

PAUL LANGFORD, Lincoln College, Oxford. *The Eighteenth Century*

CHRISTOPHER HARVIE, University of Tübingen. *Revolution and the Rule of Law*

H. C. G. MATTHEW, formerly at The Queen's College Oxford. *The Liberal Age*

KENNETH O. MORGAN, The Queen's College, Oxford. *The Twentieth Century*

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

THE distinctiveness, even uniqueness, of the British as a people has long been taken for granted by foreign observers and native commentators alike. Visitors from overseas, from those omnipresent Venetian ambassadors in the late fifteenth century, through intellectuals like Voltaire or Tocqueville, to American journalists in the twentieth century, have all been convinced of the special quality of British society. This has equally been assumed by modern native chroniclers of the British scene, as opposed in their ideological outlooks as Sir Winston Churchill and George Orwell, patriots both. But the nature or essence of the Britishness of the British is far easier to proclaim than to define, let alone to explain. Very few attempts to encapsulate its quality have been more than marginally successful. One of the most celebrated, addressing itself to the English people alone and first published in 1926, came in G. M. Trevelyan's remarkable synoptic *History of England*. Trevelyan here focused on a number of themes which he believed to have marked out the separate experience of the English through the centuries—geographical severance from the European continent, with the consequent centrality of sea-power; a broad social fluidity in which the early demise of feudalism helped generate a new industrial and commercial enterprise; a flowing cultural continuity from the time of Chaucer and Wycliffe onwards; and above all—a theme especially dear to the heart of an old late-Victorian Liberal like Trevelyan—a long political and legal evolution expressed in the durability of parliamentary institutions and the rule of law. Secure in itself, a vibrant, outward-looking island had proceeded to colonize and civilize the world. None of Trevelyan's themes can be dismissed. Equally, none can be accepted uncritically in the more tormented, doubt-ridden age of the late twentieth century, with its well-founded

suspicion of national and racial stereotypes. The problem of trying to come to grips with the essential reality of the British experience remains as pressing and as fascinating as ever.

The purpose of this book is to isolate and uncover the main elements in that experience throughout British history, from the earliest Roman period down to the later twentieth century. It is not concerned with the protean concept of 'national character', a difficult and perhaps unrewarding enterprise even when considering the English alone—and almost impossible when the distinct traditions of the Welsh, Scots, and Irish are included. It is rather intended to disentangle the main political, social, economic, religious, intellectual, and cultural features of these islands as they have revealed themselves to successive generations, and as trained scholars have tried to examine them. The question of a British 'national character', or the lack of it, will, therefore, be implicit rather than explicit. Readers will be left to draw their own conclusions, and to form their own personal visions. This is, inevitably, a multi-author volume, written by ten professional historians in close collaboration with one another. Such a collective approach is inescapable, since the days when one compendious mind such as Trevelyan's could have the capacity and the confidence to treat all aspects of British history with equal ease probably died with the Liberal intelligentsia some time after 1914. It is certainly neither practicable nor desirable, now that Renaissance men have vanished from the earth. Rather, each major phase in the history of Britain is examined here in depth by a specialist working in that field, but always directing his findings to the general reader. A basic premiss of this book is that it deals with the history of Great Britain, two partitioned, poly-cultural islands, and not merely with England alone. Indeed, the fact that the ten authors include three Welshmen and two Scots may help towards that end! Again, while the geographic and other distinctiveness of Britain from the European continent and the world beyond may constantly emerge, so too will the economic, intellectual, cultural, and religious links by which Britain and overseas

nations helped shape each other's experience. The dynamic urge for exploration, colonization, and conquest from the Tudor period onwards, which led in time to the creation of the greatest empire the world had ever seen, also lent an outward-looking aspect to British historical development. Britain in this book remains the geographical island familiar to schoolchildren. But it is an island whose physical insularity was always qualified by a wider process of transmission from continental Europe, and later from North America, Africa, Asia, and Australasia, from the first arrival of the Roman legions onwards.

These chapters help to show how old clichés have dissolved in the searching light of modern research and scholarship. The 'anarchy' of the mid-twelfth century, the chaos of the Wars of the Roses, the inevitability of the Civil Wars, the serenity of Victorian England, familiar to readers of *1066 and All That*, tend to disappear like the autumn leaves at Vallombrosa. Again, the notion that British history, unlike that of less fortunate nations elsewhere, is uniquely marked by a kind of seamless, peaceful continuity emerges here as needing the most severe qualification. The history of the British people is a complex, sometimes violent or revolutionary one, full of disjunctions and abrupt changes of pace or of course. The idea of a tranquil, undisturbed evolutionary progress even for England, let alone the turbulent, fractured, schizophrenic history of the Celtic nations, comes out here as little more than a myth, fit for the refuse-heap of history, like romances of 'golden ages' over the centuries from Arthurian times onwards.

Roman Britain, as Peter Salway shows, was marked by constant, alternating phases of social upheaval and readjustment, long before the final retreat of the Romans in the early fifth century. John Blair describes the dynastic turbulence and the dramatic growth of urban life in the Anglo-Saxon period, until the final, violent end at Hastings. In the early Middle Ages, John Gillingham depicts a saga of conquest punctuated by frequent defeats on French and British soil, with an exploding

society under such strain by the late thirteenth century that it is described here as being possibly on the verge of class war. Although that was avoided, in the later Middle Ages, as Ralph Griffiths writes, long wars in France were followed by aristocratic turmoil in Britain in the fifteenth century, accompanied by domestic recovery from plague and social revolt. The Tudor Age, as John Guy demonstrates, suffused in a golden glow in the patriotic effusions of later generations, was marked in fact by extreme pressure of population upon economic resources, by religious conflict, and the threat of foreign invasion. The resultant political and religious tensions inherited by the house of Stuart are analysed by John Morrill for a century in which—despite a marked decline in internal lawlessness—two civil wars, regicide, a republic, a restoration, and a revolution, followed each other in bewildering, breathless profusion. The apparent surface stability, prosperity, and cultural expansiveness of the Georgian age, as Paul Langford shows, gave way to an explosive tumult of industry, trade, and technology unprecedented in the history of the world, and also to the new revolutionary impulses surging in from the American colonies and from republican France. Somehow, the picture of Edward Gibbon, the urbane chronicler of the Rome of the Antonines and their successors, fleeing across Europe in the face of the Jacobin hordes in his beloved France, is symbolic. The early nineteenth century, as Christopher Harvie explains, did indeed manage to avoid the revolutionary malaria raging through other European states. But instead it brought massive dislocations in the social fabric and the notion of the legal community, and a seemingly unbridgeable class division that led Marx, fancifully, to see Britain as being in the forefront of the revolutionary apocalypse. The later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as outlined by H. C. G. Matthew, moved on rapidly from the bland self-assurance of the Great Exhibition, to the anxieties of the *fin de siècle* period, with its social tensions, imperialist neuroses, and sense of national vulnerability. The years since 1914, described by the present writer, saw two world wars, pulverizing economic pressures in the thirties and

the seventies, and a forcible wrenching of Britain out of its place in the sun. The history of Britain, then, is not one of harmonious continuity, broadening from precedent to precedent, or from status to contract, as Victorian intellectuals would have it. It is a dramatic, colourful, often violent story of an ancient society and culture torn apart by the political, economic, and intellectual turmoil of human experience. Britain in many ways has been the cockpit of mankind.

And yet, a reading of these chapters may also leave the clear impression that, however elusive in definition, the sense of Britishness always survived in the post-Roman and post-Norman periods. Some elements of that consciousness, not necessarily closely related, can be clearly traced through the centuries. There were, variously, that Celtic Christian identity that survived the invasion of the Romans; the artistic flowering seen in the miniatures and sculpture of the late Anglo-Saxon era; the centralized governmental and ecclesiastical system created by the Normans and Angevins; the vivid sense of an English nationality emerging in the poetry, and perhaps even the architecture, of the fourteenth century. Even in the Tudor twilight, Shakespeare's plays testify to a growing sense of national cohesion—while the presence of that ubiquitous Elizabethan Welshman, John Dee, who invented the ambiguous term 'British Empire', indicates some wider horizons, too. Equally, the intellectual values embodied in the revolution of 1688, Macaulay's famous 'preserving revolution', suggests a social and cultural continuity beneath the surface turbulence of high politics in the seventeenth century. The communal stability of much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, together with their integrative developments in industry, transport, and communication, and perhaps even the democratic advances, political and social, of the present century, have reinforced this perceptible current of national awareness. At key moments in British history, society coalesced rather than divided. Class war, however defined, did not in fact take place in the later Middle Ages; while Marx's prophecies of violent revolutionary upheaval in the modern industrial period were, fortunately, not

fulfilled. That Britain was able to assimilate the strains of its political revolution as early as the seventeenth century and of its industrial revolution as early as the eighteenth, in each case long before other European nations did so, testified to the rooted strength of its institutions and its culture. Consensus, no less than conflict, is a central part of our story.

In its many forms, this rooted patriotism, embracing the Welsh, Scots, and Ulstermen over the centuries—though, significantly, never the southern Irish—endured and remained unquenchable. The visible, recognized symbols of that patriotic sense still survive—Crown, Parliament, the processes of law, the legacy of empire, the urge for individuality and domestic privacy, the collective enthusiasm for recreation and mass sport. But what is equally striking, perhaps, is the patriotism of the dissenting critics also, with their alternative scenarios. The Levellers, Daniel Defoe, William Cobbett, William Morris, R. H. Tawney, George Orwell, all in their time emerged as passionate, libertarian opponents of the social inequalities and political imbalance of their day. Yet each of them emerged, also, as deeply committed to an almost religious sense of the civilized essence of their country and its people, their history and destiny. By setting this sense of national continuity against the recurrence of disruption and crisis through the centuries, the historian derives perhaps his ultimate justification in thrusting the British people face to face with their past and with the image of themselves. We hope that general readers will understand themselves, their society, neighbours, and an encompassing world with more clarity, subtlety, enthusiasm, and even affection, after reading this book.

KENNETH O. MORGAN

Oxford,
November 1983

In this revised paperback edition, the text has been updated to take the story down to the millennium.

K.O.M.

Oxford,
November 2000

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1. *Roman Britain*

(*c.*55 BC–*c.* AD 440)

PETER SALWAY

The Beginnings of British History

In Roman times Britain had as many people as at its peak in the Middle Ages. For four centuries it was an integral part of a single political system that stretched from Turkey to Portugal and from the Red Sea to the Tyne and beyond. Its involvement with Rome started before the Conquest launched by Claudius[1] in AD 43, and it continued to be a part of the Roman world for some time after the final break with Roman rule. We are dealing with a full half-millennium of the history of Britain.

The origins of later Britain go back beyond the Roman period. Aspects of the society the Romans found in Britain were beginning to emerge in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Ages. At the time of the Roman Conquest, the culture of Britain had something like fifteen hundred to two thousand years of development behind it—although the prehistorians are greatly divided on the details. By the end of the pre-Roman Iron Age, society had evolved forms of organization closely similar to those encountered by the Romans elsewhere in north-western Europe, and had adopted versions of the culture and language we loosely call 'Celtic'[2]. Outside the imperial frontiers in Britain these continued largely unchanged; inside, the Celtic substratum persisted, assimilated and adapted by Rome in ways not in general closely paralleled by modern colonial empires.

Why, then, are we not either starting this *History of Britain*

before the Romans, or consigning Roman Britain, as some modern writers would have us do, to 'prehistory'? The answer lies in the real distinction between the Roman period and what went before. There is some truth in the assertion that the study of Roman Britain is prehistory, in the sense that we have to lean very heavily on archaeology—and this is also true of the early Anglo-Saxon period. However, our sources for Britain are by no means solely archaeological, and the interpretation of the material remains themselves cannot be divorced from the study of the written sources. It is true that the quantity of contemporary or near-contemporary literary evidence is not great in comparison with later periods but there is enough to be significant. Moreover, we have the very considerable remains of the once huge routine output of a literate society—and in a form not subject to the inevitable corruptions of the Greek and Latin literary texts, which have largely survived only by being copied and re-copied by hand down the centuries. Actual examples of writing found in Britain, mostly as inscriptions on stone but some in other forms, constitute a major primary source for the Romano-British period. They include trade marks on manufactured goods; a small but growing number of personal letters and other documents in a variety of materials, discovered in excavations; even graffiti—the everyday writing and reading matter of ordinary people. Nor can we ignore the specialized and difficult but rewarding study of Roman coinage, which had a peculiarly important part in the politics and economics of the Roman world. Not only was the currency itself manipulated by government as money, but also the wording and images upon the coins were consistently exploited as a powerful medium for mass propaganda which possessed the insistence of a television commercial repeated over and over again. The ability to read was, admittedly, very much commoner in the towns than in the Romano-British countryside but it was compulsory in the army and essential in many other walks of life. It was certainly not, as in other ages, restricted to a small or specialized class.

The critical difference between Roman Britain and what went