

Episode 1: Albion Becomes Britannia

Cold Open - Historiography of Ancient Britain (3-4 minutes)

Bede

- Ecclesiastical History of the English People (731)
- Monk from Northumbria
- Seeking to cement an English national identity - political and religious motives
- Speaks almost nothing to pre-Roman Britain
 - Geography - island formerly called Albion (comes from the Greeks)

Geoffrey of Monmouth

- History of the Kings of Britain (1136)
- More iron age content

Albion

Brutus

- Descendant of Aeneas - cousin of King Priam of Troy
- Kills his parents; leaves Italy
- Founder of Tours (in Gaul/France)
- Settles in "Britain" - name derived from "Brutus"
- First king of Britain

Era: approximately 1200 B.C.E. to 60 B.C.E.

Welcome and Episode Introduction - Why Britain? Why the Romans? (5-6 minutes)

Why do we start in Britain?

- Britain represents the edge of the Roman Empire which creates a dynamic of its own in terms of the balance of cultural influence from the Romans versus the natives.
- Due to British geography, it was always a little tougher to conquer; hence, only the strongest and most ambitious neighbors would have success in laying claim to the island and, as a result, influence its cultural and political evolution.
- As we will see in our story, a variety of factors led to the incubation of thought and legal concepts which sowed the seeds of liberty in England.
- While there are elements of the story of liberty that will feature other nations, most notably France, our story will feature England and later its American colony.

Why do we start with the Romans?

- The Roman Republic was a major advance in early principles of representative government and features of its organization--both culturally and administratively--were a prototype that influenced the values of liberalism and democracy in the future.
- The fall of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire serves as lessons of how representative government can devolve into autocratic rule.
- The vast scale of the Roman Republic and Empire along with its general embrace of multiculturalism ensured that its legacy would be felt in many ways throughout the western world for all time.

Historical Content

1. The clans of the British Isles, unique geography, interactions with the continent and Scandinavia **(6-8 minutes)**

- Key Points:

- Many clans across the isles; scholars believe that by the Iron Age, the island was inhabited by Celtic Britons

- What is a “Celt”?

- Ethnicity versus Culture; language

- Common heritage with much of the continent north of the Alps

- Druids and “druidism” as a “religion”

- Enjoy the isolated features of an island and exist at the “edge” of the “known world”, but close proximity to the continent and Scandinavia

- Strong evidence of trade--especially with Gaul

- As noted, it was known to the Greeks hundreds of years before the Romans

- By the Iron Age (starting around 8th Century B.C.) the **island was largely inhabited by Celtic Britons**

- The Britons (*Pritani), also known as **Celtic Britons or Ancient Britons**, were the indigenous Celtic people who inhabited Great Britain from at least the British Iron Age into the Middle Ages, at which point they **diverged into the Welsh, Cornish and Bretons** (among others). They spoke the Common Brittonic language, the ancestor of the modern Brittonic languages.[1]

- The **traditional view** that the Celtic Britons originally migrated from mainland Europe in the Iron Age **has been questioned** by the contention of some scholars that Celtic languages had instead spread north along the Atlantic seaboard during the earlier Bronze Age.[2] Moreover, genetic studies show continuity between Iron Age and older British populations,[3] suggesting **trans-cultural diffusion was also very important** in the spread of Celtic languages.
 - The earliest written evidence for the Britons is from Greco-Roman writers and dates to the Iron Age.[4] **Celtic Britain was made up of many tribes and kingdoms, associated with various hillforts. The Britons followed an Ancient Celtic religion overseen by druids. Some of the southern tribes had strong links with mainland Europe, especially Gaul, and minted their own coins.**
 - Definitive evidence of **widespread trade with continental Europe**
 - From the late 2nd century BC onwards South-central Britain was indirectly linked into Roman **trading networks via Brittany and the Atlantic seaways to southwest Gaul**.^[24] Hengistbury Head in Dorset was the most important trading site and large quantities of Italian wine amphorae have been found there.
 - In Southeast Britain, meanwhile, extensive contact with the **'Belgic' tribes of northern Gaul** is evidenced by large numbers of imported Gallo-Belgic gold coins between the mid-2nd century BC and Caesar's conquest of Gaul in the 50s BC.
 - As an island, naturally insular; however at the Straits of Dover, the distance is just over 20 miles between the island and the continent
 - The trade routes insured that there was connection to wide array of other tribes, kingdoms, and cultures
- 2. Life in the clan-based society (**6-8 Minutes**)

- Key Points

- Tribes or “clans” are structured as a network of family units moving past a nomadic or hunter-gatherer society; minimal specialization and largely dependent on subsistence living
 - “Kings” are “elected” or chosen by the elite--not necessarily through hereditary claims
 - Quotes from Weiner to summary “what is the rule of the clan”
 - Status and legal standing in the clan is based on kinship relationships
 - Brief discussion of Henry Summer Maine to illustrate the first stage of legal evolution--what is a “Status Society”
- Tribal kings
- Economics of agriculture, land ownership, animal husbandry, and trade

- From Rule of the Clan by Mark Weiner (pg. 8-9)

What exactly is the rule of the clan? When I refer to the rule of the clan, I mean three related contemporary phenomena.'

First, and most prominently, I mean the legal structures and cultural values of societies organized primarily on the basis of kinship—societies in which extended family membership is vital for social and legal action and in which individuals have little choice but to maintain a strong clan identity. Today these societies include many in which the United States and its allies have a major strategic interest, such as Afghanistan, Yemen, Nigeria, and Somalia, but they have existed across history and throughout the world. Sometimes they are described as "tribal," though P tend to avoid the term because in English it carries a host of negative and racist connotations. This strict form of the rule of the clan also includes the traditional Hindu caste system and Indian joint family, despite the manifest great differences between tribal societies and rapidly modernizing democratic India.

Second, by the rule of the clan I mean the political arrangements of societies governed by what the Arab Human Development Report 2004 calls "clannism."⁷ These **societies** possess the outward trappings of a modern state but are **founded on informal patronage networks, especially those of kinship, and traditional ideals of patriarchal family authority.** In nations pervaded by clannism, government is co-opted for purely factional purposes and the state, conceived on the model of the patriarchal family, treats citizens not as autonomous actors but rather as troublesome dependents to be managed.

Clannism is the historical echo of tribalism, existing even in the face of economic modernization. It often characterizes renter societies struggling under the continuing legacy of colonial subordination, as in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, where the [[nuclear family]], with its revolutionary, individuating power, has yet to replace the extended lineage group as the principle framework for kinship or household

A form of clannism likewise pervades mainland China and other nations whose political development was influenced by Confucianism, with its ideal of a powerful state resting on a well-ordered family, and where personal connections are essential to economic exchange. **Third, and most broadly, by the rule of the clan I mean the antiliberal social and legal organizations that tend to grow in the absence of state authority or when the state is weak.** These

groups include petty criminal gangs, the Mafia, and international crime syndicates, which look a great deal like clans and in many respects act like them.

Today corporate conglomerates and collectivist identity groups have the potential to transform into similar clanlike systems. In this respect, the rule of the clan is a synecdoche for a general pattern according to which humans tend to organize their communities. Life under the rule of the clan is profoundly different from life in liberal societies. Most important, compared with modern liberal states, communities governed by the rule of the clan possess a markedly diminished conception of individual freedom. This is because **under their legal principles people are valued less as individuals per se than as members of their extended families. The rights and obligations of individuals are fundamentally influenced by their places within the kin groups to which they inescapably belong.**

- **What did the legal system in British clan/tribal society look like?** We don't know exactly, but legal scholar **Henry Sumner Maine** through his book "Ancient Law" provides insight. A legal scholar in Britain, and universally praised as the "**Charles Darwin of Law**" for his theories on legal evolution. He wrote about the specific transformation **from status to contract societies.**
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_James_Sumner_Maine
 - From Rule of the Clan:
 - By **societies of Status**, Maine did not mean societies that simply possess a sense of social rank or hierarchy. Instead, **he meant those communities in which family groups serve as the primary basis for social organization and in which the law takes the extended family as its principal unit of concern. In these communities-societies governed by the rule of the clan-a person's social and legal role is determined by his or her place within the kinship group. For instance, the role of women in clan societies is to physically reproduce the clan itself and this role shapes all the legal rules affecting them, from their ability to sue or be sued to their property rights.**

3. Meanwhile, the Roman Republic in 60 B.C. with the formation of the First Triumvirate (6-8 minutes)

- Key Points
 - We could talk about Rome forever, but we are not going to!

- The Republic formed with great innovation and ideals; terminology is good to know
 - Republic grew through military conquest--usually in the spirit of “defense”
 - Gracchi brothers accelerate norm-breaking, using populism and violence, but are killed
 - Marius a new populist and military reformer versus Sulla a hardline conservative; more norm-breaking
 - Republic is more chaotic and governed by elites who are seeking fortune, fame, and military greatness--thus enters Gaius Julius Caesar
- The Republic was formed around 509 B.C. and continued over centuries with a complex system of checks and balances.
 - the **Assemblies**, composed of the people, which served as the supreme repository of political power and had the authority to elect magistrates, accept or reject laws, administer justice, and declare war or peace;^[6]
 - the **Senate**, which advised the magistrates,^[7] acting primarily not on legal authority *per se*, but rather with its influence, and
 - the **magistrates**, elected by the people to govern the Republic in their name, exercising religious, military, and judicial powers, along with the right to preside over and call upon the assemblies.^[8]
- We can't get into all of the detail of different roles, but it's important to understand a few terms:
 - Consul - top magistrate; 2 at a time, one year term
 - Praetor - next level down; judge and military commander
 - Dictator - emergency powers
 - Tribune - lead on behalf of a group; notably the tribune of the plebs
 - The Senate - membership only, class and money; inherited
- Republic formed due to the monarchy's abuses. - <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-worldhistory/chapter/the-roman-republic/>
- Wars, leading to civil wars, and a breakdown of norms slowly eroded the “purity” of the republic (note that, the republic was hardly pure by modern liberal standards, e.g. the prevalence of slavery, but had strong features)
- Gracchi - reformers, brothers seeking land reform on behalf of the plebs - one murdered, the other committed suicide before he would have the same fate. Election to tribune twice in a row.
- Marius and the creation of armies loyal to generals and not the states. Marius elected Consul 6 times in a row (and eventually a 7th) despite the rule of ten years in between Consulships.

- Sulla
- Pompey
- The deal between Pompey (military), Crassus (money), and Julius Caesar (political) Book: (Storm Before the Storm)
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crisis_of_the_Roman_Republic
- <https://www.thoughtco.com/end-of-the-roman-republic-timeline-120884>

The End of the Roman Republic

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| 133 B.C. | Tiberius Gracchus tribune |
| 123 - 122 B.C. | Gaius Gracchus tribune |
| 111 - 105 B.C. | Jugurthine War |
| 104 - 100 B.C. | Marius consul. |
| 90 - 88 B.C. | Social War |
| 88 B.C. | Sulla and the First Mithridatic War |
| 88 B.C. | Sulla's march on Rome with his army. |
| 82 B.C. | Sulla becomes dictator |
| 71 B.C. | Crassus crushes Spartacus |
| 71 B.C. | Pompey defeats Sertorius' rebellion in Spain |
| 70 B.C. | Consulship of Crassus and Pompey |
| 63 B.C. | Pompey defeats Mithridates |
| 60 B.C. | First Triumvirate: Pompey, Crassus, & Julius Caesar |
| 58 - 50 B.C. | Caesar conquers Gaul |
| 53 B.C. | Crassus killed in (battle) of Carrhae |
| 49 B.C. | Caesar crosses the Rubicon |
| 48 B.C. | Pharsalus (battle); Pompey killed in Egypt |
| 46 - 44 B.C. | Caesar's dictatorship |
| 44 B.C. | End of Civil War |
| 43 B.C. | Second Triumvirate: Marc Antony, Lepidus, & Octavian |
| 42 B.C. | Philippi (battle) |
| 36 B.C. | Naulochus (battle) |
| 31 B.C. | Actium (battle) |
| 27 B.C. | Octavian emperor |

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Reading List

Podcasts

- The British History Podcast - <https://www.thebritishhistorypodcast.com/>
- Dan Carlin's Hardcore History 60 – The Celtic Holocaust - <https://www.dancarlin.com/product/hardcore-history-60-the-celtic-holocaust/>
- The History of England - <https://thehistoryofengland.co.uk/>

Video

- Dan Jones - Walking Britain's Roman Roads - https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqtCQJ4CrFxc53D37f_hyIGx7rNsdCpgs
- ROME - the Complete Series on HBO

Books

Weiner, Mark S. 2014. **The Rule of the Clan What an Ancient Form of Social Organization Reveals about the Future of Individual Freedom.** Picador Usa. - <https://amzn.to/33HzdQk>

Henry Sumner Maine. 2012. **Ancient Law : Its Connection with the Early History of Society, and Its Relation to Modern Ideas.** Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press. - <https://amzn.to/3tQIW2x>

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Bede, The Venerable Saint, Bertram Colgrave, Judith McClure, and Roger Collins. 2008. **The Ecclesiastical History of the English People**. Oxford: Oxford University Press. - <https://amzn.to/3w4sb4k>

J Robert Wright. 2008. **A Companion to Bede : A Reader's Commentary on the Ecclesiastical History of the English People**. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. <https://amzn.to/3bssLB0>

Of, Geoffrey, Michael D Reeve, and Neil Wright. 2009. **De Gestis Britonum [the History of the Kings of Britain] : An Edition and Translation of de Gestis Britonum [Historia Regum Britanniae]**. Woodbridge: Boydell Press. - <https://amzn.to/2RS2yoG>