Human Rights, Social Welfare, and Greek Philosophy Legitimate Reasons for the Invasion of Britain by Claudius

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Abstract

In 43 AD, the fourth emperor of Imperial Rome, Tiberius Claudius Drusus, organized his military and invaded Britain. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the legitimate reasons for The Invasion of Britain led by Claudius. Before the invasion, his had an unfortunate life. He was physically distorted, so no one gave him an official position. However, one day, something unimaginable happened. He found himself selected by the Praetorian Guard to be the new emperor of Roma. Many scholars generally agree Claudius was eager to overcome his physical disabilities and low expectations to secure his position as new Emperor in Rome by military success in Britain. Although his personal motivation was understandable, it was not sufficient enough for Imperial Rome to legitimize the invasion of Britain. It is important to separate personal reasons and official reasons. A significant part of this research was library based. In this paper, I will focus on three possible reasons Claudius used to legitimatize the invasion of Britain: 1) Human Rights: To salvage refugees from Britain, 2) Social Welfare: To distribute land and resources for military veterans as part of a social welfare program, and 3) Natural Slave Theory: To apply ancient Greek philosophy by Plato and Aristotle. Because primary sources are limited during the first century, I applied an interdisciplinary view to analyze texts to complete my study.

Index terms— (1) roman, (2) britain, (3) claudius, (4) roman emperor, (5) colonies, (6) slavery, (7) colchester, (8) veterans, (9) legitimacy.

1 INTRODUCTION

he aim of this paper is to investigate the reasons used to legitimize the invasion of Britain by Claudius in A.D. 43. To begin the invasion, Claudian military crossed English Channel and landed approximately 20,000 soldiers at Richborough or Fishbourne Harbour at Chichester in Britain (Ex.1).

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Ex.1 : The progress of British Invasion only approximately reconstructed from historical source and inscriptions

After a number of battles with local leaders and their followers, the Roman soldiers successfully conquered the South East side of Britain. Claudius' army continuously invaded North East Britain and gained his terrain.

Before Claudius, Britain had been a target for Roman emperors almost 100 years. Julius Caesar was the first commander to invade Britain in 54 BC, and 55 BC, but due to rebellion in Gaul he left without creating a formal Roman colony or military base. He was able to only establish informal relationship with local people.

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Following Caesar, his successors, the first Roman emperor Augustus and the third Roman emperor Caligula, also planned on invasion of Britain. According to historian Peter Salway, "Romans were scorned to do so" because "Britons were too weak to cross the Channel," but none of their plans were carried out (Salway1993).

The fourth Roman emperor, Claudius, was born in 10 BC into part of the royal family; one of the first consuls, Marc Antonius, was his great grandfather, and the second emperor, Tiberius, was his uncle. However, Claudius spent an unfortunate childhood. When he was a baby, he suffered various diseases and disabilities. As a result, he was physically distorted and unable to speak clearly. His mother, Antonia, did not show Claudius sympathy; in fact, she even called him "a monster." In addition, no one, including his highly successful relatives, gave him an official position. Soon, his family decided him incapable of doing intellectual work even though his physical disability did not affect his intelligence (Suetonius 5:2). Moreover, disabilities did not stop Claudius' ability to learn. He became an avid reader and eventually applied himself to literature to gain varied academic knowledge. According to Suetonius, he wrote several historical books when he grew up although those books, unfortunately, did not survive (Suetonius 5:41).

One day, something unimaginable happened. The previous emperor, Claudius witnessed Caligula was murdered on January 22nd, 41 AD, and Claudius found himself selected by the Praetorian Guard to be the fourth Roman emperor. According to historian Guy de la Bedoyere, Claudius "knew he needed to prove himself" **??**Bedoyere 2006, 24). Soon after, he revived the invasion plan for a British invasion and soon occupied the southeast of Britain. In Rome, it was important for the emperor to publicize his greatest military triumph because military success was an essential qualification for a leader. In fact, Claudius actually traveled to Britain to lead his army during the invasion. His act was needed to prove himself as a leader for Roman citizens and senators. After 60 days, he came back to Rome and celebrated the success. His military achievement brought him respect and confidence to secure his position as the fourth Roman emperor. Claudius even issued new Roman coins that celebrated on this achievement (Ex. 2). One side shows his profile, and another side shows the triumphal arches erected in Rome to commemorate the invasion of Britain. Citizens of Rome learned the greatness of Claudius, so the successful campaign validated his right to rule.

4 Claudius' profile

5 Ex. 2 : Coin issued by Claudius

The triumphal arches erected in Rome. The man on the house is believed to be Claudius.

Many scholars, including Sheppard Frere, Stephen Kershaw, Salway, Bedoyere generally agree Claudius was eager to overcome his physical disabilities, achieve a real legacy, and invade Britain to secure his position as new Emperor in Rome (Frere 1967) (Kershaw, 2010) (Salway1993) (Bedoyere 2006). Although his personal motivation was understandable, it was not sufficient enough to Imperial Rome to legitimize the invasion of Britain. It was important to separate personal reasons and official reasons. History suggests the necessity of valid reasons when major countries initiate war. For example, during The First Punic War, Rome was officially asked by Mamertines of Messina for aid in his fight against the Carthaginian navy (Bagnall 2002). Once Rome received legitimate reasons from Messina, they arrogantly begun the war even though their true reason was to destroy a rival country, Carthaginia. Moreover, in the first invasion of Britain, Caesar's official reason was to prevent anti-Roman barbarians from fleeing Gaul to Britain. He used this reason to legitimatize the invasion and enter a mostly unknown island.

What are the legitimate reasons for Claudius' British invasion? In this paper, I will illustrate Claudius' family and social background, and will analyze three possible reasons to legitimatize the invasion of Britain: 1) To salvage legal and human rights for refugees from Britain, 2) To distribute land to Roman military veterans as part of a social welfare program, and 3) To use ancient Greek philosophy focusing on the natural slave theory by Plato and Aristotle. At the end, I will synthesize all valid motivations to conclude the invasion of Britain was seen as a legitimate act by Claudius. This study is important to understand actual historical conquest, which is relevant to complex modern society. The findings might be helpful to separate legitimate reasons from illegitimate reasons for current conflicts.

6 II.

7 METHODS AND PROCEDURES

8 DISCUSSION a) Human Rights

The first valid reason was to rescue political refugees from tribal areas in Britain. Adminius, was the youngest son of the tribal king, Cunobelinus in Catuvellauni (now, called St. Albans area). After Cunobelinus' death in AD 40-43, his heirs were his three sons, Caratacus, Togodumnus, and Adminius (Salway 1993) (Frere 1967). The first two were spiritedly anti-Roman; in contrast, Adminius was allied with the Romans. The reason why Adminius left his land is unclear. According to Professor David Shutter, Adminius wanted to protect his inheritance (Shotter 2002). The archaeologist, John Wacher, said that "Adminius was expelled either for openly expressing [pro-Roman] opinions, or for not supporting the hardening anti-Roman outlook of his brothers" **??**Wacher 1975,

203). Even though Adminius' true motivation is still a mystery, he appealed to Rome for assistance in establishing his claim to the kingdom. As a result, "Britain (Adminius) provided not only the ideal opportunity, but also a positive reason for immediate intervention" (Salway 1993 57).

Another refugee from tribal Britain is king of the Atrebates (now, called Silchester area), Verica (or Berrios). He was believed to own some territory in the southwest of Britain, but Caratacus, who was a leader of the Catuvellauni tribe, took over Verica's territory by force. After Caratacus established his entire kingdom in 40 BC, Verica escaped his tribe and traveled to Rome hoping for help in taking back his territory.

According to Dio Cassius, "his exile persuaded Claudius to send a force thither" (Dio 1924). Bedoyere also specified "Verica provided Claudius with a reason to invade Britain" **??**Bedoyere 2006, 26).

Adminius and Verica's action provided the golden opportunity for Claudius to invade Britain, giving himself a valid reason to invade Britain. He could be seen as rescuing innocent young men, Adminius and Verica, who were inappropriately exiled from Britain with the possibility of losing all of their territories. In this theory, Claudius is not invading British land for his own sake, such as military honor or confiscating land. Instead, he is protecting the legal and human rights of Adminius and Verica. Claudius found a legitimate reason for his invasion of Britain.

9 b) Social Welfare

Next, Claudius used the invasion of Britain as a way to expand social programs in the colonies. Through this program, land and resources are provided a means of paying off soldiers as a reward for their services by giving retired soldiers since they did not own any place to return to (Kristinsson 2010) **??**Gascoigne From 2001). Also, colonies were intended to act as civilizing influences on the indigenous people. They were selfgoverning communities, with a city-council (ordo) and a system of magistrates modeled on that of Rome. (Roger 1980). The historian Tacitus said the part of Britain was gradually shaped into a province and was given a colony of veterans (Tacitus).

The first colony, Colchester (Corinium Dobunnorum), was established in 49 AD by Claudius (Bedoyere 2006). However, Salway said the local people hated that a very large proportion of Roman war veterans received land, so Claudius needed more land to avoid conflict with local people (Salway 1965). Those evidences show Claudius used the new territories transform available land for his retired soldiers and their family members.

10 c) Greek Philosophy

The third and final reason is Claudius found profoundly refers to Greek philosophy to justify suppressing people. To fill the expanding Roman labor market, Roman emperors are inevitably seeking inferior people (Richmond 1947). Romans often called Britons and other non-Roman people barbarians. The used the word, barbarians, "to refer to all foreigners, especially the wide variety of people who were encroaching on their borders" (Jarus 2014). In Politics, Aristotle describes there are four types of barbarians: 1) Broad: strangeness, 2) Limited: lack of language and letter, 3) Strictly: Stupid, do not follow administration law, and 4) Lack of religion (Aristotle). For Romans, including Claudius, Britons belong to those categories because they often have long beards, long hair, no written language, and are violent. Also, they do not have any gods in common with the Romans.

In addition, it is possible Claudius refereed to Aristotle's theory of natural slavery. According to Aristotle, people who lack the capacity for rational deliberation are naturally slave to dominants, who are capable of rational deliberation; therefore, some people were naturally born to be slaves (Ward 2002). For Aristotle, by nature some are free, others slaves, so from Claudius' perspective, Romans are free, but Britons should be ruled. Clearly, the Roman Empire is a slave society, and slavery is an integral part of Roman civilization. The Sociologist Max Weber describes social condition in Rome.

Together (Aristocrats and slaves) they formed ?the basis for the special position held by the Roman aristocracy, a position which has no parallel in history. Even English aristocrats in the 18C could not equal Roman aristocrats in power, although their position was structurally similar (Weber 1897, 281). As Weber describes, there was a salient distinction between the Roman aristocracy and the slaves. It was the norm in the Roman society for slave owners to manage the tasks, awards, punishment, and even the life of their slaves.

How do Romans justify such salient social stratification? Claudius might consider it morally correct and, it is his duty to suppress tribal people in Britain. According to Oxford University Professor Stephen Kershaw, Plato believed those who are not inhabited by divine wisdom are better off when controlled by those who are, and Aristotle supports the ideology of slaves by nature **??**Kershaw 2010, 118). Bedoyere also said by promoting a way of life the Romans genuinely believed they benefited others, even by enslaving man, and their conquests were legitimate and morally justifiable (Bedoyere 2006). It is highly possible Claudius believed as a ruler, he should rule barbarians, such as in Britain.

Did Romans, especially Claudius, know about Greek philosophy? Most likely, they did. In Chedworth Roman Villa and Fishbourne Roman palace, wealthy citizens enjoyed mosaics of Greek mythology and gods. This evidence shows the strong relationship between Roman and Greek cultures. In Roman society, almost everyone, young women, soldiers of lower ranks, community members of both genders, and even some slaves were able to correspond by letters. The Vindolanda writing tablets show a considerable amount of documents written by ordinal people in the first century (Birley 2015). More specifically, according to Keith Bradley at University of Notre Dame, reflective Romans were also aware that the theory of natural slavery had been articulated **??**Bradley

1994, 133-4). Israeli historian Benjamin Issac also said "the Romans duly substitute themselves as the ideal rulers. As a result masters and slaves, rulers and subject people live in a symbiosis beneficial to both parties" **??**Issac 2003, 11).

Moreover, the Roman philosopher Cicero set up schools of Greek philosophy in Rome, and it had become fashionable for Roman aristocrats to have a Greek philosopher among his intimate friends and counselors (Bradley 1994). Remember, Claudius was an avid reader and writer, who studied hard when he was young. It is reasonable to believe Claudius understood Greek philosophy and the essence of Aristotle's natural slave theory and exercised it when he conquered barbarian territory, such as Britain.

11 IV.

12 CONCLUSION

With all of the above considerations in hand, I conclude the legitimate reasons for Claudius's British invasion are based on human rights, social welfare, and Greek philosophy. Adminius and Verica fled Britain and gave Claudius a valid reason, protecting human rights, for the invasion of Britain. From Claudius' perspective, the Roman army would be a salvation army to rescue innocent young men to save their land and social rights. Also, for Claudius, the invasion of Britain might expand social welfare for war veterans in the Roman army and their families and dependents. Colonies provide land and resources for them to start a new life after military service since retired soldiers usually did not own any land to go back. Moreover, Claudius sees the people of Britain as barbarians because of their unsophisticated physical and behavioral characteristics. Roman citizens were highly educated: even women were able to correspond in their own handwriting, and they enjoyed Greek mythology in their home settings. It is highly possible that Claudius refers to Greek philosophy: barbarianism and the theory of natural slavery. As Plato and Aristotle believe, Claudius also believes some people are born to rule (Romans), and other are born to be ruled (Britons). Human rights, social welfare, and Greek philosophy were the reasons identified as necessary to legitimatize the invasion of Britain. To hide his personal ambition to secure his position as an emperor, he used British refuges from tribal family members, colonies for retired soldiers, and Greek philosophy to legitimatize the British Invasion. After the Volume XV Issue VIII Version I 4 (H)

invasion, he never had to go to war again. He secured his title for 13 years until his death.

V.

13 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
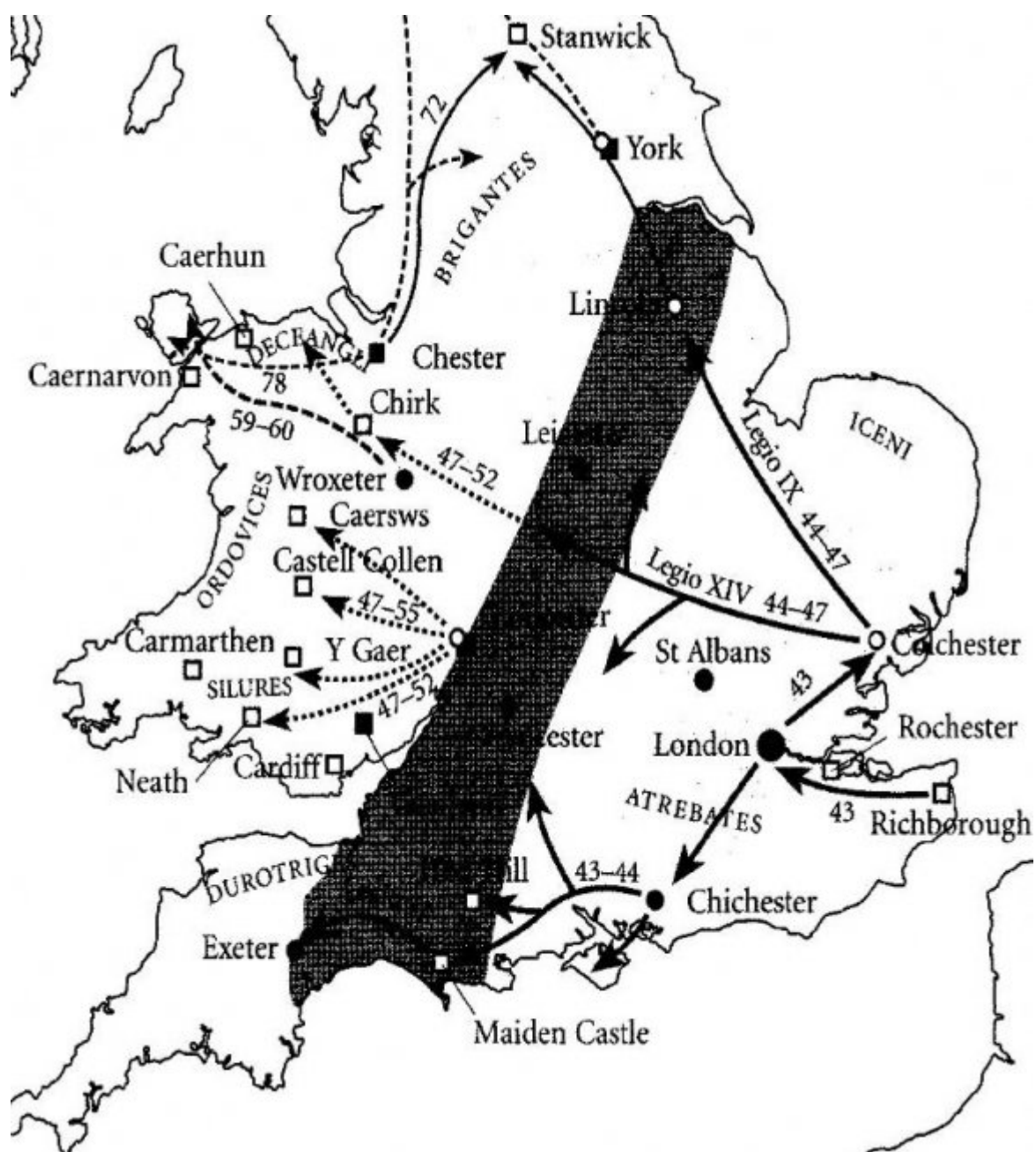
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Figure 1:

Figure 2:

Corinlum Museum, Chedworth Roman Villa and Bath
between July 17h and August 11th in 2015. Viewing
Roman villas in England was important for me to
understand the social structure of Roman Britain,
especially the slave (Britons) and master (Romans)
relationship. During the visit, I interviewed some of the
museum technicians and archeologists, who provided
me with a considerable knowledge of Roman Britain. In
August 2015, at Oxford, I interviewed Classics professor,
Stephen Kershaw, to correct information focusing on
Aristotle's Natural Slave Theory.
III.

Figure 3:

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