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The impact of medieval fortifications in North Wales throughout the Wars of the three Kingdoms



Figure1.0: View from Conway Castle from field survey 2018.

By Mark Kniveton

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Chapter I

The English Civil Wars for many started as Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham that formally marked the start of the conflict, or rather the revisionist interpretation, the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. All of the three kingdoms had experienced the possibility of invasion from Spain adding to what many saw in the gunpowder plot of 1605 as a Popish plot to undermine the government of England. These events would give the English government support 'to justify a policy of fining Catholic worshippers and executing Catholic clergy and those who sheltered them' (Laurence, Gibbons, 2011, p.31). The context of Catholic rebellion of using Ireland for an invasion into England raised fears from returning soldiers serving in foreign armies on the continent added to rumours of war between Protestant and Catholic spilling in to the British Isles a very real possibility. When Charles I ascended to power, the authority of foreign policy did not rest solely with him but also with parliament, which they exercised in restricting his income, in doing so placed king and parliament on the course for war.

The war for Charles I in Scotland; Ireland and England including North Wales exposed divisions with religion and royal power, firstly with Scotland and then Ireland. Charles I had few options to deal with invasion from Scotland by 1639, as experienced soldiers brought their knowledge back from the continent demonstrated when they overran the North of England. As Morrell argues even within strong royalist support the request for more ship money met with resistance in the county of Denbighshire. One example was the drain on the resources for the county militia added with 'rumours of invasions from Ireland or the continent' left the Welsh gentry vulnerable (Morrill, 1988, P.123). Consequently, this forced Charles I to raise an army with the money through parliament but with concessions. This gave parliament greater constitutional authority causing further division between parliament and King.

When Charles I faced rebellion from Ireland in 1641 parliament choose to postpone the army due to set sail for Dublin and by 1642 they faced forces raised by Charles I when he rejected the Militia Ordinance and raised his royal standard. This would not only see forces meet on the fields of battle such as Edgehill and Naseby among others, but conflict also throughout the Civil Wars spilled in to urbanised areas such as fortified towns that encompassed medieval castles. This resulted in both Charles I and parliament recognising the importance of defending medieval stone fortifications. The nature of warfare in Wales did not see large battles but control for Wales rested with the remaining fortifications. This resulted in the longest sieges throughout the Wars of the Three Kingdoms that became vital to royalist and parliamentary armies for control of Wales.

The nature of civil wars cannot avoid the involvement of the population rather than soldiers of two opposing armies and one structure or structures that would determine success was the medieval castles and fortress towns, they projected authority throughout Scotland; Ireland as well as England and Wales. Although by the seventeenth century, many fortifications had fallen in to ruin, nevertheless the Civil Wars brought castles and fortified towns back in to use and consequently for both royalist and parliamentary gentry they became vital for dominating the land and people once again throughout the Civil War.

This dissertation will first consider how and why medieval castles and fortified towns on the coast of North Wales from 1646 were to influence motivations and decisions for those who took the royalist or parliamentary stance. However, some contemporaries perhaps believed the age of the castle had ended with the introduction of gunpowder with larger ordinance. Furthermore, historians such as Brauer have recently argued 'The science of gunpowder weapons did make the traditional, vertical-walled castle obsolete' (Brauer, 2008, p.129). Therefore, this dissertation will

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also explore the effectiveness of ordnance that used gunpowder as Brauer suggests made castles obsolete and examine how medieval fortifications on the coast of North Wales resisted for so long. The dissertation will examine the counties of Caernarvonshire and Merioneth in which the castles and fortress towns of Conway, Caernarfon and the fortress of Harlech not only affected the direction and pace of the Civil War in North Wales, but also how they became vital for the strategic war aims of the royalist war effort in the Civil Wars. This not only prompted Charles I to support a reconstruction programme for the most important fortress towns, but also drew Anglesey's importance in possible landing sites for royalist support from Ireland.

The revisionist study by the local historian David Cooke on the Wars of the Three Kingdoms has concentrated on sieges of the Civil War, in his study *Yorkshire sieges of the Civil Wars* (Cooke, 2011). This gives foundation to the importance of sieges within the Civil Wars in England; however, the importance of medieval fortifications in Wales is absent because of the geographical limit covered in Cooke's study. In addition, because of this absence any comparable study between English and Welsh medieval fortifications undermines the importance fortifications in Wales contributed to the broader consequences in the course of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. Furthermore, although Cooke's narrative deals with the importance of coastal fortifications such as Hull and Scarborough, this highlights a gap in the historiography of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms in that fortifications throughout North and South Wales also contributed to supporting both royalist and parliamentarian success and reasons for their failure.

The coastal fortifications in Wales just as they did on the English coast provided an opportunity to maintain authority for both the King and parliament, with the intention of been supported from the sea. This importance is highlighted by Hutton and Reeves in *The Civil Wars: a military history of England Scotland and Ireland 1638 -1660*, which highlights not just their physical strength but their impact from successful resistance ‘served as proof of divine favour’ (Kenyon et al. 1998, p.200). However, there is no mention of the fortifications within North Wales. This unique strength, even without the naval superiority enjoyed by Edward I still provided a considerable influence throughout North Wales. This affected loyalty throughout Wales just as they had done in England. In addition, Wales is unique for two reasons, firstly, the unrestricted medieval construction of castles that expanded with fortress towns throughout Wales far exceeded the numbers compared to England, Scotland and Ireland making further academic discussion important if we are to understand how Wales influenced decisions of the gentry within the broader context in Wars of the Three Kingdoms. Secondly, parliament were mindful of royalist support from Catholic Ireland, by reinforcing the coast of North Wales from a possible landing of an Irish army would counter this threat but doing nothing would have wider repercussions that would spill in to England.

As the Civil War continued one consequence of maintaining fortresses resulted in a war of attrition, which neither parliament nor Charles I could afford to continue indefinitely, because of escalating costs. This contributed to the creation of a standing army for the state, the New Model Army. This would shift the reliance on militias’ raised for local defence to a professional army with greater motivation to bear arms for their state rather than for their county. However, the existing medieval fortifications still occupied continued to resist. As the historiography of Welsh involvement in military actions has related to larger engagements contemporary evidence from Sir Thomas Aston quoted by Phillips ‘The footmen principally Welsh

dropped their arms and ran away without an attempt to fight' (Phillips, 1878, pp.144-145). However, this would not be the case in North Wales.

This resulted in a different approach to warfare in North Wales where medieval fortifications dominated the land, with the nature of sieges required specialist soldiers and specialist equipment such as siege armour found in the National Civil War centre in Newark, qualified men in limited numbers also dictated the pace of when the sieges themselves took place. Furthermore, many secondary accounts suggest Wales became and remained a royalist stronghold from the outbreak of war until the end. There is no doubt that the individual fortress towns such as Conway did not capitulate immediately; Harlech was the last royalist stronghold to fall, however not all gentry in Wales were loyal to the royalist cause as the Archbishop of York, John Williams would demonstrate at Conway castle. In addition, the Welsh defence of Fortress towns in North Wales undermines the contemporary evidence of weak Welsh motivation to fight rather than flee because of the stubborn defence of coastal fortifications on the coast of North Wales, Conway; Caernarfon and Harlech remained vital in keeping a foothold for royalist forces in the hope for support from Ireland. This especially became critical when parliament discovered Charles I intention of support from Ireland and the pope; the urgency to capture fortifications in North Wales became significant upon the discovery of private correspondence, 'published by parliament... *the kings cabinet opened*' which prompted one leading Welsh royalist, Sir Trevor Williams to change sides (Hirst, 1986, p.257).

The historiography of the Civil Wars has concentrated on the Three Kingdoms, Scotland over religion, Ireland over land and England over loyalty to Charles I and his right to govern. However, Wales would be no less important in the actions of the English and Welsh royalist and parliamentarian gentry who made decisions of loyalty throughout the Civil War. The revisionist studies' that considers Welsh sieges only briefly mentions the sieges that took place in medieval Welsh fortifications throughout the War of the Three Kingdoms. Therefore, this study will attempt to re-address the importance of medieval fortifications on the coast of North Wales;

moreover, to highlight that a re-evaluation of academic discussion of other medieval fortress towns across Wales and their impact throughout the Civil War must also be addressed.

Although Cooke's revisionist study concentrates on Civil War sieges as previously mentioned, this relates to Yorkshire rather than any in North or South Wales and although Cooke highlights the coastal sieges of Hull and Scarborough, there is one important difference to the fortress towns of Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech. The fortifications of North Wales provided a far greater possibility of a landing by an Irish Catholic army to support the royalist cause on the North Welsh coast compared to English coastal fortifications that Cooke highlights. In addition, the proximity to the Irish coast also needs to be in context when considering Welsh contribution to the Civil Wars with the geographical proximity of the mainland to the Island of Anglesey. This made any landing a terrifying prospect considering propaganda portrayed the Irish committing gruesome atrocities from the Protestant depositions of 1641 onwards, one example recorded cutting the throat of Margaret Farnie's husband in front of her (Gibbons, 2007, p.228). One orthodox standpoint from the historian Norman Tucker concentrates on North Wales and does explore in detail relating to the actions at Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech among others. However, there is little discussion related to the evidence that Tucker presents in the appendix highlighted in *North Wales in the Civil War* (Tucker, 1958, p.175). This document sets out instructions to find landing places on the Island of Anglesey by Charles I because the risk of any invasion from being intercepted by parliamentarian ships would be reduced and there would be less interference from parliamentarian forces to counter the threat of an Irish army crossing the Menai Straits in to mainland Wales.

Therefore, my approach is also to examine how religious prejudice affected decisions and to explore how coastal fortifications became critical in maintaining authority on the coast of North Wales for both royalist and parliamentarian armies throughout the Civil Wars from 1646 in to the 1650s of Cromwell's invasion of Ireland. I will also consider the aspect of ordinance employed by both royalist and parliamentarian

armies within North Wales on the fortifications at Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech as specific examples rather than the large pitched battles that has dominated Civil War historiography such as Marston Moor and Naseby.

The conquest of Edward I provided the medieval castles and fortress towns the same authority in the seventeenth century as they had done in the thirteenth century. Although their construction meant to counter a medieval threat from the longbow and crossbow, both the Welsh gentry and Edward I recognised throughout the conquest they still held not just a physical presence but also their psychological dominance of hierarchical authority. Although with the advancement of technology, such as gunpowder and heavy ordinance as Brauer suggested this made such fortifications obsolete, however, gunpowder technology had its limits because the deployment of large ordinance required still proved difficult. The required resources even in the seventeenth century of moving ordinance by land drained the limited logistics by redirecting not only protection of the artillery train by soldiers but the resources to physically transport the ordinance rather than by ship (RA, (1642) *the first part of the principles of art military*).

The orthodox historiography of Wales's involvement within the Wars of the Three Kingdoms has a perception for those residing within Wales to have loyalty to the royalist cause. However, this perspective does not always appear that royalist support was overwhelming comparable to a parliamentarian or the neutralist standpoint as the historian Christopher Hill highlights one example that individual gentry also would determine the outcome of sieges in what many medieval fortifications had become private accommodation for Welsh and English Gentry. One such example is when 'Clarendon testifies to the existence of support for the Parliamentary cause...Cheshire and North Wales. (Hill, 1972, p62) this illustrates that stone fortifications in which the Welsh gentry occupied for a parliamentary cause became strongpoints in a war with very few defined front lines. This became more important as Welsh loyalty could change; one example occurred when the Archbishop John Williams 'turned to the parliamentarians' (Ashbee, 2015, p.16). This illustrates the gentry were prepared to

shift allegiance and thus challenge the perception of royalist loyalties in Wales and thus divide allegiance between royalist, parliamentarian and a neutralist stance throughout Wales as the Civil Wars progressed.

Chapter II

Medieval fortifications in Wales since their construction by Edward I are significant to the fabric of Welsh history, their purpose was to maintain order, stability and authority for Edward I. Although by the seventeenth century the English rule in Wales made the threat of rebellion against England remote, nevertheless events would soon demonstrate castles and fortress towns were a vital component of royal authority just as they were in Edward I's reign. The influence they projected reinforced the gentry's traditional right to enforce hierarchical authority, which the Welsh gentry were keen to maintain. Although many of the castles had fallen in to a state of ruin, even Conway Castle by 1627 'was near to ruin' (Ashbee, 2015, p.14). As such maintaining structures became expensive and by releasing them in to private ownership removed financial responsibility for Charles I and therefore increased his income after parliament had voted to grant 'tonnage and poundage for one year only' (Laurence and Gibbons, 2011, p.37). This trend of reducing the expenditure for the maintenance of medieval castles also affected Caernarfon at least internally, as one report states 'all quite faln down to the ground and the Tymber and the rest of the materials as iron and Glasse carryed away and nothing left that [is] variable' (Taylor, 2008, p.16). Therefore, in Caernarvonshire their traditional purpose was removed, reduction of this responsibility therefore limited royal authority to the Welsh gentry, with the exception of Harlech, only because of his judicial obligations for the assizes and quarter sessions to 'remain the sessions in the castle' (Ashbee, 2017, P.19) until the turmoil of the 1640s.

The decision to neglect the medieval coastal fortifications by Charles I not only limited royal authority to the Welsh gentry, but as atrocities on the continent escalated

within the Thirty Years War of the 1630s this would raise concerns across England when conflict in Germany appeared to involve ‘Catholic atrocities...of attacks against Protestants’ (Laurence, Gibbons, 2011, p.26). This conflict may have been far from Wales, however any sympathetic notions towards Catholics by Charles I to those who committed atrocities, illustrated in *The Lamentations of Germany Wherein as in a Glasse* (Laurence, Gibbons, 2011, p27) demonstrated Charles I’s loyalty for those residing within England and Wales. Therefore, atrocities abroad viewed even by an illiterate audience in England and Wales was so effective as cheap print made visual propaganda accessible to a wider audience, as Hill points out that ‘three a day for twenty years, though much faster between 1642 and 1649’ (Hill, 1980, p149). Furthermore, one contemporary account suggests provision to accommodate the Welsh through interpreters to bridge the language barrier as one account in 1644 from a William Griffith indicates aboard one of the three man of war ships off the coast of Anglesey ‘one Welshman of their company with whom our men conferred’ (Baron Hill manuscripts, 1644, Bangor University). This made defence from Catholic Ireland not just important but vital. When events of atrocities within the Irish rebellion of 1641 occurred, from the same unrestricted censorship of seventeenth century propaganda, this provided a sense of urgency that resulted in reinforcing further fears not only in England but more so within Wales because of an unprotected coastline, which consequently split allegiance to the king. As the historian Norman Tucker argues ‘In South Caernarvonshire men like Thomas Madryn (the Sheriff), Thomas Glynne of Glynllifon ...Sir William Williams of Vaenol, had leanings towards the Puritan party...but compelled by circumstances’ Tucker, 1958, pp21-22).

The events across the continent and the Irish Sea would have profound importance to an Island nation such as England throughout the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, as coastal fortifications became critical with importing support from Ireland became the easiest method of transporting money; soldiers; arms and ordinance. This placed such fortifications and fortified towns such as Conway and Caernarfon in a precarious position. This increased the possibility of a secure bridgehead for Charles I in which to expand the landing of any Irish soldiers especially from Anglesey. Therefore, the

importance for royalist support against parliamentarian armies meant Wales became vital for Charles I to continue a war of attrition, rather than rely on the success or failure of the larger battles, the nature of sieges would influence success or failure.

As the Wars of the Three Kingdoms escalated drawing support from Scotland, England and Ireland, for Charles I and Thomas Fairfax the events after the sacking of the baggage train at Naseby confirmed parliament's fears of Charles I intention for Irish support that the private letters revealed within the King's cabinet. The private letters revealed Charles I intention to use Irish support against parliament, 'I am confidently assured of a considerable and sudden supply of men from Ireland' (BL, special collection, *The Kings Cabinet opened* (1645) p.9). Although the letters were private and never intended for a public audience once revealed in parliament the document thereafter undermined the relationship between Charles I and his loyal subjects. This goes some way to reveal why loyalty for Charles I diminished after the announcement in parliament. Although as the Earl of Manchester had pointed out "you may win all the battles but the king will remain the king" (Constitutional Revolution and Civil War, 2009) many contemporaries understood this was correct thus parliament could not afford a war of attrition. In addition, if we are to accept de Groot's argument that 'the people demanded Royal privacy be opened to public scrutiny' and 'given access to his unguarded moments' then for many it would be difficult to understand the King could separate his private thoughts from his public actions. Therefore, once the private letters of Charles I became public debate over what indicates as thousands in money and arms '£30000 ready 10,000 muskets 2000 pistols 800 barrels of powder ... +£30000 more' ((BL, special collection, *The Kings Cabinet opened* (1645) pp.19-20). This placed the support from Ireland vital to the royalist war effort, which parliament and many others were now aware of the depth of support Charles I had relied on from Ireland. The situation with the announcement of the documents revealed in 1645 placed Anglesey as primary concern for parliament because of the plans that Charles I wrote as options for possible landing places on the Island (Tucker, 1958, p.175). This placed the fortifications on the coast of North Wales integral to the success of any plans to land an Irish army on Anglesey,

otherwise the intended forces would be able to land elsewhere on the North Welsh coast but would be exposed to a parliamentarian threat. This made Caernarfon vital if not taken.

Moreover, by 1646 the evidence Phillips suggests that Charles I through the Earl of Glamorgan entered into a treaty where '10, 000 of the Irish were to land soon at Chester' (Phillips, 1878, p.349). This further reinforced to many gentry in England and Wales that the concessions Charles I made to obtain Catholic support provided a reason why parliament's motivation in laying siege at Conway and Harlech, but most importantly Caernarfon because of the castle's geographical proximity to the island of Anglesey.

The nature of seventeenth century warfare depended on the recruitment of militias drawn from local towns and villages; this meant holding castles and fortified towns became vital in controlling these militias. The loss of each fortified town or castle had a psychological impact on the local authority. One example in Denbighshire 'the gentry (already anxious about rumours of invasions from Ireland or the continent) found the prospect of being left without local defence intolerable' (Owens, 1988, p.123).

The defence and subsequent sieges of the fortifications and castle towns of Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech require individual analysis even though they are all sited on the North Welsh coast. Firstly, the royalists identified the importance of Conway's Castle and fortified walls when Charles I instructed Archbishop John Williams to begin preparations for defence of the castle and town walls. This however became limited once parliamentary soldiers breached the town walls as the number defending the town wall of Conway was insufficient to repulse the second attempt by Major

General Mittons account of 1646 as the defences of the town was left to '22 soldiers of fortune, 50 towns men' (BL, 1646a). Although this parliamentary evidence of the siege makes clear that Mitton had to storm Conway he did so with the 'advice of Doctor Williams... Arch bishop of Yorke' (BL, 1646a). This document also illustrates the lack of ordnance used against the town walls as the necessity to use scaling ladders is mentioned within the account, which further highlights when faced with laying siege to the castle itself Mitton could not storm it successfully but John Owen held out until 'November 18th, the Conway garrison marched out into the town' (Tucker, 1958, p.125).

Second, Caernarfon also became difficult to breach as 'two desperate sallies, but on both occasions were beaten back' (Philips, 1878, p365) this would indicate that storming the defences was impractical, undermining was not possible because as with Conway and Harlech, Caernarfon is built on a rocky outcrop. Moreover, the archaeological evidence from the limited impact scars by ordinance against Caernarfon castle from recent field surveys I conducted, which even for England 'have seen almost no investigation' (Foard, Morris, 2012, p.128). There is only one impact scar (Fig 1.1), however this individual evidence suggests the use of cannon was not one of the reasons for the success of Mitton but the 'considerable assistance from the county in conducting this siege' (Philips, 1878, p.365). This evidence suggests local loyalties provided assistance against the royalist garrison was neither royalist nor neutral. One individual that is notably mentioned is Colonel Thomas Glynne, a Colonel within the county militia he 'swiftly changed sides when parliamentarian forces invaded the county in the spring of 1646' (Healy, 2010,). Furthermore, one pamphlet, *The Taking of Carnarvon* relating to the surrender of Caernarfon suggests the castle of 'great strength and of great use' with also a reference to 'the conveniency of bringing in of divers foreign forces...often done to serve the King against the parliament and Kingdom' (Phillips, 1874, pp.309-310). This illustrates parliaments motivation to bring fortifications of North Wales under the authority of parliament to counter any threat from foreign forces.

The third castle in this study is Harlech, the last royalist stronghold to fall to parliament and within the articles of surrender highlights another use for the medieval fortifications just as Caernarfon and Conway provided the means to store 'ordnance, arms, ammunition and provisions of war' (Philips, 1874, p333). This highlights their importance considering the logistics involved in providing for an Irish army of 10,000 that Charles I intended to support his cause.

The medieval fortifications importance also has to consider the technological advancement since their construction as the use of ordnance became more common in seventeenth century warfare, however, the introduction of even the larger ordnance did not make the medieval fortifications obsolete. Therefore, three considerations used by royalist and parliamentary armies require further analysis, such as the type of ordnance, the transportation and the effectiveness, for the purpose of this study, on medieval fortifications. Firstly, the classification of ordnance fell in to two main types. The siege guns were the 'cannon, demi-cannon and sometimes the perrier'...and the lighter type such as the 'culverin, saker and falcon' (Henry, 2005, pp.9-10). This limited the parliamentary army intent on besieging medieval fortifications to the more larger siege ordnance, with the exception of large mortar shot found at Harlech (Fig 1.3), however this evidence is also limited because of the lack of evidence of the original locations from where each shot was found from archaeological survey information. Secondly, because of the considerable resources for the transportation of siege ordnance the resources required would be either '34 oxen... or 100 men could pull a Demi-cannon' (Henry, 2005, p.23). Moreover, one example of the instruction describes hundreds of pounds of powder in weight used in the firing of cannons (Smith, 1643, p.17). This made besieging Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech extremely difficult for any length of time, especially when considering the topography of North Wales was far from ideal to transport the large artillery train needed. The third question of effectiveness is difficult to assess, as there appears to be no archaeological evidence of sustained damage to any of the fortifications exterior

walls at Conway, Caernarfon or Harlech fortifications after a recent field survey I conducted. The only exception to suggest the use of ordinance is evident on the Queen's Gate exterior at Caernarfon (Fig 1.2), although this evidence is also limited because of difficulty in dating the evidence.

Although, Henry suggests it would require 'a projectile of up to 63lb in weight ...very little could survive the continuous bombardment (Henry, 2005, p.41) this would require even greater resources to be used in a siege. The three fortifications at Conway, Caernarfon or Harlech appear to show little evidence to suggest that the use of ordinance larger than a Demi-cannon, with the exception of the mortar ordnance. Other evidence from a contemporary pamphlet records the parliamentarian perspective, which makes no mention of any ordinance used against the town walls at Conway, instead the use of scaling ladders that were 'a yard and a half too short' (Coward, Gaunt, 1646 p325) are recorded to achieve Mitton's success to take the town, but ineffective on the higher castle walls.

Chapter III

The unfinished business of Ireland by 1649 had not gone away with the execution of Charles I, as Hill argues 'Papists were regarded as agents of a foreign power' (Hill, 1980, P.148), this left parliament still needing to resolve their influence and deal with the Papists in Ireland. The religious prejudice threat could not be ignored which left unchecked undermined the English parliament's authority. The choice for parliament by 1649 as to deal with the Scottish or Irish threat first lay with the mistrust of the Irish, which singled them out in comparison to other prisoners parliament had captured. One account illustrates the treatment of the Irish prisoners captured at Caernarfon in a parliamentary chronicle told of them 'binding them back to back, cast them overboard' (Coward, Gaunt, 1646 p529). This treatment throughout the 1640s illustrates soldiers indoctrinated against a Irish papist threat that Cromwell commanded had few sympathetic supporters, moreover, the proximity of North Wales where Welsh grievances and religious conflict could occur became for many a fight for national survival between Ireland and England where Wales geographically caught in the middle.

The soldiers that Cromwell commanded had godly convictions against what many believed as a Popish threat from Ireland also addressed some of the previous Welsh grievances raised with Charles I that had the intent 'to have the Papists removed out of the country'. The first grievance on the agenda related to the removal of Irish Papists in Wales suggesting the importance religion influenced local concerns in Wales (Phillips, 1878, pp.304-306). The Irish Catholic problem as early as 1643 highlights one example from a pocket book issued to common soldiers in 1644, *Cromwell's Soldier's Catechism*. This book from the early stages of the Civil War

gives instruction for the common soldier to ‘fight to recover the king out of the hands of a Popifh maligrant company’ (RA Archives, 1642), which by 1649 even with the execution of Charles I the old grievances had not gone away. It would mean rather than fight in Wales and widen the conflict throughout Wales, invasion of Ireland for Cromwell was critical.

The English parliament could not afford to have rebellion within Wales when dealing with Catholic’s not just in Ireland but also in England and Wales. This was especially true of the treatment of Irish and papist born in Ireland, which is illustrated in one parliamentary ordinance of 1644, which interestingly states ‘no quarter shall be given...either upon the sea or within this kingdom, or the dominion of Wales’ (Coward, Gaunt, 1644, p.530). This makes clear that the Irish or papist born were to be exempt from the rules of capitulations and agreements, for example sieges. Moreover, by specifically referring to the dominion of Wales suggests even with the mention of a separate geographical identity further reinforced parliaments intention to that Wales fell under the same laws as England that papists had no safe haven.

Furthermore, the Civil War had resulted in the “‘largest loss of life ever, including the First World War”’ (The Stuarts: A Bloody Reign, 2018) of many towns and villages throughout England and Wales along with the number of castles and fortified homes the gentry possessed. To cause further destruction of property and bring further Welsh casualties would undermine the authority of the Welsh gentry making their loyalty to parliament even more attractive.

England and Wales divided by 1655 in to twelve districts administered by military governors, but the economics of war remained significant in not only keeping the army paid was an endemic problem within the Civil Wars, which had forced parliament since 1653 to ‘reduce the size (and cost) of the army’ (Laurence, Gibbons, 2011, p.99). In one example, fortresses such as Conway continued to ‘remain operational’ (Ashbee, 2015, p.16). This highlights the importance parliament still

placed on fortifications on the coast of North Wales, moreover the importance of siege artillery appears from Foard's study of ordnance 'field artillery survived the stringent cost cutting' (Foard, 2012, p.83). This illustrates parliament's priority for maintaining all ordnance for such tasks as sieges or for field armies especially when faced with the cost of maintaining not just the New Model Army but also money to pay for Cromwell's invasion of Ireland. The campaign for Cromwell could not be allowed to descend into a war of attrition as the historian Derek Hirst points out 'he had an eye to a hostile audience on both sides of the Irish Sea' (Hirst, 1986, p.295). Therefore, in providing authority along the Western coastline of North Wales not only secured possible supply routes to Dublin it also provided stability in North Wales considering the South Wales revolt and the naval mutiny of 1648 (Plant, 2010). In addition, the castle provided at a greatly reduced cost the means to control large areas with limited soldiers in comparison maintaining a large field army, which still enforced the authority of parliament. Moreover, medieval fortifications also provided a secure means for ordnance; arms; powder and provisions for an army especially one that would sail to Ireland if needed to be further reinforced.

Therefore, the medieval fortifications' importance continued to provide stability on the coast of North Wales during and after Cromwell's invasion of Ireland within the uncertain times of the 1650s when social, judicial and military changes took place after the execution of Charles I. The order from parliament for the slighting of medieval fortifications such as Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech only occurred after the completion of Irish subjugation. This highlights even with a naval supremacy in the Irish Sea that parliament achieved, the medieval fortifications on the coast of North Wales played a vital role in the strategic planning, execution and conclusion of the Irish campaign.

One point that also requires attention is the actions of royalist and parliamentary naval actions and their bearing on the Wars of the Three Kingdoms within the Irish

sea and their impact on English and Welsh loyalty, however this study cannot explore the depth of analysis required because of limited space available. This context cannot be in isolation because medieval fortifications on the coast of North Wales still provided coastal security from invasion threats bringing confidence and thus stability to the Welsh gentry. Moreover, one example demonstrates parliament still faced problems at sea regardless of their dominance as Bernard Capp illustrates in his description of the escalation of the fleet revolt in 1648 (Kenyon et al. 1998, pp182-183).

In conclusion, this study has highlighted the religious prejudice that occurred throughout the British Isles and thus exposed divisions within each of the Three Kingdoms, which through a re-evaluation of the castles and fortress towns on the coast of North Wales they all provided a vital resource throughout the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. The medieval fortress, were not obsolete as historians such as Brauer claim but remained a key part in royalist and parliamentary strategic planning, even with the advancement of gunpowder technology and ordinance in the seventeenth century. Consequently, parliament's decision to invade North Wales and lay siege to the medieval fortifications on the West coast of North Wales limited royalist support predominantly from Ireland and therefore restricted sufficient levels of soldiers to influence the outcome of the Civil War. The three examples used in this study, Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech all became critical for both parliament and royalist armies to reinforce their position or maintain their influence in North Wales. Moreover, as Cooke highlights English sieges, in particular in Yorkshire and as Foard's studies concentrate also on an English perspective, this highlights that further study must be addressed to include more Welsh fortifications to explore their impact throughout the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.

The impact of fortress towns and castles on the coast of North Wales illustrates the importance medieval fortifications contributed to both royalist and parliamentary motivation, especially when considering the ratio of medieval fortifications in Wales compared to England, Scotland and Ireland. This ratio contributed to revealing

Charles I's plans that through Wales medieval fortifications did become a component of Charles I's plans as a means to reinforce his royalist armies in England from Ireland through Anglesey. In doing so would require a secure coastline in which to conduct such moves, suggesting the reason why Charles reinforced Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech. In addition, this also explains why parliament made the decision to allocate such resources to besiege Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech that resulted in the longest sieges of the Civil War. This became vital once the announcement of Irish Catholic support from the captured private correspondence of Charles I after the battle of Naseby.

After the execution of Charles I the medieval fortifications on the coast of North Wales continued to provide the stability as their contribution, physically and physiologically remained vital for Cromwell's campaign to successfully conduct his conquest of Ireland. This was especially important after the revolt in South Wales and the naval revolt of 1648. A testament of the medieval fortifications on the coast of North Wales is evident with the orders of parliament that to slight Conway, Caernarfon and Harlech only occurred in the 1660s. Therefore, the medieval fortifications of these fortress towns and castles all impacted royalist motivations to protect possible support from Ireland, when they did capitulate to parliament it was not due to the use of gunpowder used by large ordnance but only when the garrisons surrendered themselves. They also continued to provide a vital projection of authority not only throughout the Wars of the Three Kingdoms but also including Cromwell's invasion of Ireland. This illustrates the importance the contribution medieval fortifications on the coast of North Wales provided for King and parliament throughout the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.

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Appendix



Figure 1.1: Outer wall of Caernarfon Castle, Queens gate photograph from field survey 2018.

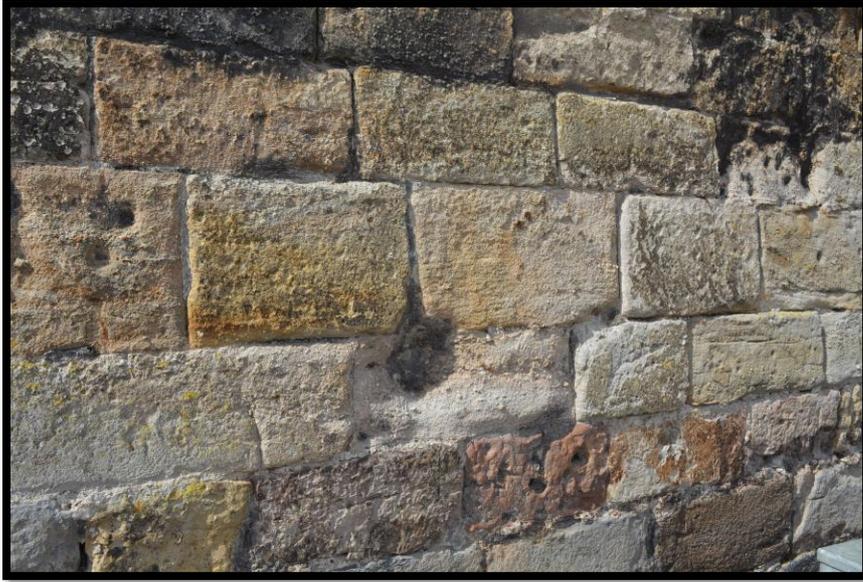


Figure 1.2: Outer wall of Caernarfon Castle, Queens gate photograph from field survey 2018.



Figure 1.3: Mortar shot located within Harlech castle from field survey 2018.