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Aspects of Early Rural Settlement in West Cornwall, UK. Some Indications from Later Records

1 Introduction

The investigation of issues concerning early rural settlement and landscape organisation in Europe is a task fraught with difficulty. The lack of contemporary documentation, together with the misinterpretation of the sources that there are has led to some misguided interpretations[1]. This study seeks to explore familiar themes of early medieval landscape organisation through using a range of often later sources that are interpreted with regard to theories of territoriality and evolving territorialisation. A detailed local study in Cornwall may then be placed in the context of wider developments in terms of settlement, society, economy and polity.

Cornwall contains a complex and particularly rich assemblage of historical and archaeological material which requires further analysis in order to make sense of its meaning. Although it may not be regarded as a nation state, Cornwall is an individual and separately identifiable region with a distinct, Celtic-speaking history which has not received the same attention as other 'Celtic' regions. Many investigations in other Celtic regions have been greatly aided by a rich assemblage of early documentary material[2], which has enabled a thorough and uniformly systematic assessment of early landscape organisation. Cornwall however does not have any comparable corpus to aid such a general reconstruction, though many workers such as Preston-Jones and Rose (1986, 137-38) stress the possibilities of early systems of landscape organisation in Cornwall that are comparable to other areas, and detailed recent works on specific areas of Cornish evidence tend to support such a contention.[3] The very early (ninth to early tenth century) domination of the area by an Anglo-Saxon hegemony goes some way to explain this lack of a pre-English systematic documentary source.

It is essential to recognise that the sites and zones that are of interest to archaeologists and historians should not be placed within a geographical vacuum. Early workers such as Vinogradoff (1905) and Jolliffe (1926, 1933) noted the importance of a territorial framework, but only more recently has the analysis of landscape organisation and the placing of archaeological sites into a territorial framework become a central focus.[4] A reconstructed framework of landscape organisation can provide a context within which to understand the products of early societies that are being uncovered by archaeologists and historians. In addition however, it is crucial to acknowledge that spatial structures should no longer be seen simply as an arena in which social life unfolds, but rather as a medium through which social relations are produced and reproduced. In this respect, exercises of landscape organisation and territorialisation are both key social practices and important cultural experiences.

It is not my intention to undermine the work of historians and archaeologists. Rather, I intend to pro-

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1 Of particular note here are the ethnic interpretations and accompanying 'waves of invasion' hypotheses that many workers held earlier this century.

2 In particular I am thinking of the large collection of ninth century charters referring to cases in a small region of eastern Brittany (Davies 1988), or the law codes of Ireland such as the *Crith Gablach* (Binchy 1941 and McLeod 1986). For a particularly good law code contextualisation of a largely morphological investigation of early Irish settlement forms, see Stout 1991. Useful law tracts also pertain to early Wales (see Jones 1976) and Scotland; (the *Senchus Fern'Alban* for instance is utilised by Lamont). Even later works that aggregate the surviving material of earlier times have been very useful for producing a systematic territorial analysis of a region. McErlean 1983 used the seventeenth century Calendar of Patent Rolls of James I for his investigation of townlands while the interpretation of early land organisation on the Isle of Man has greatly utilised the nineteenth century Atlas of quarterlands by James Woods (see Davies 1956).

3 Thomas 1994 for instance, charts the development of early Christian activity within a structured Cornish society of the middle of the first millennium, while Hooke 1994 clarifies and interprets the pre-Conquest charter material for Cornwall.

4 See for instance the works of Phythian-Adams 1978; Michelmore 1979; Hooke 1982, 1985; Winchester 1987; Driscoll 1991 and Hadley 1996.

mote the acknowledgement of the importance of spatial experience and order through concepts of territoriality. It is through notions of territory that the landscape is ordered and it is therefore within the context of territoriality that we may understand the organisation of that landscape. Following a short discussion of the notion of territoriality, section 2 refers to the use of this concept. Dodgshon's organisational perspective avoids the reification of period-based cultural 'traditions' by seeking to uncover an evolving relationship between society and space. A study of Cornwall that synthesises notions of landscape order and societal development is called for.

A wider exploration of territorial experiences and formations in other Celtic-speaking regions is explored in section 3 with the intention of uncovering ways in which we can perceive the early territorial development of Cornwall. Some methods of relating the theory and the reality in Cornwall are then discussed in section 4, stressing the importance of flexibility and clarity both in terms of the interpretation and the language used to communicate expressions of landscape organisation. Actual territorial patterns in west Cornwall are then reconstructed in section 5 through a broad range of source material. A detailed case study is considered in section 6, in which the territorial expression of a later medieval system of justice and local government is related to the proposed vestiges of a much earlier scheme of administration and exploitation.

2 Territoriality; landscape, society and context

In order to understand changes that have occurred within society one should look at the way society organises the landscape which it not only occupies, but of which it is an integral part. In this respect, as a product of successive societies, the landscape itself may be seen as a source for the study of previous societies. Processes of territorialisation are consequent upon particular relationships of society and space that are represented through the medium of landscape organisation. The indivisible nature of landscape and society means that an emerging territorial framework which results from such processes as territorialisation can be related to societal transformations. The identification and representation of purpose in terms of territorial organisation allows the intentions and designs of such mechanisms to be examined. The recognition and interpretation of a territorial 'culture' opens up debate on the experiences, meanings and expressions of territorial organisation. An investigation of the processes of territorialisation necessarily entails an analysis of social processes. In this respect, the human agency of territorialisation may be articulated through the expression 'territoriality'; a term at the very heart of the space/society relationship.

Territoriality can be defined as "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area" (Sack 1986, 19). Territoriality implies, by definition, a form of classification by area, a form of communication such as a marker sign or boundary, and an attempt at enforcing control or restraint over access to resources. Its logic rests on the advantages that stem from these interconnected relationships (Sack 1986, 21-22). Because territoriality is always socially constructed, an understanding of the spatial strategies that have been used to control space can potentially give a far deeper knowledge of the meanings, reasons and acts of will that occur in the society in which they operate.

Gold (1982, 53-54) argues that "the most important facet of territoriality is that it can create a stable and unobtrusive framework for the orderly conduct of everyday life". Therefore, a society with changing needs attaches changing importance and meanings to its territorial framework at various levels. Biddick (1990) for instance, saw the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Britain being mirrored by a change from using territorial management as a vehicle for enhanced status, to one which facilitated commercialism and the creation of money. Biddick (1990, 9) articulates this transition succinctly by commenting that "land left the sphere of personal relationships and became property". Although the perception of territory over this period can be seen to have been transformed, the underlying reasons for the existence of territories remained consistent, namely, the maintenance of control and influence over a geographical area.

"Whether powers were full or partial and held by greater or lesser rulers, they tended to be defined in relation to territory" (Davies 1990, 16). This concern for the control and articulation of power is a very important aspect of the territorial strategy. Working in a Scottish context, Driscoll (1991, 83) argues that power "flowed from the land. Consequently the basis for understanding state institutions is an understanding of how land was controlled and how agricultural production was managed. At this most fundamental level it is the patterns of landscape organisation that we must seek to understand, that is we must seek to produce a coherent image of the early medieval landscape with its attendant social practices and political institutions". Therefore, if land is seen as the ultimate source of wealth, then the territorial control and organisation of the land's resources can be seen as the key to power-broking in any society.

It is axiomatic therefore, that in order to understand the purpose and meaning behind strategies of territoriality we must look toward emerging systems of power and control within societies. Territoriality, however, is also an experience that is associated with cultural, social and economic relationships. "Territoriality, as a component of power, is not only a means of creating and maintaining order, but is a device to create and maintain much of the geographic context through which we experience the world and give it meaning" (Sack 1986, 219). In this sense, there is a need to focus on the experience, as well as the functions and use of territory.

Territory and territoriality are important aspects of the relationship between society and space. The development of territoriality and territorialisation however needs to be approached and interpreted in practice. In this respect, Dodgshon's (1987) thesis of developing territoriality provides a useful context in which to view the more specific territorial developments that are the focus of this study. Dodgshon's organisational perspective (1987, 130-165) suggests that as societies become more organised, institutions develop a more sophisticated sense of territoriality, with both increasing hierarchalisation and specialisation. The horizontal network of spatially defined subsystems, together with a vertically structured organisation of stratified groups allowed more complete control, and were better adapted to the administrative requirements of large and complex societies. In this way, older patterns of spatial order such as tribal divisions, were preserved in a different form, along the lines of newer principles of territorial order. Dodgshon's 'totalising' perspective challenges period-based approaches in order to explain the evolution of the relationship between society and space in terms of territorial development and unfolding systems of spatial organisation which are deeply embedded in social order and cultural expression. The nature of territoriality is as a stable framework for the formation, conduct and development of society which evolved at a number of rates and scales so as to reflect the transforming conditions of society.

An exploration of the developing sense of territoriality will aid an understanding of the evolution from tribal to kinship to feudal to class based systems. Feudalism for instance generated a distinct form of spatial order that utilised a complex system of lordship for purposes of regulation and exploitation in terms of both society and territory (Dodgshon 1990, 256). In this sense, the significance of developing territoriality and territorialisation is as a focus on the evolving patterns and processes of the social organisation and production of space. Issues regarding the transformation of the experience of time and space may therefore be addressed. Increasing territorial order and a more sophisticated notion of territoriality brought about alterations whereby communities of kin became communities of locality. Similarly, increasingly focused modes of organisation brought "respect for the discipline of the calendar rather than the seasons" (Loyn 1974, 13).

Continuity is an important theme when examining the prevailing patterns, forms and perceptions of institutions as an evolving whole. An investigation into territoriality means that actual settlements and site-specific phenomena, or even the physical boundaries, are less important in terms of continuity than the ideals and purposes of landscape division. Ideas of landscape organisation always rest on previous notions of organisation, so raising the importance of context and continuity.

In addition to the search for general evolutionary trends in territorial development, a focus on context also highlights the potential importance of localised factors in both time and space. Wider landscape developments and societal transitions vary both spatially and temporally, alluding to what Abels (1988, 116) describes as a flexible combination of "ideas, customs and innovations differing according to need and locale". Therefore, in order to achieve a deeper and wider understanding of the processes and patterns, we need to look at more detailed, local studies, while drawing parallels over both space and time.

It should be emphasised that investigations focusing on territoriality and territorial development necessarily draw attention to social context in a way that has been missed by many previous studies of pre-modern Britain. In west Cornwall for instance, Newcombe's (1968, 1970) statistical investigations of archaeological sites in west Penwith are a good example of an approach that lacks such a 'societal context'. His 'new geography' positivist approach, using an almost geometrical analysis of sites, failed to take into account the social production and division of space and thereby failed to provide any real explanation grounded within a contemporary social context. With these problems in mind, Phythian-Adams (1978, 39) indicated the importance of placing elements within a territorial context, "rather than socially undifferentiated regional maps of drift geology", demonstrating the need for detailed local studies "which seek to bring together all the evidence in specific topographical contexts".

The process of bringing together a wide range of evidence is particularly cogent for a study of emerging medieval territoriality. The lack of a single systematic and comprehensive source necessarily demands a rigorous search for a variety of source

material; both direct and indirect. A broad-based investigation will therefore be provided with a rich context within which to view landscape and societal developments. This study seeks to provide a synthesis of landscape and social evolution, based upon a number of indirect sources, which is comparable to what is known in other regions. In this sense, this investigation is concerned with the interpretation of clues and the relation of particular localised developments to wider processes and organisational theories.

The need for local studies, that people such as Phythian-Adams (1978, 1) allude to, should be underlined. It is through the synthesis of a wide range of material and the interpretation of signs that a detailed reconstruction of local territorial development can be achieved. Such developments in terms of landscape organisational strategies must be seen within their social context and related to societal transformations. This 'context-rich' local study can then be related to developing territorial experiences in other regions.

3 Contextual background; emerging administrative frameworks in Celtic-speaking regions

The extension of the power of the state through specialised hierarchies of administration and control can be seen to mirror the increasing importance of notions of territoriality in an increasingly delineated landscape of known territorial units. In attempting to comprehend the essence of early societies and the nature of their interaction with the environment, one has to consider the access, uses and manifestations of power. The existence of ancient 'pre-state' territorial recognition seems to be a common element throughout the British Isles, with later, more tightly defined administrative units taking on the form of previous territorial entities of various types. A short review of some of these supposed units in Celtic-speaking areas can act as a useful introduction for the work that I have done in Cornwall.

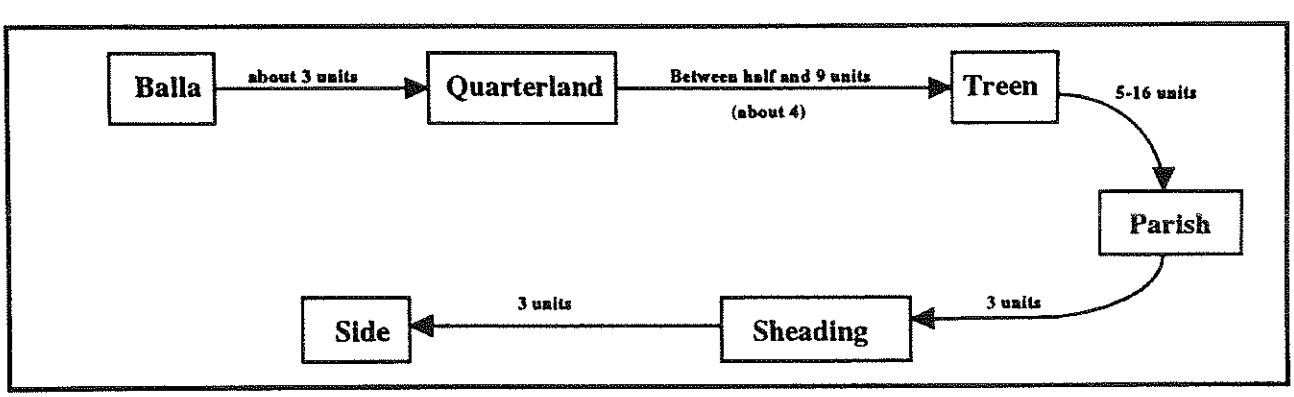
The Isle of Man for instance, possessed a complex and highly regulated landscape organisational system based around *quarters, treens, parishes* and *sheadings* (Davies 1956; Megaw 1978). Although there is some considerable variation in the actual numbers, these units appear to make up a complex and well understood hierarchy of specialised exploitational elements in the landscape, as shown in Fig. 1.

In Brittany, an archaic system of landscape organisation reveals itself in the later structures of the communes or *plebs* (Flatres 1977; Davies 1981, 1988). Ireland has a highly developed and surprisingly understudied early organisational system based around such units as the *catron,* the *gnive* and the *ballybetagh* (Hogan 1929; Graham 1970b), so that McErlean (1983) was able to draw up a structured ideal of hierarchical landscape organisational order for each of the provinces, as shown in Fig. 2.

From Wales come law documents setting out strict guidelines for systematic landscape division based around specialised territorial units (Lloyd 1911; Davies 1982, 1990). In an 'ideal' version of this territorial hierarchy, Jones (1976) used the medieval code known as the Book of Iowerth to display an 'all encompassing' model based very solidly upon an estate system.[5] The purpose and general style of these administrative territorial hierarchies seems to be constant, with a system embracing many functions in a variety of forms. We see flexibility and adaptability within a systematic model of territorial control.

In Scotland we find a number of hierarchical systems involving such units as the *davoch*, the *pennyland,* the *baillebetagh* and the *ploughgate.* Lamont (1957/8, 1966) investigated in great detail the administrative and economic units of the Scottish island of Islay and produced a very revealing account of control and resource exploitation through a highly developed system of tributes, dues and services,

Fig. 1. - *The territorial hierarchy in the Isle of Man.*



[5] See the Book of Iowerth scheme on figure 3.

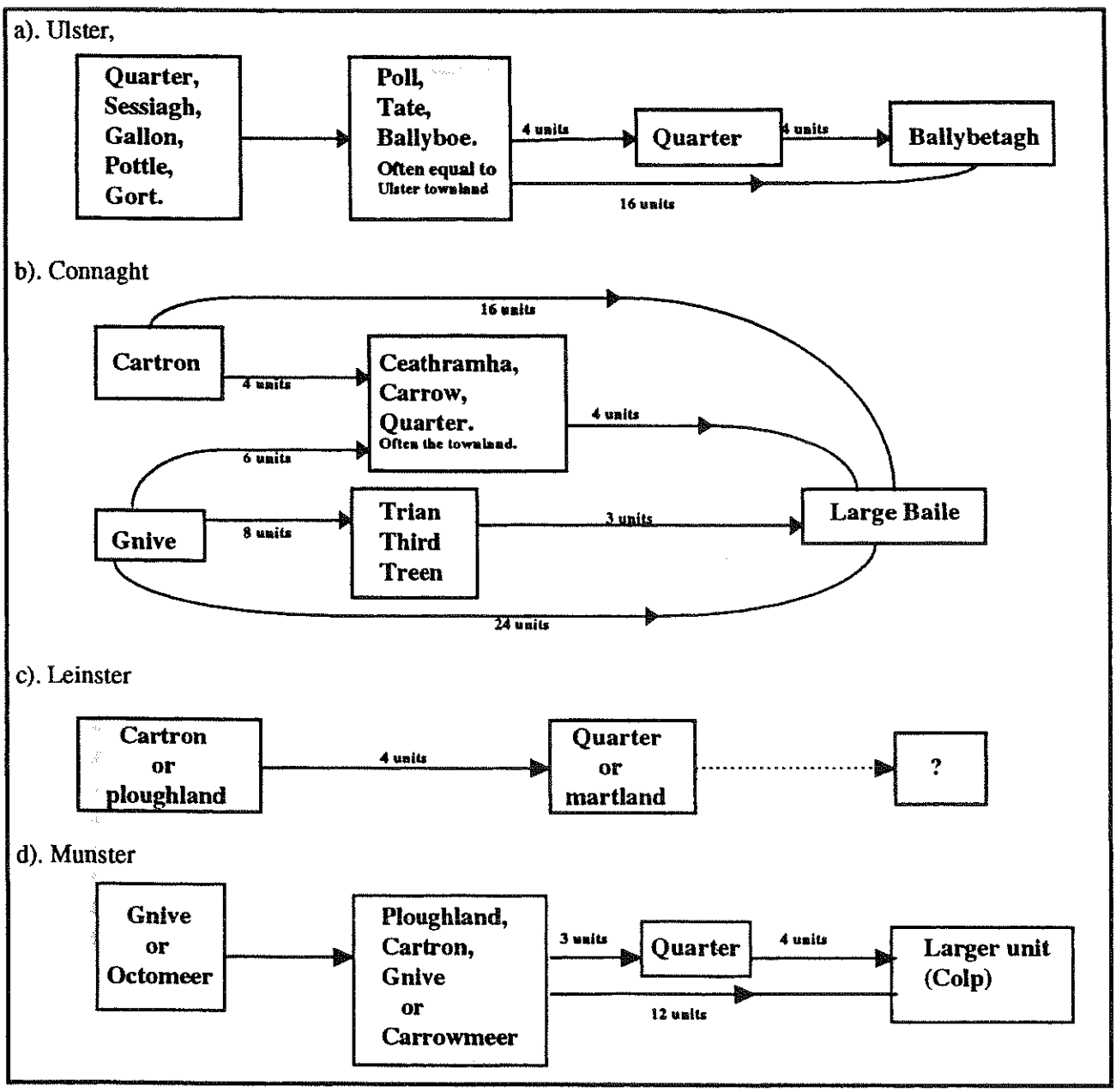


Fig. 2. - *The territorial hierarchy of Ireland (after McErlean 1983).*

based upon often strict codes of land division (see Fig. 4).

The important issue to comprehend is how the emerging systems of territorial control interpreted older notions of organisation. Though terms, languages and even territorial form differ somewhat throughout Scotland, the nature or 'style' of territorialisation may show many common elements. Units

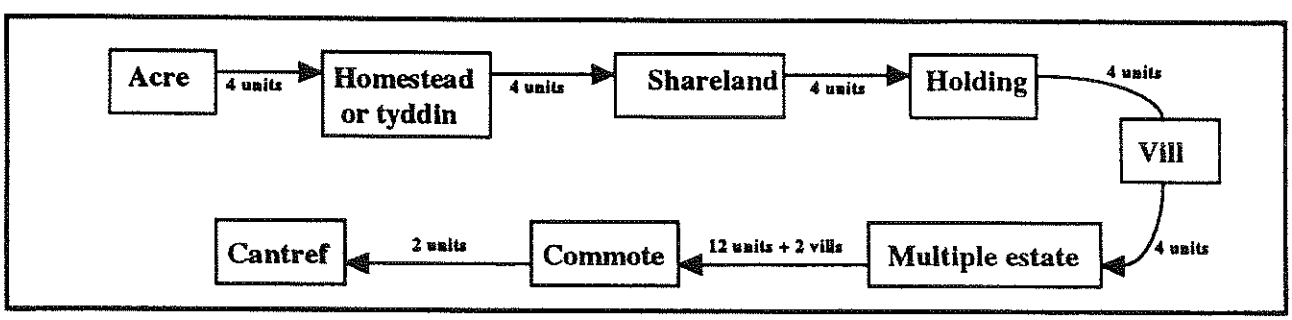


Fig. 3. - *The territorial hierarchy according to the Book of Iowerth. (after Jones 1976)*

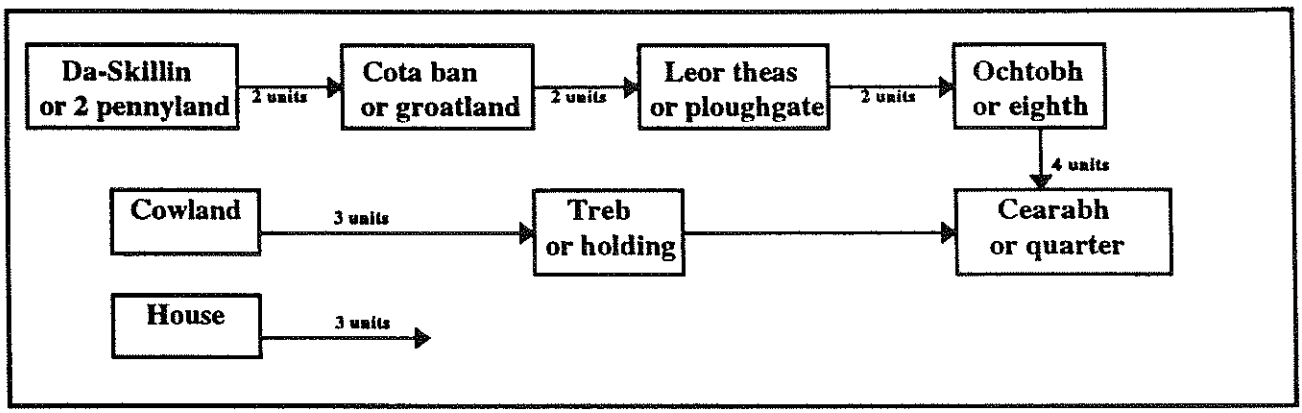


Fig. 4. - *The territorial hierarchy of Islay, (after Lamont 1957/8)*

of lower levels of economic production or tribute (such as the *baillebetagh* or *cowland*) are incorporated within a system of tax. The collection of dues through the mechanism of territorially organised *ouncelands* or *pennylands* for instance represents an increasingly sophisticated organisational structure. These developments in Scotland open up the question of administrative organisation in other Celtic-speaking regions.

4 Relating territorial frameworks to Cornwall

Without the law codes and other material that exists for such areas as Ireland for instance, Cornwall has no formal language or terminology for the legal and political environment of pre-English society. It is a mistake however to see Cornwall as a political vacuum in the period before Anglo-Saxon domination. Such notions as the *regione* and the *terra unius familiae* for instance, provide a suitable framework for analysis of early territorial entities and developing landscape organisation. Flexible notions of early landscape organisation that can be related to ideas of community, hierarchy and exploitation, but do not carry the legal and definitional 'baggage' of such terms as 'estate' can therefore be used to clarify the evidence that is known in west Cornwall. In this respect, common themes and ideas that are displayed in other areas can be related to what is known about Cornwall.

In order to make the most of what information exists for Cornwall, conceptual frameworks deduced in other areas can act as a guide to explore the territorial hierarchies and exploitational mechanisms of west Cornwall. Investigation along such themes as regular assessments and territorial dues for instance can be informed by a notion of what Cornwall 'should' be like. In this respect, the Cornish evidence is being interpreted within the context of what has been gleaned from other regions and supported by territorial theory.

In many respects, studies of early landscape organisation in western Britain confirm the notion that actual physical boundaries are less important than the function and territorial meaning conveyed by landscape division. Hence, the basic 'history' of Cornish territories can be informed by a need to approach developments of landscape and society through a territorial perspective. The experiences of other regions suggest that comparable developments may be found in Cornwall. Additionally, the basic description of the Cornish territorial framework, and the narration of its history, can be greatly enhanced by a more explicit investigation of evolving territoriality and processes of territorialisation. In this respect, territorial experience is viewed less in terms of the history and endurance of physical landscape divisions and more in terms of its reflection of the crucial relationship between society and space.

In Cornwall, the physical reconstruction of an early territorial framework may provide a context within which to view organisational models which are comparable to other regions. Preston-Jones and Rose (1986) for instance have suggested that a complex system of transhumance existed in early Cornwall and Herring (1996) sees this system as perhaps being organised on a hundredal basis around Bodmin Moor, though they bring little good evidence to bear on the subject. An intensive investigation of territorial organisation in west Cornwall can potentially distinguish a possible organisational model for a transhumance system comparable to those in Ireland or the Isle of Man.[6] In these areas, transhumance zones

[6] For emergent and early systems of transhumance in Ireland, see Graham 1953, 1970a, 1970b. For a review of the transhumance systems in the Isle of Man see Davies 1956 and especially Quine 1996.

were partially defined according to a wide-ranging and assessed territorial hierarchy of a sort that can be investigated in Cornwall.

Working within an Irish context, McErlean (1983, 328) noted the importance of the "regulation of land resources among a territorially-defined community". Davies (1990) supported this notion with reference to Welsh material and, even in Cornwall, Thomas (1994) has alluded to the importance of perceiving communal organisation within early territorial patterns. My investigations in Cornwall can seek to uncover the earliest patterns of what can be termed 'communal organisation' through the relation of reconstructed physical units to developing notions of landscape division and society.

The definition and delineation of a territorial framework necessarily requires some form of 'signifier' such as a recognised boundary,[7] as well as some attempt to enforce certain codes (Sack 1986). In this respect, certain actions that involve surveillance or supervisory mechanisms within a developing territorially defined arena can be seen to be important. The territorial development of government in England for instance clearly demonstrates the increasing role that territories played in the administering of daily justice, civil control and fiscal exaction. Territorialisation can therefore be portrayed as an ongoing attempt to instil influence or 'control' within a socially defined landscape and Cornwall provides a suitable 'testing ground' in which to view such developments.

Developing notions of surveillance and supervision were charted by Robinson and Scaglion (1987) in their study of justice and the developing police function, and it is in these terms that such functions can be investigated in Cornwall. At the local level in Cornwall, we see the tithing institution as a territorialised expression of community. This was a system of compulsory collective responsibility, through which a sort of joint bail was fixed for individuals, not after their arrest for a crime, but rather as a safeguard in anticipation of it.[8] This system constituted the backbone of Norman law-giving and can be seen as the mechanism through which central government held dominion over the population. Importantly, this system in Cornwall, unlike other parts of Britain, not only represented an income generating mechanism and form of judicial control, but became systematically territorialised.

The evolving wider hierarchies of administration and exploitation that have been identified in simple terms in many Celtic-speaking regions and by Loyn (1984), Jolliffe (1937) and Warner (1988) among others in England, can act as a guide to the way the emerging Cornish network of territorial administration can be viewed. In this sense, a better understanding and explanation of the tithing network for instance can be produced than has been hitherto established.[9]

The place of such territorial devices as the tithing within a wider evolving hierarchy of government and administration can be investigated. The early territorial administrative structure of Cornwall can be related to those of other areas such as Scotland, Ireland, Brittany and the Isle of Man in order to extend our comprehension. In this respect, the importance of such things as dues and assessments can be clearly seen. Reference to well ordered partially standardised patterns of assessment on the ground therefore, may reflect a systematic and regularised ideal of territorial assessment in theory. The bare historical record of early Cornish territories requires deeper analysis within the context of theories of developing territoriality and synthesis with notions alluded to in other areas.

The origins and nature of any regular assessments in Cornwall need to be addressed, not in terms of finding a perfectly formed and uniform system of assessment that may never have existed, but in terms of finding the vestiges of an assessment system that is comparable to ones found either in the law books or on the ground in other areas. The general history of territorial institutions in Cornwall requires further analysis with respect to themes of hierarchalisation and specialisation. In this sense, a focus upon function as opposed to 'form' *per se* is a crucial element in the analysis of relationships that are found in the processes of territorialisation in west Cornwall.

Preston-Jones and Rose (1986, 138) note that the emergence of large estates made up of *trefs* or local farm units in ninth century Wales agrees with "the little which is known for Cornwall". This raises the question of whether we can perceive anything in Cornwall which is comparable or analogous in function to these multi-vill units. We should try to per-

[7] This 'boundary' however, need not be in the form of a fixed physical 'barrier' or even a solid 'line on a map'.

[8] For a more legally-based definition of the tithing see Critchley 1967, 2-3, or Pollock & Maitland 1968, Vol. I, 568-71. The tithing system of Cornwall is often overlooked in studies, but has been analysed quite thoroughly by Pool 1959, 1981, whose latter paper should be considered as the basic reference text on the subject.

[9] The existing contradictory understanding of the tithing as being in many ways the 'manor' under another name, (Pool 1959, 1981) and yet also being equated with the vill (Pool 1981, 279) needs further analysis.

ceive the sorts of patterns which would have been part of such a postulated system, while acknowledging the problematic nature of this 'multiple estates' approach.[10] In this respect we should seek a method of conceptualising such early patterns, from the premise that territorial developments are linked to social expressions, through demands for service, income and power.

It is important to recognise that not all societies were developing at the same time and in the same way. An investigation of territorialisation and territorial relationships, however, can provide an important opening into revealing some aspects of deeper developments of societal and landscape meaning and representation. It must be emphasised that by their very definition, territories are socially generated. They represent expressions of community, government and exploitation rather than being inanimate physical features such as hills or rivers. Territories therefore are intrinsic to a 'peopled' landscape. Since there is no single or simple 'answer' and no all-encompassing and homogenous system, the interpretation of these patterns, associations and designs into a coherent territorial framework should perhaps avoid the use of such loaded terms as the 'estate' for example, and instead concentrate on allowing for multiple meanings and paths of development. It is for this reason that such terms as *regione* have been used.

An investigation into the territorialisation of a region such as west Cornwall obviously has repercussions for studying landscape and landscape changes. This investigation attempts to fill the structured political vacuum that is implicit in many studies of Cornwall before Saxon hegemony. Polity and landscape organisation were not Norman or even Saxon inventions and so we should try to perceive the origins or antecedents for the later patterns and practices that seem unique or at least somehow different in Cornwall.

The examination of changing modes of resource allocation and territorial development, can bring insight into the economic arrangements of early Cornwall. Investigation of such early territorial schemes may provide a more meaningful framework within which to view the findings of archaeologists, while further emphasis on territoriality for instance, may bring better understanding of early systems of grazing management. In terms of administration, the expansion of 'government' through surveillance and control mechanisms such as the tithing system, can be seen through territorial studies. In this sense, the development of territorial ideas mirrored the establishment of more complex systems of tribute-type exploitative practices, organised forms of justice and accountable mechanisms of government.

The transition of self-identity from a familial notion based upon such concepts as 'tribe' and the development of a notion of identity based upon 'place', is apparent in areas such as Ireland and Wales through focusing upon territoriality, and consideration of Cornish material may bring some important related points of view. Cornish features should be viewed within the context of wider evolving territorial patterns. Linkages and relationships can be made with other areas and other times. It is important to note that deficiency in source material does not necessarily mean a deficiency in territorial structure. In relation to Cornwall, the investigation of early systems of landscape organisation can look beyond the lack of direct and complete forms of evidence to use the indirect material, signs, analogous comparisons and the many strands of partial evidence.

5 The tithing framework of west Cornwall and the vestiges of early landscape organisation

Sources from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (see edited works by Hall 1978; Stenton 1952; Midgley 1945 and also Pool 1981) show that the territorial framework of tithings was being utilised for the purpose of a centrally organised law and order system; a mechanism whereby the authority of the state trickled down to the lives of people in every corner of the land. This uniform and systematic territorial structure, with perhaps much older origins, reflects the increasing importance placed on controlling the landscape through a complex and tightly regulated territorial hierarchy. Every person not of noble status would have known which tithing they were in, to whom they were responsible, and for whom they had responsibility. This close level of control and supervision was enhanced by putting these relationships on a territorial footing, the framework of which was then utilised for the management of a taxation system. Each household paid a certain proportion of money known as smoke silver, the assessment of which was based around the territorial tithing framework (Pool 1981). Figure 5 shows a map of the supposed tithing districts in the two hundreds of Penwith and Kirrier in west Cornwall. This map was determined from using a wide variety of evidence based upon tithing extents, court documents and manorial relationships,[11] and shows the name, centre and territorial associations of every tithing.

[10] See for instance Hadley 1996.

[11] This work was carried out as part of a doctoral thesis. For more specific and detailed information, see Harvey 1996. In

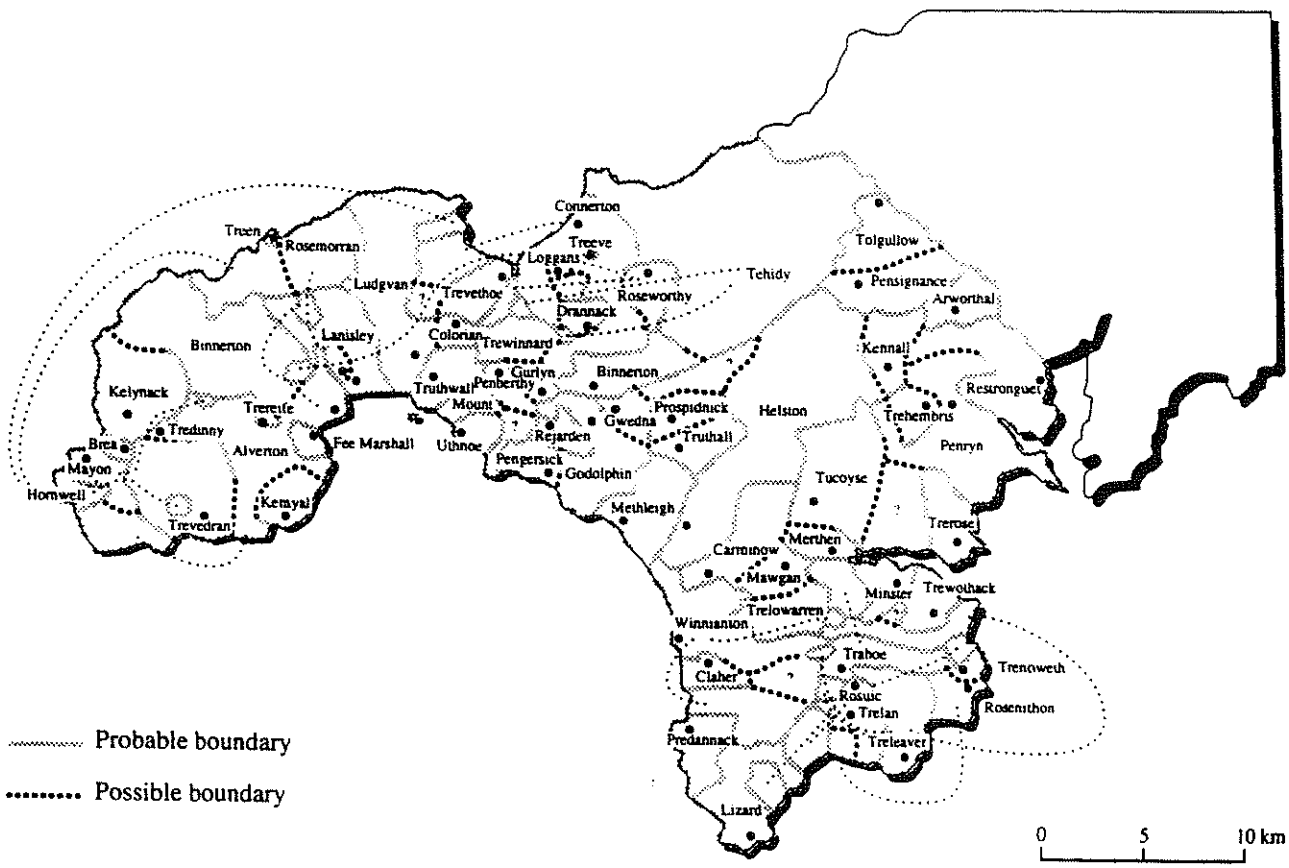


Fig. 5. - *Basic tithing pattern (Penwith based largely on Pool 1959).*

In order to understand the complex inter-relationships between land and society which are expressed by such a territorial pattern, it is necessary to explore the evolving territorial relationships and examine some of the assessment data that survive. The *Extenta Acrarum* documents of 1284 and 1345 record the assessment of each tithing in terms of Cornish acres.[12] The interpretation and understanding of the Cornish acre units are at present unsatisfactory, though in origin can be traced to at least the period of the Domesday Survey (Padel *pers. comm.*). The use of the Cornish acre in the context of tithing assessment is interesting and suggests that the territorial units themselves may have at one time represented much more than groupings of people for judicial organisation and control. The very common repetition of the three Cornish acre unit (or multiples thereof), tends to indicate some sort of systematic and uniform reckoning of territorial units and possibly points toward a more ancient system of landscape organisation that is previously unrecognised in research literature. The results of this analysis are displayed graphically in figure 6, which emphasises the non-random pattern of Cornish acre assessments.

The fact that Penwith does not demonstrate this overwhelming prevalence of the number three, is probably due to its being the only Cornish hundredal jurisdiction in private hands.[13] The Lords of Connerton, who held the hundred would have been eager to maximise any dues to them and so would have boosted the acreage assessments for their hundred. Importantly, it seems that whatever the significance the three Cornish acre unit may have once held, by the time Penwith's figures were artificially boosted, the significance was forgotten, implying possibly very ancient origins for the assessment structure.

many respects, the lines represent recognition of territorial significance rather than strictly defined and accurate 'boundaries'.

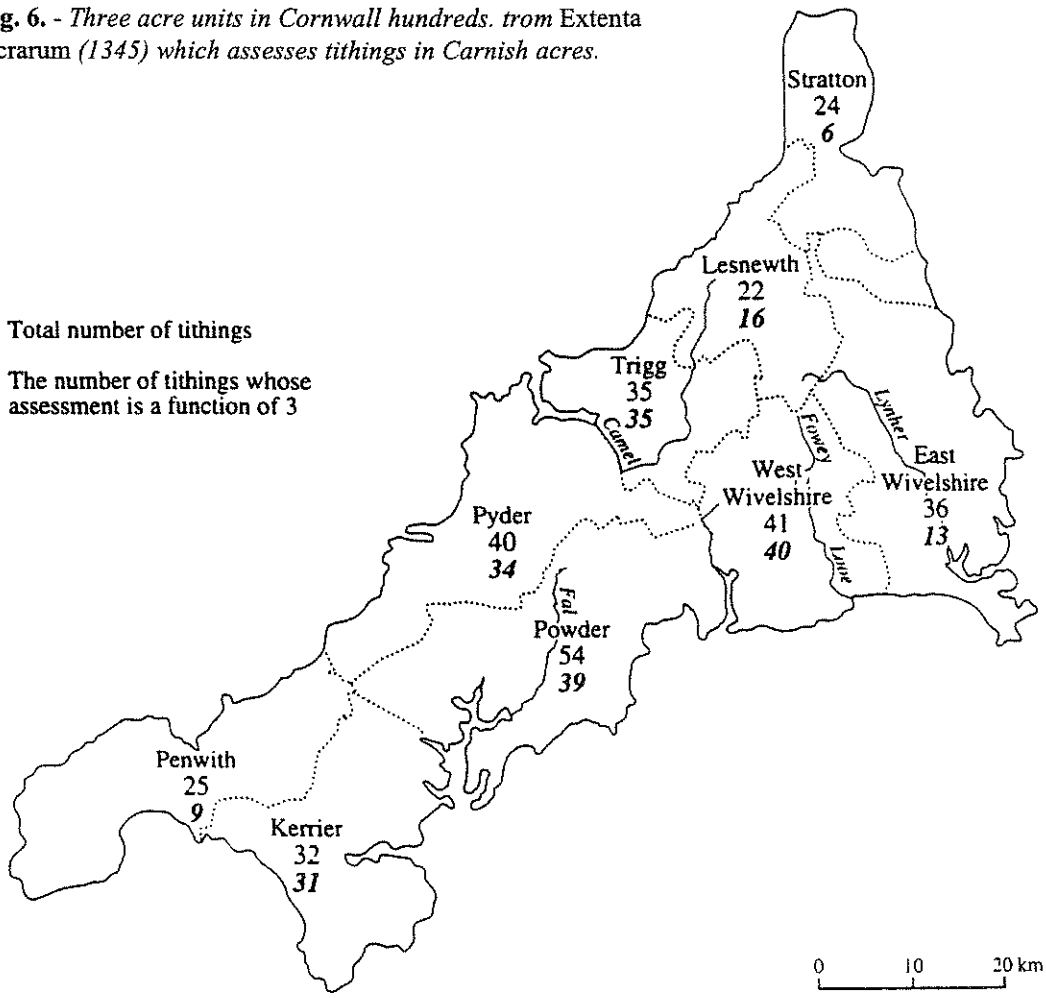
[12] Neither of the two versions exist in their original state. Although the original purpose of the records and the context of their production is not completely understood, some kind of survey is apparent, with both versions providing lists of tithing names and assessments in Cornish acres. Their basic record is transcribed by Pool 1981. The most complete published discussion of the meaning of the Cornish acre is to be found in Hull 1971, liv-lxii.

[13] The hundred of Penwith was granted by William II outside of royal authority in about 1090. The private hundredal jurisdiction was comprehensively confirmed by a charter to the Arundell family of Connerton of the period 1227x43. See Hall 1978, 171, and Pool 1959, 165-171.

Fig. 6. - *Three acre units in Cornwall hundreds. from* Extenta Acrarum *(1345) which assesses tithings in Carnish acres.*

25 Total number of tithings

9 The number of tithings whose assessment is a function of 3



Interestingly, the only other hundreds where the three Cornish acre unit seems to be less significant are the two easternmost hundreds, and even here the three Cornish acre unit is still relatively significant. These two hundreds received Anglo-Saxon influence much earlier than the west; perhaps by about A.D. 825. The six earliest charters that refer to land in Cornwall, including all the pre-tenth century examples, are associated with land either in Stratton hundred or the far south east (Finberg 1953, items 16 and 72-77).[14] Although large scale population displacement and complete landscape re-organisation seems very improbable, the very early English interest and involvement in this part of Cornwall provides an explanation for the apparent exception of this most eastern zone. This is certainly so in terms of place name distribution in the area, and may provide a context within which to view the apparently anomalous assessments of later years (Preston-Jones & Rose 1986, 142; Wakelin 1975, 59-60). Because the three Cornish acre unit does not appear to be significant in these early Anglicised areas, it implies that the significance of the three Cornish acre unit should be sought in the pre-Saxon period.

Further analysis of the assessments together with investigation of manorial and other linkages reveal a sort of 'unity' amongst certain groups of tithings. Some of the proposed 'blocks' of tithings are shown in figure 7, which illustrates the disparate and often fragmented nature of these land units. Eleven of such blocks are shown (some with their assessments according to the *Extenta Acrarum* of 1345), and some suggestions of links with other tithings are also put forward. In this respect, the three Cornish acre unit seems to have been a basic unit within a hierarchical territorial framework, maintained for the purpose of exploitation and control at a very early period. The system can perhaps be seen as a territorial scheme for the full economic exploitation of the landscape through integrated estate management of specialised elements.[15] While acknowledging the probable local

[14] Indeed, a charter of king Ine (AD 705x712) records the granting of 20 hides at *linig*, which has been interpreted as the land between the Lynher and Tamer rivers (see Finberg 1953, item 73).

[15] The topic of reconstructing integrated estate units from early periods is a much discussed and debated area of work. See for example Jones 1976, 15-40, or Blair 1991, chap. 1. For a more up to date view on such supposed early schemes, see Hadley 1996.

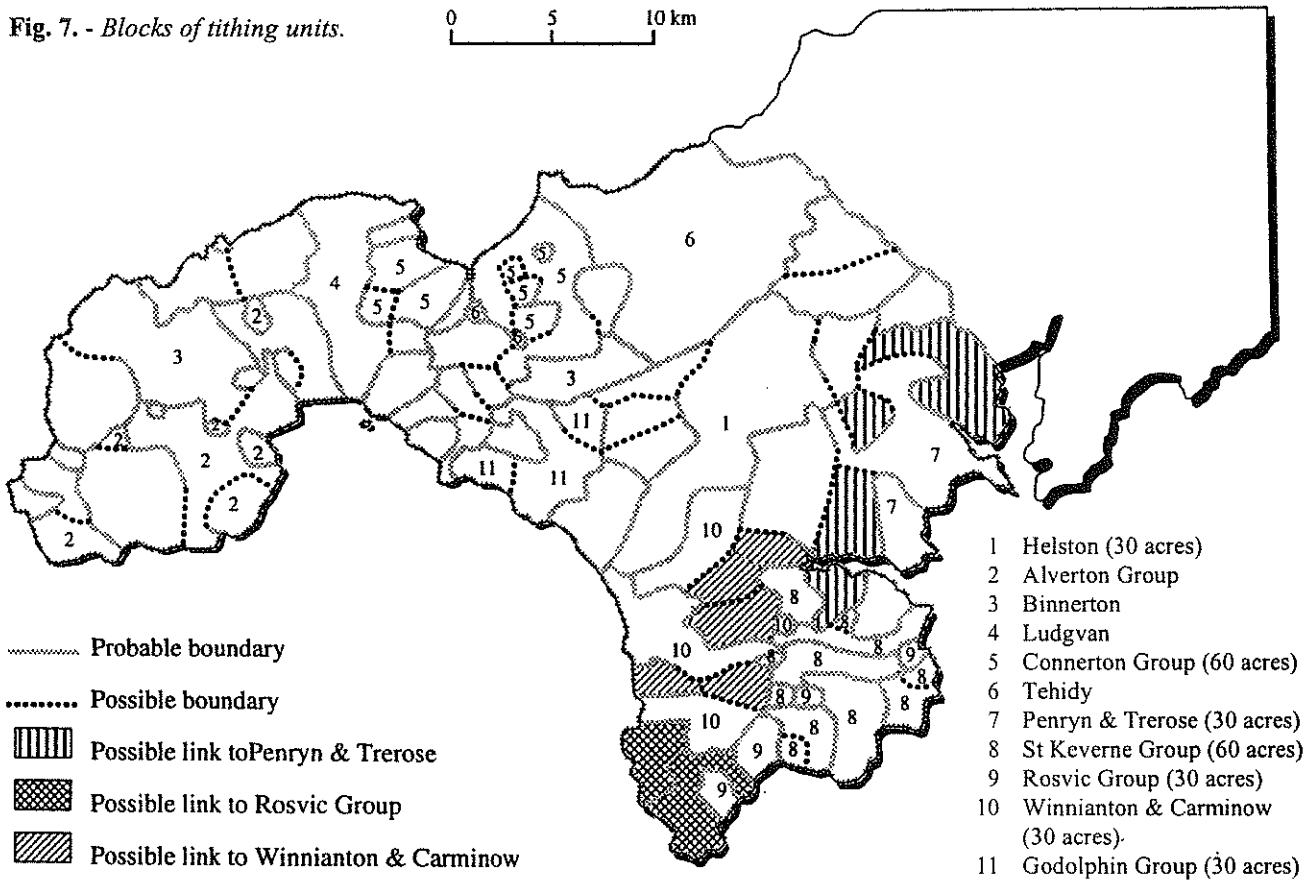


Fig. 7. - *Blocks of tithing units.*

fluctuations, transitions and changes that would have occurred over the several centuries under investigation, essential elements of stability, persistence and cohesion can be seen to endure. Transhumance practices and other economic activities are reflected in place name elements such as *havos, hendre* and *laity*.[16] It is combinations of such specialised units within a developing estate system that would have provided a surplus for an elite class.

6 The vestiges of early land organisation in the Meneage area of west Cornwall

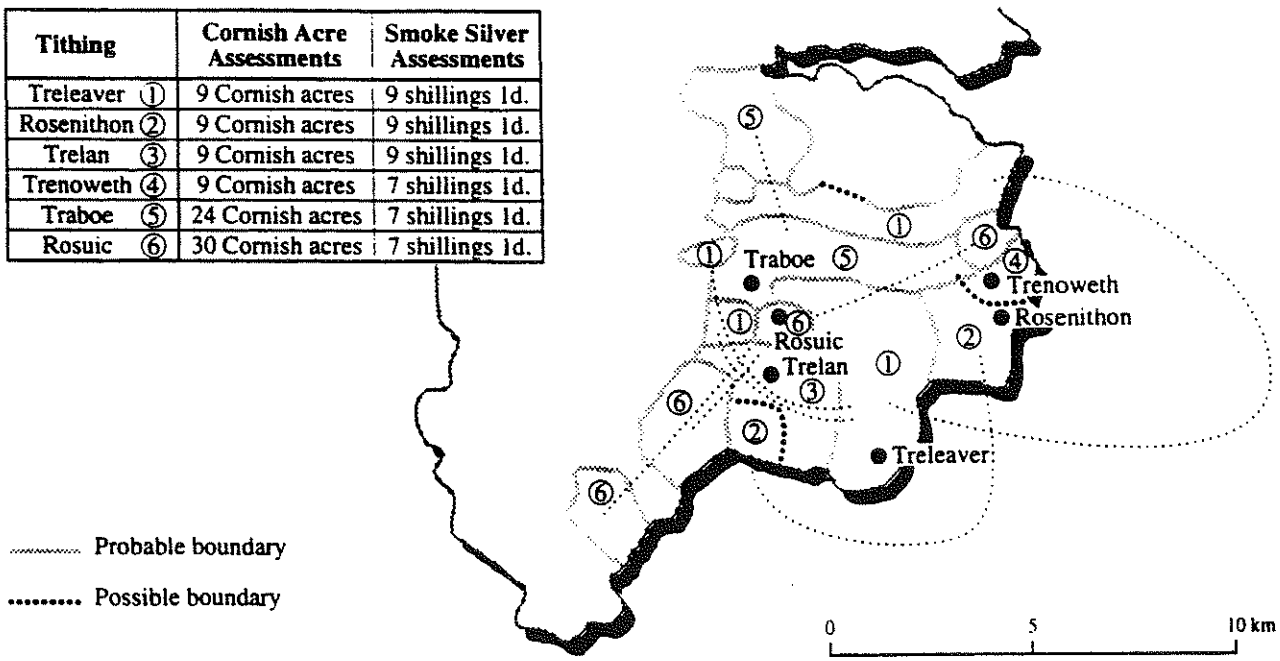
At this point it is perhaps useful to look at a particular area in more detail and to draw out some of the themes that have been discussed and to demonstrate the application of using a wide range of heterogeneous sources to understand early organisation of landscape elements. The area around the present day village and parish of St. Keverne in the far south of Cornwall (otherwise known as 'the Meneage') provides us both with a number of questions and potential sources for such a purpose. Figure 8 reveals the complexity of the tithing framework in this area as well as highlighting the systematic nature of this framework's assessments, both in the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Six tithings with their centres marked and territorial connections indicated, are displayed. The tithings of Rosenithon, Treleaver, Trelan and Trenoweth are all assessed at 9 Cornish acres, and the first three are also liable for 9 shillings and 1 pence (9/1) smoke silver. Trenoweth, Traboe and probably Rosuic[17] are each liable for 7/1. The fact that Traboe is assessed at 24 Cornish acres and Rosuic at 30, greatly complicates the relationship between Cornish acres and smoke silver. It appears that the actual area of Rosuic was mostly outside the parish, and largely composed of moorland, which may well have had few smoke silver-paying tenements. Traboe appears to occupy similar land of a similar size to Treleaver, while Rosenithon, Trenoweth and Trelan all seem to occupy relatively smaller pieces of land. The assessments certainly appear to be dependent

[16] An early work on such significance of place name elements in Cornwall was conducted by Pounds 1942. More recent comments have been made by Padel 1985 and Preston-Jones & Rose 1986, 141-145.

[17] This depends upon whether 'Lucies' can be equated with this tithing; Pool 1981 thinks so.

Fig. 8. - *The tithing framework in the St Keverne area.*

Tithing	Cornish Acre Assessments	Smoke Silver Assessments
Treleaver ①	9 Cornish acres	9 shillings 1d.
Rosenithon ②	9 Cornish acres	9 shillings 1d.
Trelan ③	9 Cornish acres	9 shillings 1d.
Trenoweth ④	9 Cornish acres	7 shillings 1d.
Traboe ⑤	24 Cornish acres	7 shillings 1d.
Rosuic ⑥	30 Cornish acres	7 shillings 1d.



upon some status or function beyond that of simple land area and number of tenements. The fact that these tithings which are positioned so close to each other, are all assessed in the same way seems to indicate that they are related in some way; perhaps as component parts of a larger entity.

In order to try and understand the significance of these arrangements, a number of other sources can be brought in to play. In terms of parochial organisation, the name 'Meneage' or 'monkish land' appears to have been affixed to the ecclesiastical establishments of this area, suggesting a degree of early territorial cohesion that had recognition in the nomenclature of later territorial organisation. The 'administrative' centre of this territorial unit was undoubtedly the important early centre of Lesneage (literally 'the court of the Meneage'). King Edgar's grant of land at Lesneage and Pennare to Wulfnoth Rumuncant in AD 967 concerns a defined portion of land in the heart of St. Keverne parish.[18] Along with the other pre-Conquest charters primarily concerning Traboe,[19] and the grant of some land 'in the Meneage' to St. Michael's Mount in the immediate post Norman Conquest period,[20] the break up of a large early estate seems to be indicated. In this respect the 'Meneage' appears to be some sort of early land unit that became fragmented due to land holding interests but importantly, it was also a land unit that held some sort of spiritual significance.

The investigation of the nature of this 'spiritual significance' leads us to the door of the early monastic centre of Lannachebran (indicated on figure 9). Documentary evidence for the early existence of this establishment is found in the form of a tenth century list of saint's names[21] while Domesday Book lists St. Keverne as the only land holding religious establishment in Kirrier.[22] Olson (1989) sees the monastery of Lannachebran as an important land-holding monastic centre of the pre-English period, and one which was very much related to the early regional territory of the Meneage.

When looking at this area therefore, the vestiges of an early territorial entity are reproduced in later territorial frameworks, with assessments showing a remarkable consistency. As well as illustrating the common 3 Cornish acre phenomenon, the acreage figures for the six St. Keverne tithings add up to 90 Cornish acres, and if Rosuic is ignored,[23] then the St.

[18] Exeter Dean and Chapter, 2521 (*saec. xi2*), Sawyer 755, Finberg 1953, item 84; Hooke 1994a, item 4, 37-40.

[19] See Hooke 1994, items 6 and 10; Finberg 1953, items 90 and 99.

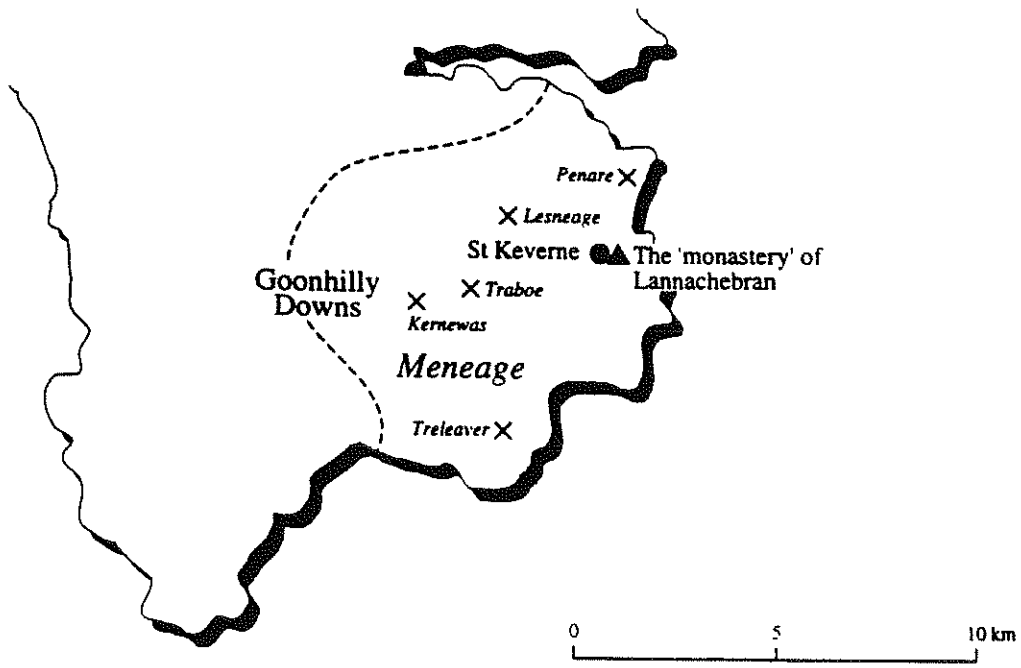
[20] This is noted in the *Cartulary of St. Michael's Mount*. Item 1, p. 1 of Hull's (1962) transcription, dated c.1070.

[21] *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* MS "*Reginensis Latinus* 191".

[22] See Thorn & Thorn 1979, item 4/23.

[23] The territorial tithing of Rosuic appears to mostly contain land in the Ruan/Grade area of the Lizard peninsula and territorially at least seems to have little to do with St. Keverne parish.

Fig. 9. - *The Meneage in the early medieval period.*



Keverne parish total is 60 Cornish acres. Whether these assessments represent some sort of administrative 'label' or are more concerned with 'estate' organisation is not known. The idea of assessment certainly indicates some form of exploitation, and the label 'acres' does suggest an agrarian/economic relationship. The Meneage appears to have been a large unit recognised before the Conquest which was broken up due to land holding pressures of the tenth and eleventh centuries, but this does not necessarily indicate that it once functioned as a single integrated 'estate'. There is a strong possibility however, that the Meneage was expressed as a whole number of Cornish acres and in terms of a definite group of '3 Cornish acre units'. Therefore some administrative and tribute collecting competence is indicated.

In order to make more sense out of the meaning of this early land unit, it is perhaps profitable to look towards the area of place name studies. Hooke (1994) sees such early units of exploitation as including several agricultural components stretching from the high moorlands to the sea. In this context, an investigation of certain place name elements may allow a deeper understanding of the nature of internal organisation within this large territorial unit. The interpretation of the place name 'Lesneage' as 'the court of the monkish land' indicates the existence of an administrative hierarchy within such units, while other place names imply other functions and relationships associated with such an internal hierarchy of administration and exploitation. Preston-Jones and Rose (1986, 144) for instance saw the relationship between the place name elements *hendre* (old/winter settlement) and *havos* ('shieling' or summer settlement) as demonstrating the operation of a system of transhumance.

The Meneage region has good access to areas of moorland and a place on the edge of the Goonhilly Downs named Kernewas, or 'autumn settlement' (located in figure 9), implies that a system of transhumance may have once operated. Kernewas is included within the tithing extent of Treleaver,[24] but when mapped, appears as a detached portion, away from the rest of Treleaver tithing. This settlement is very close to that of Rosuic, and so may be related to some extent to the early operations of that estate. A link between Kernewas and Traboe however is better supported, with this area of moorland apparently included within the charter bounds of Traboe in AD 977 (Hooke 1994). Henderson (1931, 63-64) also notes the existence of a thirteenth century charter[25] in which the moor above *Kinihavot* was granted by Robert Breto, Lord of Trelan. Therefore, this important element within an early system of transhumance appears to be connected by varying degrees to at least three or four different tithing units as they emerged in the later medieval period.[26] Some sort of agrarian/economic coherence within the proposed Meneage

[24] '2 tenements at Kenewas' noted in Henderson MSS, HB/8/76.

[25] PRO, A. 8999, *circa* 1250.

[26] These being Treleaver, Traboe, Trelan and possibly Rosuic.

region is thus implied, with the Goonhilly Downs representing an important element within an integrated agricultural system.

The existence of a transhumance-based mode of pastoral farming requires an organised division of landscape that is recognised at all levels of society. The acknowledged hierarchical basis of Cornish acre, three Cornish acre unit and groups thereof, may provide a context within which such an agricultural system may operate. The hundred-wide assessment confers the unit 'Cornish acre' onto units of landscape and recognises the existence of a 3 acre entity as that requiring acknowledgement of a certain level of status, as well as reflecting the increasing power of state mechanisms. Dodgshon argues (1987, 162) that the increasing territorialisation of tribal groups and the development of state mechanisms, was all part of the assertion of "a new kind of lordship, namely feudal lordship". The tribal territories therefore took on a new meaning as part of the hierarchy of administrative and lordship units that is found in the pre-Norman feudal system.

In Cornwall, the evidence is both scarce and of low resolution, so that the highly detailed reconstruction that is possible in some Celtic-speaking areas is impossible here, especially when alluding to pre-Conquest processes. However, the evidence that does exist suggests that similar processes were taking place as those that are found in other regions, and certainly does not indicate a totally different system.

In Cornwall is revealed an early territorial framework, with previously unrecognised three Cornish acre units and larger groups of acres, possibly with specialised functions, producing a hierarchy of landscape organisation. At one level, the agricultural economy operated through systems of transhumance organised through recognised territorial limits, while at another level, dues were collected and administrative control was maintained. An English administrative agency utilised the landscape organisational scheme in order to suit their own needs of judicial control and income generation, and it was this scheme of early economic exploitation through integrated estate management that formed the basis of the later emergent manorial system.[27] It is important however to heed the cautions that Hadley (1996, 11-12) recognises, based around the underlying assumption that there was a point at which the landscape was uniformly divided into neatly segmented territories.[28] As Hadley (1996, 12) notes, 'Property rights and territorial organisation were seldom simple in the early medieval period'.

7 Conclusion

The early territorial pattern in Cornwall mirrors some important aspects of early societal systems and the evolution of these territories mirrors the evolution of the distinct Cornish society that defined them. As society in Cornwall became more complex and as the need to control increased, especially when power was being wielded from a distant central agency, organisational strategies had to become more sophisticated. Therefore spatial control mechanisms involving the use of systematic territorialisation were used. The development of territorial organisation must be seen within the context of a continuing purpose of the territorial strategy; namely that of the exploitation and control of resources and population.

It is only through looking at the ways in which societies use territorial strategies that we can understand both the nature of those societies and the form of the landscape which later societies (including our own) inherited. Other material in the landscape should be viewed within the context of this territorial organisation to enable us to understand their meaning. Further work is needed however if the full significance of the territorialisation of early west Cornwall is to be appreciated. What was the nature of the ancient forms of landscape organisation and how were they recognised territorially? How well does the rest of Cornwall fit the proposed scheme and what sort of comparisons can be made with other regions? How were the territorial devices actually perceived by English power-brokers and what form did their exploitation of the landscape take? These questions have, to date, only been partially addressed and this investigation can be seen as a useful 'starting block' for a whole range of further explorations.

[27] In Wales, Melville Richards 1969 attempted to place the various terms and units he found into some sort of coherent administrative whole, though is still tentative when interpreting the administrative relationships of some forms. This work may be seen as a step in that direction. Work on the semantics of such names as the *tref* settlements for instance needs to be extended.

[28] Our understanding of the word 'estate' for instance should be qualified.

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