

Sample paragraph from Chapter 6, p.167

The over-simplified picture drawn by the assimilationists of a Cornwall safely and unequivocally incorporated into Wessex by the 930s conveniently omits to mention Cornwall's ambiguous later medieval and early modern status. It ignores analogies from Wales and Brittany and fails to understand the subtleties of overlordship. Yet, the later indications of Cornwall's separate status make perfect sense when we realise that Cornwall, like Welsh kingdoms, underwent a long period of time from the late seventh century to the eleventh, during which it slid in and out of client status. The level of overlordship enjoyed by the English fluctuated, even as its long-term direction was unmistakably towards greater subjection. While Cornwall had lost its client kingdom status by the 960s, even in the political and administrative sphere it nonetheless retained aspects of difference, resulting from that status and from its earlier independence. These lingered on for another half a millennium well into the early modern period.