



Cultural contacts and ethnic origins in Viking Age Wales and northern Britain: the case of Albanus, Britain's first inhabitant and Scottish ancestor

Journal:	<i>Journal of Medieval History</i>
Manuscript ID:	RMED-2014-0018.R1
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	early medieval, Scotland, Wales, origin-legends, historiography, identity, ethnicity

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

View Only

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

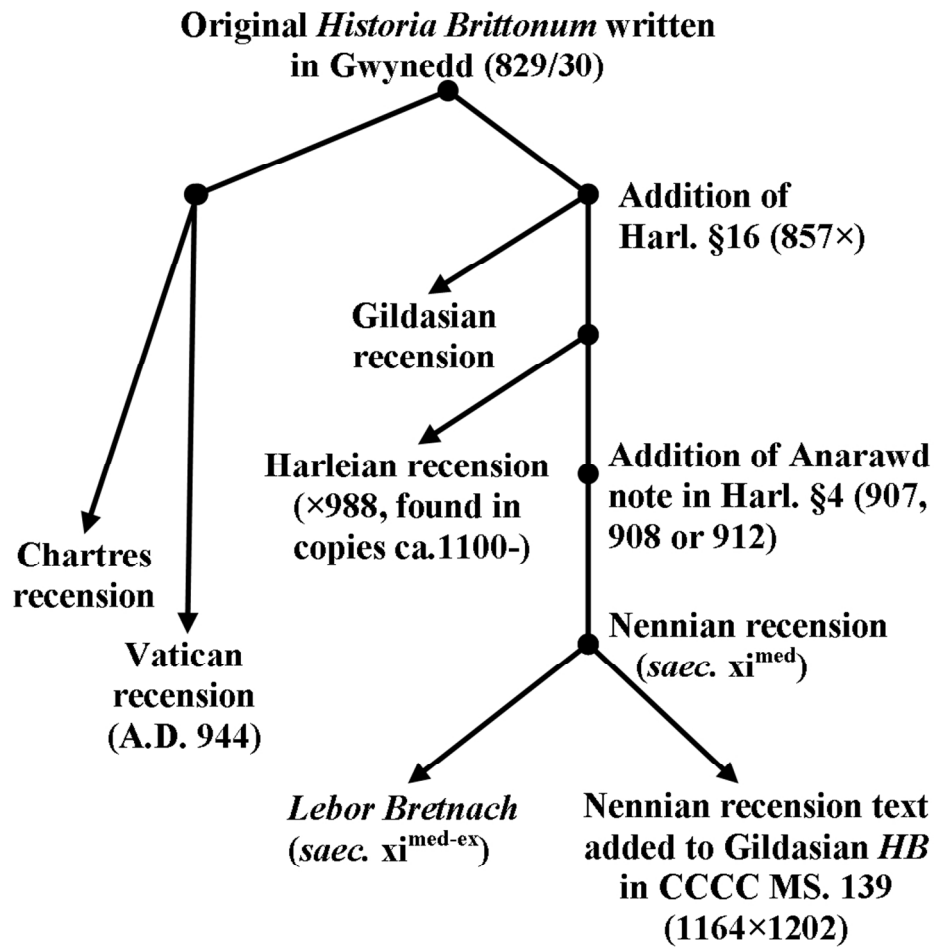


Figure 1. Stemma of the relationships of *Historia Brittonum* and *Lebor Bretnach*
99x99mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Nicholas J. Evans

Department of History, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, United Kingdom

Cultural contacts and ethnic origins in Viking Age Wales and northern Britain: the case of Albanus, Britain's first inhabitant and Scottish ancestor

Abstract:

Albanus, eponymous ancestor for the kingdom of Alba, provides an example of the extent to which the creation of an ethnic identity was accompanied by new ideas about origins which were able to replace previous accounts. Through an analysis of *Historia Brittonum*'s textual tradition and Welsh knowledge of early Roman history and medieval ethnic groups, this article establishes that Albanus was added to *Historia Brittonum* in the late ninth or early tenth century as an ancestral figure for the new kingdom of Alba in northern Britain. This was potentially a result of shared political situations in Gwynedd, Alba (formerly Pictland) and Strathclyde in relation to Scandinavian power at this time, which encouraged contacts and the spread of Alba-based ideology to Gwynedd. The later development of this idea and its significance in Alba itself, Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, and English claims to supremacy over Scotland, are also traced.

KEYWORDS: early medieval, Scotland, Wales, origin-legends, historiography, identity, ethnicity

In Celtic-speaking regions, as elsewhere in Europe, our understanding of the inter-relationships between political change and identity, and its representation in various types of evidence, such as 'historical' accounts and archaeology, has been transformed in the last fifty years. Sources like origin accounts and histories were once evaluated primarily in terms of their truthfulness, and dismissed as relatively worthless if they clashed with more reliable evidence. However, while scholarship has generally become more sceptical about the veracity of these accounts' portraits of the past, these sources are now considered useful

1
2
3
4 because they help us to understand cultural and political contexts at the time of writing.¹ They
5
6 can be regarded as formulations of history which served particular, sometimes political,
7
8 purposes, and which reflected wider perceptions about societies and their positions in the
9
10 broader scheme of history. Indeed, it has also been suggested by Susan Reynolds that
11
12 accounts of ethnic origins in medieval Europe were closely connected to political structures,
13
14 with the rise of new kingdoms, often associated with particular 'peoples', leading to the
15
16 creation of usually fictitious explanations for its origins, partly to support group solidarity.²
17
18 Reynolds, however, noted that, as in modern societies, the reality in the medieval period was
19
20 often more complicated than writers acknowledged; there were instances of kingdoms with
21
22 subjects from multiple ethnic groups, and there could be many loyalties which contributed to
23
24 a person's identity.³ Further research is necessary to understand better the inter-relationships
25
26 of kingdom, ethnicity and perceptions of the past.⁴ In particular, by considering the nuances
27
28 of individual cases, such as why the origins of kingdoms and peoples were presented in
29
30 particular ways, it might be possible to gain insights into the development of these societies,
31
32 and how they fit into overall international patterns.
33
34
35
36

37
38 One particularly striking instance of medieval political, ethnic and linguistic
39
40 transformation took place in Scotland, when the Picts became Gaelicised in the ninth and
41

42
43 ¹ James E. Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 1–6; and *idem*,
44 'From Ancient Scythia to *The Problem of the Picts: Thoughts on the Quest for Pictish Origins*', in *Pictish*
45 *Progress. New Studies on Northern Britain in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen T. Driscoll et al., *The*
46 *Northern World* 50 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 15–43, for discussion of Scotland in a broader historiographical
47 context. For important examples, see David N. Dumville, 'Sub-Roman Britain. History and Legend', *History* 62
48 (1977): 173–92; *idem*, 'The historical value of the *Historia Brittonum*', *Arthurian Literature* 6 (1986): 1–26;
49 Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Irish origin legends and genealogy: recurrent aetiologies', in *History and Heroic Tale. A*
50 *Symposium*, ed. Tore Nyberg et al. (Odense: Odense University Press, 1985), 51–96; *idem*, 'Historical need and
51 literary narrative', in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Celtic Studies*, ed. D. Ellis Evans,
52 John G. Griffith and E.M. Jope (Oxford: D. Ellis Evans, 1986), 141–58.

53 ² Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines Gentium* and the Community of the Realm', *History* 68 (1983): 375–90.
54 Also *idem*, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900–1300*, 2nd ed. (1984; Oxford: Oxford
55 University Press, 1997), 250–302.

56 ³ Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines Gentium*', 378–80, 382–5, 389–90.

57 ⁴ One such important study, placing Scotland in a broader context informed by Reynolds's work, is Dauvit
58 Broun, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain from the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh
59 University Press, 2007), especially 1–97.
60

tenth centuries.⁵ The Pictish language, culture, and kingdom were replaced by a Gaelic language, close to Irish and Manx, a culture with Irish connections, and a political elite which traced its origins back to the Gaelic-speaking part of Scotland, called Dál Riata (roughly Argyll, the Inner Hebrides, also including part of County Antrim in Ireland). New Gaelic names for the kingdom (*Alba*) and its inhabitants (*Albanaig*, ‘Albanians’, or *firu Alban*, ‘men of Alba’) were introduced. This was the last complete disappearance of an ethnic group based exclusively in Britain and Ireland. There is much that is not understood about this process, with interpretations often based on a few pieces of evidence, and a lack of scholarly consensus regarding the nature of the transitions, but there is general agreement that the period of main terminological change took place in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. While Cináed mac Alpín (842/3–58) and his successors to 878 were called *reges Pictorum*, ‘kings of the Picts’, in the Irish chronicles, from A.D. 900 onwards his descendants, starting with his grandson, Domnall mac Constantín (889–900), were given the title *ri Alban*, ‘king of Alba’.⁶ In general, Pictish ethnic and territorial names, like Fortriu, Circin and Ce, were replaced by terms, like *Scotti*, *Scotia* and Angus, reflecting a Gaelic culture, while possibly Pictish territories such as Moray, Marr, Strathearn, and the Mearns, not attested before, may have risen to prominence as new structures of lordship and power developed.⁷ The resulting

⁵ See Alex Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba, 789–1070* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), for the historical context.

⁶ Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill, trans. and eds., *The Annals of Ulster (To A.D. 1131) Part I Text and Translation* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983) (hereafter ‘AU’), 858.2, 862.1, 876.1, 878.2, 900.6. Ead, king of Cruithentúath, also appears in *Chronicum Scottorum* (William M. Hennessy, trans. and ed., *Chronicum Scottorum. A Chronicle of Irish Affairs from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1135; with a supplement containing the events from 1141 to 1150* (London: Rolls Series, 1866)) (hereafter CS), s.a. 904 (*recte* 904 or 905). Kings of the Picts had before 850 also sometimes been called *rex Fortrenn*, ‘king of Fortriu’, after the kingdom which had created the Pictish over-kingship.

⁷ For the changes in terminology, see David N. Dumville, ‘Ireland and Britain in *Táin Bó Fraich*’, *Études celtiques* 32 (1996): 175–87; Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 72–3, 84–6; T.M. Charles-Edwards, ‘Picts and Scots. A review of Alex Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba 789–1070*’, *The Innes Review* 59 (2008): 168–88, at 170–1; Nicholas Evans, ‘Circin and Mag Gerginn: Pictish Territories in Irish and Scottish Sources’, in *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 66 (Winter 2013): 1–36, at 32–6.

1
2
3
4 units and identities afterwards usually retained their significance for centuries, into the
5
6 modern era.
7

8
9 The degree to which these developments were gradual and peaceful, partly a result of
10 longer processes of Gaelic linguistic and cultural expansion, or were traumatic and violent,
11 involving discrimination against Pictish or rapid transformation in the face of Scandinavian
12 attacks, is still open to debate.⁸ While most of the new ethnic terms used for the formerly
13 Pictish region were previously applied to Ireland and Dál Riata in Argyll and their
14 inhabitants, the use of Alba and related words was somewhat more novel, representing a
15 semantic shift in Gaelic from 'Britain' to a kingdom, territory and people in northern Britain.⁹
16
17 In addition to Gaelic *Alba*, the use of Latin *Albania* instead of *Pictavia* for the land is first
18 found in the 'Chronicle of the Kings of Alba' in events for 903, while Gaelic *fir Alban* or
19 *Albanaig* for the people appears first in 918 in the Annals of Ulster.¹⁰ Dauvit Broun has
20 suggested that there is an earlier reference to Alba as the name for the Pictish realm, perhaps
21 dating to the reign of Constantín mac Cináeda (862–76) or earlier, found in a poem in the
22 *Series longior* 3 version of the longer Pictish king-list, but this is uncertain.¹¹ The change in
23 the meaning of Alba, along with the creation of new related territorial and population terms
24 all mark the formation of a new ethnic identity, although the degree of novelty is uncertain,
25 given the evidence that a cognate Pictish word containing *Albid-* was also in use, and Gaelic
26 *Alba may have represented a continuation of* pre-existing P-Celtic British and Pictish ways of
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 ⁸ For an emphasis on continuity from the Picts, see Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 71–97; for a more traditional
51 view that Cináed mac Alpín and his successors were Gaels from the Cenél nGabráin royal dynasty of Dál Riata
52 and therefore represented more of a change, see Charles-Edwards, 'Picts and Scots', 171–4.

53 ⁹ Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 79–84, who stresses continuity.

54 ¹⁰ 'Chronicle of the Kings of Alba', Marjorie O. Anderson ed., *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland*, 2nd ed.
55 (1973; Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1980; repr. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011), 249–53, at 251; AU 918.4,
56 *Albanaig* first appears in AU 967.1.

57 ¹¹ Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 77–80; Nicholas Evans, 'Ideology, Literacy, and Matriliney: Approaches to
58 Medieval Texts on the Pictish Past', in *Pictish Progress*, ed. Driscoll et al., 45–65, at 49; *idem*, 'Circin and Mag
59 Gerginn', 8–9, 21–3.
60

1
2
3
4 perceiving the ethnicity of the Picts.¹² The promotion of Gaelic Alba-terminology may have
5
6 been part of an attempt to unite the Gaels and Picts in Britain in support of the former Pictish
7
8 kingdom's claims to a wider hegemony in Britain, but it is difficult to pin down the exact
9
10 context.

11
12
13 Until now the focus of scholarly analysis has understandably been on the Pictish,
14
15 Gaelic and Anglo-Saxon sources, because the British chronicle record for northern Britain is
16
17 very meagre in the crucial period. However, the Welsh *Historia Brittonum* (hereafter *HB*),
18
19 'History of the Britons', could also reflect the change in terminology in its account of the
20
21 origins of the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland, since it contains a figure called Albanus, the
22
23 eponymous ancestor of a people called *Albani*.¹³ If this was a reference to Alba in northern
24
25 Britain, this would be at least contemporary or maybe somewhat earlier than the other
26
27 evidence for this meaning. Given the scarcity of such evidence, another instance of Alba
28
29 would potentially have considerable significance. It also provides a potential case study of
30
31 how the formation of a new ethnic identity relates to the development of corresponding
32
33 innovations in origin accounts, since the figure of Albanus had a later life in texts in medieval
34
35 Britain from the eleventh century onwards. Therefore, the heart of this article is concerned
36
37 with the issue of when and why the figure of Albanus appears in *HB*, and how the portrayal
38
39 of Albanus developed.
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

48 ¹² Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba*, 176–80; Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 80–4.

49 ¹³ Editions of individual copies and recensions of *HB* have been published; the most useful are David N.
50 Dumville ed., *The Historia Brittonum*. 3. *The 'Vatican' Recension* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), and
51 Edmond Faral ed., *La Légende arthurienne. Études et documents*, 3 vols. (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1929), vol.
52 3, 1–62 (for editions of the Chartres MS. and London, British Library, Harley MS. 3859). The most accessible
53 translation, based on Faral's edition of the Harley MS. plus additions from other copies, is John Morris, trans.
54 and ed., *Nennius. British History and The Welsh Annals*, History from the Sources 8 (London: Phillimore,
55 1980), 9–43, 50–84. Unless specified, the text and numbering of sections in editions of Harley MS. 3859 (Harl.)
56 in the works of Faral and Morris, regarded as the most reliable in general, will be followed, although it does not
57 necessarily always retain the original text. Other *HB* recensions and manuscripts were edited in David Norman
58 Dumville, 'The Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 3 vols. (PhD. diss., University of
59 Edinburgh, 1976).
60

1
2
3
4 *HB* was written in 829 or 830 in Gwynedd in north-west Wales.¹⁴ Based on a number
5
6 of pre-existing written sources, the text focuses on the ancient settlement of Britain and the
7
8 history of the Britons up to the late seventh century, but it also includes accounts of the
9
10 settlements of the other inhabitants of Britain and Ireland, the Gaels, Picts, and Saxons,
11
12 although these are not the focus.¹⁵ The author is often known as Nennius, due to the
13
14 ascription of the work to him in one group of witnesses to the text, known as the ‘Nennian
15
16 recension’, but David Dumville, the scholar who has dramatically increased our
17
18 understanding of this text in the last forty years, has argued that this is not reliable evidence
19
20 for the actual author.¹⁶
21
22
23

24 Albanus appears in the origin-legend section of the text, in one version of the account
25
26 explaining the origins of the Britons and other peoples of Europe. The settlement account of
27
28 Britain starts by stating that there are two alternative explanations. One possibility (Harl.
29
30 §10), stated to be from the ‘annals of the Romans’, and seemingly favoured by the author of
31
32 *HB*, was that the first settlers of Britain, the Britons, were descendants of the Trojans and
33
34 related to the Romans. In this version, which adapted earlier accounts of the creation of
35
36 Rome, after Troy was destroyed the Trojan leader Aeneas came to Italy, settling among the
37
38 Latins and marrying into their royal line. Aeneas’s grandson or great-grandson, Brutus (who
39
40 elsewhere is called Britto), was fated to kill his parents, and was banished when this took
41
42 place through no fault of his own.¹⁷ After travelling for a while, he came to Britain, filled it
43
44 with his descendants, and the island was named after him. Such attempts to claim Trojan
45
46
47
48

49
50 ¹⁴ David N. Dumville, ‘*Historia Brittonum*: an Insular History from the Carolingian Age’, in *Historiographie im*
51 *frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter (Vienna and Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag,
52 1994), 406–34, at 406.

53 ¹⁵ See Dumville, ‘*Historia Brittonum*: an Insular History’, for a discussion of its contents and perspective.

54 ¹⁶ David N. Dumville, ‘Nennius’ and the *Historia Brittonum*, *Studia Celtica* 10/11 (1975/6): 78–95, repr. in
55 David N. Dumville, *Histories and Pseudo-histories of the Insular Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990),
56 chapter X. See P.J.C. Field, ‘Nennius and his History’, *Studia Celtica* 30 (1996): 159–65, for an inconclusive
57 counter-argument for Nennius’s authorship.

58 ¹⁷ However, the different name-forms may reflect different sources for *HB*; see Dumville, ‘*Historia Brittonum*:
59 an Insular History’, 409.
60

ancestry are found elsewhere in the early medieval period, most notably among the Franks, for whom by the seventh century it provided the dominant explanation for their origins.¹⁸

In the other account (Harl §17), from ‘the old books of our elders’, Britto (or perhaps Brutus) has Biblical rather than Trojan ancestry:¹⁹

I found another explanation about Brutus in the old books of our elders. The three sons of Noah divided the world into three parts after the Flood. Sem extended his boundaries in Asia, Ham in Africa, Japheth in Europe. The first man who came to Europe was Alanus, of the race of Japheth, with his three sons, whose names are Hessitio, Armenon, and Negue. Hessitio had four sons, Francus, Romanus, Britto and Albanus; Armenon had five sons, Gothus, Walagothus, Gepidus, Burgundus, Langobardus; Negue had three sons, Vandalus, Saxo, Bavarus. From Hessitio derive four peoples, the Franks, the Latins, the Albans and the British; from Armenon five, the Goths, the Walagoths, the Gepids, the Burgundians, the Langobards; from Negue four, the Bavarians, the Vandals, the Saxons and the Thuringians. These peoples are subdivided throughout Europe.

This section explains the origins of different peoples in Europe, tracing them forwards from Noah, Japheth and his descendant Alanus. In this account (as found in the Harleian MSS.) one of the sons of Alanus was Hessitio, and his four sons were Francus, Romanus, Britto and

¹⁸ Matthew Innes, ‘Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic past’, in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 227–49, at 248–9; Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (London: Longman, 1994), 33–5. For the view that there was a connection between the Frankish and British claims to Trojan origins, see Dumville, ‘*Historia Brittonum*: an Insular History’, 408.

¹⁹ HB §17, Morris ed. and trans., *Nennius*, 22, 63 (with addition from Dumville, ‘Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*’, vol. I, 181 in square brackets): ‘*Aliud experimentum inveni de isto Bruto ex veteribus libris veterum nostrorum. Tres filii Noe diviserunt orbem in tres partes post diluvium. Sem in Asia, Cham in Africa, Jafeth in Europe dilataverunt terminos suos. Primus homo venit ad Europam de genere Jafeth Alanus cum tribus filiis suis, quorum nomina sunt Hessitio, Armeno, Negue. Hessitio autem habuit filios quattuor: hi sunt Francus, Romanus, Britto, Albanus. Armenon autem habuit quinque filios: Gothus, Valagothus, Gebidus, Burgundus, [Langobardus]. Negue autem habuit tres filios: Vandalus, Saxo, Boguarus. Ab Hisione autem ortae sunt quattuor gentes: Franci, Latini, Albani et Britti. Ad Armenone autem quinque: Gothi, Walagothi, Gebidi, Burgundi, Langobardi. A Neguo vero quattuor: Boguarii, Vandali, Saxones et Turingi. Istae autem gentes subdivisae sunt per totam Europam.*’

1
2
3
4 Albanus, from whom the Franks, Latins, *Albani* and Britons were descended. This account is
5
6 the source from which later texts developed the story of Albanus. After this *HB* continues in
7
8 Harl. §18 with a genealogy mixing the two traditions (and badly mangling early Roman
9
10 history). This was omitted (seemingly independently) from most recensions.²⁰

11
12
13 After his appearance in *HB*, Albanus is first found as a significant figure in Alba
14
15 itself, rather than in Wales, in the late eleventh century Gaelic poem, *Duan Albanach*, dated
16
17 to the reign of Malcolm III (1058–93):²¹

18
19
20
21
22 O all ye learned ones of Alba
23
24 O stately yellow-haired company,
25
26 what was the first invasion, is it known to you,
27
28 which took the land of Alba?

29
30
31
32 It was Albanus who took (it) with his host.
33
34 He was the distinguished son of Isiocon,
35
36 brother of Briutus without betrayal
37
38 from which Alba of the many boats is named.

39
40
41
42 Briutus banished his brisk brother,
43
44 across the fierce English channel;
45
46 Briutus took splendid Alba
47

48
49 ²⁰ It appears in the Harleian (Harl §18) and Vatican (§7) recensions, but not in the Chartres, Gildasian and
50 Nennian recensions or *Lebor Bretnach*. Dumville (‘Nennius’ and the *Historia Brittonum*’, 82), has suggested
51 that in the Nennian recension its key point was incorporated elsewhere, but in the other recensions the fact that it
52 contradicted other contents may have led to its exclusion (cf. Dumville, ‘*Historia Brittonum*: an Insular
53 History’, 410).

54 ²¹ Kenneth Jackson, ‘The Duan Albanach’, *Scottish Historical Review* 36 (1957): 125–37, translation at 129,
55 edition at 128: ‘*A éolcha Alban uile, | a shluagh féuta foltbhuidhe, | cia céudghabháil, an éol duibh, | ro*
56 *ghabasdair Albanbruigh? || Albanus ro ghabh lia shlógh, | mac sein oirdherc Isiocón, | bráthair is Briutus gan*
57 *brath | ó ráitear Alba eathrach. || Ro ionnarb a bhráthair bras | Briotus tar Muir nIcht n-amhnas; | ro gabh*
58 *Briotus Albain áin | go rinn fiadhnach Fotudáin.*’ See *idem*, ‘The Poem *A Eolcha Alban Uile*’, *Celtica* 3 (1956):
59 149–67, for an analysis of the poem’s textual history.
60

as far as the conspicuous peak of Fodudhan.’

In these stanzas Albanus is the first settler in Britain, but is later expelled by his brother Briutus. Albanus and Briutus, therefore, have the same familial relationship as in *HB*. The meaning of the last stanza of *Duan Albanach* is somewhat cryptic, partly because it plays on the dual meaning of Alba in Gaelic. The peak of Fodudhan is thought to be North Berwick Law in the territory of the Gododdin in Lothian, so the implication of ‘Briutus took splendid Alba as far as the conspicuous peak of Fodudhan’ is that Alba was the whole of Britain.²² However, the poem also displays knowledge of the other meaning of Alba, as a territory beyond the Forth, since Briutus does not take all of Britain; he left alone the core of the eleventh-century kingdom of Alba north of the Forth.²³ This is the more constricted sense which starts to be found from the end of the ninth century. The poem makes Albanus the only primordial settler in Britain north of the Forth, with the implication, in medieval eyes, that the later inhabitants of this region, Alba, and their king, controlled this area legitimately.

The source for Albanus and Briutus, as well as other material in *Duan Albanach*, was probably *Lebor Bretnach* §5, a Gaelic translation and adaptation of *HB* created in the mid-eleventh century. However, *Lebor Bretnach* did not elaborate on *HB*, so *Duan Albanach* would only have obtained his Albanus’s name and his relationship with Briutus, but not their settlements in Britain, from this source.²⁴

²² Jackson, ‘*A Eolcha*’, 165–6; *idem*, ‘*Duan Albanach*’, 134.

²³ It seems to me more logical (especially as Briutus was the ancestor of the Britons) and natural to understand the passage to intend that Briutus took Britain as far north as North Berwick Law, rather than the view of Jackson, ‘*A Eolcha*’, 166, *idem*, ‘*Duan Albanach*’, 134, that it meant that Briutus conquered northern Britain as far south as this location, just managing to get a foothold from the north onto the southern side of the Forth.

²⁴ *Lebor Bretnach* §5, A.G. Van Hamel, ed., *Lebor Bretnach. The Irish Version of the Historia Brittonum ascribed to Nennius* (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1932), 6–7: ‘*Iar ndilinn tra rorandad in doman i tri itir maccu Nae .i. Eoraip 7 Affraic 7 Assia. Sem i n-Assia, Cam i n-Affraic, Iathfeth i n-Eoraip. Ced-fear thanic in n-Eoraip ar tus do sil Iafed .i. Alanius cona tri macaib .i. Hissicon 7 Gothus no Armen 7 Negua. Ceitri meic la Hisicon .i. Frangcus 7 Romanus 7 Britus 7 Albanus. Armenon imorro coic meic lais .i. Gothus, Uelegothus, Cebitus, Burgandus, Longbardus. Neagua dano tri meic lais .i. Uandalus 7 Saxo 7 Boarus. Saxus*

1
2
3
4
5
6 After the flood, then, the world was divided into three between the sons of Nae [Noah]; that
7
8 is, Europe and Africa and Asia. Sem [Shem] in Asia, Cam in Africa, Iathfeth [Japheth] in
9
10 Europe. The first man who came to Europe earliest from the seed of Iafed; that is Alanius
11
12 with his three sons: that is, Hissicon and Gothus or Armen and Nequa. Four sons from
13
14 Hisicon: that is Frangcus and Romanus and Britus and Albanus. Armenon, moreover, had five
15
16 sons: that is, Gothus, Uelegothus, Cebitus, Burganndus, Longbardus. Neagua, also, had three
17
18 sons: that is, Uandalus and Saxo and Boarus. Saxus son of Neagua, the Saxons are derived
19
20 from him. Britus moreover, from him are the Britons. He was a son of Hision son of Alan son
21
22 of Feithiur . . . [It continues with a genealogy back to Biblical figures.]
23
24
25
26

27 Thomas Owen Clancy has argued that *Lebor Bretnach* was written in Abernethy or maybe St
28
29 Andrews, so, given the textual similarities shared with *Duan Albanach*, it is possible that the
30
31 latter text was also composed in Alba, but an origin in Ireland is possible.²⁵
32

33 A similar account to *Duan Albanach*'s, albeit more clearly related to the version of
34
35 the origins of peoples given in *Lebor Bretnach* and *HB*, is found in the *a* recension (also
36
37 known as the first recension) of the Gaelic historical text *Lebor Gabála Érenn*.²⁶ This was
38
39 created in the late eleventh century, indicating that the ideas in *Duan Albanach* had come to
40
41 form a part of that tradition by that time:²⁷
42
43
44
45

46 *mac Neaguai is uada itait Saxain. Britus imorro is uada Breatain, mac side Hision meic Alani mac Feithiur . . .*
47 .'. The translation is my own.

48 ²⁵ Clancy, 'Scotland, the 'Nennian' recension of the *Historia Brittonum*, and the *Lebor Bretnach*', in *Kings,*
49 *Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland, 500–1297. Essays in honour of Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson on the occasion*
50 *of her ninetieth birthday*, ed. Simon Taylor (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), 87–107, at 92–102, 105–6. See also
51 Mark Zumbuhl, 'Contextualising the *Duan Albanach*', in *Cànan & Cultar / Language & Culture. Rannsachadh*
52 *na Gàidhlig* 3, ed. Wilson McLeod, James E. Fraser, and Anja Gunderloch (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic
53 Press, 2006), 11–24.

54 ²⁶ *HB* was suggested as the origin for some of the *Lebor Gabála* text in John Price Carey, ed., *Lebor Gabála:*
55 *Recension I* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1983), 329–30. Edward J. Cowan, 'Myth and
56 Identity in Early Medieval Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review* 63 (1984): 111–35, at 120–1, suggested that the
57 *Lebor Gabála a* (also known as the 'first') recension and *Duan Albanach* accounts are related.

58 ²⁷ John Carey, trans., 'The Book of Invasions (First Recension). *Lebor Gabála Érenn*', in *The Celtic Heroic*
59 *Age. Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe & Early Ireland & Wales*, ed. John T. Koch in collaboration
60

From Emoth descend the people of the north of the world. Ibath had two sons, Bodb and Baath. Bodb's son was Dói. Elanius son of Dói had three sons: Armen, Negua, Isicón. Armenon had five sons: Gotus, Cibidus, Viligotus, Burgundus, and Longbardus. Negua had three sons: Saxus, Boarus, Vandalus. Isicón, however, the third son of Elanius, had four sons: Romanus, Francus, Britus, Albanus. It is Albanus who took Alba first, and it is named Alba after him; then he was driven across Muir nIcht [the English Channel] by his brother Britus, so that Albania on the Continent is derived from him **today**.

The *Lebor Gabála Érenn* account contains similarities with *Duan Albanach* in its depiction of Britus driving Albanus across the English channel, and the idea that Alba was named after him. However, it does not limit Britus's conquest and it displays knowledge of an *Albania* on the Continent (*Alba Letha*), which is claimed to have also been named after him. *Letha* is a term which is difficult to pin down; it could mean Brittany, Italy, or the Continent in general.²⁸ It is unlikely to mean modern Albania, which only starts to appear in Byzantine sources from the mid-eleventh century onwards, so here it most plausibly means either the *Albani* in or near Scythia mentioned by Isidore of Seville in his 'Etymologies', a well-known early medieval source used in late ninth- or early tenth-century Wales, or the inhabitants of

with John Carey (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2000), §11, 227; Carey, ed., *Lebar Gabála: Recension I*, 80 (lines 75-86): 'Emoth, is uad fine thuascirt in domain. Ibath, dá degmac leis .i. Bodb 7 Baath. Bodb diarbo mac Doi. Elinus mac Doi, trí meic leis .i. Armen, Negua, Isacon. Armenon, cóic meic leis: Gotus, Cibidus, Uiligotus, Burgandus 7 Longbardus. Negua, trí meic leis: Saxus, Boarus, Uandalus. Isicon, immorro, in tres mac Eline, .iiii., mic leis: Romanus, Francus, Britus, Albanus. Is é int Albanus ro gab Albuin ar tús, 7 is uad ainmnigher Alba coro innarbad la (Britus a bráthair) tar muir nIcht conid uad Alba Letha hodie'. One of the main sources of the *a* recension of *Lebor Gabála* was compiled by the Irish scholar Gilla Cóemáin (*fl.* 1072), and the recension was by 1106 part of *Leabhar na hUidhre*, although it was subsequently lost from this manuscript (see R. Mark Scowcroft, 'Mediaeval Recensions of the *Lebor Gabála*', in *Lebor Gabála Érenn: Textual History and Pseudohistory*, Subsidiary Series 20, ed. John Carey (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 2009), 1–20, at 6, 8; John Carey, 'The LU Copy of *Lebor Gabála*', in *ibid.*, 21–32). The relevant section is not found in recension *b* (the second recension) or the *Míniugud* recension (see Carey, *Lebar Gabála: Recension I*, 30–1, 35, 38). 'Albania' and 'Albanian' also appear in recension *a* among the list of languages from which Gaelic was fashioned, but the other languages listed do not display a striking correspondance with the Table of Nations in *HB* or *Lebor Bretmach* (*ibid.*, 83, 84, for discussion see 334–9; *idem*, *Celtic Heroic Age*, 229).

²⁸ J.T. Koch, 'Litavis', in *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, 5 vols., ed. J.T. Koch (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2006), iii, 1159, although references often refer less clearly to Brittany or *Latium* than Koch implies.

Alba Longa in Italy.²⁹ The account in *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* recension *a*, while it displays some differences in the order of peoples, was clearly based on a text of *Lebor Bretnach*, since it contains the same names, overall scheme and similar phrasing (number plus *meic lais*, ‘sons by/with him’, followed by the names). Since *Duan Albanach* does not contain a version of the list of peoples, the account in *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* recension *a* cannot have been based on that poem. Similarly, *Duan Albanach* had as a source a regnal list combining kings of the Picts and Alba which is not part of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* recension *a*, but is likely to have accompanied *Lebor Bretnach* to Ireland.³⁰ Therefore, neither *Duan Albanach* nor *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* recension *a* were copies of the other. The simplest explanation is that they both used a version of *Lebor Bretnach* accompanied by or including an account of the settlement of Britain by Albanus and Brutus, itself likely to be an expansion upon *Lebor Bretnach*, as well as a Pictish king-list.

Therefore, it is clear that by the late eleventh century the references to a person called Albanus and a people called *Albani* were transmitted to the kingdom of Alba itself, and either there or in Ireland were employed to explain the origins of the kingdom, establishing Alba as the oldest unit in Britain. Since *Lebor Bretnach* and recension *a* of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* survive in Irish copies, the elaboration may have taken place in Ireland, but the close

²⁹ The ‘Etymologies’, IX.ii.63, IX.ii.65, XIV.iii.33 (for Albania), XIX.xxiii.7, trans. Stephen A. Barney et al., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 195, 201, 386. For evidence of its use in Wales, see Michael Lapidge, ‘The Study of Latin Texts in late Anglo-Saxon England [1] The Evidence of Latin Glosses’, in *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. Nicholas Brooks (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), 99–140, at 113 n. 72. See below, 00–00, for Alba Longa. Contemporary medieval sources relating events in the Balkans refer to *Albanoi* from 1043 onwards, albeit initially twinned with *Romaioi* and *Latinoi*. At the same time people called Arbanites, inhabiting Arbanon, a territory in modern Albania, start to be mentioned. Based on Classical models, *Albanoi* either meant the *Albani* of ancient Latium or an Illyrian tribe in the Balkans region found in the ‘Geography’ of Ptolemy (written A.D. 140×50), but whether there was continuity of identity and culture for this tribe from the time of Ptolemy to the eleventh century is controversial. See Stefanaq Pollo et al., *The history of Albania from its origins to the present day* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 28, 37–40, for references and one view; Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 28–40, for analysis, arguing that linguistic continuity from Illyrian to Albanian is very likely. The lack of earlier medieval references makes it unlikely that *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* was referring to the Balkan people.

³⁰ Dauvit Broun, *The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of the Scots in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), 168–72. See also Clancy, ‘Scotland, the ‘Nennian’ recension’, 99–100, 101–2.

1
2
3
4 connections between the literary cultures of Alba and Ireland in this period make it difficult
5
6 to discern where particular developments took place, and make the question less significant,
7
8 since ideas presumably travelled in both directions.³¹
9

10
11 These accounts were intended to make the kingdom of Alba more important, but the
12
13 same basic idea, especially the relationship with Brutus, the ancestor of the Britons, had the
14
15 potential for other, more negative, re-interpretations. Geoffrey of Monmouth, who wrote the
16
17 extremely influential *De Gestis Britonum* (also known as *Historia Regum Britanniae*)
18
19 (hereafter *DGB*), between 1123 and January 1139, recast the tale so that the Albanus figure,
20
21 now called Albanactus, became a son of Brutus.³² After Brutus's death, the 'kingdom of
22
23 Britain' was divided among Brutus's three sons, Lochrinus, the eldest, who received the
24
25 central part, Loegria, Kamber, who received what became Kambria, while Albanactus, the
26
27 youngest, received 'the region known today as Scotland [*Scotia*], which he named Albania
28
29 after himself.' This situation worked until Humber, king of the Huns, killed Albanactus,
30
31 forcing his people to flee to Lochrinus. The episode then depicts England, represented by
32
33 Lochrinus, as the saviour of Alba, with Wales under Kamber providing assistance. This, along
34
35 with the rule of Brutus over all Britain, makes it clear that Britain was fundamentally a single
36
37 unit, with England as its dominant constituent region. There is no strong evidence for a
38
39 textual connection with the Gaelic accounts in *Duan Albanach* and the first recension of
40
41 *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, but the form *Albanactus* seems to incorporate Gaelic *Albanach*,
42
43 meaning an inhabitant of Alba, so some knowledge of the Gaelic settlement accounts is quite
44
45 plausible.³³
46
47
48
49
50
51

52
53 ³¹ For the close connections displayed in these texts, see Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 59–60; *idem*, *Irish Identity*, 172.

54
55 ³² Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Geoffrey of Monmouth. The History of the Kings of Britain. An Edition and Translation of the De Gestis Britonum (Historia Regum Britanniae)*, II, 23 and 24 (part), ed. Michael D. Reeve, trans. Neil Wright (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), 30 (vii for the date range).

56
57 ³³ Geoffrey's *DGB* and William of Malmesbury's 'History', finished in 1126 or 1127, were both known very
58
59 quickly in royal circles in Scotland (Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 48), making it plausible that ideas could also
60

1
2
3
4 However, Geoffrey did use *HB* as one of his major sources, so he may have
5 developed independently the bald account in *HB*, reshaping it significantly for his own
6 purposes.³⁴ The episode establishes the general pattern of Geoffrey's narrative, with
7 temporary divisions (often negatively portrayed) and British kings, like Arthur, who establish
8 or maintain unity in the island, often being the high points. Geoffrey, writing in Oxford, may
9 have had an eye on his English audience when he emphasised the importance of the English
10 portion of Britain, but his account was firmly intended to be focussed on kings of the Britons,
11 at that point meaning the Brittonic-speaking peoples such as the Welsh. Geoffrey's emphasis
12 on Britain was part of a British view, also found in Gildas's *De Excidio Britanniae* and *HB*,
13 that the Britons were the original inhabitants of the island, which, combined with prophecies
14 about the future reconquest of the parts of Britain lost to the English, gave them a unique
15 connection with the island.³⁵

16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31 This presentation of the past was initially a significant challenge for those who
32 regarded the kings of England as natural overlords of Britain, but over time Geoffrey's work
33 became integrated into a view of history, dominant in the thirteenth century, that the Anglo-
34 Saxons and the kings of the English were the successors of King Arthur and earlier British
35 kings to the overlordship of Britain.³⁶ As a result, the settlement of Britain episode in
36 Geoffrey's *DGB* came to be employed to show that Alba was subordinate to the kings of
37 England. As such, it was used as an argument by Edward I during the Wars of Independence
38 in a letter to Pope Boniface in 1301, to claim that he was rightly the overlord over the Scots,
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49
50 travel in the opposite direction. Geoffrey may also have included references to David I, King of the Scots
51 (1124–53) (Cowan, 'Myth and Identity', 133–4).

52 ³⁴ Reeve and Wright, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, lvii–lix; Robert W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early*
53 *Britain from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 137–40, 156–64.

54 ³⁵ R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire. Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093–1343. The Ford*
55 *Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in Hilary Term 1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000),
56 35–6, 43–6. See Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 37–70, for the Scottish dimension.

57 ³⁶ Davies, *First English Empire*, 36–44; R. William Leckie Jr, *The passage of Dominion: Geoffrey of Monmouth*
58 *and the periodization of insular history in the twelfth century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1981), 20
59 for the importance of Geoffrey's *DGB* in the thirteenth century.
60

1
2
3
4 because Albanactus had been in a subordinate relationship to Locrinus, who inherited the
5
6 overlordship of Britain from Brutus.³⁷ Therefore, whereas Albanus in *Duan Albanach* had
7
8 been used to demonstrate the antiquity of the Scottish realm, his alter ego Albanactus came to
9
10 be employed for the subjugation of the same kingdom.³⁸

11
12
13 So by the mid-twelfth century the role of Albanus had been developed in different
14
15 ways, but when did Albanus start to mean the ancestor of inhabitants in northern Britain?
16
17 Dumville has argued that Albanus in *HB* was not intended to be such an ancestor figure:³⁹

18
19
20
21
22 It had better be stated here that Albanus has nothing to do with Scotland. Irish *Alba*, latinised
23
24 locally as *Albania*, came to refer specifically to north Britain only in the tenth century . . .
25
26 Here Albanus is the eponym of the inhabitants of Alba (Longa), founded (according to our
27
28 text, §4 [Harl. §10] by Aeneas), just as Romanus is the eponym of the *Romani uel Latini*.

29
30
31
32 The reasoning is logical and plausible on its own terms, but it is important to realise that
33
34 Albanus was not actually part of the original text of *HB* created in 829/30. The original of *HB*
35
36 no longer exists, but the text survives in a number of different recensions, in which it has
37
38 been altered in various ways. The inter-relationships of the different versions are indicated in
39
40 the stemma in figure 1. This is based largely on the work of Dumville, with the following
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50
51 ³⁷ See Davies, *First English Empire*, 41–2; R. James Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland. Historical Narrative in*
52 *Medieval Scotland* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 62–5, and 70–5 for Baldred Bisset’s
53 counter-attack on this on behalf of the Scots. See E.L.G. Stones, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Scottish Relations 1174–*
54 *1328. Some Selected Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 192–219, for Edward I’s letter, 220–
55 35 for a report (ca. 1301) to Edward I from the papal curia explaining the Scots’ arguments there against the
56 letter including Edward’s view on the sons of Brutus.

56
57 ³⁸ For later, often not hostile, Scottish responses to the ‘Matter of Britain’ see Steve Boardman, ‘Late Medieval
58 Scotland and the Matter of Britain’, in *Scottish History. The Power of the Past*, ed. Edward J. Cowan and
59 Richard J. Finlay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 47–72.

60 ³⁹ Dumville, ‘*Historia Brittonum*: an Insular History’, 409, n. 24.

extra proposals, based on the Albanus evidence discussed in this paper, which do not conflict with the textual evidence hitherto presented:⁴⁰

- 1) The Nennian recension and its *Lebor Bretnach* derivative are most closely related to the Harleian recension, sharing a common source with that recension between A.D. 857 and 912.
- 2) The Gildasian recension is not so closely connected to these recensions, being derived from an ancestor of their common source. The ancestor shared by the Gildasian, Harleian and Nennian recensions contained an addition to §16 dateable to 857 or later, providing a *terminus post quem* for this ancestor, although it does not survive in our evidence for the Nennian recension.

Albanus and *Albani* are found in only some versions of *HB*: they occur in the Harleian version and *Lebor Bretnach*. It is uncertain whether they were once the readings of the fragmentary Nennian recension too, but that recension only survives through corrections and additions made during the twelfth century to another Gildasian recension copy of *HB* in one manuscript.⁴¹ Given that *Lebor Bretnach* was based on the Nennian recension, and does have Albanus, there is good reason to assume that the Nennian recension had Albanus also.⁴² In

⁴⁰ The issue clearly requires further research including the full text of *HB*. Dumville, 'Historia Brittonum: an Insular History', discusses the recensions in terms of their depictions of history, but he has also published more detailed studies. For the Vatican recension's relationship to other recensions, see Dumville, 'Vatican' Recension, 3–8, 24–54, 56–7 (concordances of section numeration). For the Nennian and Sawley recensions, see *idem*, 'The Corpus Christi 'Nennius'', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 25 (1972–4): 369–80 (374 on the Gildasian recension), reprinted in *idem*, *Histories and Pseudo-histories*, chp. IX; *idem*, 'Nennius' and the *Historia Brittonum*' (80–2 on the Gildasian recension), and *idem*, 'Celtic-Latin texts in northern England, c. 1150–c. 1250', *Celtica* 12 (1977): 19–49 (19 for the Gildasian recension), repr. in *idem*, *Histories and Pseudo-histories*, chp. XI; for the Harleian recension, see *idem*, 'The *Liber Floridus* of Lambert of Saint-Omer and the *Historia Brittonum*', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 26 (1974–6): 103–22, repr. in *idem*, *Histories and Pseudo-histories*, chp. XII; for *Lebor Bretnach*, see *idem*, 'The Textual History of 'Lebor Bretnach': a Preliminary Study', *Éigse* 16 (1975/6): 255–73. Fuller discussion of the Harleian, Sawley, Gildasian, and Chartres recensions can be found in *idem*, 'Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*'.

⁴¹ The resulting text in Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 139 (CCCC 139) was then copied in what Dumville ('The Corpus Christi 'Nennius''; *idem*, 'Nennius' and the *Historia Brittonum*', especially 79–80) has named the 'Sawley' recension.

⁴² It would be a mistake to read too much into the fact that no note on the Albanus alternative reading was added to the text of CCCC 139. Comparing this part of the Gildasian text of CCCC 139 (Dumville, 'Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', vol. II, 635–6, vol. III, 778–9) with the Harleian recension, *Lebor Bretnach*, and forms

contrast, Albanus is not found in the other versions of *HB*: the Chartres, Vatican or Gildasian recensions. They have Alemannus and the *Alemanni* instead, referring to the Germanic-speaking group in southern Germany, Switzerland and Alsace conquered by the Franks in the mid-sixth century.

Fortunately, we know that the source for this section of *HB* is a ‘Table of Nations’, which probably dates to *ca.* A.D. 520.⁴³ It survives independently elsewhere in Europe in variant versions. *HB* is closest to MS F of the ‘Table of Nations’, regarded as Italian in origin and dating to the early ninth century, which, like all the other witnesses, includes the *Alemanni*, although it does not list eponymous ancestors, which was an innovation of *HB*.⁴⁴

There was a man called *Alaneus* who had three sons, that is, *Hisisione*, *Ermenone* and *Niguelo*. From *Hisisione* were born four peoples, that is, the Romans, Franks, Alemans and Britons. From *Ermenone* were born five peoples, that is, the Goths, Walagoths, Gepids, Burgundians and Lombards. From *Niguelo* were born four peoples, that is, the Vandals, Saxons, Bavarians and Thuringians.

added elsewhere from the Nennian recension, there are not many other substantially different forms where the versions differed substantially which could have prompted a correction or marginal addition. The exception perhaps is *Ysition*, since the somewhat different *a Britone filio Isioconis* is found elsewhere in an addition, probably from the Nennian recension, to Harl. §7. While other text to adhere to the Nennian recension exemplar, the names were not thus altered, although it should be noted that at some point additions to the CCCC 139 text changed *Almannus* to *Alemannus*, *Alamanni* to *Alemanni*, and *Walagothos* to *Walagothus* to standardise and correct forms. I thank Corpus Christi College for allowing me to consult this manuscript, for work supported by the British Academy Neil Ker Memorial Fund.

⁴³ Walter Goffart, ‘The supposedly ‘Frankish’ table of nations: an edition and study’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 17 (1983): 98–130; repr. in *idem, Rome’s Fall and After* (London: Hambledon Press, 1989), 133–65 (references are to the latter version). Goffart’s view that the text was produced in the Byzantine Empire rather than Ostrogothic Italy is unconvincing, involving an unwarranted argument that the *Walagothi* and *Saxones* were later additions. Given that *Walagothi* was ultimately a Germanic term, Ostrogothic Italy, rather than Byzantine territory, would fit the evidence better.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 145–7 (MS. F): ‘*Alaneus dictus est homo qui genuit tres filios, id est, Hisisione, Ermenone et Niguelo. De Hisisione nate sunt generationes quattuor, id est: Romanos, Francos, Alamannos et Brittones. De Ermenone nate sunt generationes V: Gothi, Walagothi, Cybedi, Burgundio et Langobardos. De Niguelo nate sunt generationes quattuor, id est: Wandalos, Saxones, Baioarius et Toringus*’. The translation is my own.

1
2
3
4 This evidence, as well as the appearance of *Alemannus* not only in the Chartres and Vatican
5 recensions, but also in the Gildasian recension, indicate that, following its 'Table of Nations'
6 source, *Alemannus* was the original reading of *HB* when it was created in 829/30.
7
8
9

10
11 Given the textual evidence, it is clear that *Albanus* and *Albani* were alterations made
12 to the original *HB*, but when? There is some evidence provided by additions made during the
13 textual history of *HB* which enable us to produce a date range. Dumville has discussed a note
14 in the Nennian recension relating to Anarawd, a member of the second dynasty of Gwynedd.
15 From the chronological data it contains, it can be argued that the note was added to an
16 ancestor-text of the Nennian recension in 907, 908 or 912.⁴⁵ This addition is not found in the
17 Harleian recension, so the common source of the Nennian and Harleian recensions can be
18 dated to 912 or earlier.⁴⁶ There is evidence from another addition to the Nennian recension
19 that the chronological data was added in north Wales, most likely in Anglesey.⁴⁷ Therefore,
20 the earlier textual history of text, including the addition of *Albanus*, also presumably took
21 place in northern Wales, since that was where *HB* was created in 829/30.
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34

35 The Harleian and Gildasian recensions also contain an additional chronological
36 statement in Harl. §16 which Dumville has argued was added in 857 or later.⁴⁸ This provides
37 a *terminus post quem* for their common source. Since the Gildasian recension, as has been
38 pointed out, has *Alemannus* but the Harleian recension has *Albanus*, 857× is also a *terminus*
39 *post quem* for the change to *Albanus*. The lack of evidence for the additional chronological
40 statement in the Nennian recension is not significant, since the note, present in the Gildasian
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49
50 ⁴⁵ Dumville 'Nennius' and the *Historia Brittonum*', 86–7.

51 ⁴⁶ Given that the Harleian recension was produced in Wales, and the context in Harleian MS. 3859 also displays
52 a strong interest in the same dynasty, it is unlikely that this note would have been omitted from that recension,
53 although this possibility cannot be discounted. If it was omitted from the Harleian recension then the common
54 source can be dated ×988, although that recension's common ancestor was earlier than this.

55 ⁴⁷ Dumville 'Nennius' and the *Historia Brittonum*', 87.

56 ⁴⁸ Dumville, 'Some aspects of the chronology of the *Historia Brittonum*', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*
57 25 (1972–4): 439–45 (repr. in *idem, Histories and Pseudo-Histories*, chp. IV), 440, n. 3, states that the second
58 section of §16, starting with *initium compoti*, was a later attempt to gloss the first part, 'in, or more probably
59 after, A.D. 857'.
60

base-text of CCCC 139, is not long, so it is not surprising that no variants from the Nennian recension were added to that statement, and the other potential source for the Nennian recension, *Lebor Bretnach*, often lacks such chronological notes.⁴⁹ To summarise, then: Albanus and *Albani* replaced Alemmanus and *Alemanni* at some point after 857, later than the original HB of 829 or 830, but before 912.

What was the significance of this change? A possibility is that the change from *Alemannus* to *Albani* was simply a mistake, due to copying errors. However, it is unlikely to have happened twice, and Alemannus is not that close in form to Albanus, **since such as change would involved both -em- or -am- becoming -b- and -nn- becoming -n-**. It cannot be coincidence that a real population name was chosen, even if the similarity of the names may have been a factor. It is also notable that the versions with Albanus all list him and his brothers in a different order to that found in the other recensions; the Harleian recension and *Lebor Bretnach* have *Francus, Romanus, Britto, Albanus*, whereas the Chartres, Vatican and Gildasian recensions have *Francus, Romanus, Alemannus, Britto*. While on the face of it this might not seem significant, in fact this is potentially the only known case in the first couple of hundred years of *HB*'s textual history in which the order of the sons and grandsons of *Alanus* and their corresponding ethnic groups, a total of 28 names, was changed.⁵⁰ There is a high degree of stability among the recensions of *HB* (and *Lebor Bretnach*), so the fact that the only change of name order took place at the same time that one of the moved names was transformed to Albanus cannot be chance.⁵¹ However, the fact that the order of the

⁴⁹ According to Dumville ('Nennius' and the *Historia Brittonum*', 81, n. 7), the Nennian version provides 'no special additional guidance' regarding this addition.

⁵⁰ Using the editions cited in n. 13 above, and Dumville, 'Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', vol. I, 181, 183, for the Harleian recension, vol II., 635–6, vol. III, 778–9, for the Gildasian base-text of the Sawley recension.

⁵¹ While the order was stable in versions of *HB*, this is not not the case for the 'Table of Nations', whose witnesses vary considerably in their order. The original *HB* has two changes of order compared to MS. F of the 'Table of Nations' (*Francus* and *Romanus*, and the list of peoples in *HB* derived from the sons of *Inguo* son of *Alanus*, which differs from the list of eponyms). The first recension of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* has four differences in its order compared to *Lebor Bretnach* (the order of the sons of *Alanus*, of *Gepidus* and *Ualagothus*, of *Romanus* and *Francus*, and of the sons of *Inguo*).

1
2
3
4 corresponding list of peoples was not altered, but remained *Franci, Latini, Albani, et Britti*,
5
6 with *Albani* simply replacing *Alemanni*, means that we should probably not argue that the re-
7
8 ordering of the first list was making an ideological statement.⁵² The overall pattern, therefore,
9
10 provides strong supporting evidence for the theory stated above that the Harleian recension
11
12 and *Lebor Bretnach*, and the Nennian recension by inference, shared a common source in
13
14 distinction to the other recensions of *HB*.
15

16
17 While we will never know what exactly happened, the following is a possible
18
19 scenario: a copyist, coming across *Alemannus* (or a variant or corrupt form of that) in the text,
20
21 was unsure whether the name should be included, since a similar name, Albanus came to
22
23 mind (as a potential ancestor for the *Albani*). So *Alemannus* was initially left out, and Britto
24
25 was copied immediately after Romanus.⁵³ Before continuing copying, the scribe investigated
26
27 the matter and decided to add Albanus after Britto, in the next available space. A few
28
29 sentences later the scribe simply replaced *Alemanni* with *Albani*, rather than changing the
30
31 word order again. If this explanation is correct, it indicates that a degree of consideration was
32
33 involved, but not necessarily a high degree of pre-meditated thought.
34
35
36

37
38 What the scribe intended by Albanus and *Albani* is, like much interpretation of early
39
40 medieval evidence, not a question which can ever be answered with complete certainty, but
41
42 what was most likely can be suggested. The four main possibilities are that Albanus and
43
44 *Albani* related to: 1) Alba Longa in Italy; 2) a people in Scythia in Asia; the Gaelic word
45
46 Alba, either meaning 3) Britain or 4) the kingdom of Alba in northern Britain.
47

48
49 That *Albani* and Albanus were intended to refer to an eponym of Alba Longa and its
50
51 inhabitants, the explanation given by Dumville, is plausible. Alba Longa, to the south of the
52

53
54
55 ⁵² Harl. §17, Faral, ed., *Légende arthurienne*, vol. III, 15. *Lebor Bretnach* did not include the lists of population
56
57 groups derived from the eponyms, although it did state that the Britons were derived from *Britto* (van Hamel,
58
59 ed., *Lebor Bretnach*, §5, 7).

60
⁵³ An alternative is that *Alemannus* was initially included, but was expunged from the text after Albanus was added. Other, generally more complex, variant scenarios, leading to the same result, are possible.

1
2
3
4 River Tiber in *Latium*, was inhabited by *Albani*. According to much later Roman accounts, it
5
6 was supposedly a precursor settlement of Rome, founded and ruled by the descendants of
7
8 Aeneas and it was from there that Romulus and Remus were supposedly cast out, leading to
9
10 the foundation of Rome.⁵⁴ Later Rome under their third king Tullus Hostilius took over Alba
11
12 Longa, destroying the city and forcing all its inhabitants to move to Rome.⁵⁵ As a result of all
13
14 this, with shared rulers before and after Rome's foundation, the Romans were also regarded
15
16 as *Albani*. It is, therefore, not surprising that the original *HB* mentions the *Albani* and the
17
18 foundation of Alba Longa. In the first account of the origins of the Britons, Alba was founded
19
20 either by Aeneas (Harl. §10), or Aeneas's son Ascanias (Vatican §5, *Lebor Bretnach* §8),
21
22 following the mainstream tradition.⁵⁶ Also, the kings of the *Albani* appear in Harl. §11, where
23
24 the early kings among the Latins are included:⁵⁷
25
26
27
28
29
30

31 Aeneas reigned three years among the Latins. Ascanius reigned 37 years, and after him
32
33 Silvius, son of Aeneas, reigned 12 years, Postumus 39 years; and from him the kings of the
34
35 Albani were called Silvii; and Britto was his brother. . . . Postumus, his brother, ruled among
36
37 the Latins.
38
39
40

41 Given these references in the original *HB*, it is quite possible that someone later changed
42
43 Alemannus to Albanus in a later section with Alba Longa's inhabitants in mind. However,
44
45 there was little reason to do so. It is likely that Alba Longa and its role in the pre-history of
46
47
48

49 ⁵⁴ See, for instance, Livy, *The Early History of Rome. Books I–V of The History of Rome from its Foundation*,
50 trans. Audrey de Sélincourt, with an introduction by R.M. Ogilvie (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books,
51 1971), Book I.1–30.

52 ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Book I.23–30.

53 ⁵⁶ Dumville, 'Nennius' and the *Historia Brittonum*', 81 n.7.

54 ⁵⁷ Morris, ed. and trans., *Nennius*, 20, except *Silvii appellati sunt* is translated 'were called Silvii' rather than
55 'are called Silvii', 61: '*Aeneas autem regnavit tribus annis apud Latinos. Ascanius regnavit annis XXXVII. Post*
56 *quem Silvius, Aeneae filius, regnavit annis XII, Postumus annis XXXIX. A quo Albanorum reges Silvii appellati*
57 *sunt. Cuius frater erat Britto. . . . Postumus, frater eius, apud Latinos regnabat.*'
58
59
60

Rome would have been known among the learned (presumably clergy) in ninth-century Wales; Alba Longa is mentioned in Virgil's *Aeneid*, which was a very common teaching text, in Isidore of Seville's 'Etymologies', the chronicles of Isidore and Bede, and the very influential Late Roman Eusebius-Jerome Chronicle.⁵⁸ Not only does the original *HB* have an account of the early history of Rome, but an addition found in the Chartres and Vatican recensions (Vat. §4, Chartres §11), included probably in mid-ninth century Wales, contained genealogies of the Romans' Trojan ancestors, and the detail that Rhea Silvia was the mother of Romulus and Remus.⁵⁹ This addition states that Roman and British kings are called *Silviatici* because they descend from Silvius, to clarify the somewhat confused account provided in the original *HB* by making Silvius an ancestor of the Britons as well as the Romans. Neither Alba Longa nor the *Albani* are mentioned in this additional section, which displays a combination of both knowledge of texts on the ancient Roman past and a lack of interest in Alba Longa and *Albani*, perhaps because on its own Alba Longa was not of contemporary relevance.

Moreover, the creation of Albanus as an ancestor of Alba Longa would have not made much sense. The *Albani*, like the Romans, were also *Latini*, found in the same *HB* list, rather than being a separate people, since the ancestral rulers of the Romans were both Latins and *Albani*. While there was a period after the foundation of Rome when Romans and *Albani* were 'brother' peoples, this was not for long. When all the inhabitants of Alba Longa were forced to move to Rome, the Romans also became *Albani* to an even greater extent. So it is

⁵⁸ For instance, Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.8, 1.325, 8.756, trans. Robert Fagles, *Virgil. The Aeneid* (London: Penguin Books), 47, 56, 263; Isidore, 'Etymologies', IX.iii.15, XIII.xxii.27, XV.i.53-5, trans. Stephen A. Barney et al., *The Etymologies*, 200, 282, 304; Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, §99, Theodor Mommsen, ed., *Chronica Minora Saec. IV.V.VI.VII*, vol. I, *MGH AA*, vol. XI (Berlin: Weidmanns, 1892), 439; Bede, *Chronica Maiora*, Theodor Mommsen, ed., *Chronica Minora Saec. IV.V.VI.VII*, vol. III, *MGH AA*, vol. XIII (Berlin: Weidmanns, 1898), §§72, 75, 91, 110. pages 261, 263, 265. *Eusebii Pamphili Chronici Canones*, ed. John Knight Fotheringham (London: Humphrey Milford Library of the University of Oxford, 1923), 101, 103, 105, 121, 135, 144, 146, 164.

⁵⁹ Vat. §4, 'Vatican' Recension, ed. Dumville, 64-5, also 48; Chartres §11, *Légende arthurienne*, ed. Faral, vol. III, 6, 8.

1
2
3
4 very doubtful whether someone from Wales would have thought that the *Albani* of early Italy
5
6 could justifiably be placed on the same level as the Franks, Romans and Britons as a separate
7
8 people.
9

10
11 The second possibility, the view that the *Albani* were the Scythian people of the same
12
13 name living in Asia, referred to by Classical authors and Isidore of Seville, is unlikely.⁶⁰ An
14
15 attempt was made in the twelfth century in the tract *Cronica de origine antiquorum Pictorum*,
16
17 surviving in the Poppleton collection of Scottish materials, to link these *Albani* with northern
18
19 Britain as the ancestors of the Picts and Gaels, using Isidore's 'Etymologies'.⁶¹ It is tempting
20
21 to argue that the Scythian connections of both the Picts and Gaels, found in their origin
22
23 accounts, made Alba attractive as a name for the kingdom in northern Britain, but no text
24
25 from the ninth or tenth century makes this connection, and it does not fit the context in *HB*,
26
27 with the *Albani* being in a close relationship with the Romans, Britons and Franks.⁶²
28
29

30
31 Another aspect to be considered is whether there was a good reason to replace the
32
33 *Alemanni* in the list. There is little evidence to indicate that there would have been a strong
34
35 desire to remove this name for a better known replacement. First, none of the other less well-
36
37 known names in the Table of Nations – the *Walagothi*, Gepids, Vandals and the Bavarians –
38
39 were replaced.⁶³ Secondly, the *Alemanni* continued to be a significant people throughout the
40
41

42
43 ⁶⁰ See above, 00, for *Albani* and *Albania* in the 'Etymologies'.

44 ⁶¹ Anderson, *Kings*, 243–5.

45 ⁶² See Cowan, 'Myth and Identity', 121–9, Zumbuhl, 'Contextualising the *Duan Albanach*', 17–18, for the view
46 that the Scythian connection played a part in or may reflect the Pictish to Gaelic transition. For the supposed
47 Scythian origins of the Picts, see Fraser, 'From Ancient', 30–3; Evans, 'Ideology, Literacy', 54. For the
48 Scythian origins of the Gaels, see John Carey, *The Irish National Origin-Legend: Synthetic Pseudohistory*,
49 Quiggin Pamphlets on the Sources of Mediaeval Gaelic History 1 (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon,
50 Norse and Celtic, 1994), 6–14.

51 ⁶³ For the peoples in the Table of Nations, see Goffart, 'Frankish' Table of Nations', 152, 155–6. *Walagothi*,
52 the only known instance of this word, probably meant 'Roman Goths' containing the same element as the
53 Walloons, Welsh, and walnuts. The Gepids and Vandals did not survive the sixth century, although they were
54 mentioned in the early seventh century by Isidore ('Etymologies', IX.ii.92 and IX.ii.95, trans. Barney et al., *The*
55 *Etymologies*, 197). The Bavarians and Bavaria appear in sources from the sixth century onwards (Timothy
56 Reuter, *Germany in the early middle ages c.800–1056* (London: Longman: 1991), 54–8; Benjamin Arnold,
57 *Medieval Germany, 500–1300. A Political Interpretation* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1997), 13–20). The
58 form *Boguari* in *HB* is presumably the result of a change reflecting British sound change of *w-* > *gw-* (John T.
59 Koch, 'Celts, Britons, and Gaels—Names, Peoples, and Identities', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of*
60

early medieval period. They had been mentioned in Classical sources since the third century A.D., but, even after they were conquered by the Franks in the sixth century, the *Alemanni* continued to be significant, as a people inhabiting parts of southern Germany, northern Switzerland and west into Alsace, and as a territory, *Alemannia*.⁶⁴ In the tenth century *Alemannia* was gradually eclipsed as a territorial term by Swabia, although *Alemannia* continued in use as late as the thirteenth century.⁶⁵ In fact, in the late eleventh century the usage of *Alemannia* (and the related ethnic term *aleman*) underwent a dramatic transformation, since it came to also mean all the Germanic-speaking lands north of the Alps in the Holy Roman Empire.⁶⁶ This explains why it has become the basis for names for Germany and German in many languages, such as French (*Allemagne* and *allemand*), and Welsh (for instance, *yr Almaen* for the country, and *Almaeneg* for the language), and was found in late medieval and early modern English as *Almanie*, ‘Germany’, and *Almain*, ‘German’.⁶⁷ However, in the late ninth and early tenth centuries *Alemanni* and *Alemannia* in their original senses were still in frequent use: Charles the Fat was king of *Alemannia* from 876 to 882, and after the deaths of his brothers, his subjects in 882 were listed in the Annals of Fulda as ‘Franks, Bavarians, Alemans, Thuringians and Saxons’; while in 911 Conrad, *dux*

Cymmrodorion New Series 9 (2003): 41–56, at 52–4), so it is not a scribal error. The other peoples, the Burgundians, Thuringians, Saxons, Lombards, all outlasted the early Middle Ages as peoples or regions (Arnold, *Medieval Germany*, 1–2, 5, 7, 10, 40–8; Jean Dunbabin, *France in the Making 843–1180* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 63–6, 179–84; Chris Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy. Central Power and Local Society 400–1000* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 64–79), and were, apart from the Thuringians, all clearly mentioned by Isidore (‘Etymologies’, IX.ii.99, IX.iv.28 (Burgundians); IX.ii.95 (Lombards); IX.ii.100 (Saxons), trans. Barney et al., *The Etymologies*, 197, 204–5).

⁶⁴ Arnold, *Medieval Germany*, 25–31; Reuter, *Germany*, 58–60.

⁶⁵ Arnold, *Medieval Germany*, 25; Reuter, *Germany*, 115, 132, 336.

⁶⁶ Arnold, *Medieval Germany*, 6–7, for the usage inside the Holy Roman Empire.

⁶⁷ *Le Grand Collins Robert*, (Brussels: Le Robert/Harper Collins, 2008), <http://rc2009.bvdep.com>, s.v. *Allemagne*, and *allemand*. *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru. A Dictionary of the Welsh Language*, 4 vols. (Cardiff: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1950–2002), s.v. *Almaenaidd*, *Almanaid*; *Almaeneg*, *Almaenaeg*; *Almaenes*; *Almaeniad*, *Almaniad*; *Almaeniaith*, *Almaniaith*; *Almaenwr*, *Almanwr*; *Ellmyn*; *Ellmyneg*. *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), <http://www.oed.com> (accessed 15 April 2014), s.v. *Almanie* and *Almain*. Welsh *yr Almaen* or its Latin counterpart do not occur before 1100 in any surviving text. It is found meaning part of Germany in two separate Welsh translations of the first version, written ca.1110, of Honorius Augustodunensis’s popular *Imago Mundi* (*Delw y Byd* (*Imago Mundi*), ed. Henry Lewis and P. Diverres (Cardiff: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1928), §24, at pages 39, 94, less certainly in the note on §23, p. 94; for the textual tradition, see Natalia I Petrovskaia, ‘*Delw y Byd*: la traduction Médiéval en gallois d’une encyclopédie latine et la création d’un traité géographique’, *Études celtiques* 39 (2013): 257–77).

1
2
3
4 of Franconia, was elected king ‘by Franks, Saxons, Alemans and Bavarians’, according to
5
6 *Annales Alemannici*.⁶⁸
7

8
9 In Wales, other than *Historia Brittonum*, we have no early medieval texts referring to
10 *Alemanni* or *Alemannia* or **their** equivalents in Welsh, but the *Alemanni* appear in Isidore’s
11 ‘Etymologies’ at IX.ii.93, XIX.xxiii.6, a text which was used as a source for glosses added *ca.*
12 900 to the Welsh Cambridge ‘Juvenius’ manuscript.⁶⁹ This manuscript’s glosses overall
13 display similarities with those found in other ‘Juvenius’ copies derived from a textual
14 tradition with ninth-century origins on the Continent.⁷⁰ Contemporary knowledge of the
15 Continent is also likely to have been gained because Irish people, as well as being active in
16 the copying and annotating of Welsh manuscripts, often used Wales as a stopping place on
17 the route to Continental Europe.⁷¹ Welsh involvement and contacts in Anglo-Saxon lands
18 provided another conduit for knowledge of the Continent. This is exemplified by the case of
19 Asser, bishop of St Davids and visitor to the court of King Alfred of Wessex in the late ninth
20 century, who presumably knew about Continental events, such as the Viking attacks and
21 political events in the Carolingian empire recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle from 879–
22 87 and 890–2, a text which Asser used as a source for his ‘Life of Alfred’, written in 893.⁷²
23 Moreover, Asser’s ‘Life of Alfred’ drew inspiration from Einhard’s ‘Life of Charlemagne’,
24 written between 811 and 833, which mentioned the *Alemanni* on three occasions.⁷³ While
25 Einhard’s ‘Life of Charlemagne’ may not have been obtained in Wales, Asser’s own life,
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 ⁶⁸ Arnold, *Medieval Germany*, 7; Reuter, *Germany*, 115, 135 (for the quote), 336.

50 ⁶⁹ Helen McKee, ‘Scribes and Glosses from Dark Age Wales: The Cambridge Juvenius Manuscript’, *Cambrian*
51 *Medieval Celtic Studies* 39 (Summer 2000): 1–22, at 14–15; Lapidge, ‘Study of Latin Texts’, 113 n. 72.

52 ⁷⁰ Lapidge, ‘Study of Latin Texts’, 125.

53 ⁷¹ McKee, ‘Scribes and Glosses’; N.K. Chadwick, ‘Early Culture and Learning in North Wales’, in *Studies in*
54 *the Early British Church*, ed. N.K. Chadwick et al. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 92–118.

55 ⁷² Michael Swanton, trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London: J.M. Dent, 1996), 76–85. On Asser and his
56 ‘Life of Alfred’, see T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford, Oxford University Press,
57 2013), 452–65, 488.

58 ⁷³ Einhard, ‘Life of Charlemagne’, ed. O. Holder-Egger, *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, MGH, 6th ed.
59 (Hannover, Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1911, Neudruck, 1965), 14, 18, 22.
60

1
2
3
4 shared between St Davids and Wessex, demonstrates how knowledge might have travelled
5
6 from the Continent to England and then to Wales.
7

8
9 Overall, there is little reason to support the view that *Alemannus* and *Alemanni* were
10 replaced because these terms were not known. Instead we should look for a strong positive
11 reason for making the change to Albanus and *Albani*, rather than retaining the pre-existing
12 names, as was the practice elsewhere in *HB*. We cannot completely rule out the possibility
13 that *Alemannus* was changed to Albanus simply because there were kings of the *Albani*
14 mentioned earlier on, even if this went against contemporary perceptions of early Roman
15 history. Early medieval writers were willing to contradict earlier, even authoritative, authors,
16 but usually this was for a purpose, such as helping to explain the contemporary medieval
17 situation in some way. For instance, in some Italian manuscripts of the ‘Table of Nations’ the
18 Thuringians of Germany were replaced with the Tuscans, who would have been more
19 relevant to an Italian audience.⁷⁴ It is difficult to see how including the *Albani* of Alba Longa
20 instead of the *Alemanni* made *HB* more relevant, but if the *Albani* were a contemporary
21 people inhabiting part of northern Britain it would make much more sense. That does not
22 completely rule out any connection with Alba Longa, if the ancient *Albani* were regarded as
23 the ancestors of contemporary *Albani*, but there is no evidence for such a view in the relevant
24 recensions of *HB*.⁷⁵
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

44 Of the two contemporary possibilities, the least likely is Alba as the whole of Britain,
45 since there was already *Britto* from whom the Britons were descended. The resulting
46
47
48

49
50 ⁷⁴ Goffart, ‘Frankish’ Table of Nations’, 146. Note that, as with the *Alemanni* to *Albani* change, the similarity in
51 the names presumably was also a factor.

52 ⁷⁵ The description of the kings of the *Albani* as *silvii* after King Silvius (father of Britto) (in Harl. §11) is an
53 intriguing element, as has been pointed out to me by Dr Katherine Forsyth. The word ‘Gaels’, *Goidil*, came
54 (probably in the seventh century) from a British word, meaning ‘people of the woods’, as well as ‘wild, barbaric
55 people’ (Proinsias Mac Cana, ‘Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages: an overview’, in *Ireland and Wales in the*
56 *Middle Ages*, ed. Karen Jankulak and Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts, 2007), 17–45, at 27–9; Koch,
57 ‘Celts, Britons, and Gaels’, 50–6). The *silvii* could have suggested to the Welsh scribe the *Albani* of northern
58 Britain, who were increasingly Gaelic-speakers, but we have no supporting evidence for this interesting
59 possibility.
60

1
2
3
4 multiplying of ancestor figures would have been problematic for the Welsh, and so would
5
6 have been avoided. Far more probable is that Albanus and *Albani* referred to the relatively
7
8 new ethnic group in northern Britain, the *Albanaig*. In early medieval texts such as Isidore's
9
10 'Etymologies', population terms were thought to often derive from the name of an ancestor
11
12 figure, so the creation of Albanus to explain the *Albani* would have seemed natural.⁷⁶ Such an
13
14 explanation contradicted the accounts of Gaelic and Pictish settlements in northern Britain
15
16 which were still present in *HB*, but the changes were not part of a major re-writing of early
17
18 history. The inclusion of Albanus and *Albani* was a relatively minor attempt to explain the
19
20 new terminology for northern Britain which had travelled to Gwynedd, by scholars who
21
22 assumed that current territorial and ethnic names would be reflected in ancient events.
23
24
25

26
27 It is unclear how exactly knowledge of Alba as northern Britain came to northern
28
29 Wales. Transmission of the more confined meaning of Alba could have been direct or via the
30
31 northern Britons in Strathclyde, although other routes, the most obvious being via the
32
33 Scandinavians or Irish, cannot be ruled out. Direct evidence for Welsh relations with the Picts
34
35 and Alba is not strong. Contemporary evidence for direct contacts during the period in
36
37 question comes from the Welsh *Annales Cambriae*, kept at that time in St Davids. This
38
39 contains an obituary notice for Cináed mac Alpín, king of the Picts, who died in 858, not
40
41 taken from the Irish chronicles, so it probably came from a direct source.⁷⁷ Earlier in the
42
43 century, the original *HB* included among its wonders of Britain the loch of *Lumonoy*, which
44
45 could be Loch Leven in Kinross and Fife.⁷⁸ Given the number of islands mentioned, it is
46
47 more likely to be Loch Lomond, at or close to the frontier between Pictish and British
48
49 territory, indicating that connections existed between Wales and this area.
50
51
52

53
54
55 ⁷⁶ For instance, see Isidore, 'Etymologies', IX.ii.84–5, trans. Barney et al., *The Etymologies*, 196: 'The Romans
56 are named after Romulus . . . Latins, from Latinus . . . Italus, Sabinus, and Sicanus were brothers, after whom
57 names were given to both peoples and regions.'

58 ⁷⁷ *Annales Cambriae s.a.* 856, ed. and trans. Morris, *Nennius*, 44–9, 85–91, at 48, 89.

59 ⁷⁸ *HB* §67, ed. and trans. Morris, *Nennius*, 40, 81.
60

1
2
3
4 There is, however, a suitable political context for the change to Albanus and *Albani*.
5
6 For most of the period from 857 to 911 the Picts, Gwynedd and the northern Britons would
7
8 have shared some political interests. They were geographically separated, but they were not
9
10 too distant if Gwynedd controlled the Isle of Man until the late ninth century.⁷⁹ They also all
11
12 had to contend with a major Scandinavian threat.⁸⁰ On at least three occasions, in 853, 856
13
14 and 877, Gwynedd was in conflict with the ‘dark foreigners’, who by the 860s were led by
15
16 the dynasty of Ívarr, based in Dublin and also from the late 860s in control of much of
17
18 Northumbria.⁸¹ In 877 the king of Gwynedd, Rhodri Mawr son of Merfyn Frych, was forced
19
20 to flee to Ireland. When he attempted to return in 878, Rhodri was killed by the Mercians,
21
22 who were ruled at that time by a client king of the Scandinavians led by, among others, the
23
24 family of Ívarr.⁸² The situation is partially paralleled among the Picts; in 866 Pictland was
25
26 plundered by the Vikings of Dublin, there was also conflict in the period from 871 to 876,
27
28 and in 878 the relics of Columba were taken to Ireland, probably from Dunkeld, in order to
29
30 escape the Scandinavians.⁸³ Up to 876, where we have evidence, the same can be said for the
31
32 northern Britons in Strathclyde located between these two kingdoms. In 870 Dumbarton
33
34 Rock was besieged and captured by the Dublin Vikings, resulting in a major shift in the
35
36 British kingdom, with its new kingdom name, Strathclyde, perhaps reflecting major structural
37
38 changes after the symbolic centre had been taken. In the following year a great number of
39
40 Britons, Picts and English were taken to Dublin, presumably as a result of the same
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 ⁷⁹ Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 467–71, 475–8; Clare Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and*
51 *Ireland. The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2007), 179–82; and David M.
52 Wilson, *The Vikings in the Isle of Man* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2008), 52–6.

53 ⁸⁰ David N. Dumville, ‘Vikings in the British Isles: A Question of Sources’, in *The Scandinavians from the*
54 *Vendel Period to the tenth century: an ethnographic perspective*, ed. Judith Jesch (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002),
55 209–50, for a discussion of the sources and overall Scandinavian impact.

56 ⁸¹ Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 478–9, 484, 486–7; Downham, *Viking Kings*, 1–9, 202.

57 ⁸² Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 488, 490.

58 ⁸³ AU 866.1, 871.2, 875.3, 878.9; Anderson, *Kings*, 250; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, s.a. 875, trans. Swanton,
59 72–5. Downham, *Viking Kings*, 139–45; Woolf, *Pictland to Alba*, 106–16.
60

1
2
3
4 expedition.⁸⁴ Welsh interest in the event, and fear of the Vikings, is perhaps indicated by the
5
6 *Annales Cambriae* record of the attacks on Dumbarton Rock and on York in 867.⁸⁵ Similarly,
7
8 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Halfdan, the brother of Ívarr, ravaged in Strathclyde
9
10 and among the Picts from a base on the Tyne in 875 or 876.⁸⁶ Therefore, there is good
11
12 evidence that in the period from the mid 860s to 878 that both the Picts and the kingdom of
13
14 Gwynedd, and from 870 to 875/6 also the northern Britons, were enemies of the Vikings,
15
16 under serious threat of conquest.
17
18

19
20 At the same time close connections can be discerned between the ruling dynasties of
21
22 the Picts and Strathclyders. In the reign of Cináed mac Alpín (842/3–58), the ‘Chronicle of
23
24 the Kings of Alba’ states that the Britons burned Dunblane, but it is likely that the situation
25
26 changed once the existence of both kingdoms was under threat.⁸⁷ Not only were they both on
27
28 the receiving end of Scandinavian attacks in 870–1 and 875, but, according to the ‘Chronicle
29
30 of Ireland’, the king of Strathclyde, Artgal, was killed in 872 at the instigation of Constantine
31
32 mac Cináeda, king of the Picts, which probably resulted in a more amenable British king
33
34 being placed on the throne.⁸⁸ Later, in 878, Eochaid son of Rhun, of the Strathclyde royal
35
36 dynasty, became king of the Picts.⁸⁹ Eochaid’s reign from 878 until 889, perhaps reflected
37
38 and encouraged close links with Strathclyde. Although, according to the ‘Chronicle of the
39
40 Kings of Alba’, Eochaid was deposed, probably in 889, dynastic connections may have
41
42 continued later. The late tenth-century ‘Life of St Cathróe’ indicates that this saint came from
43
44 Alba, and was related to both the kings of Alba and of Strathclyde.⁹⁰ Since he was born *ca.*
45
46
47
48

49
50 ⁸⁴ AU 870.6, 871.2; *Annales Cambriae*, s.a. 870, ed. and trans. Morris, *Nennius*, 48, 89.

51 ⁸⁵ Downham, *Viking Kings*, 203.

52 ⁸⁶ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, s.a. 875, trans. Swanton, 72–5. Downham, *Viking Kings*, 163.

53 ⁸⁷ Downham, *Viking Kings*, 162. Anderson, *Kings*, 250.

54 ⁸⁸ AU 872.5, CS 872.4.

55 ⁸⁹ He may have ruled jointly with a certain Giric mac Dungaile. It is unlikely that Eochaid’s reign is a
56 fabrication, as it seems unlikely that a king with such a British connection, and legitimacy in the female line to
57 Cináed mac Alpín would have been created, rather than a more obvious son of Cináed or his brother Domnall.

58 ⁹⁰ David N. Dumville, ‘St Cathróe of Metz and the Hagiography of Exoticism’, in *Studies in Irish Hagiography. Saints and Scholars*, ed. John Carey et al. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 172–88, at 176–7, 179–80.

1
2
3
4 901×906, it can be inferred that the relevant royal intermarriage took place in the ninth
5
6 century or the very early years of the tenth century, demonstrating that Eochaid was not the
7
8 only member of the Pictish elite to have strong British connections.⁹¹ In these circumstances
9
10 the swift transmission of ideas between the Strathclyde Britons and their northern neighbours
11
12 would be expected.
13

14
15 Unfortunately, contemporary written evidence for the situation in Strathclyde itself is
16
17 lacking from 875 to 927, but from the archaeological evidence, and as an explanation of the
18
19 growth of northern British power south into Cumbria by the latter date, it has been argued
20
21 that Scandinavians may have been heavily involved in the Strathclyde polity.⁹² A dominant
22
23 Scandinavian political and military role is not the only plausible solution, since an alliance
24
25 with Alba could provide an alternative explanation, but the archaeological evidence for
26
27 Scandinavian influence is strong.⁹³ What exactly this entailed in practice is uncertain; were
28
29 there simply personal, economic connections, or were groups of Scandinavians involved? It is
30
31 possible that the kings of Strathclyde allowed Scandinavian settlement and contacts either
32
33 because they could not prevent them or because they could enhance their power.
34
35
36

37
38 Would one such group have been adherents of the dynasty of Ívarr, marking a change
39
40 in the shape of political alliances? It is noticeable that there are no recorded battles between
41
42 Eochaid son of Rhun and the Scandinavians, but that in the following reign such conflict
43
44 resumed. If it cannot simply be explained as a gap in our evidence or a lull in Scandinavian
45
46 military activity, such as that which occurred in England from 878 to 892, it may have been
47
48 the case that the kingdoms of the Picts (if it was still called that) and Strathclyde during the
49
50

51
52
53 ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

54 ⁹² Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 481–2; Downham, *Viking Kings*, 162–3, 168–70; Stephen T.
55 Driscoll, 'Church Archaeology in Glasgow and the Kingdom of Strathclyde', *Innes Review* 49 (1998): 95–114;
56 Courtney Helen Buchanan, 'Scandinavians in Strathclyde: multiculturalism, material culture and manufactured
57 identities in the Viking Age', in *Historic Bute: Land and People*, ed. Anna Ritchie (Edinburgh: Scottish Society
58 for Northern Studies, 2012), 17–32.

59 ⁹³ Downham, *Viking Kings*, 163.
60

1
2
3
4 reign of Eochaid switched to an alliance with the Dublin and Northumbrian Vikings. If this is
5
6 so, then it would again have paralleled developments in Gwynedd, where at some point after
7
8 878 an alliance was formed with the Northumbrians which continued to 888x92, after which
9
10 Gwynedd reverted to being opposed to the Vikings, under Mercian or West Saxon
11
12 overlordship.⁹⁴ These alliances may have recognised the power of the Scandinavians, who
13
14 even after their defeat by Alfred in 878 at Edington were still a very significant force in the
15
16 British Isles. This would have provided the rulers of the northern Britons and Picts with a
17
18 breathing space, allowing them to prepare for a future conflict, and to introduce new
19
20 ideological concepts to maintain support for their regimes. This period has been regarded by
21
22 Alex Woolf and others as the time when major changes in organisation took place inside the
23
24 Pictish kingdom, with Gaels achieving significant positions.⁹⁵ However, it could also have
25
26 been when *Alba* and *Albania* terminology became used more frequently for the kingdom,
27
28 perhaps with implications of a wider overlordship over northern Britain, including the Britons
29
30 as well as the Picts and Gaels.⁹⁶ Later, as the kingdom's territory and sphere of influence was
31
32 reduced, the term *Alba* increasingly had a more confined meaning, became more restricted,
33
34 although claims to a wider hegemony implicit in such a term meaning 'Britain' could have
35
36 remained one of its attractions.
37
38
39
40
41

42 In the 890s and early 900s both Gwynedd and the Picts were at war again with
43
44 Scandinavians. According to the Welsh annals, the 'Dark foreigners' attacked Anglesey in
45
46

47 ⁹⁴ Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 489–94, where he also suggests that the alliance with the
48 Scandinavians post-dated Gwynedd's defeat to Mercia in 881. However, an alternative is that a pre-existing
49 alliance triggered the conflict of 881.

50 ⁹⁵ Woolf, *Pictland to Alba*, 320–2, 340–2.

51 ⁹⁶ Charles-Edwards, 'Picts and Scots', 178–80, who suggests this idea, but gives reasons to be cautious.
52 However, the appearance of *Pictavia* in the 'Chronicle of the Kings of Alba' in the reign of Domnall son of
53 Constantín (889–900), which Charles-Edwards comments upon, does not prove that *Alba* was not used before
54 his reign, since there could have been a period of terminological overlap, found, for instance in the use of *firu*
55 *Fortrenn*, 'men of Fortriu', in AU 904.4, after the first reference to a king of Alba in AU 900.6. 'Men of Fortriu'
56 was the population term related to the title 'king of Fortriu' also used for Pictish kings. A British aspect to the
57 change to *Alba* is plausible since *Alba* could have been a Gaelic synonym for Welsh *Prydain/Prydyn* (and
58 maybe a Pictish cognate), meaning both 'Britain' and 'Pictland' (Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 79–84), or a
59 Gaelic form of Pictish **Albid* which also had British cognates (Woolf, *Pictland to Alba*, 178–9).
60

1
2
3
4 892, and in 893 Gwynedd fought with the English against the Scandinavians at Buttington.⁹⁷
5
6 In 902 Vikings, probably from Dublin, led by an 'Igmunt' (Ingimundr), attacked Anglesey,
7
8 and after an initial victory, were expelled, with the result that they settled in the Wirral
9
10 instead.⁹⁸ There is evidence from the early tenth century (and maybe back to the late ninth
11
12 century) that Scandinavians settled in Anglesey, and were involved in craft and trade
13
14 activities.⁹⁹ This could indicate that, as in Strathclyde, the kings of Gwynedd may have
15
16 wanted to use Scandinavians to their own advantage at about this time, either by dominating
17
18 or creating a Scandinavian settlement at Llanbedrgoch. Ingimundr's attack and Scandinavian
19
20 involvement in Anglesey are likely to have been related to the processes by which the Isle of
21
22 Man and other areas around the Irish Sea, in particular north-west England, were settled by a
23
24 mixed Gaelic and Old Norse speaking population in the years around 900.¹⁰⁰
25
26
27

28
29 In northern Britain, while the events were not necessarily part of the same conflicts,
30
31 the 'Chronicle of the Kings of Alba' records that during the reign of Domnall son of
32
33 Constantine (889-900) the Northmen raided Pictavia, were defeated by the *Scotti* on another
34
35 occasion, and killed Domnall at Dunnottar.¹⁰¹ Early in the following reign, in about 903, the
36
37 Northmen plundered all Albania, but the descendants of Ívarr were defeated in 904 by the
38
39 'men of Fortriu'.¹⁰² In the Irish *Chronicum Scottorum* under the year 904 we have a
40
41 somewhat obscure entry for the killing of an otherwise unknown *Ead*, king of Cruithentúath
42
43 (the Picts), by the Vikings under the descendants of Ímarr and a certain Catol, perhaps a
44
45
46
47

48 ⁹⁷ Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 494, 507–8.

49 ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 496, 500–2.

50 ⁹⁹ Downham, *Viking Kings*, 207–9; Colmán Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles: the Insular Viking
51 Zone', *Peritia* 15 (2001): 145–87, at 162–3, for the view that the Scandinavians settled in Anglesey in the ninth
52 century.

53 ¹⁰⁰ Downham, *Viking Kings*, 83–5, 170–5, 179–82, 208–9; Wilson, *Vikings in the Isle of Man*, 52–6. On the
54 evidence for settlement in north-west England, see John R. Baldwin and Ian D. Whyte, *The Scandinavians in*
55 *Cumbria* (Edinburgh: Scottish Society for Northern Studies, 1985), and David N. Parsons, 'On the Origin of
56 'Hiberno-Norse Inversion-compounds'', *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 5 (2011): 115–52.

57 ¹⁰¹ Anderson, *Kings*, 251. Less reliable Irish sources indicate that the dynasty of Ívarr may have been active in
58 Alba from 892–4 (Downham, *Viking Kings*, 145).

59 ¹⁰² Anderson, *Kings*, 251; AU 904.4.

1
2
3
4 Briton.¹⁰³ Who *Ead* and *Catol* were is uncertain, but we should not dismiss the record out of
5
6 hand. *Catol* could be *Cadell*, **who**, if he was not *Cadell* son of *Rhodri Mawr*, ruler of
7
8 *Dyfed*,¹⁰⁴ **may** have been an otherwise unknown member of the royal dynasty of *Gwynedd*,
9
10 maybe in the Isle of Man, subordinate to the Vikings like the puppet rulers of *Mercia* and
11
12 *Northumbria* introduced in the 860s after the conquests in England.

13
14
15 Overall, there are considerable parallels between *Gwynedd*, *Pictland/Alba* and from
16
17 870 to 875 at least in *Strathclyde* in terms of their relations with the Scandinavians. There is
18
19 also some evidence for close connections between *Pictland* and *Strathclyde* in the 870s and
20
21 880s. There is no direct evidence for political relations, for instance involving military
22
23 assistance, connecting the Picts and the northern Britons with *Gwynedd*, but, given the
24
25 difficult circumstances these realms faced, and the fact that our surviving sources are unlikely
26
27 to detail less substantial interaction, that is not surprising. Nevertheless, this is a plausible
28
29 context for the transmission of ideas, such as *Alba* as a new term for the Pictish kingdom.
30
31 *Colmán Etchingam* has stressed that the western Scottish seaboard and the Irish Sea
32
33 constituted a single 'Insular Viking Zone', so one understandable response to this could have
34
35 been increased contacts between those on the receiving end of this Scandinavian activity.¹⁰⁵
36
37 In the late ninth or early tenth century it would have been desirable, and perhaps seemed
38
39 natural, given their long histories as inhabitants of the island, to project shared contemporary
40
41 interests back into the distant past, by giving the Picts and the Britons a close common
42
43 ancestry. It has been suggested by *Edward Cowan* that the concept of *Albanus* as a brother of
44
45 *Brutus* was intended in the tenth century to demonstrate common ancestry between the
46
47 peoples of northern Britain, including the men of *Strathclyde*.¹⁰⁶ While *Cowan's* dating is
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

55 ¹⁰³ CS *s.a.* 904.6.

56 ¹⁰⁴ *Downham, Viking Kings*, 146–7, 209–10.

57 ¹⁰⁵ *Etchingam*, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles'.

58 ¹⁰⁶ *Cowan*, 'Myth and Identity', 123–4.
59
60

1
2
3
4 suspect, the idea is an attractive one for the late ninth and early tenth centuries, in which there
5
6 are plausible contexts for a desire to stress the closeness of the Picts and Britons.
7

8
9 It is important to realise, however, that there is no evidence that the idea of Albanus
10 found in some recensions of *HB* had any immediate impact in Alba itself, since no knowledge
11 of *HB* in Alba itself is displayed until the eleventh century, when the Nennian recension and
12 *Lebor Bretnach* were produced, probably in Abernethy or St Andrews. Even in the accounts
13 found in *Duan Albanach* and *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, Albanus is far less prominent than the
14
15 Gaels or even the Picts. It is perhaps striking that the role of Albanus did not become more
16 significant until, after Geoffrey's *DGB*, it was picked up and used by those promoting an
17 English overlordship. We might expect Albanus to have become an eponymous ancestor of
18 the people of Alba, so that they were no longer regarded as an offshoot of the Gaels or as
19 descendants of the Picts. The building-blocks of such an idea are found in *Duan Albanach*
20 and the *a* recension of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, which state that Alba derived its name from
21 Albanus, that Albanus was the brother of Brutus, and was the first to migrate to Britain.
22
23 However, the idea of continuity of descent connecting Albanus with contemporary Gaels was
24 not adopted, since no genealogy linking contemporary rulers or nobles with Albanus exists.¹⁰⁷
25
26 As a result, the potential to give Alba a more prestigious place among the peoples of the
27 world, by stressing brotherhood with the Romans, Britons and Franks, as found in the 'Table
28 of Nations', or through a Trojan and Italian ancestry (as **Brutus**'s brother), was not realised.
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

46 It may be the case that the arrival of *HB* in Alba in the mid-eleventh century was too
47 late for such ideas to develop. This could be partly because, even if the territory of Alba was
48 important as a concept, the aristocracy and royal family of Alba already firmly regarded
49 themselves as descendants of the Gaels of Dál Riata in Argyll.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, after the late
50
51
52
53
54
55
56

57 ¹⁰⁷ See Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 48–9, for the general lack of impact that *Duan Albanach* achieved.

58 ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 56–7, 86–7; Woolf, *Pictland to Alba*, 226–7.

1
2
3
4 eleventh century the marriage of Malcolm III to Margaret of the Anglo-Saxon royal dynasty
5
6 gave the kings an important ancestry which was impressive on a wider scale.¹⁰⁹ This provided
7
8 them with as legitimate a claim to be rulers over the English south of the Forth as had the
9
10 kings of England. Broun has argued that this meant that, while Gaelic royal ancestry retained
11
12 importance, the Pictish identity of the kingdom of Alba waned; there was simply not enough
13
14 space for three ideas of origins.¹¹⁰ In such a context Albanus, and ideas of a separate
15
16 Albanian ancestry for the people, would also have struggled to gain prominence.
17
18

19
20 It would seem, then, that the potential for cultural and political impact begun in the
21
22 late ninth or early tenth century by small changes to *HB* by a British scribe, probably
23
24 reflecting the re-naming of Pictland as Albania by creating an ancestor figure called Albanus,
25
26 was only more fully realised centuries later. It achieved greater significance after it was
27
28 brought to prominence by another Welsh cleric, Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the twelfth
29
30 century, and then taken up in the ideological battle for legitimacy at the end of the late
31
32 thirteenth century. Albanus may never have formed a crucial element of Scottish identity, but
33
34 the creation of this figure provides evidence for contacts between northern Britain and
35
36 Gwynedd in the Viking Age, and a desire to reflect these connections and shared interests
37
38 through the creation of a common Roman ancestry for Alba and the Britons. The case of
39
40 Albanus, therefore, provides us with an interesting study of the continued formation of ethnic
41
42 origin accounts to explain and legitimise contemporary societies in the ninth to twelfth
43
44 centuries, and evidence for how new elements were incorporated into already complex
45
46 depictions of the past. However, it also provides an illustration of the increasing
47
48 establishment of received views of ethnic origins in Celtic-speaking regions. In the central
49
50 Middle Ages, with the Gaels, Picts, Britons and Anglo-Saxons, along with Scandinavian
51
52
53
54
55

56
57 ¹⁰⁹ Broun, *Scottish Independence*, 51.

58 ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 48–51, 60–1.
59
60

1
2
3
4 newcomers, present in multiple historical texts as the post-Roman inhabitants of northern
5
6 Britain, it was possible to shift ancestry between these ethnic groups, but not to establish an
7
8 alternative ethnic history, even when a kingdom changed its identity.
9
10

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18 Figure Titles:

19
20 Figure 1. Stemma of the relationships of **recensions of** *Historia Brittonum* and *Lebor*
21
22 *Bretnach* (partly based on Dumville, 'Vatican' Recension, 53).
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60