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PROCLAIMED AT YORK: THE IMPACT OF CONSTANTINE, SAINT AND EMPEROR, ON COLLECTIVE BRITISH MEMORIES

Constantine, raised to Augustan rank by the acclaim of the Roman soldiers at York in 306, was not the only emperor whose reign began in Britain. As one of Rome's most distant territories, and of course an island (Fig. 1), Britain seems always to have been vunerable to revolt, as indeed were all the westernmost provinces to greater or lesser degree.[1] As early as 197, Albinus seized power in the West. Two generations later came the so-called Gallic Empire of Gallienus and his successors, in which Britain was involved together with Gaul, Spain and the Low Countries. It lasted for about twenty years in the middle of the third century. A series of usurpers – most famously Magnus Maximus, proclaimed emperor in Britain in 383, but continuing with Marcus in 406/7, Gratian in the latter year, and Constantine III from 408 to 411 – led the British monk Gildas, writing around 500, to describe his country as a 'thicket of tyrants', echoing Jerome's phrase that Britain was 'fertile in usurpers'. Indeed, Constantine's proclamation might not have happened at York were it not for the involvement of his father in pacifying Britain. Constantius crossed to Britain in 296 to end a ten-year revolt by a Belgian commander Carausius and his successor Allectus. Constantius' action in preventing the sack of London by part of the defeated army was commemorated by a famous gold medallion on which he is shown receiving the thanks of the city's inhabitants as *Redditor Lucis Aeternam* (Fig. 3).

Constantine's acclamation at York fits a pattern, therefore – though of course it stands apart because of his subsequent military and political successes, and the huge consequences of his conversion to Christianity. Constantine was certainly the most famous emperor proclaimed in Britain, but that does not al-

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[1] The most recent general account of Roman Britain is David Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession: Britain in the Roman Empire, 54 BC – AD 409*, The Penguin History of Britain I (London, Allen Lane, 2006), hereafter 'Mattingly 2006'. It supplements Peter Salway, *Roman Britain*, The Oxford History of England 1A (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981), hereafter 'Salway, 1981', updated as *The Oxford Illustrated History of Roman Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993). A shorter account also revised is Ian Richmond, *Roman Britain* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1955), ed. M.Todd (London, Penguin, 1995).
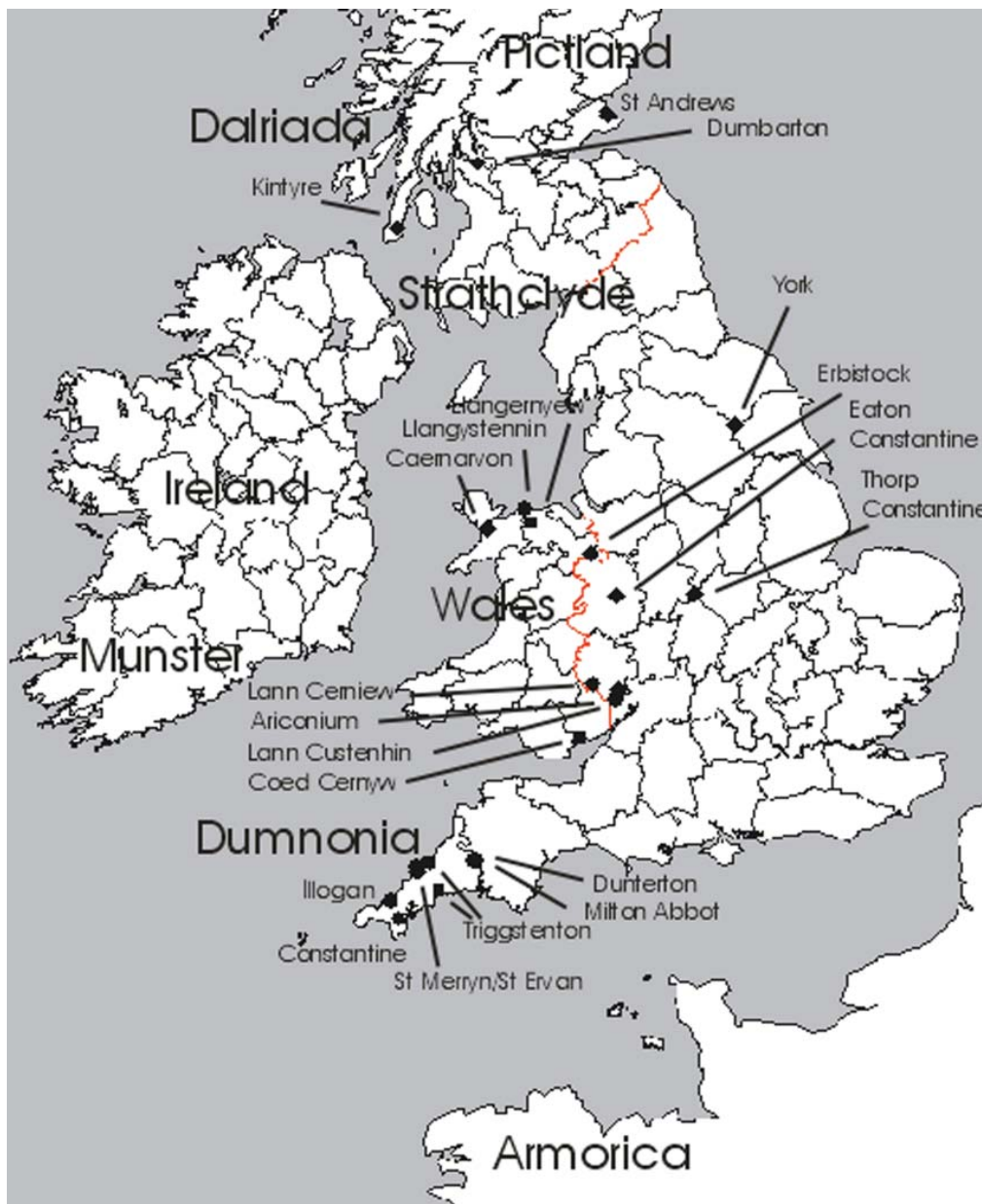
Fig. 1. Places mentioned in the text.
Сл. 1. Места поменута у тексту.

together explain the strength of the island's attachment to his memory. After all, within a short time he had taken his forces to mainland Europe to consolidate his share of the imperial power. Constantine was memorialised by the peoples
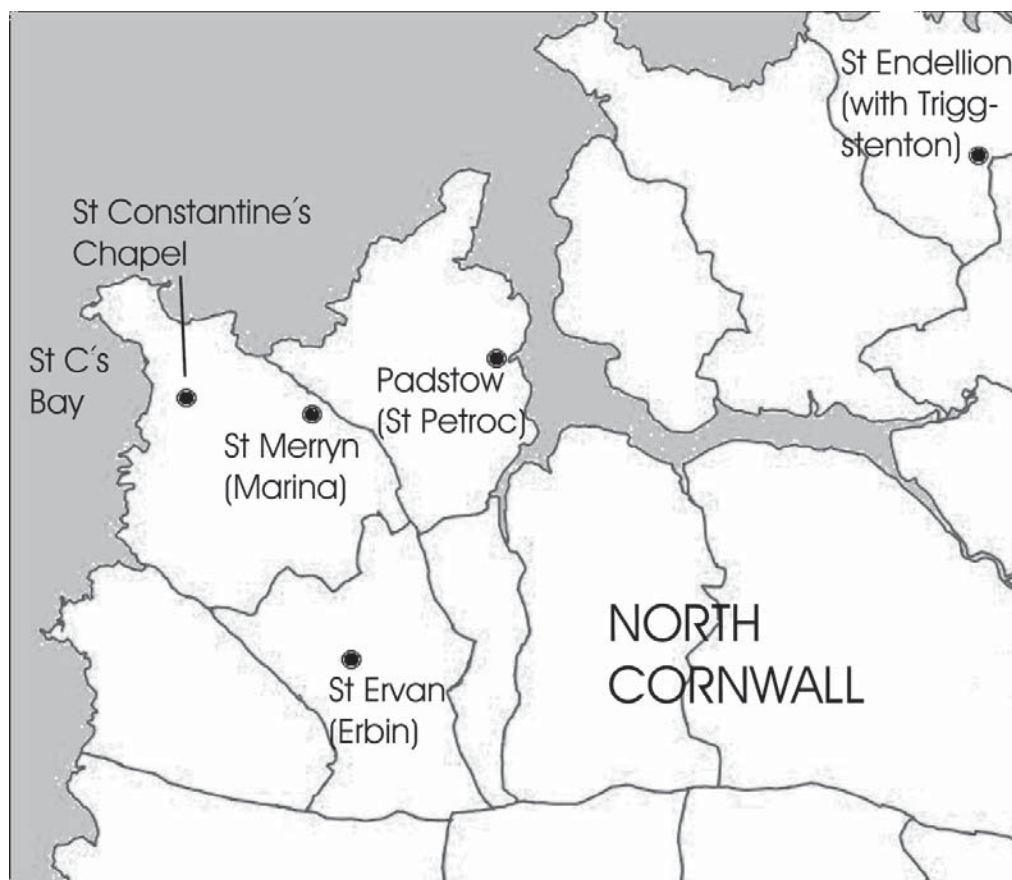
Fig. 2. Places associated with 'Constantine' in northern Cornwall. St Erbin was said to be a son of St Constantine of Cornwall, and St Petroc was said to be a cousin of Constantine the Great. The name *Custentin* may be preserved in that of Triggstenton.

Сл. 2. Места у Корнволу која се доводе у везу са именом 'Константин'. Св. Ербин је био син св. Константина од Корнвола, а за св. Петрока се тврдило да је био рођак Константина Великог. Име „*Custentin*" је можда у основи назива "*Triggstenton*".

of Britain in a number of ways over many centuries and the purpose of this paper is to review this attachment and attempt to explain why the event at York in 306 and its consequences became part of British national consciouness.

The usurper Constantine III

Constantine's elevation to imperial rank found mention in the earliest surviving history from the British islands – that of Bede, writing around 730. Gildas, who died *circa* 540, and the monk called Nennius, about a century later,

Fig. 3. Constantine the Great receives the thanks of London's inhabitants as *Redditor Lucis Aeternam*.

Сл. 3. Константин Велики као *Redditor Lucis Aeternam* прима захвалност грађана Лондона.

Fig. 4. *Siliqua* of the Western usurper Constantine III with his bust on the obverse (left).

Сл. 4. Римска силиква западног узурпатора Константина III са његовим ликом на предњој страни (лево).

passed over it: their purposes were more selective than Bede's.[2] Much later, Constantine's reign excited writers of epic tales like Geoffrey of Monmouth, *circa* 1125, giving rise to myths (or maybe perpetuating them) in which Constantine was even presented by Geoffrey as having been 'king of Britain' in succession to his father before being proclaimed emperor at York.[3]

This rewriting of history was partly due to confusion and conflation arising from the culture of naming. Constantine's reputation, particularly as the prototype of Christian monarchy, ensured that his memory lived on in those bearing his name. Scholars have argued that it is unlikely to have been pure coincidence that the man chosen as emperor in rebellious Britain in 406 was called Constantine. It appears to have been the initial continental campaign of this usurper, known to history as Constantine III (Fig. 4), which provided mythmakers like Geoffrey with the raw material for their fictionalised accounts of other rulers, including Magnus Maximus and even the part-legendary King Arthur.[4] One should be cautious about accepting without question that Constantine III's name had been the key to his acclamation. He also had a son called Constans, but these may have been quite popular names in certain classes. It is worth noting that the general sent to oppose Constantine III was named Constantius, and

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[2]   Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain, and Other Works*, ed. and trs. Michael Winterbottom (Chichester, Phillimore, 1978), hereafter 'Gildas'; *Bede: Ecclesiastical History of the English People ...* , translated Leo Sherley-Price, revised R. E. Latham, introduction and notes D. H. Farmer (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1990), Book 1, Chapter 8 (p. 55); *Nennius, British History and The Welsh Annals*, ed. and trs. John Morris (Chichester, Phillimore, 1980), hereafter HB.

[3]   Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, ed. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966), pp. 132, hereafter 'HRB', and many other editions.

[4]   Constantine III's brief reign is summarised by Salway, 1981, pp. 426-34, and more recently by Mattingly, 2006, pp. 529-32, and described in more detail by J. F. Drinkwater, 'The usurpers Constantine III (407-411) and Jovinus (411-413)', *Britannia* 29 (1998).

that the rival emperor set up by dissidents in Spain was called Maximus. An interesting twist in this view of events is that the name of Constantine III's British general Gerontius was destined to be borne by at least one king in post-Roman Dumnonia (present-day Devon and Cornwall), where Constantine was also a regal name. This Gerontius, or Geraint, died in 710.[5]

Table 1: Persons named Constantine in early medieval Britain

Person	Date(s)	Location
1. Constantine 'son of Maximus'	fl. 400	Western Britain
2. Constantine III	407-11	Britain
3. Constantine son of Constantine	?4/5/6xx	North Wales
4. Constantine, king	c. 540	Dumnonia
5. Constantine, magnate and convertee	5xx	Dumnonia (Cornwall?)
6. Constantine son of Paternus (?=5, 7)	d. 576	Cornwall/Galloway
7. Constantine, convertee (?=5, 6)	fl. 588/9	Memory in Ireland and Scotland
8. Constantine Corneu ('of Cornwall')	?5xx	North Wales
9. Constantine son of Rhydderch Hael	c. 575	Strathclyde
10. Constantine son of Fergus	789-820	Pictland
11. Constantine I son of Kenneth	862-77	Pictland
12. Constantine II son of Aedh	900-52	Pictland ('Alba')
13. Constantine III son of Cuilén	995-7	Pictland ('Alba')
14. Constantine, earl of Fife	1095x1128	Fife in Scotland

Constantines in south-west Britain

Constantine's name continued to be borne by rulers in Britain, particularly in western Britain and in Scotland, until the end of the tenth century (Table 1). The best-known is the king of Dumnonia castigated by Gildas, the polemicist monk and a contemporary (Gildas died *circa* 540), who accused him in his tract *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*, 'The Ruin and Conquest of Britain', of killing two young princes who had sought sanctuary in a church. The crime had been committed while Constantine was wearing abbot's dress, but it is unclear whether this was disguise, or vestments to which Constantine was entitled as lay abbot of a monastery endowed by his family. Geoffrey of Monmouth incor-

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5   The starting point for study of the Dark Age history of Britain's south-western peninsula remains Susan Pearce, *The Kingdom of Dumnonia: Studies in History and Tradition in South-Western Britain, A.D. 350-1150* (Padstow, Lodenek Press, 1978), hereafter Pearce, 1978.

porated a similar episode into his mythic history, identifying this Constantine with Constantine III, making him the successor of 'King Arthur' and claiming that he pursued the two sons of Arthur's rival Mordred into churches in London and Winchester, slaying them by the respective high altars.[6] For this he was struck down by God.

A rich man of the same kingdom named Constantine entered the legendary history of St Petroc, which survives in manuscripts from the twelfth century and which claimed, anachronistically, that the saint was a Welsh king's son and cousin to Constantine the Great.[7] This wealthy man was struck with paralyis as he tried to attack Petroc after the saint had protected a stag from his huntsmen. Released by Petroc's prayers, he and twenty of his soldiers became Christians. Perhaps this man and the king castigated by Gildas are the same person, for the conversion of a Constantine was commemorated in the Irish *Annals of Tigernach* and of *Ulster* and the so-called *Cambrian Annals* under the year 588 or 589.[8] The story was known in Wales in the eleventh century.[9] The *Aberdeen Breviary* describes him as son of Paternus, king of Cornubia (i.e. Cornwall), and as husband of the queen of Lesser Britain (i.e. Armorica, modern Brittany).[10] After her death he forsook his kingdom and spent seven years grinding corn in an Irish monastery. When he identity was discovered, he was ordained priest and sent to St Columba at Iona and afterwards was commissioned by St Kentigern to preach in Galloway in south-west Scotland. There he was elected abbot of Kintyre and died after being wounded by attackers.[11] The date of his death is given in the *Aberdeen Breviary* as 576, which creates problems in reconciling the *Breviary* account with the relevant entries in the *Annals*.

Devotion to this Constantine, celebrated on March 9, was centred on the parish of Constantine near the Helford River in southern Cornwall, and its house of canons first mentioned in the eleventh century. It has been suggested that this community might be as old as the sixth century, though this can not presently be demonstrated.[12] The possibility has also been raised that it possessed the body

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6   HRB, p. 262; cf. Gildas.

7   John of Tynemouth, 'De sancto Petroco', edited by John Capgrave, *Nova Legenda Angliæ*, ed. C. Horstman (2 vols, Oxford, 1901), 2, pp. 317-20; and *Acta Sanctorum* (64 vols, Antwerp, 1643-), Jun. 1, p. 392. See also *Analecta Bolandiana* 74 (1956), p. 145. A late version is in Nicholas Orme (ed.), *Nicholas Roscarrock's Lives of the Saints: Cornwall and Devon*, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series 35 (Exeter, 1992), hereafter Orme, 1992, p. 102.

8   *Annals of Tigernach* (MS of 1088), ed. William Stokes, in *Revue Celtique* 16-18 (1895-7); *Annals of Ulster* (MS of before 1498), ed. W. M. Henessy (Dublin, 1897-1901); *Annales Cambriae*, Rolls Series (1860), and HB, pp. 44-9, 85-91. At the time of writing, these texts were in process of web-delivery via CELT, the Corpus of Electronic Texts, at University College, Cork.

9   In Rhigyfarch's *Life* of St David: A. W. Wade-Evans (ed.), *Vitæ Sanctorum Britanniæ et Genealogicæ* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1944), p. 159.

10   *Breviarium Aberdonense* (Edinburgh, 1854), cited by Sabine Baring Gould and John Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, hereafter LBS, 2 (London, Charles J. Clark for the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1908), p. 173.

11   G. H. Doble, *St. Constantine, King and Monk, and St Merryn*, Cornish Saints series 26 (Truro, 1930).

12   Pearce, 1978, p. 105.

of its eponymous patron.[13] On the north Cornwall coast is found the chapel and well of St Constantine at Constantine Bay in St Merryn parish, recorded from 1390.[14] Boy children were being given the name 'Constantine' in the former parish as late as the sixteenth century.[15] Bodmin Priory, also in Cornwall, described the saint in its medieval calendar as 'king and martyr'.[16] Other dedications honouring a Constantine are at Milton Abbot just over the Cornish border in Devon ('Constantine the Confessor' in 1193 and 1521), a chapel at neighbouring Dunterton (mentioned 1421), also on the Devon side of the boundary, and a chapel at Illogan, Cornwall (1449).[17] The name *Custenin* may also be preserved in the place-name Triggstenton found in the parishes of St Endellion and Tywardreath, at opposite ends of the corridor linking Cornwall's north and south coasts from Padstow (close to St Merryn) to Fowey (Fig. 1).[18]

A further Constantine of Cornwall (Constantine Corneu, Welsh *Cystennin Gorneu*) – unless again the same person is meant – appears in the genealogy of St Cybi.[19] He has been identified with the titular saint of Llangystennin or Llangwstenin ('the church of Constantine') in Caernarvonshire on the North Wales coast near the estuary of the River Conway. The argument rests on the location in the same deanery of Llangernyw ('the church of the Cornishmen'), whose patron saint is Digain, supposed son of Constantine Corneu together with Cybi's ancestor Erbin. Llangystennin's church is certainly of great antiquity, for a handbell of the type attributed to holy men in Celtic-speaking regions came from there and at the beginning of the twentieth century was held by the Powysland Museum in Welshpool, Montgomeryshire.[20] Erbin is also patron of Erbistock in Denbighshire and St Ervan in Cornwall – a neighbour of St Merryn: indeed the two parishes occupy a single coherent block of land bounded by two parallel streams. They look like the upper and lower portions of a single estate, with St Constantine's Chapel sited in a valley leading up from Constantine's Bay, while the parish centre, St Merryn (Marina), lies close to the eastern border with Padstow (Fig. 2).

Constantines in Wales and the English borderlands

It appears that the name Constantine was also adopted by at least one influential, perhaps ruling family in North Wales. *Circa* 800 the monk known to history as 'Nennius' reported that the fifth Roman emperor to visit Britain was

[13] Oliver Padel, 'Local saints and place-names in Cornwall', in Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe, *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 345.

[14] C. G. Henderson, *A History of the Parish of Constantine in Cornwall*, ed. G. H. Doble (Long Compton, 1937).

[15] Orme, 1992, p. 127.

[16] William Worcestre, *Itineraries*, ed. J. Harvey (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 88-9.

[17] Orme, 1992, pp. 127.

[18] G. H. Doble, *The Saints in Cornwall*, 3 (1964), hereafter 'Doble, 1964', p. 79.

[19] In London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A 14; A. W. Wade-Evans, *Vitæ Sanctorum Britanniæ* (1944), hereafter 'Wade-Evans, 1944', pp. 234-51; Doble, 1964, pp. 105-32.

[20] LBS, 2, p. 177.

'Constantine, son of Constantine the Great'; that he subsequently died there; and that 'his sepulchre is shown near the fortress which is called Caer Segeint [*i.e.* Segontium, modern Caernarvon], as letters which are on the stone of the burial place [*in lapide tumuli*] tell'.[21]

It is possible that a Constantine ruled in the area around the Severn estuary, too. The hint lies in the biography of Dubricius, bishop *circa* 500 in the small kingdom of Ergyng named after the Roman town of Ariconium.[22] (Ergyng, in English 'Archenfield', is in modern Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. Ariconium is near Ross-on-Wye.) It was said that through his maternal grandmother, wife of the king of Ergyng, he was great-grandson of 'Constantine son of Maximus and Helen'. Dubricius' mother was said to be Ebridil or Efrddyf. Her own mother is unnamed in the genealogy. The king of Ergyng to whom she was married was Pepiau or Peibio ['?Publius']. The lineage may a conflation of traditions concerning Constantine the Great and the usurper Maximus.

Some scholars have been convinced that Constantine son of Maximus was the St Constantine of Welsh dedications.[23] It has been suggested alternatively that he is to be identified with the usurper Constantine III. Whatever the truth of the matter, it is noteworthy that among royal gifts to Dubricius noted in the collection of charters known as the *Book of Llandaff* is a 'church of Constantine', *Lann Custenhin Garth Benni*, a place which survives today as Welsh Bicknor on the river Wye in Herefordshire.[24] The donor is named as Peibio – perhaps a descendant of Dubricius' grandfather, unless the latter was conferring possessions on his grandson in relative old age.[25] A minor place-name Strickstenning, recorded *circa* 1650 at Much Birch near Hentland only a few miles from Welsh Bicknor, may also incorporate the name *Custenhin*. Perhaps this is Constantine of Cornwall again, since the following entry (again a charter ascribed to Peibio) concerns a 'church of the Cornish' in the same region – *Lann Cerniu*, otherwise *Cenubia Cornubium* (monastery of the Cornish), identified with Cwm Barruc in the Valley Dore, Herefordshire. Elsewhere in the region, a parish between Newport and Cardiff is called Coed Cernyw, 'The Cornishmen's Wood' (served today by a church of All Saints).[26] Elsewhere in the *Book of Llandaff* is found Tref y Cerniu, in modern Pembrokeshire.

Constantines of Scotland

Constantine's name held similar appeal further north. *Circa* 575 Rydderch Hael ('the Generous'), king of Strathclyde, the territory of the Cumbrian Britons between the Rivers Clyde and Lune with its principal residence at Dumbarton

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[21] HB, Chapter 25 (pp. 24, 65).

[22] G. H. Doble, *Lives of the Welsh Saints*, ed. D. Simon Evans (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1971), hereafter 'Doble, 1971', pp. 56-87.

[23] Wade-Evans, 1944; E. G. Bowen, *The Settlements of the Celtic Saints in Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1954), p. 22.

[24] The Book of Llandaff, or *Liber Landavensis*, edited by J. G. Evans, *The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv* (Oxford, 1893), and Wendy Davies, *The Llandaff Charters* (Aberystwyth, 1979), hereafter LL, p. 72.

[25] LL, pp. 275-6.

[26] LL, p. 192.

near Glasgow, gave the emperor's name to the son born to his previously sterile wife Langueth after intercession by the famous bishop Kentigern.[27] This Constantine reigned briefly after his father's death in 614, eventually becoming a monk and going to Ireland. The *Life* of St Kentigern reported that many accounted him a saint. He is traditionally associated with the church of Govan near Glasgow.[28]

Constantine was also the name of four later kings in Scotland.[29] The first was Caustantín mac ('son of') Fergusa, king of Pictland in eastern Scotland 789-820, and named on the Dupplin Cross.[30] He and his Óengus (modern Angus) are considered to have been kinsmen of the first great king of Pictland, Fergus. The family appears to have originated from Angus and the district known as the Mearns, and to have had connections with a ruling family from Munster in south-west Ireland.[31] Their names have been taken by some historians to be Gaelic (that is, Irish), and by others to indicate Gaelicisation of the Picts. Óengus may have given sanctuary to Bishop Acca of Hexham, perhaps receiving relics of St Andrew in return.[32]

Two generations later, Caustantín mac Cináeda (known as Constantine I, son of Kenneth MacAlpin, the legendary founder of Scotland), 862-77, defended his Pictish kingdom against the Danes but was killed by them in battle.[33]

Caustantín mac Áeda (known as Constantine II, son of Aedh), for 43 years from 900 king of Pictland which he renamed Alba ('Britain' in Gaelic), allied himself with the Scandinavians opposed to the English king Aethelstan. After abdication he became abbot of St Andrew's in Fife and died there in 952.[34]

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[27] Jocelyn's *Life* of Kentigern, in A. P. Forbes, *Lives of St Ninian and St Kentigern*, The Historians of Scotland 5 (1874); K. H. Jackson, 'The sources for the life of St Kentigern', in Nora K. Chadwick, *Studies in the Early British Church* (1958), pp. 272-357.

[28] A. D. Macquarrie, 'Early Christian Govan: the historical context', in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 24 (1990-2), p. 11.

[29] For their historic context, Archibald A. M. Duncan, *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1978), especially pp. 54ff. More recent accounts of early medieval Scotland are Sally Foster, *Picts, Gaels and Scots* (rev. edn, London, Batsford, 2005); Leslie Alcock, *Kings and Warriors, Craftsmen and Priests in Northern Britain AD 550–750* (Edinburgh, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2003). See also Alex Woolf, *Pictland to Alba: Scotland, 789–1070*, New Edinburgh History of Scotland (Edinburgh, due 2007); and Michael Lynch (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), hereafter Lynch, 2002.

[30] Thomas Owen Clancy, 'Caustantín son of Fergus (Uurgust)', in Lynch, 2002.

[31] Dauvit Broun, 'Pictish Kings 761-839: Integration with Dál Riata or separate development', in Sally Foster (ed.), *The St Andrews Sarcophagus: A Pictish masterpiece and its international connections* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1998).

[32] Barbara Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain c. 600–800* (London, Longman, 2006); Alex Woolf, 'Ungus (Onuist), son of Uurgust', in Lynch, 2002.

[33] Alan Orr Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History A.D 500–1286*, 1 (reprinted with corrections, Stamford, Paul Watkins, 1990), hereafter 'Anderson, 1990'; Archibald A. M. Duncan, *The Kingship of the Scots 842–1292: Succession and Independence* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2002), hereafter 'Duncan, 2002'; Alfred P. Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men: Scotland AD 80–1000* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1984), hereafter Smyth, 1998.

[34] Alex Woolf, 'Constantine II', in Lynch, 2002.

Causantín mac Cuiléin (known as Constantine III) ruled Alba for eighteen months between 995 and 997, and was buried on Iona, the holy island off the west coast of Scotland.[35]

The last well-known bearer of the name Constantine among Scotland's ruling families was Causantín, first Earl (or Mormaer) of Fife, a small kingdom incorporated into the Kingdom of Alba. He was grandson of the Macduff whose victory ends Shakespeare's drama, *Macbeth*; Macduff in turn was grandson of Cináed mac Duib, king of Alba 997-1005. This Constantine is heard of between 1095 and 1128 and was Justiciar of Scotland, the country's senior lawman.[36]

Constantine and the legitimacy of kings and saints

In early medieval Welsh and other western British sources, kings' legitimacy was often underpinned by the insertion of Constantine the Great into their genealogies. This also involved a sustained attempt to link Constantine with the usurper Maximus (383-8). Geoffrey of Monmouth amended the latter's name to Maximian, thus causing confusion with Constantius' colleague Maximian and Constantine the Great's opponent Maxentius, Maximian's son. He also made him a senator invited by the British nobility in 379 to take the place of a British ruler Octavius, who had died in 375. '[Maximianus] was a Briton on the father's side, being the son of Leolinus, uncle of Constantine.' Maximian married the daughter and only child of Octavius, a clear variant of the tradition whereby Maximus married a British princess, Helena, daughter of Eudaf.[37] The latter's name is the Welsh derivative of Latin *Octavius*. Several Welsh lineages traced rulers' descent directly from Constantine through Maximus.

It is clear that the confused accounts actually strengthened the power and symbolism of Constantine's name. As archetypal Christian monarch, Constantine's name was already invoked in formal ritual and informal correspondence, and through ideas about his mother, Helena (explored in previous Proceedings). In earlier symposia I have demonstrated the concern of the Mercian king Offa, for example, to present himself as heir of Constantine, and also the concentration of Helen dedications around York, a non-random distribution which echoes that in northern Greece, Macedonia and Bulgaria – and now here in the city of Nis.

Kings and kings' sons bearing Constantine's name could become saints, as he himself became known as a saint in the East, and as it appears his father Constantius may have been regarded in at least one location in Britain. Henry VIII's antiquarian, John Leland, reported *circa* 1540 that a lamp burned perpetually in Constantius' honour in the church of St Helen's-on-the-Walls, York, one of the many named after Constantine's mother, and which was built over

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[35]   Anderson, 1990; Duncan, 2002; Smyth, 1998.

[36]   John Bannerman, 'MacDuff of Fife', in A. Grant and K. Stringer (eds.), *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community, Essays Presented to G. W. S. Barrow* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 20–38.

[37]   HRB, Book 5, Chapter 8 (pp. 133-8).

Romano-British fabric including a mosaic featuring a female's head.[38] Insular Saints Constantine include the sons of Rydderch Hael, Fergus, and Aedh, mentioned earlier. A Scottish litany of saints composed in the late ninth century include the son of Fergus and perhaps the son of Cináed, entered among the martyrs, and a recent commentator has seen this as evidence of official promotion of a cult of royal saints.[39] In addition, no fewer than thirty-eight saints in Welsh tradition were said to be descended from Constantine, including Dubricius.[40] Saints called Constantine shared their name with landmarks, like Constantine's Bay in Cornwall, as well as the churches and localities mentioned earlier. Dedications of churches in honour of Constantine the Great had to wait until the Norman Conquest and the arrival of seigneurs from the peninsula around Coutances – itself named, of course, to commemorate the emperor. The dedication at Thorpe Constantine in Staffordshire and the place-name, together with that of Eaton Constantine in Shropshire, derive from the family name 'de Coutances' or 'de Costentin', seigneurs at these places in the thirteenth century.[41]

Legitimacy which flowed from descent and sanctity was bolstered too by memorialising of Constantine in the landscape. Welsh tradition held to the myth that Constantine died on a hilltop in south Wales, Mynydd Mawr in modern Carmarthenshire. Nennius included a *Caer Custeint* ('Constantine's Fortress') in his list *circa* 800 of twenty-eight recognised cities of Roman Britain (all with names beginning *Caer-*, 'fortress', the Welsh counterpart of Old English *ceastre-*, a Roman defended town).[42] This may not be York, since *Eboracum*, York's Latin name, is included in the list, and so is Caernarvon. Possibly *Caer Custeint* preserves the memory of an honorific appended to the name of some better-known location.

Constantine in later medieval tradition and politics

It has already been noted that Constantine's supposed tomb lay at Caernarvon long after the Romans left the British islands. This is a town long associated with the *imperium* of Britain and where, beginning with the reign of Edward the First, the eldest sons of British monarchs are customarily proclaimed Prince of Wales. Copyists corrected the record of the sarcophagus described by Nennius so as to refer first to Constantine's son Constantius. Later Caernarvon was identified rather with Constantine's father. According to one text a castle had been built by an Earl Hugh 'in Arfon, in the old fortress of

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38 J. R. Magilton, *The Church of St Helen-on-the-Walls, Aldwark*, Archaeology of York 10/1 (London, 1980).

39 G. F. Gordon, 'Processional litany of the monastery of Dunkeld in Scotland', *Notes and Queries* 9 (3rd series, 1866), pp. 406-9; Thomas Owen Clancy, 'Scottish saints and national identities', in Thacker and Sharpe, 2002, pp. 397-421, at p. 420.

40 P. C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Geneaological Tracts* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1966).

41 Eilert Ekwall, *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (4th edn, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1964); A. D. Mills, *Oxford Dictionary of British Place-Names* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003).

42 HB, pp. 40, 80.

Constantine, emperor, son of Constans the Great'.[43] In 1283 the chronicler Matthew Paris wrote that 'the body of that great prince, the father of the noble emperor Constantine, was discovered at Caernarvon, near Snowdon, and by command of the king [Edward the First] was honourably placed in the church.[44] Also the crown of that ancient famous king of the Britons, Arthur, was given up, with many other jewels. And so, by the protection of God, the glory of the Welsh... was transferred to the English'. Matthew Paris understood *maximi* in the phrase *corpus maximi principis*, 'the body of that great prince', to refer to Maximianus and says that he married the daughter of Octavius 'at the insistence of the nobles'. This follows Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, generally taken to be largely if not wholly fictional. In the margin appears a variant text: '*corpus patris Constantini imperatoris invenitur*'.[45] Immediately before this passage, Paris recorded that 'a large portion of the Cross of the Lord, which in the language of the Welsh is called *Croizneth*, was given up with many other famous relics to the lord Edward, king of England', a further link with Constantine via his mother Helena, the rediscoverer of the Cross.

The power and purpose of Constantine's memory

Edward the First's appropriation of Constantine's memory was therefore woven into the propaganda on behalf of his *imperium* over Wales – and, he hoped, over Scotland and Ireland likewise. Doubtless he saw himself as Constantius and his son the Black Prince as a latter-day Constantine. In the same period, the thirteenth-century Welsh Mostyn manuscript gives Constantine as the name of the father of Uther (later surnamed Pendragon), father of the renowned 'king' Arthur.[46]

Edward's appropriation of the 'Constantinian' tomb at Caernarvon also had the effect of reinforcing Constantine's role within Britain's Roman heritage, a part of the islands' history to which historians and statists would return in later ages. Tudor historians were keen to emphasise Britannia's Roman imperial past as contemporary Britain began to forge its own empire overseas. The personified figure of Britannia, first shown on Roman imperial coins of the first century of the Common Era, reappeared as frontispiece to a famous seventeenth-century panegyric of the British countryside, Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*. In 1714, the last year of Queen Anne's reign, it was incorporated into Britain's own coinage, following the Act of Union with Scotland, and remains today on Britain's 50 pence piece.

Constantine's popularity in Britain was clearly influenced by his posthumous promotion as the ideal Christian monarch, and founder of the Christian

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43 *Historia hen Gruffudd vab Kenan vab Yago*, chapter 7.

44 '*Apud Kaernervan [E. B. ins. portum Snowdoniae], corpus maximi principis* [E. B. *imperatoris*], *patris imperatoris nobilis Constantini, erat inventum et rege jubente in ecclesia honorifice collocatum.*'

45 *Flores Historiarum Matthew Paris*, 3 vols (1890), translated C. D. Yonge, *Matthew of Westminster's Flowers of History* (2 vols, 1853), Ms. N. (under 1283).

46 Mostyn Ms. 117.

world as it was known through the Middle Ages and beyond. However, there may have been more. At some point in the three years from 315, Constantine was awarded the title *Britannicus Maximus*. Such honours were frequently associated with major military success. It may have arisen from a campaign against some would-be usurper whose identity was subsequently lost to view. However, action against external enemies may be more likely – particularly since Constantine III was an upstart, one who established himself, if only for a short time. When Constantine I was proclaimed at York, it was on the death of his father, Constantius, who was in Britain at the head of imperial units conducting one of the periodic campaigns on the island against external threats. The successive commanders of these armies were of comital rank, and eventually, *circa* 398, a permanent post was created, *Comes Britanniae* or *Britanniarum*. The coming together of military command (particularly of highly trained, mobile field forces) and civil authority must inevitably have influenced subsequent ideas about the legitimacy of *imperium* and kingship. The linkage can be seen in historical references to Arthur, arguably the most potent figure in British myth and known in legend as 'King', as 'leader in battle'. By the same process, legitimacy was claimed by the rulers of small Dark Age kingdoms on the basis of descent from one or other of the late Roman emperors whose own power rested on military command. Constantine's acclamation set a benchmark which must have been referred to time and again in the centuries *after* Britain was set adrift from direct imperial rule.

It remains to explain why Constantine became a popular name among ruling families in what became Scotland at just the period that it did. One clue may lie in the sculpture of a sarcophagus at St Andrews (Fig. 5). King David is shown killing the lion, as in the Old Testament, dressed like a late antique Roman emperor with what looks like a *kaiserfibel* or fibula on the neckline of his garment (Fig. 6). The figure is reminiscent of that of the Emperor Justinian in the mosiacs of San Vitale, Ravenna. This style of depiction is known as *imitatio imperii* and it may allow symbolic identification of the figure of David with the king who commissioned it. Possibly this was Óengus I, king of the Picts from 732 until his death in 761, who, as mentioned earlier, may have been responsible for the foundation of St Andrews' cathedral with its relic(s) of the Apostle.[47] The end of his reign overlaps, therefore, with the earliest part of the reign of Offa of Mercia. Among Óengus' successors was a kinsman (perhaps grandson or great-nephew) Constantine (Caustantín) (789-820). The *imitatio imperii* of the sarcophagus may therefore reflect not only the range and energy of Óengus himself, but also a sense of *Romanitas* which extended to the culture of naming.

It is also useful to note that Constantine had by this time returned as one of the more popular names for Emperors in the East. Heraclius and his first wife Eudocia had named one of their sons after its father, but when this younger Heraclius was crowned co-emperor by his father in 613, he was known as

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[47] Alex Woolf, 'Onuist son of Uurguist: *tyrannus carnifex* or a David for the Picts?' in David Hill and Margaret Worthington (eds), *Aethelbald and Offa: Two Eighth-Century Kings of Mercia*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 383 (Oxford, Archaeopress, 2005).

Fig. 5. The sarcophagus at St Andrew's.

Сл. 5. Саркофаг светог Андрије.

Fig. 6. Detail from the St Andrew's sarcophagus showing David slaying the lion.

Сл. 6. Детаљ са саркофага светог Андрије, приказ Давида који убија лава.

Heraclius, New Constantine, and thereafter as Constantine III until his death in 641. He was succeeded by his own son, named Constans, and there were a further six Byzantine emperors named Constantine up to the eleventh century.. So while it is possible that the name Constantine was adopted by the Pictish kings in some way as a consequence of their acquisition of dominion over the western Scottish kingdom of Dalriada – where, as mentioned earlier, a Constantine, perhaps of kingly origin, was venerated as a saintly assistant of bishop Kentigern – it is equally possible that the Pictish kings, enjoying growing power and wealth, were appealing to Roman identity and legitimacy as represented by the empire of Constantine rather than, like English kingdoms, to Rome itself. It may be that this had something to do with the reception of the relic(s) of St Andrew, since it was to Constantinople that the Apostle's remains were translated from Patras, his supposed place of martyrdom, providing Constantine's capital with a relic almost equal to those of Peter and Paul at Rome. At the same time it harked back to a memorialising of Constantine which was already in place in south-western Britain by *circa* 540. Historians and art scholars unite in pointing out the strong Byzantine influences in insular sculpture, textile, and book illustration in the seventh to ninth centuries. Is it possible that there is a politico-cultural context to this, which links it to the controversy over the dating of Easter which divided the Irish and Roman churches? Was there a deliberate effort by western insular kings to maintain (or at least imitate) contact with the empire during the period when imperial power in the west was fragmented by 'barbarian' peoples? We might also whether such a thread was woven so deeply into the fabric of Scottish identity that it contributed to Scotland's long sense of connectedness with the Continent, the strength of which even today contrasts markedly with attitudes among the English.

One final related point is worth making. A key player in the raising of Constantine the Great to the purple at York was Crocus, a German king com-

manding a unit of Allemani. This reminds us that it is increasingly clear that the identity of England as a cultural mix of Celt and Teuton, with the latter eventually dominant, was already in process of formation when Constantine's reign began. Linguists now suppose that the seeds of the English language itself were sown a century-and-a-half before the traditional *adventus* of the Anglo-Saxons with the legendary Hengest and Horsa. The longevity of Constantine's memory was no accident.

Грахам Џонс

ПРОГЛАШЕН У ЈОРКУ: УТИЦАЈ КОНСТАНТИНА, СВЕЦА И ИМПЕРАТОРА, НА КОЛЕКТИВНО БРИТАНСКО ПАМЋЕЊЕ

Константин Велики био је не само једини римски император који је проглашен за цара у Британији, једној од најудаљенијих провинција Римског царства, већ свакако најславнији и најбоље упамћен. Британци славе спомен на њега на више начина. Његово проглашење помиње се у најстаријим сачуваним записима о историји ових острва - посебно у делима Бида и монаха Ненијуса.

Његова владавина је подстицала средњовековне писце епских прича (као што је Џефри од Монмаута) и кроз њихово писање је створен мит у којем је Константин постао одраз, а можда и извор, неких кључних аспеката легенде о краљу Артуру.

Култура давања имена учинила је да успомена на Константина настави да живи у онима који су носили његово име. Најверованије није случајно да се цар који је 406. године преотео престо у Британији звао Константин III.

Краљеви у Британији, посебно у западној Енглеској и Шкотској, наставили су да носе његово име све до тринаестог века. Други краљеви су своју легитимност поткрепљивали убацивањем самог Константина у сопствена породична стабла.

Његово име могли су, такође, да имају и свеци, будући да је он сам био познат као светац на Истоку. На име Константина као архетипског хришћанског монарха, позивало се у формалној ритуалној и у неформалној преписци, а помињано је у том контексту и у представама о његовој мајци Јелени (о чему је било речи у претходном Зборнику). Незадовољни помињањем њиховог најчувенијег владара у литератури, генеалогији и ономастици, Британци су славили спомен на њега и на локалном нивоу. У Средњем веку се тврдило да у цркви у Јорку, чији су римско-британски темељи недавно откривени, вечним пламеном гори кандило у част његовог оца, а црква је носила име његове мајке. Дуго након што су Римљани напустили британска острва, тврдило се, зачудо, да се његов гроб налази у Кернарвону, граду у Велсу који је повезан са британском империјом и у којем се још и данас најстаријим синовима британских монарха додељује титула принца од Велса.