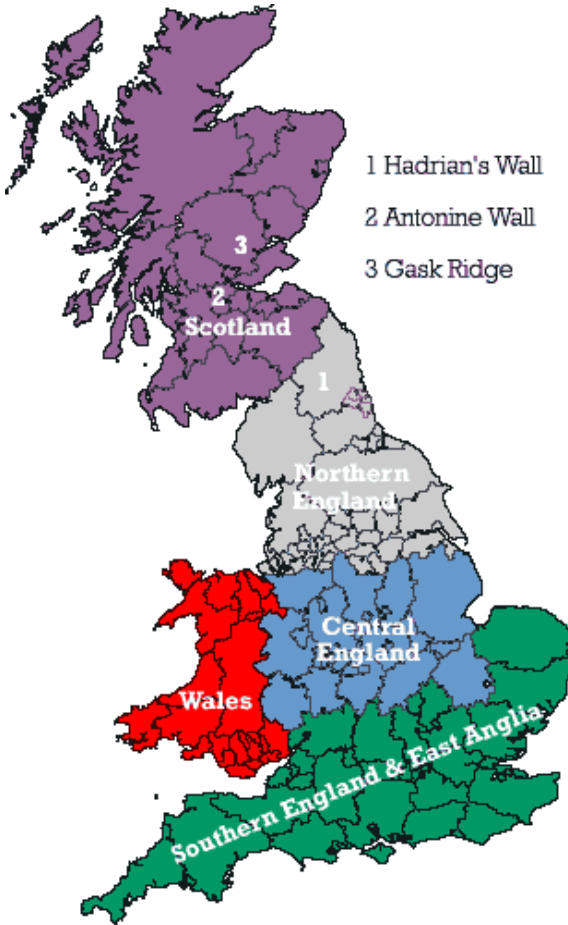


## St Columba, the Dalriadic Scots, and the Rise of Christianity in Britain

This handout gives an historical overview for the first millennium of "Scottish" history, following the birth of Christ (roughly, 0–1000). The overview provides historical context for more in-depth study of Scotland's great patron saint, Saint Columba. There are several overarching themes to Scottish history for this millennium, including the following:

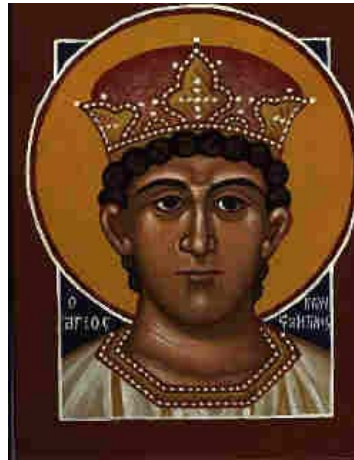
- The fall of the Roman Empire (in the west, anyway), and the impact of its dissolution on the British Isles.
- The rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire, and, more particularly, in Scotland and the British Isles.
- The emergence, growth, and consolidation of the Scottish Kingdom, one of the oldest kingdoms in Europe.
- The emergence of the Vikings as a threat to the peoples of northern Europe, especially Scotland, during the 9th and 10th centuries.

Year	Event	Commentary
30	St Andrew, brother of St Peter, is the first called of Jesus' disciples; according to tradition, Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross, the form of which became known as "St Andrew's Cross"; already patron saint of Russia and Greece, in the 8th century the relics of St Andrew were taken to the future site of St Andrews in Scotland, so that he became the patron saint of Scotland as well.	 <p>1 Hadrian's Wall 2 Antonine Wall 3 Gask Ridge</p>
79–83	After successfully invading England and Wales, the Roman general Agricola attempts to conquer Caledonia (present day Scotland).	

118 Romans build Hadrian's wall to contain The Romans tried several times to extend their

- the "barbarian" Picts.
- 142–43 Romans build the Antonine wall further north, again to contain the Picts.
- 211 The Roman emperor Severus dies, ending two years of Roman "conquest" of the Picts; in 209 Severus had managed to sign a battle-enforced peace treaty with the Pictish tribes, but this short-lived peace did not survive the emperor's death.
- 312 Constantine defeats Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, near Rome; he is inspired by a vision, seeing a cross superimposed on the sun and the words "in this sign you will be the victor".
- 313 Constantine and Licinius issue the Edict of Milan, which mandated toleration of Christians in the Roman Empire; Constantine becomes guardian of the Christian Church.
- 325 Constantine presides over the first ecumenical council of the Christian Church in Nicaea.
- 326 Constantine began the building of Constantinople, on the site of the ancient Greek city, Byzantium; the city was completed in 330, given Roman institutions and Greek art; eventually, the city becomes home to the Eastern Roman Empire and the Greek Orthodox Church.
- 337 Constantine is baptized shortly before his death, on May 22, 337.
- 371 St Martin (316?–397?) is named bishop of Tours; St Martin establishes the first monasteries in Gaul, giving particular attention to the conversion of the rural population (Latin *pagani*, from which the English "pagans" is derived).
- 395 St Augustine (354–430) becomes bishop of Hippo; in his monumental Christian apologia *The City of God* (413–426) Augustine formulated a theological philosophy of history.
- c. 400 Romans abandon Hadrian's wall, beginning their retreat from Britain.
- mastery of present-day England and Wales to present-day Scotland, or "Caledonia", but never had much success.
- The Romans built two walls across the neck of Britain in an attempt to control the unruly Picts, but none of the Roman tactics were effective.
- The first stage in the development of the Pictish kingdom is completed about this time: A loose confederacy of tribes under one name (Picts), each tribe with its own king.
- Constantine figures prominently in this chronology because he (a) was instrumental in establishing Christianity as a "state" religion within the Roman empire, and (b) was an exemplary historical figure — the warrior-saint — who became a model for later Christian kings, including the Picts and Scots.

Constantine the Great



- c. 460 St Patrick (c. 410–493), a Briton, is appointed successor to St Palladius, the first bishop of Ireland. St Ninian, another Briton, is thought to be the first apostle to the Picts, probably active in the triangle between Edinburgh, Stirling, and Glasgow; the facts of Ninian's life are not well known, but the best guess is that he lived during the same century as Patrick.
- c. 500 Fergus Mor, King of Dalriada Scots, arrives on the west coast of Alba (Scotland) — Fergus Mor is a rough contemporary of the legendary King Arthur. The second stage in the development of the Pictish Kingdom is completed shortly after the arrival of the Scots on the west coast of present-day Scotland; there are two confederations of tribes — Dalriadic Scots and the mainland Picts — each with its own overking (this is the same pattern found in Ireland).
- 561 St Brendan (c. 486–578?) founds the monastery in what is now Clonfert, in County Galway, Ireland; later Brendan visits Iona and the mainland of Scotland. Brendan's extensive travels about Europe and the North Atlantic are the subject of a later medieval romance, *The Voyage of St Brendan*, recounting his fabulous adventures.
- 563 St Columba (c. 521–597) sets out from Ireland, accompanied by 12 disciples, to establish a monastery on the west coast of Scotland (Alba); he eventually chooses Iona as his site. The Scots were a Celtic people who emigrated from Ireland to the west coast of Pictland, as Scotland was called in the sixth century.
- 697 St Adamnan (625?–704) enters the monastery on the island of Iona and is elected abbot; Adamnan wrote *On the Holy Land*, an important account of a pilgrimage made by a Frankish bishop; he is best known for his *Life of Saint Columba*, the essential biography of Columba and account of the early Irish church. Like Columba, Adamnan was born in County Donegal, Ireland; their emigration reflects both a migratory trend, from Ireland to Scotland, as well as an evangelical trend, again from Ireland to Scotland (see Thomas Cahill's book, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, Doubleday, 1995).
- 661 St Cuthbert (630–687) becomes prior of Melrose; is prior of Lindisfarne from 664 to 676, when he retires; as prior of Lindisfarne, he introduces Roman practices dictated by the Synod of Whitby. The Synod of Whitby was held to iron out differences in usages between the Celtic Christian church, centered in Ireland and Iona, and the Roman Christian church, centered in Rome; the Roman usages carried the day (some historians, including Lynch, feel that the Synod was as much, if not more, a territorial dispute between rival paruchia, as it was a dispute over religious practices).
- 729–41 Oengus I is King of Picts and Dalriadic Scots. By 729 the third stage in the development of the early Scottish kingdom was complete, with the two branches — Dalriadic Scots and mainland Picts — recognizing a high king (with struggles between the branches for the kingship).

late 8th cent. *Book of Kells* is probably begun on Iona; after the Viking raids began on the Western Isles during the early 9th century, the monks on Iona are believed to have taken this medieval manuscript to the monastery at Kells, where work on the illuminated manuscript was completed – one of the few facsimile's of the *Book of Kells* can be found in TCU's library.

from the *Book of Kells*



780–820 Constantine, son of Fergus, is "King of Fortriu", as the high kings of Picts/Scots were called; this king's name is indicative of the "cult of Constantine" that flourished in Western Europe during this period, becoming an influential model for early medieval Christian kings.

795–806 The monastery on Iona is attacked at least three times by Viking raiders; in 806 we know that 68 monks were massacred at Martyr's Bay.

Eventually the Viking raids shut down the monastery at Iona, and the surviving monks departed for their sister monasteries at Kells and Dunkeld.

800 Charlemagne is coronated on Christmas Day, by Pope Leo III, in St Peter's Basilica in Rome; Charlemagne is the first Holy Roman Emperor.

Although Charlemagne had consolidated the Frankish empire by his coronation in 800, the Vikings were already making raids on the river valleys and coastal areas of the new empire; Scotland also was feeling the sting of the Viking sword.

843–58 Kenneth mac Alpin, a Dalriadic Scot, is King of Fortriu; Kenneth's descendents ruled Scotland from 843 to 1286, with the death of Alexander III (Alexander's death precipitated the monarchical crisis which led to Edward I's interventions in Scotland, William Wallace's rebellion, and Robert the Bruce's seizing the crown of Scotland).

The mac Alpin dynasty came into being in part because so many Pictish rival claimants were killed in a watershed battle (839) with Norsemen, and in part because (or so the speculation goes) that Kenneth murdered the remaining claimants at what was the first of Scotland's numerous "Black Dinners".

900–43 Constantine I is King of Scots; Constantine's reign ended a period of 200 years during which the high kingship of Scotland was consolidated.

An important feature of the Scottish monarchy was its partnership with the emerging Scottish church; the church and monarchy were co-dependent — with the Scottish kings acquiring legitimacy and administrative skills from early abbots, and the abbots gaining the security of official sponsorship.