

These four kingdoms and their people were gradually united to form the Kingdom of Scotland - though it should be noted that the regions of the Britons and the Angles stretched far down into modern England and that several centuries were to pass before a final boundry, short of the original southern limits of these two regions, was at last fixed and accepted to define the land of Scotland from the land of England. As we have seen, the name Picts does not occur until the end of the third century when a Roman writer speaks of ‘Picts and irish(scots) attacking the Romans (Hadrians’) Wall. If, as we have suggested, the word meant to the Romans simply ‘the painted people’ it would be an indication that the peoples of the north were still following the custom of painting their bodies at a time when that custom had died out in the south. Probably, too, the Romans used the word as a general term for all the peoples living in the land-mass of Scotland to the north of the Forth: and another Roman writer’s phrase ‘Caledones and other Picti’ seem to show that the term was a collective one.

The name ‘Picts’, however, passed into current use for the peoples of a Pictish kingdom which stretched northwards from the Forth. At first we hear of ‘northern Picts’ and ‘southern Picts’, probably the inhabitants of two seperate kingdoms each under its own king; but, by the seventh century, these two seperate groups had united to form one Pictish kingdom with a shift southwards of political power. It was a united Pictland that defeated the Angles at Dunnichen in 685; and the peoples of that Pictland were the decendants of differing iron-age invaders and of the late bronze-age peoples whom they had overruled. The strength and