

John White and British Antiquity: Savage Origins in the Context of Tudor Historiography

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The five engravings of Picts and ancient Britons, included as a supplement at the end of Harriot's *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia* are not customarily regarded as having the cultural impact associated with White's images of Indians; thus this paper is itself, perhaps, something of a supplement to the majority of the papers in this collection, oriented as they mainly are, and rightfully, to White's engagement with the New World. But the relationship between White's illustrations of ancient Britons and developments in Tudor historiography shows that here, too, his work was innovative and had a lasting influence. In this case, however, as I hope I will be able to demonstrate, White's achievement can best be understood as crystallizing emergent thought rather than documenting new experiences. What I will argue is that his watercolours, and the engravings derived from them, participate in a widespread debate about British history and cultural identity, a debate whose partisans took up their positions not only in antiquarian publications but also in the theatre and in popular entertainments.

The five plates are introduced with a brief prefatory text, which offers a point of departure for any analysis of them. The reader is primed to take these illustrations seriously because they are of a piece with what has come before: just as *A briefe and true report's* overall title page had identified a time (1585) and a place (Virginia), so the sub-title page for the ancient British appendix likewise fixes chronology ('in the old tyme') and place ('one part of the great Britainne'). And just as John White is described earlier as diligently collecting and drawing 'the true pictures and fashions' of the Algonquians,

so here, all the plates are entitled 'the true picture' of the Picts and their neighbours. White's images of Indians are vouchsafed textually by the affidavit 'sent thither specially' for the purpose of making these visual records. A reader who agreed, on the basis of the Virginia plates, that White had professionally discharged his pictorial duties in America, would also be ready to accept the most curious part of the supplement's inscription: 'The painter ... gave me also these 5. Figures followinge, fownd as hy did assured my in a ooldd English chronicle...'

I will come back to the idea of an old English chronicle later in this paper, but for now let us concentrate on the images. As is immediately obvious, what White painted and what de Bry engraved are not identical. What we are shown in the printed supplement are a Pictish man, a Pictish woman, a *yonge dowgter of the Pictes* and two 'neighbours of the Picts': a man and a woman (Figs 1–5). Only two of these engravings, the Pictish man and woman (Figs 1–2), are closely derived from White's watercolours (Figs 6–7). The engraved neighbours of the Picts (Figs 4–5), especially the man, are only loosely related to their prototypes in White's drawings (Figs 8–9) and the daughter of the Picts (Fig. 3) is engraved from a picture not by White but by Jacques Le Moyne (Fig. 10). With respect to this last, it was perhaps for reasons of variety that de Bry substituted Jacques Le Moyne's watercolour, for the White image of a Pictish man he discarded (Fig. 11) is, essentially, a reversed pose of the picture de Bry selected for engraving (Fig. 6).



Figure 1 *The true picture of one Pict*, Theodor de Bry, 1590, engraving after John White (© British Library Board, All Rights Reserved, G.6837)



Figure 2 *The true picture of a woman Pict*, Theodor de Bry, 1590, engraving after John White (© British Library Board, All Rights Reserved, G.6837)



Figure 3 *The true picture of a young daughter of the Picts*, Theodor de Bry, 1590, engraving after John White? or after Le Moyne? (© British Library Board, All Rights Reserved, G.6837)



Figure 4 *The true picture of a man of nation neighbour to the Picts*, Theodor de Bry, 1590, engraving after John White (© British Library Board, All Rights Reserved, c.38.i.18)



Figure 5 *The true picture of a woman neighbour to the Picts*, Theodor de Bry, 1590 engraving after John White (© British Library Board, All Rights Reserved, G.6837)

Jacques Le Moyne's *Daughter of the Picts* is the only surviving work by him of this type (Fig. 10). The use of flowers to cover the body has been repeatedly commented on, given that it bears no direct relation to the classical accounts of the Picts or other British tribes. I think it worth suggesting here that Le Moyne followed Bede's idea that the Picts originated in Scythia, and so turned to Xenophon who, in the *Anabasis*, records that the warlike peoples on the Black Sea coast included the fair-skinned Mossynoicoi, whose chestnut-fattened children were 'tender and very white... with backs and breasts variegated and tattooed all over in flower patterns'.¹

The only other artist known to have attempted illustrations of ancient Britons in this period was Lucas de Heere, who probably made them in the mid-1570s. His depiction, which occurs in two variants, one in the British Library (Fig. 12), the other in the library of the University of Ghent, seems to have taken its cue from Herodian's account in his *Roman History*:

Their very bare bodies they marke with sundry pictures, representing all maner of living creatures; and therefore it is verily, that they will not be clad, for hiding (forsooth) that painting of their bodies. Now they are a most warlike nation,

and very greedy of slaughter, content to bee armed onely with a narrow shield and a speare, with a sword besides hanging downe by their naked bodies.²

De Heere's rather sober approach to the illustration of the Britons is a fortunate survival insofar as it throws White's illustrations into relief. For when we compare de Heere's ancient Britons to White's, it is immediately apparent that White has classicized his subjects. The disposition of White's Pictish man and Pictish woman (Figs 6–7) have something of the poise and grace that derives, ultimately, from high art examples: for the man, a hint borrowed perhaps from the *Apollo Belvedere* (first engraved in the 1530s); for the woman, a reference, possibly, to the School of Fontainebleau's *Artemis*, an anonymous picture of the goddess as hunter painted c. 1550–60. Likewise, the developed musculature of the man and woman neighbours of the Picts (Figs 8–9) are Mannerist and the man has more than a passing resemblance to the print illustrating *Gad* in Joos Lambrecht's *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Ghent, 1552). The muscularity of all these figures may also remind us of the work of another artist associated with Fontainebleau, Rosso Fiorentino, as for example his pictures of classical gods engraved by Jacopo Caraglio in the 1520s. The point of these observations about style, however, is not to insist absolutely on White's practice stemming from such and such a tradition but to point out that, whatever his influences, his characteristic treatment of these figures has the effect of dignifying them by association. As I will argue later, this has important implications for White's attitude to British antiquity.

White's drawings of ancient Britons carry no inscriptions, but two texts were supplied in the published volume that bear on them.³ The first of these, 'Interpres/lector' ('Translator/to the reader'), only appears in the original Latin edition of 1590. It provides a brief digest of descriptive extracts from Caesar, Pliny and Herodian on the Britons and two lines from Claudian on the defeated Picts and Scots.⁴ The material on the Britons has been selected to comment on their appearance: the men's unshaved upper lip, the use of woad by men and women, their nakedness, body decoration and weapons of war. The lines from Claudian, however, offer no descriptions and talk only of the Emperor Honorius' military successes against the Picts and Scots. These sources provide a



Figure 6 *A Pictish warrior holding a human head*, John White (BM 1906,0509.1.24)



Figure 7 *A Pictish woman*, John White (BM 1906,0509.1.27)



Figure 8 *Ancient British man*, John White (BM 1906,0509.1.28)



Figure 9 *Ancient British woman*, John White (BM 1906,0509.1.25)

Figure 10
A young daughter of the Picts, attributed to or after Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, c. 1580s, watercolor and gouache, touched with gold, on parchment (The Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection B1981. 25.2646)



background of sorts for the engravings after White's watercolours, but not an explicit context for them that would make the images subservient to these Classical texts.

First, the descriptive sources concern Britons, while the images illustrate Picts and their neighbours. Second, the letterpress accompanying the images makes no specific mention of the sources adumbrated in 'Interpres/lectorii,' but offers instead a series of assertive remarks, some indeed derived from Classical authority but many others merely fanciful embroidery. Thus, rather than the engravings and their letterpress illustrating and extending the body of knowledge rehearsed in 'Interpres/lectorii,' they offer a supplement to that knowledge.⁵ Moreover, whereas the letterpress to the images is insistent that the women were armed and played their part in warfare, at the very bottom of 'Interpres/lectorii' is added a remark that completely undermines these belligerent women of the engravings: 'In truth, no one [i.e., no Classical author] writes about their women, armed and advanced in war' ('armatus ad bellum profectas').⁶ There is, in other words, a disjunction between the scholarship that underpins 'Interpres/lectorii' and the



Figure 11 *Pictish man*, John White (BM 1906,0509.1.26)



Figure 12 *Ancient Britains*, Lucas de Heere (© British Library Board, All Rights Reserved, MS Add. 28330, fol. 8v)

more exuberant fancy detectable in the images and their accompanying letterpress. As to the relation between the letterpress and the engravings, rather than the text determining the iconography, the flow of information seems to be in the opposite direction: the detailed accounts of body decoration and clothing found in the letterpress to the engravings may be better understood as verbal descriptions of the images White and Le Moyne had already produced.

But while the letterpress accompanying the engravings is not to be regarded as securely founded on Classical scholarship, it is remarkable for its ambition: 'to shoue how that the Inhabitants of the great Britannie haue bin in times past as sauuage as those of Virginia'. The point is reiterated in the first plate (Fig. 1), showing a Pictish warrior brandishing the head of an enemy, with another at his feet, the accompanying text stating that: 'In tymes past the Pictes, habitans of one part of great Britainne, which is now nammed England, wear sauuages...'. The elision of England and Great Britain here is hazy and ambiguous in its intent, but it is noteworthy none the less.

Contemporary readers, or those of them who knew anything about the Picts, would have regarded them as a separate people, whose ancient territories lay in the modern kingdom of Scotland. Associating the Picts with England in any way was therefore unorthodox. Here, however, while the aggressive, naked Picts may look more primitive than their semi-clad neighbours, they not only occupy contiguous territories – as 'neighbours' – but are also placed in England. We can make some sense of this statement by comparing it with what William Camden had said in *Britannia*, published four years earlier in 1586: '... the Picts... were verie naturall Britans themselves, even the right progenie of the most ancient Britans.' It is possible that Camden's temporal concentration on lineage has been condensed and misleadingly rephrased here as a spatial observation: 'habitans of one part of great Britainne, which is now nammed England.'⁷

If the letterpress accompanying the plates owes something to *Britannia*, as I suggest it may, that itself is significant. An author making use of Camden would be allying himself with the most advanced antiquarian thinking in Britain at this period. And this humanist scholarship, we should note, was the only intellectual context that would support the equation of ancient Britons with Algonquians.⁸ Camden's *Britannia* used classical accounts to describe the culture of the people inhabiting the country before Caesar's invasion: primitive tribes, varying only in degree in their lack of sophistication. From that evidence Camden concluded that it was not until the Roman occupation that Britain achieved anything resembling civil society. Thus, when the supplement to *A briefe and true report* asserts that Pictish peoples occupied 'one part of great Britainne, which is now nammed England', not only is the overall thesis of a savage past underlined but also barbarism is relocated from the periphery of Britain into a more central position. And it is primarily this insistence on the primitive, hypertrophied in Pictish nakedness and head-hunting, that supports the wider point: 'the Inhabitants of the great Britannie haue bin in times past as sauuage as those of Virginia.'

This new emphasis on a barbarous past was a late 16th-century revelation. Camden's *Britannia* was written at the prompting of Abraham Oretelius who, Camden tells us,

arriving heere in England..., dealt earnestly with me that I would illustrate this Ile of Britaine, or (as he said) that I would restore antiquity to Britaine, and Britaine to his antiquity; which was as I understood, that I would renew ancientrie, enlighten obscuritie, cleare doubts, and recall home veritie by way of recovery, which the negligence of writers and credulitie of the common sort had in a manner proscribed and utterly banished from amongst us.⁹

Camden's work would eventually dismantle one very important example of 'credulitie of the common sort', the long-standing historiographic tradition stemming from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*. Geoffrey's account, produced sometime around 1136, provided a glorious history for his homeland, beginning with the fall of Troy and the journey of Aeneas' great-grandson, Brutus, to the country then called Albion. When the colonists arrive the giants inhabiting the land are defeated, among them Gogmagog, and the Trojans rename the country Britain after Brutus. A long-lasting dynasty is then established among whose rulers may be found Lear and Cordelia, Cymbeline and Arthur. And on the banks of the Thames a capital city, Trinovantum, Troynovant or New Troy is founded, which will later be renamed London after King Lud. The chronological span of ancient British history, in Geoffrey's telling, runs from the sack of Troy, c. 1240 BC, to the death of Cadwallader in AD 689. The overall import of the Galfridian account (from Galfridus: Geoffrey) is that Britain's civilization antedated that of Rome, that Britain acquired through conquest an extensive continental empire and that British history was as glorious as anything found in Classical annals. Indeed, rulers like Belinus and Brennus, who sacked Rome, and Arthur, who conquered all Europe and was about to attack the Roman emperor Leo, had not Mordred's treachery called him home, were far superior to their Mediterranean counterparts.

Although some medieval writers questioned Geoffrey's *History*, others elaborated its authority. Some later monarchs had invoked the Galfridian history for their own purposes, especially Edward IV, and it was still invoked in the Tudor period, not least perhaps because Geoffrey's account of Merlin's prophecies seemed to legitimize the Tudors as preordained rulers.¹⁰ For example, in 1486 Henry VII christened his oldest son Arthur at Winchester and was formally welcomed into Bristol by his 'cosyn' Brennus. In 1530 the Duke of Norfolk told the Imperial Ambassador that Henry VIII could rule absolutely because an Englishman (Brennus) had once conquered Rome.¹¹ The day before her coronation, in January 1559, Elizabeth made an official passage through London where at Temple Bar she was greeted with images alluding to the defeat of Gogmagog by Brutus' lieutenant Corineus. Arthur and the Lady of the Lake took part in the Earl of Leicester's pageants at Kenilworth in 1575.¹² The Galfridian account of British history provided that sense of deep continuity and historical pedigree that reaffirmed the nation's current status and ambitions. When Elizabeth went to give thanks at St Paul's Cathedral for the defeat of the Armada, she was presented with a copy of Henry Lyte's *The Light of Britayne. A record of the honorable originall and antiquitie of Britaine*, a book in the full Galfridian tradition.¹³ Two years later, in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, it is Geoffrey

of Monmouth's narrative that informs the history of Britain given in the contents of two books, found by the knights Arthur and Guyon, that reveal the genealogy and high antiquity of Britain's rulers, while Britomart prophesizes the rise of New Troy. In the theatre, the earliest known play treating the Galfridian material is Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's *Tragedy of Gorboduc* (1562); from 1588 and into the 1610s at least 20 further plays were performed whose concern was the earliest history of Britain and the Arthurian tradition, including, of course Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1605) and *Cymbeline* (1610–11) and Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bonduca* (1610–11).¹⁴

But although Geoffrey of Monmouth's account was still a publicly accepted point of reference in the 1580s and 1590s, humanist scholars throughout the 16th century had become increasingly sceptical of it.¹⁵ To summarize these debates and their often bitter invective is not easy and Kendrick's classic study *British Antiquity* is still the best account of a complex episode in historiography.¹⁶ Suffice to say that before Camden, the most vigorous critics of Geoffrey were John Major in his *Historia Majoris Britanniae* of 1521 and, decisively, the Italian scholar Polydore Vergil, whose *Anglica Historia* was published in 1534. Geoffrey's defenders were quick to reply, most notably Sir John Price in his *Historiae Britannicae Defensio*, written at mid-century but not published until 1573. By the close of the century, however, the new learning was in the ascendant, typified by George Buchanan's *Rerum Scotticarum Historia* (1582) and especially by Camden's *Britannia*, first published in Latin in 1586, with a further five editions before its translation into English in 1610. As we shall see, although Galfridian ideas survived in popular and courtly culture beyond the 1580s, after Camden no serious scholar could adequately defend Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*.

Yet, even among the antiquaries there was some ambivalence about the extinction of the Galfridian history. Camden was at pains to show the proper respect for Geoffrey of Monmouth and the *Britannia* contains several passages where we can witness Camden attempting to mollify Geoffrey's supporters. Camden's balancing act is most obviously on show in his statement that: 'I have impeached no mans credit, no not Geffray of Monmouth whose history (which I would gladly support) is held suspected amongst the judicious.'¹⁷ John Stow took this equivocation a step further. His famous *Survey of London* (1598) mentions Geoffrey's account of New Troy only to refute it, paraphrasing Caesar's *Gallic War* to describe pre-Roman settlements in England not as cities, but merely 'thicke and combarsom woodes plashed within and trenched aboute'.¹⁸ But in the other book Stow published that year, *The Summarie of the Chronicles of England*, he presents an image of pre-Roman Britain very much closer to the world Geoffrey had imagined. As Bart van Es has pointed out, this vacillation over the status of the Galfridian account may be explained by a distinction shared by Stow and his readers between an antiquarian survey, where accuracy was of prime importance, and a chronicle narrative, where teaching by example was the major concern.¹⁹

Where, then, does this leave White's Britons and de Bry's engravings of them? De Bry published *A briefe and true report*

in 1590, at the moment when the Galfridian history had been fatally wounded by Camden's careful accumulation of evidence. The figures de Bry includes are presented as barbarians, according to humanist scholars' insistence that the authority of Classical texts warranted no other representation of ancient Britons. But in giving up Geoffrey's colourful account of Trojan settlement and imperial glory, de Bry had to confront the public's nostalgia for an account of British history that had done good service for 400 years. He needed, I believe, a device to vouchsafe his illustrations as authoritative.

Here I want to return to the opening text, which informs the book's readers that 'The painter ... gave me also these 5. Figures followinge, fownd as hy did assured my in a ooldd English chronicle...'. Clearly, being able to demonstrate that the illustrations were copied from an ancient chronicle would help establish their pedigree for a readership still unsure about the revisionist history associated with modern antiquarianism. And, with respect to that readership, when it came to narratives of ancient Britain, old chronicles had already appeared twice before to validate them. Readers in the year 1590, had they seen a copy of the newly published *The Faerie Queene*, would have remembered that 'An auncient booke, hight *Briton moniments*' and 'another booke, That hight *Antiquitie of Faerie lond*' had been discovered by Arthur and Guyon in the House of Alma.²⁰ It is worth considering that Spenser here was deliberately echoing Geoffrey of Monmouth's authentication statement in the *History of the Kings of Britain*, how

Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford... presented me with a certain very ancient book written in the British language. This book, attractively composed to form a consecutive and orderly narrative, set out all the deeds of these men, from Brutus, the first King of the Britons, down to Cadwallader, the son of Cadwallo. At Walter's request I have taken the trouble to translate the book into Latin.²¹

The invocation in Harriot's *A briefe and true report of an 'ooldd English chronicle'* is thus the third in a relay of texts concerning ancient sources whose survival from antiquity into the present guarantees the authenticity of their narratives. In the circumstances of the 1580s and 1590s, the emergence of an old chronicle in which Britons as savages had already been recorded was propitious, to say the least. It had the important and immediate benefit of sidestepping the controversy about the value of Geoffrey's history *vis-à-vis* the new antiquarian learning. Even though White's drawings support Camden's position on British antiquity, because they are purportedly derived from an ancient source they do not rely on Camden's scholarship but carry their own authority with them.

White's drawings were also participants in a new sensibility about the uncivilized that was developing in this period. Earlier in this paper I talked about the deportment and poise of White's figures and suggested that they were enhanced by their association with instances of high art and the classical tradition. Their dignified and monumental treatment offsets, by this means, the negative connotations of the 'savage' epithet the text employs to describe them. The new scholarship may have proposed that aboriginal Britons lacked refinement, but on one reading there was evidence enough to suggest that they were nevertheless estimable

people. This concurs with the 'hard primitivism', as Lovejoy and Boas called it, we associate with Montaigne's essay 'On the Cannibales', first published in 1575 and translated into English in 1603.²² An early example of its English equivalent can be found in the middle of Stephen Gosson's anti-theatrical tract, *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579). Here Gosson contrasts the hardihood of the primitive Britons with the degenerate lifestyle of his Elizabethan contemporaries.

Dion [i.e., Cassius Dio] sayth, that english men could suffer watching and labor, hunger and thirst, and beare of al stormes with hed and shoulders, they vsed slender weapons, went naked, and were good soldiours, they fed vppon rootes and barks of trees, they would stand vp to the chin many dayes in marishes without victualles: and they had a kind of sustenance in time of neede, of which if they had taken but the quantitie of a beane, or the weight of a pease, they did neyther gape after meate, nor long for the cuppe, a great while after. The men in valure not yeelding to *Scithia*, the women in courage passing the *Amazons*.²³

If Brutus and his Trojans had to be given up in the annals of the nation, these hardy Britons might yet become equally worthy heroes of its early history.²⁴

Here, though, a further issue arose, for once the Galfridian history of Britain was supplanted, there was considerable uncertainty about who the ancestors of the present-day inhabitants of Britain actually were. The reputation and identity of the Britons recorded in classical texts, for all their hardihood and martial valour, did not offer a secure point of reference for an Elizabethan reader. Those who had received civilization – the Britons south of the Roman wall – had also been defeated by waves of invaders and, it was presumed, had been supplanted by the Saxons. Seen from a metropolitan point of view, those who had never succumbed to the Romans – the inhabitants of what were now the Celtic fringes – had remained reluctant converts to civilization even in modern times. Neither seemed to have much to do with contemporary England, increasingly identified with the Saxon settlement, and many educated Englishmen would not wish to claim descent from the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain. For example, in talking about linguistic study, Camden drew a distinction between the ancient Britons and the modern English.

I have made recourse to the British, or Welsh tongue (so they now call it) as being the same which the primitive and most ancient inhabitants of this land used, and to the English-Saxons tongue which our Progenitours the English spake.²⁵

Antiquarians of a Saxonist persuasion made much of the distinction between aboriginal Britons and those who replaced them. Sir Henry Spelman in his tract *Of the Union*, published in 1604 was adamant that the roots of English culture did not extend beyond the Saxon settlement and that the modern historian should not try:

to restore the memory of an obscure and barberouse people, of whome no mention almoste is made in any notable history author but is either to their owne disgrace or at least to grace the trophies and victoryes of their conquerors the Romans, Pictes and Saxones.²⁶

Whether or not the aboriginal Briton was a worthy progenitor of the modern citizen would remain an issue up until the later 19th century.²⁷ But the severing of any lineage leading to the present from the Britons the Romans encountered had the great advantage that it allowed a relatively disinterested



Figure 13 *Ancient Britaines* from John Speed *History of Great Britaine*, 1611, (Courtesy of University of Plymouth Library Special Collections)

scrutiny of British barbarism to take place. If these peoples were not ancestors, they held up no mirror to the contemporary reader. Their savagery was as remote in time as that of the Virginia Indians in place.

I have argued thus far that White's drawings and de Bry's use of them make sense as a response to the world of Elizabethan antiquarian scholarship, whose major achievement in the 1580s was Camden's *Britannia*. Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle of Mediterranean origins, imperial glory, chivalry and courtly behaviour was eclipsed, for all the unease engendered in accepting Britain's barbarous past and the primitive peoples who had once inhabited it. And just as Camden's work passed through many editions in his lifetime and was then comprehensively updated and expanded in 1695, in 1722 and again in 1789, so White's images were transmitted through the 17th and 18th centuries. They first reappear in John Speed's *History of Great Britain* (1611) (**Fig. 13**). In the title page to this book, Speed presents the figure of the Briton, an aboriginal presence surrounded by the invaders who settled in Britain; a Roman, a Saxon, a Dane and a Norman (**Fig. 14**). Speed's work went through numerous editions in the 17th century and the illustrations derived from White/de Bry were picked up and re-used in the 18th and early 19th centuries, too, as for example in Thomas Jefferys' *A Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, Ancient and Modern* (1757–72), in *A Museum for Young Gentlemen and Ladies* (London, 1799) and in George Lyttleton's *History of England* (London, 1803).

Yet, although the antiquarian learning reflected in White's images would be transmitted to new audiences, its immediate effect outside scholarly circles was limited. When James I succeeded Elizabeth, Thomas Dekker and Ben Jonson wrote the ceremonial script to accompany his ceremonial entry into London in March 1604 (delayed for a year because of plague). At the Fenchurch triumphal arch, the Genius Loci giving the Speech of Gratulation, made reference to Brutus. Jonson, in a note provided for the published script, provided a judicious mixture of scepticism and practicality about this allusion:

Rather than the City should want a founder, we choose to follow the received story of Brute, whether fabulous, or true, and not

altogether unwarranted in poetry: since it is a favour of antiquity to few cities to let them know their first authors.²⁸

Jonson's reservations were overtaken the following year, when the playwright Anthony Munday devised the 1605 pageant for the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Leonard Halliday. Munday's pageant, *The Triumphs of Re-United Britannia*, contains the most extensive treatment of Galfridian material ever presented to the public, tracing the whole Brutus myth and the founding of Troynovant and moving on to consider the reigns of Brutus' sons, among whom the kingdom had been divided, before personifications of British rivers sing prophetically of the land eventually reunited under 'our second Brute, Royall King James'.²⁹ In 1612 the Lord Mayor's pageant, devised by Thomas Dekker, was entitled *Troia-Nova Triumphans*.³⁰ The see-saw of popular demand and scholarly research can be found nicely balanced in Michael Drayton's topographical poem *Poly-Olbion*, also published in 1612, dedicated to Prince Henry. Drayton's poetry makes use of the Galfridian tradition, but he also employed John Selden to write an antiquarian gloss employing the new scholarship.³¹

This paper has been focused very much on the idea of the British savage, but I would like to conclude with some brief remarks about the importance of the comparison with the Algonquians. Clearly, the point of including the five British plates in Harriot's *A briefe and true report* was to put them in dialogue with the American images presented there. But it is a dialogue of distinction as well as similarity. The most obvious difference is that no Indian is shown to be as ferocious as a head-hunting Pict, who we are told, 'when they hath ouercome some of their ennemis, they did neuer felle to carye a we their heads with them'. Regarding the women, while their Indian counterparts are always shown in peaceful occupations, all three of the British women are armed. As the accompanying text to plate V (**Fig. 5**) states: 'the[y] did carye suche waepens as the men did, and wear as good as the men for the warre.' One way of thinking about this comparison is

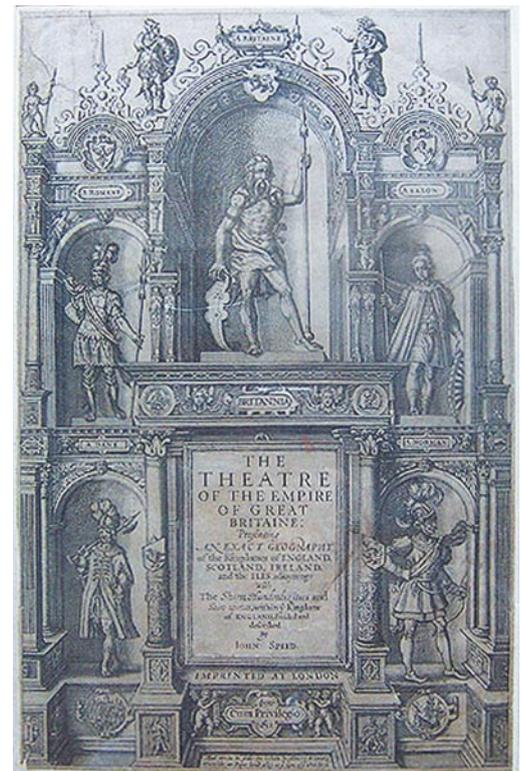


Figure 14 Title page to John Speed *The History of Great Britaine*, 1611, (Courtesy of University of Plymouth Library Special Collections)

that the British plates, in their display of a fierce and martial race, help to insinuate a positive response to the Indians living near the Virginia colony. The British warriors prompt the reader to consider how much more peaceable the Indians are and how tractable they would be in receiving the fruits of civilization from Europeans.³²

As events proved, of course, the docile image of the Algonquians that White provided was a fiction. Resistance to English domination would become as much a feature in America as it had been at home, most persistently in Ireland but elsewhere, too, as for example the assertion of Cornish linguistic separation in the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549. As for White's Picts and Britons, the idea of a 'savage' aboriginal population coloured a deal of pejorative reactions to the peoples of the British archipelago. Indeed, the text's intended comparison of 'how that the Inhabitants of the great Britannie haue bin in times past as sauage as those of Virginia' could easily be brought up-to-date for entirely prejudicial purposes. As a polemicist declared in 1652, 'We have Indians at home – Indians in Cornwall, Indians in Wales, Indians in Ireland.'³³

Notes

- 1 Xenophon, *Anabasis*, V, iv. The Scythians' body decoration was also a reference point for humanists like Peter Martyr, who describes the body painting of the people of Caxinas in Central America as including 'flores aut rosas, aut implicitos laqueos' ('flowers or roses or intricate knots') and compares it with the Scythian tribe, the Agathyrsi. See P. Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, I.7.5 and III.4.5. My thanks to Peter Mason for this reference.
- 2 Herodian, *Roman History*, III. xiv.7–8, from Philemon Holland's translation of Camden's *Britannia*, 1610, 30. For Lucas de Heere see Th. M. Chotzen and A.M.E. Draak, eds, *Beschrjving der Britische Eilanden. Door Lucas de Heere. Een geillustreerd geschrift uit zijn Engelsche ballingschap*, Antwerp, 1937 (with English summary). For de Heere, see Michael Gaudio's paper in this collection.
- 3 I would like to thank Kim Sloan for bringing this text to my attention. It is reprinted in a modern facsimile edition in S. Berg, K.O. Kupperman and P. Stallybrass, eds, *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia. Thomas Hariot. The 1590 Theodor de Bry Latin Edition*, Charlottesville and Leiden, 2007.
- 4 Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, V; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, XXII, ch. I; Herodian, *Historia*, III; Claudian, *De Tertio Consulatu Honorii Augusti*, 55–6.
- 5 The sources that may have been drawn on include Caesar, Herodian, Diodorus Siculus and Dio Cassius. It is probable that the author made use of Camden's *Britannia* to access them. See S. Piggott, *Ancient Britons and the Antiquarian Imagination*, London, 1989, 74–85.
- 6 Given the authority of this remark and its implicit criticism of the women depicted in the engravings, it is tempting to suggest that the author of 'Intepres/lector' was a scholar familiar with the new understanding of the Britons seen in Camden's *Britannia*, perhaps even Camden himself. Camden was, of course, an associate of Richard Hakluyt, who encouraged de Bry's enterprise.
- 7 Camden, *Britannia* (1610 edition, translated by Philemon Holland), 115.
- 8 Samuel Daniel in his *History of England* (1612) also compared the way of life of the ancient Britons with what his contemporaries had reported of the Indians.
- 9 Camden, *supra* n. 7, Preface.
- 10 However, Sydney Anglo is sceptical that the early Tudors maintained as much interest in the British History as is often claimed. See 'The British History in Early Tudor Propaganda', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 1961, 17–48.
- 11 For Henry VII and the Duke of Norfolk see P. Schwyzer, 'British History and "The British History": the same old story?' in D.J. Baker and W. Maley, eds, *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature*, Cambridge, 2002, 15.
- 12 For Elizabeth and Leicester's entertainments see D.M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry 1558–1642*, London, 1971, 22, 30–5.
- 13 See T. Marshall, *Theatre and Empire: Great Britain on the London Stages under James VI and I*, Manchester, 2000, 114.
- 14 For the Galfridian influence on playwrights see G. McMullan, 'The Colonisation of Early Britain on the Jacobean Stage', in G. McMullan and D. Matthews, eds, *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, 2007, 119–140; J.E. Curran, Jr., 'Royalty Unlearned, Honor Untaught: British Savages and Historiographical Change in *Cymbeline*', *Comparative Drama*, vol. 31, part 2, Summer 1997, 277–303; J.E. Curran, Jr., 'Geoffrey of Monmouth in Renaissance Drama: Imagining a Non-History', *Modern Philology*, vol. 97, part 1, August 1999, 1–20; M. Floyd-Wilson, 'Delving to the root: *Cymbeline*, Scotland, and the English race' in D. Baker and W. Maley, *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature*, Cambridge, 2002, 101–15.
- 15 Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher's deployment of the Galfridian material was not uncritical either.
- 16 T.D. Kendrick, *British Antiquity*, London, 1950. See also A.B. Ferguson, *Utter Antiquity: Perceptions of Prehistory in Renaissance England*, Durham, NC, 1993.
- 17 Camden, *supra* n. 7, Preface.
- 18 J. Stow, *A Survey of London*, London, 1598, 3.
- 19 Bart van Es, *Spenser's Forms of History*, Oxford, 2002, 14.
- 20 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 1590, Book II, Canto IX, 59, 60. Spenser describes Arthur and Guyon as 'burning both with feruent fire,/ Their countries auncestry to vnderstand'. Ibid., T.P. Roche, Jr., ed., London, 1987, 326–7.
- 21 Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, Harmondsworth, 1966, 51.
- 22 A.O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, 2nd edition, Baltimore and London, 1997.
- 23 Quoted in M. Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, Cambridge, 2003, 97.
- 24 In this context it is worth remarking that the Latin text from Caesar's *Gallic Wars* printed in 'Interpres/ Lectori' edits out a passage on the Britons' promiscuity. In place of the original 'uxores habent deni duodenique inter se communes...' ('Groups of ten or twelve men share their wives...') all it says is 'Uxores habent, &c.' A reader unfamiliar with this passage and therefore unable to fill in the '&c' in 'uxores habent, &c', might understand it to mean something quite civilized and monogamous – simply 'they have (hold or possess) wives' – as opposed to its real meaning.
- 25 Camden, *supra* n. 7, Preface.
- 26 Sir Henry Spelman, 'Of the Union', p. 170; quoted in M. Floyd-Wilson, *supra* n. 23, 173.
- 27 See S. Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination*, New Haven and London, 1994.
- 28 For a transcript see R. Dutton, ed., *Jacobean Civic Pageants*, Keele, Staffordshire, 1995.
- 29 See Dutton, *ibid.* Also, Bergeron, *supra* n. 12, 141–5.
- 30 Bergeron, *supra* n. 12, 164.
- 31 For a recent survey of the Trojan myth in Jacobean culture, see Marshall, *supra* n. 13.
- 32 For a discussion of relations with the Algonquians see Joyce Chaplin 'Roanoke "Counterfeited According to the Truth"' in K. Sloan, ed., *A New World: England's first view of America*, Chapel Hill, 2007, 51–64.
- 33 'An Eminent Person' [Roger Williams], *The Hireling Ministry none of Christs*, London, 1652. Quoted in A.H. Williamson, 'Scots, Indians and Empire: the Scottish Politics of Civilization 1519–1609', *Past and Present*, no. 150, 1996, 56.