

Why Scotland is called “Scotland?”

The word *Scotland* was derived from the Latin *Scoti*, of uncertain origin, applied to Gaels of Hibernia, the Roman name for modern Ireland. The Late Latin word *Scotia* (*land of the Gaels*) was eventually used only of Gaelic-speaking Scotland. This name was employed alongside *Albania* or *Albany*, from the Gaelic *Alba*.

Alba is the Scottish Gaelic and Irish name for Scotland. It is cognate to *Albey* in Manx, the other Goidelic Insular Celtic language, as well as similar words in the Brythonic Insular Celtic languages of Cornish (*Alban*) and Welsh (*Yr Alban*) also meaning Scotland.

The Goidelic word is ultimately loaned from Latin *alba* "white", probably referring to the whole island of Great Britain after the white cliffs of Dover. Hence also the early classical name *Albion*. It was used by the Gaels to refer to the island as a whole until roughly the ninth or tenth centuries, when it came to be the name given to the kingdoms of the Picts and the Scots (Pictavia and Dál Riata), north of the River Forth and the Clyde estuary, traditionally considered to have been unified by Kenneth Mac Alpin.

As time passed that kingdom incorporated others to the south. It became Latinized in the High Medieval period as "Albania" (it is unclear whether it may ultimately share the same etymon as the modern Albania). This latter word was employed mainly by Celto-Latin writers, and most famously by Geoffrey of Monmouth. It was this word which passed into Middle English as *Albany*, although very rarely was this used for the Kingdom of Scotland, but rather for the notional Duchy of Albany. From the latter the capital of the U.S. state of New York, Albany, takes its name.

The use of the words *Scots* and *Scotland* to encompass all of Scotland became common only in the Late Middle Ages. In a modern political context, the word *Scot* is applied equally to all inhabitants of Scotland, regardless of their ancestral ethnicity. However, a 2006 study published by the University of Edinburgh suggest that segments of Scottish society continue to distinguish between those who claim to be Scots on ethnic grounds and those who claim to be Scots on the grounds of civic commitment. "Scots" is also used to refer to the Scots language, which a large proportion of the Scottish population speak to a greater or lesser degree