

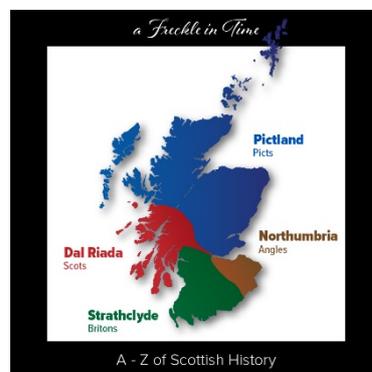
## Scottish History—A Personal Perspective by Kyle Granite Part 1—The Kingdom of Alba [A is for Alba]

Hi everyone, my name is Kyle Baillie Granite and I live in Glasgow with my husband and two little boys. I love history which has led me to embark in a lifelong dedication to studying and preserving history, gaining a Bachelors with Honours in History and a Masters in Historical

Research at Stirling University and a Masters in Archive Preservation at Glasgow University. When lockdown struck earlier this year I decided to create my own little Scottish History channel called '*A Freckle in Time*' on Youtube, Instagram and Facebook.

Last month I started an A to Z of Scottish History on my Instagram account, with the aim of revealing the stories behind some of the most iconic elements of Scottish History. And what better way to start this series than the birth of this bonnie wee nation...or maybe more the conception, as the country continued to develop. Although people inhabited the land for many millennia before this, the creation of the **Kingdom of Alba** appears to be the first sign of a collective “identity” and the stirrings of the idea of “nationhood”.

Prior to 843AD Scotland, as we now know it, was a patchwork quilt of different peoples and tribes, each with their own culture and language. The four main groups were; the Angles (Germanic people who originally came over to assist the Romans with their conquest of the British Isles), the Britons (who occupied a large stretch of territory from the Clyde down to the Lake District, split into two segments with the Northern section known as Strathclyde), the Picts (Celts, whose ancestors were those who built the ancient neolithic standing stones from the third millennium BC and ancient dwellings from the Iron Age) and the Gaels (or Scoti, who came over from Ireland around 500AD and occupied a territory in modern Argyll known as Dal Riada). The largest of these groups were the Picts or Picti meaning “Painted People” - a nickname given by the Romans to describe the troublesome northern barbarians, who inhabited the land north of the rivers Forth and Clyde on the Eastern side of the country, known as Pictland or Pictavia. Both the Picts and the Scots were ethnic Celts (who migrated to Britain from Continental Europe in the first millennium BC), however they spoke different languages; the Picts spoke ‘British’ or ‘Brittonic’ Celtic similar to Welsh called ‘P-Celtic’ and the Scots spoke Goidelic Gaelic called ‘Q-Celtic’. Still with me?!



As Christianity spread throughout the land with the help of pilgrims such as St Ninian and St Columba, the differences between the Picts and the Scots began to shrink. These differences were almost forgotten about entirely when a new threat appeared from the coast; the Vikings. Beginning with a raid on the Christian epicentre, Iona, in 795AD, and culminating in the assimilation of Orkney and Shetland as Norse earldoms, which would last more than 300 years. However, out of the darkness of warfare came union, in the form of a joint king, Kenneth MacAlpin, in 843AD, who was, it is believed, to have been of mixed Pictish and Dalriadan stock, with a Gaelic father and Pictish mother. Due to the constant threat of Viking raids on the Coast, MacAlpin moved his base from Dal Riada to deep in the heart of Pictland, establishing a new royal seat at Scone, Perthshire, where Scottish Kings would be crowned for hundreds of years to come on the ‘Stone of Destiny’. Kenneth I is the first of the lineage of

the Scottish royal dynasty and represented the establishment of a “united” Kingdom with a shared religion and a fearsome enemy to unite against. The **Kingdom of Alba** marked the end of Dal Riada as a political entity and was the paving stone to the nation of Scotland. Although, the centre of power within the Kingdom lay in Pictland, it was the Scots who were the dominant power and eventually the Pictish identity disappeared.

The myth of a genocide of the Picts has been rejected and instead scholars accept that it is far more likely that there was an integration of cultures and the Picts simply ceased to be seen as a separate entity.

So now you know how it all began. The rest of my A—Z of Scottish History will continue to bust myths, uncover forgotten stories and explain the origins of quintessential Scottish cultural icons. So, stay tuned and wish me luck for letters, X, Y and Z!