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John E. Curran Jr.

English Faculty Research and Publications/College of Arts and Sciences

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Abstract

Curran argues that, since Roman Britain is a key to understanding the historiographical debates of Edmund Spenser's time, the Roman Britain section of Briton Moniments in "The Faerie Queene" needs to be examined. It is here that Spenser acknowledged the direction historiography was taking, and saw how this new trend altered the relation between history and glory.

Still considered exhaustive and infallible nearly a century after its completion, Carrie Anna Harper's study of the sources of Spenser's Briton Moniments, the Galfridian chronicle of The Faerie Queene II.x, has been subject to little amendment.[1] Subsequent commentators on Briton Moniments have tended to avoid looking at sources, concentrating instead on such issues as how the chronicle might inform the theme of temperance, how it functions as praise for Elizabeth, how it relates to the faerie chronicle, or how it reflects Spenser's idea of history in general. A new look at Spenser's sources is, then, long overdue, because, while Harper showed us what source the poet probably used in a given instance, her aim was never to speculate as to why he made the decisions he made, or if those decisions might actually mean something; how might Spenser's manipulation of his sources reveal the degree to which he was influenced by, or felt anxiety about, the great changes in historical outlook

taking place around him? The sixteenth century saw tremendous advances in historiographical materials and methods, advances collectively known as the "historical revolution,"[2] and one of the more important facets of this revolution was the discovery of Roman Britain. Drawn from the evidence of classical historians, the discovery of Roman Britain was instrumental in discrediting Geoffrey of Monmouth's legendary British History. This study shall argue that, since Roman Britain is a key to understanding the historiographical debates of Spenser's time, we need to look closely at the Roman Britain section of Briton Moniments (II.x.47-63); there we shall find that Spenser acknowledged the direction historiography was taking, and saw how this new trend altered the relationship between history and glory.

Was it really the Renaissance discovery of Roman Britain which proved fatal to Geoffrey? Camden's Britannia, first published in 1586 while Spenser was writing the first installment of The Faerie Queene, was the culmination of a long process, begun earlier in the century by Polydore Vergil (1534), of compiling evidence from classical history so as to tell the true story of Roman Britain, and to paint a true picture of the ancient Britons. This endeavor provided ammunition against Geoffrey's medieval myths because it gave skeptics a basis for attack; while no history existed to contradict Geoffrey's famous heroes, Brutus and Arthur, Geoffrey s Roman Britain now was made vulnerable. Historian F. J. Levy, writing on the impact of Camden, explains:

The defenders of Brutus and Arthur generally held that if Geoffrey were right in one place, then there was a good chance for his being right in others. But while these may have been the crucial centers for argumentation, they were not the only ones. Geoffrey had written a history of the island which included the events of the Roman Conquest as well. Surely here, if anywhere, the methods of historical criticism could prevail. It is at this place, then, that Camden attacked Geoffrey.[3]

As a result of the humanist historiographical project, large sections of Geoffrey's chronology, those which overlapped with the period treated by Roman historians, were proven false. Event by event, person by person, Geoffrey's account was contrasted with those of Caesar, Tacitus, Dio Cassius, Herodian, and other classical historiographers, and the British History was irrevocably damaged.

Spenser could not have been ignorant of this situation. Though opinion has been divided as to the degree of Spenser's belief in the British History, he must have seen the problem that Roman Britain presented for it. Even if, as scholars have thought, he had completed much of Briton Moniments prior to the arrival of Britannia,[4] he would have known what the issues were, and would have had ample cause to suspect Geoffrey's credibility. The two historians to whom Briton Moniments is most indebted, Raphael Holinshed (1577) and John Stow (1580), both recognized the problem, Holinshed placing the rival versions side by side (often pointing to Geoffrey's errors), and Stow simply replacing Geoffrey's entire Roman Britain section with Roman history.[5] Furthermore, during his time in the Leicester circle, Spenser knew personally the antiquarian Daniel Rogers, and so the poet could easily have been exposed to the cutting edge scholarship on Roman Britain which ultimately led to Camden himself.[6] It should also be noted that if Spenser is the "E. S." who wrote a Latin chronicle sometime in the 1570s, he certainly recognized the historiographical crisis, for E. S. supplanted Geoffrey's account of Caesar's invasions with that of Caesar himself.[7] In any case, the advent of Camden's masterpiece would not have been necessary for Spenser to discover Geoffrey's inadequacies. The Britannia probably only confirmed Spenser's doubts.

With these doubts came a serious problem for Spenser as "poet historical": the discovery of Roman Britain and the fall of the British History meant that the nation no longer had a past, as Spenser says, "worthy of Maeonian quill" (II.x.3).[8] In losing the Galfridian tradition, Englishmen lost a history designed specifically for the glorification of Britain. Geoffrey's most important contribution to the nation's prestige was his assertion that Britain's history was on a par with that of Rome. This competition with Rome was responsible for Geoffrey's two most egregious fabrications: the Trojan founding of Britain and Arthur's conquest of the Romans. That Spenser refers to the latter event in the midst of his Roman Britain section[9] clearly suggests that the Galfridian form of

patriotism had some appeal for him; it was gratifying to imagine that Arthur "defrayd," or paid back, the humiliation of Rome's dominance over Britain (II.x.49). And yet, Spenser would have known that Arthur's Roman conquest, like all the elements of Geoffrey's competition with Rome, was a sham. The Britannia established beyond question that the Britons were a nation of savages, who had no recorded history of their own, and who were no match at all for the Romans. The discovery of Roman Britain demanded of Englishmen an exercise in objectivity. It forced them to accept truth over self-flattery, and solidified the distinction between history and poetry.

To Spenser, such a distinction was not entirely welcome; in his own version of Roman Britain, the poet quietly admits to the fall of the British History, but he also reminds us of what made it so special. At key points, Spenser manipulates details in his Roman Britain section in order to indicate that an alternative history, a truer history, exists apart from his Galfridian narrative. This truer history is devoid of those aspects of Galfridian legend which make it the perfect vehicle for glorifying the nation, and the perfect material for a "poet historical." Spenser's manipulation falls into three categories: he deflates the grandeur surrounding important events; he makes allusions to the humanist history; and he gives his own unique account of prominent heroes. Using his sources in these three ways, Spenser shows us how the discovery of Roman Britain brought with it a new ancient British history not conducive to the exigencies of patriotic poetry.

Two significant Galfridian events of the Romano-British period are the treachery of Androgeus during the Caesarian invasions, and the victories of Arviragus in the wars with Claudius. Geoffrey had fashioned both events as key elements of his epic agenda to maintain the British competition with Rome. In his accounts of Androgeus and Arviragus, Spenser takes care to remind us of their contributions to Britain's prestige; but at the same time, he indicates that these contributions are fabrications.

In stanza 48, Spenser gives us Androgeus, Geoffrey's famous traitor. The poet sets forth the basic Galfridian line that Caesar was ultimately successful in his British conquest only because of Androgeus, who, "false to natiue soyle," "Betrayd his contrey vnto forreine spoyle." According to Geoffrey, Caesar was repulsed in his first two trips to Britain, and only the perfidy of Androgeus, who invited the Romans back, permitted a third trip and a Roman victory.[11] The notion that Caesar did not conquer Britain by his own power, but required British assistance, offered compensation for Britain's defeat by Rome; Geoffrey's Androgeus allowed Englishmen to conceive of the Britons as so powerful that they were undefeatable except by their own devices. Much depended on Androgeus and his treachery, and his significance was not lost on Medieval and Renaissance writers eager to preserve British dignity." As for Spenser, he ensures that we understand the role of Androgeus in asserting the national glory with the Alexandrine of stanza 48: "Nought else, but treason, from the first this land did foyle." Androgeus is held as exemplary for the entirety of British history; he proves the rule that no force on earth can overcome the Britons except for the Britons themselves. With Androgeus, the poet shows us what the British History can do for British glory.

But while Spenser makes us aware of Androgeus's use within the Galfridian scheme, his version is suggestive of the weak historical ground upon which that use was based. The wording of lines 48.6, 8-"natiue soyle," "forreine spoyle"-seems to derive from John Higgins's Mirror for Magistrates, where Higgins's "Irenglas" declares his patriotism: "At all assayes, to saue my natiue soyle: / (With all my labour, trauayle, payne, and toyle) / Both from the force of foes, and forayne spoyle" (221).[12] "Irenglas" is Geoffrey's Hirelgdas, nephew of King Cassivellaunus, and killed at the hands of Androgeus's kinsman Cuelinus; Androgeus's apostacy resulted from his support of Cuelinus in spite of the angered Cassivellaunus (314). Higgins found this part of the Androgeus story important enough to give "Irenglas" his own voice. But while Spenser's wording appears to be borrowed from Higgins's version of the affair in "Irenglas," Spenser excludes the Hirelgdas/Cuelinus episode altogether, saying Androgeus's motivation for treachery is no more than resentment at Cassivellaunus's kingship. This omission, then, is significant and deliberate. Why has Spenser made it?

It could be to save space; or it could be to indicate the fictionality of Geoffrey's Androgeus story. Except for Spenser, the Tudor chroniclers who exclude the Hirelgdas/Cuelinus story are those-like John Rastell, Thomas Lanquet, William Warner, Stow, and E. S.-who accept Caesar's own account of the invasions, in which he affirms that he made only two (successful) British expeditions.[13] The chroniclers who follow Caesar omit Hirelgdas/Cuelinus because the story takes place at a victory party celebrating Caesar's second defeat, so relating the story demands a Galfridian account. To include the story of Hirelgdas and Cuelinus is to adhere to Galfridian narrative; to avoid it is to admit that Caesar himself told a totally different tale. Androgeus is a special case in the historical debate, because if he is divorced from the fictional Hirelgdas/Cuelinus story, he may be allowed to survive the purge of the British History. He survives by being identified with Caesar's Mandubracius, young leader of the Trinovantes, who sought Caesar's protection from Cassivellaunus, who had slain Mandubracius's father (259, 263). For example, the Geoffrey defender John Price, desperate to retain something of Geoffrey's account of Caesar's invasion, makes the argument that Androgeus is Mandubracius (33-4). Camden, the final judge on these matters, rules in favor of it: "Androgeus" can stay as Mandubracius, though only because he is named "Androgeus" by Bede and Eutropius (Geoffrey's input being inconsequential) (224).[14] But if Androgeus was Mandubracius, his all-important traitor status was, as Camden implied, severely compromised, for Caesar's Mandubracius was certainly not essential to the British defeat. Thus, Spenser, by omitting the Hirelgdas/Cuelinus episode, attaches his Androgeus to historical reality. But Spenser knows that this historicity is antithetical to Androgeus's place in the competition with Rome. Even as the poet highlights Androgeus's role, he subtly undermines it with this key omission.

The historiographical situation of Geoffrey's King Arviragus had much in common with that of Androgeus; like Androgeus, Arviragus was a shadowy figure with a vague link to historical truth, whom Geoffrey had made over for his epic agenda. Geoffrey, having no access to Tacitus's accounts of the Claudian wars, and creatively supporting his theme of Britain's parity with Rome, had his Arviragus resist the Romans so successfully that Claudius was moved to placate the British king by giving him a daughter, Genissa, in marriage. Transparently absurd to sixteenth-century humanists, Geoffrey's Arviragus story was exploded by Polydore Vergil (63-64).[15] Consequently, defenders of Geoffrey, like Price (28), tried to point out that the name "Arviragus" was not Geoffrey's invention; Juvenal, in his fourth satire, had made a brief reference to this British king.[16] But as with Androgeus, Arviragus's historicity was incompatible with his legendary grandeur. Holinshed, for example, cites Juvenal on Arviragus, but he knows that the ancient poet cannot help Geoffrey's case for Arviragus's great successes. Juvenal's work is in fact simply another piece of evidence discrediting the "order of the British kinglie succession," and proving the Genissa story "but a feined tale" (485). Camden of course shares this view, and reasons that, while the Juvenal quote may establish Arviragus's existence, it also establishes his insignificance (191-92).

Realizing this problem, Spenser emphasizes Arviragus's role in glorifying Britain, even as he hints at the historical weakness of that role. The poet devotes stanzas 51-52 to the Galfridian Arviragus tale, including the Genissa story, and gives a striking testimony to Arviragus's patriotic usefulness: "Was neuer king more highly magnifide / Nor dred of Romanes, then was Arvirage" (52.1-2). Arviragus, says Spenser, is yet another example of how Britain faces Rome on an equal footing. For such a flattering encomium of Arviragus, Spenser must have been borrowing from Geoffrey himself (326), or from the Italian Ponticus Virunnius (30):[17] "Quamobrem diligebant eum summopere Romani et timebant eo modo, ut prae omnibus regibus sermo de ipso apud Romam iugiter fieret [wherefore the Romans esteemed him greatly, and feared him in such a way that in Rome his reputation was above all other kings]." But in adopting Geoffrey's sentiments, Spenser uses the loaded word "magnifide"; the poet clearly wants his praise for Arviragus to stand out, and he invites us to consider its exaggerated quality. We can read "magnifide" to mean "praised," but it could also mean "augmented" (OED); and so Spenser seems to point us to the process by which an insignificant king was made larger than life.

In fact, Spenser would have known that the Genissa story was only the first in a series of attempts to find for Arviragus a more exalted place in British history. The Scottish chronicler Hector Boece, for example, makes him the ex-husband of "Voada"-Tacitus's Boadicea-having divorced her to marry Genissa (40). This arrangement was attractive enough to draw into it Richard Grafton (77), Thomas Cooper (97), John Bale (15), Warner (III.18), and David Powel, who is so taken with it that he claims that Tacitus actually mentions Arviragus, calling him Prasutagus (Boadicea's real husband, Tacitus, Annals, 5:157).[18] Another attempt, set forth by the fifteenthcentury chronicler John Hardyng (34-35),[19] and also by Bale (14), was to give Arviragus contact with Joseph of Arimathea, who supposedly founded an apostolic Christian colony in Britain. "Arviragus" was but a name, an obscure classical reference floating around, vaguely associated with a time period during which a lot was supposed to have happened-the Claudian invasions, the Boadicean rebellion, the early christianization of the island-and so the name was used as an instrument by which the classics could be integrated with medieval legend. Spenser calls Arviragus a unique case of magnification, and indeed he was, because in his case much ado was made out of a solitary name. As with Androgeus, with Arviragus the poet reminds us of the gap between the patriotic significance of events in the Galfridian scheme and the historical truth about Roman Britain.

At other points in the Roman Britain section, Spenser directs us toward this historical truth by making several allusions to the classical sources and humanist scholarship which had recently brought about the discovery of Roman Britain. The poet makes the first such allusion with his treatment of King Cassivellaunus-"Cassibalane" (stanza 47)-the hero who resisted Caesar's invasions. Spenser tells us he was a king, uncle of Androgeus and Tenantius, and younger brother of Lud (stanza 46). Here Spenser follows the basic Galfridian line, as Harper observes (109). But why has Spenser bothered to say that Cassibalane was "by the people chosen" (47.2)? According to Geoffrey, power naturally devolved upon him because of his nephews' youth (302). Neither Stow (31), nor Holinshed (464), nor Hardyng (76)the third source most often cited by Harper-indicates that the people had anything to do with his assumption of power. An element of choice was not unheard of in the chronicles, as William Caxton's chronicle (cap. 35)[20] and John Rastell (A.v) seem to give the Britons some say in Cassivellaunus's rise, and so does Higgins in his Mirror: Higgins's "Nennius" tells us, "The Britaynes wanting aged rulers thus, / Chose for that time Cassibellane their kinge" (194). Spenser, however, seems more definitive than anyone else in signifying the role of the people, of a popular election, in determining Cassivellaunus's kingship. Certainly, Spenser has departed from Geoffrey here, and he has also taken the time to specify the means by which Cassivellaunus came to rule.

In so doing, Spenser alerts us to one of the most important points about Roman Britain which contradicts the patriotic fiction of the British History. Caesar's Cassivellaunus was not a king as such, and he was not even mentioned as being a factor in Caesar's first invasion; he was elected temporary leader by other petty chieftains in order to resist Caesar's second invasion (249): he was indeed "by the people chosen." This point about Cassivellaunus led critics of the British History to attack one of its most treasured, basic provisions: the line of kings, the idea that Britain was a nation given laws by a genetically anointed monarch descended from Troy. Polydore Vergil wondered much about the nature of ancient British polity, as he saw "suche diversitee emonge writers" who wrote about it. What type of power did British "kings" really have? From his classical sources he concluded that ancient Britain was governed much as Renaissance Italy or Germany, where there were many petty "kings" at once, and where these "kings" were merely those "which were of moste puissaunce, as Cassivellaunus, who for that same cause was called king" (60-1). The ambivalent Holinshed is quite worried about this problem, and confused by the "contrarietie in writers." Could there perhaps have been a Trojan-descended monarchy up until Cassivellaunus, which thenceforth split into factions? Or is Polydore correct? (47778). For Camden the issue was settled, as he refers to the multiplicity of rulers and tribes in Britain, and how the Britons at certain timesas in the case of Cassivellaunus-"unum imperatorem designarunt [they elected one ruler]" by the "publicum gentis concilium [public assembly of the people]" (12). Spenser's wording, then, may actually recall Camden himself. Caesar's statement about Cassivellaunus as popularly chosen leader overturned

one of the most charming features of the British History, its Trojan monarchy; with this brief phrase, Spenser calls our attention to the new and less glamorous view of ancient British society.

We hear another echo of Caesar in stanza 48: Spenser tells us that, after Caesar's first invasion, the "shore" and the "ocean" were purpled with Roman blood. The reference to the ocean escaped Harper's notice, but A. C. Hamilton in his note on the passage sees the difference from Geoffrey, who reports only that the ground was washed with blood as if from the ocean (309). How do we account for this? Spenser's source here is probably William Warner's Albion's England; in describing Caesar's first expedition to Britain, Warner says that the Romans invaded "buying deere / The bloodie Shore: the water yet lesse deerer than the land / To them, whome valiantlie to proofe the Ilanders withstand" (III.17). Warner's version implies that Caesar's troops are actually attacking the shore of Britain and being resisted from that shore; Warner is describing the battle as he has learned about it from Caesar's own commentaries. Caesar reports that he began his first trip to Britain with a hard fought amphibious assault, in which the Britons, hurling their darts from the shore, inflicted serious casualties on the Romans who were trying to wade in from their ships (211-15). Such a situation indeed conjures up the image of a bloody shore and bloody waters. Warner is undoubtedly referring to Caesar here; Spenser, in following Warner, is doing the same thing. But Caesar tells us that he was soon able to overcome the Britons on the shore and win his first British victory. In the midst of his Galfridian account of Caesar's invasion, Spenser alludes to another, less flattering history.

In dealing with the Galfridian kings Kymbeline, Guiderius, and Marius (stanzas 50-51, 53), Spenser alludes to recent humanist developments by indicating who was real and who was imaginary. Marius and Guiderius were imaginary. The period of time into which Geoffrey inserted Marius (late first century A.D.) proved to be very well documented, as humanists discovered Tacitus's Agricola. Thus Holinshed speaks suspiciously of Marius, "of whome Tacitus maketh no mention at all" (510). Marius, scourge of Picts and eponymous founder of Westmoreland, is summarily dealt with by Camden: "eijciatur somnium [let the fantasy be jettisoned]" (447). Spenser's innovative statement-Harper calls it unique (114-15)-that Marius's reign was uneventful is tantamount to yielding him over to fiction; by omitting Marius's wars with the Picts, and calling his time one of "great tranquility" (53.2), Spenser alludes to the loss of one of Geoffrey's glorious kings. As for Geoffrey's Guiderius, who courageously defied Claudius, Spenser alludes to his loss by excluding him altogether. He was Geoffrey s invention, and so, like Marius, Guiderius had to fade away.

On the other hand, Spenser shows that he knew Kymbeline was a real person-at least insofar as he could be identified with Cynobellinus. This king is mentioned by Suetonius as the father of Adminius, who had some dealings with Caligula (1:473), and by Dio as the father of the resistance leaders Togodomnus and Caractacus (7:417, 421).[21] Price (28) and Stow both assume Kymbeline and Cynobellinus are the same person. Stow, however, has trouble fitting the king into both chronologies, seeing that Kymbeline would have had to reign from before Christ (since, by Geoffrey, he is king when Christ is born) at least through to Caligula (since, by Suetonius, he is the living father of Adminius). Stow therefore concludes that, to account for Kymbeline's elongated reign, the reign of Arviragus must be shortened; but this would imply that the reign of Guiderius must be elided all together (35-36). Stow is most likely Spenser's source here, because the poet concedes to this problem: Guiderius is indeed elided, and Spenser's Kymbeline indeed lasts from the nativity all the way to Claudius. Moreover, although it seems Spenser wholly preserves Guiderius's Claudian rebellion, merely ascribing it to Kymbeline, the poet could have found some good authority for suggesting that Kymbeline was himself something of a rebel. While Geoffrey pictures Kymbeline as a passive vassal of Augustus (320), Holinshed, following Dio (5:419, 6:253, 259), points to some troubles in Britain during the Augustan period, and concludes that Kymbelineassuming Geoffrey is wrong about his vassalage-could have been involved (479-80). Sure enough, although Spenser's Kymbeline is at war during the Claudian period, his revolt seems to begin in the reign of Augustus, for it occurs "soone after" Christ's birth (50.8). Thus, Spenser's Kymbeline is an odd amalgam of

Galfridian and humanist histories: with his bold rebellion and his tragic murder, Kymbeline recalls the story of Geoffrey's Guiderius; but because of Spenser's use of Stow and Holinshed, Kymbeline also has affinities with the obscure, uninteresting Cynobellinus. Once again, Spenser relates the glorious Galfridian material, even while alerting us to the presence of the true history.

Spenser closes his Roman Britain section with a final allusion to the humanist history, in his treatment of the all-important figure of Constantine II-Arthur's grandfather (stanzas 62-63). This figure embodies the disparity between historial truth and patriotic exigency. In creating his Constantine II as the progenitor of his Arthur, Geoffrey displayed remarkable hubris, a complete "indifference to criticism of the scholars who existed in his day."[22] Constantine II, the heroic Breton prince who rescued the Britons, and his son Constans, who was a monk before he was corrupted and murdered by Vortigern, were very obviously distortions of Constantine the usurper and his monk/emperor son. The real story, which occurred during the reign of Honorius, was available in Orosius and Zosimus.[23] Such blatant historical counterfeiting could not escape the watchful Polydore Vergil; characteristically aware of Geoffrey's machinations, Polydore reports on the usurper while giving Constantine II no mention at all (1012). For Holinshed, too, the truth was inescapable-Geoffrey had created a fable from a real person: Constantine II was further proof that "there is not so much credit to be yeelded to them that haue written the British histories" (552). Constantine II elicits a particularly harsh correction from Camden, who relates the story of Constantine the usurper "contra Galfredi nostri vantitatem [contrary to the vanity of our Geoffrey]"; Geoffrey's Constantine story is riddled with "mendacs [lies]" (133-34).

Thus, the problem of the evident fictionality of Constantine II, and of its source, was gradually recognized, doing great disservice to Geoffrey in the process. But what ramifications did the explosion of Constantine II have for the Arthur story? Though they do not say it, it is hard to imagine that these writers were not pondering the conclusion to which John Speed finally came in 1611: on the basis of Arthur's grandfather, Constantine the usurper, who had worn the purple, Speed affirms the king's "naturall descent from the Romans," against those self-flattering historians who would "naturalize him for a Britaine."[24] Through the Constantine problem, British history was ultimately forced to relinquish its beloved Arthur to the conquering Romans.

Could Spenser have anticipated Speed's deduction? From Holinshed and Camden he had all the information necessary to do so. He is certainly manipulating his material in a striking way; as Harper says of the Constantine section, it is a "narrative unlike any of the earlier ones, yet so compounded of familiar facts that the difference almost escapes detection" (134-35). Here the poet makes three important changes to his Galfridian material which together comprise an allusion to the classical history; these changes all serve to point us toward the Roman, and away from the Armorican Constantine.

The first change is the omission of the Armorican connection altogether. Where does Spenser's Constantine come from? We are not told. His status as brother of Aldroenus, king of Brittany, is primarily what differentiates Geoffrey's Constantine II from his historical namesake; and Spenser has left it out. In this he seems virtually alone. Hardyng, Caxton, Rastell, Grafton, Cooper, Warner Virunnius, and Holinshed-all the chroniclers who relate the Constantine II story-include his emigration from Armorica. Spenser's exclusion of this crucial detail leaves open the possibility that we think of his "second Constantine" as Constantine the usurper.

The second change is Spenser's alteration of the standard Galfridian narrative of Constantine's rise to power and his conduct. According to Geoffrey, Constantine came to Britain because of a deal offered by the Britons; if he would rid their land of the marauding Scots and Picts, the Britons would crown him king (359-60). After his successful campaign, he was "ordeined" king, as Cooper puts it, "accordyng to promys made" (138). Spenser's Constantine, however, is crowned before his battles with the British enemies, not as a result of them. Spenser, by placing the coronation before the victories, cancels out the idea of the pact with Brittany, thereby taking another step in dissociating Constantine from his Armorican roots.

Moreover, Spenser plays the same game with Constantine that he played with Cassivellaunus: he departs from Geoffrey and makes Constantine an elected leader. If Constantine is, as Spenser says, elevated "by consent of Commons and of Peares" (62.8), he is not Geoffrey's Constantine, a royal prince whose services rendered have, by prior agreement, won him the crown. In fact, as a popularly chosen monarch with no distinguished pedigree, Spenser's Constantine resembles more closely Constantine the usurper as the poet would have heard of him. Holinshed reports, "The souldiers . . . proceeded to the election of an other emperour, or rather vsurper, and so pronounced a noble gentleman called Constantine . . . . Some report this Constantine to be of no great towardlie disposition Woorthie to gouerne an empire, and that the souldiers chose him rather for the name sake" (538). The abrupt, emotional manner in which Spenser's commons and peers elect Constantine (62.9) may recall this account of Holinshed. Thus, the career of Spenser's Constantine seems less like that of the Armorican Prince and more like that of the historical personage

The third change, which Harper discerns (134), is that Spenser, following no precedent, attributes the Pict wall to Constantine; Geoffrey's Constantine, of course, had nothing to do with the wall. The wall in question is that described by Gildas (21-23) and Bede (1:5761),[25] built by the departing Romans in a final gesture of good will to the besieged and hapless Britons. It is a great symbol of Roman culture and of British incapacity in its absence; Spenser knows his audience would think only of Romans in connection with that wall. Moreover, though no one says that Constantine the usurper actually built the wall, the poet could easily have read about him in conjunction with it. Rastell (Ci) and Stow (74-75) both tell the story of the wall immediately after their accounts of the usurper. For these historians, the wall and the man are of the same era, connected as distinguishing features of the tumultuous Roman withdrawal. Geoffrey's Constantine is of a different era, saving the day after the Roman evacuation has left its impact; Spenser, by associating his Constantine with the wall, seems to relocate him back in time to the period of Roman departure.

Thus, Spenser closes his Roman Britain section with a complex, specialized account of Arthur's grandfather-an account with covert suggestions that he does not even exist as Geoffrey presented him. He is not from Armorica and he did not earn his kingship according to the terms of a pact; instead, he is of obscure extraction, he has been elected to his position, and he is the builder of a wall chronologically situated during the era of Roman withdrawal. What are we to make of this? It seems we are given the option to consider Constantine the usurper as the Constantine in question. Spenser's Constantine is certainly heroic, and we are certainly meant to recall his significance: from him derives the greatest hero of all time, the man who is reading Briton Moniments. But while he serves this vital patriotic purpose, Constantine II has no place in the new humanist historiography; and this is precisely what Spenser conveys here by alluding to Constantine the usurper. This new historiography seems quite a bit less satisfying than the old. In the new history, Arthur might not even exist; and if he does exist, he was probably a Roman.

Spenser's allusions to the new Roman Britain all suggest the distinction between Galfridian legend and the less exciting truth; the poet makes this suggestion even more strongly in his imaginative, unique accounts of two very important heroes, Nennius and Bunduca. These heroes are mirror images of one another: Nennius is pure patriotism, and has no link to historical truth; Bunduca comes from the classical history, and so her patriotic capacity is questionable.

In handling Nennius, Geoffrey's hero in the wars against Caesar, Spenser takes considerable liberties with the story, appropriating it for his own purposes (stanza 49). First of all, Harper finds strange Spenser's positioning Nennius at the end of the Caesarian invasion story. Such a placement has a precedent in Hardyng, but it is quite unusual, and seems to imply that Nennius's heroism occurred during Caesar's third trip rather than his first, as Geoffrey reports (30911). Even more peculiar in Spenser-and, as Harper finds, unprecedented (107-9)-is Nennius's evident exclusion from the sons of Heli (Spenser in stanza 46 indicates that Heli has only two sons, Lud and Cassibalane), and the striking statement that the sword he took from Caesar is extant. Spenser has

drastically manipulated the Nennius story, because Nennius epitomizes the poet's basic dilemma over the British history: it is patriotically irresistible but fiction.

Spenser sets Nennius apart because, with his dramatic personal combat with Caesar and with his gallant death, he is a thoroughly beloved figure in English lore. In Higgins's Mirror, the author breaks his De Casibus pattern and singles Nennius out as providing a positive rather than a negative example, which "encourageth all good subiectes to defende their countrey from the powre of foraine and vsurping enemies" (191). John Bale thinks so highly of Nennius that he attributes to the hero the original writing of the British History. Bale explains that the medieval writer known as Nennius merely borrowed his name from the true author of his source material (13), the ancient British hero. For Bale, Nennius, an outspoken advocate for British freedom against Roman oppression, is the British History, the first originator of it; Nennius symbolizes defiance in the face of historiographical as well as military domination by the Romans. This symbolism is not lost on Holinshed, who, though cognizant of Geoffrey's defects, cannot quite bear to part with Nennius: the story "may well be true, sith Cesar . . maketh the best things for his owne honour" (470). Nennius is prominent in the Galfridian competition with Rome, a great figure of national pride. Spenser, then, puts him in a place of distinction in order to recall the tradition he represents.

But the poet simultaneously divulges the ridiculousness of the character. Spenser relegates Nennius to legendary limbo, banishes him from the chronology. First, he is divested of his descent from Heli. Who is this Nennius? We do not know. Then, he is situated so as to make vague his actual contribution to the fight against Caesar. When was it? Where was it? We do not know. Spenser has effectively de-historicized the hero. Such is the import of the sword, "yet to be seene this day." Caesar's sword, called by Geoffrey "crocea mors" (311), embodies the fantasy behind Galfridian narrative; by fabricating an assertion of its corporeal existence, Spenser asserts its fictionality. Spenser presents the sword as an artifact, a product of antiquarian research like that of Camden; it is the type of thing the defenders of the British History would have to produce to retain its credibility. Spenser's make-believe artifact is a symbol of what the British history does not have: proof. The new historical standards favored verifiability and skepticism; no longer was the sheer patriotic value of heroes like Nennius sufficient to qualify their stories as history.

With Bunduca, on the other hand, Spenser was dealing with a character from humanist history, who had no place in Geoffrey's epic program. Including her as yet another brave British rebel in the struggle against the Romans (stanzas 54-56), Spenser wants us to consider her possibilities as a hero serviceable in the competition with Rome. Are aspects of the new historiography interesting enough to provide for patriotic poetry? Such is the question here. Critics have tended to answer it in the affirmative; Thomas H. Cain, Lillian S. Robinson, and Antonia Fraser all have discussed the manner in which Spenser uses Bunduca to praise his queen.[26] Bunduca is a type of both Britomart and Elizabeth, and Spenser says as much (III.iii.54).

It is important to note just how much Britomart resembles the classical Boadicea of Tacitus (Annals, 5:157-69, Agricola, 1:57) and Dio (8:83-105). Although Boadicea is older and more matronly, the two queens look similar: they both have extremely long, light-colored hair, and both are armed with spears (Dio, 8:85). Both queens also share an association with chastity and both conduct missions of revenge against rape and cupidity (Tacitus, Annals, 5:157, 165). Moreover, Boadicea and Britomart both have strong connections to feminine warrior deities; Boadicia makes a personal plea to Andraste, the goddess of victory (Dio, 8:93-95), just as Britomart has a divine counterpart in Isis. The most striking parallel, as Fraser begins to notice, is that each queen is set off as a foil against another warrior queen.[27] Britomart has Radigund, who differs from Britomart in her effect on men. The lascivious Radigund emasculates male warriors, making them into docile slaves, while Britomart empowers the men around her and encourages them to virtuous action; witness her speech to Radigund's captive, the demoralized Artegall, where she exhorts him to dispense with his shameful "womanishe attire" and reclaim his "dreadfull manly looke" (V.vii.37-40). Meanwhile, Boadicea has a foil in Cartimandua, queen of the Brigantes.

Cartimandua, like Radigund, is a negative example of female rule. She is on the wrong side-she is a Roman ally-and, like Spenser's amazon, she is associated with lasciviousness (Tacitus, Histories, 2:403, Annals, 4:371), and with weakening and entrapping British males, as with her betrayal of Caractacus (Annals, 4:365). Boadicea, on the other hand, like Britomart, uplifts her men, using a rhetoric which plays upon male shame at emasculation-in this case, slavery to the "woman" Nero: she tells her soldiers, "may this Mistress DomitiaNero reign no longer over me or over you men" (Dio, 8:93-95). Finally, we should not neglect Gildas s mention of Boadicea, for, although not strictly classical, he was considered authoritative by both Polydore and Camden. Gildas calls her "leaena," a lioness (91); Spenser's Britomart, who carries a lion on her shield (III.i.4), is compared to a lioness in a prominent epic simile (V.vii.30). Perhaps Boadicea is a model for Spenser's Britomart, or perhaps not; but the classical versions of her story seem to have some resonance in The Faerie Queene.

To whatever extent the classical Boadicea may have affected Spenser, that she affected him is unquestionable; but if he recognized Boadicea for what she was, he knew that she was not part of the legendary tradition geared toward British glory. Boadicea, as a figure from Roman writers, was alien to the British History, and posed a threat to it. Why had Geoffrey neglected her? Seeing this problem, many chroniclers tried to make her more user-friendly by figuring her into the Galfridian chronology. The most popular strategy, as has been noted, was to marry her off to Arviragus, thereby lending her a place in the old history. A lesser known attempt, set forth by Virunnius (31) and Bale (16-17), was to make her into a great conqueror much like Arthur himself, storming through France and almost sacking Rome, as great a threat to the Urbs as Brennus or Hannibal. But the Bunduca of Spenser comes totally unmedievalized; in Briton Moniments, Spenser has eschewed integrating Bunduca safely into the British History, as his predecessors tried to do. Instead, as Harper notes (117-20), Spenser draws upon the classics-influenced accounts of Stow, Holinshed, and Camden himself. As we see in

"The Ruines of Time," Spenser used Camden as an authority for the story of "Bunduca," and associated her with Camdenism.[28] Thus, the poet knew her as a purely non-Galfridian figure of classical history. As such she is a fatal intrusion into Briton Moniments, a conspicuous symbol of the fall of the British History at the hands of Camden.

The truth was, the classical Boadicea, interesting though she may have been, wanted the features necessary for Galfridian heroism, and was simply not amenable to a Galfridian agenda; Spenser realized this, and manipulated his version of her story accordingly. Harper notes three alterations Spenser makes in the Bunduca story which seem to be wholly his own (118-20). These alterations are designed to show us what was so glorious about the British History, by showing us just what a non-Galfridian British hero, a representative of Camdenism, lacks.

The first alteration is her unique placement in the chronology. Spenser locates Bunduca after the reign of the Christian king Lucius, which-though there was much confusion as to its precise date-was generally held to be mid to late second century A.D.; Spenser has placed Bunduca about 100 years too late. What has the poet gained from this? Harper tells us that here Spenser cleverly finds a way to work Bunduca unobtrusively into the Galfridian chronology by inserting her into Geoffrey's post-Lucius civil wars and interregnum (Historia, 331). But what Spenser's insertion does is remind us that Geoffrey's technique of arranging stories merely to fill gaps in the chronology is no longer viable. The selection of such an overtly unhistorical place in time for Bunduca makes us recall that she has no place in time agreeable to Spenser; such as she is, she simply does not fit into a Galfridian, linear, genealogical, one-king-at-atime, medieval chronicle, res gestae format. Such an idealistic chronology no longer exists because of discoveries like that of Boadicea herself. Moreover, Spenser's placement of Bunduca after Lucius seems to have christianized her, which again emphasizes her incapacity as a national hero. She was a wild Celtic barbarian, a member of a society practicing druidical abominations, sexual degradations, and human sacrifices.[29] Even Geoffrey's pre-Christian British kings display more Christian piety than any Briton from classical history ever could.

Spenser manipulates the place as well as the time of the Boadicean rebellion, and for the same reason: to reveal the shortcomings of the new version of Roman Britain. The poet moves the scene of battle westward from Camulodunum (Colchester), Londinium (London), and Verulamium (St. Albans) to a place "Besides the Seuerne." Harper can find no source for this change except for a suggestion in Holinshed that Camulodunum might be further west than Colchester (488). Spenser, however, would have had a much better estimation of Camulodunum's location from Camden (241-47). But the great antiquarian's monumental scholarship about Romano-British geography is the whole point here; Camden has had the effect of demystifying places. The true locations of the Boadicean rebellion, Camulodunum, Londinium-which is no longer Troynovant, thanks to Camden-and Verulamium represent the uncongeniality of classical history to Galfridian myth. These names exemplify Camden's project of pinpointing Romano-British places, and destroying the beloved Galfridian pattern of kings eponymously founding cities; Geoffrey's history, unlike Camden's, had infused places with meaning. Hence Verlame's complaint in the "Ruines of Time" that everyone has forgotten her; she has no meaning for contemporary Englishmen. On the other hand, the Severn, named for Geoffrey's Sabrina, is associated with Wales and Cornwall, close by the sites of Brutus's landing and Arthur's death. "Besides the Seuerne" is simply a nice place to have a climactic Galfridian battle. By planting Bunduca on the Severn, Spenser points out what she, and humanist products like her, have cost him: the legendary magic of place is no more. Westmoreland can no longer be derived from Marius, all because of the Britannia.

Third and most importantly, Spenser changes his material to give his Bunduca a betrayal. Like all true Galfridian heroes-recall the Androgeus situation-Bunduca loses only because she is betrayed by traitors in the ranks; some of her own "Captains" have defected to the enemy Roman general. This is of course far from the truth. Boadicea's defeat actually resulted from the mass confusion of a vast horde of unarmored barbarians trying to fight in an enclosed space against a few highly disciplined and efficient Romans. The embarrassing defeat involves no lack of British cohesion; it does involve a lack of British prowess and intelligence. Like Caesar's commentaries, the classical Boadicean rebellion belies a self-flattering Galfridian pattern, and, to highlight this unfortunate reality, Spenser fashions for his Bunduca an imaginary betrayal.

Boadicea possesses no place in a pedigree, no civilized religion, no meaningful site for her battle, and no lurking traitors to whom defeat may be attributed; Spenser, aware of this, makes us aware of it by creating a Bunduca who has all four. Perfect national heroes, like Nennius, no longer inhabit the world of Britain's ancient past. Boadicea was the most exciting feature of the new Roman Britain, but she could not compensate for the fall of the British History. Geoffrey had forged a narrative in which historical "fact" corresponded to patriotic interpretation; with his eclipse, this correspondence became an anachronism, an old-fashioned and naive way of viewing the past. Spenser in Briton Moniments creates his own Roman Britain to herald in the new history and bid a fond farewell to the old: he is telling us that history and glory would have to be seen, from then on, as two very separate things.

Footnote

1. All references to Harper are from Carrie Anna Harper, The Sources of the British Chronicle History in Spenser's Faerie Queene (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1910).
2. For the origin of this term and an excellent discussion of the rapid development of historiographical materials and methods in the English Renaissance, see F. Smith Fussner, The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought 1580-1640 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962).
3. F. J. Levy, "The Making of Camden's Britannia," Bibliotheque D'Humanisme et Renaissance 26 (1964):71. For the impact of the discovery of Roman Britain, and Camden in particular, see also T. D. Kendrick, British Antiquity (London: Methuen, 1950), 108-9; Arthur B. Ferguson, Utter Antiquity: Perceptions of Prehistory in Renaissance England (Durham: Duke UP, 1993), 94-95.

4. Harper, Sources, 187-90; Josephine Waters Bennett, The Evolution of The Faerie Queene (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1942), 92, 134-36. Harper (177) and Bennett (136) believe that Spenser used Britannia for the Briton Moniments he had previously begun.

5 On Spenser's use of Holinshed and Stow, see Harper, Sources, 36-37, passim. Raphael Holinshead, The Historie of England, in Holinshed's Chronicles: England, Scotland, and Ireland, 6 vols. (New York: AMS, 1976), 1:464-550. All page references to Holinshed are from this volume. John Stow, Chronicles of England from Brute onto this present yeare (London: Ralphe Newberrie and Henry Bynneman, 1580) STC#23333, 31-52.

6. For Spenser's probable relationship with Rogers, see Alexander C. Judson, The Life of Edmund Spenser, in the Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variourum Edition, 10 vols., ed. Edwin Greenlaw, et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1945), 8:59. For the letter of Gabriel Harvey to Spenser mentioning Rogers, see The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, ed. J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (London: Oxford UP, 1926), 632. For Rogers's work on Roman Britain, see F. J. Levy, "Daniel Rogers as Antiquary," Bibliotheque D'Humanisme et Renaissance 27 (1965):452-62.

7. See Historia Britannica Hos Est, De Rebus Gestis Britanniae seu Angliae commentarioli tres (Matthew Hunt, 1640). The original edition was published in 1583. For the possibility of Spenser's authorship, see Frederick Ives Carpenter, "Spenser Apocrypha," in The Manly Anniversary Studies in Language and Literature (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1923), 64-69.

8. All references to The Faerie Queene are from A. C. Hamilton's edition (London: Longman, 1977).

9. See A. Kent Hieatt, "The Passing of Arthur in Malory, Spenser, and Shakespeare: The Avoidance of Closure," in The Passing of Arthur: New Essays in Arthurian Tradition, ed. Christopher Baswell and William Sharpe (New York: Garland, 1988), 182-85.

10. For Geoffrey on Caesar, see The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth, ed. Acton Griscom (London: Longmans, Green, 1929), 306-20. For Caesar's two British expeditions, see The Gallic War, trans. H. W. Edwards (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classics, 1986), 205-29, 239-63. On Geoffrey's manipulation of Caesar's account, and of Androgeus, see Homar Nearing, Jr., "The Legend of Julius Caesar's British Conquest," PMLA 64 (1949):904-5.

11. See for example John Lydgate, This lytell treatyse compendiously declareth the damage and Destruction on Realmes caused by the Serpente of Division (1535?) STC#17027, 4; John Bale, illustrium Maioris Britanniae Scriptorum, Hoc est, Angliae, Cambriae ac Scotiae Summarium (1558) STC#1295, 14; John Price, Historiae Brytannicae Defensio (London: H. Bynneman, 1573) STC#20309, 33.

12. John Higgins, Parts Added to The Mirror for Magistrates, ed. Lily B. Cambell (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1946).

13. John Rastell, The Pastyme of People: The Cronycles of dyuers realmys and most especyally of Englond (1530) STC#20724; Thomas Cooper and Thomas Lanquet, Coopers Chronicle, Conteininge The Whole Discourse of the histories . . .newly enlarged and augmented (London: Thomas Cooker, 1560) STC#15218; William Warner, The First and Second Parts of Albions England (London: Thomas Cadman, 1589) STC#25080.

14. William Camden, Britannia (London: Ralph Newberry, 1586) STC#4503 (translations of Camden my own).

15. Polydore Vergil, Polydore Vergil's English History, from an early translation, Books 1-VIII, ed. Sir Henry Ellis (London: Camden Society #36, 1846).

16. "regem aliquem capies, aut de temone Britanno excidet Arviragus." Juvenal and Persius, trans. G. G. Ramsay (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classics, 1969), 66. Geoffrey cites Juvenal Historia, 326.

17. Ponticus Virunnius, Pontici Virunni Viri Pera Doctissimi Britannicae Historiae Libri Sex, ed. David Powel (London: Henry Denham and Ralph Newbery, 1585) STC#20109 (translation my own).

18. Hector Boece, Croniklis of Scotland, trans. J. Bellenden (Edinburgh: T. Davidson, 1540[?]) STC#3203; Richard Grafton, Chronicle at large and mere History of the affayres of Englande (1569) STC#12147; see Powel's

    letter to Henry Sidney at the opening of his edition of Virunnius, A3-A4. Tacitus, 5 vols. trans. Clifford H. Moore, John Jackson, and M. Hutton (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classics, 1970).

19. John Hardyng, The Chronicle of John Hardyng, Grafton's edition, ed. Henry Ellis (New York: AMS, 1974).

20. William Caxton, Chronicles of England (1480) STC#9991.

21. Suetonius, 2 vols. trans JG C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classics, 1989) Dio's Roman History, 9 vols., trans. Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classics 1982).

22. J. S. P. Tatlock, The Legendary History of Britain (Berkeley: U of California P, 1950), 158-59.

23. Zosimus, Historia Nova: the Decline of Rome, trans. James J. Buchanan and Harold T. Davis (San Antonio: Trinity UP, 1967), 222, 226, 228, 249-53, 257; Orosius, The Seven Books of History against the Pagans, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington, DC: Catholic UP, 1964), 356-57, 359.

24. John Speed, Thf Hidr of cGru sg Bri, .isso* w*ags(London, 165) Wings, 34.

25. Gildas, The Ruin of Britain and other Works, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom (London: Phillimore, 1978); Bede, Baedae Opera Historica, 2 vols., trans. J. E. King (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classics, 1971).

26. Thomas H. Paine, Praise in The Faerie Queene (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1978), 199; Lillian S. Robinson, Monstrous Regiment: The Lady Knight in Sixteenth Century Epic (New York: Garland, 1985), 299-300; Antonia Fraser, The Warrior Queens (New York: Alfred J. Knopf), 218-20. For Boadicea's reputation during the reign of Elizabeth, see Donald R. Dudley and Graham Webster, The Rebellion of Boudicca (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1962), 118-21; Fraser, Queens, 216-20.

27. On Isis as warrior goddess, and on Boadicea/Cartimandua, Britomart/Radigund, see Fraser, Queens, 37, 54-55, 219-20.

28. "The Ruines of Time," in The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser, ed. William A. Oram, et al. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989), 225-61.

29. For druids in the Boadicea story, see Tacitus, Annals, 5:155-57. For Boadicea's mention of the ancient British custom of wife-sharing, see Dio, 8:93-95. For human sacrifices during the Boadicean rebellion, see Dio, 8:95; Camden, Britannia (251).