ANTON BARYSHNIKOV

Nizhny Novgorod State University
Russian State University for the Humanities (Moscow)
baryshnikov85@gmail.com

REGES, REGULI, DUCES:
SOME REMARKS ON THE INDIVIDUAL AND
POWER IN LATE IRON AGE PRE-ROMAN BRITAIN*

Abstract: The paper considers one of the most significant changes in late pre-Roman Iron Age in Britain—the emergence of individual power, usually labeled as kingship. The modern perception of this sociopolitical phenomenon has been largely determined according to texts from Greek and Roman authors. This paper argues that this image is distorted and says more about the ancient writers than it does about ancient political leaders, their status, or the essence of their power. Avoiding terms like king to prevent a general misunderstanding of the phenomenon is reasonable; nevertheless, coins from so-called dynasties and tribes as well as other material sources show the emergence of individual power from the first century B.C.E. to the first century C.E. This new phenomenon should be analyzed with new (and re-worked) theoretical frameworks. Additionally, comparative studies can play a significant role in exploring the nature of what is referred to as Iron Age kingship in Britain.

Keywords: Iron Age kings, Pre-Roman Britain, rex, Caratacus, Togidubnus, kingship.

1. A tale of kings and kingdoms

The end of the pre-Roman Iron Age in Britain witnessed quantitative changes that affected many (if not all) aspects of life on the island.[1] In the political sphere, these transformations were manifested in its most visible form in the southeastern region.[2] It was here that proto-state entities emerged that are often referred to in scholarly literature

[1] Haselgrove, Moore 2007: 1. For a review of socio-cultural transformations in pre-Roman Britain southeast Britain, see Hill 2007, *Id.* 2012.

[2] Hill 2007: 30–33; Champion 2016: 164–166. We must not however forget that the changes in the southeast of the island become visible due to the state of the evidence, including material culture. It is likely that future archeological research into the north and west of Britain will change the current situation.

as kingdoms. Their emergence was due to a process of centralizing power in the hands of the elite and their individual representatives, and to the inception of personal, "kingly power". The inscriptions on coins and the texts of ancient authors enable us to become familiar with some rulers of pre-Roman Britain. The degrees of such acquaintance differ considerably, as in some cases we know only names or parts of names, while in others the information is sufficient to reconstruct specific moments in the biography and rule of one figure or another. The fragmentary character of the existing data, the difficulty of interpreting them, and researchers' zeal to fill in the gaps make the emergence of varying suppositions that differ in their justification and daring rather inevitable.[3]

Two dynasties occupy a central place in the narrative of the political history of pre-Roman Britain: the southern, which dates back to the Atrebate Commios, and the eastern, founded by Tasciovanus.[4] The representatives of these dynasties are the main figures in the majority of researchers' reconstructions, and the relations and conflicts between them (either real or assumed) are often at the center of stories about the late Iron Age in Britain. The rulers of other regions remain nameless and voiceless, and only some of them (Prasutagus and Boudica, Cartimandua, Venutius, and Calgacus) appear in the descriptions of events following the year 43 C.E. On the whole, contemporary scholarship seems to have formed a certain standard of narrative about the political history of pre-Roman Britain, which—with some elaboration or other—is replicated in the majority of publications.

This paper attempts to analyze personal power in Britain in the late Iron Age. I believe special attention should be given to the nature and the character of the rulers' authority, as well as their status, functions, and possibilities in pre-Roman communities.[5]

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[3]   I believe that the "Togidubnus issue" may serve as a good example of this. Its essence lies in the question of how many Togidubni were involved in the events of the year 43 C.E. Two British rulers named Togidubnus are known. One is mentioned by Tacitus and is in an inscription from Chichester. He was the successor to Verica and incorporated the territories of the southern dynasty (Tac. *Agr.* 14; *RIB* i 91). The other Togidubnus (also spelled Togodumnus) is mentioned by Cassius Dio. This Togidubnus, son of the king Cunobelinus, acts as an ally of his brother Caratacus in the resistance to the Romans, during which he is killed (Cass. Dio 60.21.1). Some researchers think the report of Togidubnus' death to be false and therefore Togidubnus, son of Cunobelinus, may be identified as the Togidubnus the pro-Roman ruler of the Southern Britain—in which case he was not killed fighting against the Romans but had sided with them in good time. A choice between one or two kings turned out to be a choice between two different reconstructions of the events of the year 43 and between the history of conquest and the history of treason. At the same time, the existing sources do not shed full light on the question, and Togidubnus remains a paradox similar to Schrödinger's cat. See Mattingly 2011: 90.

[4]   Creighton 2000: 55–79. Creighton's book remains the most well-grounded and important for those beginning to study kings and kingly rule in pre-Roman Britain. His extensive analysis of numismatic evidence is crucial for the reconstruction of political links between Rome and British rulers. It shows how members of British elite (many of whom were *obsides* in Rome) became familiar with Augustan political and ideological discourse, learned to use it, and adopted kingship to become clients and allies of Empire. Other comprehensive narratives of political history of Late Iron Age Britain, include chapters in the books by Braund (his careful examination of literary sources benefited Romano-British studies, which are usually focused on material evidence), Mattingly and Hoffmann (who made a thought-provoking attempt to compare archaeological data with the information from written sources), and an article by Creighton: Braund 1996: 67–90; Mattingly, 2007: 47–86; Mattingly 2011: 76–93; Creighton 2011; Hoffmann 2013, 14–105.

[5]   On the difficulties of understanding the phenomenon of kingship in the pre-Roman Britain, see: Champion 2016: 164; Haselgrove 2004: 12.

2. Lost in translation: Ancient authors and modern terminology

The accounts of Greek and Roman authors concerning the rulers of Britain are interesting but require a cautious and critical approach. The characteristic features of such sources have been mentioned more than once in the literature: they are biased, stereotypical, Rome-centered, and full of rhetoric.[6] Despite these peculiarities, the texts of ancient authors are of undoubted value for the study of polities in Iron Age Briton. Even the profoundly Roman (or Greek or, at any rate, Imperial) view of the Britons' society is extremely important for understanding the issue, not only because the sources are limited, but also because such a view, notwithstanding all distortion, does present some aspects of historical reality.

In order to understand the specifics of individual rule in pre-Roman Britain, it is important to not reinterpret what Greek and Roman authors commented on concerning the rulers of the island, but instead to analyze *how* they did it, and *what terminology* they used to identify their positions in the system of power relations.

Among the various sources, one of the most significant is the Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*, as Caesar was the only author to have experienced direct communication with the Britons. His descriptions of his Gallic campaign and two expeditions to Britain reveal several local rulers' identifications.[7] Caesar uses the word *rex* six times, and four of these kings—Cingetorix, Carvilius, Taximagulus and Segovax—ruled in Cantium (Caes. *B. Gall.* 5.22.1). The name of the king of the Trinovantes, who was killed by Cassivelaunus, is not known; nor is it known whether or not his son Mandubracius received individual rule after having returned to his lands on Caesar's instructions (*B. Gall.* 5.20.1). The sixth king connected to Britain—Commios—initially did not have kingly rule on the island, but became, in large part to Caesar's assistance, the ruler of the Atrebates in Gaul (*B. Gall.* 4.21.7).[8] Along with the kings, Caesar mentions the *principes Britanniae*, representatives of the local nobility, who were present in his camp (*B. Gall.* 4.30.1). The title *dux nobilis* is given to Lugotorix, who was captured during the battle with troops of the kings of Cantium (*B. Gall.* 5.22.2).[9]

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[6] Mattingly 2007: 36–7; Leins 2012: 17–18. The excessive influence of written sources on the reconstruction of ancient and early medieval communities has led to an argument of "the tyranny of historical record"; see: Champion 1990: 90; Thurston 2002: 20.

[7] For an analysis of fragments from Caesar on the noble Gauls (and, to a lesser extent, on the Germans and Britons), see: Barlow 1998. See also the classic work by Rambaud 1966; Mutschler 1975: 147–198.

[8] Our conceptions of Commios' fate are based on passages in Hirtius (*B. Gall.* 8.48), Frontinus (*Str.* 2.13.11) and on the coins he had minted in Britain. Briefly, this was as follows: Commios and the Atrebates had joined the anti-Roman resistance. After a series of defeats, he fled to Britain, where he became a king and founded the southern dynasty. For more detail, see Creighton 2000: 59–64; Braund 1996: 72–73. For Caesar's mentions of Cassivellaunus and the rest of the British nobles, see Barlow 1998: 147; Rambaud 1966: 78, 81, 95, 167, 195, 302, 327.

[9] Lugotorix appears in this passage only, and the special attention Caesar paid him is somewhat surprising, especially since it concerns a captive ruler rather than a military leader, albeit one high-born. Probably the special mention of the captive Briton is related to the composition of the story about the second expedition to Britain. In describing the initial stage of this operation, Caesar says that the military tribune Q. Laberius Durus fell in battle (*B. Gall.* 5.15.5). The capture of the leader of the Britons is the second part of the antithesis, and a certain answer to balance the loss of the officer.

The most mysterious and striking figure in Caesar's work is Cassivellaunus, his principal adversary in the British campaigns. This was a ruler whose authority and influence are evident, as he had been chosen to command all of the Britons' forces, he had given orders to the kings of Cantium, and he had ruled the lands beyond the Thames (*B. Gall.* 5.11.8–9, 18.1, 22.1). Nevertheless, Caesar does not refer to him as *rex*, name him as one of the *principes*, or use the word *dux* when referring to him (as was the case with Lugotorix).[10] However, Cassivellaunus' title and status are mentioned in later works. He must be a "king", as mentioned by Plutarch (Plut. *Caes.* 23.3), and Cassius Dio calls him the most powerful of the dynasts of the island (Cass. Dio 40.2.3). I'm inclined to think that Plutarch's message presents some simplification, whereas Dio was more precise and tried to follow Caesar himself in characterizing Cassivellaunus' status.

All this, however, does not resolve some important questions: Who was Cassivellaunus? Why did Caesar recognize his role in the conflict and negotiate with him but never mention the title and position of the ruler of the Britons? It seems that Caesar had no political motives for hiding this kingly status. The *Bellum Gallicum* mentions a number of rulers with the title of *rex* for both those who supported Rome and those who were against it (sometimes even alternating between pro-Roman and anti-Roman positions). The use of the kingly title envisages no distinct formal criteria: Caesar referred to as kings those who had received their powers from Rome (*rex sociusque et amicus*) and those individual rulers who had attained their power by their own efforts and authority in the community.[11] Moreover, the logic of propaganda would seem to have lead Caesar to perhaps exaggerate: winning a victory over a leader of the Britons is one thing, while driving a powerful king of a far-away island into submission is another.

We could also take a risk and suppose that the terminology used by in the *Bellum Gallicum* could be have been influenced by two scenarios. In the first, Cassivellaunus killed the legitimate ruler of the Trinovantes and banished his son, Mandubracius. Caesar took the expelled Briton under his protection and then returned him to his motherland after the victory (*B. Gall.* 5.20.1, 22). In this version, Cassivellaunus turned out to be a usurper, and there was no possibility of referring to him as a king. In the second scenario, Cassivellaunus might have had no permanent power, but instead might have held some magistracy (similar to the *vergobret* of the Aedui: *B. Gall.* 1.26.5). Caesar might not have been overly interested in the specifics of his adversary's position; it was enough for him to know that Cassivellaunus, without being a king, was chosen by the Britons as the leader of the allied forces.

The nameless rulers of Britain in the second half of the first century B.C.E. appear in the works of two Greek authors: Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, who wrote sometime later than Caesar. These passages are short and do not allow for any far-reaching conclusions. Diodorus writes that kings and dynasts ruled on the island (Diod. Sic. 5.21.4), but Strabo was more skeptical. He identifies the Britons' rulers as dynasts of local significance but not

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[10]   Creighton 2000: 57; Braund 1996: 64; Rambaud 1966: 92, 100, 191.

[11]   E.g., kingly power was received from Caesar by Commius (*B. Gall.* 4.21.7) and Cavarinus (5.54.2); Casticus strove for kingly power independently although unsuccessfully (1.3.1–3). The latter was the son of Catamantaloedes, a king and friend of the Roman people. Leins rightly notes the problematic nature of *reges* mentioned by Caesar: Leins 2012: 17. For a full list of kings and aristocrats mentioned in Caesar's narrative, see: Barlow: 159–64. On *rex sociusque et amicus* see the book by Braund, now a classic: Braund 1984.

very powerful rulers, which matches well with his general depiction of Britain as an underdeveloped, peripheral territory (Strabo 200/4.5.2).[12] Nevertheless, Rome did officially consider some of rulers of the island at the time to be kings (*Mon. Anc.* 33.1).

The works of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio contain information about British rulers of the first century C.E. The most informative are surviving passages from Tacitus. There are names of several prominent leaders of Britons in *Agricola, Annales* and *Historia*: Caratacus (*Ann.* 12.33.1–2, 34.2, 35.7, 36, 38.1–2, 40.3; *Hist.* 3.45), Cogidumnus (meaning Togidubnus— *Agr.* 14.2),[13] Cartimandua and Venutius (*Ann.* 12.36.1, 40.3–4; *Hist.* 3.45), Prasutagus and Boudica (*Ann.* 14.31.1–3, 35.1, 37.5; *Agr.* 16.1), and Calgacus (*Agr.* 29.4). Tacitus seems to have been more preoccupied with the choice of the words used to describe British rulers than Caesar (or any other ancient author).[14] The author's precision in using the title of *rex* (and its female form *regina*) is readily apparent. It is predominantly borne by the allies of Rome: Cogidumnus (*Agr.* 14.2), Prasutagus (*Ann.* 14.31), Cartimandua (*Ann.* 12.36). The adversaries of Rome do not receive any kingly compliments. Tacitus mentions only Boudica's kingly origin (*Agr.* 16), whereas he only alludes to the rest—Calgacus, Venutius—as military chiefs or noble commanders rather than as individual rulers.[15] The only exception is the case of Caratacus. When he fights Rome, he is never referred to as a king, but he is labeled as *rex* in the famous description of his speech before Claudius and, through the senator's speeches rather than by Tacitus directly, in one line with the past kings defeated and captured by Scipio and Paulus. This pattern seems to be a part of Tacitus's general agenda. In most cases involving foreign rulers and leaders mentioned in his works, Tacitus's choice of terminology and descriptive tools are determined by the political position of the person and his/her relationship with Rome. If a leader could be labeled "pro-Roman" or was officially recognized by Rome, Tacitus uses the term *rex* and related words.[16] Those who fought against the Romans are not be given this title. It is not clear (at least for me) if this terminological strategy was created by Tacitus or if he carefully followed the texts of his sources, but it is amply evident that his descriptions present purely Roman perspectives of more complex sociopolitical phenomena.

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[12]   Braund 1998: 80–6. Strabo's concept of Britain falls well within the general image established in the ancient literature. See Stewart 1995.

[13]   Murgia 1977; Coates 2005.

[14]   Going illustrated through the example of Marobodus how skillful and careful Tacitus could be when constructing a narrative about barbarian rulers. Both the choice of words and the composition of the narrative structure were well-thought out and determined by the general concept of Tiberius's reign and policies. See Going 1990. It is reasonable to suppose that the Roman historian not only described the political relations between British communities and Rome but also created an artificial narrative (which was itself only a small part of the grand historical narrative) in which factual evidence was reworked according to Tacitus' views and those of some of his contemporaries.

[15]   Caratacus, Tac. *Ann.* 12.33.1; Calgacus, *Agr.* 29.3; Venutius, *Ann.* 12.40.3. In their actual position in the system of power, the following individuals might have been quite equal to the king Prasutagus: Caratacus, son of king Cunobelinus, who started minting his own coins not long before the invasion, and Calgacus who, in the words of Tacitus, was of prominent ancestry among the rulers of Caledonia.

[16]   Tacitus uses *rex* and related words in three cases: a) when he writes about the distant past, mythological kings (e.g. *Ann.* 2.60.1), or kings who interacted with Republican Rome (e.g. *Ann.* 2.88.2); b) when he describes general, theoretical aspects of one-man rule (e.g. *Hist.* 1.16.4); c) when he depicts relations between Imperial Rome and foreign rulers. All of Tacitus's writings contain about 220 usages of the term *rex*, and approximately 10% of them are related to the first two cases.

There are two more interesting terms Tacitus uses with respect to the rulers of the British Isles. In his wording, there was a time when Britain was ruled by "kings", but now the Britons obey their *principes* (*Agr.* 12.1). Besides, Agricola had given shelter to a "minor king" (*regulus*) of Hibernia, who had to flee after an upheaval (*Agr.* 24.3). Unnamed British *reguli* are also mentioned in the *Annals* in the description of the fate of Roman captives from Germanicus's army (*Ann.* 2.24.5).[17] In several places, Tacitus identifies British leaders as *ductores* and *duces* (*Ann.* 12.34.1; *Agr.* 29.4).

Works by Suetonius and Cassius Dio complement information Tacitus provides rather than contradicting it. Both authors mention Cunobelinus, possibly the most powerful king on the island during the pre-Roman period (Suet. *Calig.* 44.2; Cass. Dio 60.20.1). In the stories of Claudius' conquest of Britain and Boudica's uprising, Dio uses generally the same approach as Tacitus. Kingly titles are not used in relation to the adversaries of Rome, but the writer does make the point that the Britons obeyed a kingly power rather than having self-government.

The works of Greek and Roman authors seem to leave no room for doubt concerning the existence and evolution of individual power in Britain. The rulers of the island possessed enough power to gather troops, fight, enter into alliances with one another, and support relations with Rome. Regretfully, it is not clear to what extent the various terms used by ancient writers to refer to the British rulers reflect real differences in the amount of power and the status these individuals had. Did the *rex* have greater power and authority than the *princeps* or the *dux*? According to the texts, Cassivellaunus, whose title is not given by Caesar, was superior in power to Cingetorix, and Caratacus and Calgacus were not less powerful than Prasutagus. It is likely that the choice of term in each case depended on the author's own judgment (and the sources used) and reflected a particular author's specific understanding of the British reality by rather than the reality itself.

This interpretation of the Britons' society and polity in the eyes (and the texts) of ancient authors is further complicated through the processes of further translation and employment of Greek and Roman terminology in contemporary research. A good example of this is the term *rex*. It is translated in English as king and in Russian as *царь* (tzar). Both translations may fairly be deemed imprecise. The use of such words (specifically the use of the Russian *царь*) places the British rulers on the same level as later monarchs who did indeed have individual rule. Moreover, the status of the British "kings" was much less "kingly" than that of their contemporaries in the east, which probably explains Strabo's reluctance to refer to noble Britons as kings.

The term *principes* also presents similar difficulties. In English-language research it is usually translated as chieftains or with the Greek synonym dynasts (and less often potentates or leading men). In Russian-language writings the translations (and the understanding) of the word are different: In the translation of Caesar's work the *principes* became *князи* (*knyaz* or princes), and the translation of Tacitus calls them *вождями* (*vozhd* or chieftain). The variability of translations is mainly due to the lack of a definition for the source word. It is

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[17] It is interesting that *regulus* is quite rare in Tacitus's surviving texts. I found only five instances of this term. Apart from British and Irish rulers, it is used to define leaders of Cilicia (*Ann.* 2.78.3, 2.80.2) and Iberia and Armenia (*Ann.* 6.33.1).

difficult to understand who the people were whom the ancient authors called *principes Britanniae*—small rulers, hereditary aristocrats in general, or some other social groups—and it is clear only that they belonged to the highest strata of British communities.

The problems in translation mentioned here may seem insignificant, but only at first glance. In a situation where the nature of individual rule is not clear, and when the rulers of Britain can be understood only through authors belonging to a different culture, precision in the choice of terminology becomes especially important.[18] By following the Greeks and the Romans, and by using plain, conventional words, one may distort the reality one is studying.[19] In this sense, the use of neutral expressions that are not burdened with a plethora of involuntary associations and analogies seems more appropriate: for example, words like ruler or a leader.[20] However, in some cases (first and foremost, when considering rulers who received formal recognition from Rome) the use of the Latin term *rex* could be considered correct. This is even more so, since this title, for some of them, was a part of their public self-presentation.

3. The "kings" and material culture: Coins, *oppida*, and burials

Among the material evidence related to the rulers of pre-Roman Britain, coins struck on the island even before Caesar's expeditions are of particular significance.[21] Sometime after the collision with Rome, and very likely under the influence of external factors, the coins underwent a very special change: inscriptions begin to appear on them.[22] The majority of these are the personal names (or parts of names) of rulers of various regions of the island.[23] The very fact that these inscriptions appeared points to the existence of many individuals who possessed enough wealth and ambition to maintain their power and authority by new methods.

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[18] Some of the most recent publications show increasing awareness among researchers of the potential effects of using such terms in historical narratives and archaeological interpretations. E.g., see: Collis, Karl (forthcoming).

[19] M. V. Garcia Quintela (Garcia Quintela: 518) was very clear: "When... we refer to kings in the Celtic world, these had little to do with the social, institutional, and political image of European monarchs from the mediaeval period to the present day, or even with the models offered by Hellenistic royalty or the Roman emperors." See also Thurston 2010: 234 (who cites the passage of Garcia Quintela and agrees with him on this).

[20] It is to be noted that this paper does not follow a pattern in which the power of the leaders in the ancient communities would be replaced with the power of rulers; here these terms are treated as close in meaning (though not full synonyms). For the leader—ruler pattern and its connection with the development of community and the formation of the state, see: Haas 2000.

[21] Extensive research has been dedicated to the coins of pre-Roman Britain. Some main works and catalogues include Haselgrove 1987; Van Arsdell 1989; Cottam et al. 2010; Leins 2012. For a detailed analysis of the iconography, distribution, language, political meaning, and social impact of coins from the southern and eastern dynasties, see: Creighton 2000: 55–79; Leins 2012: 79–108, 124–146.

[22] Creighton 2000: 146. For inscriptions and the specifics of the language, see Mays 1992, Williams 2001.

[23] I have counted 46 names. This should be considered an approximation, since what is found in some inscriptions may something other than the name (e.g., a reference to a title unknown to us). See, for example, the Nash Briggs's doubts about the interpretation of ESVPRASTO- and -PRASTO: Nash Briggs 2011: 93–95, Talbot 2017: 266.

In the southeast of the island the names of such rulers sometimes come with the contraction *F(ilio)*, references to kinship (real or desired) with preceding rulers, reference to the location where the coin was probably struck (three such locations are known: Camulodunum, Verlamion, Calleva), and the title *rex*.[24] Four rulers in Britain officially called themselves kings: Tasciovanus and Cunobelinus from the eastern dynasty, and Eppillus and Verica from the southern.[25] The use of the title is an unambiguous indication of diplomatic relations with Rome, recognition by the imperial authority, and the status of *rex sociusque et amicus*.

The appearance of a Roman term in the British context indicates that some rulers of the island did indeed represent themselves as *reges*. However, this raises some questions: How important a part of public representation was the title struck on the coin? And how often did the British rulers use them in their coinage?

Creighton's calculations demonstrate that most of the rulers seldom used the title *rex*. It is seen most frequently on the coins of Verica's type (19% of the total number) and more seldomly on Tasciovanus' (8%), Eppillus' (4%) and Cunobelinus' (1%) types.[26] This distribution shows that, for the majority of rulers, the use of the title was less important than the reference to the dynasty or where it was struck.[27] Creighton's explanation is most likely correct: He interpreted the situation on the assumption that the title was not of much importance for those who were ruled by these "kings".[28] The number of people who understood the meaning and the significance of the term *rex* was rather limited and could have included some representatives of the local elite, mercenaries, merchants, and craftsmen from the continent. The most important foundations of the British *reges'* authority must have been rooted in local traditions and social relations rather than in formal recognition from Rome.

One more type of material evidence related to the phenomenon of individual rule is elite burials.[29] The first that should be mentioned are the Lexden, Stanway and Folly Lane burials.[30] The rich inventory (which included imported items), their size and location, and the complexity of funeral rites (specifically in the case of Folly Lane) indicate the deceased's

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24   Aside from the Latin word, its Celticized variants were also used: *rig*, *ricon(i)*. See Creighton 2000: 169, Braund 1996: 71.

25   For the most recent summary of personal coinages, see: Leins 2012: 95–97 (Tasciovanos), 99–106 (Cunobelin), 139–141 (Eppillus), 141–143 (Verica).

26   Creighton 2000: 170, tab. 6.1.

27   Creighton mentions that a reference to a "mint" is almost never seen together with a declaration of dynastic affiliation and the title *rex*. Based on analysis of the distribution of coins from Cunobelinus and Tasciovanus, he suggests that the selection of coin legends reflected the various ways in which power had been legitimized. Thus, in the area of Camulodunum, in the very heart of his domain, Cunobelinus had no need whatsoever to declare his dynastic affiliation with Tasciovanus. In the area of Verulamium, the center that Tasciovanus once relied upon, the situation was different. Here it was necessary to emphasize his affiliation with the family of the former ruler of the eastern dynasty: Creighton 2000: 172–173.

28   Creighton 2000: 170.

29   Niblett 2004; Harding 2016: 127–162. For mortuary rites in southern Britain in the late Iron Age see Lamb's thesis: Lamb 2018.

30   Foster 1986; Crummy 2007; Niblett 1999. The Folly Lane burial may be dated to a time either before or after the conquest: Creighton 2001: 402. In the latter case the aristocrat buried at Folly Lane might not be connected to the local nobility but represent the Roman garrison situated in Verulamium. This perspective is justified by Pitts, see Pitts 2014: 160–161.

high social status. Hypothetically these burial complexes could be linked to the eastern dynasty and its various branches. These quite possibly could have been the kinsmen of Tasciovanus and Cunobelinus, but certainly there are no direct arguments to support such hypotheses.[31] The appearance of burial complexes of such significance, and the earlier occurrence in the southeast of Britain of other Welwyn type burials, allow us not only to witness the processes of social and property stratification, but also to confirm the emergence of elite groups from the local communities—groups that were to hold significant shares of property and power.[32]

Finally, many researchers have linked these so-called kings and the dynasties that appeared to the development of settlements organized after 20/10 B.C.E. and are traditionally referred to as territorial *oppida*.[33] The most important of those were located in the areas of St. Albans, Colchester, Bagendon, Chichester, Fishbourne, Silchester, and Stanwick.[34] They occupied large areas whose boundaries were marked with ditches and ramparts, and they had a sophisticated internal structure with separate buildings, fenced plots and burials. The *oppida* differed greatly from the urban settlements of the continent, but they played an important role as trade and craft centers. Their connection with the rulers of Britain is obvious but not very clear. Very likely, *oppida* were the strongholds of the *reges* and other representatives of the nobility, which they inhabited on a relatively permanent bases, and were the centers that united the areas governed by the dynastic elite in both real and symbolic ways.[35] It is not clear whether the inhabitants of such centers were an independent community that could act as a political subject (this may be indicated by the appearance of the names of the cities on the coins minted by the "kings"), or they were an overgrown sort of court for the "king" with all the nobility, their clients, mercenaries, tradesmen, and craftsmen who had decided to settle closer to the source of power and money. I believe the first possibility is more plausible, but it is impossible to prove or disprove it based on existing information.

These aspects of material evidence deserve much more attention, and this section is merely a sketch. Nevertheless, it is clear that coins, rich burials, and *oppida* show that the development of individual rule was essential to the whole process of social and cultural transformation in Britain in the late Iron Age. It seems that the rulers known to us from the ancient texts as *reges* and *principes* did indeed occupy important positions in a changing society, possessed authority and military power, and gradually consolidated their wealth. Some of them had coins struck, had access to (and some taste for) items imported from the continent, and were connected with the Gaulish communities and the Empire through a

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[31] The connection of burials with the rulers of Britain is suggested by Creighton 2006: 135. As far as I can judge, his opinion is generally shared in modern publications. See: Fitzpatrick 2007; Harding 2016: 154.

[32] On the Welwyn type burials and their occurrence in pre-Roman Britain, see: Stead 1967; Niblett 2004: 31–32; Hill 2007: 29–30.

[33] Hill suggests that at least some of these settlements could be referred to with more precision as royal sites rather than *oppida*: Hill 2007: 32. On the connection between *oppida* and dynasties of the southeast, see: Pitts 2010.

[34] For a list with necessary references, see Pitts 2010: 36, tab. 1. To the papers listed by Pitts I would add a recently published book summarizing the research carried out at Stanwick: Haselgrove 2016.

[35] Recent research shows the origins and nature of the *oppida* and their functions are more complex than previously thought. See Moore 2012, 2017; Garland 2017: 205–227; *Id.* 2020.

complicated network of political and cultural contacts. That being said, it must be taken into consideration that the "kings" in the southeast of Britain that are known to us are only the tip of the iceberg: there were many more rulers and leaders of various kinds and levels.[36] Alas, owing to the actual state of the sources, these remain in the shadow of their luckier contemporaries.

4. Research methods and some concluding remarks

The progress undoubtedly made in archaeological studies of late Iron Age Britain allows a fuller reconstruction of the evolution of individual rule in local communities. Nevertheless, many questions related to the *reges*, *principes*, and the British specifics of individual rule remain unclear and controversial. What Braund wrote twenty years ago is still relevant: "not only do we know nothing in detail of the lengths of the 'reigns' of those rulers who appear on coins, but we are also usually in the dark as to the extent and nature of their power".[37] This, however, is not a reason to be discouraged. I believe that further research into the power of the "kings" may be pursued in several directions.

Firstly, the development of Iron Age studies requires a holistic approach to the contemplation of societies and polities in prehistoric Britain. Understanding the development of the "kingdoms" and "dynasties" in the southeast and other regions of the island becomes possible through analysis of all the changes that occurred during this period.[38] Thus the appearance of borders limiting households and settlements, changes in how land was organized, and the emergence of signs of both private and collective identity, together with a tendency for the number of individual burials to grow (as Lamb mentions) leads to a bold proposal (and therefore one calling for a critical treatment).[39]

Essentially, the identification of the *reges* and *principes* within the structure of power relations was not simply a political process, but rather part of a deeper, more general shift in social consciousness and a part of individualization that led to the onset of individual rule at very different levels, including household, village, community, and polity. Besides, the general historical context must also be taken into account: changes in the late Iron Age did not start from scratch, and Caesar and Tacitus's "kingdoms" and "kings" had been preceded by other polities and rulers. Which sometimes raises the question of if the slain father of Mandubracius was a king, then what had his grandfather and great-grandfather been?

Secondly, I believe that turning to comparative studies could be of much use. A rather obvious choice for comparison is early Ireland, which is rich not only in archaeological data but also in evidence from epic and legal texts (e.g., *Críth Gablach*).[40] Another important

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[36] Rare cases of two personal names inscribed on the same coin (like Eppillus and Anarevito on a coin found in 2010) highlight the complex and dynamic nature of power structures in the late Iron Age. The fluid nature of British communities and polities is clearly outlined in recent works on ancient British coinage by Ian Leins. See: Leins 2012: 18; *Id.* 2015.

[37] Braund 1996: 68.

[38] For a brief review of new opinions on the late Iron Age Britain and the changes during that period, see: Haselgrove, Moore 2007: 2–15.

[39] Haselgrove, Moore 2007: 8; Lamb 2016.

[40] The potential effects of comparison with Irish evidence can be found in Creighton: Creighton 2000: 20–25,

step in this direction was made by Tina Thurston, a specialist in the Scandinavian Iron Age.[41] By analyzing material from pre-Roman Italy, Gaul, Germany, and Scandinavia, she attempted to identify the essence of "kingly" power. In Thurston's opinion, European Iron Age societies were rather decentralized, and power within them was not concentrated among a few autocratic rulers but "was spread through many facets of society".[42] A heterarchical structure was characteristic for Iron Age societies, wherein power belonged not only to the representatives of the corporate elite (warriors and priests), but also to simple members of the community who voted in people's assemblies.[43] The position of the ruler in such a reconstruction is far from solid: the ruler is rather the first among the nobles.[44] In my opinion, the Thurston's observations should not only stimulate a re-interpretation of existing information but also assist in incorporating data from other regions of the world. In particular, potential interest seems to lie in an analysis of the *realia* of the Kievan Rus—the reconstruction of the position held by *князи* (*knyaz* or princes), their capabilities and responsibilities, and interactions with their troops, *дружина* (*druzhina*), and the nobility known as *бояре* (*boyars*). These can be of no less use than the Scandinavian Thurston actively made use of.

Thirdly, under conditions of limited evidence, special importance must be attached to a rethinking of theoretical approaches towards interpretation. The problem of individual rule in Britain has always been part of broader questions such as what the character of sociopolitical development of the island's communities was, and at what stage they were in the development of statehood. These issues deserve the closest attention because here, as in the case of the "kings", we see a variation in terminology (and respectively in theoretical interpretations). We encounter in papers such terms as kingdoms, chiefdoms (mainly in the descriptions of Caesarean and pre-Caesarean Britain), tribes, dynasties, the Roman *civitates*, and the neutral proto-states and polities. Some of these terms, e.g., chiefdom, have been heavily criticized and are now used much less frequently, while others are still in the research vocabulary.[45]

135–136, 147. For common features of the development of Iron Age Britain and Ireland see Hill 2012. Though Hill is cautious about the degree of similarity between southeast England and other parts of Britain and Ireland, and notes that kingship could have been be an experiment specific to the southeast. I think a well-thought out comparison of ancient British and Early Irish communities will enrich our understanding of the essence of kingship and the nature of the kings' power. Useful specifically for the study of the kingship phenomenon (among many others) are observations by Byrne and Gibson: Byrne 1973, Gibson 2008.

[41] Thurston 2010.

[42] *Ibid.* 207.

[43] *Ibid.* 227. See also: Hill 2007: 21; Leins (on Iron Age communities of the northeastern region) 2012: 244–247. On heterarchy see: Crumley 1987; *Id.* 1995; *Id.* 2001: 25–28.

[44] Thurston's opinion that is worth noting (Thurston 2010: 207): "The power of those we typically imagine as rulers, the warrior elite, lay at a nexus between camaraderie and incentive, self-abasement and aggrandizement, and much like the indirect expressions of power described by Gramsci, Lukes, Benton, and Townsend couched in highly ideological frameworks of brotherhood, devotio, and fate. It was a dangerous space within which to live, with death in battle the result of a successful balancing act, and death at the hands of one's own kin or followers for those who strayed outside its narrowly defined bounds."

[45] On the difficulties of using the term chiefdom with regard to the Iron Age in Europe, see: Randsborg 2015: 41–44. The term tribe, so frequently used in descriptions of pre-Roman Britain, has been subjected to justified criticism in Moore 2011.

However, in these attempts to re-conceptualize we must not succumb to the extremity of total unification and choose one notion or one theoretical model that would provide a label to suit all the phenomena being analyzed.[46] We must not only turn to the new (new if only to researchers of pre-Roman Britain) ideas and concepts, such as a "corporate state with a heterarchic structure" proposed by Thurston, but also closely review existing or obsolete concepts.[47] The need for a pluralism of concepts and approaches is dictated by the complexity of the problems in question. This complexity, in turn, is formed by the special dynamism of the epoch. We must remember that in studying late Iron Age Britain we do not encounter a single society whose transformation can be characterized as universal and consistent, but rather some heterogeneous communities undergoing changes under the influence of a wide range of internal and external factors not completely known or understood. Consideration of these circumstances, elaboration of new approaches, and involvement of information concerning other Iron Age societies seems to me would enable a better understanding of the rulers of pre-Roman Britain.

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[46] I agree with Collis, who insists on the need for a pluralism of approaches: Collis 2007: 524.

[47] It is possible that it would be of use to exculpate some of them: e.g. the once-popular notion of military democracy that was actively used by Soviet researchers who followed Morgan and Engels. See Khazanov 1974.

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АНТОН БАРИШЊИКОВ
Државни Универзитет у Нижњем Новгороду
Руски државни универзитет за хуманистичке науке (Москва)

REGES, REGULI, DUCES: НЕКА ЗАПАЖАЊА О ПОЈЕДИНЦУ И МОЋИ У КАСНОГВОЗДЕНОДОПСКОЈ ПРЕРИМСКОЈ БРИТАНИЈИ

Резиме

У раду се разматра једна од најзначајнијих промена у касногвозденодопској преримској Британији - појава индивидуалне моћи, често означаване као краљевске. Модерно разумевање ове друштвено-политичке појаве било је највећим делом одређено слеђењем текстова грчких иримских писаца. У раду се предлаже да је таква слика искривљена и говори више о античким ауторима него што сведочи о британским политичким вођама, њиховом статусу или суштини њихове моћи. Избегавање појмова као што је „краљ" да би се спречило опште неразумевање овог феномена је оправдано. Међутим, ковани новац такозваних династија и племена, као и други материјални подаци, показују појаву моћних појединаца у периоду од првог века пре н.е. до првог века нове ере. Овај нови друштвени феномен би стога требало да се анализира помоћу нових и допуњених теоријских оквира. Додатно, компаративне студије могу да играју значајну улогу при истраживању природе појаве која се назива „гвозденодопска краљевска власт" у Британији.

Кључне речи: гвозденодопски краљеви, преримска Британија, rex, Каратакус, Тогидубнус, краљевска власт.