

# Pictish Progress

*New Studies on Northern Britain  
in the Early Middle Ages*



*Edited by*  
Stephen T. Driscoll, Jane Geddes  
and Mark A. Hall



BRILL

## Pictish Progress

# The Northern World

North Europe and the Baltic *c.* 400–1700 A.D.  
Peoples, Economies and Cultures

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VOLUME 50

# Pictish Progress

New Studies on Northern Britain in the Early Middle Ages

*Edited by*

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LEIDEN • BOSTON  
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## CONTENTS

Foreword .....	vii
STEPHEN T. DRISCOLL, JANE GEDDES AND MARK A. HALL	
List of Contributors .....	xi
List of Figures .....	xiii
List of Tables .....	xvii
Maps: 1.1: A cultural geography of northern Britain in the seventh century .....	
	xix
1.2: Places mentioned in the text .....	xx

## INTRODUCTION

F. T. Wainwright and <i>The Problem of the Picts</i> .....	3
BARBARA E. CRAWFORD	

## PART ONE

### NAMES AND TEXTS

From Ancient Scythia to <i>The Problem of the Picts</i> : Thoughts on the Quest for Pictish Origins .....	15
JAMES E. FRASER	
Ideology, Literacy and Matriliney: Approaches to Medieval Texts on the Pictish Past .....	45
NICHOLAS EVANS	
Pictish Place-names Revisited .....	67
SIMON TAYLOR	

## PART TWO

### STORIES IN STONE

The Problems of Pictish Art, 1955–2009 .....	121
JANE GEDDES	

Tales from Beyond the Pict: Sculpture and its Uses in and around Forteviot, Perthshire from the Ninth Century Onwards .....	135
MARK A. HALL	
Saints, Scrolls and Serpents: Theorising a Pictish Liturgy on the Tarbat Peninsula .....	169
KELLIE MEYER	
The Forms of Two Crosses on Pictish Cross-slabs: Rossie Priory, Perthshire and Glamis no. 2 .....	201
ROBERT D. STEVICK	
The Interpretation of Non-ferrous Metalworking in Early Historic Scotland .....	221
ANDREW HEALD	

## PART THREE

## LANDSCAPES FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

Pictish Archaeology: Persistent Problems and Structural Solutions .....	245
STEPHEN T. DRISCOLL	
Together as One: The Landscape of the Symbol Stones at Rhynie, Aberdeenshire .....	281
MEGGEN GONDEK AND GORDON NOBLE	
The Early Medieval Landscape of Donside, Aberdeenshire .....	307
IAIN FRASER AND STRATFORD HALLIDAY	
A Review of Pictish Burial Practices in Tayside and Fife .....	335
SARAH WINLOW	
Index .....	371

## FOREWORD

### THE ROAD TO PUBLICATION

This publication is the culmination of an extended programme of conferences that have sought to mark the contribution of F. T. Wainwright to Pictish studies, and in particular the 50th anniversary of *The Problem of the Picts*. The latter book, which Wainwright edited and contributed to, started life as a conference, the first Scottish Summer School in Archaeology, held in Dundee in 1952, and appeared as a book in 1955. Our somewhat more extended chronology has taken us from 2004 (and the first of four conferences that marked the 50th anniversary) until the appearance of this book in 2010. The programmes of all four conferences are listed below in order to give due acknowledgement and thanks to all those who contributed to their success, regardless of the inevitable selection process to reduce the papers down to a manageable and representative size for publication (with some of those not published here published, or set to be published, elsewhere).

The 2004 conference in Perth was organised by Mark Hall on behalf of the co-sponsors, Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee and Perth Museum and Art Gallery. The 2006 conferences in Kalamazoo and Leeds (with sponsorship from Brill's *Northern World* book series) were driven by the immense energy and enthusiasm of the late Dave Edsall (Iowa State University), who organised the Kalamazoo session and brought Stephen Driscoll and Mark Hall on board to help organise the session in Leeds. Sadly, Dave passed away before he could see this fruit which owes so much to his passionate labouring. We dedicate this volume to his memory. The Aberdeen conference, also 2006, was organised by Jane Geddes on behalf of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and the Aberdeen University Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies. It finally brought the research to an audience in northern Pictland.

In addition, we are indebted to Barbara Crawford for supplying the insightful academic biography of Wainwright, and to James Fraser, whose contribution was solicited by the editors after its presentation to a meeting of the First Millennia Studies Group in Edinburgh in 2007. This was particularly gratifying as not only is Fraser's paper on a theme Wainwright would have found fascinating but Fraser had

initiated a commemorative Wainwright project in 2003 but was forced to abandon it for personal reasons.

The conference programmes:

1. *Fifty Years On from Wainwright: Are the Picts the Problem?* Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth, Scotland, 20 March 2004
  - Simon Taylor: How Pictish are our Place-names?
  - Meggen Gondek: Questions for the Pictish Monumental Landscape
  - John Barrett: From Pattern to Process: The Implications of Excavations at Pitcarmick
  - Derek Hall and Mark A. Hall: What's Cooking? New Carbon Dates for the Earliest Phases of the Perth High Street Excavation and the Question of Perth's Early Medieval Origin
  - Martin Carver: Portmahomack and the 'conversion' of the Picts
  - Stephen T. Driscoll: The Problem with Pictish Archaeology: A Southern Perspective
  - Sarah Winlow: Burial in the First Millennium AD: Pagan and Christian in Tayside and Beyond
2. *Fresh Pict: Fifty Years of Pictish Studies*, Kalamazoo International Medieval Congress, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA, 5 May 2006
  - Michael D. King: The Christian Meaning of the Pictish Crescent and the V-Rod Symbol
  - Kellie Meyer: Saints, Scrolls and Serpents: Theorising a Pictish Liturgy
  - Robert D. Stevick: Pictish Participation in Insular Art: The Forms of the Crosses on Two Cross-slabs
  - Helen McKay: The Spoked Wheel Symbol of Pictland
  - Kelley K. McDonald: Pictish Symbol Reversal: A Way to Distinguish between the Living and the Dead
  - Kirsten J. Anderson: Monumental Hegemony: Brochs and Pictish Symbol Stones in Early Medieval North Scotland
  - Jean Hetzel: The Bonny Wee Symbols: An Examination of Pictish Symbols on Small Artefacts
  - Lloyd Laing: How Roman were the Celts?

3. *Fresh Pict: Fifty Years of Pictish Studies*, Leeds International Medieval Congress, Leeds University, Leeds, England, 12 July 2006
  - Stephen T. Driscoll: Problems with Pictish Archaeology: A Southern Perspective
  - Sally Foster: The Joys, Pitfalls and Lessons of Attempting to Reconstruct the Biography of a Major Pictish monument: The Hilton of Cadboll Cross-slab, Easter Ross
  - Jane Geddes: The Problems of Pictish Art: Fifty Years On
  - Martin Carver: The Early Monastery at Portmahomack and its Context
  - Meggen Gondek: Standing on Pictish Ceremony: The Landscape of Symbol Stones at Rhynie, Aberdeenshire
  - Allie Nickel: From *Apurfeirt* to *Athan*: Abernethy as a Pictish Centre
  - Lloyd Laing: Workshops and Pictish Patronage in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries
  - Mark A. Hall: Dupplin and Invermay, Crosses and their Landscapes: More on the Cultural Biography of Pictish Sculpture
  - Nicholas Evans: Ideology, Literacy and Matriliney: Approaches to Medieval Texts on the Pictish Past
  - Andrew Heald: The Role of the Smith in Religious and Secular Early Medieval Society: Metalworking Workshops at Tarbat, Easter Ross
  - Margaret Duszejko-Studenna: Music and Language of the Art within Art: Deceptive Ornament on Christian Monuments—Decoding the Structures
4. *Fresh Pict: Problems Revisited in Aberdeen*, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen, Scotland, 18 November, 2006
  - Nicholas Evans: Ideology, Literacy and Matriliney
  - David Dumville: Matriliney
  - Lloyd Laing: Workshops and Patronage
  - Andrew Heald: The Role of the Smith
  - Simon Taylor: Pictish Place-names Revisited
  - Stratford Halliday: The Pictish Landscape of Donside
  - Gordon Noble: The Ground Beneath his Feet: The Landscape Context of Rhynie Man
  - Jane Geddes: St Vigean, St Fechin and St Antony: A Lost Cycle in Southern Pictland?

- Michael D. King: The Christian Meaning of the Pictish Crescent and V-Rod Symbol

The editors are grateful to Ingrid Shearer who designed the introductory maps and some of the distribution maps as well as improving a number of the illustrations. Lastly, we would like to thank Marianne Noble for coping so patiently with copy editing and delivering the text for publication.

Stephen T. Driscoll, Jane Geddes and Mark A. Hall  
Spring 2010

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## LIST OF FIGURES

(chapter author in brackets after description)

Fig. 1.1: A cultural geography of northern Britain in the seventh century. ....	xix
Fig. 1.2: Places mentioned in the text. ....	xx
Fig. 2.1: Distribution of *CÊT. (Taylor) ....	86
Fig. 2.2: Distribution of *LANERC. (Taylor) ....	90
Fig. 2.3: Distribution of *OGEL/*OCHIL. (Taylor) ....	94
Fig. 2.4: Distribution of *PERT. (Taylor) ....	98
Fig. 2.5: Distribution of MONADH. (Taylor) ....	104
Fig. 3.1: The early medieval landscape context of the Forteviot sculptures. (Hall) ....	139
Fig. 3.2: Spindle whorl incised with ring-headed cross from Ecclesiamagirdle. (Hall) ....	145
Fig. 3.3: Forteviot sculptural fragment no. 5. (Hall) ....	146
Fig. 3.4: Forteviot sculptural fragment no. 7. (Hall) ....	147
Fig. 3.5: Invermay sculptural fragment no. 1 (Forteviot no. 8). (Hall) ....	148
Fig. 3.6: Invermay nos. 1A and 1B (Forteviot nos. 9 and 10). (Hall) ....	150
Fig. 3.7: Invermay no. 1B (Forteviot no. 10), broad face. (Hall) ....	151
Fig. 3.8: The Dupplin Cross: a) faces A, B, C and D; b) base. (Hall) ....	152
Fig. 3.9: Pomerium Playground dedication boulder, Perth: a) boulder and playground; b) inscription. (Hall) ....	155
Fig. 3.10: Detail of John Adair's map of Strathearn, to show the locations of the Dupplin and Invermay crosses. (Hall) ....	158
Fig. 3.11: Kinnoull family memorial: granite copy of Dupplin Cross in Dupplin churchyard. (Hall) ....	159
Fig. 3.12: Invermay cross-base, 2003: a) restored monument with replacement pillar; b) detail of original base. (Hall) ....	161
Fig. 4.1: Map showing the Tarbat peninsula. (Meyer) ....	170
Fig. 4.2: a) Nigg cross-slab pediment; b) Nigg cross-slab pediment: detail of loaf in raven's mouth. (Meyer) ....	178

Fig. 4.3: a) Nigg cross-slab: serpents on left side of shaft; b) Nigg cross-slab: serpents on right side of shaft. (Meyer) .....	184
Fig. 4.4: Shandwick cross-slab: serpents and serpentine beasts. (Meyer) .....	185
Fig. 4.5: TR2 fragment: serpents. (Meyer) .....	186
Fig. 4.6: TR20 fragment: figural composition. (Meyer) .....	188
Fig. 4.7: Shandwick cross-slab: spiral panel. (Meyer) .....	190
Fig. 4.8: Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab: spiral panel. (Meyer) .....	191
Fig. 4.9: Shandwick cross-slab: <i>crux gemmata</i> . (Meyer) .....	193
Fig. 4.10: TR1 fragment: detail of vine-scroll root and winged quadrupeds. (Meyer) .....	194
Fig. 5.1: Rossie Priory cross-slab, Perthshire, with schematic drawing superimposed on a photograph. (Stevick) .....	202
Fig. 5.2: Glamis no. 2 cross-slab, with schematic drawing superimposed on a photograph. (Stevick) .....	203
Fig. 5.3: Illustration of an equal ratio for two pairs of measures. (Stevick) .....	205
Fig. 5.4a–d: One way to set the overall ratio of width to height for the two crosses. (Stevick) .....	208
Fig. 5.4e–h: One way to complete the form of the Rossie Priory cross-slab. (Stevick) .....	209
Fig. 5.5e–h: One way to complete the form of the Glamis no. 2 cross-slab. (Stevick) .....	211
Fig. 5.6: Tentative derivation of armpit designs for the Glamis no. 2 cross-slab. (Stevick) .....	214
Fig. 6.1: Non-ferrous metalworking sites in Early Historic Scotland (squares represent probable sites and numbers correspond to site numbers in the appendix). (Heald) .....	222
Fig. 6.2: The mould from Cnoc a' Comhdhalach and the object produced. (Heald) .....	224
Fig. 6.3: Metalworking sites in and around Dunadd. (Heald) .....	229
Fig. 7.1: Early Scotland Political Map 1b from the inside cover of <i>The Problem of the Picts</i> . (Driscoll) .....	251
Fig. 7.2: Distribution of the place-name element <i>Pit</i> from <i>The Problem of the Picts</i> . (Driscoll) .....	254

Fig. 7.3a: Distribution map illustrating the influence of aerial photography on settlement archaeology in Strathearn, Perthshire (Driscoll)	
Fig. 7.3b: A second distribution map illustrating the influence of aerial photography on settlement archaeology, here in south-east Perthshire (Driscoll) .....	258–259
Fig. 7.4: Plans of Pictish houses at a common scale showing the range of architectural traditions practised in the first millennium. (Driscoll) .....	261
Fig. 7.5: An artist's impression of the Pictish settlement at Easter Kinneir, Fife. (Driscoll) .....	263
Fig. 7.6: Comparative plans of hillforts were a characteristic device used by Leslie Alcock; this composite of Pictish hillforts has been drawn from three such diagrams. (Driscoll) .....	265
Fig. 7.7: Modern topographic survey of Turin Hill, Angus. (Driscoll) .....	266
Fig. 7.8: Elizabeth Alcock's display of the distribution of Pictish stones against a background of the good agricultural land. (Driscoll) .....	269
Fig. 7.9: The cropmarks of Forteviot. (Driscoll) .....	272
Fig. 7.10: The SERF study area is defined by the three modern parishes of Forteviot, Dunning and Forgandenny which run from the uplands of the Ochils to the banks of the River Earn. (Driscoll) .....	273
Fig. 8.1: Location of Rhynie, showing findspots of the symbol stones. (Gondek and Noble) .....	284
Fig. 8.2: The symbol map of the symbol stones of Rhynie. The lost no. 4 is not included on this map. (Gondek and Noble)	289
Fig. 8.3: Symbol stone distribution in relation to other upstanding monuments. (Gondek and Noble) .....	292
Fig. 8.4: The Craw Stane enclosures. (Gondek and Noble) .....	294
Fig. 8.5: The magnetometer survey carried out in 2005. Grids marked by grey area on map. (Gondek and Noble) .....	296
Fig. 8.6: The resistivity survey of 2006. Grids marked by hatched area on map. (Gondek and Noble) .....	298
Fig. 8.7: The square enclosures at the southern outskirts of the village of Rhynie. (Gondek and Noble) .....	298

Fig. 9.1: Map of Donside showing the medieval parish boundaries and Kintore, Invernochty and Garviach. (Fraser and Halliday) .....	319
Fig. 9.2: Maps of the territorial units at Invernochty (top) and Kintore (bottom). (Fraser and Halliday) .....	320
Fig. 9.3: Maps showing the distributions of Pictish symbol stones, cross-slabs, crosses and ogham inscriptions. (Fraser and Halliday) .....	323
Fig. 9.4: The stone at Logie Elphinstone, which bears an ogham inscription at the top, below which a crescent with V-rod and a double disc with Z-rod are superimposed upon another double disc with Z-rod. (Fraser and Halliday) .....	328
Fig. 9.5: Carved stones found at Dyce. (Fraser and Halliday) ....	329
Fig. 10.1: Aerial view of Boysack Mills. (Winlow) .....	336
Fig. 10.2: 'Double disc' cairn complex, Lundin Links during excavation in the 1960s. (Winlow) .....	337
Fig. 10.3: Distribution of barrows/cairns and flat graves. (Winlow) .....	338
Fig. 10.4: Aerial view of Hallhole barrow cemetery. (Winlow) ....	339
Fig. 10.5: View of square barrow 3, Whitebridge. (Winlow) .....	340
Fig. 10.6: View of round barrow 1, Whitebridge. (Winlow) .....	340
Fig. 10.7: Size of barrow/cairn cemeteries and flat grave cemeteries. (Winlow) .....	341
Fig. 10.8: Aerial view of Invergighy Cottage barrow cemetery. (Winlow) .....	342
Fig. 10.9: Analysis of layout of barrow cemeteries. (Winlow) ....	343
Fig. 10.10: View of Bruceton symbol stone. (Winlow) .....	362

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Sigla used for the Pictish king-lists. (Evans) .....	46
Table 2: Linked measures in the form of Rossie Priory cross-slab. (Stevick) .....	218
Table 3: Linked measures in the form of Glamis no. 2 cross-slab. (Stevick) .....	219
Table 4: Sites with non-ferrous metalworking of arguable Early Historic date. (Sites in italics are probable). (Heald) .....	240
Table 5: Monuments from Rhynie (information compiled from <i>ECMS</i> ; Logan 1829, RCAHMS 1999, NMRS; Fraser and Halliday 2007, 119–22). (Gondek and Noble) .....	286
Table 6: Detail from excavated sites from Tayside and Fife. (Winlow) .....	368



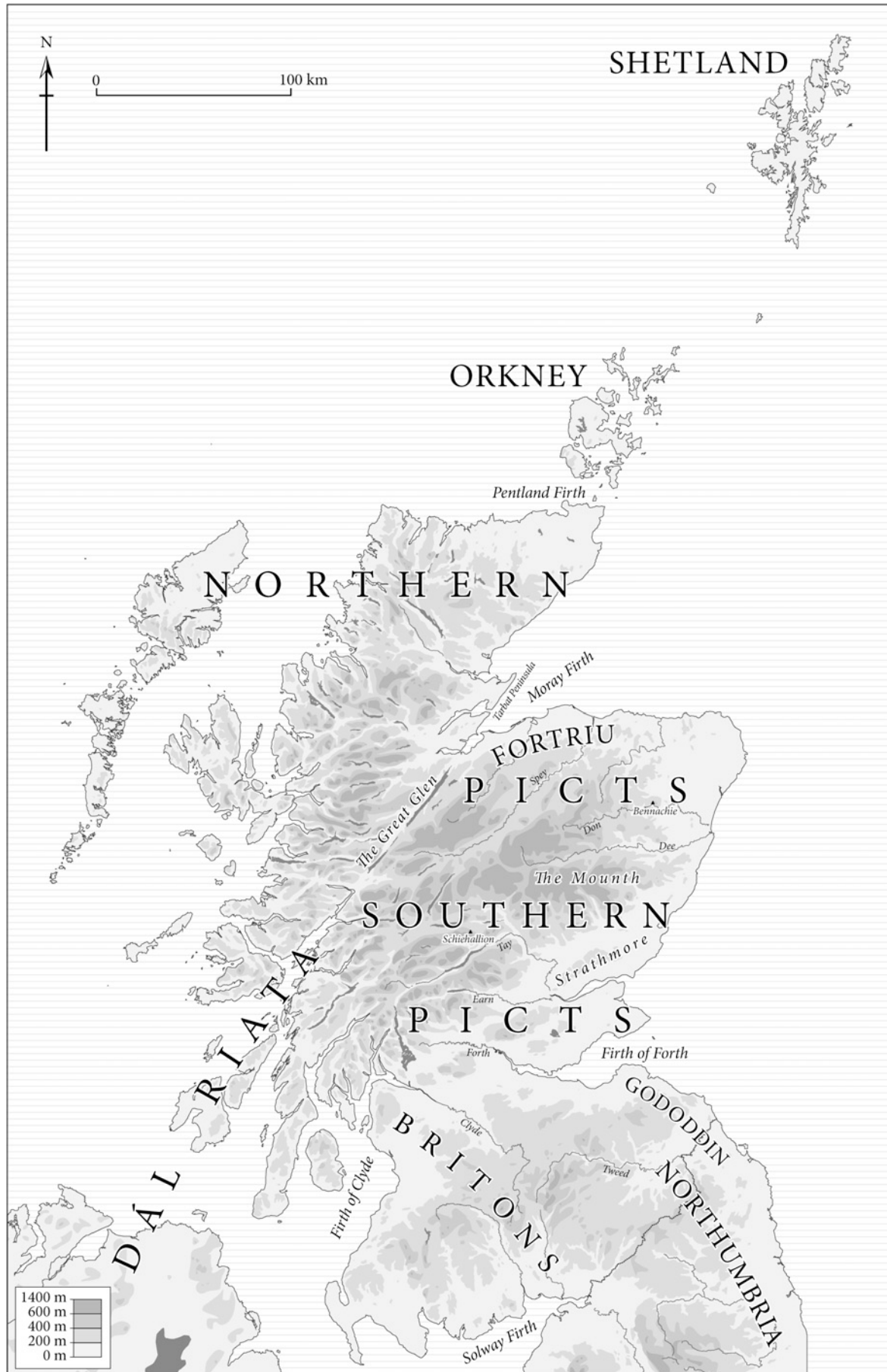


Fig. 1.1: A cultural geography of northern Britain in the seventh century. (Map: Ingrid Shearer.)



Fig. 1.2: Places mentioned in the text. (Map: Ingrid Shearer.)

## INTRODUCTION



## F. T. WAINWRIGHT AND *THE PROBLEM OF THE PICTS*

Barbara E. Crawford

*The Problem of the Picts* was an innovatory volume which deserves to be commemorated fifty years after its publication (1955).<sup>1</sup> It broke new ground as “a composite work” (the editor’s phrase) which brought together the expertise of several scholars who examined the evidence for the Picts from different angles. That composite nature was what today would be called ‘interdisciplinary’ although in 1955 that word was very new, and it reflected an approach which F. T. Wainwright was to pioneer. As he said in the preface, “we have tried to bring together the archaeological, historical and linguistic evidence”, and “that has made us more than usually careful about terminology” (wisely!). Wainwright himself led off with a look at “The Picts and The Problem”, as well as “Houses and Graves”; Stuart Piggott (Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh) took a general look at “The Archaeological Background”; R. W. Feachem (Senior Investigator, Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland) looked at “Fortifications”; R. B. K. Stevenson (Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland) “Pictish Art”; and K. H. Jackson (Professor of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh) “The Pictish Language”. All these chapters were accepted as the ‘gold standard’ regarding the different aspects of the evidence until recent decades. The contributions to the present volume of conference papers will show how Pictish studies have moved on since 1955.

*The Problem of the Picts* cannot be considered, or understood, without an awareness of the role which F. T. Wainwright played in its genesis, for he was the inspiration behind it; his contribution to this and other multi-authored books forged a new approach in the post-war period, advancing a more popular academic publication programme.

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<sup>1</sup> The 40th anniversary of its publication was the stimulus to the production of *A Pictish Panorama* ed. Eric Nicoll (1995), a most useful collection of interdisciplinary studies by Dauvit Broun, Katherine Forsyth, W. F. H. Nicolaisen, Isabel Henderson, Anna Ritchie and Edwina Proudfoot, and with an annotated Pictish bibliography by J. R. F. Burt.

These volumes were the fruit of his desire to further co-ordination among scholars of different disciplines as well as of his drive to open up the world of archaeological endeavour to a wider public. "These books remind us of his foresight, industry and ability" said Stewart Cruden in his preface to *The Northern Isles*, which was the last of the publications resulting from the Summer Schools in Archaeology which Wainwright established, appearing in 1962, shortly after his tragically early death in 1961 at the age of 43. We can perhaps be more effusive about Wainwright's achievements, viewed from a more distant perspective than Cruden's in 1962, and recognise the 'inspiration' which led him not only to bring scholars together in interdisciplinary ventures, but to write himself about the difficulties of combining different disciplines in the study of proto-historic periods and especially the 'Dark Ages' of the early medieval period.<sup>2</sup> In his own research activities he ranged widely across an astonishing spectrum of academic disciplines and pan-British topics, more than any other scholar of his age, blazing a trail for future practitioners of his methodology.

Born near St Helens in Lancashire in 1917, Frederick Threlfall Wainwright was educated at Rainford, Preston Grammar School and the University of Reading, where from 1935–8 he studied history under the great historian Sir Frank Stenton. Here it was that he learned to use other sources of evidence apart from historical materials for a better understanding of the pre-Norman period of English history. He graduated in 1938 with a first-class honours degree in history, followed by a teaching diploma in 1939, the same year as he married Barbara Mary Brockman, also a pupil of Stenton, and a future collaborator in some of her husband's publications. He then pursued a career in teaching, and for five years from 1940 taught both history and English at Liverpool College, during which period he also produced a doctoral thesis on Edward the Elder and the Danes, for Reading University. He took up the challenge of interdisciplinary work in this period and learned about the archaeological techniques of survey and excavation on several Anglo-Saxon fortified sites such as Eddisbury, Chirbury, Tamworth and Chicklade. His interest in place-names, stimulated no doubt by his experience of studying with Stenton, led to a large number

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'Dark Ages', which Wainwright uses quite freely, has become something of a contentious term in recent decades. See my attempt to justify its continued use: Crawford 1997.

of review articles on place-name publications and short contributions on the Scandinavian place-names of north-west England.<sup>3</sup> Eventually he became Treasurer of the English Place-Name Society.

At the end of the war came the surprise move north, to another country with quite a different historical and archaeological (and place-name) culture. In 1945 Wainwright took up an academic appointment in Queen's College Dundee, part of the University of St Andrews, as Lecturer in History, and from 1951–5 he was Head of History.<sup>4</sup> One wonders why he decided to cast his boat out in new and somewhat alien waters. However, this move saw the beginning of his active engagement with Scottish archaeology and above all the 'problems' of the Picts. Very few before him had aspired to encompass the history of both the Anglo-Saxons and the Picts, or had the ambition to master the diverse evidence for such different 'Dark Age' cultures.<sup>5</sup>

Within a few years he had written an article on the battle of Nechtansmere,<sup>6</sup> and the site of the battle (*Antiquity*, xxii, 1948), followed the next year by an article on "Problems and Policies" (*Antiquity*, xxiii, 1949), stimulated by an assessment of the state of archaeology published the previous year by the Council for British Archaeology (*Survey and Policy of Field Research in the Archaeology of Great Britain*, part i). This is a hard-hitting and provocative diatribe on 'Dark-Age problems'; the problems of evidence, of technique, and of interpretation, and above all the problem of co-ordinating the various sources of evidence (political, social, economic, artistic, literary and linguistic "which archaeology alone can never solve") into "a single historical synthesis". Here we have the first evidence that Wainwright was meeting head-on the problems of the fraught relationship of archaeology and history. As he says (and as some of us well know), "it

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<sup>3</sup> A full bibliography of Wainwright's publications can be found in Finberg 1975, 345–52.

<sup>4</sup> He taught the General class on Outlines of European history from close of Middle Ages to present day and the Special class on Outlines of British history from close of Middle Ages to present day.

<sup>5</sup> H. M. Chadwick of Cambridge University had been a proponent of the interdisciplinary approach just prior to Wainwright, and the Dept. of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic has maintained Chadwick's interdisciplinary outlook. In Scotland Professor Leslie Alcock of Glasgow University was Wainwright's outstanding successor in furthering research and excavation of Early Historic sites, a focus maintained by the Dept. of Archaeology at Glasgow.

<sup>6</sup> One notes that he clung to the Anglo-Saxon name for the battle rather than adopting local nomenclature (Dunnichen).

is extraordinarily difficult to co-ordinate the work of specialists”, and he does not mince his words about the distrust of specialists for each other and the “mutual complaints and denunciations uttered in bitter rage, academic indignation or sly geniality”. He raises all the problems of interdisciplinarity which he was later to expound on at greater length in his seminal book *Archaeology, place-names and history*, subtitled *an essay on problems of co-ordination* (1962). There are a lot of very wise words on the need for interpretation and co-ordination, but underneath the fluent consideration of the problems one senses that there was a very frustrated scholar who was himself attempting to co-ordinate the very different sources of evidence, and finding the enormous barriers to doing this in his new field of endeavour, the early history of Scotland. He concludes by recommending the need for “an institute or department devoted specifically to the many-sided problems of the Dark Ages”, which perhaps was the ultimate goal of his own ambitions.

Another recommendation which he put forward was that a Council for Dark Age Studies should help to spread the word among an interested public about the early medieval period by disseminating readable reports of archaeological excavations. These would help to dissipate the legends and provide new and reliable evidence about the cultures for the edification of the “wide and interested public”, who were the potential patrons of equipment, departments, funds and (perhaps) lavish journals. This may sound a little ambitious and far-fetched, but the idea of public participation was far-sighted and led him to organise the Summer Schools in Archaeology which pioneered a new approach and from which so many useful publications ensued.

In 1952 the first Summer School in Archaeology took place at the University of Dundee, and the resulting papers were published three years later in *The Problem of the Picts*. Further conference proceedings, and other books in the series *Studies in Early History and Archaeology* (of which Wainwright was the general editor from 1955–62), followed: *Roman and native in north Britain* (1958), *The Scottish Castle* (1960), *The Northern Isles* (1962), *Prehistoric Peoples of Scotland* (1962), *Prehistoric and Early Wales* (1965), and *The Roman Villa in Britain* (1969), most of them after Wainwright’s early death. They were all major contributions to better understanding of the particular topic. As already noted, Wainwright himself contributed two major chapters to *The Problem of the Picts*, and two more on “Picts and Scots”, and “The

Scandinavian Settlement" in *The Northern Isles*, with a brief chapter on "The Golden Age and After" as well as a short appendix on "The St Ninian's Isle Excavation".<sup>7</sup> All these chapters have stood the test of time very well, and some of them have made a lasting impact on our understanding of certain historical situations; the conclusion that "the Scandinavians arrived [in the Northern Isles] in numbers sufficient to overwhelm the earlier inhabitants politically, socially, culturally and linguistically" has resonated down the decades and still forms the rallying call of one side of the argument in the continuing contested interpretation of the Viking impact on Orkney and Shetland.

Wainwright's remarkable grasp of the different kinds of evidence for the Scandinavian impact on the Northern Isles resulted from his familiarity with the evidence for the impact of the Danes on Anglo-Saxon England. But where the Picts were concerned he had no linguistic background which was of any help for a thorough grasp of the complex situation; the evidence of the place-names must have been especially obscure, and his difficulties in using them as a tool to better understanding were probably exceedingly frustrating to him. The 'problem' of the Picts may partly have been, understandably, a problem of his own understanding. However, the archaeological evidence was a field which he could make his own, as indeed he did.

In *The Problem of the Picts* his discussion of the archaeological evidence for Pictish houses and graves is a masterly assessment of the nature of the problem—and the lack of evidence. Many of the cautionary statements are as apposite today as they were in 1955. As he constantly states, the lack of excavation made the 'problem' intractable. The finding of sites for excavation was the prime requirement but domestic dwellings of the right period were exceedingly elusive. "There are many places, where on historical or archaeological grounds the existence of Pictish settlements may be presumed, and these especially should be watched." (p. 89). The problem in Pictland was the absence of stone-built houses, with the result that advances in recognition of Pictish period domestic settlement has advanced faster and

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<sup>7</sup> This gives a resumé of the relevant publications on the hoard since its discovery in 1955, Wainwright adding in his usual direct terms, "Other accounts and illustrations of the hoard may be ignored."



further in the Northern Isles where stone was abundant and much used by the pre-Norse Iron Age population.<sup>8</sup>

However, there was one class of stone building which was abundant in Pictland and this was the souterrains, subterranean structures which are a remarkable feature of Iron Age culture, and the study of which Wainwright made his own. The excavations of Ardestie and Carlungie I souterrains in Angus were conducted by him and took place from 1949–51, and the resulting study, *The Souterrains of Southern Pictland* (published posthumously 1963), is a masterly and readable account of the excavations, along with a reconsideration of the nature and function of souterrains and a summary of the evidence for all recorded souterrains between the Dee and the Forth. As he says when discussing who the peoples were who built the souterrains, “the problem is complex”, and he is very cautious about identifying them as Picts, but content to accept that they were simply “one of the many groups that went to make up the historical Picts”. What they were built for is still the puzzling question and Wainwright ranges over most of the possibilities, none of which, as he admits, are convincing, although he settled for the ‘byre’ explanation as a “tentative conclusion” (p. 18). What he did not bring into the equation was the mystical aspect of some religious belief, which for myself, in light of the extraordinary site of Minehowe in Orkney, would appear to provide the most satisfactory set of possible parameters to explain these underground structures which can have served no practical purpose.<sup>9</sup>

All of Wainwright’s prodigious energy in the time when he was in the Department of History at Queen’s College, Dundee had been devoted to the ‘Dark Age’ period of Scotland’s early history, and especially to the development of Summer Schools in Archaeology. Yet he was appointed to teach modern social and economic history, and this can only have been a distraction to him from the pursuit of interdisciplinary studies appropriate to a much earlier period of history to which he was so passionately committed. It appears by 1955 that he was unwilling to continue in his current position and he proposed that his appointment should be changed to ‘Independent Lecturer in

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<sup>8</sup> See reports of the excavations at Buckquoy (Ritchie 1974; 1976–7), and other sites in Orkney (Hedges 1987, 41–9; Hunter 2007), and more recently Scatness in Shetland ([www.brad.ac.uk/acad/archsci/field\\_proj/scat/](http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/archsci/field_proj/scat/))

<sup>9</sup> More recent assessments of the possible function and fate of souterrains have been published by Barclay (1980) and Armit (1999).

Anglo-Saxon Archaeology and History' in St Salvator's College in St Andrews. This seems to have been agreed on the terms that he was required only to "deliver such lectures in this subject [Anglo-Saxon Studies] as he may be requested to deliver by the Professors of English and Medieval History" (St Andrew's University Court Minutes 25th July 1955. UYUY505. 1955).<sup>10</sup> However, all cannot have proceeded smoothly as in the 1957–8 Court Minutes it is said that he had suffered "misapprehension in various quarters" regarding his lecturing title so it was recommended that it be changed to 'Lecturer in Dark Age Studies' in order to clear up confusion. This would seem to have been an ideal development for him, yet there is no evidence that he flourished in this position (he was promoted to Senior Lecturer) for he appears not to have offered any courses appropriate to this title, and no courses are listed in the University records. When I entered the University of St Andrews in the autumn of 1959 my only recollection of his involvement in teaching is that he took some of us undergraduates interested in archaeology out on Saturday morning field trips. The evidence suggests that he had reached an academic impasse, through attempting to carve a position for himself which did not fit into the regular structure of the History Department's curriculum. The uneasy relationship of archaeology and history appears to have been a block to his career progress in the academic environment of the 1950s. What would have been his future is, of course, unknown as he died after a short illness in June 1961.

Wainwright was ahead of his time. Only in recent decades have interdisciplinary studies become a normal part of the academic curriculum. Nothing has yet appeared in print to match the slim volume *Archaeology and place-names and history*, which Wainwright wrote as a follow-up to his 1949 article in *Antiquity*, and which appeared in print in 1962, again after his death, taken through the press by his widow. Described by H. P. R. Finberg in the preface to the re-publication of several of Wainwright's articles on Scandinavian names and settlement (1975) as "this pithy little book" (perhaps 'pungent' would be a more apposite term), it still astonishes the reader with its hard-hitting arguments and criticism of all the practitioners of the different disciplines. But it is very unspecific, with very few direct examples. The discussion

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<sup>10</sup> [Courtesy of] University of St Andrews Library, Department of Special Collections.

has almost no references or footnote documentation, a situation which he comments on in the preface, but he says this is because he is “discussing ideas rather than the results of research” so that “it matters little who said what, especially as I am more concerned to set down what I think myself than to contradict the expressed opinions of others”. However, there is plenty of contradiction in the following pages, and plenty of ‘obita dicta’, especially in the chapter on “The Conflict of Scholars”. This is not the place to discuss many of the issues which he raises, and in some respects these issues are now outdated, especially concerning archaeologists’ misuse of historical evidence. Not that he is uncritical of historians, for he berates them also for their tendency to mishandle archaeological and linguistic evidence—and their own historical sources. His harshest words are reserved for the “amateurs and popular writers” who are described as “the purveyors of rotten meat” who “rush in to feed the hungry public”. One wonders what he would have made of today’s world of archaeology personalities on screen and the availability of information, some good and some not so good, on the Internet.

The book reflects a different age in which the interdisciplinary model was new, distrusted and the source of great antagonisms. Most of us have had experience of some of these attitudes, although—thank goodness—they are much less pervasive than they once were. In my own programme of ‘Dark Age’ conferences intended to bring together the scholars who now adorn the academic world of early medieval Scottish studies<sup>11</sup> I met only willingness to be associated with scholars of different disciplines, and a desire to understand the priorities and technical methodology of co-researchers in the same field of endeavour. Wainwright was ploughing a much harder furrow and he was unable to achieve what was an ambitious and perhaps unrealistic programme in the academic environment in which he lived and worked. His prime achievement lay in conference publications like *The Problem of the Picts* which, more than fifty years on, is still a valuable collection of interdisciplinary papers for today’s scholars to use in their own understanding of what is no longer perceived as the ‘problem’ it was in Wainwright’s day.

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<sup>11</sup> Crawford 1994; 1996; 1998; 2002.

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PART ONE

NAMES AND TEXTS



## FROM ANCIENT SCYTHIA TO *THE PROBLEM OF THE PICTS*: THOUGHTS ON THE QUEST FOR PICTISH ORIGINS

James E. Fraser

Who were the Picts? And where did they come from? These questions lie at the heart of the Pictish problem, and we have not set ourselves to answer them. We have not shied away from them when they impinge upon our theme, as they do, but as a general rule we have kept our eyes on the historical Picts, and we have tried to isolate the various features characteristic of them and of the area occupied by them... That has been our aim—not to write a volume which might be entitled *The Origins of the Picts*, though we hope we have brought a little nearer the day when such a volume can be written. (Wainwright 1955a, v)

With these words, F. T. Wainwright laid down his mission statement for *The Problem of the Picts*, the proceedings of a Summer School hosted by him in Dundee in 1952. The School's objective had been "to isolate the various features characteristic of [the Picts] and of the area occupied by them" during the period in which the ethnonym *Picti* was certainly applied to them. Here in the preface to this landmark volume of essays, Wainwright established a framework for thinking about Pictish origins which has remained with us ever since. He and his colleagues took "the historical Picts" as a single identifiable group, with "characteristic features" which could be "isolated". To that end, Stuart Piggott examined the prehistoric archaeology of north-east Scotland, Dick Feachem examined its Early Historic hillforts, Wainwright himself examined settlement and burial archaeology, Robert Stevenson examined "Pictish art", and Kenneth Jackson examined language.

This cadre of impressive scholars took it for granted that the discrete "historical" period from 300 to 850 had intrinsic research validity, though they anticipated potential significant links with prehistory, terming the antecedents of the "historical Picts" the "proto-Picts" (Wainwright 1955b: 14–5, 48–53). Wainwright and his colleagues were, after all, chiefly concerned with origins. Indeed, they regarded the subject as central to Pictish studies, seeing movement towards a volume addressing it as the field's most desperate requirement. Social, institutional and political developments, including ecclesiastical ones, Wainwright regarded as secondary and (comparatively) minor



problems of the Picts. His title, then, was not intended to problematise the whole of Pictish studies: *the Problem of the Picts* related specifically to an inability “to write a volume which might be entitled *The Origins of the Picts*”. Other controversial subjects in Pictish studies were acknowledged, but did not, in Wainwright’s words, “directly concern our theme”.<sup>1</sup>

### I—Solving ‘the Problem of the Picts’

This inability on the part the ‘Wainwright Five’ to produce an *Origins* monograph was a function of the scholarly tradition within which they worked. What was perplexing them, and immobilising their pens, was, in Wainwright’s words, “that the people known to historians as Picts have not yet been recognised or satisfactorily identified in archaeology”. Why should this fact have been so troubling? In 1911, Gustaf Kossinna had published *Die Herkunft der Germanen*, “The Origins of the Germans”, presumably exactly the kind of book that Wainwright had in mind for his putative *The Origins of the Picts*. Here and elsewhere, Kossinna had pioneered a methodology in prehistoric archaeology now known as ‘the culture-historical paradigm’, in which he presumed that “sharply defined archaeological provinces correlate at all times with definite peoples”. At the dawning of the twentieth century ethnologists and anthropologists were turning away decisively from notions that differences between human societies (prehistoric or otherwise) were primarily explicable in terms of biological racial differences, and embraced instead the idea of societies as distinct cultural units (Jones 1997, 45–51). Yet Kossinna’s work was famously central to the racial history of Europe championed by the Third Reich (Curta 2002, 202–3), and Wainwright’s own language quoted below (speaking not just of “obscure origins” but also “complex racial developments”) shows that, even as late as the 1950s, vestiges of the racial paradigm remained embedded in understandings of culture (see also Wainwright 1955b, 28–9). Running the words ‘Pictish race’ through an Internet search engine sadly reveals that it remains embedded in the understanding of some.

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<sup>1</sup> Another, key, element of the mission statement of Wainwright *et al.* was the achievement of consensus amongst themselves, which they regarded as encouragement “to hope that our approaches are soundly based”.

Archaeologists in the English-speaking world had been introduced to Kossinna principally by Gordon Childe. At the forefront of the movement among prehistorians decoupling “peoples” from “races” (e.g. Childe 1933, 194–9), he was also Piggott’s predecessor in the Abercromby Chair of Prehistoric Archaeology at Edinburgh. Unsurprisingly, Piggott’s evaluation of “the Archaeological Background” in *The Problem of the Picts* is a *tour de force* in the culture-historical method, often referring to Childe’s scholarship in discussing Scotland’s “Circumpolar culture”, “Skara Brae type culture”, “Warrior Cultures”, and so on. In 1933 Childe had written of “cultures” as “groups of distinctive traits, mostly peculiarities in material culture”, which “tend to hang together and be associated in a given continuous region at a given period”. A “culture”, in his mind, corresponded to “a community sharing common traditions, common institutions and a common way of life”, and could “reasonably be called a people”, but not a race (Childe 1933, 197–9). His influence on Scottish archaeology and history alike may help to explain how the culture-historical paradigm he championed established such a hold on Pictish studies. The Wainwright Five thus expected an identifiable group of named people like the *Picti* to have “characteristic features” detectable by the archaeologist, but the Picts were resolutely refusing to conform to this theoretical paradigm.

As a result of this ‘problem’, Wainwright wrote, “archaeologists who value their reputation are reluctant to introduce the Picts into archaeological discussions”. Indeed, in some quarters by the 1950s, “an extreme form of an extreme argument” maintained that “the Picts never existed outside the imagination of Roman panegyrists” (Wainwright 1955b, 1). Such was the power of culture-historical theory that, despite textual evidence to the contrary, it was possible to argue that peoples whose archaeology failed to fit the paradigm were not peoples at all. *The Problem of the Picts* was the end result of a project formulated to deal comprehensively with that argument. It was entirely the product of dashed expectations built up by a flawed methodology. Wainwright thus found it necessary in his introductory essay to defend the Pictish “claim to a historical existence”, arguing that “however obscure the origins and however complex their racial development, the Picts themselves are a genuine historical people” (Wainwright 1955b, 2–3). The Five hoped to demonstrate that, if their “proto-Pictish” antecedents were a “problem”, the historical Picts, at least, had the kind of “characteristic features” that conformed to the

culture-historical paradigm. Reading between the lines of his mission statement, and throughout his introductory essay, it seems that Wainwright's ultimate goal was to find the prehistoric origins of these features, once he and his colleagues had isolated them.

*The Problem of the Picts* thus provides a fascinating local insight into the tyrannical power of the culture-historical theory of human difference, which is being given up by scholars of the past and present, leaving in its wake a massive clean-up job. "What we want to know", Wainwright wrote, "is whether the Picts were a homogeneous or a heterogeneous people and where they or their constituent elements came from." His introductory essay cast an unconvinced eye across attempts to identify as "proto-Picts" the "beaker-folk" of prehistoric Scotland, or the "broch-builders", or the "souterrain-dwellers", or "the men who threw up the vitrified forts". These classic applications of culture-historical thinking, identifying "cultures" as peoples, Wainwright characterised as exercises "in making bricks without straw" where Pictish origins were concerned (Wainwright 1955b, 10). What was actually happening was that the archaeological record of northern Britain was presenting its foremost experts in late prehistory and protohistory with an important case study in the limitations of the culture-historical paradigm. Key developments in anthropological and sociological study of ethnicity in the fifty years since he and his colleagues wrestled with their evidence have accordingly exploded the simplistic equation of a "culture" with a people (Jones 1997, 51–83). As a result, Wainwright's 'Problem of the Picts' has become a non-problem.

In some respects, then, it could be argued (somewhat unfairly) that *The Problem of the Picts* represents a missed opportunity of mounting one of the first challenges of the culture-historical model. It is unfortunate that Wainwright and his colleagues could not make the necessary conceptual leap which might have spared them much vexation in coming to terms with their data. The best they could achieve instead was to regard the question as still open, and to express optimism that, sooner or later, the Picts would meet the requirements of the culture-historical paradigm. Having dismissed all prior efforts to locate their origins within a single *prehistoric* archaeological "culture", Wainwright wrote (with my emphasis) that "the urgent requirement at this stage is to isolate the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the *historical* Picts and Pictland, so that in the future scholars may advance towards problems of race and origin from positions strengthened by a positive knowledge of what are or may be significant features in the terrain of available material" (Wainwright 1955b, 11; but see Piggott 1955, 54).

The Wainwright Five thus spurned revolution in favour of the argument that a detailed consideration of the historical Picts was the best way to identify them with a “culture”, the roots of which could then be pursued by prehistorians. Wainwright’s expectations were that those roots would be complex, rather than simple and linear. In his introductory essay, he cautioned readers that “the evidence... is against the view that the Picts as known to history were a single homogeneous people”, and he noted his belief that they would prove to be “a heterogeneous people” whose antecedents would not be found “in a single race or culture”. These were wise words. As a result of their failure to produce an identifiable archaeological “culture”, Wainwright concluded that “the historical Picts represent a number of racial and cultural groups which impinged or were superimposed on one another”. He imagined that other peoples, including the Anglo-Saxons, had similarly heterogeneous racial and cultural origins, but decided that the Picts were uncommon, their “individual racial and cultural elements” being “more evenly balanced and nearer the surface” than occurred with other peoples. From this conclusion, Wainwright inferred further that the integration of the Picts was “both recent and superficial”, as late as the seventh century, and had not, as yet, produced a single identifiable “culture” (Wainwright 1955b, 11–12).

Despite such thoughtful deliberations, Wainwright remained convinced all the same that the Picts had been a people since 300. He was thinking in sophisticated ways about the evidence relating to Pictish origins, but wrestling with the culture-historical paradigm, against rash applications of which he cautioned readers (Wainwright 1955b, 13–14). The point he was coming to appreciate, but does not seem to have been able to bring himself to state, was that Pictish cultural heterogeneity did not automatically rule out ethnic solidarity—a point that scholars today can concede with little of the perplexity of Wainwright’s generation. There was something of the *avant-garde* about Wainwright’s considered solution to ‘the Problem of the Picts’, which has since been vindicated by shifts in how the human sciences understand and measure human difference. However, the same rejection of culture-historical theory undermines Wainwright’s notion of Pictish ethnic solidarity despite fundamental heterogeneity—his sense of that heterogeneity was entirely based on Childe’s equation of culture and community.

Scholars of early medieval northern Britain were hardly unique in regarding the question of ethnic origins as central to their field. The inundation of the Latin West in late Antiquity by barbarians, who

eventually settled amongst the Roman citizenry, was an important factor in transforming both barbarian and Roman identities at the dawn of the early Middle Ages (Ward-Perkins 2005). The transformative processes involved gave rise to various ethnic groups, whose early medieval kingdoms were identified, by the nationalist historiographies of the nineteenth century, as the lineal ancestors of such modern nation-states as England, France, Spain and Italy. These historiographies quite naturally lavished attention on 'the fall of the Roman Empire', through which so many key European nations were thought to have been created.

In Scotland, nationalist historiography quite naturally latched on to the *Scoti* of this same period—the Dalriadan Gaels of the early Middle Ages—rather than the *Picti*, *Brittones* or (especially) *Angli* who cohabited with them within the confines of the modern Scottish borders, much as the medieval Scottish kingdom had done in attempting to isolate its primordial origins. It still suits some to perpetuate the mantra that "it was...the Gaels who forged the Scottish nation" (Newton 1997, 5; 28), but such outmoded nationalist thinking about origins has long since been discredited. Serious scholars of the subject like Dauvit Broun and Alex Woolf are now operating well outwith the nationalist paradigm (see in particular Broun 2007; Woolf 2007). German nationalist historiography, of course, embraced the entirety of the subject of Rome's fall, for, although the German state itself was not foreshadowed by any single early medieval kingdom, it was Germans (as their historiography understood it) who had played the dominant role in transforming the Roman world and creating the medieval forerunners of the nation-states of western Europe.

This is not the place to rehearse the nature of nationalist historiography, nor its eventual eclipse, nor its use and manipulation by states, in Germany and elsewhere, in the epoch of the two World Wars. It will suffice to say that subsequent generations of scholars, including Wainwright's and our own, have not been in a position to ignore the body of work produced by the many early students of early medieval ethnicities. Since 1995, the results of what are now called 'ethnogenesis' studies have tended to polarise scholars into two camps, whose principal arguments have revolved around the approach framed by the Vienna scholar Reinhard Wenskus in 1961, six years after *The Problem of the Picts*. Racial and nationalist historiographies had long propagated the notion that the Goths, Franks and other barbarian architects of early medieval kingdoms preserved—as an aspect of having

preserved their biological race—what Childe called “cultures” whose “distinctive traits” were as old as the race itself. Wenskus proposed, in the influential *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (“tribe-creation and constitution”), a model for understanding ‘ethnogenesis’ in barbarian kingdoms that succeeded where Kossinna had failed in disassociating the preservation of ancient culture from racial concepts.

Wenskus’s thinking was consonant with what has since been called the ‘nativist’ approach to early Irish literature which predominated among his contemporaries, with its insistence that early medieval monastic writings from Ireland preserve ancient traditions. One statement of this principle maintains that:

In medieval Ireland and Wales, poets...were members of a privileged order within the learned class...[T]heir apprenticeship was both long and arduous, and an essential part of it consisted in learning hundreds of tales...[They] had the custody of the original tales, and they recited them on auspicious occasions...It is no wonder that the greatest care was taken to ensure the integrity of the tradition. (Rees and Rees 1961, 16–17; see also McCone 1990, 1–28)

In a similar vein, Wenskus theorised that the barbarians of early medieval Europe possessed a mechanism for the preservation of ancient ethnicity, in what he called a *Traditionskern*, a “kernel of tradition”. Not unlike Wainwright and his colleagues in their examination of the Pictish evidence, Wenskus concluded that the Goths, Franks and others were conglomerations of smaller groups, and theorised that, upon settlement inside the Roman Empire, these conglomerations looked to their leading tribe—their “kernel of tradition”—to guide them in adopting a new common ethnicity shaped by that tribe’s own particular ancient traditions, preserved in ancient stories and folk memory (summarised in Gillett 2002b; Murray 2002; Pohl 2002).

It is a nice question what Wainwright and his colleagues would have made of Wenskus, had *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* been published a decade earlier. After all, ‘*Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory’, as it has come to be known, might have been formulated expressly to explain their heterogeneous-but-unified Picts. It was probably a blessing for Pictish studies that (for some reason) it never imported the theory. Having inspired considerable scholarly activity, particularly in German historiography, Wenskus’s theory is no longer accepted, even within the so-called ‘Vienna School’ which first promulgated and popularised it (Pohl 2002, 222–5). Since 1995, the theory and its principal adherents at Vienna and elsewhere have been subjected to

sometimes stinging rebuke by scholars like Walter Goffart, who rejected *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory as a fanciful and unnecessary construct, with a naïve conception of early medieval texts as repositories of preserved ancient traditions (Goffart 1995; also Reynolds 1998; Goffart 2002; Murray 2002; Bowlus 2002). Unfortunately, it has little to offer present-day scholars of Wainwright's subject.

Within the narrow confines of ethnogenesis studies, the efforts of Goffart and other sceptics can take on the appearance of a witch-hunt against Wenskus and his most prominent academic descendants at Vienna, Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl (Goffart 2002, 31; Pohl 2002, 221–4). However, this debate has direct corollaries in other fields of study not far removed from ethnogenesis studies. The (sometimes strained) efforts of Kim McCone and others in Irish literary studies since the 1980s to highlight the complexities of the early literature produced by learned monastic writers in Ireland, cautioning against naïve and uncritical acceptance of 'nativist' assumptions, provide one example of a related debate (McCone 1990). Another may be found in the sea change in early medieval Insular historiography since the 1970s, which has taken to heart inherent dangers, highlighted by David Dumville in particular, involved in regarding textual evidence from later centuries as authentic reflections of British and Irish history before 600 (Dumville 1977; 1990). An element of bitterness has featured in the debates in both of these cases. Yet another bitter corollary lies in more recent assaults upon uncritical applications of 'Celtic' labels and models in Iron Age studies in different parts of temperate Europe (e.g. Chapman 1992; Hill 1995; Megaw and Megaw 1996; Sims-Williams 1998; James 1999; Collis 2003). Indeed, the Celtic and ethnogenesis critiques have shared some of the same innovative scholarship on the subject of the archaeology of ethnicity.

In each of these debates, critics of the existing paradigm have advocated a (sometimes drastic) return to first principles and a certain amount of (sometimes drastic) slate-clearing, on two key bases. The first of these is that the primary evidence in question can be explained in another way, often more in keeping with epistemological developments in related fields. Thus McCone (1990, 52–3), for example, has looked to developments in the study of early Icelandic literature to highlight antiquated thinking in the study of early Irish literature, while Siân Jones (1997, 84–127) has looked to the human sciences in developing a methodology for understanding ethnicity in archaeology. The second basis common to these critiques has been that the prevailing

paradigm has its ultimate origins in some very obsolete thinking about the past, such as discredited racial or nationalist discourses, or obsolete, often Romantic conceptions of the workings of folk memory.

In the case of ethnogenesis theory, Pohl persists in disagreeing with Goffart on the matter of whether or not (in Pohl's words) "pre-ethnographic, non-Roman traditions played some part in the creation of identity" in early medieval Europe. At the same time, this leading member of the Vienna School accepts (and emphasises that he had done so prior to Goffart's initial salvoes) that many so-called 'Germanic traditions', identified as such by Wenskus and Wolfram, are in fact learned fabrications of the time, in whole or in part (Pohl 2002, 233–4; also Pohl 1998, 21–2). To return to the Picts, Wainwright concluded in 1952 that the Pictish origin legend recorded by Bede in *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*HE*), in which "the Pictish race (*gens Pictorum*), as they assert (*ut perhibent*), sailed out from Scythia into Ocean in a few long-ships" (Bede, *HE*, i.1), is to be "dismissed as legend or literary invention" on archaeological grounds (Wainwright 1955b, 10). What Wainwright did not realise at the time was how important it would become to choose between legend and invention: that has come to represent a choice between competing methodological and theoretical schools of thought about origins of peoples. Where the identification of early medieval 'tradition' and 'invention' is concerned, debate will surely run and run, just as in the parallel cases of early Irish literature and early Insular history.

It is no accident that the Vienna School's (slow) movement away from the *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory resonates, like the more dismissive criticisms of Goffart and others, with archaeologists who work on late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. They are increasingly agreed that the archaeological "cultures" of Wainwright's day were scholarly abstractions, and cannot be traced backwards in time to a single point of origin, like the first homeland of a pre-migration *Traditionskern* or a single "proto-Pictish" people whence Pictishness spread to all Picts. Instead, material culture reflects layer upon layer of situational cultural innovations, and speaks more of recent developments—like the outer rings of a tree—than of primordial cultural (or racial) origins. Indeed, the whole notion of an archaeological "culture" faded into obsolescence as archaeologists came to recognise the extent to which previous generations had relied upon exaggerating similarity and ignoring diversity within what were being portrayed as discrete "cultures".



With the ongoing refinement of archaeological, historiographical and ethnological discourse over the fifty years or so following on from the publication of *The Problem of the Picts*, the notion of seeking to pinpoint the origins of a people—the central concern of the Wainwright Five—has passed into absurdity along with the culture-historical theoretical paradigm so consummately on display in the contributions of Piggot (1955) and Jackson (1955, 155–8, inspired by Piggot 1955, 57–60). The pioneers of the paradigm were obsessed with identifying peoples and tracing their origins, but as Jones has reminded archaeologists, a people is not the “bounded, holistic social unit defined by language, culture and political autonomy” that Childe and others imagined it to be. There is instead, as a rule, “a distinct lack of coincidence between the boundaries of cultural, linguistic and socio-structural phenomena” among human beings. Peoples are characterised by internal cultural discontinuity and heterogeneity, just as appeared to be the case with Wainwright’s Picts (Jones 1997, 50–1). Within the diverse cultural landscape of a people, moreover, the lineages of each cultural phenomenon stretch backwards in time in countless different directions, not unlike the innumerable ancestral lineages which happen to come together over hundreds of thousands of years to produce a single individual. If it is ludicrous to limit an individual’s “origins” to a single ancestor or single ancestral lineage, it is no less ludicrous to limit a people’s origins to a single “culture”.

Current social scientists and archaeologists recognise that ethnicity represents (and for the Picts represented), first and foremost, consciousness of difference from other groups, with the emphasis on consciousness. How internally similar or diverse ethnic groups may be can vary greatly. They can convince themselves that they are much more bounded and culturally homogeneous than they actually are. Ethnic consciousness may be expressed, deliberately or accidentally, in material cultural ways, but then again it may not. Observed archaeological patterns thus cannot be given ethnic explanations with any confidence, without explicit corroboration from other sources that ethnic consciousness underlies a pattern. The archaeological diversity that perplexed Wainwright and his colleagues and gave rise to ‘the Problem of the Picts’ thus does not prove that the Picts had no sense of ethnic solidarity. At the same time, that diversity does not prove (as Wainwright believed it did) that they were as ethnically diverse as their material culture. In dealing with the people that Wainwright termed “proto-Picts”, corroboration from other evidence to enable us

to draw confident ethnic conclusions will probably always elude us, leaving us forever uncertain about the extent to which the archaeological record may, or may not, reflect ethnic solidarities in the Roman Iron Age. In the case of “the historical Picts”, on the other hand, a consideration of the textual evidence may enable us to speak more confidently about ethnicity.

## II—*The significance of ‘Picti’*

The treatment of the period 300–850 by Wainwright and his colleagues as a meaningful and coherent block of time for research purposes looks, more than fifty years on, as outmoded as some of their other thinking. In fact, hindsight suggests that, as in the case of their struggles with the culture-historical paradigm, their decision represents another missed opportunity to make a great leap beyond the received wisdom. The initial date of 300 was chosen, as Wainwright reiterates several times, on the basis of the first application of *Picti* to denizens of northern Britain. Had he insisted on the same criterion in identifying the cut-off date for “the historical Picts”, rather than settling on a date in the middle of the reign of Cinaed son of Alpín (842–58), perhaps one of the Five would have anticipated some of the important work that has been done since, demonstrating the serious implications of the fact that *Picti* went on being applied to inhabitants of northern Britain for some seventy years after 850 (e.g. Broun 1994; 1997; see now Broun 2007, 71–97).

Wainwright did not look closely at the origins of the term *Picti* c. 300, apart from a non-committal consideration of the debate about whether it was Latin or native in origin (Wainwright 1955b, 1–2). Jackson concluded in his contribution to *The Problem of the Picts* that *Picti* originated as a Latin verbal adjective, a position which has earned a measure of scholarly consensus since 1952, to which I know of no good reason to object (Jackson 1955, 159–60; also Watson 1926, 67–8; Anderson 1973, 127–9; Nicolaisen 1976, 150–1; Rivet and Smith 1981, 438–40).<sup>2</sup> Jackson and Wainwright were agreed that the significance of the ethnonym was simply that the Picts were inclined to apply pigment

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<sup>2</sup> It is not at all clear to me why English, Norse, Scots and Welsh vernacular forms in *pect-* cannot all be derivatives of Anglo-Saxon *peohta*, itself a plausible borrowing from Latin *Picti*.

to their skin, as Isidore of Seville believed in the seventh century (Isidore, *Etymologiae*, xix. 23.7). This notion that *Picti* was essentially a descriptive Latin nickname has persisted in the years since (e.g. Smyth 1984, 44–5; Foster 2004, 7). Were we inclined to follow Wolfram, who regarded it as a safe bet as a general rule, we could surmise that the Pictish ethnogenesis took place about one generation prior to this first appearance in Roman sources c. 300. Certainly Wainwright and his colleagues seem to have attached something like the same significance to the first appearance of *Picti* (Wainwright 1955b, 50).

It has since been appreciated, however, that there is no good reason to regard the terminological shift that saw third-century Roman writers begin to apply *Picti* to the *Brittones* of northern Britain as proof of a new ethnic consciousness in northern Britain c. 300 (Anderson 1973, 127–9; Rivet and Smith 1981, 281; Alcock 2003, 42; Heather 1994). The vernacular languages of Britain and Ireland mirror Latin in having developed the facility to differentiate between two different kinds of British natives, *Brittones* and *Picti*. The fact that Irish and British went on applying their traditional ethnonym to the *Picti*—*Cruithni* in Irish and \**Priteni* in Welsh (Middle Welsh *Prydyn*)—strongly suggests that, if there was any ethnogenesis in third-century Britain, it was the Romano-British *Brittones*, not the *Picti*, who had changed. In all three languages, the ethnonym attached to the Picts connotes a lack of *romanitas*, Latin having resorted to the spectre of the woad-smeared British barbarians of Caesar's *De bello Gallico* (Julius Caesar, *DBG*, v. 14; Wainwright 1955b, 39).<sup>3</sup>

In the Pictish origin legend recorded c. 731, the Picts self-identify as *Picti*, and regard themselves as a single *gens*. Yet there are some important indications in *Vita Sancti Columbae* (Fraser 2003, 36–7; Fraser 2003–4) and in *Historia ecclesiastica* and Stephen's near-contemporary *Vita Sancti Wilfrithi* that Pictish ethnic solidarity may have been very recent in the early eighth century, just as Wainwright concluded on the grounds of Pictish archaeology (Bede, *HE*, iii.4; Stephen, *VSW*, § 19; Fraser 2009, 44–9). As a result of all of these considerations, we have little grounds to join Wainwright and his colleagues in their assumption that the first mention of *Picti* in Roman writing signals

<sup>3</sup> Woolf 2007, 178–80, raises the possibility that \**Albid* should take the place of \**Priteni* in this discussion. These ethnonyms are discussed more fully in Broun 2007, 79–84, and in a different context by Fraser 2009.

the birth of a new ethnic solidarity across north-east Scotland. In fact, Bede's Pictish origin legend may represent one of the first ever expressions of such solidarity. Wainwright, after all, could not be certain that the Picts had achieved political unity before 685, a minimalist view that I wholeheartedly endorse (Wainwright 1955b, 21–3, 44–7). There are no obvious reasons to assume that they achieved ethnic solidarity any earlier.

Although we must abandon the old culture-historical quest for the origins of the Picts, we may replace Wainwright's central research question with a perfectly valid new one which emerges from the foregoing discussion: how did Pictishness—apparently a foreign idea, developed among Latin speakers, and probably arising from consciousness of difference within Roman Britain from the northern barbarians—become discovered and adopted by the Picts themselves? The question is much easier to ask than to answer. If I may be allowed to speculate, as Wainwright did, as to what the nature of the answer might be, I would guess that the process involved Picts in being confronted, and ultimately in coming to terms with the version of themselves that they discovered in Latin writing, as they became increasingly familiar with Latin learning in the wake of Christianisation.

### III—*The Pictish origin legend*

Wainwright (1955b, 25) did not doubt “that written records, perhaps mainly if not entirely in Latin, were compiled and kept in the Pictish monasteries”. His views on this point have been challenged and vindicated since he expressed it, and need not be doubted (Hughes 1980; Forsyth 1998; Evans this volume). The extent to which Picts became familiar with Latin learning is revealed by the origin legend which Bede reportedly received from Pictish informants (on Bede's *perhibere* in Pictish contexts see Anderson 1908, 7; Chadwick 1949, 14, 27; Hughes 1970, 1–2; Duncan 1981, 3, 27; Fraser 2003–4, 188–90) and included in *Historia ecclesiastica*:

The Pictish race (*gens Pictorum*) sailed from Scythia, as they assert (*ut perhibent*), into Ocean in a few long-ships, and were carried by the wind beyond the furthest bounds of Britain, reaching Ireland and landing on its northern shores. There they found the Irish race (*gens Scottorum*), and asked permission to settle among them, but their request was refused... The Irish answered that the island would not hold them both;

‘but we can give you some good advice as to what to do’, they said. ‘We know of another island not far from our own, in an easterly direction, which we often see in the distance on clear days. If you will go there, you can make a settlement for yourselves. But if anyone resists you, make use of our help’ (*nobis auxiliaries utimini*).

And so the Picts went to Britain and proceeded to occupy the northern parts of the island, because the Britons (*Brettones*) had seized the southern regions. As the Picts had no wives, they asked them of the Irish, who consented to give them, but only on condition that, where the matter came into doubt (*ubi res ueniret in dubium*), they should elect their kings from the female royal line rather than the male. And it is well known that the custom has been observed among the *Picti* to this day. In the course of time, after the Britons and the Picts, Britannia received a third, Irish, nation (*natio Scottorum*) into the Pictish part (*in Pictorum parte*), who with Reuda their leader (*dux*) came from Ireland, and won the lands which they still possess by friendship or by iron (*uel amicitia uel ferro*). (Bede, *HE*, i.1)

Given the nature of his rejection of the historicity of this myth in *The Problem of the Picts*, one is bound to conclude that, even had he known *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory, Wainwright would not have been tempted to see the myth as an authentic ancient tradition promulgated by a Pictish “kernel of tradition”. For Wainwright, the principal conclusion invited by the myth had nothing to do with Pictish origins, and everything to do with matrilineal succession, which he, like so many others of his generation, took to be an authentic custom that the legend was written to explain (Wainwright 1955b, 25–8). More than fifty years later, matrilineal succession looks distinctly unlikely, not least because Bede implies that patriliney was normal. This famous passage vindicating recourse to the female royal line, with its reference to the present day, is best understood as a clear indicator of the myth’s provenance (Smyth 1984, 57–75; Woolf 1998; Ross 1999; Clancy 2004; Evans this volume).

Pohl has drawn a distinction between “ethnic discourse” and “ethnic ideology”, the latter being conscious efforts on the part of elites “to support their power” through the use and manipulation of “ethnic discourse”, which can feature at all levels of society (Pohl 2002, 233–4). It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Bede’s Pictish origin legend represents a classic example of such “ethnic ideology”, for his contemporaries as kings of Picts were the brothers Bridei (696/7–707) and Naiton (or Nechtan) (707–24, 729–32), sons of Der-Ilei, who appear to have claimed the kingship through their maternal heritage,

and to have been sired by a man who may have been a *Scotus* from Cowal (Clancy 2004). The legend's normalisations of matriliney and Picto-Scottish heritage among the Picts thus appear to be attempts to support and legitimate these two Pictish kings in the kingship. It may, therefore, reveal little about Pictish ethnicity at the time it was composed, surely c. 700. Yet the fact that the single 'Pictish' place-name recorded by Bede—*Peanfahel*, modern Kinneil on Forth—appears to mix Gaelic and British linguistic elements is intriguing in this context (Bede, *HE*, i.12; Jackson 1955, 143–4). Pohl has stressed his belief that kings and other elites could only fabricate so much in their “ethnic ideology”, lest it diverge too far from the “ethnic discourse” that was present throughout a society. Might we, on the slim basis of *Peanfahel*, entertain the notion that the significant Gaelic stream within early eighth-century Pictish ethnicity, implied by the origin legend, resonated with many Picts, and not just with those at the royal court of the sons of Der-Ilei?

Wainwright and his colleagues were willing to regard Bede's Pictish origin legend as an unhistorical fable, but they accepted as a fact the Dalriadan origin legend that follows on immediately from it in *Historia ecclesiastica*, in which the Scottish Gaels are said to have arrived from Ireland some time after the Picts (Wainwright 1955, 34). The situation thus exactly parallels the tendency of former practitioners of *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory to accept that Goths and Lombards were actually Scandinavian in origin on the basis of their origin legends (“authentic myth”), while rejecting the Trojan and Macedonian origins outlined in the Frankish and Saxon origin legends respectively (“insignificant scholarly inventions”). Pohl (2002, 230–1) has recognised that this tendency was “a fundamental methodological mistake”, and we too now appreciate that obvious plausibility does not, automatically, provide the Dalriadan origin legend with any great claim to historicity (Campbell 2001; also Nieke and Duncan 1988, 8–11; Dumville 2002, 186–8; Fraser 2006).

In fact, the notions that Scottish Gaels occupied Pictish territory (*Pictorum pars*), and owed its possession to Pictish friendship, as well as to their strength (*uel amicitia uel ferro*), have such a Picto-centric look that Pictish provenance seems likely. After all, Gildas shows that it was by no means obvious in the sixth century that the Picts had long preceded the Gaels in northern Britain, writing that they together “seized the whole of the extreme north of the island from its

[British] inhabitants" (Gildas, *DEB*, i.19; Evans this volume). Instead, this notion, with its associated ones, may be suspected of representing an ideological statement, probably emanating from the sphere of the Pictish royal court in the early eighth century. In a similar vein, Bede at one point states, again from Pictish source material, that Iona was a Pictish island in the 560s when it was donated by the Picts to St Columba for the foundation of his great monastery (Bede, *HE*, iii.4).

A particularly revealing element of the Pictish origin legend is its extraordinary idea that the *gens Pictorum* originated in Scythia. Long before 1952, it had been ascertained that the explanation of this claim lay in early medieval Latin learning, although scholars like William Watson and Hector Munro Chadwick took it that the seat of that learning was in Ireland, rather than that the author of this legend, whoever he may have been, was Pictish (Watson 1926, 60–1; Chadwick 1949, 88; Wainwright 1955b, 26). It is not impossible that our author was an Irish or Dalriadan Gael working in Pictland, of course, but the Gaelic dimensions of the legend are insufficient grounds to support such a conclusion. There is undoubtedly a relationship between the Pictish and Dalriadan origin legends recorded by Bede (apparently from Pictish sources) and the origin literature relating to these peoples preserved in Gaelic. If it emerges that the author of these legends had access to Irish learning, this fact would not require him to have been Irish himself, any more than access to Latin learning requires his first language to have been Latin.

Latin learning he is certain to have had, for it seems that, like Bede, he had read Vergil's *Aeneid*, and particularly the fourth book, in which 'the great Aeneas' travels in the lands of the eastern Mediterranean, where, the poet writes, "painted Agathyrsi (*picti Agathyrsi*) mixed with Cretan bands" (Vergil, *Aeneid*, iv, ll. 145–6; Wright 1981–2). In the fourth century, Servius wrote what became the standard commentary on *Aeneid* used by early medieval scholars. By then the *Picti* had joined the ranks of the barbarian peoples familiar to Roman scholarship, and Servius remarked on these Vergilian lines that *picti Agathyrsi* "are a Scythian people (*populus Scythiae*)", and furthermore, that "*picti* [here] is not, however, 'having *stigmata*', like the people (*gens*) in Britain, but rather 'finely painted' (*pulchri*), namely with hair of an agreeable sea blue" (Servius, *Commentarius*, iv, l. 146). Nothing would have been more natural for a Pictish scholar c. 700, intent on composing an origin legend, than to engage in the ubiquitous Western practice (e.g. Murray 1998a) of locating his ultimate origins within

classical Antiquity, transforming Servius's conceptual linkage of the *Picti* and the *picti Agathyrsi* into a genuine historical one.

Dauvit Broun (2007, 79–84) has recently set out a case for believing that Gaelic *Alba*, applied to the Pictish kingdom in our sources after 900, represents a translation of a Pictish word for the kingdom which meant 'Britain'. At the same time, Alex Woolf (2007, 178–80) has argued a different case, suggesting that *Alba* was a straight borrowing of a Pictish British word \**Albid*. Either scenario paves the way for the notion that the kingdom can have been known as *Alba* in Gaelic c. 700. In that event, our author would only have been encouraged in his Scythian enterprise by the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville, another standard Latin text used by Bede (Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 9). After all, Isidore (*Etymologiae*, ix. 2.65) wrote that, among the *Scythiae gentes*, there was one called *Albani* on account, he says, of their white (*albus*) hair, whose coloured (*picta*) eyes enabled them to see "better by night than by day". Such a link between the terms *albus* and *picta* must have seemed heaven-sent in the search for the origins of the *Picti* of Alba, or possibly \**Albid*. If Broun's scenario is preferred, this kind of thinking on the part of our author would be suggestive of a certain Gaelic perspective, or at least knowledge of the language. It is a nice question whether or not the author was sufficiently aware of Gaelic origin narratives to know that they had identified Scythia as the place of origin of the *Scoti*. In later centuries, such shared origins blurred the distinction between Gael and Pict in the learned mind (see for example Cowan 1984, 121–2)—arguably something that the Pictish origin legend was otherwise keen to do.

Servius's identification of Vergil's *Agathyrsi* as a *populus Scythiae* related to a Pontic Greek story about Scythian origins recorded by Herodotus, the ancient Greek historiographer *par excellence*. He had written in the fifth century BCE that the famous Heracles fathered three sons in Scythia: Scythes, the eponymous father of the Scythian race, and two others, Agathyrsus and Gelonus, whom their mother forced into exile (Herodotus, *Historiae*, iv, 8–10). In his *Georgicon*, Vergil wrote of "the eastern homes of Arabs and painted Geloni (*picti Geloni*)", another Scythian people characterised as "painted", and this time identified with Gelonus, the brother of Agathyrsus (Vergil, *Georgicon*, ii, ll. 114–5). The Geloni continued to be the subjects of poetic references to barbarian peoples into late Antiquity (Pohl 1998, 27–8).



Links between the Picts and the Scythian peoples described as *picti* in the literature of classical Antiquity are not confined to Bede's Pictish origin legend. The eleventh-century Gaelic text *Lebor Bretnach*, an adaptation of the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* attributed to Nennius, was composed using material of Scottish provenance (Clancy 2000). One recension of the text includes the Gaelic poem *Cruithnig cid dosfarclam*, "The Picts, who established them?", which in its early lines makes remarkably similar connections between the Picts and Scythia, observing that the first ancestors of the Picts (*Cruithni*) were called *Agantirsi*, and also *síl nGeleoin meic Ercoil*, descendants of Geleon son of Ercol, surely Herodotus's Gelonus, son of Heracles (*Cruithnig cid dosfarclam*, ll. 17–18, 21–4; Evans this volume). As it stands, *Cruithnig cid dosfarclam* dates from the reign of Mac Bethad son of Findláech in Alba (1040–57), and appears to have been modelled on Gaelic vernacular origin literature, representing one of a number of inter-related origin stories relating to the *Cruithni*, a name borne by an Irish people of Ulster, as well as applied to the Picts (Mac Eoin 1962; Zumbuhl 2006, 15–18; Broun 2007, 55).

Gearóid Mac Eoin concluded that the Pictish origin story recorded by Bede was an offshoot of an older Irish legend, but his methodology, comparing various elements contained in or absent from different legends (which he called "variants"), cannot be accepted as proof that any of them pre-dates Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*. In fact, Nicholas Evans (this volume) shows that Mac Eoin was susceptible to some of the same thinking about origin stories that shaped the *Traditionskern* theory. He takes it that these different "variants" all post-date Bede's work and possibly included his legend among their sources. Dauvit Broun has recently proposed that *Cruithnig cid dosfarclam* is Scottish in origin (Broun 2007, 55). A further possibility may therefore be considered: did the poet have among his sources a Scottish text approximating to Bede's own Pictish source? Mac Eoin called the poem "a patchwork of traditions about the Cruithni", and noted its close relationship with Bede's legend (Mac Eoin 1962, 50–1). More detailed work on these inter-relationships is required to test Mac Eoin's conclusions, as well as these other possibilities (see now Evans this volume). It may emerge that the poet's notions that the Picts were so-called "from their tattooing (literally 'disfiguring') of their fair forms" (*o cearptar dia cuclli*), and that before they reached Ireland they fetched up in Francia and founded the city of Pictavia (*Pictabis; Pictaue*), namely Poitou, reveal

more about the author of Bede's Pictish origin legend and his methods (*Cruithnig cid dosfarclam*, ll. 19–20, 41–4, 57–60).<sup>4</sup>

It is a rule of thumb in *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory that the formulation of an origin legend of the type recorded by Bede was a watershed moment in any process of ethnogenesis, marking the establishment of the ethnic solidarity it describes (Bowls 2002, 246, 252–3; Brooks 1999, 5). It is best to be wary of applying such a rule to any data set. We have seen, nonetheless, that the Pictish evidence tends to conform, providing no clear evidence of Pictish ethnic solidarity much earlier than the early eighth century when the Pictish origin legend was apparently composed. This is not the place to examine the circumstances that can have given rise to a newly conceived and self-conscious Pictishness c. 700 (see Woolf 2003; Fraser 2002; Fraser 2009, 223–7). It will suffice to return to our new central research question surrounding Pictish origins, replacing Wainwright's culture-historical 'Problem of the Picts'.

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<sup>4</sup> *Cruithnig cid dosfarclam*, l. 13, like one other "variant", locates the origins of the Cruithni in Thrace (*Traicia*) rather than in Scythia. Mac Eoin 1962, 151, argued that Scythia was Bede's innovation, and Thrace original to the pre-Bedan Irish legend. However, the Vergilian and Herodotan trails implied by Bede's legend (and *Cruithnig cid dosfarclam*) lead to Scythia, not Thrace, so that Scythia is likely to be original to the Pictish origin legend, and Thrace an Irish innovation. In any case, origin legends were sensitive political and ethnic statements, and a scholar like Bede, who shows himself to have been politically sensitive, is most unlikely to have made such a significant modification as a relocation of the Pictish homeland. *Senchus Síl hÍr*, the origin legend of the Cruithni of Ireland, which knows nothing of *Agathyrsi* or Heracles, identifies the Cruithnian homeland as Thrace (Dobbs 1923, 62–72, especially 64; Evans this volume). It also says that they met and became the allies of the sons of Míl on the Continent, before their migration to Ireland, and married Milesian women there. Wolfram (1994, 22–4) argued that women in early medieval origin stories tend either to "sacrifice their entire past and cultic existence for the salvation and survival of the tribe", or else to stand "for the conservative layer of society that opposed... ethnogenesis". This story of the integration of the Cruithni and the sons of Míl may have been taken up and adapted by the author of the Pictish origin legend, to suit the needs of the sons of Der-Ilei. Yet Molly Miller (1982, 134) highlights British pseudo-historical elements within the legend. On the whole it seems that its author was a student of Insular ethnography, as well as Latin scholarship. It is striking that Bede's legend gives not the slightest indication that some offshoot of the *gens Pictorum* remained behind in north-east Ireland as the Cruithni. Although this might be an omission by Bede, it tends to fit the notion expounded here that neither the legend's point of view nor its audience was particularly Irish. Poitou (*Pictavia*) took its name from the Pictones, a Gallic people mentioned in many Classical sources. For the most recent mapping of their territory see maps 17.1 and 24 in Koch *et al.* 2007.

By 700, Pictishness had been discovered, adopted and re-shaped by the Picts, and was a foreign notion no longer. A gap of four centuries separates Bede's Pictish origin legend from the first recorded application of *Picti* to the *Brittones* of northern Britain. The Pictish ethnicity outlined by the legend, understood by Bede to encapsulate all of the inhabitants of lowland Scotland north of the Forth (and perhaps beyond), may not have been of any great age when the legend was composed. That is not to say that some Pictish groups had not previously embraced the notion of Pictishness as a self-conscious ethnic category, though this remains unproven. Thus, although a detailed consideration of the Pictish origin legend may shed some light on the issue, and helps to establish some chronological parameters, our central research question relating to the Pictish discovery of Pictishness remains unresolved for the present.

#### IV—*In search of Pictish ethnicity*

What Pohl has called "strategies of distinction", whereby ethnic groups both recognise and shape their consciousness of difference from other groups, included in the early Middle Ages such indicators as language, arms, dress, hairstyle and adornment (Pohl 1998). Apart from succession customs, and whatever may be implied by the idea that all Picts were ultimately the products of a Gaelo-Pictish marriage, Bede's Pictish origin legend reveals little about what strategies of distinction might have been at work within Pictish ethnicity in the early eighth century. Isidore's explanation of the ethnonym *Picti* was that "an *optifex*, with the tiny point of a pin and juice squeezed from a native plant, tricks (*inludit*) [Picts] out with scars to serve as identifying marks, and their nobility are distinguished by their tattooed (*picti*) limbs" (Isidore, *Etymologiae*, xix. 23.7). Pigmentation of the skin was thus likely embraced as a particularly definitive Pictish ethnic marker. There is no hint of such behaviour in the images of Picts borne by the monumental sculpture of Early Historic north-east Scotland. Yet a papal legation in 787 forbade the Northumbrians to carry on mutilating themselves with "the injury of staining", a practice reflecting "the superstition of heathens", which can only refer to tattooing, a habit that Servius (and many other writers) had long before associated with the Picts (Whitelock 1979, 836–40).

There is thus nothing at all improbable about the idea that eighth-century Pictish ethnic identity included tattooing tendencies, which

may have been customary throughout Pictish history. After all, Lombard elites took to heart their “long-beard” ethnonym (Pohl 1998, 56–9). It seems, however, that by the end of the eighth century such behaviour was not confined to the Picts in northern Britain—was tattooing among non-Picts distinct from tattooing among Picts? Being *picti* was a feature that Picts shared with Scythians, and these long-lost Eastern cousins were something of a byword for barbarism in the writings of classical Antiquity, a fact which could have fuelled Pictish ethnic discourse. Yet St Paul’s epistle to the Colossians (3:11), which Pictish students of scripture will have known well, observes that, in Christendom, “there is no gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian or Scythian, slave or free”, seemingly contrasting *barbarus et Scythia* as opposites like gentile and Jew, if typically maintaining a conceptual link between the two.

It seems that both Latin and vernacular culture in Britain and Ireland preserved in their ethnic nomenclature a sense that the Picts were the non-Roman Britons, and Pictish ethnicity may well have embraced this idea as the *Picti* discovered and adapted the Latin notion of Pictishness, and perhaps linked it with Latin conceptions of the Scythians as exotic *barbari*. One is reminded that Naiton son of Der-Ilei wrote to Wearmouth-Jarrow that the Picts were “remote from the Roman nation and language” (*longe a Romanorum loquella et natione segregati*) (Bede, *HE*, v.21). It is surely an ideological, rather than an empirical, statement of consciousness of difference, for we have already seen that the author of the Pictish origin legend was a full participant in the Latin learning of the age, and Bede (*HE*, i.1) remarks that the Picts were united with the other Insular peoples through the Latin language.

A strong circumstantial case can be made for reading a great deal into Naiton’s statement of remoteness from Rome as an element of ethnic ideology in eighth-century Pictland, invited perhaps by ethnic discourse on the implications of *Picti* itself. Tattooing, reflecting “the superstition of heathens”, may be one case in point. Another may be the remarkable contrast between Irish and Anglo-Saxon engagement with the Continent and its literate, Latinate community by the early eighth century, and the apparent complete absence of Picts from these spheres of activity and interaction. Katherine Forsyth (1998, 54) has called it “one of the most striking things about Pictland” that its monumental sculpture shows a “marked preference...for non-Roman script” (Okasha (1996, 32) suggested that this reflects the use of such ‘script’ for vernacular inscriptions). Unlike the Irish, who developed

it, Picts routinely made use of ogham script for formal inscriptions, and even more routinely made use of the famous and enigmatic symbolic 'script' (see Driscoll, pp. 267–8). This contrast in preference in this formal communicative register—Roman script in Ireland (where engagement with the Continent was pronounced) but non-Roman in Pictland (where it was not)—is yet another case in point. One could cite other examples of apparently conscious non-engagement with Continental or Latin norms.

Stephen Driscoll has highlighted the ongoing difficulties experienced by archaeologists in attempting to identify ethnic discourse or ethnic ideology in the material culture of Early Historic northern Britain, bringing up to date Wainwright's own discussion of the culture-historical heterogeneity that underpinned 'the Problem of the Picts' (Driscoll 2000). He shows (2000, 242–3, 251) that the Church may have been involved in promulgating ethnic ideology in northern Britain. If he is correct (2000, 249) in seeing symbol stones as essentially media of local communication, they are very unlikely to have been self-consciously 'ethnic'. However, ethnic markers can grow up from internal markers of social differentiation, if these are interpreted in ethnic terms from outside the group (Jones 1997, 112–27; Pohl 1998, 40–1, 51–2). Such considerations may help to explain the 'Pictish' distribution of these monuments, and their almost complete failure to cross over into non-Pictish areas. Isidore's explicit association of tattooing with Pictish elites also deserves consideration in this light.

Possibly a careful study of the representations of Picts on monumental sculpture would reveal aspects of Pictish ethnicity, since perceptions of ethnic difference in the early Middle Ages could relate to arms (depicted in many sculptural images), dress (similarly commonly depicted) and hairstyle (is it significant that Pictish warriors tend to be depicted with long hair combed straight back over their heads, and with pointed beards?) (Pohl 1998, 52–3). Wainwright (1955b, 32) advocated just such a project, with some surprise that it had not yet been undertaken. More than fifty years later, we are still waiting. The Hendersons note "intriguing" Scythian echoes in some animal designs on Pictish sculpture (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 71, 75, 79 note 45): is it conscious borrowing? The many equestrian images on Pictish sculpture may also take on an extra dimension of remarkability, given that the stereotypical Scythian in Classical writing was a (nomadic) horseman (Pohl 1998, 28–9, 41). However, he was also an archer, and

there are precious few images of archery in Pictish sculpture, and none of mounted archery.<sup>5</sup>

Bede speaks of a Pictish language, a subject which, like so many others already discussed, has seen several refinements since 1952 when Kenneth Jackson discussed it (Jackson 1955; see also Chadwick 1949, 50–80; Forsyth 1997). According to Pohl's research, sensitivity to the fact that different named *gentes* could and did speak a common vernacular language—as the British and Pictish *gentes* seem largely to have done—is not much in evidence anywhere in Europe prior to the eighth century (Pohl 1998, 24). Links between ethnicity and language seem generally not to have been as fundamental to early medieval conceptions of identity as they have since become. The story of the Tower of Babel informed Christian scholars about the diffusion of *gentes* and languages, but Latin scholarship did not formulate a sufficiently clear understanding of the relationship between language and *gens* for Bede's words to be taken as proof that each Insular *gens* spoke a language clearly distinct from the others (Pohl 1998, 22–7). But was the Insular case different from that which obtained on the Continent?

A desire to assimilate barbarian origins with the world view of classical Antiquity in Latin scholarship was a feature of ethnic discourse and ethnic ideology in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Making the most of the non-Roman connotations of *Picti* would have been in line with such tendencies, much like the notion that the original Pictish homeland was Scythia. On the Continent, Pohl has argued that early Slavic ethnicity emerged primarily around “a way of life that, unlike the post-Roman kingdoms in the West, did not rely on Roman infrastructure” (Pohl 2002, 233–4). Pictish ethnicity by the early eighth century may not have been greatly dissimilar in this respect, if Naiton's remarks can be taken as stating a tenet of ethnic discourse.

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<sup>5</sup> There are only five known archers in Pictish sculpture: four of them—from a now lost monument from Meigle (Henderson and Henderson 2004, pl. 318) and on cross-slabs in St Vigeans (ibid., pl. 83 and 197), Shandwick (ibid., pl. 97) and Glenferness (ECMS, ii, 116)—are crouching, hooded figures leading the Hendersons to suggest (2004, 137) that the figure may represent a legendary hero, his name now lost (and there is plenty of speculative room to imagine an invented Scythian hero). The fifth—on the Camuston free-standing cross (ECMS, ii, 252–54)—may appear to be a mounted archer but is actually a Sagittarius. In Dumfriesshire the Northumbrian Ruthwell cross bears a well-known archer figure and reminds us of the archer's exegetical role in Insular art, one undoubtedly familiar in Pictland. For a recent analysis of the Ruthwell archer (with references to prior views) see Ó Carragáin 2009.

The realities of the situation were rather different from such ideology, of course. The Picts had embraced the Roman religion of Christianity, and their native land had not been unaffected by four centuries of cultural interaction with the Romans in Britain during the Roman Iron Age. The Pictish origin legend betrays the same kind of high-level Pictish Latinity as the Tarbat monumental inscription, and there are other indications of meaningful contact with the Continent. Association of the Picts with Scythia demonstrates ethnographic learning of a high calibre, Latin and vernacular. Yet, at the same time, there is good reason to believe that many Picts in the early eighth century had convinced themselves that a mutual lack of interest in ‘the Romans’, however they defined them, was central to their ethnic identity. Like the Goths, their far more infamous contemporaries in terror, the *Picti* appeared suddenly in Latin writing in the later third century, went on to found barbarian kingdoms of some significance, and, ultimately, disappeared from the ethnic and political landscape of the Latin West. If the myth of non-engagement with the Continent became as important to Pictishness as the present study has suggested, perhaps we have an important clue as to how and why Pictish ethnic identity became obsolete after 900. The possibility that etymological ridicule played a part in making Pictishness unfashionable should not be ruled out (e.g. Pohl 1998, 43).<sup>6</sup>

### *Final thoughts*

In 1980 Dick Feachem wrote of *The Problem of the Picts*, on the dust-jacket of the second printing by the Melven Press in Perth, that the work of the Wainwright Five “must surely remain the final statement for generations to come”. Some twenty-five years after this statement was penned, the very ‘Problem of the Picts’ that so enthralled Wainwright, Piggott, Feachem, Stevenson and Jackson has disappeared, not because it had been solved, but because developments in the human sciences had made it insoluble and imponderable. The central research question of the project—whether or not a study of the historical Picts would

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<sup>6</sup> The opposite of this phenomenon is of course displayed in the famous pun on Angles (*Anguli*) and angels (*angeli*) attributed to Gregory the Great (*Vita Gregorii papae urbis Romae*: § 9; Bede, *HE*, ii.1).

throw up characteristic features with prehistoric origins—no longer has validity. The origins of the Picts are, in racial and culture-historical terms, utterly lost, untraceable in their complexities, and, in the final analysis, unimportant. The drive to understand such origins was one of the main engines of the nationalist and racial historiographies of the past, as well as the culture-historical theoretical paradigm that so shaped *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory and other approaches to the past whose flaws have only recently begun coming to light in such fields as Celtic studies, early Irish literature, and early medieval Insular history. It is time to jettison that drive along with the obsolete intellectual frameworks that long shaped and were shaped by it. Present-day scholars do not share the need of Wainwright and his colleagues to defend and uphold the very existence of the Picts. That aspect at least of the 'Problem of the Picts' their watershed volume of essays may be said to have solved. We need not doubt Wainwright when he tells us that their efforts placed their reputations on the line.

More than fifty years later, if a volume entitled *The Origin of the Picts* is to be written, it will not deal with primordial points of origin of this or that cultural trait. It will deal instead with how the various peoples of north-east Scotland in the Roman Iron Age came to regard themselves as *Picti* and, having done so, how that realisation may have been translated into word and deed, and expressed in material and other cultural ways. The critics of Wenskus's *Traditionskern* theory, whether dismissive or constructive, have shown the importance of understanding texts like Bede's Pictish origin legend as indicators not of authentic ancient tradition, but rather of how ethnic and scholarly discourses were being played out in the here-and-now of the text. If something of such discourses is revealed through the foregoing examination, an image is created of a complex and dynamic community in some kind of significant ethnic transition, and of a sophisticated Pictish writer actively engaged in understanding the ramifications of some significant political and social developments of the age. I find it pleasant that such an image of the early eighth century is not too far removed from the one that Wainwright himself believed he could perceive. His conviction that the Picts were characterised by cultural diversity and political changeability, and yet, despite being far from a monolithic entity, were capable of ethnic solidarity, is a credit to Frederick Wainwright's impressive and cautious scholarship, and his commitment to the multidisciplinary approach to Pictish studies that



was the *raison d'être* of *The Problem of the Picts*. His worrying 'problem' is our challenging facet of Pictish studies. We still have much to do.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Aspects of this essay have been discussed informally with Nicholas Evans over several years, to my great benefit, and it is a pleasant happenstance that some of our thoughts on the subject of Pictish origins should be published in the same volume. Aspects have also been discussed publicly at meetings of the Early Medieval Europe Research Group (2003) and the First Millennia Studies Group (2007), congeries of collegial scholars both happily based largely in the city of Edinburgh. The material presented here has benefited from these airings, and I wish to register my gratitude to the organisers and audiences involved. I am particularly grateful to Stephen Driscoll and Mark Hall for the opportunity to contribute to a project that I initiated, but was forced to abandon for personal reasons in 2003, and for ably seeing it through to its final stages.

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## IDEOLOGY, LITERACY AND MATRILINY: APPROACHES TO MEDIEVAL TEXTS ON THE PICTISH PAST

Nicholas Evans

Medieval texts concerned with the origins and history of the Picts comprise some of the more intractable sources in the subject. Often found in texts written by outsiders and surviving in later manuscripts, the difficulty has been to determine what can legitimately be used as evidence for Pictish culture. However, if the development of these texts can be established, they could offer potentially vital contemporary evidence for Pictish society and for outside perceptions of the Picts in the Middle Ages. There are many texts which could be considered historical to some extent, but in this paper the Pictish king-lists and settlement accounts, sources which are concerned with the ancient history of the Picts, will be focused on.<sup>1</sup> The intention is to discuss the scholarship concerned with these texts, as well as how approaches and our understanding have altered, particularly since the publication in 1955 of the influential book *The Problem of the Picts*, edited by F. T. Wainwright. It will also provide guidance for modern scholars on the often confusing proliferation of categorisations of different versions of these texts, as well as suggesting future avenues for research.

These sources did not form the basis for any of the chapters of *The Problem of the Picts*, but they were discussed by Wainwright in his introductory chapter (1955, 1–53), and they comprised a major source for Kenneth Jackson's analysis of the Pictish language (Jackson, K. H. 1955, 129–66, 173–6). Wainwright (1955, 19–20) was cautious about using the Pictish king-lists because, despite the work of H. M. Chadwick (1949) and Marjorie Anderson (1949a, 1949b, 1950), he still thought that much more research needed to be done on them. However, he did discuss (Wainwright 1955, 10, 16–19, 25–8, 38, 46–7)

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<sup>1</sup> Other medieval sources which dealt with Pictish history, for instance the Irish annals, the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba*, tales about the destruction of the Picts, and the St Andrews foundation legend, would also have provided useful material for analysis.

the origin legends as evidence for Pictish matriliney, use the Pictish king-lists for kings after the late sixth century, and state that the sections of the lists before then were not reliable evidence for ancient Pictish kings. However, since *The Problem of the Picts* there have been substantial advances in our understanding of these sources, so there is less reason to be cautious than in 1955.

One group of these sources, the Pictish king-lists, are unique textual survivals from the Pictish period, although they have been altered in various ways to fit later purposes. They are lists of sixty or more kings, presumably of all the Picts, with reign lengths, from ancient times up to the mid or late ninth century. There are two main versions of the list, called *Series longior* (SL) and *Series breuior* (SB) by Molly Miller (1979b, 1–3; 1982, 159–61), although other scholars have given them different designations (see Table 1).

Table 1: Sigla used for the Pictish king-lists.

Miller (1979b, Anderson 1–3; 1982, (1973, x) <sup>2</sup> 159–61)		Chadwick (1949, xxvii–ix)	Henderson (1967, 91–2); Wainwright (1955, 17); Jackson (1955, 144–6)	Van Hamel (1932, 82–7)
<i>Series longior</i> (SL)	Group P	—	List 1; Group I	—
SL1	A	A	—	P
SL2H	C1	C	—	D
SL2M	C2	—	—	H
SL2O	B	Bii	—	—
SL2E	—	—	—	—
SL3	LB4 (1950, 16)	Bi	—	—
<i>Series breuior</i> (SB)	Group Q	—	2; II	—

<sup>2</sup> Anderson (1950, 13), used the terms List I (for SL) and List II (for SB).

*Series longior* (Anderson's 'Group P', Henderson's 'List 1') is subdivided into three groups. The first of these is SL1 (Anderson and Chadwick's MS. A, Van Hamel's P), found in the fourteenth-century Poppleton manuscript written in northern England, but derived from a compilation created 1202 × 14 (Miller 1982, 139). The other versions survive in Irish manuscripts: SL2 (which includes Anderson's B, C1 and C2, Chadwick's Bii and C, Van Hamel's D and H)<sup>3</sup> in *Lebor Bretnach* (LB) (Van Hamel 1932), on the history of Britain, and SL3 (Anderson's LB4, Chadwick's Bi) in *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (LGE), the "Book of the Invasions of Ireland", and different manuscripts of LB (Miller 1982, 159–61), in additions made in the twelfth century or later. The other group, *Series breuior* (Anderson's 'Group Q', Henderson's 'List 2') is found in Scottish manuscripts of the fourteenth century or later.

At the time of *The Problem of the Picts*, many of the lists had been edited by W. F. Skene (1867, 4–8, 24–30, 148–51, 172–4, 199–202, 285–7, 396–400), and detailed studies by H. M. Chadwick (1949, 1–34) and Marjorie Anderson (1949a; 1949b; 1950) had been published in the previous decade. Chadwick's analysis contained much useful discussion of the lists, particularly of the names of kings, but less on the lists' textual history. His conclusion (Chadwick 1949, 2, 27, 30–4), that the two list groups (SL and SB) represented independent traditions, being dependent on oral transmission for the section before about the middle of the sixth century, was convincingly overturned by Anderson who studied the inter-relationships of each textual group's representatives. Anderson identified that SL1 had a separate origin from the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba*, the text immediately following it in the Poppleton manuscript (1949a, 37–8), analysed the SB (1949b) and SL groups, arguing that SL2 was in existence by 1093, and proposed that a written common source was shared with SB up to the reign of King Nechtan son of Der-Ilei in the 720s, after which the two groups were independent (1950, 18). The general agreement of reign lengths and correspondences of details made it likely that a written source underlay the lists before the 720s, while linguistic variation between the generally Gaelic spelling of names in SB and the usually Pictish orthography (similar in some respects to Welsh) of SL could have been

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<sup>3</sup> However, extracts (Miller's SL2E) from another version were also printed in 1662 by John Lynch in his *Cambrensis Eversus* (Anderson 1973, 78).



the result of people knowing how the same names were written in the two related languages in the Pictish period or later, so the linguistic differences could be a product of later copying (1950, 18).<sup>4</sup>

In *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* (1973, esp. 52–67, 77–102, 116–18, 212–15, 235–91), Anderson built on this research, providing new, more accurate, editions of many of the king-lists, and a detailed study of both branches, although many of the basic conclusions had been present in her previous publications. The main exceptions were the propositions that the pseudo-historic section only found in SL was added not much later than 877, and that the surviving SB witnesses derived from a common source written at some point from 1214 to 1249 (Anderson 1973, 52, 102). Nevertheless, and despite not focusing on the ideological aspects of the text, this monograph placed the study of the king-lists on a new, more solid foundation through its sound and comprehensive analysis of the textual development of these sources.<sup>5</sup>

The depiction of Pictish history was the subject of another important study, undertaken by Molly Miller in her article “The disputed historical horizon of the Pictish king-lists” (1979b). This convincingly argued that the list was contemporary by the reign of Gartnait son of Donuel (c. 656–63), and suggested that the pre-historical section of the lists either had reigns based on multiples of 14 which underlay the 84-years Easter cycle used in Pictland before the 710s, or were scholarly commentaries on this (Miller 1979b, 9–12, 16–27, 32). This theory is questionable since Miller’s reconstruction (1979b, 2, 11–12, 22, 26–7, 32–4) involved the emendation of some reign lengths, and a radically different perception of the dates and inter-relationships of the various versions from that proposed by Marjorie Anderson.<sup>6</sup> Also, unfortunately, Miller used a copy of John of Fordun’s version of the list

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<sup>4</sup> The relationship of the Pictish king-lists to the Pictish material in Bede’s *HE* was the subject of an article by A. A. M. Duncan (1981), who argued that the Northumbrian monk Ecgberct played an important role in the transmission of these texts. However, see Evans (2008b) for a different interpretation of the inter-relationship.

<sup>5</sup> With minor exceptions, Anderson (1973, 63–4, 212–15, 234) viewed Fordun’s king-list source to have been derived from the archetype of SB, but it is more likely that it was compiled from at least three versions, one of which was a version of SB sharing a common source with the archetype of the SB list (I intend to produce a more detailed analysis of this in the future).

<sup>6</sup> Miller implied that SB and SL2 were more closely related to each other than to SL1 (1979b, 2, 11) and that the beginning of the Fordun king-list was 231 BC, corresponding to the ‘Nennian’ recension of *HB*’s “nine centuries after Brutus” for the *aduentus Pictorum* (1979b 12, 22). From this Miller drew the conclusion (1979b, 26–7,

which was based on a corrupt manuscript lacking kings found in other witnesses, with negative consequences for her analysis.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the numerical pattern in other versions is still quite striking; the question is, though, whether this was the result of chance or design.

More recently, without pursuing Miller's chronographical theories, Dauvit Broun has considered other potential ideological interests of the king-lists. In particular he has studied the additions at the start of the *Series longior* Pictish king-list, which begin with Cruithne, the Gaelic for 'Pict', and his seven sons, whose names seem to be the names of territories. Broun argued first that this was an ideological statement produced c. 900 of the territory of Alba, which he has taken (1994a, 24–5; 1994b, 48–54) to be coterminous with Pictland, but more recently he has dated this (and the other additions Anderson dated to soon after 877) to 862 × 76, in the reign of Constantín mac Cináeda (Broun 2005, 245–52). It should be noted that the identification of this kingship with Alba is based on a stanza only found in SL3, so it probably was added to the king-list after the Pictish period. While it is possible that this particular stanza was the ultimate source for the addition of Cruithne and his sons in the ninth century, this is not certain.<sup>8</sup> What is clear, however, is that the section of the king-list with Cruithne and his sons was an important statement of the territoriality of the Pictish kingship (Broun 1994b, 49–52) since Cruithne is described as "*pater Pictorum habitancium in hac insula*" ("father of the Picts living on this island"), but it is also probably a recognition that Pictish provinces were also significant. These seven territories in the king-list have often been equated with the divisions of *Albania* in the twelfth-century text *De Situ Albanie*, with, for example, the Pictish region of Fortriu being Strathearn and Menteith (for instance, see Anderson 1973, 139–43). However, Broun (2000), following up the scepticism of Isabel Henderson (1967, 36–8), has argued that the two

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32–4) that the Welsh had access to Fordun's source by c. 1050, and, therefore, that Fordun's source was in existence by then.

<sup>7</sup> See Broun 1999, 16–32, for a study of the manuscripts of John of Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, and the identification of the text in Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. Helmstadiensis 538 as a copy of the text in London, British Library, MS. Add. 37223, but with additional errors.

<sup>8</sup> The alliteration with C and F of the seven names in the SL list makes it likely that a Gaelic poetic source was used, but the form *Cirig* in the poem and SL3 in general is found as *Circin* in SL1 and SL2, so *Cirig* was probably a late alteration. The stanza could be a late creation from SL3, but it is also possible that an earlier *Circin* in the stanza was altered to *Cirig* when or after it was included in SL3. See Anderson 1973, 82–4, for different reasons for the view that SL3 was a derivative version.

sources' territories are unlikely to correspond, which has created space for new interpretations of the political geography of Pictland, such as Alex Woolf's recent proposal (2006) that the Pictish province Fortriu was actually located in northern, rather than southern, Pictland. Broun (1999, 105–8, 197–200) has also analysed the later transmission of the SB Pictish king-lists, which are found with king-lists of Dál Riata and Alba, and discussed how this compilation was used to promote the idea of the kingdom of Scotia as a territory, and the kingship's antiquity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in texts such as the Declaration of Arbroath.

It is clear that there have been substantial advances in our understanding of the Pictish king-lists since the late 1940s, but there are still aspects of the textual history and ideology where advances are possible. For instance, Marjorie Anderson (1973, 85–8) argued that the common source of *Series longior* and *Series breuior* ended in the 720s, because of differences in the two versions after then. However, some of these differences can be explained by scribal corruption made during copying and by arguing that *Series breuior* is a compilation of two manuscripts, which led to the duplication of kings in the eighth century, such as Onuist son of Uurguist (found in SB as Óengus son of Fergus) and Nechtan son of Der-Ilei. Elsewhere, there are duplications in the pre-historic section: SB's Feradach Finleg and Douernach Uetalec are duplicates of the king found in SL as Uuradech Uecla, while SB's Uipognenet and Fiachua albus correspond to SL's Uipoignamet, with *find* or *albus*, both meaning 'white', replacing *uec* or *uet* in the Gaelicised duplicates. This indicates that SB was a compilation of two lists which had diverged in their name-forms enough for these kings to be considered separate people, and accounts for many of the differences between SL and SB. When these duplicates are taken into account, there are insufficient differences between SL and SB to argue strongly that these lists were independent of each other as early as the 720s. From their contents and name-forms it is likely that the common source continued until at least 834, shortly before the *Series longior* version was created; therefore it is possible to reconstruct at least in part two late Pictish versions of the king-list, one the common source of *Series breuior* and *Series longior*, the other the *Series longior* version itself.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> I intend to undertake a more detailed study of this issue in the future.

As well as advances in our understanding of textual issues, and the belief systems underlying these texts, the royal names, themselves a major source for Pictish culture and language, could receive more attention. The forms in the different groups were studied by H. M. Chadwick (1949, 7–33) and Marjorie Anderson (1973, 90–2, 96–8), but more in-depth linguistic analyses have been undertaken by Kenneth Jackson (1955, 144–6, 161–6), and more recently by John Koch (1983, 214–20), partly in conjunction with Katherine Forsyth (2000, 23–4, 33–4). The main problem with the studies from Jackson's onwards is that they were often reliant on the SL king-list (particularly SL1), which contains names in Pictish orthography, but does not necessarily preserve unchanged Pictish forms.<sup>10</sup> While the orthography of the *Series breuior* list has been substantially Gaelicised, when the relationships of the SB list are altered according to Broun's reassessment of the Alba lists, the archetype of that group produces name-forms closer to that of SL.<sup>11</sup> A comparative analysis of the names in the lists could, therefore, produce a more accurate picture of the Pictish language, and of the transmission of these names into the late medieval period.

When we turn to another group of sources, accounts of the Pictish settlement in Britain, it is clear that our understanding of their textual histories has also grown considerably, but there is still a considerable amount that could be done. These can be divided into two groups: one tradition is found in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*HE*), "The Ecclesiastical History of the English People", and Irish versions of the ninth century or later, while the other occurs in Brittonic sources. In the first group the accounts vary in their content, but their core narrative is that the Picts, or *Cruithin*, went to Ireland, obtained Irish wives and settled in northern Britain. Some accounts also contain the information that as part of the marriage deal, a stipulation

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<sup>10</sup> Jackson was open about his rejection of *Series breuior* as evidence for Pictish linguistics when he stated (1955, 144) that "only Recension I [meaning *Series longior*] will be regarded as evidence on the nature of the Pictish language".

<sup>11</sup> Broun (1999, 137, n. 30), noted a correct reading in MS. I of the Alba king-list (accompanying the *Series breuior* Pictish list) not found in the other manuscripts of that group. If, as is likely, this is also the case for the Pictish king-list, it indicates that MS. I is a witness independent of the other manuscripts of the *Series breuior* common source, and does not share an intervening common ancestor with MS. F, as Anderson (1973, 60–3, 234) argued. I intend to discuss this in more detail in the future, and to produce critical editions of the *Series longior* and *Series breuior* archetypes, as well as a partial reconstruction of the king-list sources available to John of Fordun.

was made that succession amongst the Picts should pass through the female line. For a list of these, see below:

- 1) Bede, *HE*, I.1, finished 731. This was one of the sources for the accounts in Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, “The History of the Kings of Britain”, IV, 17 (Faral 1929, III, 63–103), and *Brut y Brenhinedd*, the Welsh translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s text (Parry 1937, 85–6). Other late medieval versions, including Scottish accounts, were at least partially based on these (Skene 1867, 155–60, 163–6; MacQueen and MacQueen 1993, 60–1, 68–75, 86–7; 1989, 296–9; Broun, 1999, 84–5; King 2005, 20–3), but require further study.
- 2) Máel Muru Othna (*ob.* 887), *Can a mbunadas na nGaedel*, “From whence do the Gaels originate?” Gearóid Mac Eoin translated the relevant lines (1964, 140) and designated it Version 1. The Book of Leinster version was edited by R. I. Best and M. A. O’Brien (1957, lines 15990–16158), with the relevant section being lines 16077–80 and 16097–100.
- 3) Part of *Senchas Síil hÍr*, “The History of the Descendants of Ír” (Dobbs 1923, 64–9) containing some Old Irish linguistic forms (which, therefore, probably date to the early tenth century or before), but surviving in later manuscripts. There is also a related account in *LGE* §156. This is Mac Eoin’s Version 2.
- 4) Episodes in *LB* (Van Hamel 1932), “The British Book”, written 1058 × 1093 (but with subsequent additions), and *LGE* (Macalister 1938–56; Carey 1983), “The Book of the Invasions of Ireland”.<sup>12</sup>
  - a) *LB* §13 from the original text (1058 × 1093). This is based on the SL3 Pictish king-list and other origin legend material. This is Mac Eoin’s Version 5.
  - b) *LGE* §490, 491, 495 (In Mark Scowcroft’s account of the development of the Cruithin material (1987, 116–19), this is the first stage, found in recension  $\mu$ . This version is preserved in the Book of Fermoy). It is related to *LB* §6 (in Roman script), a late addition to *LB* found in MSS. B and Lb. It is part of Mac Eoin’s Version 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* was very confusingly edited by R. A. S. Macalister (1938–56) as a single text, but editions of individual recensions (versions) are gradually appearing. The first recension has been partially edited by John Carey (1983).

- c) *LGE* §492, 493, 494 (Scowcroft's second stage, in recension *m*), *LB* §6 (Roman script). It is accompanied by the poem *Cruithnig cid dosfarclam* (*LB* §7, *LGE* poem XC), which is related to it, but has some different details. It is part of Mac Eoin's Version 4.
- d) *LB* §6 (in italics), *LGE* §498 (part of Scowcroft's third stage, in recension *l*). It is a late addition only found in *LB* MS. Lb. Probably a conflation of the account in *Senchas Síil hÍr* (see number 3), and b) or c). This is Mac Eoin's Version 3.
- e) *LGE* poem LXXXIX, about Ard Lemnachta, concerned with battles of the Cruithin in Leinster (part of Scowcroft's third stage). The same tale is also found in *Senchas Arda Lemnachta láin* (Gwynn 1903–35, III, 164 f.). It is part of Mac Eoin's Version 4.

These often very brief accounts, surviving in many complicated sources, mostly from after the Pictish period, have provided a considerable challenge to scholars, so there have been relatively few detailed studies of these settlement tales since *The Problem of the Picts*. However, our understanding of *LB* and *LGE*, which contain many of the versions of the settlement tale and survive in manuscripts from the end of the eleventh century or later, has been transformed by David Dumville (1975–6), Mark Scowcroft (1987; 1988) and John Carey (1994). The stemmatic analyses by the first two of these scholars enable the identification of when material on the Picts was included in these complex texts. However, while these underlying sources have been studied, less work has been done on the Pictish accounts in them since Wainwright's time, apart from analyses by Gearóid Mac Eoin (1964), Marjorie Anderson (1973, 77–84), and Molly Miller (1982). Mac Eoin, in his study of the origin legend's development (1964, 138–40), made the important discovery that the wrong poem with information on the Picts had been attributed to Máel Muru Othna (Chadwick 1949, 84–6; O'Rahilly 1946, 343–4) who lived in the ninth century; in fact the poem *Can a mbunadas na nGaedel* (number 2), rather than *Cruithnig cid dosfarclam* (in 4c) was by Máel Muru. In *Can a mbunadas na nGaedel*, the Cruithin (the Gaelic word for the Picts) briefly appear in the account to steal the women of the sons of Míl (the settlers in Ireland from whom the Gaels were descended), forcing the sons of Míl to marry the *Túatha Dé Danann* (the euhemerised gods) (Mac Eoin 1964, 140, 147–8). This poem contains a few elements found in other texts, such as Cruithne son of Cinge (who is also the first king in the

Pictish king-lists), but not the marriage alliance between the Cruithin and the Gaels, although the marriage agreement between the sons of Míl and the *Túatha Dé Danann* displays some parallels with this. As a result of Mac Eoin's re-identification (1964, 138–40), the much more elaborate origin legend in *Cruithnig cid dosfarclam* could date from much later than the ninth century, since it is found as an addition to *LB* and *LGE*.

Mac Eoin's analysis involves many other important points, but it also contains unsubstantiated assumptions, which means that his overall reconstruction of the origin legend's development is suspect. Mac Eoin argued (1964, 148, 153) that the earliest version of the tale is represented by Máel Muru's poem, which he dated to before AD 600, since it showed the "Goidelic ancestors in a more realistic light", being "an echo of what must have happened after the Goidelic invasion". As with Máel Muru's poem, he proposed (Mac Eoin 1964, 148–9, 153) that the version in *Senchas Síol hÍr* was early (about AD 600) because it disagreed with the view of Irish history found in what Mac Eoin considered the *LGE* tradition, and that it was altered to explain the Pictish practice of matrilinear succession (through the female line) among the Picts. According to Mac Eoin (1964, 149–53), most of the accounts added to *LGE* and *LB* (numbers 4a–d) were also derived from a version produced before Bede independently adapted it in 731, changing the Thracian origin of the Pictish to a Scythian origin. Apart from the fact that scholars would now view medieval depictions of Irish prehistory as predominantly medieval constructions which did not reflect real folk memories, Mac Eoin's analysis assumed that there was a somewhat fixed *Lebor Gabála* tradition in the early medieval period, and that some elements, such as Bede's Scythian origin for the Picts, must be late additions, even though Bede's account is probably the earliest surviving source.<sup>13</sup> While there clearly was a version of the tale before Bede's, the possibility that Irish accounts borrowed ideas from Bede, or were significantly the products of their own literary and social

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<sup>13</sup> See James Fraser's chapter, this volume. The Scythian origin comes from *picti Agathyrsi* in Vergil's *Aeneid*, IV, line 146, via a commentary by Servius, and the Thracian origin (which may not be completely incompatible with the other view) comes from *picti Geloni* in Vergil's *Georgicon*, II, line 115, Gelonus being a son of Hercules (see Miller 1982, 144, n. 31). Both derivations are reflected in *LB* §13, which describes the Picts who took the Orkneys as *Clanda Gaileoin...meic Earcoil*, and explains that these were *Istoreth mac Istoirine meic Aigine meic Agaitheris* (Van Hamel 1932, 23).

contexts, was not sufficiently considered by Mac Eoin. To some extent Molly Miller, in her article "Matriliny by Treaty" (1982, 133–50), gave more emphasis to the view that versions could represent Gaelic viewpoints after the Pictish period ended in the ninth century, rather than arguing that these depictions date from the seventh century or earlier. However, Miller did not reconstruct the textual history of these accounts, because her focus was on attitudes towards the Picts and Pictish matriliney, which, as with Mac Eoin's study, led to other aspects of these texts being overlooked.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, it is probably fair to state that the use as evidence of the origin legends (and, to a lesser extent, the king-lists), has been focused on the matriliney issue. For Wainwright (1955, 25), as for others of his time, Pictish matriliney was a fact. This view continued to be held in the following decades, in which studies discussed matriliney in anthropological terms, made comparisons with different cultures and reconstructed the Pictish royal family tree in various ways (Mac Eoin 1964; Henderson 1967, 31–3; Jackson, A. 1971; Anderson 1973; Kirby 1976, 298–311; Boyle 1977; Miller 1978, 51–6; Miller 1979a, 51–6; Miller 1982). In *Warlords and Holy Men*, Alfred Smyth challenged this (1984, 57–75), arguing that there was no matriliney, and explaining away the origin legends as Gaelic propaganda. He also proposed that the king-list evidence, that no sons succeeded their fathers before the eighth century, could be explained by the theory that the kingship rotated between different dynasties, and that other kings were foreign intruders who gained power by force. Since then, Smyth's case has been countered by David Sellar (1985, 35–41), and then restated using different evidence by Alex Woolf (1998) and Alisdair Ross (1999). Whatever the correct conclusion is, the debate on Pictish matriliney has produced useful comparisons with succession systems elsewhere, for instance in Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England,<sup>15</sup> has focused attention

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<sup>14</sup> Miller's focus on matriliney even extended to arguing that texts, such as *HB*, did not mention Pictish matriliney on purpose, in order to deny the legality of the Pictish settlement (1982, 136).

<sup>15</sup> Numerous anthropological comparisons with modern peoples were made by those in favour of matriliney (see for instance Boyle's article (1977, 2, 5–10)), but the problems with this approach have been highlighted by Ross (1999, 13–14). Alfred Smyth (1984, 67–72) suggested that the Picts had a kingship which oscillated between different dynasties, like early medieval Leinster, a similarity which was rejected by Sellar (1985, 39–40). Alex Woolf (1998, 150–9, 165–7) also made a comparison with Anglo-Saxon, Danish and Welsh kingships, and succession under Roman law.



on the nature of Pictish kingship, and produced new ideas. But it is possible that the focus on the matriliney issue has led to other important aspects of these sources being overlooked or underemphasised (Evans 2008a).

Much work can still be done on the origin legends, through the study of details in the tales and of these sources' individual contexts, so that a more comprehensive understanding of their development can be constructed.<sup>16</sup> For example, the two main Pictish leaders in the accounts are Cruithne son of Cinge and Cathluan son of Caitming or Gub. However, while Cruithne is found in accounts before 900, in both the Pictish king-list archetype and Máel Muru Othna's poem, Cathluan is not found as a Pict in any texts before the poem *Duan Albanach*, written in the late eleventh century.<sup>17</sup> Cathluan was probably the seventh-century British king Cadwallon, borrowed from the early ninth-century Welsh text, *Historia Brittonum* (*HB*) (Morris 1980, 37, 38, 78, 79).<sup>18</sup> The appearance of Cathluan in a Pictish origin legend is, therefore, perhaps one indication that the account contains post-Pictish elements (although the context of his inclusion deserves further consideration). By identifying when other elements were included in the origin legends, it may be possible to reconstruct what, if anything, is reliable evidence for Pictish culture.

Another case is the origin legend in *Senchas Síil hÍr* (Dobbs 1923, 64–5; Mac Eoin, 1964, 149) which may contain Old Irish forms and the potentially early statement that the Cruithin created 'swordland' in the plains of Fortriu and Circinn (probably the main plains of northern and southern Pictland respectively). However, the statement that the soldiers of Thrace (the Cruithin), as part of the deal by which they obtained wives from the Irish, agreed through a contract with the men

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, Zumbuhl (2006, 11–24) for a study placing a related text, *Duan Albanach*, in context (including the Pictish origin legends), and discussing individual details profitably (including the largely ignored statement in the Pictish origin legend that there were seventy Pictish kings from Cathluan to Constantine).

<sup>17</sup> As well as the Pictish king-lists and Máel Muru's poem, Cruithne (or Cruithnechan) is found (see above, pp. 52–3) in numbers 4a, 4b, in 4c the poem *Cruithnig cid dosfarclam* (although in *LB* §6 and *LGE* §§492, 493, and 494 Cruithne has been relegated to the status of a *cerd*, 'wright'), and 4d. Cathluan appears in the *Duan Albanach*, edited (1956) and translated (1957) by Kenneth Jackson, as well as the SL2 king-lists, 4b, and 4c.

<sup>18</sup> Cadwallon is spelt in the Harleian MS. as *Catguollauni*, and *Catgublaun*, which could become re-ordered as *Cathluan* ('battle-light') son of Gub and Cadwallon's son *Catgualart* could perhaps be Cathluan's son *Catinoladar* (using *LB* §6's spelling).

of Ireland that not only lordship but also every inheritance would be according to the (Irish) mothers<sup>19</sup> could represent a later alteration, in the late ninth century or later, when Gaelic-speaking rulers controlled formerly Pictish territory. The implication would be that the kingship, territory and property of the Picts would pass to the Irish. It is clear that the development of this text, and the accompanying section on the kings of the Cruithin of Alba who ruled Ireland (Dobbs 1923, 64–7), require further analysis in the context of the development of traditions about the Cruithin in Ireland, before this tale can be used with confidence as evidence for the Picts.

Indeed, the whole issue of the relationship between the Picts and the Irish Cruithin could provide one, albeit difficult, avenue for future research. As Anderson (1950, 13–16; 1973, 79–84, 90) and Chadwick (1949, 3–5, 81–8, 99–107, 116–19), among others (MacNeill 1933; O’Rahilly 1946, 343–52) have demonstrated, there are many links between the Pictish king-lists and the origin legends, as well as characters shared with Irish literature on the ancient past. This is largely because the Picts shared the same name in Gaelic as people in Ireland, called Cruithin. A strict definition, that the Picts and the Irish Cruithin should be regarded as completely separate peoples, since the Irish Cruithin were not called Picts, was made by scholars such as Marjorie Anderson (1973, 80, 129–30) and Kenneth Jackson (1955, 158–9) because of the casual manner in which the two groups had been associated by previous scholars, with negative results. This distinction, however, should not prevent us from exploring the connections that medieval people thought existed between the Picts and the Irish Cruithin, even if this had no ancient reality.<sup>20</sup> Such a task would require a careful study of the Irish Cruithin in the context of the Irish pseudo-historical tradition.

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<sup>19</sup> Mac Eoin (1964, 151–2) translated *iar mathra* as “according to the mother’s kin” (using the noun *máithre*) rather than “according to the mothers” (using *máthair*), which would probably mean that the kingship and inheritance of the Cruithin would have passed to the men of Ireland.

<sup>20</sup> That the Picts themselves thought that they were connected to the Cruithin is indicated by the additions made to the SL king-list, in which their eponymous ancestor Cruithne son of Cinge is described (in SL1) as “*pater Pictorum habitantium in hac insula*”, “father of the Picts living on this island”. This indicates that other Picts were considered to be living elsewhere, presumably in Ireland, but Anderson (1973, 80) thought that the qualifying phrase was unnecessary, and that *Pictorum* must have been translated from *Cruithne(ch)*, because of her view that the term *Picti* could only be used for the people in Britain.

The other group of texts on Pictish origins is found in Brittonic sources, mainly derived from Gildas's polemical tract, *De excidio Britanniae*, "On the Ruin of Britain" (Winterbottom 1978), which was written in the first half of the sixth century. This tradition has received far less attention from scholars interested in the Picts, with the exception of Miller (1982, 135–6, 148). In Gildas's account of the end of Roman domination and the conquests of the Anglo-Saxons, he stated that the Picts were an overseas nation, and that they took and kept the northern part of Britain up to the wall (Wright 1984, 86–92, 104–5). The meaning of this has been much debated, but the most likely conclusion, persuasively argued by Neil Wright, is that Gildas was describing the settlement of the Picts in northern Britain, subordinating his history to his overall argument.<sup>21</sup> Gildas's settlement tale was influential: it was a source for Bede's *Chronica Maiora* (Jones 1977, 513–17; Wallis 1999, 217, 219–20, 366), written in 725 (although in his *HE* Bede altered his account, making it clear that the Picts had already been in Britain); for the *Vita Sancti Teiliaui*, probably written in the early twelfth century; and for Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (Wright 1984, 92–100).<sup>22</sup>

Another Brittonic account is *Historia Brittonum* (*HB*), written 829/30, probably in Gwynedd (Dumville 1990; 1994, 406). A critical edition of this text was produced by Faral (1929), but editions have also been made of the important version in MS Harley 3859 (Morris 1980) and the Vatican recension (Dumville 1985). In §12 of *HB*, the Picts took the Orkneys at least 800 years before Brutus arrived in Britain, and then later, after wasting many lands, they occupied the northern third of Britain (Morris 1980, 20, 61). This was probably also based on Gildas, as is indicated by the emphasis on Pictish aggression and the settlement of the Picts from overseas to the north.<sup>23</sup> The

<sup>21</sup> It also may have reflected knowledge that there had not been a people called the Picts before the Romans, combined with little understanding of how the Picts had come to be present in northern Britain.

<sup>22</sup> If, as Wright (1985, 95–6) proposes, the reason for Bede's alterations was that he was following the account of Pictish origins found in *HE* I.1 (see above, pp. 54–5), which placed their settlement in prehistory, then it is likely that Bede's source for the Pictish origin legend was obtained 725 × 31.

<sup>23</sup> Other evidence that Gildas was used for the Picts is found later in sections 15 and 23 (Morris 1980, 21, 24, 62, 64–5) where *HB* has statements that the Irish from the west and the Picts from the north attacked the Picts, and that the British were unused to weapons, which are based on Gildas, *De Excidio Britanniae* section 14 (Winterbottom 1978, 21, 93). Later references to the attacks of the Picts and Irish

identification of the Orkneys as an intermediate place of settlement was an innovation, probably inferred from Gildas's text, but also perhaps influenced, as Molly Miller suggested (1982, 135), by its recent conquest by Scandinavians in the ninth century.<sup>24</sup> It is likely that the Pictish settlement was put earlier so that the Irish settlers of Dál Riata took Pictish land (Morris 1980, 20–1, 62) but that some aspects of Gildas's Pictish settlement account were retained in *HB*.

It is difficult to determine whether the Brittonic account of the Pictish settlement was known in Pictland itself, but *HB* and Bede's *Chronica Maiora* did achieve quite a wide circulation, so this is possible. What is probable is that *HB* was known in the Gaelic kingdom of Alba in the following period, since *LB*, and the 'Nennian' recension it was largely based on, were written in Alba, the former in the reign of Máel Coluim III (1058–93) (Clancy, 2000).<sup>25</sup> Indeed, in *LB* §13 (Van Hamel 1932, 23–4) there is an attempt to combine the Orcadian settlement of *HB*, the SL3 Pictish king-list, and the elements of the Cruithin legend, such as the travels of Cruithne, into a single condensed narrative. *LB*, therefore, like Bede's *HE*, represents a combination of the two main traditions about the Pictish settlement.

Another area of debate in which it is possible to gain insights is Pictish literacy. In the 1970s Kathleen Hughes (1970; 1980, 1–21) argued that the Picts used writing less than other peoples elsewhere, confining its use mainly to liturgical texts and king-lists, rather than more sophisticated genres. She argued that the general lack of Pictish documents could not be explained by later losses. This view was countered by David Kirby (1973, 12 n. 31) and Katherine Forsyth (1998), who cited the inscriptions of Pictland, as well as references to writing in Bede's *HE*, as evidence for a considerable degree of literacy, while Patrick Sims-Williams (1985, 306–7) has argued that Hughes may have under-emphasised the possibility of later destruction of early manuscripts from Scotland. Hughes (1970, 4–8; 1980, 5–6, 10, 14) had discussed the Pictish king-lists, but she considered them to be

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in Roman and post-Roman times in sections 30 and 31 are also likely to have been based on *De Excidio* sections 16–17 (Winterbottom 1978, 21–2, 94). For the use of Gildas's text in *HB* overall, see Dumville, "Sub-Roman Britain: History and Legend" (1977, 180, n. 31).

<sup>24</sup> Knowledge of Scandinavian settlement is indicated by the description in §8 (Morris 1980, 18, 59) of the Orkneys as "*ultra Pictos*", "beyond the Picts".

<sup>25</sup> The 'Nennian' recension was itself derived from a copy of *HB* in Wales in 907/8 or 912 (Dumville 1972–4, 86–94, repr. Dumville 1990).

rather unsophisticated. However, they may actually provide evidence, not only for scholarly contacts with the Gaelic world, but also other genres: for instance, the foundation note for Abernethy in *Series longior* (Anderson 1973, 247), perhaps added in the ninth century, describes the property bounds of the supposed initial grant and includes a tale in which a King Nechtan son of Uerp received the kingship of all the Pictish provinces through the intercession of St Brigit, in return for which he granted Abernethy to God and Brigit.<sup>26</sup> This demonstrates the use of writing for recording land ownership, knowledge of hagiographic conventions and also the use of writing to provide ideological support for both the community and the kingship of all the Picts.

As has already been discussed, in both the Pictish king-lists and the origin legends there is evidence for close links between Irish and Pictish scholarship. For instance, Cruithne son of Cinge appears as the first king in the Pictish king-lists and as a leader of the Cruithin in some Irish versions of the Pictish origin legend. Also, there are strong textual parallels between the *Series longior* Pictish king-list additions and the section in the tract about the northern Irish Dál nAraide kindred, *Senchas Síil hÍr*, which follows the Cruithin settlement tale (Anderson 1973, 81). There are, therefore, indications in these texts of a Pictish literate culture, albeit with a strong Gaelic influence.

The Pictish king-lists provide evidence relevant to the literacy debate in another way. Through their very survival, the Pictish king-lists hint at why other Pictish texts might not have survived. One group, *Series breuior*, survived only in Scottish manuscripts (Anderson 1973, 52–67), probably because in the twelfth century it was used to locate the foundation of the ecclesiastical centre at St Andrews in the Pictish period (cf. Anderson 1973, 98–100), and then, as Dauvit Broun has discussed (1999, 197–9), it was later employed by Scottish kings in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to legitimise the territorial extent and antiquity of the Scottish realm. The other group, *Series longior* was not used in this way, and does not survive in any Scottish manuscripts;

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<sup>26</sup> The note is only found in SL1, so it could potentially date to as late as the twelfth century. Anderson (1973, 92–6) thought that it was added later than the ninth century, but that the bounds were perhaps “really ancient boundaries of the church lands of Abernethy” (Anderson 1973, 95). For a study of the bounds see Taylor (2005). However, a Pictish context best fits the contents, and the name *Nectonius magnus filius Wirp* is in Pictish orthography, and it does not contradict the preceding note on the foundation of Abernethy common to the SL group, so it is possible that the longer note was omitted when it was included with *LB*.

it is found in Ireland, in historical texts, and in the fourteenth-century northern English Poppleton manuscript. From the foundation notes in this group, it probably had been kept in Abernethy for a considerable period from the ninth century onwards (Anderson 1973, 92–3, 102).

Given the general lack of manuscripts from early medieval Celtic societies which survived in the countries themselves, survival depended on texts being considered to be worth copying repeatedly, which was unlikely for Pictish texts. The Pictish king-lists exist because they were adaptable and could be reused for different purposes, but even then only when there was sustained interest over the medieval period; other Pictish texts, such as genealogies, with a more confined purpose, were less adaptable and would have been lost.<sup>27</sup> The processes of Gaelicisation and Anglo-Normanisation probably prevented much continuity from the Pictish period (Hughes, 1980, 15–16; Broun, 1998, 183–201), except in ecclesiastical centres, such as St Andrews and Abernethy, which had Pictish origins. Given this, Forsyth's view (1998, 39–61) that Kathleen Hughes over-estimated the chances of survival is likely to be correct, even though Hughes herself stressed the barriers to survival for early medieval texts (1980, 3, 11–21).

In conclusion, there have been considerable advances in our understanding of the Pictish origin legends and king-lists since the writing of *The Problem of the Picts*. However, much work can still be done in many areas, on their textual development and also on their changing meanings for contemporary audiences. It is to be hoped that scholars will continue to employ varied approaches to these texts and continue the trend in considering them from a number of perspectives since they can provide significant evidence for Pictish culture and how they were perceived by others, both their contemporaries and later writers.

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<sup>27</sup> As James Fraser has pointed out to me (and Hughes, 1980, 3–4, noticed), the lack of Pictish texts and manuscripts surviving elsewhere in Europe is significant, but not necessarily for Pictish literacy, since it could also reflect the nature of links with the Continent.

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## PICTISH PLACE-NAMES REVISITED

Simon Taylor

This paper aims to do two things. The first is to attempt to define what a Pictish place-name is, and to discuss some of the problems of distinguishing between place-names coined by speakers of Pictish and place-names coined by speakers of other Celtic languages in northern Britain. The second is to re-examine the distribution of place-names in northern Britain which contain certain elements defined as P-Celtic.<sup>1</sup>

I will start by stating my assumptions: whether or not these assumptions will be challenged by the evidence presented in the chapter itself, it is for the reader to judge. The first assumption is that a language called Pictish existed. I certainly believe, with Watson (1926), Jackson (1955), Nicolaisen (1976), Koch (1983) and Forsyth (1997), that the peoples north of the Forth spoke a P-Celtic language or languages before they spoke Q-Celtic. It was Jackson who coined the term 'Pritenic' to apply to this language before about 500 AD, as opposed to Brittonic, the name for the closely related P-Celtic language spoken further south (1955, 160). According to this model Pictish develops from Pritenic, British from Brittonic. Jackson, in his important chapter "The Pictish Language" in *The Problem of the Picts*, uses 'British' "only in the strict sense of the language of the people living in what became the province of Roman Britain, south of the Antonine Wall" (1955, 130). Both Jackson and Koch would argue that Pritenic and Brittonic were diverging already during the Roman period (Koch 1983, 214).

Before moving on to the evidence provided by place-names, I will say a little more about the key publications which inform these discussions, the most influential of which is Jackson's above-mentioned and widely-known "Pictish Language" chapter (1955). In 1983 John Koch published an article which included an important section on Pictish, but this is far less well known, partly because of its appearance in an

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academic journal (*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*), partly because of its rather daunting title, “The Loss of Final Syllables and Loss of Declension in Brittonic”. In 1997 Katherine Forsyth, who had been John Koch’s postgraduate student, published *Language in Pictland*, in which, while accepting the basic notion of an early divergence between Brittonic and Pritenic, she stressed that “we must keep in mind that they are united by far more than divides them” (1997, 27). It can be added here that when we come to look at the place-name evidence, this statement is strongly reinforced. The main focus of Forsyth’s argument, however, was not the divergence or otherwise of Pictish from other P-Celtic languages but rather the question of whether there was any survival into Pictish times of a non-Indo-European language in Northern Britain. She argues against such survival, and for the thorough-going “Celticity” of the Picts. This particular debate has been running since the nineteenth century, and is still alive in the twenty-first, since Graham Isaac has revived the whole question of the possible survival into Early Historic times of a non-Indo-European language in northern Britain, alongside a P-Celtic language (Isaac 2005).

This paper will avoid this latter debate entirely, concentrating only on the place-name evidence which provides the strongest indication of the existence in northern Britain of a P-Celtic language closely related to Brittonic or British.<sup>2</sup> The first problem which is encountered in any such discussion concerns the geographical boundary between Pictish and British. This is not a problem in those areas which can be assigned in the early medieval period relatively uncontroversially to one or other kingship, such as the kingship of the Picts: e.g. Fife, Kinross, Aberdeen and eastern Inverness-shire; or to the kingship of Strathclyde, such as Lanarkshire. However, when we come to the small county of Clackmannanshire, the definitions of Pictish or British become far less straightforward. It was an area which, when it first enters the historical

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<sup>2</sup> In this chapter I will use ‘British’ in much the same way as that defined by Jackson above, i.e. to refer to the P-Celtic language spoken within what became Roman Britain south of the Antonine Wall. However, I will also use it as a general term to apply to the P-Celtic languages spoken in this area after the end of the Roman Empire, a language referred to variously as Brittonic and Brythonic (see Koch 2006, under ‘Brythonic’). It thus includes Welsh and the language of the British kingdoms of the north, such as the kingdom of Al Clud (Dumbarton), which stretched well to the north of the Wall, and its successor, the kingdom of Strathclyde. In this northern context it replaces the frequently used but problematic term ‘Cumbric’, described as “more correctly a geographic rather than a linguistic term” (Koch 2006, under ‘Cumbric’).

record, formed the northern part of the British territory of Manau. This lay on both sides of the River Forth east of (and perhaps including) Stirling, and the name, Manau, supplies (with a Gaelic genitive ending) the second part of the name Clackmannan, 'the stone of Manau', as well as that of the Gaelic name Slamannan (*sliabh Manann* 'moor of Manau') STL in the uplands to the south of the Forth, on its southern boundary (Watson 1926, 103). Its 'Welsh' credentials are strongly endorsed by the *Historia Brittonum* §62, which records the tradition that towards the end of the Roman period Cunedda migrated to Gwynedd, North Wales, from *Manau Guotodin*. *Guotodin* (in modern Welsh orthography *Gododdin*) refers to a tribal confederation which included much, if not all of modern Lothian, with the Forth its northern boundary. It is combined with Manau here to distinguish it from the Isle of Man, since the names were identical, thus meaning 'Manau beside or associated (perhaps only geographically) with the territory of the Gododdin'. By the late sixth century Manau was coming under attack from the west: in a duplicated entry under the years 582 and 583 the Annals of Ulster record (as *Bellum Manonn* AU 582.1, and *Bellum Manand* AU 583.3, 'the battle of Manau') a battle fought and won in Manau by Áedán mac Gabráin, king of Dál Riata, probably against the local people, the Miathi, who live on in the name of the hill and hillfort Dumyat (Logie STL),<sup>3</sup> as well as in that of Myot Hill (Denny STL). The next time Manau is mentioned by name is in 711, when the Picts were heavily defeated by the Northumbrians 'in the plain of Manau' (*in campo Manonn*) (AU 711.3). The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry referring to this battle identified its site as being between the Rivers Avon and Carron, that is the area around Falkirk STL, on the south side of the River Forth.<sup>4</sup> And in 875 we have a record of a great battle between the Norse and the Picts at Dollar CLA (Anderson 1980, 250). In short, from this admittedly sparse record, a picture of Clackmannanshire as a recurrent theatre of war emerges. Its political geography was against it, lying as it did on the borders of at least three kingdoms, and probably not forming part of any of them for very long

<sup>3</sup> A fine picture of Dumyat graces the cover of the 1980 reprint of *The Problem of the Picts* (Melven Press, Perth). For the siting of this battle in Manau see VC Anderson, xix.

<sup>4</sup> *Her...feohþ Beorhtfrið ealdor man wið Pyhtas betwixt Hæfe 7 Cære*. MS E of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud 636) s.a. 710. See Whitelock 1954.

until becoming part of Gaelic-speaking Alba in the tenth century.<sup>5</sup> Two of these adjacent kingdoms spoke a P-Celtic language (the kingdom of Dumbarton, later Strathclyde,<sup>6</sup> and the kingdom of the Picts). So how do the place-names of Clackmannanshire fit into this fragmented but apparently turbulent history, and how should we classify its non-Gaelic Celtic place-names, such as Dollar and Aberdona? Are they Pictish or British? It is in such cases that I have come to appreciate the practical wisdom of W. J. Watson's choice in his *The History of Celtic Place-Names of Scotland* (1926) of the term 'British' to describe all non-Gaelic Celtic place-name elements in Scotland, studiously avoiding 'Pictish' to refer to the language.<sup>7</sup> However, just because we cannot draw a clear line on the map between Pictish and British does not invalidate the usefulness of 'Pictish' as a linguistic term.<sup>8</sup>

Because we know so little about Pictish, with so little surviving apart from place-names and personal names, how do we recognise a Pictish place-name at all? The process involves reference to the two related languages that are well attested from an early period: Irish and Welsh. In this way we are able to construct a surprisingly nuanced picture of Pictish place-name elements. Soon after getting involved in Scottish toponymics in the early 1990s, I used this tried and tested methodology to devise something I called 'Categories or Degrees of Pictishness', a classification system which has been evolving slowly over the years (and is still evolving!). This divided those place-name elements found in eastern Scotland north of the Firth of Forth into four categories. While these categories are in no way cast in stone, they have proved useful in ordering my own thoughts about Pictish place-names, so I will briefly set them out. Full details can be found in appendix 1 below.

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Clancy, writing about the late seventh century, well describes this area as a "buffer zone" (between Northumbria and the kingdom of the Picts) (2004, 139).

<sup>6</sup> I define the kingdom of Dumbarton as the British kingdom centred at Dumbarton and arguably covering an area roughly co-extensive with the later ecclesiastical deanery of the Lennox, as well as large areas of Clydesdale proper. The focus of this polity shifted to south of the Clyde after the fall of Dumbarton in 871. For more details see Taylor 2006, 13, 22–7 and Clancy's discussion of the terms in his 'Ystrad Clud' entry in Koch 2006.

<sup>7</sup> W. J. Watson was less averse to using 'Pictish' to describe the language of the Picts in his earlier works, e.g. on Ross and Cromarty (1904) and Sutherland (1906 [2002]).

<sup>8</sup> Recently, in his fine book on early medieval Scotland, Alex Woolf has chosen the term 'Pictish British', "on the analogy of 'Scottish Gaelic', thus stressing both its common heritage with British and its distinctive character" (2007, xiv).

I will be looking at some of the elements in these categories in more detail later.

The emphasis in what follows is very much on a limited group of key words generally recognised as Pictish, at least when they occur within historical Pictland, and repeatedly used to form place-names, mainly, though not exclusively, as generic elements, words such as *\*aber*, *\*pert*, *\*pren* and *\*pevr*. By focusing on this group, a significant body of place-names which were coined by the Picts tends to be overlooked, i.e. those names which do not contain any of these key words, but which can be certainly or probably assigned to Pictish by other diagnostic features. The distribution of such names is as important and revealing as any of those which contain the ‘usual suspects’. Given the constraints of time and space, this chapter will concentrate very much on this familiar limited group. However, a wider survey of Pictish place-names will have to give just as much careful consideration to names such as Biffie, Blebo, Dairsie, Deer, Kellie/Kelly, Lundie and Rosemarkie. A fuller (though far from comprehensive) list of such names can be found in appendix 4 below.

A wider survey of Pictish place-names should also take into account all names, whatever their ultimate linguistic origins, which were used by the Picts and mediated by them to their successors, be they Gaelic-speakers, Norse-speakers or Scots-speakers. This body of names includes many river-names and territory-names. The best survey of them can be found in Watson 1926, chapters I and II “Early names”; III “Names in Adomnán’s ‘Life of Columba’”; and chapters XIII and XIV “River Names”.<sup>9</sup> However Pictland or the kingdom of the Picts is defined, this represents a significant body of names, and indicates a relatively high degree of political and social continuity within early medieval North Britain.<sup>10</sup>

The ‘Four Categories or Degrees of Pictishness’ are as follows:

1. Those names which can be described as wholly Pictish, that is coined by Pictish-speakers. These include, amongst others, place-names containing (in anglicised form) *aber*, *keith*, and *dol* or *dull*.

<sup>9</sup> See also Nicolaisen 1976 [2001], chapter 9 “Pre-Celtic Names”.

<sup>10</sup> Such continuity has to be treated with some caution: Orkney contains the Pictish (or Pritenic) name for this archipelago, with the addition of Norse *ey* ‘island’; below this level, however, the place-nomenclature shows little or no trace of Pictish survival.



It should be noted that the element *\*cuper* ‘confluence’ is the only such element which is confined to historical Pictland.

2. Those names which contain Pictish loan-words borrowed into Gaelic attested only in place-names: this is predicated on the fact that these elements frequently occur with elements which are recognisably Gaelic. This is more problematic than it seems, as these Gaelic elements may simply have been adapted or translated from Pictish. For example, all the places called Kincardine may formerly have been *\*Pencarden* (see below for more details). Similarly the earliest attestation of St Andrews, *Cind righ monaigh*, under the year 747 in the Annals of Tigernach (cited ES i, 238), written in a Gaelic-speaking milieu, is probably adapted from Pictish *\*Penrimond*.<sup>11</sup>
3. Those names which contain Pictish loan-words attested as common nouns in Scottish Gaelic.
4. Those names which contain what may be described as ‘false friends’. This is a term used most commonly in the realm of teaching French to Anglophones and vice versa to refer to a word of very similar form, and from the same Latin root, which occurs in both English and French, but which means something significantly different in each language, e.g. ‘to demand’ versus French *demande* ‘to ask’; ‘to pretend’ versus French *prétendre* ‘to claim’. In the context of Scottish place-names, I use this term to refer to Gaelic elements whose meaning in place-names seems to have been influenced by a Pictish cognate. For *ràth* and *lios*, both referring to defended or enclosed settlements, I am indebted to work done by Aidan MacDonald, the Cork-based Scottish archaeologist. In the 1980s MacDonald published a whole series of important Scottish place-name articles. The fact that he published them in the *Bulletin of Ulster Place-Name Society* (later *Ainm*) has meant that they have never become as well known in Scotland as they deserve.

I should stress that this ‘false friends’ category can be doubly treacherous: differences between Scottish and Irish usage of an element can also arise from different dialectal usage within Gaelic, both Scottish and Irish. Sometimes this dialectal difference can be caused by the

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<sup>11</sup> Compare this to the earliest forms of Kinneil WLO (such as *Peanfahel* and *Peanuahel*, both from eighth-century MSS of Bede’s *HE*) and Kirkintilloch DNB (*Caerpentaloch*, from *Historia Brittonum*) (see MacDonald 1941, 30–1 and Watson 1926, 347). In both these names British *\*pen* has been Gaelicised as *ceann*.

influence of whatever language Gaelic superseded, known as substrate influence, but sometimes it may be a result of factors internal to the language. Within an eastern lowland Scottish context, our knowledge of both Pictish and Gaelic is so imperfect that in many cases we can never really know which of these two processes might be involved. For example, Professor Barrow would include the hill-words *beinn* and *càrn*, so common in Scotland, relatively rare in Ireland, as belonging to this category of 'false friends', and in this he may well be right (Barrow 1998, 56).

It is possible to construct yet another category, which, developing the idea of 'false friends', might be called 'associates whose loyalty can never be known'. These are words used in the construction of place-names which were shared by Pictish and Gaelic with minimal differences in both pronunciation and meaning. One such element is *dùn* 'fort, (fortified) hill', which frequently occurs in place-names in both Ireland and Scotland. Common to all other known Celtic languages, there is every reason to assume that it existed also in Pictish. It is found in many important early centres of power which have developed as parishes or regional centres, such as Dumbarton, Dundee, Dunfermline and Dunkeld.<sup>12</sup> Many of these are in historical Pictland, and, while the historical and archaeological record make it likely that several of these were occupied in the Pictish period, it is usually assumed that the generic element is Gaelic, and that the names were therefore coined by Gaelic-speakers. I would argue, however, that it is just as likely that many of them were coined by Pictish speakers, and, in those cases, that the second (specific) elements represent either adaptations or replacements made by Gaelic-speakers.<sup>13</sup> This observation could well hold good for several other elements which we assume are Gaelic. It is only our ignorance of Pictish, and the dearth of early sources, which lead to this assumption. We are not completely dependent on supposition in this regard, however. One example, provided by that most important of sources for sixth- and (above all) seventh-century Scotland,

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<sup>12</sup> Aidan MacDonald, in his article on this element in Scottish place-names, lists about 30 instances of *dùn* in the name of a medieval parish (1981, 36–7). The specific of Dunkeld is the genitive of the tribal name which appears in Classical sources as *Caledonii* or *Calidonii* (see Watson 1926, 21–2; Jackson 1954, 14–16).

<sup>13</sup> This is acknowledged by W. J. Watson, who writes of eastern Scotland: "More of the old names were retained or adapted to Gaelic, many were doubtless translated in whole or in part." (1926, 233).

Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, is *Crog reth*,<sup>14</sup> the Pictish form of the name which has survived in the thoroughly Gaelic guise *A' Chruach*, and in the district name Rannoch (Gaelic *Raithneach*) (see Watson 1926, 78; Koch 1983, 218–19).<sup>15</sup> I will not explore this hypothesis any further here (a hypothesis which is in many cases very difficult, if not impossible, to prove), but in any treatment of place-names in those parts where Gaelic has replaced a P-Celtic language, be it British or Pictish, it should always be borne in mind that the definition of a Gaelic place-name must remain somewhat blurred and tentative.

Having set out this general framework, I want now to go back and look at some of these elements more closely. Category 1 contains those elements which could be termed 'wholly Pictish'. As will become clear from the following distribution maps, this should really be worded 'wholly P-Celtic' or 'wholly non-Gaelic'. I say this because the distribution of these elements is far from straightforward. A general impression of the problem can be got from W. F. H. Nicolaisen's map from his influential 1976 book *Scottish Place-Names*, map 20 (p. 163), which appears unaltered in the 2001 edition, also map 20 (p. 209). This is entitled "*P-Celtic names containing aber, pren, pert, lanerc and pevr*". All distribution maps should, of course, carry various 'health warnings', chief amongst them that they show only what has survived, not what has been lost. However, the more that detailed local surveys are carried out, the less risk such distribution maps pose to their users. Nicolaisen's above-mentioned map was in turn inspired by K. H. Jackson's distribution map, presented in his chapter "The Pictish Language" in *The Problem of the Picts*. This is entitled "Distribution of certain P-Celtic place-name elements other than *Pit* (e.g. *carden, lanerc, pert, pevr, aber*) north of the Antonine Wall" (1955, map 7, p. 150). The main problem with Jackson's map is that, unintentionally, and despite the caption, it obscures the fact that several of these elements also occur south of the Antonine Wall (which cuts across central Scotland from the south shore of the Forth near Bo'ness to the north shore of the Firth of Clyde at Kilpatrick). Nicolaisen's map, which

<sup>14</sup> A man visiting Columba comes from "the shores of the loch of *Crog reth*" (*litoribus stagni Crog reth*) (VC Anderson, 82, book 1, chapter 46).

<sup>15</sup> J. T. Koch states that the name "survives as Scottish Gaelic *Cruach Raithneach*" (1983, 218). This is not quite what W. J. Watson says: "The hill in question can only be *Cruach Raithneach*, probably the range of hills marked on the maps as *A' Chruach*, some distance west of Loch Rannoch and forming part of the boundary of the district of Rannoch." (1926, 78).

includes most of the same elements (the only difference being that it drops *carden* and adds *pren*), is a great improvement on Jackson's in two ways. Firstly, it shows the distribution of these elements right down to the modern Scottish-English Border (and in one instance just beyond) and secondly, it differentiates the elements by using separate symbols. And when so presented, the nature of the problem is at once clear: none of the elements chosen by Nicolaisen for this map confines itself to historical Pictland. Nicolaisen himself was acutely aware of the problem: in the context of his assumption that *Pit*-names confine themselves to Pictish territory, and noting that \**carden* is found only north of the Forth, he writes:

When it comes to the evaluation of the linguistic affinities of the other four generics [*lanerc*, *pert*, *pevr*, *aber*], matters become more complicated, in so far as none of them occurs exclusively in what we have defined as Pictish territory on the basis of the distribution of *Pit*-names. (1976, 159 [2001, 204])<sup>16</sup>

In the pages which follow he attempts to uphold the 'Pictishness' of some of these elements by seeing a difference in their usage or application within Pictish territory as opposed to the area which he calls Cumbria.<sup>17</sup> For example, writing of *pert*, he notes that "the main difference [between 'Pictish territory' and 'Cumbria'] lies in the fact that this element, which originally applied to a natural feature [which he defines as 'wood, copse'], was never elevated to a settlement name in the south, while having survived only as such in the north" (ibid., 164). However, he classes Larbert STL as being "within Pictish territory", which is, by any traditional definition of Pictland, unlikely, and he fails to mention Partick LAN, as well as the settlement-name Parton and the parish-name Solport in modern Cumbria, formerly Cumberland, England, which was as much part of his 'Cumbria' as anywhere else south of the Antonine Wall.

Regarding *aber* Nicolaisen writes that "a preponderantly north-east-erly [by which he means eastern Scotland north of the Forth] distribution is distinctly evident, the implication being that it was employed more productively in the naming of places by the Picts than by the

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<sup>16</sup> This problem is acknowledged also in his map of these elements (undifferentiated) in McNeill and MacQueen 1996, 51, which he entitles simply "Overlapping place-names".

<sup>17</sup> Nicolaisen's 'Cumbria', a term I would argue is anachronistic and misleading, takes in all of southern Scotland, including Lothian, Galloway and the Lennox.

Cumbrians, as far as the *p*-Celts of Scotland were concerned" (ibid., 164–5). Be that as it may, four of six *Aber*-names south of the Forth were formerly names of parishes, which is very much in line with the high number of *Aber*-parish-names north of the Forth (see appendix 1, category 1 below).<sup>18</sup>

Of Jackson's 'four generics', perhaps the one with the most 'Cumbric' distribution is *\*lanerc*, since within Pictish territory it is confined to the southernmost part (Menteith and southern Strathearn). This was, however, obscured on Nicolaisen's map by the inclusion of Lendrick, Airlie ANG, which does not appear on record until the mid-nineteenth century and is very probably a transferred name.<sup>19</sup>

There is no escaping the fact that from the evidence presented above, as well as from a close scrutiny of all the elements considered thoroughly Pictish (as listed in appendix 1, category 1 below), the bulk of them ignore the Firth of Forth as the great frontier which it is so often presented as in the early medieval period, with Fife and south-east Scotland showing an especially close relationship. In this, the most 'Pictish' of categories, the only element emerging so far with any claim to be exclusively Pictish in terms of historical Pictland is *\*cuper* 'confluence'.

The situation is thus very complex, and this is fully acknowledged by Nicolaisen (1976, 164). Any picture which emerges is determined by various factors, such as 1) which place-names or place-name elements the toponymist chooses to focus on; 2) how certain names are interpreted; 3) how well or superficially place-names have been collected and analysed for any given area; and 4) how the toponymist decides the geographical limits of the study area, which is in turn determined very much by the political-historical framework in which he or she

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<sup>18</sup> Koch (1983, 214) would see another difference between *Aber*-names north and south of the Forth. He quotes several early forms of *Aber*-names in historical Pictland (including Lochaber, mentioned in Adomnán's *Life of Columba* as *stagni Aporici* and *stagno Aporum*; and early forms such as *Apurnethige* for Abernethy PER and *Apor-crosan* for Applecross ROS) as evidence for the fact that Pritenic (Pictish) used the *o*-grade *\*abor* from *\*ad-bhor-*, while British used *\*aber* from *\*ad-bher* (as in Bede's form of Abercorn on the south side of the Forth, which appears twice as *Aebbercurnig*).

<sup>19</sup> NO350506. *Lendrick* 1865 OS 6 inch 1st edn.; Lendrick Lodge on OS Explorer. There is nothing marked here on Ainslie's map of Angus (1794), and no sign of the name, only *Lochton* and *Lochside* a short distance to the south. It seems likely, therefore, that the name is a late importation into the area from either Lendrick, Callander PER or Lendrick (Hill), Fossoway KNR (formerly PER).

is working. Nicolaisen's treatment of the element *\*cair* (1976, 160–4, including map 19, p. 161) well illustrates several of the above points. Generally speaking, his distribution maps have contributed greatly to moving the whole discipline of toponymics in Scotland forward, stimulating debate and further study, even though individual maps have been subject to some criticism and revision over the years.<sup>20</sup> However, the above-mentioned map entitled “Cumbric names containing *cair*” (1976, map 19)<sup>21</sup> has to be seen as an exception to this generally positive assessment. The problem begins with the description “Cumbric names”, since two dots (representing Carpow by Abernethy PER and Kirkcaldy FIF) are placed within an area which by the author's own definition is unequivocally Pictish. It is then compounded by the failure to recognise a whole raft of other names north of the Forth which contain *\*cair*, many of them apparently referring to sites of Roman forts (for details of which see appendix 1, category 2, under *\*cair* below). There is certainly no justification for the statement that “*cair* serves the same function for Cumbric as *pett* for Pictish, and their almost complete mutual exclusion makes them especially valuable as important markers of Cumbric and Pictish, both linguistically and territorially” (ibid., 162–4).

Any re-examination of Pictish place-names in Scotland cannot avoid dealing with the issues raised by the element *pett* ‘land-holding, unit of land’, which has survived in literally hundreds of Scottish place-names, mainly those of farms or small rural settlements, and mainly in the form *Pit-*. Despite all the ink spilled on *Pit*-names, no complete survey of them has been published, an undertaking which is crying out to be done.<sup>22</sup> Jackson argued, in his edition of the *Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer*, that the Pictish word *pett* was not borrowed into Gaelic as a common noun “any more than *ville*, so common in forming American village names, has really been borrowed into American as such, though the *meaning* is known” (1972, 115 n. 3).

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Crawford 1987, chapter 4; Taylor 2007, and Nicolaisen himself (1989).

<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately reprinted unchanged in the 2001 edition, map 19, p. 207, and (with minimal changes) in MacNeill and MacQueen 1996, 51.

<sup>22</sup> The most complete list, with historical forms, which I am aware of is that compiled by Robert Henery of the Scottish Place-Name Society, as yet unpublished. For Scotland east of a line drawn from Perth to Inverness, there is a complete list of surviving *Pit*-names with extensive spatial and environmental detail for each name (along with *Bal*- and *Auch*-names) in Fraser 1998 (also unpublished).

In other words it remained simply part of the onomastic register, a term whose meaning was understood, but which occurred only in place-names. Nicolaisen, however, refers to it as “an appellative” (i.e. a common noun) in the *Gaelic Notes* (1976, 151–2 [2002, 195]), and I would agree with this (see Taylor 1997 and 2008, 282–3). Nicolaisen is clear that most of the place-names containing this element were not coined by Pictish speakers, but rather by Gaelic speakers who had borrowed the word, basing his opinion on the fact that many of the specific elements are Gaelic (1976, 156 [2001, 201]). In this he took his lead from W. J. Watson, who even reports the survival of the common noun into modern Gaelic (1926, 408).<sup>23</sup> Why, therefore, when the two giants of Scottish place-name studies of the twentieth century were so clear about this, is it repeated over and over again that *Pit*-names are Pictish? It is partly, no doubt, on account of the general eagerness of the Scottish public, both lay and academic, to have something other than the Pictish carved stones and king-lists which can be clearly linked to this elusive people. And there may even be the superficial (and completely coincidental) resemblance of *Pit*- and *Pict*. The distribution map of places containing this element, and the way it has been presented, must, however, also bear some responsibility. There is no doubt that the distribution of *Pit*-names looks remarkably ‘Pictish’. K. H. Jackson, who was the first to produce such a distribution map (1955, 146, map 6), makes this point strongly, stating that:

It is beyond reasonable doubt that they [the *Pit*-names] were all given by one single population speaking some sort of P-Celtic language, which inhabited eastern Scotland from the Forth to around the Dornoch Firth and occupied much more thinly parts of the western mainland from at least Lochaber to Lochcarron and Loch Torridon. (ibid., 149)

And Nicolaisen, acknowledging his debt to Jackson, writes:

The map of *Pit*-names, as we have it (and we must thank Professor Kenneth Jackson for first providing us with the first [*sic*] version of this visual aid in 1955), can be said to be definitive as a cartographic expression of the major toponymic evidence for the settlement area of the linguistic (Celtic) Picts. (1976, 156 [2001, 201])

There are complex, even mixed, messages here, so it is perhaps not surprising that it is still generally held that where there is a *Pit*- there

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<sup>23</sup> See also Cox 1997.

was a Pict. The situation is not helped by the caption of the *Pit*-name distribution map in Nicolaisen 1976, 153 [2001, 198], which reads “Pictish names containing *Pit*”, while the very similar map published in 1996 is simply captioned “Pictish place-names” (McNeill and MacQueen 1996, 51).<sup>24</sup>

While not denying the ultimate Pictish origin of *pett*, I fully accept, along with Watson and Nicolaisen, that it was used to generate place-names in the Gaelic-speaking period. This has to mean that the distribution map of names containing *pett* reflects an era which post-dates any that is generally deemed ‘Pictish’. I would therefore argue that the map of *Pit*-names (or better, of names containing *pett*, since there are some names, such as Petty INV and ABD, or Pettymarcus ABD, where the *e* has remained) depicts not “the settlement area of the Pictish people, i.e. of speakers of Celtic Pictish” (Nicolaisen 1976, 151), but rather the extent of Gaelic-speakers in the tenth century, as Alba is beginning to expand into areas outwith its core lands between the Dornoch Firth in the north and the Firth of Forth in the south. Further north its absence throughout most of Sutherland and Caithness, as also down the west coast and in the islands, probably reflects the extent of Scandinavian influence during this period; and in this regard it is significant that one of the most northerly names in *pett* is Pittentrail, in south-east Sutherland, which contains *tràill*, a Norse loan-word into Gaelic meaning ‘thrall, slave’ (Watson 2002, 59). In south-east Sutherland Watson mentions “six or seven *pits*...confined to the parishes of Rogart, Lairg and Dornoch” (loc. cit.).<sup>25</sup> An important emendation will have to be made in Glenelg, one of the few places in western Scotland where *Pit*-names are recorded. Both Jackson and Nicolaisen, following Watson, place two dots in Glenelg (on the mainland opposite north-east Sleat on Skye). However, records show only one *Pit*-name here, appearing variously as *Pitalman* (1541 RMS iii no. 2297), *Pitchalman*

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<sup>24</sup> The accompanying text refers to “the hybrid Pictish-Gaelic composition of many *Pit*-names”, stating that “some of these names may be part-translations; most of them are likely to have been coined during a Pictish-Gaelic bilingual period in the ninth and tenth centuries, or perhaps even later” (ibid., 50). Since it is clear that the word was borrowed into Gaelic, it is not necessary to invoke the notion of hybridity (a very rare phenomenon in place-names), nor even of a bilingual period, although such no doubt existed. I would, however, agree with the time period he suggests, the later the more likely.

<sup>25</sup> However, only three are shown in this area on Nicolaisen’s map (and only two on his map in McNeill and MacQueen 1996, 51).



(1608 *Retours* (Inverness) no. 19) and *Pitalmit* (1820 Thomson Map/ Inverness-shire), and which is now represented by Bailanailm (NG88 19), first recorded as such with reference to a small settlement on the OS 6 inch 1st edn. (1876). The variable early forms of this place led Watson to assume they referred to two separate places.<sup>26</sup>

I have classified the element \**carden* as having once been a loan-word from Pictish into Gaelic, but attested as such only in place-names (category 2). This classification has been made on account of its frequent combination with Gaelic *ceann*: there are six or seven places called Kincardine, from the Dornoch Firth to the Firth of Forth. On the other hand, it has impeccable Pictish credentials, appearing as it does as part of a name in Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, written in the late seventh century about events in the late sixth. Referring to Urquhart on Loch Ness, which Adomnán himself implies was in the kingdom of the Picts,<sup>27</sup> he writes that Columba came to the "farmland which is called Urquhart" (*agrum qui Airchartdan nuncupatur*), where lived Emchat (*Emchatus*), an old man, and his son Virolec (*Virolecus*).<sup>28</sup> This name has survived as Urquhart, and is found five times north of the Forth, between Fife in the south and the Black Isle ROS north of Inverness.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, its distribution, apart from Cardross DNB, is entirely confined to the historical kingdom of the Picts. There may, therefore, be a good case for it to be reclassified as 'wholly Pictish', and, as I have already mentioned, Kincardine is perhaps best seen as a Gaelic adaptation or part-translation of an earlier \**Pencarden*. In fact it mainly occurs as a simplex, with or without a suffix (see appendix 1, category 2 below). It is combined with G *druim* 'ridge' once

<sup>26</sup> I am most grateful to Denis Rixson for first alerting me to this error. From material which he supplied it is clear that the change from *Pit-* to *Bal-* took place around 1800, with the earliest *Bal-* form recorded as *Ballnellum* in 1804 (RHP23075/1).

<sup>27</sup> Adomnán situates Urquhart "on the other side of the Spine of Britain" (*ultra Britaniae dorsum*), i.e. to the east of Drumalban, which is one of the ways in which he refers to the kingdom of the Picts. Furthermore, one of the inhabitants of Urquhart was called *Virolecus*, which would appear to be a Pictish name-form.

<sup>28</sup> VC Anderson, book 3, chapter 14, 201–2; the Irish form of this name, mentioned by the Andersons in their discussion (p. 202, footnote 226), refers to the first element, the preposition *air* 'on' or 'at'. It can be assumed that this translates a similar Pictish preposition (which latter probably accounts for the *Ur-* in the modern forms of this place-name).

<sup>29</sup> 'Urquhard (sive Vuquhard)', which appears in RMS iii no. 1966 as the name of a fishing ground near Ayr, is a scribal error for a place written variously as *Wolquhare* or *le Wolquhare* (1540 RMS iii no. 2064), *Welquhair* (1647 RMS ix no. 1890), and *Wolwhair* (1662 *Retours* (Ayr) no. 525).

(Drumchardine, Kirkhill by Inverness),<sup>30</sup> and with Gaelic or P-Celtic *ros* ‘promontory’ twice (in Cardross, a parish beside Dumbarton DNB, and, probably, in Cardross, Port of Menteith PER).<sup>31</sup>

The uncertainty concerning the categorisation of names containing \**carden* extends itself also to what \**carden* might mean. In an important article in *Scottish Language* 18 (1999), Andrew Breeze pointed out that the evidence for the (very rare) Welsh cognate *cardden* meaning ‘thicket, brake’ etc. is dangerously flimsy, and he suggested instead a meaning such as ‘encampment, enclosure’. W *cardden* is not quite so rare as a place-name element, occurring as it does in about twelve names, confined to central Wales and Denbighshire, frequently with the definite article, Y Gardden (as a feminine noun, the first letter mutates from *c* to *g*).<sup>32</sup>

What conclusions can be drawn from all this? I would suggest that at present it is unwise to indulge in too much speculation. Having been presented with so many distribution maps and distribution descriptions, the reader may be surprised that what is needed are more such, not only of individual elements, but also of place-names themselves which can be assigned to one or other language group with some certainty, yet which do not contain any of the key words generally recognised as Pictish (as discussed briefly above, p. 71, with some examples given in appendix 4 below).<sup>33</sup> And before such maps can be produced, we need in-depth county surveys for the whole of Scotland.

This does not mean that, until all of Scotland’s place-names have been properly surveyed and analysed, any place-name based theorising should be put on hold. I have ventured, above, one such theory regarding the distribution of names containing *pett*. And there is, I hope, much more that can be extrapolated from the data presented in this

<sup>30</sup> This too appears to have had a suffix (*Drumcardny* 1568 RMS iv no. 2348). It may be a pre-existing place-name with Gaelic *druim* attached as a generic in the Gaelic-speaking period; or *druim* may be a Gaelic adaptation of a Pictish cognate; see appendix 1, s.v., for more details.

<sup>31</sup> I am assuming that Cardoness KCB (*Kerdonnes* 1277) does not contain \**carden*.

<sup>32</sup> It should be pointed out that many of these appear very late in the record; from the online database of Welsh place-names with some early forms, extracted from the Melville Richards Archive, visited November 2006: [http://www.e-gymraeg.co.uk/enwawlleoedd/amr/cronfa\\_en.aspx](http://www.e-gymraeg.co.uk/enwawlleoedd/amr/cronfa_en.aspx) None of these is mentioned in Owen and Morgan 2007.

<sup>33</sup> There is a very useful set of maps showing within England county by county the distribution of names containing Celtic elements in Coates and Breeze 2000, 368–92.

chapter, by historians, linguists and archaeologists. However, above all my hope is that this chapter, along with its appendices and maps, will show up the gaps in our knowledge, and where future research effort might usefully be directed.

In the Wainwright book of 1955, which was used as the touchstone of the Perth conference in March 2004 where the paper on which this chapter is based was first delivered, there was no separate treatment of place-names—this was subsumed in K. H. Jackson's chapter on the "Pictish Language". At the Perth conference the situation was reversed. I hope this marks a new shift in the exploitation of our place-nomenclature as a tool for understanding early medieval Scotland. Toponymics, the study of place-names, is often talked about, but few resources are invested in it, with the notable exceptions of the Shetland Place-Name Project and (from 2006 to 2010) the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Project, *Gaelic in Medieval Scotland: the Evidence of Names*, based at the Department of Celtic, University of Glasgow, the chief aim of which is to complete an in-depth place-name survey of Fife. Only with more such investment can toponymics deliver its vital evidence for the early medieval period in Scotland. If we are serious about wanting to understand linguistic, cultural, social and political relationships in this period, then we need to start getting serious about place-names.

## APPENDIX 1

## DEGREES OF PICTISHNESS

\* = reconstructed form

# = obsolete

*Category 1*

This consists of P-Celtic words probably not borrowed into Gaelic, indicating that the place-names containing them were coined by speakers of P-Celtic:

\***ABER** or \***AB(B)OR** (the latter form with *o*-grade, as suggested by Koch 1983, 214): ‘burn- or river-mouth’; e.g. **Arbirlot** ANG (*Aberhelot*), **Arbroath** ANG (*Aberbrothoc*), **Arbuthnott** KCD (*Abirbuthenoth*), \***Abergarf** LAN (*Abercarf* 1114 × 1124, now Wiston). The word was Latinised by Adomnán, writing of **Lochaber**: once as a third-declension noun in the genitive plural, *stagno Aporum* ‘(to) the loch of the river-mouths’, suggesting a nominative singular \**apor* (book 2, chapter 20, VC Anderson, 120), once as a first-declension adjective in the genitive singular, *stagni litoribus Aporici* ‘(to) the shores of the river-mouth-loch’, suggesting a nominative singular masculine *aporicus* (book 2, chapter 37, *ibid.*, 148; see also Watson 1926, 78–9).

Distribution: over sixty examples, only two west of the Great Glen (**Applecross** ROS and **Appledore**, Skye INV), with three in the Great Glen (**Lochaber**, **Abertarf** and **Abriachan**). A remarkably high number were medieval parishes (twenty-six). Mainly in eastern Scotland. Six south of Forth-Clyde line (four of which were parishes). None in England, which means there is not one between **Abermilk** (now Castlemilk near Annan DMF) and north Wales. For a distribution map of this element see Barrow 1998, 57, map 2.1, which supersedes Nicolaisen 1976, 163 [2001, 209], map 20. From both maps the dot by Loch Lomond should be removed, since this represents Aber, Kilmaronock DNB, which more probably derives from Gaelic *eabar* ‘pool, puddle, marsh’ (see Taylor 2006, 29).

\***BREN** or \***BRUN**: 'hill'. The underlying form in **Cameron** by St Andrews FIF (*PNF* 3) and **Cameron**, Markinch FIF (*PNF* 2) would appear to be \**brun*. **Cameron** MLO (*Cambrun* 1264 × 1288) Norman Dixon would derive from an otherwise unrecorded G \**brun* 'hill' cognate with W *bryn* (1947, 238, 337). Since Cameron MLO (now a southern suburb of Edinburgh) is in British-speaking territory, it is more likely that it is in fact a British place-name. This conclusion is strengthened by the existence of two British places called **Trabrown**, one in Lauder BWK (*Treuerbrun* c. 1170 *Dryb. Lib.* p. 268), one (**Trabroun**) in Gladsmuir ELO.<sup>34</sup> These Watson analyses as cognates of W *tref yr bryn* 'farm of the hill' (1926, 359–60). There is, however, some evidence that the Pictish cognate of W *bryn* was also realised as \**bren*, as in **Burnturk**, Kettle FIF (*Brenturk* c. 1245 *St A. Lib.* 283; *Brenturk* 1294 PRO E 101/331/1; *Bernturk* 1451 *ER* v, 469; *PNF* 2) and perhaps in **Newburn** FIF (*Nithbren* 1150 *David I Chrs.* no. 171, 172; *Nitbren* 1152 × 1159 NLS MS Adv. 15.1.18 no. 82; *PNF* 2). Both \**bren* and \**brun* could be the same word, showing vowel variation, the latter perhaps influenced by OIr *brú* (acc. *broinn*, gen. *bronn*), 'belly', referring to a rounded hill. A similar confusion is found in Cornish between \**bren* 'hill' (cognate with W *bryn*) and *bron* 'breast, hill' (Padel 1985, 31, 32). Camborne in Cornwall appears as *Camberon* 1182 and *Cambron* c. 1230, and is analysed as *cam(m)* + *bron(n)* 'crooked hill' (Padel 1988, 63). It may also be found in **Burnbane**, Little Dunkeld PER (around NO10 38) (*terre de Brinbane* c. 1419 Fraser, *Grandtully* i, no. 111\*).<sup>35</sup>

It is found in the names of at least three places in AYR, two of which, **Roderbren** and **Brenego**, in Tarbolton, have not survived (c. 1161 × 1177 Fraser, *Lennox* ii, no. 1), while the third, **Barnweill**, Craigie, has been assimilated both to Sc *burn* and Sc *barn*.<sup>36</sup> It is also probably the first element in **Barncluith** LAN, 'hill by or on the Clyde' (rather than British \**pren* 'tree', as suggested by Watson 1926, 352).

<sup>34</sup> There are two places called Trebrown in Cornwall, for which see Padel 1985, 33, under *bron* 'breast, hill'.

<sup>35</sup> See also Hall *et al.* 1998, 140, where I suggest that the first element may be G *braon* '(place of) dampness' (found more certainly in nearby Birnam). I did not at that time consider the possibility of a P-Celtic \**bren* etc. I am grateful to Mark Hall for reminding me of this.

<sup>36</sup> *Berenbouell* c.1161 × 1177 Fraser, *Lennox* ii, no. 1; *Burnwele* 1441 *RMS* ii no. 266; *Barnwele* 1459 *RMS* ii no. 734; *Barnweill* 1559 × 1566 *RMS* iv no. 173.

Because we do not fully understand the way in which *b* behaves in word-initial and element-initial position, there is much scope for confusion with British (and Pictish) *\*pren* ‘tree’.<sup>37</sup>

Distribution: because of the difficulty of distinguishing between *\*bren* etc and *\*pren*, it makes sense to take the two together. See under *\*pren* below.

**\*CĒT**: ‘a wood’; often occurs as Keith; and north of Forth in several burn-names, e.g. Keithing Burn, at the mouth of which is Inverkeithing FIF. For discussion, and some examples, see Watson 1926, 381–2. Names wrongly mentioned in Watson 1926 as containing this element: Balkeith, Tain ROS (*Balmachothē*);<sup>38</sup> and Keith Inch, Peterhead, ABD (*Caikinche*).

Distribution: c. twenty-six examples from BNF to AYR (ABD, ANG, AYR, BNF, BWK, ELO, FIF, KNR, MLO, PER, RNF, WLO). None west of the Spey<sup>39</sup> and none in Galloway. Two examples in Cumberland, England. See Fig. 2.1 for distribution map and list.

**\*CUPER**: ‘confluence’?; found unequivocally only in **Dalfouper**, Edzell ANG (*Dulquhober* 1511), **Coupar Angus** PER, and **Cupar** FIF (PNF 4).

Distribution: only in eastern Scotland north of the Forth.

**\*DOL**: ‘water-meadow, haugh’; e.g. **Dull** PER, **Dallas** MOR (earlier *Dolays Mychel* 1226 *Moray Reg.* no. 69, p. 74). This word will also appear in category 3, borrowed into Gaelic as *dail*. Some caution needs to be exercised in interpreting this different realisation of the word as reflecting different language-contexts, as it may also reflect different

<sup>37</sup> I am grateful to Dr Alan James and Guto Rhys for sharing with me their extensive knowledge of and insights into this matter.

<sup>38</sup> While Watson (1926, 382, and footnote 1) is correct in pointing out that Balmakeith, Nairn NAI does not contain this element, his suggestion that it contains the personal name *Càidh* (the Gaelic form of the surname ‘Keith’) is not supported by the early form *Balnecath* 1238 *Moray Reg.* no. 40.

<sup>39</sup> I have omitted Keithmore by Convinth, south-east of Inverness, as it is probably a transferred name from Keithmore by Mortlach BNF. It is first recorded on OS 6 inch first edn. (1875; for more information see <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/beauly/> under Keithmore). I have also omitted Inchkeith in the Firth of Forth. For my suggestion that it contains the saint’s name Coeddi see PNF 1, 412; and Keithen, Monquhitter ABD NJ79 45, early forms of which are *Keirthyn*: though modern pronunciation suggests the *r* was intrusive (Alexander 1952, 74).

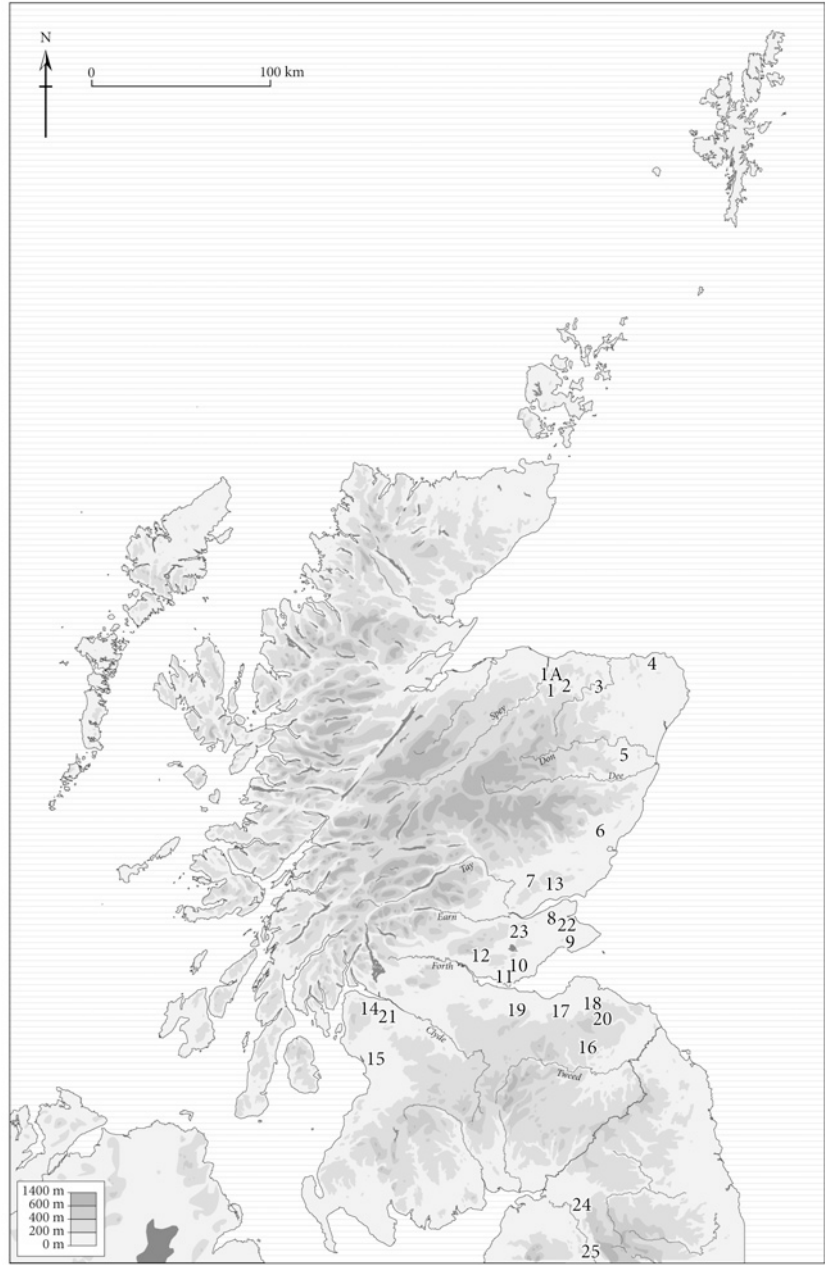


Fig. 2.1: Distribution of \*CĒT. (Map: Ingrid Shearer.)

Key to Fig. 2.1

\**cēt* 'woodland'

Layout of each name: **Number** on map; **County** (pre-1975); **Type of feature** [P = Parish (medieval and modern); R = Relief feature; S = Settlement; W = Water feature] **NGR**

**1 Keithack BNF S NJ34 38**

Upper and Lower Keithack by Dufftown, Mortlach; note also adjacent to Nether Keithack is Keithmore, see 1A.

**1A Keithmore BNF S NJ35 39** Adjacent to Upper and Lower Keithack; occurs as the toun (*villa*) of *Keth* c.1450 *Abdn. Reg.* i, 251, one of two touns within the lordship of Mortlach, along with the toun of Pitglassie (*Petglassy*), Mortlach, making up one davoch.

**2 Keith BNF PS NJ42 50**

**3 Keithny (Burn) BNF W NJ62 47** Gives rise to the parish- and settlement-name of Inverkeithny, which supplies the NGR.

**4 Kethock (Burn) ABD W NJ99 67** By Fraserburgh; see Alexander 1952, 75, who cites also Ketack Burn, Knockando MOR and Kettock Burn, Strachan KCD.

**5 Keithney ABD S NJ72 19** Chapel of Garioch parish; *Kethny* 1631 *RMS* (Alexander 1952, 306).

**6 Keithock ANG S NO60 63** Between Montrose and Brechin; also Keithock Burn.

**7 Keithick PER S NO20 38** By Coupar Angus PER.

**8 Kethyn # FIF W NO398232** Burn, now gone, flowing past Easter Kinnear, Kilmany; see Taylor and Henderson 1998, 238; and *PNF* 4.

**9 aqua de Kethok # FIF W NO456008** Burn, now the Den Burn, forming the boundary between the parishes of Kilconquhar and Carnbee. See *PNF* 3, Section 1.

**10 Kethymyre # FIF W NT251873** A bog between the parishes of Burntisland and Kinghorn. See *PNF* 1, 46.

**11 Keithing (Burn) FIF W NT12 82** Gives rise to the parish- and settlement-name of Inverkeithing FIF (*PNF* 1).

**12 Dalkeith KNR S NT01 99** Fossoway parish, formerly PER. *Dolketh* 1194 × 1198. Note also nearby Keith Hills in the same parish (NT03 98).

**13 Keith Lundie ANG S NO28 37** Lundie parish. Easter Keith and Wester Keith.

**14 Ferret of Keith RNF R NS23 68**

**15 Dankeith AYR S NS38 33** *Dalkeith* 1530 × 1531 *RMS* iii no. 980; *Dalkeith et Haggis* 1582 *RMS* v no. 427.

**16 Inchkeith BWK S NT48 49** Lauder parish; also Inchkeith Hill west of Lauder.

**17 Dalkeith MLO PS NT33 66**

**18 Pencaitland ELO PS NT43 68**

**19 Bathgate WLO PS NS98 69** See MacDonald 1941, s.n.

**20 Keith ELO PS NT44 64**

**21 Cathcart RNF PS NS57 60** *Kerkert* 1158 *APS*; *Katkert* c.1170 *Pais. Reg.*; *Catkert* 1177 × 1185 *RRS* ii no. 220; Gilbert of *Kathkerd* 1203 × 1210 *RRS* ii no. 476. Generic element variation between British \**cair* and \**cēt*. See also Watson 1926, 366–7.

**22 Kitattie # FIF S NO40 19** Leuchars parish FIF (*PNF* 4).

**23 Catochil PER S NO177134** Abernethy parish PER. See main text, appendix 1, category 1, footnote.

**24 Clesketts, Cumberland S NY58 58** Farlam parish. *EPNS Cu* i, 84–5.

**25 Culgaith, Cumberland PS NY61 29** See *EPNS Cu* i, 184–5.

**Not included:**

Inchkeith, Kinghorn FIF (see main text).

Keithen, Monquhitter ABD NJ79 45: early forms *Keirithyn*: though modern pronunciation suggests the *r* was intrusive (which Alexander takes it as, 1952, 74).

Keithmore, by Convinth INV (suspected transfer; see main text.).



dialects within early Scottish Gaelic, or different ways of treating the borrowed word.

\***ECLĒS**: ‘church’, in names north of the Forth: e.g. **Inglismaldie** KCD, **Exmagirdle** PER.

See Barrow 1983 and Taylor 1998.

Distribution: chiefly south of the Mounth, and easterly, north and south of the Forth. It appears in three or four simplexes south of the Forth, but always in combination with a saint’s name north of the Forth. If the two distribution maps, one for England (Cameron 1968) and one for Scotland (Barrow 1983) are put together, there is a large area in what is now northern England where the element does not appear (or has not survived), with only one in Cumberland<sup>40</sup> and in County Durham (probably),<sup>41</sup> and none in Westmorland or Northumberland.

\***LANERC**: cognate with W *llannerch* ‘clearing, glade, pasture, empty space, place, area’. It occurs as a simplex in **Landrick**, Dunblane & Lecropt, Menteith PER, **Lanrick**, Kilmadock, Menteith PER, **Lendrick**, Callander PER and **Lendrick** (Hill), Fossoway, southern Strathearn KNR (formerly PER). It also occurs as the specific in the British name **Carlenrig** ROX (Watson 1926, 368, but is not listed with the other *lan-erc*-names p. 356, the best known of which is **Lanark** LAN); Watson’s suggestion that *Panlaurig*, Duns parish BWK is for *Panlanrig* is untenable in the light of later forms (Watson 1926, 374; but see Johnston 1940, 42). It is found in combination with G *druim* in **Drumlanrig** DMF, probably as an existing name construction (despite early forms such as *Drumlangryg* (1357 RRS vi no. 153), in which the second element has been reinterpreted as Sc *lang rig* ‘long rig or ridge’). **Lendrick**, Airlie ANG appears to be a nineteenth-century transferred name from Lendrick, Callander PER or Lendrick (Hill), Fossoway KNR.

Distribution: eight, from Menteith PER and southern Strathearn PER to DMF. A marked southern and central distribution, with none in

<sup>40</sup> Eaglesfield, not shown on Cameron’s map; see Wilson 1978.

<sup>41</sup> Egglecliffe, Co. Durham, can be removed from Cameron’s map; see Watts 2002, 38–9. However, I would agree with Alan James (pers. comm.) that Eggleston, County Durham (*Egleston* 1197) may well contain this element, despite Watts (ibid., 39), who interprets it as ‘Ecgwulf’s estate’. Recent discussions of ‘*ecles*-place-names’ in both Scotland and England can be found in Hough 2009 and James 2009.

Fife or north of the Tay, and none in the Lothians. There are at least four in Cumberland, England (including Lanercost, around which the others cluster).<sup>42</sup> For distribution map within Scotland along with other P-Celtic elements, see Nicolaisen 1976, 163 [2001, 209] (map 20), from which Lendrick, Airlie ANG has to be removed, and Landrick by Dunblane PER and Caerlanrig on the Teviot ROX added. For distribution and list see Fig. 2.2.

\***MIG**: ‘bog, marsh’; Watson relates it to the Welsh word and place-name element *mig-*, *mign*, pl. *mignoedd* ‘bog’ (1926, 374). Amongst the examples he gives (374–6) are **Dalmigavie**, Strathdearn INV, **Meigle**, Gowrie PER (*Migdele*); **Midmar** ABD (*Migmarre*); **Midstrath**, Birse ABD (*Migstrath*) and **Strathmiglo** FIF. The furthest north example is **Migdale** (*Miggewethe* 1275), Creich SUT. It is rare in areas outwith historical Pictland, with possibly four independent examples in southern Scotland, appearing twice as a river-name (**Meggat** Water DMF and **Megget** Water SLK), and twice as a settlement-name, **Migdale**, Kilmacoll RNF (NS35 71) and **Meggetland** by Edinburgh MLO. Megdale DMF (NY30 95) lies on the Meggat Water and contains a reduced form of the river-name.

Distribution: predominantly confined to eastern Scotland north of the Forth as far north as south-east Sutherland. There would appear to be none in England.

\***OGE**L: ‘high’; found north and south of the Forth. See Watson 1926, 378, and Barrow 1998, 62–3. Two forms can be distinguished: 1) those with the velar fricative /x/, realised in modern Scottish Standard English spelling as *ch*, e.g. The **Ochils** (the range of hills which runs from near Stirling north-eastwards into Fife) and **Ochiltree** (AYR, WLO, WIG), thus chiefly south of the Forth; and 2) those with the voiced velar stop /g/, e.g. Glen **Ogle**, Balquhidder PER,<sup>43</sup> **Ogil**, Tannadice ANG, and **Ogilvie**, Blackford PER and Glamis ANG, thus chiefly in historical Pictland, though not exclusively so (see Fig. 2.3). Together they

<sup>42</sup> For details and references see key accompanying Fig. 2.2.

<sup>43</sup> *Glenogil* 1456 ER vi, 277. Note also Allt Oghline, a burn on the Braes of Balquhidder (NN476216). Angus Watson proposes for the specific G ògail with a masc. diminutive ending *-an*, gen. *-ain*, ‘little youthful one’. However, he does also more tentatively suggest that it may be the same element as in Glen Ogle, which he would derive from the ‘high’ word (2002, s.n.).



Key to Fig. 2.2

*\*lanerc*

Layout of each name: **Number** or **Letter** on map; **County** (pre-1975); **Type of feature** [P = Parish (medieval and modern); R = Relief feature; S = Settlement; V = Vegetation; W = Water feature] **NGR**

**1 Barlanark LAN S NS66 64** Glasgow parish. *Pathelanerhc* 1114 × 1124 *David I Chrs.* no. 15 (13th century copy); *Barlannark* 1173 *Glas. Reg.* no. 28; *Barlannarc* 1186 *Glas. Reg.* i no. 62. The first element appears to be British *\*baedd* 'boar', assimilated to G *bàrr* 'top, summit' (also a British element) by the later twelfth century. It may, however, be an example of generic element variation (for which see Taylor 1997).

**2 Carlenrig ROX S NT39 04** Teviothead parish. Also spelled Caerlanrig (e.g. OS Landranger no. 79). See Watson 1926, 368.

**3 Drumlanrig DMF S NX85 99** Durisdeer parish.

**4 Lanark LAN PS NS88 43** Royal centre.

**5 Landrick PER S NN799024** Dunblane & Lecropt parish.

**6 Lanrick PER S NN68 03** Kilmadock parish.

**7 Lendrick PER S NN54 06** Callander parish.

**8 Lendrick Hill KNR R NO019036** Fossoway parish, formerly PER.

**9 Lanercost, Cumberland S NY55 63**

**10 Lanerton, Cumberland NY59 64**

**11 Lanrecorinsan #, Cumberland c.NY53 60**

**12 Lanrecereini #, Cumberland c.NY59 62**

**13 Lanrechaithin #, Cumberland S c.NY55 66**

**14 Lanrequeitheil #, Cumberland** 'unlocated', possibly in Brampton parish (parish church NY53 61).

stretch from ANG to WIG. The River **Oykel**, which forms the south-east ROS/SUT boundary, is unusual, both in form and location: it is the only example which has developed a voiceless stop in English, and it lies much further north than any other of the Ogle/Ochil-names (see Fig. 2.3).<sup>44</sup> It is *Oiceal* (gen. *Oiceil*) in modern Gaelic, with early forms such as *Strathochell* 1490 *RMS* ii no. 1978 ('strath or broad valley of the Oykel'), also *Strathokell*, *Essokell* (combined with *G eas* 'waterfall') and *Killochel* (combined with *G caol* 'kyle, strait') 1582 *RMS* v no. 411. The Norse form is *Ekkjall* (see Watson 1926, 209–10).

K. H. Jackson, in his comments on the Pictish treatment of the early Celtic consonant cluster *ks*, states that it would seem to agree with Gaulish and Goedelic (Gaelic) in that it becomes *ss*, probably "in the first quarter of the third century AD", as opposed to Brittonic, in which it becomes *ch* "at some time between the fourth and sixth centuries" (1955, 165; discussed in more detail *ibid.*, 137–8). The frequent realisation of this consonant cluster in Pictish territory as *g* (sometimes as *ch*)<sup>45</sup> clearly flies in the face of this statement. John Koch gets round the problem by writing of the "occasional change of early Celtic *-xs-* to Pritenic [early Pictish] *-SS-*" (my emphasis) (1983, 215).

It should be considered, however, that names containing *\*ogel* may derive from Celtic *\*ocelo-* 'headland, promontory, spur' (see Rivet and Smith 1979, 429, under *Ocelum*).<sup>46</sup>

**Distribution:** five with fricative *ch* (e.g. **Ochils**, **Ochiltree**); ten with stop *g*. From ANG to WIG. For a distribution map with full list see Fig. 2.3. Note also the Roman Fort *Uxelodunum* at Stanwix, Cumberland

<sup>44</sup> W. J. Watson considers Achilty, Contin ROS, Gaelic *Aichealaidh* (Gaelic form from Dwelly 1901–11, 1004, early forms *Auchquilye* 1479, *Hechely* 1528) a Pictish name, containing the Pictish cognate of *uchel*, and compares it with the first part of the Wester Ross name Achiltibuie (*Akilvy* 1617) (1904, 148). However, he makes no mention of either of these in any later writings, and probably quite rightly decided against such an etymology.

<sup>45</sup> The only independent example north of the Forth of *-ch-* in a name containing this element is in The Ochils, which, given the prominence of this hill-range at its western end when viewed from south of the Forth, and given its role as the northern boundary of the British-speaking territory of Manau, could well have been transmitted to Gaelic-speakers through British rather than Pictish. Catochil, the name of a small settlement in the Ochils near Abernethy PER, the first element of which is probably Pictish *\*cēt* 'wood' (*Cathehill* 1295 *Cambus. Reg.* no. 7 [sixteenth-century copy]; *Catoichill* 1508 *RMS* ii no. 3178), has been influenced by the name of the hills in which it lies, and which supplies its second element.

<sup>46</sup> I am grateful to Thomas Clancy for this suggestion.

(NY40 57) and *Uxelum* “perhaps the Roman fort at Ward Law, Caerlaverock” DMF (NY02 66) (Rivet and Smith 1979, 483–4).

\***PANT**: ‘hollow’; found north of the Forth in Angus (**Panbride**, **Panmure** and **Panlathy**, clustered together, and representing one occurrence of this element); note also **Panholes**, Blackford parish PER (*Panan* 1240 *Inchaffray Chrs.* no. 67; *Pannel* 1467 RMS ii no. 903; *Pannell* 1526 RMS iii no. 345). **Pannanich**, Glenmuick ABD, cited by Watson 1926, 374, as a possible derivative, has no form earlier than 1769 (*Pananich*).

\***PEN**: ‘head, end, promontory’; Watson 1926, 353–6 states that there is no sure instance north of Antonine Wall. But **Pennan**, Aberdour ABD (*Pennand* 1587) is a possibility; note also **Pandewan** [hill], Lochlee parish ANG, **Pinderachy**, Tannadice/Fern ANG, and **Pinnel Hill**, Dalgety FIF (*Pin-hill* 1756; see PNF 1, 81). While its cognate G *ceann* (earlier *cenn*) seems only to mean ‘end, head’ on a horizontal plane, British \**penn* seems also to mean ‘promontory, height’, although it is unlikely to mean simply ‘hill’ (see Padel 1985, 177–8). For the suggestion that \**pen* may frequently have been Gaelicised to *ce(a)nn* see above, pp. 72, 80.

\***PERT**: ‘wood, grove’; cf. W *perth* (f.) ‘hedge, (thorn-)bush, brake, thicket, copse, coppice; (the) bush, countryside, jungle’ (GPC). In Wales it is found in Narberth, Pembrokeshire, earlier Arberth, which “seems to have been a district name for an area opposite or adjacent to (*ar*) part of the formerly extensive woodland area of Narberth Forest (an earlier sense of *perth*)”; in Redberth, Pembrokeshire, which the authors suggest contains Welsh *rhyd* ‘ford’, translating ‘?ford by the bush’; and, in the derived adjective *perthog* ‘bushy’, in Pantperthog, Merionethshire, ‘bushy hollow’ (Owen and Morgan 2007, s.nn.). In Scotland it is found, for example, in **Pert** (former parish) ANG and **Perth** PER (Watson 1926, 356–7). *Perth beg* (c. 1450 *Abdn. Reg.* i, 251, a village in the lordship of Mortlach BNF), “is the furthest north instance” (Watson 1926, 357).<sup>47</sup> In fact, the furthest north instance

<sup>47</sup> This does not appear on map 20 of Nicolaisen 2001 (209), but is mentioned in the text (210). It is possible that this is an early transferred name from the better-known Perth on the Tay.

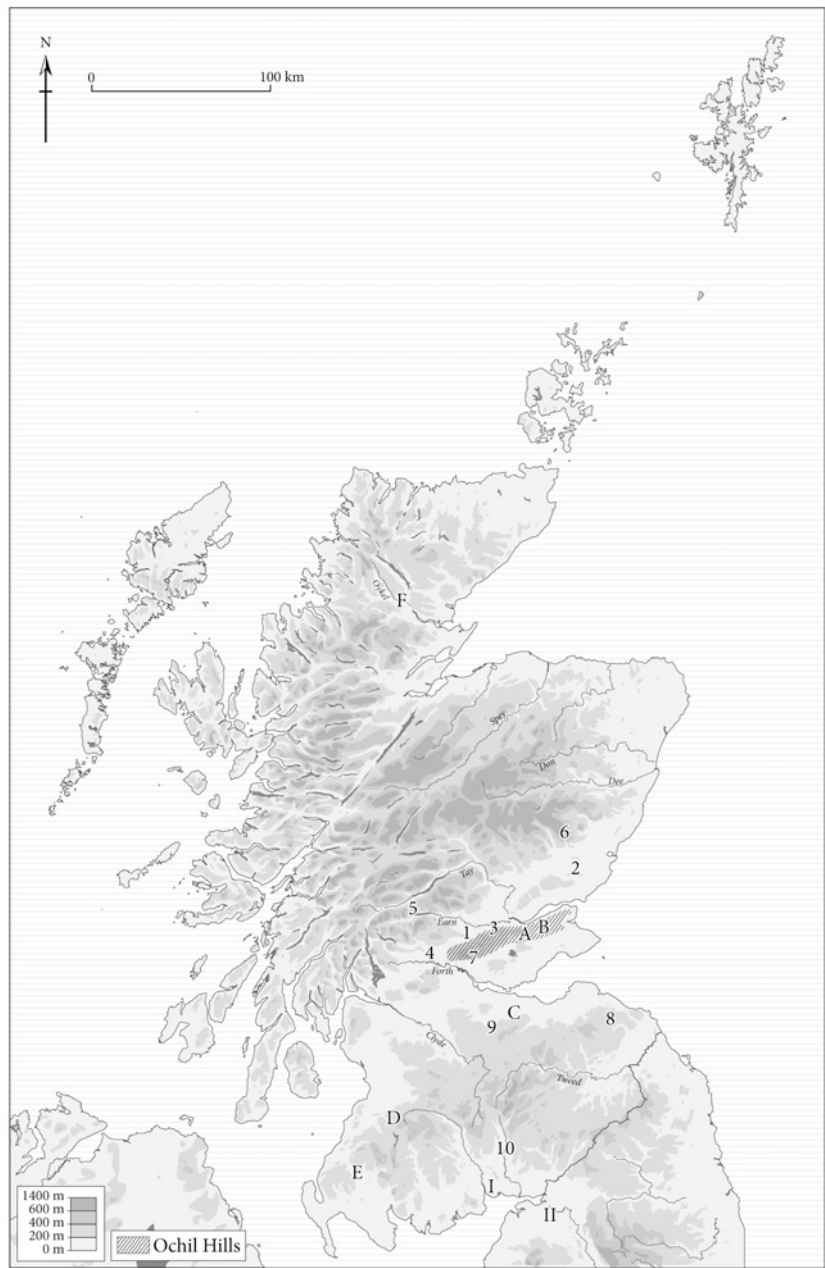


Fig. 2.3: Distribution of \*OGEL/\*OCHIL. (Map: Ingrid Shearer.)

Key to Fig. 2.3

*\*ogel/\*ochil* 'high (place)'.

Layout of each name: **Number** or **Letter** on map; **County** (pre-1975); **Type of feature** [P = Parish (medieval and modern); R = Relief feature; S = Settlement; V = Vegetation; W = Water feature] **NGR**

**1 Ogilvie** PER S NN90 08 Blackford parish.

**2 Ogilvie** ANG S NO38 44 Glamis parish.

**3 Ogle Hill** PER R NN97 11 Auchterarder parish; with hillfort.

**4 Oglegarth Wood** PER V NN67 01 Kilmadock parish.

**5 Glen Ogle** PER R NN59 23 Balquhider parish. The NGR is where the Ogle Burn flows into Loch Earn at Lochearnhead.

**6 Ogil**, ANG S NO44 61 Tannadice parish; Mains of Ogil, Milton of Ogil, Easter Ogil, Den of Ogil, Burn of Ogil, Glen Ogil (and Glenogil).

**7 Ogle** CLA R NS88 99 Alva parish; in the Ochils, it is the name now attached to the southern shoulder of Craighorn, which rises steeply to 583 metres.

**8 Ogle Burn** ELO W NT73 73 Rises on Blackcastle Hill (c.300 metres), forming parish boundary between Oldhamstocks and Innerwick, then flowing into Thurston Mains Burn at the above NGR.

**9 Ogilface** WLO S NS92 69 Torphichen parish. *Oggelfast* & *Ogelfas* 1165 × 1203; *Okelfas* 1203 RRS ii no. 434 [original document]; see MacDonald 1941, 97 and Watson 1926, 378.

**10 Ogle Linn** DMF W NY04 95 South of Moffat.

**A Catochil** PER S NO17 13 Abernethy parish PER, in the Ochils. See main text, appendix 1, category 1, footnote.

**B Ochils** STL/CLA/PER/FIF R NN90 00 Range of hills stretching c.70 kilometres from near Stirling in the west, north-east to Leuchars in north-east Fife. The highest point is Ben Cleuch at 721 metres, which supplies the above NGR.

**C Ochiltree** WLO S NT03 74 Linlithgow parish. See MacDonald 1941, 61–2.

**D Ochiltree** AYR S NS50 21

**E Ochiltree** WIG S NX32 74

**F Oykel** ROS/SUT W NC47 00 The NGR is of where the Oykel is joined by the Cassley to form the Kyle of Sutherland, near Inveroykel. See also main text, appendix 1, category 1, under \*OGEL.

**I Uxelum ?** DMF NY02 66 “perhaps the Roman fort at Ward Law, Caerlaverock” (Rivet and Smith 1979, 483–4).

**II Uxelodunum, Cumberland** NY40 57 Roman Fort at Stanwix by Carlisle (Rivet and Smith 1979, 483–4).



may be Watson's *Perthok* and *Perteoc* associated with Ludquharn, Longside, inland from Peterhead ABD (ibid.). This might be later **Parcock** #, Old Deer parish ABD, probably now Howe (NJ987419), c. 3.5km south-west of Ludquharn. These forms date from 1417, the full references being *ER iv*, 285 and 288 respectively.<sup>48</sup> An even earlier reference may be in the personal name Walter de *Perthoch*, steward of William Prat of Crichtie, Old Deer, in 1246 *A. B. Ill.* iv, 3. It appears as *Percok* in 1544 (*A. B. Ill.* iv, 22).

For **Panbarthill** ELO see Watson 1926, 374, and key to Fig. 2.4.<sup>49</sup> Distribution: c. twelve, only four north of the Forth, one BNF, one ABD, one ANG and one PER. None in Fife.<sup>50</sup> Note that three of four north of the Forth are the simplex, and one is simplex + diminutive or some other suffix, as also is **Partick** LAN. All the rest are combined with other elements. See Fig. 2.4.<sup>51</sup>

\***PEVR**: 'beautiful, shining'; occurs only in names of water-courses, some of which have later become incorporated into settlement-names, e.g. **Innerpeffray**, Crieff PER; **Strathpeffer** ROS and **Inverpeffer**, Arbirlot by Arbroath ANG (terra sua de *Inuerpefir* 1267 *Arb. Lib.* no. 250).

Distribution: historical Pictland (excluding Fife) as well as Lothian. For distribution map see Nicolaisen 2001, 209 (map 20). Going south from Lothian, the next example of it would seem to be Peover, Cheshire.<sup>52</sup>

\***PREN**: 'tree'. As discussed above under \**bren* 'hill', it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between these two elements. The invisibility of \**bren* has been unintentionally fostered by the fact that W. J.

<sup>48</sup> I am grateful to Gilbert Márkus for supplying these references.

<sup>49</sup> Perthumie Bay, near Stonehaven KCD (NO89 88) probably contains G *port*. Watt 1914, 379 writes that Portlethen KCD used to be called Pertlethan "for it is fisher lingo to convert *port* to *pert*". Perthudden, a coastal name in Slains parish ABD (NK03 28), stressed on *u* (as in *cup*) (Alexander 1952, 99, who gives no early forms) may well also contain Gaelic *port*.

<sup>50</sup> Watson suggests that Gospetry, Strathmiglo FIF contains this element (1926, 210). He based this on the earliest form he was aware of, *Gospertie* (1507). However, much earlier forms *Kilcospardy(n)* 1294 Stevenson, *Documents* i, 413; 417, the first element of which is probably G *coille* 'woodland', make this suggestion highly unlikely.

<sup>51</sup> The only English examples given by Smith 1956 under \**pertá* (Welsh *perth*) are Pertwood, Wiltshire, Peart, Somerset and Solport, Cumberland.

<sup>52</sup> *EPNS Cheshire* 2, 292; I am grateful to Alan James for this reference. There are no examples of place-names in Wales with this element (modern Welsh *pefr* 'bright, shining, clear, fair') in Owen and Morgan 2007.

Watson did not see it as a British element occurring frequently enough to merit its own section in his important chapter “British Names” (1926, 339–88). The British element *\*pren*, on the other hand, did merit a place in that chapter (351–2), where both Barncluith LAN and Newburn FIF are probably wrongly assigned to *\*pren* rather than *\*bren*. The most enigmatic of all these names is **Kinpurney**, Newtyle ANG, which first appears as *Kylprony* (1317 RRS v no. 127). The first element is either G *coille* ‘wood’, or an assimilated form of *ceann* ‘end, head’. Either way, the generic is Gaelic, and the earliest form suggests that the specific is not *\*pren/bren/brun* at all, but rather the element found in Pronie, Prony and Tillypronie, also Pitprone, all ABD, which Alexander suggests may derive from G *pronn*, ‘crumbly soil’ (1952, 356).<sup>53</sup> Alternatively, if the specific is of P-Celtic origin, then it may have been incorporated as a pre-existing name *\*Pronie/Bronie*, so that the name would be interpreted ‘end of a place called *\*Pronie/Bronie*’.

Distribution: fortunately the distribution of both *\*pren* and *\*bren/brun* is roughly co-extensive. Examples are clustered in south-east PER, FIF, the Lothians and the eastern Borders, with a few outliers in AYR and LAN. There is only one example north of the Tay, Kinpurney ANG, and that is uncertain (see above); and none in Dumfries and Galloway (WIG and KCB). There are two fairly certain examples of *\*bren* in northern England, close to the modern border: Knorren (Beck and Fell), Cumberland, near Lanercost (*Knavren* c. 1195; *Cnoveran* 1250; possibly “a British compound of *cnau* ‘nuts’ and *bryn* ‘hill’” EPNS Cu i, 19); and Yeaverling near Wooler, Northumberland (mentioned in Bede, *HE* as (*Ad*)*gefrin*), the first element being cognate with W *gafr* ‘goat’ (Ekwall 1960, s.n.).

? **\*ROTH**: see category 4, under *ràth*.

**\*TRAUS/\*TROS**: ‘(lying) across or athwart’; see Watson 1926, 350–1; to these examples can be added **Trustach**, Banchory-Ternan KCD (*Trostach* 1212 RRS ii no. 506); and **Trusta**, Fern ANG (*Trusty* 1794 Ainslie map of Angus).

Distribution: found north and south of Antonine Wall. Obviously an element shared by Pictish and northern Brittonic.

<sup>53</sup> This is a problematic element, which MacBain 1911 (s.v.) would link with G *bronn* ‘distribute’, but which can also mean ‘break or crush’ (hence *pronnag* ‘crumb’).

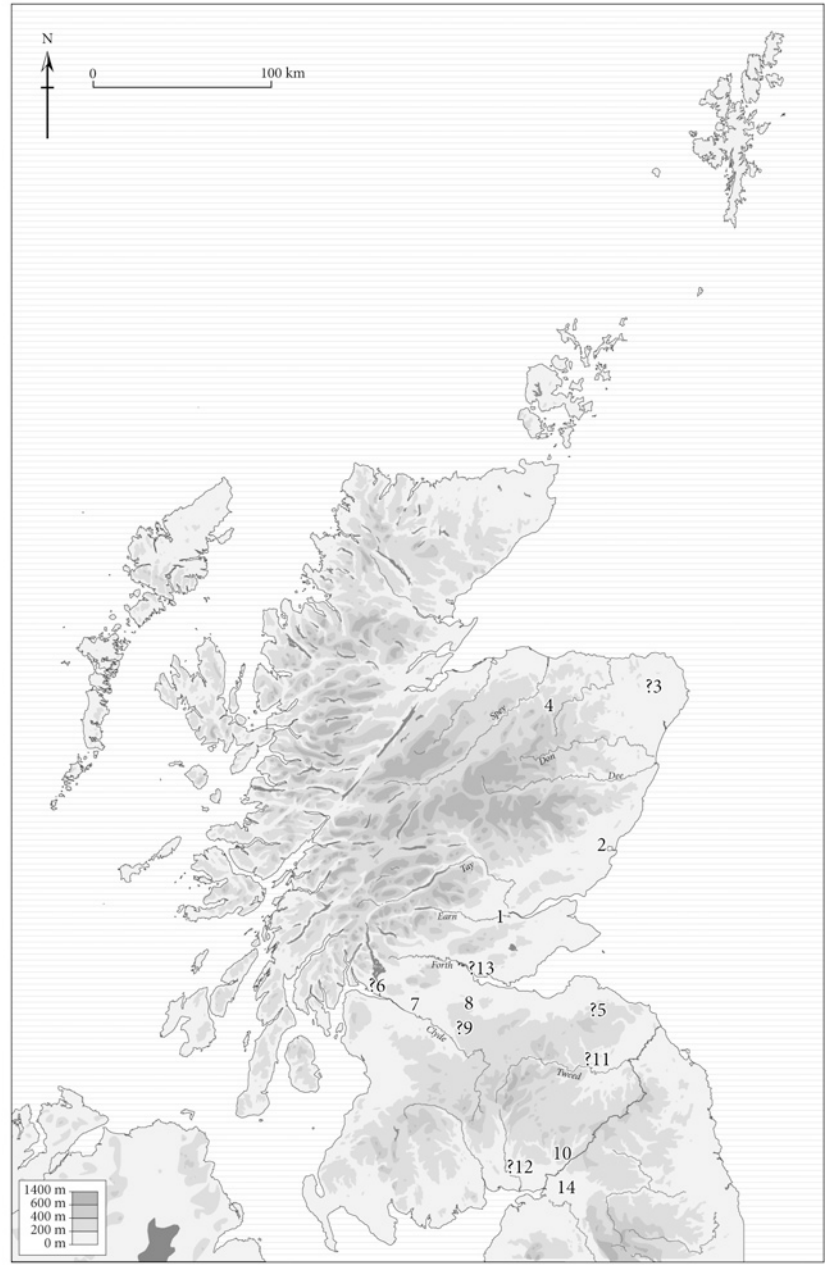


Fig. 2.4: Distribution of \*PERT. (Map: Ingrid Shearer.)

Key to Fig. 2.4

\**pert* 'wood, grove'.

Layout of each name: **Number** on map; **County** (pre-1975); **Type of feature** [P = Parish (medieval and modern); R = Relief feature; S = Settlement; V = Vegetation; W = Water feature] **NGR**

**1 Perth PER PS NO11 23**

**2 Pert ANG PS NO65 65** Now part of Logie-Pert parish.

**?3 Parcock # ABD NJ987419** Old Deer parish; see main text, p. 96.

**4 Perthbeg # BNF c.NJ32 39** Mortlach parish, which supplies the approx. NGR.

**?5 Panbarthill # ELO R NT63 77** Dunbar parish. *Panbarthill* 1573 × 1574 *RMS* iv no. 2188; see Watson 1926, 374.

**?6 Pappert DNB S NS40 79** Bonhill parish. Pappert Hill (NS42 80) is on the boundary between Bonhill and Dumbarton parishes.

**7 Partick LAN S NS55 66** Govan parish.

**8 Larbert STL PS NS85 83**

**?9 Pappert Hill LAN R NS85 65** Shotts parish. The NGR is of Papperthill Craigs.

**10 Perter Burn DMF W NY40 84** A tributary of the Tarras, it is mentioned by Watson 1926, 357. It has given its name to the settlement of Perterburn just east of Langholm, which supplies the above NGR.

**?11 Pappert Law SLK R c.NT48 28** Not on map 20 of Nicolaisen 2001 (209), but mentioned in the text (210). The above NGR is of Selkirk.

**?12 Papert Hill DMF R NY26 85**

**?13 Paperthill # FIF R c.NS95 89** Tulliallan parish FIF formerly PER, listed as one of the lands of the barony of Tulliallan 1619 *RMS* vii no. 2017. It probably survives in the name Peppermill Dam, which supplies the above NGR (*PNF* 1). All these Pap(p)ert names remain obscure, although Watson states that they "probably have *pert* as their latter part" (1926, 357).

**14 Solport, Cumberland PS NY47 73** *Solpert* 1246, 1301; *Soelberth* 1307 (*EPNS* Cu i, 107).

## NOTE ON \*NEMED

Both W. J. Watson (1926, 244–50) and Geoffrey Barrow propose a P-Celtic word meaning a (pre-Christian) sacred grove, taken over by the church.<sup>54</sup> There are problems with accepting this as an explanation for all names containing this element. *Neimheadh*, OIr *nemed* ‘sacred; noble or sacred place’, is a difficult element, and while many of these pagan sites were Christianised at an early date, there is evidence from Ireland of *neimhidh* referring specifically to church lands. Also Dwelly 1901–11 under *neimhidh* (marked as obsolete) gives the meaning ‘church land’. In some instances of this name we may therefore be dealing with a much later coining.

*Category 2*

This contains P-Celtic loan-words borrowed into Gaelic but attested only in place-names:

\***CAIR**: A thorough re-examination of this element in a Scottish context is long overdue. There are significantly more place-names north of the Forth which contain it than is generally realised, and, as famously with **Cramond** (*Karramunt* 1178 × 1186) south of the Forth, many of these are near or on the site of Roman forts.<sup>55</sup> Examples of Roman fort-related sites from Perthshire are **Cargill** on the Isla, **Carpow** and **Carey**, both in Abernethy parish (for more on which see Taylor 2005), and **Keir**, one in Dunblane parish (*Kere* 1477 *RMS* ii no. 888), one in Ardoch parish;<sup>56</sup> there is also **Kercock**, Kinclaven parish, (baronia de *Kercow* 1388 Fraser, *Grandtully* i, no. 4, *Kerco* 1783), on the Tay immediately opposite the important Roman fort of Inchtuthil, which is probably its referent. In Angus there is **Kirkbuddo**, a medieval parish now part of Inverarity parish (*Kerbutho* 1471, *Karbuddow* c. 1600), and probably **Cardean**, Airlie parish (see appendix 2), while in Kincardineshire there is **Kair**, Arbuthnott parish (*Kare* 1201 × 1207 *Arb. Lib.* i no. 93). There can be little doubt that there was a Pictish word \**cair* meaning much the same as W *caer*, ‘fort’, especially (though

<sup>54</sup> See Barrow 1998; for fuller treatment see also Barrow 1998a.

<sup>55</sup> In what is now southern Scotland *cair*-names seem to have developed the meaning ‘stockaded farm or manor-house’ (Jackson 1963, 80). See now also James 2008.

<sup>56</sup> For a note on the element *keir* see below, appendix 3.

not exclusively) one perceived as Roman, or with Roman features, even if the connection with Rome was not consciously made. The strong Roman associations of this element on both sides of the Forth mean that we should also be aware of the possible Roman dimension at the two important \**cair*-names on the south Fife coast, **Kirkcaldy** (*Kircalethyn* 1128, *Kerkalethin* 1152 × 1159, for which see *PNF* 1) and **Craik** (*Karel* 1165 × 1172, *Karal* 1166 × 1178, for which see *PNF* 3). It would also seem that Pictish \**cair* was borrowed into Scottish Gaelic, since there are several place-names north of the Forth containing \**cair* with Gaelic elements e.g. **Balwearie** and **Dunnikier**, both in Kirkcaldy & Dysart FIF (for which see *PNF* 1); there are also several examples of this word preceded by *G seann* ‘old’ e.g. **Craigsanquhar**, Leuchars FIF (*PNF* 4), **Sanquhar**, Forres MOR, **Shampher**, Strachan KCD, **Shannacher**, Fowlis Wester PER, and **Shanquhar**, Gartly ABD. Interestingly, none of these appears to be associated with a Roman fort, which may provide a clue to the use of the specific ‘old’. An archaeological assessment of all place-names containing this element would add greatly to our understanding of it, as well as to our understanding of early Scottish high-status settlement and occupation (slightly adapted from Taylor 2003).

Distribution: for a distribution map south of the Forth-Clyde line see Nicolaisen 1976, map 19. This is very misleading, as it suggests only two *cair*-names north of this line, both of which it terms ‘Cumbric’ (for more of a critique of this map see above, p. 77).

\***CARDEN**: The received wisdom is that this is a Pictish word meaning ‘woodland’ etc., but Andrew Breeze (1999) has pointed out that the evidence for the W cognate *cardden* meaning ‘thicket, brake’ etc. is dangerously flimsy, and has suggested instead a meaning such as ‘encampment, enclosure’.

Despite the fact that this occurs seven times combined with Q-Celtic *cenn* (*G ceann*) ‘end, head’, in **Kincardine**,<sup>57</sup> between the Dornoch Firth and the Firth of Forth, it is found only north of the Forth-Clyde line, and, apart from **Cardross** DNB, only east of Drumalban. It appears

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<sup>57</sup> Perhaps only six times, as the burgh of Kincardine in FIF appears relatively late in the record (1540), and in the first instances as *Kincarne* (see *PNF* 1, 569–70, where the earliest form *Kyncardyn* 1470s should be removed, as it refers to Kincardine-in-Menteith PER). The remaining six are all relatively high-status names, with four the names of medieval parishes, and one the centre of a sheriffdom (Kincardineshire).

either as a simplex or combined once with *\*plus* (**Pluscarden** MOR), probably a P-Celtic element itself; or once with *druim* (**Drumchardine**, Kirkhill INV). It is therefore probable that Kincardine is an adaptation or part translation into Gaelic of *\*Pencarden*; similarly the first element in Drumchardine may represent a Gaelicisation of a Pictish word cognate with *druim* (W *trum* ‘ridge’). Alternatively, in at least some of these cases, the specific may be an existing territory- or land-name *\*Carden*. If so, Drumchardine would be ‘ridge of *\*Carden*’, etc.

It most commonly occurs as a simplex, with or without a locational suffix such as *-in* (later *-ie*), meaning ‘place of’ or ‘place at’.

Distribution: overwhelmingly north of the Forth and east of Drumalban (apart from Cardross DNB), and this includes the five places called Urquhart (for which see discussion above, p. 80). Therefore, of all the so-called Pictish place-name elements this has the most ‘Pictish’ distribution in terms of our understanding of historical Pictland.

**\*GRONN**: ‘bog’. This is discussed at length by Watson in his chapter “British Names” (1926, 379–81). From the evidence he adduces there, it is clear this word was known in Ireland, finding its way into Hiberno-Latin as *gronna*, and occurring once in the Annals of Tigernach, as *Graindi Móire*, where *Graindi* is glossed as *Mona* (see AU s.a. 756, p. 210, footnote; AU itself has the Latin version of this, *Gronne Magne*). It may therefore not belong in this section at all. However, it has not survived in any Irish place-name, nor, for that matter, in any in Wales.<sup>58</sup> It is found in Fife in two parish-names *viz* **Forgan** (*Forgrund*) and **Kinghorn**, as well as in the place-names **Myregornie**, Kirkcaldy & Dysart and **Pitgorno**, Strathmiglo (with nearby Gorno Grove a recent derivative from Pitgorno; see *PNF* 4). Watson (1926, 380) suggests that **Balgrummo**, Scoonie FIF contains this element, but the early forms militate against it (see *PNF* 2). Watson states that it is found in West Lothian (two examples, although one, Gormyre, Torphichen, can be confidently rejected, since it is wholly Scots, see MacDonald 1941, 93–4; while the other, Balgornie, Bathgate, which would seem to combine with G *baile* ‘farm’, first appears in 1773), in Fife (four examples, see above), in Perthshire (five; **Groan**, Logiealmond, **Braegrum** [?]) and **Grundcruie**, Methven, **Longforgran** and **Forgandenny**), and in **Kinghornie**, near Bervie KCD. There is also **Groam**, Kirkhill INV and

<sup>58</sup> It is not mentioned in Owen and Morgan 2007.

**Groam** (of Annat) near Beauly. Note, I have omitted W. J. Watson's Craighorn, hill behind Alva CLA (*Craigharr* 1783).<sup>59</sup>

### *Category 3*

This consists of P-Celtic loan-words attested as common nouns in Scottish Gaelic:

**BAD**: 'spot, cluster, tuft'; not cognate with W *bod* 'residence' as stated in Watson 1926, 423–4; **Badentyre** ABD; **Pitfodels**, Peterculter ABD (*Badfothel*, *Badfodalis*).

**DAIL**: '(water-)meadow, haugh'; **Dalnaspidal** PER. See also discussion under \*DOL, category 1 above.

**MONADH**: 'hill; rough pasture'; **The Mounth** KCD/ABD; **Balrymonth**, St Andrews FIF.

Distribution: discussed, with a distribution map, by Geoffrey Barrow (1998, 62–5, map 2.7, p. 66, reproduced here as Fig. 2.5). Although borrowed into Gaelic, it has a remarkably restricted distribution, with scarcely any north or west of the Great Glen, and, as a settlement-name, none west of the Spey. It occurs sporadically south of the Forth, and as far south as south Cumberland, where, remarkably, there is a Gaelic place called Kinmont SO11 89 (*Kinemund* 1201 × 1216, *EPNS Cu* ii, 364–5). There appears to be only one example in Galloway, and none in AYR.

**PETT**: 'land-holding, unit of land'. According to Richard Cox it survives in Lewis Gaelic *peite* 'patch of land' (Cox 1997; see also Watson 1926, 408); it may also have been borrowed into Scots, e.g. the **Petts** of Monymusk ABD.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Early form from A. Watson 1995, 50.

<sup>60</sup> On a plan of 'Kirktown of Monymusk' dated 1774 (printed in *Monymusk Papers* opposite p. 52) there appears an area with strips of land, with the names of four different tenants attached, with the inscription "Infield called the Petts", while adjacent to it on the east is an area of approximately the same size with the inscription "Part of the Petts William McRobb". Together this represents what later (1869 OS 6 inch 1st edn.) is the large field c. 750 metres from east to west immediately north-west of the village of Monymusk, to the east of Clyan's Dam. No such word is recorded in the Scots Language Dictionaries *DOST* or *SND*. I am grateful to Dauvit Broun for first bringing this to my attention.



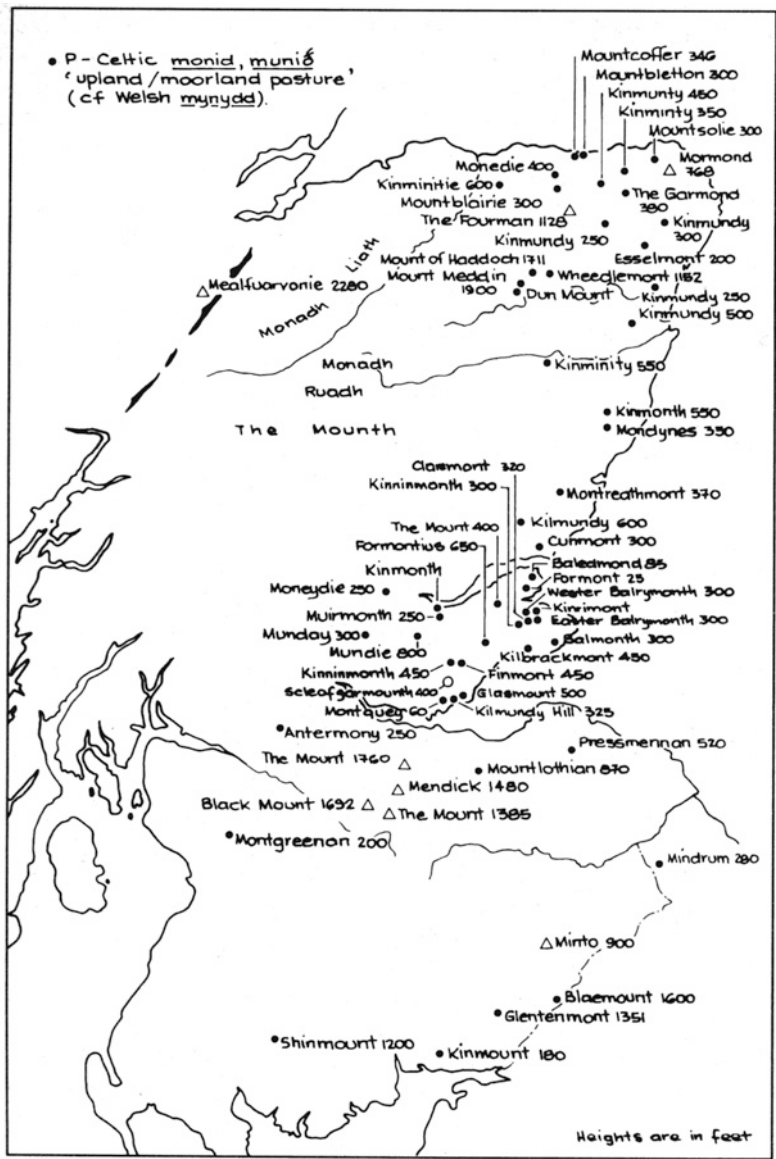


Fig. 2.5: Distribution of MONADH. (Reproduced with the permission of the author from Barrow 1998, map 2.7, p. 66.)

Distribution: for a discussion of the significance of the distribution of place-names containing this element see above, pp. 77–80. The most oft-quoted map is that which appears in Nicolaisen 1976, 153 [2001, 198] map 17, repeated with some minor variations in McNeill and MacQueen 1996, 51. When a new map of place-names containing *pett* is eventually produced, it will differ from these maps above all in the density of dots: there are many more such names in eastern Scotland than Nicolaisen or Watson were aware of, and the final tally will only be revealed after detailed surveys have been done for each county. For example, my work on Fife and Kinross has increased Watson's total of fifty-seven there to almost eighty, while his Clackmannanshire figure can be increased threefold—from one to three!<sup>61</sup> In contrast, the two *Pit*-names in Glenelg INV have to be reduced to one (see discussion above).

**PÒR**: 'seed, grain, crops'; in place-names more likely to mean 'crop-land' (Jackson 1972, 44, 68–9) rather than 'pasture' (proposed by Watson 1926, 376–7); some examples (from many) are **Balfour** ANG, FIF (*PNF* 2), KCD; **Dochfour** INV; **Pitfirrane**, Dunfermline FIF (*PNF* 1); **Pitfour** ABD, PER; **Pitfourie** PER; **Pourie** ANG; **Purin**, Falkland FIF (*PNF* 2), **Ruifour** INV.

**PREAS**: 'bush'; e.g. **Culperso** KCD (*Culpressache*); **Prescalton**, Knockando MOR.

#### Category 4

So-called 'false friends', i.e. Gaelic elements whose meaning in place-names seems to have been influenced by a Pictish cognate (Pictish substrate influence):

? **BEINN**: 'high, rugged hill or mountain'. While found in both Ireland and Scotland, its usage is different enough in each to have prompted G. W. S. Barrow to suggest Pictish substrate influence at work on its usage in Scottish toponymy (1998, 56). He makes a similar suggestion

<sup>61</sup> Watson's figures for the various counties can be found in Watson 1926, 407. They total 323, whence Nicolaisen's "group of some 300 names beginning with *Pit*-" (1976, 152 [2001, 196]).

as regards *càrn* (loc. cit.), the usage of which is even more starkly contrasted between Scotland, where it often means 'large, rounded hill', and Ireland (and Wales, for that matter), where it means only 'burial mound, pile (of stones)'.<sup>62</sup> Nicolaisen writes of *càrn*: "Because of the scarcity of this element in Irish hill-nomenclature it may be truly called a Scottish-Gaelic mountain-word." (1968, 115).<sup>63</sup> See *ibid.* map 1 for a distribution map of names beginning with *Beinn/Ben*.

**BLÀR**: 'field, muir'; probably originally 'open (cleared?) space'. Very common place-name element in Scotland, best known in **Blair Atholl** PER and **Blair Gowrie** PER, Atholl and Gowrie being territorial affixes added to differentiate them from each other, both parishes, the only parishes containing this element; there are several places containing this name in west Fife alone (see *PNF* 1, index under *Blair*). Found also frequently in LAN and the south-west; for example, Maxwell (1930, 41–3) lists eighteen places in Galloway which have *blàr* as their first element; unknown as a place-name element in Ireland, where *blár* has the more specialised meaning of 'battlefield'. Unlike most other common generics, such as *baile* or *achadh*, it can (and often does) stand on its own.

Appears often to represent large areas, so it regularly generates several names from one original *blàr*. Two examples of this are:

1. **Blair** in west Fife, which has generated names in both Gaelic and Scots covering an area at least 5 kilometres in length, from **Blair-Crambeth** (by Dowhill, Cleish KNR, formerly FIF) to **Blair** in Ballingry FIF, including **Blairadam** (an eighteenth-century coin-ing) (see *PNF* 1, 140–1).
2. In Kilmaronock DNB (south-east tip of Loch Lomond) there are eight *Blair*-names (formerly nine, before **Blairhosh** was made part of Bonhill c. 1650), all with Gaelic specifics, all contiguous, and therefore all probably divisions of an original *blàr*.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> For Irish usage see Flanagan and Flanagan 1994; for Welsh usage see Owen and Morgan 2007, xxxi.

<sup>63</sup> This article contains detailed discussion of several hill names and includes seven distribution maps: 1) names beginning with *Beinn/Ben*; 2a) names beginning with *Cnoc*; 2b) names beginning with *Knock* (including *Knock of* –); 3) names beginning with *Druim/Drum/Drim*; 4) names beginning with *Maol*; 5) names beginning with *Meall*; 6) names beginning with *Tor(r)*.

<sup>64</sup> This cluster is discussed in Taylor 2006, 31–2.

**CÀRN**: see under **BEINN** above.

**DABHACH**: large unit of land. Irish *dabhach* ‘vat’. Common in place-names from Fife northwards. Borrowed into Scots, as *davoch* or *dough*, and appearing in names such as Haddo ‘half davoch’, the Scots equivalent of Leddoch or Lettoch from G *leth-d(h)abhach* ‘half davoch’.

**DÙN**: ‘hill, hillfort’. See discussion above, p. 73.

**FOITHIR**: Often occurring as *Fetter-*; common in names of parishes and high-status settlements in eastern Scotland such as **Fettercairn**, **Fetteresso**, **Dunnottar** KCD, **Fetternear** ABD, **Forteviot** PER, **Fodderty** ROS. It occurs also in the estate name **Fedderate**, New Deer ABD, the centre of an important barony in the middle ages. Although Watson suggests that it is Gaelic *foithir* and means ‘terraced slope’ (1926, 509), it is more likely that, in eastern Scotland at least, it was an early administrative term adopted into Scottish Gaelic from Pictish *\*uotir*. It is thus more closely related in meaning to its W cognate *godir* ‘district, region’ (See *GPC* s.v.). The argument for an ultimately Pictish origin of this element is further strengthened by the fact that it is very rare in place-names in Ireland.<sup>65</sup>

**LIOS**: Early Irish *les* ‘land between a dwelling-house and its enclosure’; Modern Gaelic ‘garden’; but in place-names in Pictland more likely to mean ‘palace, court, high-status hall’ (as in the W cognate *llys*); e.g. **Auchterless** ABD; **Lathrisk**, Kettle FIF (*Losresc*). See MacDonald 1987. It is possibly found with a Pictish specific in **Erchless**, Kilmorack INV.

**RÀTH**: Gaelic ‘fortified enclosure’; but in place-names in Pictland it may at least sometimes mean administrative district subject to a *ràth* (see MacDonald 1982). There may also have been a Pictish cognate of this word with (short?) rounded vowel, *\*roth*, found for example in **Rothes** BNF, **Rothie**, Fyvie ABD; **Rothiemay** BNF, and probably the ubiquitous and important **Ruthven** (ABD, ANG, BNF, PER), early

<sup>65</sup> Alan James informs me (pers. comm.) that there is no evidence of *\*[g]wo-dir* south of the Forth.

forms of which are frequently *Rothuen* or similar, e.g. for Ruthven ANG (1196 × 1214 *Arb. Lib.* i no. 61).

**SRATH:** Early Irish *srath* ‘grass(land); meadow by river, haugh’. However, in Scotland its chief meaning in place-names is ‘broad valley’, like its W cognate *ystrad* ‘valley’. This applies also to southern Scotland, such as **Strathbrock** WLO, \***Strathannan** (*Estrahanent* c. 1124 *David I Chrs.* no. 16), now Annandale DMF, and \***Strathnith** (*Stranit* c. 1124 *David I Chrs.* no. 16; *Stradnut* c. 1150 *ibid.*, no. 210), now Nithsdale DMF.

APPENDIX 2

THE PROBLEM OF CARDEAN

**CARDEAN**, Airlie ANG

*Kerdan* 1189 × 1221 *Brechin Reg.* i no. 2

*Carden* 1543 *C. A. Rent* ii p. 218 [in list of ‘teinds of the parishioners of Airlie’ (tendis of the parrochinaris of *Erlie*)]

*Carden* 1567 *RMS* iv no. 1792

terras de *Cardane* 1569 *RMS* iv no. 1866

*Karden* c. 1583 × 1596 *Pont MS* 26

*Carden* c. 1583 × 1596 *Pont MS* 28

*Carden* 1794 Ainslie/Angus Map [later Wester Cardean]

This probably contains Pictish or Gaelic *\*cair* ‘fort (often Roman)’ qualified by the name of the river on which it lies, the Dean. Alternatively it may derive from the Pictish (or possibly the G loan-word from Pictish) *\*carden* (Watson 1926, 353; Jackson 1955, 150; Nicolaisen 2001, 204). This is accepted by all these scholars as meaning ‘woodland’; but Andrew Breeze (1999) has plausibly suggested the meaning ‘enclosure, encampment’, which would in fact fit well with the remains of the Roman camp and fort here. If this second alternative is correct, then there has clearly been re-analysis of the name at some point, with the second element assumed to be the river-name, Dean, which forms the southern march of the lands of Cardean (*Den R<iver>* c. 1583 × 1596 *Port MS* (26)).

The name has moved around a bit, but originally referred only to land in Airlie, between the Rivers Isla and Dean, where the remains of the Roman camp are to be found. Modern Cardean, on the south side of the Dean in Meikle PER, was formerly Potento.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> This note was compiled before my stumbling upon the twelfth-century form *Kerdan*, which supports a derivation from *\*cair*.

## APPENDIX 3

## A NOTE ON KEIR

The following definition of *keir* (noun) is given in *SND* (taken from <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/>):

Also *kier*. The name given, in some parts of Scotland, to an ancient fortification (Sc. 1808 Jam.). Now only in place-names (STL, KCB 1959). [ki:r] STL 1795 *Stat. Acc.* XVIII. 329 [for the parish of Kippen STL]: ‘There are several small heights in this parish, to which the name *Keir* is applied, which bear the marks of some ancient military work... The circumference of the rampart on the Keir-hill of Dasher... does not exceed 130 yards.’

To this can be added Chalmers’s statement:

In the country upon the Forth... there are a number of British forts, which are perched upon little hills. The round, sometimes the oval summits of those hills, are surrounded by a rampart, which on many of them still remains. And the general appellation, in the country, for those forts, is Keir. (Chalmers 1807, 93)

Furthermore, Dr. J. Robertson, writing on the Parish of Lecropt (now part of Dunblane & Lecropt PER), discussed the *keirs* on the north side of the Forth Valley, which he said formed a “chain of rude forts... well known to the inhabitants of the country, who carry away the stones for building inclosures [*sic*] and houses”. He went on to say that the *keirs* were “all similar to one another, in respect of situation, construction, prospect, and materials; which is a strong presumption at least, if not a clear proof, that their use was the same... They were uniformly situated near a spring of water, or a running brook, and commanded an extensive prospect...” (OSA 12, 693).<sup>67</sup>

While not denying that this word derives ultimately from British \**cair* ‘fort’, the evidence set out above is compelling for regarding it as a loan-word into Scots in the late medieval or early modern period, which as such was then used to generate new place-names. The borrowing almost certainly happened by way of place-names, but the application of the simplex *keir* to a site with some kind of fortification

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<sup>67</sup> I am indebted to Stephen Digney for supplying these references and helping me formulate my ideas on this difficult element.

could well have happened as late as the nineteenth century. This also offers a satisfactory explanation for the many *Keir*-names with Scots generics such as *hill* and *knowe*, too many for them to contain a simplex which has survived from the Celtic-speaking period. This is not to deny that some *Keir*-names were certainly, or very likely, coined by speakers of a Celtic language, the evidence for this being the relatively early date at which they appear in the record: Kair, Arbuthnott KCD (*Kare* 1201 × 1207 *Arb. Lib.* i no. 93) must surely be one such; another is very probably Keir by Dunblane PER (*Kere* 1477 *RMS* ii no. 888).

In the light of the above, I would now re-analyse two *Keir*-names in *PNF* 1 (Keir with Keir Chapel in Auchterderran, and Keir in Culross) as having been coined by Scots-speakers. It is probably also to be found in Keirs, Largo (*PNF* 2).



## APPENDIX 4

CERTAIN, PROBABLE OR POSSIBLE 'PICTISH' NAMES CONTAINING  
ELEMENTS NOT DISCUSSED ABOVE<sup>68</sup>

Altyre, Kilmorack INV and Rafford MOR (see Crawford and Taylor  
 2003, 52–3)  
 Biffie, Old Deer ABD (see Taylor 2008, 298–9)  
 Blebo FIF  
 Brechin ANG  
 Cambo FIF  
 Cawdor NAI  
 Deer ABD (see Taylor 2008, 275–6)  
 Dairsie FIF (*PNF* 4)  
 Durie, Scoonie FIF (*PNF* 2)  
 Glasslie, Falkland FIF (*PNF* 2)  
 (Loch) Glow KNR  
*Ihwdenemur* (old name for Firth of Forth; St Andrews Foundation  
 Account B; see *PNF* 3, appendix 1)  
 Kellie and Kelly FIF (*PNF* 3), ANG, ABD  
 Kelty and Keltie FIF (*PNF* 1), PER  
 Kettle FIF (*PNF* 2)  
 Lindifferon FIF (*PNF* 4)  
 Lundie (Lundin) ANG, FIF (*PNF* 2)  
 Montrave, Scoonie FIF (*PNF* 2)  
 Peebles, Arbroath ANG  
 ? Primrose FIF (*PNF* 1, 3)  
 Rosemarkie ROS  
 Scone PER  
 Scoonie FIF twice (*PNF* 2 and 3)  
*Slethemur* (old name for Firth of Tay; St Andrews Foundation Account  
 B; see *PNF* 3, appendix 1)  
 Strathairly, Largo FIF (*PNF* 2)

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<sup>68</sup> This list is intended only as a very impressionistic attempt to convey some of the types of name which can be overlooked when an elements-approach to possible Pictish place-nomenclature is adopted. It makes absolutely no claims to comprehensiveness.

*County Abbreviations*

ABD Aberdeenshire	LAN Lanarkshire
ANG Angus	MLO Midlothian
ARG Argyll	MOR Moray
AYR Ayrshire	NAI Nairnshire
BNF Banffshire	ORK Orkney
BTE Bute	PEB Peeblesshire
BWK Berwickshire	PER Perthshire
CAI Caithness	RNF Renfrewshire
CLA Clackmannanshire	ROS Ross and Cromarty
DMF Dumfriesshire	ROX Roxburghshire
DNB Dunbartonshire	SHE Shetland
ELO East Lothian	SLK Selkirkshire
FIF Fife	STL Stirlingshire
INV Inverness-shire	SUT Sutherland
KCB Kirkcudbrightshire	WIG Wigtownshire
KCD Kincardineshire	WLO West Lothian
KNR Kinross-shire	

*Other Abbreviations*

G Scottish Gaelic  
 OIr Old Irish  
 s.a. *sub anno* ‘under the year’  
 Sc Scots  
 s.n. *sub nomine* ‘under the name’; s.nn. *sub nominibus* ‘under the names’  
 s.v. *sub verbo* ‘under the word’  
 W Welsh

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PART TWO

STORIES IN STONE





## THE PROBLEMS OF PICTISH ART, 1955–2009

Jane Geddes

To mark the anniversary of F. T. Wainwright's book *The Problem of the Picts*, my brief was to review developments in Pictish art in the succeeding approximately half century (1955–2009). In that book, "Pictish Art" was tackled by Robert B. K. Stevenson (1955, 97–128). A short essay cannot do justice to all the groundbreaking articles and books produced during this time, but at least it may highlight some developments in the field. I will attempt to examine the *methodology* of art studies and the *presentation* of art during this period, and then point to current and future developments. For the purposes of discussion, Pictish art is characterised by its outstanding legacy of sculptured stone, a smaller legacy of exquisite metalwork, and a disconcerting absence of any manuscript evidence or much that can be classed as architecture.

Before looking at the methodology applied by Stevenson in Wainwright's book, it is worth looking at the long-term effect of his book, particularly its alliterative title. In 1955, it set a mid-century benchmark and spawned several follow-ups. In 1971, Isabel Henderson wrote about "The Problem of the Picts" (Henderson 1971, 51–65). Friell and Watson (1984, vii) refer to Pictish scholars faced with a unique and largely unintelligible corpus of material [the sculpture] which served to "reinforce the concept of the Picts as an unusual and mysterious people". Alan Small ran with the theme in *The Picts: a new look at old problems*. "The subject is still emotive and much of the traditional material is still controversial. It must be questioned whether traditional approaches, grinding the same old somewhat limited database are going to bring major new advances." (Small 1987, n.p. Introduction). In the same publication, Leslie Alcock (1987, 80–92) commented, "much endeavour is devoted to problems which are either insoluble or inappropriate". Wainwright's mental grip still set an agenda for the festschrift presented to Isabel Henderson in 1997: *The Worm, the Germ and the Thorn*. In this, Barbara Crawford (1997, 1–4) asks "Are the Dark Ages still Dark?", while Sally Foster (1997, 5–17) asks are the Picts "Quite the Darkest of the Peoples of

Dark Age Britain?”. In 2004, Mark Hall held a conference in Perth entitled *Fifty Years on from Wainwright: Are the Picts the Problem?*, while in 2006 a conference at Aberdeen University was entitled *Fresh Pict: Problems Revisited in Aberdeen*. Magnus Magnusson (1995, xi) tried to re-brand the subject, emphasising the “potential of the Picts”, a concept more appropriate for the multidisciplinary approach which Wainwright’s book pioneered.

The study of Pictish art has, not surprisingly, followed the same basic development as art history in general and it is therefore useful to go back to the bedrock of Pictish art studies, Allen and Anderson’s *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, published in 1903 (ECMS). Their research serves both as the beginning and end of this review. Romilly Allen catalogued and classified 508 monuments in 249 localities while Joseph Anderson analysed them with the tools available at the time. Allen applied a rigorous Victorian system of taxonomy. Every item was listed by location and type, every Pictish symbol was grouped by occurrence. Every knot of interlace and scroll was dissected to reveal underlying patterns and then grouped by locality. If only they had been able to use distribution maps and Venn diagrams, let alone enjoy the flexibility of a database. This was the primary stage of identification, relying on formal analysis and establishing a distinct vocabulary. Anderson’s scheme to classify the stones as Class I, II and III still serves as a shorthand label although it is increasingly seen as a blunt instrument.<sup>1</sup>

Stevenson (1955, 99) rightly observed that the thoroughness of Allen and Anderson’s work stood in the way of seriously rethinking the subject for a whole generation. By the 1950s the great wave of German art historians including Gombrich, Pevsner and Warburg had landed in England, and the main focus for the subject switched to style and iconography. In particular, this entailed describing and identifying stylistic details, the hallmark of connoisseurship, and delving deeply

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<sup>1</sup> For the disadvantages of the three-class system to art historians, see George Henderson and Isabel Henderson 2004, 10: “If perceptions of Pictish art continue to be filtered through a typological classification scheme devised at the end of the nineteenth century, then it cannot contribute in any serious way to either current work on Insular art, or Scottish archaeology.” For the advantage to archaeologists, Clarke (2007, 20): “I do not share the enthusiasm of some for abandoning this long-established classification scheme. It still has a clear descriptive value in terms of categorising distinct groups among these stones in terms of overall morphology and treatment of the artistic motifs even if it sets up false art-historical distinctions.”

backwards through time to find the original sources for iconography. Art was seen as craft, and originality was at a premium. It was at this point that Wainwright's *Problem of the Picts* appeared. His aim was to blast the Picts with interrogations from specialists in many different fields: history, language, archaeology and art. His authors worked on their own, producing only a spurious notion of interdisciplinary study, even though that had been Wainwright's aim. Wainwright wanted to use the evidence of the stones to elucidate not just the prevalence of style in certain areas, but also the political dimension and the religious significance, and evidence about daily life. Stevenson, however, proposed to tackle precisely the issues of his day: the problems of origin and sequence of styles (Wainwright 1955b, 32; Stevenson 1955, 97). Thus Stevenson's dissection of the crescent and V-rod, which arrives at the notion of the "declining symbol", is a classic example of style analysis, reinforced by his purely visual correlation of the crescent patterns and the peltas of hanging bowls. He saw *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* as "an inexhaustible storehouse of information for later workers to reshuffle", but does not actually do this to any great extent (Stevenson 1995, 97). His approach, in all the different classes of stone (incised, relief, with symbols, without symbols) is to highlight key Pictish characteristics and then seek their stylistic parallel through dated objects outside Pictland. In his way, he starts on the journey of normalising the Picts, and putting their art in a contemporary context, but as a result he also sees Pictish art as a reflection of existing sources elsewhere. One of his most useful contributions here was to produce distribution maps.

The deeply introverted approach to Pictish art was transformed by Charles Thomas in the 1960s. His articles bring it out of the northern mists and into Europe (Thomas 1961, 14–64; 1963, 31–97). His comparisons show Pictish society to be a completely normal variation of the Late Iron Age. He *expects* the Picts to think and behave in the same way as other people. His analysis of the "complex, recondite and insoluble" symbol stones (Anderson's words, *ECMS*, vol. 1, pt. 1, xxxii) places them squarely in the same world as all other contemporary inscribed stones, and he *expects* them to say much the same as the rest. Hence the symbols are seen as statements, not just an artefact but a historical document. They become a type of language code which he nearly cracked—at least in his own terms (Thomas 1963, 31, 34, 81). In a similar vein, Julian Brown (1972, 219–46) brought the Picts, from whom no written parchment survives, into the mainstream of

manuscript studies. He postulated that the fusion of Insular art found in the Book of Kells could be due to its production within Pictland. While opinion has now settled more convincingly on Iona, Brown obliged scholars to examine the considerable influence of Pictish art both within the Book of Kells and on the origins of stone sculpture at Iona (Henderson 1987; Fisher 1994).

During the two decades between 1963 and about 1984, while the Alcocks were excavating Early Historic fortifications, there was a strange decline in the publication of Pictish art, even though this was the era of the sensational discoveries of Rhynie Man (Shepherd and Shepherd 1977–8) and the St Ninian's Isle hoard (discovered in 1957 but not published until 1973, by Small, Thomas and Wilson). Due to the St Ninian's Isle collection, it became possible to identify a distinctively Pictish type of penannular brooch, of fundamental importance in Insular metalwork studies (a multidisciplinary reassessment of the hoard was carried out in 2008; Smith forthcoming). The shining light in these decades was Isabel Henderson who produced at least eighteen articles, and whose volume *The Picts* of 1967 was for a long time the only readily available literature on the subject (her other articles are listed in Hicks 1997, 188–90). This well-illustrated synthesis, part of an exciting and popular series *Ancient People and Places*, brought the Picts to a wider audience than ever before. However, as late as 1987, Leslie Alcock complained that “the approaches to the subject are predominantly descriptive and particularist, with little attempt at systematic social, economic and political synthesis” (Alcock 1987, 80). Also 1987 saw a major publication by George Henderson, *From Durrrow to Kells*, which usefully brought into conjunction Insular manuscripts with Pictish sculpture, and whose map of relevant sites ranged from Canterbury in the south to Shandwick in the north (Henderson, 1987). Popular synthesis had to wait a long time for more nourishment, with Laing and Laing's *The Picts and the Scots* (1993); Sally Foster's *Picts, Gaels and Scots* (1996; revised edn. 2004); and the wide-ranging *Kings and Warriors, Craftsmen and Priests* by Leslie Alcock in 2003.

During the 1970s and 1980s other major developments were taking place which took a while to impact on Pictish art. Comparative material became more accessible with the Lindisfarne Gospels facsimile in 1960; Françoise Henry's *Book of Kells* with good colour pictures in 1974; and Jonathan Alexander's catalogue of illuminated Insular manuscripts in 1978 (Kendrick *et al.* 1956–60; Henry 1974; Alexander 1978). In 1984 the first volume of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone*

*Sculpture in England* (Cramp 1984) came out, setting a standard for stone recording which would leave *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* far behind.

By the 1980s the methodology of the 'New Art History' began to make a contribution. Now art historians need to examine a work of art in terms of its context, from a broad perspective. This covers aspects such as patronage, reception, function, setting and gender. In 1982, with an enhanced understanding of eighth- to ninth-century literacy, John Higgitt tackled the Latin inscription on the Tarbat stone (Higgitt 1982, 300–21). He combined a wide range of new tools to unpack the significance of this key monument to Pictish intellectual and artistic prowess. He looked at the historiography, find site, formal description, the wording of the inscription, the lettering, how the words are used, the name, the epigraphic formulae and language compared to other inscriptions, the use of decorative capitals, the technique of carving, the relation of its ornamental fragment to other stones in the locality and contemporary documentation. This prodigious bag of tools is only part of what an art historian needs to muster today and I will look at some more shortly. However, while on the subject of inscriptions, the thrilling breakthrough achieved by Katherine Forsyth (1995) on the Dupplin Cross deserves mention, not merely for the recognition of a dateable Pictish name attached to an object, King Custantin filius Fircus (ruling from 789–829), but also for the ingenious methodology of dusting chalk and charcoal onto the surface of a cast (Forsyth 1995, 237–44).

The early 1980s can be seen as a watershed, a time when a relative trickle of endeavour by a few specialists changed to a flood, involving people with a broad range of skills. Professor Leslie Alcock had started teaching the archaeology of the Early Historic period in Glasgow University in 1973. His approach integrated excavation with historic documents and a wider understanding of the landscape context. It also produced a new generation of Scottish archaeologists with interest in the Pictish period and its art, notably Stephen Driscoll and Sally Foster. The five International Conferences on Insular Art, beginning in Cork in 1985, have produced a major forum for specialists throughout the entire Insular region to exchange ideas (Ryan 1987; Higgitt and Spearman 1993; Bourke 1995; Redknap *et al.* 2001; Moss 2005). Here, papers on Pictish art are firmly embedded in their wider regional context. The international excitement of this fully Insular approach was expressed by the gleaming exhibition, *The Work of Angels*, in 1989.

Modern logistics allowed these exquisite objects of fine metalwork to be displayed in Edinburgh, Dublin and London, while the catalogue produced an essential new corpus of photographs (Youngs 1989). Equally revealing for the often controversial corpus of Pictish metalwork is James Graham-Campbell's Chadwick Lecture (2003).

Responding to the increasing popular appetite for the subject, the Pictish Arts Society was founded in 1988. In addition to an annual conference dedicated to the Picts, the society has promoted the publication of key works on Pictland, not least the 1993 reprint of *ECMS*, published by David Henry of the Pinkfoot Press, itself dedicated to enhancing publications about Pictland. This was shortly followed by the indispensable *A Pictish Panorama* (Nicoll 1995), providing a full bibliography compiled by J. R. F. Burt, without which this paper would have been impossible to assemble.

Four recent publications will serve to define exactly where we are today and where we are going. The first is the above-mentioned reprint of *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (*ECMS*). It provided fresh access for a new generation of scholars to an increasingly battered and rare source, but also focused attention on just how far we have moved on. At the very least, it drew attention to the fact that in 1903 there were 508 known monuments, while now about 1800 are recorded. Second is *The St Andrews Sarcophagus* (Foster 1998). Pictish art was given an international showcase for the exhibition in the British Museum, *Transformation of the Roman World* (1997). The St Andrews sarcophagus was taken to London, ranked beside treasures from all over the post-Roman world (Webster and Brown 1997). This spotlight provided the opportunity to study the object in depth, particularly emphasising its connections to the rest of Britain and Europe. The following conference, *The St Andrews Sarcophagus*, was organised by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (Fionna Ashmore), Historic Scotland (Sally Foster) and the National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland (John Higgitt). In the published papers we see genuinely the fruits of Wainwright's vision, the beams of light shining both into and out of Pictish art. Multidisciplinary approaches were all harnessed to deliver coherent results for one object. The team of contributors not only exposed the tomb to intense detailed scrutiny as a physical object, minutely examining its constituent parts, but they also placed it within the context of the New Art History. Form, function, patronage, audience, reception, political and social status, and current display and perceptions are all explored. In addition, Pictish art is allowed a

new intellectual dimension, with ample demonstration of all the cultural resources required to produce such a piece, and how the tomb provides evidence for a wide range of geo-political links. The third book is the long-awaited *The Art of the Picts* by George and Isabel Henderson (2004). Here we have the second panoramic synthesis, coming over a century after Joseph Anderson's Rhind Lectures of 1892. I will not even attempt to sum up what this book achieved in three sentences, but again I will comment on methodology. Anderson declared, "These primitive monuments exhibit few features that can be dealt with as art in the proper sense of the term. They are merely incised in outline." (*ECMS*, vol. 1, lv). The Hendersons look at Pictish sculpture and metalwork not just as artefacts and social signifiers to be rendered by line drawings and distribution maps, but as highly-nuanced and technically-accomplished art. The achievement of this book has been to conjure out of Anderson's "complex and recondite" (*ECMS*, vol. 1, xxxii) stones a rich intellectual hinterland, teasing out of the images not just exotic iconographic sources but an immense package of Christian and classical learning. They tackle the problems of Christian mission by harnessing the hitherto neglected 'Class IV', cross-marked stones. The reader even comes to acknowledge Pictish prowess with manuscripts, with only a few inscriptions and the parchment-working tools at Tarbat. And, the authors put up an irrefutable edifice to demonstrate that the Picts were not just conservative copiers of more progressive art in Northumbria or Ireland, but were distinctly creative innovators.

Art historians are involved with how an object was used and also with reception theory; how an object was perceived and understood at various stages of its existence. For the symbol stones, Clarke has highlighted the problems of their "multiple lives", whereby both the stone and the application of its carving may relate to several separate events (Clarke 2007, 19–39). Stones with both a cross and further imagery often require a profound understanding of early medieval liturgy, the available patristic writings and contemporary scriptural commentaries. A precise understanding of the Mass and cycles of religious ritual through the church year shed enormous light on objects which otherwise have no explanation. Penetrating studies of the Ruthwell Cross and the liturgical significance of the Book of Kells have opened up this area (Cassidy 1992; Ó Carragáin 2005; Farr 1997). This methodology has been applied by the Hendersons to the range of stone slabs on the Tarbat peninsula. They interpret these stones, Hilton of Cadboll,



Shandwick and Nigg, as stages in a liturgical progress around the coast (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 137–42, 180–81). Kellie Meyer in this volume provides further liturgical insights into these stones. A similar multidisciplinary exegesis was delivered at a conference on *The Book of Deer* in 1997. Although the resulting book, Katherine Forsyth's *Studies on the Book of Deer*, published in 2008, may not be a totally Pictish production, it contains invaluable evidence about the earlier history of north-east Scotland.

The fourth book, *Able Minds and Practised Hands* (Foster and Cross 2005), is the result of a conference held in 2003 to celebrate the centenary of *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*. Here are papers dealing not just with the minutiae of individual monuments, but with much wider aspects of the art historian's horizon: the conservation and display of monuments, new techniques of accurate recording, and government policy concerning the care of its national treasures. The book ends with John Higgitt's paper (2005, 375–80) on future developments in the field of Scotland's stones, which is discussed below.

So far this paper has explored the prodigious written research, but of course that is only one aspect of Pictish art history. The other concerns the presentation of surviving monuments, which involves two aspects: their pictorial representation and their status in museums and the countryside. The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS, in particular Ian G. Scott and John Borland) has been methodically recording the monuments to the highest standards of record drawing for years (Fraser 2008). The method of stipple drawing allows a 3-D effect to be created and it also is very suitable for abraded areas of stone where hard lines are misleading. Enhanced photographic lighting, as practised by Tom Gray, has created astonishingly sharp and attractive portraits of the stones, frequently from the most dull and unpromising surfaces.<sup>2</sup> In addition, there are the new possibilities of electronic recording using laser technology, whereby minute changes in the surface of a stone can both monitor erosion and reveal undeciphered features on the surface (Carty 2005). It is frequently during these painstaking processes of recording that new discoveries are made (Forsyth 1995, 237–44; Borland 2005, 201–14).

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<sup>2</sup> Gray's photographs can be seen in Henderson and Henderson 2004.

Museums, and sites in the landscape with interpretative panels, are ultimately the delivery points where research reconnects with the object, where the monument, the scholar and the public interact. For the Picts, Scotland has a range of important museums: the National Museum in Edinburgh; Historic Scotland's collections at St Vigeans, Meigle, and St Andrews; Pictavia; Groam House and Tarbat Discovery Centre. In 1955 the Pictish treasures were still cramped into Victorian display cases in the National Museum of Antiquities, Queen Street. By 1998 they were installed in the new National Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street (McKean 2000, 6–11, 101–19). The present display aims to make Pictish art less 'peculiar' by embedding its artefacts within earlier and later cultures. The symbol stones stand in a mystic subterranean circle alongside Bronze and early Iron Age objects. They are separated from the Class II stones by Roman sculpture. Some jewellery lurks within the powerful bronze robots created by Eduardo Paolozzi, while more stones can be spotted within sections on Roman and Viking life, connected with warfare, literacy and livelihood. The Monymusk casket is on a different floor, associated with the emerging medieval Scottish nation. As a result, visitors develop no overview that the Picts produced a distinct culture within a geographically limited area and a finite time frame. The Hendersons produced a searing critique of this intellectual rationale (2004, 226–7). Whereas Pictavia, at Brechin, aims at bright family involvement, with replicas and montage, Groam House, at Rosemarkie, allows the artistry of its treasures to create a cultural highlight on the Black Isle. Several stones cared for by Historic Scotland remain outside but are now sheltered in glass casing and provided with panels of text (for instance Sueno's Stone, Forres; Shandwick and Eassie). This development is obviously an essential safeguard, but does not *per se* enhance the art historical experience.

So, what is going to happen next? The field expands continually in exciting ways. Martin Carver's discoveries at Portmahomack (1994–2007) have provided the depth of material and intellectual culture so far lacking from other Pictish excavations. The site, now presented in the Old Church as the Tarbat Discovery Centre, has revealed a monastic settlement supported by high-quality craft workshops, producing both magnificent carved stones and unequivocal evidence for the production of manuscripts (Carver 2008). Nearby, the well-preserved lower portion and shattered fragments of its missing side have substantially added to our understanding of the Hilton of Cadboll stone, centrepiece of the National Museum display in Edinburgh.

Here research has moved beyond an examination of its design, to a full biography, trying to understand the meaning and purpose within its geographical and social context, in phases throughout its 1200 years (James *et al.* 2008). In recent years, further sculpture has turned up at Rosemarkie, Strathmartine, Kirriemuir and Edderton. The incised bear from Scatness proves that Pictish carvers did not have to copy ecclesiastical manuscripts in order to devise their animal symbols. As part of Historic Scotland's initiative to reassess its stone collections, St Vigean's has undergone the scrutiny of multidisciplinary research followed by enhanced display and more detailed interpretation. Here the geological investigation revealed a core group of key monuments from a distinct quarry, which included a prestigious house shrine, the inscribed Drosten Stone and an incised recumbent tomb. At the same time, re-pointing of the adjacent church masonry revealed yet another complete carved recumbent still immured in the south wall. More will surely follow. The Royal Commission continues to record and research large swathes of the countryside, most recently Strathdon and the Class I stones of Aberdeenshire. *In the Shadow of Bennachie* (RCAHMS 2007, 115–33) places the Pictish stones within their geographical and historical landscape, accompanied by exemplary maps and drawings. Their volume on *The Pictish Symbol Stones of Scotland* (Fraser 2008) provides an up-to-date gazetteer with sensitive drawings and photographs but does not aim at the completeness of a corpus volume.

In this cyclical study, discussion goes back to the beginning: the great gazetteer of the stones. In her introduction to the reprint of *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, Isabel Henderson threw down the gauntlet (Henderson 1993, Introduction in *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, vol. 1, thirty-four; Henderson 2005, 80–2). A new gazetteer is needed to include the whole collection of stones, adequately illustrated with photos and drawings. The *Able Minds* conference concluded with John Higgitt, then chairman of the National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland, setting up a sub-committee to discuss “Towards a ‘New ECMS’” (Higgitt 2005, 375–80).

That committee, chaired by Mark Hall, has carried out its deliberations and produced a final report. Recording criteria were established, based closely on the best practice used in the Anglo-Saxon Corpus. Expensive specialist additions such as 3-D recording and specialist conservation assessments were seen as helpful additions where fea-

sible, but should not prevent the rest of the gazetteer proceeding without them. It was acknowledged that the key to a speedy completion of this project was to maximise the huge amounts of research already available at RCAHMS, the National Museum and Historic Scotland. Stage one of any such project would be to download all the existing datasets, standardise them and establish a compatible structure which could operate through a portal at RCAHMS. This would allow an assessment of the gaps to be made, and would thus focus intensive field resources on the areas of need. Achieving the project looked like a joint effort between universities and government bodies, recruiting additional staff and training up PhD students.

Key building blocks, which were not available when Isabel Henderson first called for this project in 1993, are tumbling into place quite rapidly with the Royal Commission's publication of Strathdon and Aberdeenshire, and Historic Scotland's upgrade of the Angus museums collections.<sup>3</sup> Romilly Allen achieved his great survey by steam train, taking laborious rubbings and making innumerable drawings. His photographers were experimenting with magnesium light. Today's scholars have all the advantages of modern technology, but the inventory project is also more complicated, requiring dozens of specialists to deliver a team effort. The nature of art history continues to change, beyond the parameters of taxonomy, style, technique and iconography. It now involves function, location, meaning and social value not just at the time of creation but for the rest of an object's existence. This extended biographical approach, while not necessarily expanding our understanding of Pictish art itself, perhaps explains why the art has remained so intriguing. A comprehensive modern recording of the stones, which will do full justice to the achievement of the Picts, still remains a challenge.

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<sup>3</sup> Research at St Vigean has been undertaken by Thomas Clancy, Jane Geddes and Simon Taylor, in preparation for the new display. Geological examination by Suzanne Miller and Nigel Ruckley in "The role of geological analysis of monuments: a case study from St Vigean and related sites" in Foster 2005, 277–92. Technical drawing by John Borland in "Understanding what we see, or seeing what we understand: graphic recording, past and present, of the early medieval sculpture at St Vigean" in Foster 2005, 210–14.

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TALES FROM BEYOND THE PICT:  
SCULPTURE AND ITS USES IN AND AROUND FORTEVIOT,  
PERTSHIRE FROM THE NINTH CENTURY ONWARDS

Mark A. Hall

I have always wanted to see Naples and the remains of the Roman Empire. There is I think a great deal of comfort to be found in thinking that very little in the world lasts forever and all things change. Things change.<sup>1</sup>

*Introduction*

This paper explores the issues of cultural biography, landscape and Pictish sculpture. The three are closely interlaced, connected by their focus, the free-standing crosses from Dupplin and Invermay and the related fragments from Forteviot, the early medieval power centre in Strathearn, some 10 miles south of Perth, Scotland. I begin with cultural biography, which is certainly a new approach to researching Pictish sculpture (and material culture generally) that has arisen since Wainwright and his colleagues produced *The Problem of the Picts*.

*Cultural biography*

Cultural biography, in an archaeological and anthropological context, charts the changes in meaning in material culture by which objects or artefacts accumulate a history or biography (Gosden and Marshall 1999, 170). It is an approach that has much to recommend it: at its best it calls for interdisciplinary study and has the facility to mirror the real world of change over time and beyond period boundaries. Change is a natural process but it is also a human political one. Consequently,

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<sup>1</sup> Said by Edith Dombey to a fellow passenger on a Mediterranean cruise, in Episode 19 of Mike Walker's BBC Radio 4 adaptation (2007) of Charles Dickens's *Dombey and Son*.



there are times when we do not like change and so tradition is born as a way of managing or counter-managing change (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Bradley 1987).

In terms of medieval studies some of the key shapers of medieval social interaction are fully amenable to a cultural biography approach, notably the cult of saints (Geary 1986), which revolved around biographical objects that took on and redefined the life of their associated saint as well as many of his/her medieval adherents. The cult of saints informs the complex biography of the Bayeux Tapestry, which of course extends down to our own time (Hicks 2006). Perhaps the key example of a singular object redolent with biographical potential is the sword. Swords were given personality through their being named by their owners and evolved these personalities through their subsequent social trajectories, often over several generations when passed on as heirlooms, gifts or removed from burial chambers (Oakeshott 2003, 6–9). They were equally powerful as gifts within ecclesiastical contexts. The *Life of St Columba* recounts a story of Columba presenting a slave with a sword so that he in turn could present it to his master in return for his freedom (Sharpe, VC, II, 39 and n. 314). Their trajectories certainly demonstrate how the same objects can be both gifts and commodities. They may start life as commissioned or acquired commodities but they can be decommmodified into gifts. This is only to be expected in a medieval Europe where a variety of polities, international institutions and communities subject to both were at various interacting levels of object-based relationships on the spectrum from economic commoditisation to gift exchange.

In the last ten years or so cultural biography has certainly become a fashionably high-profile approach to studying material culture. Its impetus has been an anthropologically-led interdisciplinary drive to understand more holistically the relationship between people and their objects/material culture or, in the words of the defining study of the subject, “the social life of things” (Appadurai 1986). This brought together a chronologically, culturally and disciplinarily diverse series of case studies, with a leaning towards commoditisation (but with an important reminder from Appadurai that commodities and gifts are not inherently defined but contextually defined). The theoretical application to all kinds of objects involved in moderating human relationships was widened by Schiffer (1999) and by two highly-influential and accomplished anthropological case studies of the Kodi people of

Malaysia (Hoskins 1993 and 1998). These looked at two biographical aspects of the object-human relationship, in the structuring role of objects in the over-arching concepts of time, history and the past, and in the structuring role of objects in people's everyday encounters. The application of these and other anthropological approaches has been recently adapted to theorise an archaeology of personhood (Fowler 2004).

The approach has begun to amass a wide number of archaeological studies, including (to cite only a few): Iberian Neolithic and Copper Age plaques (Lillios 2004); relics in the Bronze Age (Woodward 2002); Bronze Age axes (Roberts and Ottaway 2003); Neolithic carved stone balls (MacGregor 1999); Phoenician pottery (Fletcher 2006); Sardinian Nuraghi monuments (Blake 1998); the Sir Flinders Petrie Palestinian collection (Ucko 1998) and Ham Hill limestone (Durman 2006). We should also recognise that cultural biography has a wider cultural context and, as a way of exploring human behaviour through interactions between people and their things, has been around for a much longer time in popular culture. It is evident in such films as *The Red Violin*, *The Yellow Rolls Royce*, *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*, *The Robe* and its sequel *Demetrius and the Gladiators*, *The Maltese Falcon* and *Fellini's Roma*—in most of these delivery does not live up to intention, but that is another story.

In the field of early medieval sculpture cultural biography has a growing acceptance. The above comments on contemporary popular culture make it implicit that one of its hallmarks is the appropriation and adaptation of what has gone before but this is not restricted to modern practice. Hybridisation in Pictish (or more widely Insular) art is a powerful and clear example (Henderson 1997). The Hilton of Cadboll project (James *et al.* 2008) has certainly brought the issue of continuing uses for early medieval sculpture into sharp focus with its account of both changes to the cross in the medieval and post-medieval periods, with a sympathetic exploration of how one splintered local community has manipulated the cross-slab in formulating its identity and survival instinct. Other notable examples of biographies of sculpture include the Ruthwell Cross (Cassidy 1992); the Crieff Burgh Cross (Hall *et al.* 1998); the Bradbourne Cross (Moreland 1999); the general phenomenon of the reuses of Pictish sculpture (Fraser 2005); the Eigg panel (Gondek and Jeffrey 2003) and a study of the multiple lives of Pictish symbol stones (Clarke 2007).

*Dupplin and Invermay in Forteviot (Fig. 3.1)*

In turning to the Invermay and Dupplin crosses the space precludes the attempt to give full biographies and so I shall summarise some of their key life episodes with the aim of showing how they have remained culturally embedded in their landscapes, despite attempts to evict them, what might otherwise be called 'episodes of renegotiation'.

My paper now focuses on the two crosses and the power relations they have enacted as part of Forteviot—the place for which they were created and where further fragments are to be found—and its landscape. This landscape is a segment of the wider landscape of lower Strathearn, with Perth and Scone to the north on the river Tay and Abernethy to the west, close to where the river Earn joins the Tay.

Forteviot has long been recognised as a key power centre—both as church and royal palace—of Pictish and Scottish kings from at least the ninth to the twelfth centuries (Skene 1857; Alcock 1982 and, with a European perspective, Airlie 1994). It is documented as a royal thanage by 1266 (Grant 1993, 80, no. 64 and see Driscoll this volume for the necessary caution on applying this status back into the late first millennium AD). Excavations conducted by the late Leslie Alcock in the 1980s on Haly Hill, the inferred site of the palace and/or early church—on the western edge of Forteviot's natural platform—were inconclusive, but Alcock seized the opportunity to bring together all that was then known of the place (Alcock and Alcock 1992). The present parish church is dedicated to St Andrew (and was certainly so by the twelfth century, when it is so named in Version B of the St Andrews foundation legend and confirmed by a dedication performed by the Bishop of St Andrews in 1241). Alcock plausibly suggested that while Version B of the legend—which also records the founding of a church in Forteviot in the ninth century under King Óengus (Constantine's brother) after a meeting there between the king and monks from St Andrews—cannot be taken at face value, the evidence on the ground certainly supports an early church foundation (Alcock and Alcock 1992, 221–2; the church is also discussed in Taylor forthcoming, especially appendix 1, an annotated translation of Version B). Whether it was a St Andrews church from the very start remains opaque. Territorially, Forteviot parish is surrounded by parishes belonging to the dioceses of Dunkeld and Dunblane. St Andrews did not ultimately get its rights in Forteviot fully recognised until the fifteenth century.

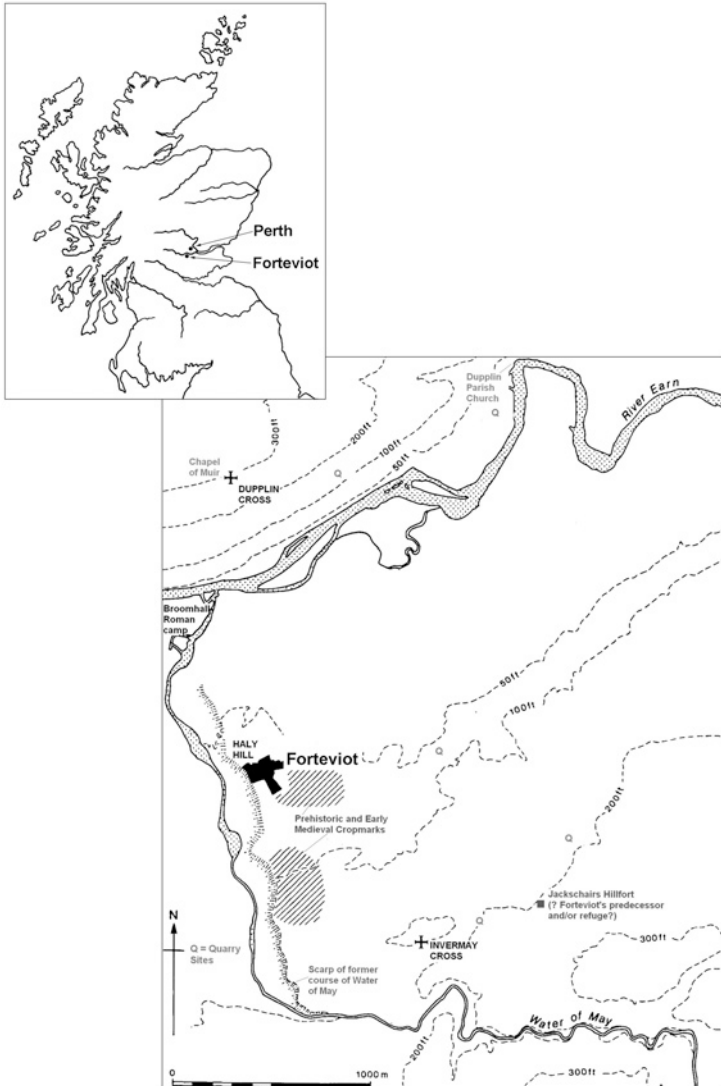


Fig. 3.1: The early medieval landscape context of the Forteviot sculptures. (Map reproduced (with amendments by author) from Alcock 1992 and courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.)

Resolving the early development is not helped by the difficult place-name. Chronicle entries for the ninth century give variations of the Gaelic *Fothuirtabaicht* (Anderson 1922, 288–9), in which the first element, may be either Gaelic *Foithuir*, ‘terrace’ (Watson 1926, 509) or a Gaelic adaptation of a P-Celtic word *\*uotir* ‘territory’, possibly a unit of administration (Simon Taylor, pers. comm.) Watson (1926, 510) noted that the second element may have been the same as the obscure Irish place-name *Tobacht* (with an implication that it may have been a personal name, which might suggest for Forteviot ‘Tobacht’s slope’ or ‘Tobacht’s territory/region’), and at present it remains obscure. The early forms of the place-name noted above certainly contradict Aitchison’s recent suggestion (2006, 33–7) that the second element of the name is the same as the pre-Celtic Teviot river name in the Borders. In all likelihood however, Forteviot is a case of the element being assimilated to Teviot, possibly from the twelfth century onwards.<sup>2</sup>

What remains the most significant source of evidence for early Forteviot is the assemblage of sculptural fragments currently held at the parish church. This is a problematical assemblage in which the number of pieces has fluctuated over the last 150 years or so. The assemblage also includes three fragments recorded (as two pieces) by Allen and Anderson in their 1903 *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (hereafter *ECMS*), and as coming from Invermay. A comprehensive catalogue and drawings are much needed. As of June 2006 there are seven certain pieces, summarily listed here as an aid to clarifying some of the ambiguities that have arisen between the *ECMS* cataloguing (pp. 319–28) and that of Alcock and Alcock (1992, 222–6).

1. *ECMS* Forteviot no. 1 (Fig. 335a–d)/Alcock and Alcock 1992 Forteviot no. 1 (p. 222): A portion of the lower part of an upright, sandstone cross-slab, relief carved on all four faces, measuring 600 × 450 × 250–300mm. The broad faces (A and C) bear on one (A) the outlined hindquarters of two spirally-jointed quadrupeds that flank the face of the slab (the tail on the right-hand creature terminates in a serpentine head that bites the horn of a third creature, which in turn bites that tail just below the head) and on the other

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of *foithuir* or *foithir* is touched upon in Taylor 2000, 205–20 and Taylor 2006 (under Kinneddar); a full discussion of the *foithir* element will appear in Taylor forthcoming. Taylor suggests that the earliest example of the Teviot assimilation process may be the royal charter issued in Forteviot, 1162 × 64, which has *Fetherteuiet* (see *RRS* i no. 256). See also Taylor, this volume, Foithir entry in appendix 1.

(C) a panel of four types of interlace. The two narrow faces (B and D) bear on one (B) a single panel of interlace terminating in triangular interlace (decorated with a semblance of ring-chain) and on the other (D) the upper torso and head of a man with three plaited tails ascending the slab, the tips all touching the man's head. Alcock suggests an eighth-/ninth-century date. The slab terminates in a slightly narrower short tang for insertion into a base. The size, shape and iconographic repertoire are consistent with the cross-slab form (compare Menmuir no. 1—*ECMS*, p. 263—for a possible sense of its complete form), but its fragmentary nature means we cannot rule out a free-standing cross.

2. *ECMS* Forteviot no. 2 (Fig. 336)/Alcock and Alcock 1992 Forteviot no. 2 (pp. 223–7): A large fragment of sandstone arch, broken at both ends and possibly across the back, which is very rough and uneven (Alcock 1982, pl. 14.1; Aitchison 2006, pls. 49 and 50) and measures 2014mm (7ft outer diameter) × c. 1200mm (4ft inner diameter). It was found in the bed of the Water of May in 1832 and inferred to have been part of the buildings on Haly Hill, swept away by the aggressive meanderings of the May (Skene 1857, 278). For full discussion see *ECMS* and Alcock and Alcock. The previous literature is fully reviewed by Aitchison (2006, 143–242). Here I will confine myself to one or two points of detail and contention. Alcock favoured identifying the arch as the head of a doorway (citing the Anglo-Saxon doorway at Earls Barton church, Northampton) or possibly a chancel arch (following Fernie's comparison with Bradford-on-Avon church) (see Alcock 1982, Fig. 14.3 for a reconstruction view of his preferred interpretation). The main problem with a structural arch interpretation of Forteviot no. 2 is less that it is absolutely too small than that it is on the small side (particularly for a chancel arch). Aitchison draws attention to the narrowness and suggests somewhat vaguely that it was for structural reasons. Other possibilities, though still problematic, are worth airing for the possibilities they offer on the wider understanding of the site. A rather too solid *baldachino* (a pillared canopy over an altar) is one possibility but perhaps more inviting is that the arch formed part of the superstructure of a baptismery.<sup>3</sup> A clear link to iconography

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<sup>3</sup> Compare broadly, for example, the seventh-century baptismery of Callisto, Cividale (Zuffi 2006, pl. at p. 275) and the ninth-century canopy of St Eleuciadio from the now vanished church of St Eleuciadio, Ravenna (Bustacchini 1984, pl. 228).

deployed in Rome and Late Antique Imperial Northern Italy (especially Ravenna) supports this suggestion. Constantine's gifts to St John Lateran (specifically the baptistery) in Rome included golden lambs and there are several depictions (primarily in apses) of the Agnus Dei (or 'Lamb of God') associated with the four rivers of paradise and the Cross (the central elements of the iconography of the Forteviot arch).<sup>4</sup> Further, the ninth-century Triclinium apse of Pope Leo from St John Lateran bears a scene of the lamb with the four rivers associated with Christ sending the apostles out on mission, which is paralleled by the Apostolic mission/Emmaus theme suggested for the Forteviot arch by the Hendersons (2004, 144–5). A baptistery at Forteviot would certainly fit in with the inferred important royal and reliquary nature of the church there. The arch has an iconic status today as a unique survival of early medieval architectural sculpture from Scotland, but in terms of its context of purpose and use it was aniconic, a liturgical mnemonic and also a mnemonic recalling Rome and its centrality to the church. Incontrovertible evidence for baptisteries in Pictland remains elusive but the suggestion has been aired before by Isabel Henderson (1997, 11–12) in her discussion of Meigle 22 (*ECMS*, 337; *RCAHMS* 1994, 102, Fig. H) arguing that the fish-tailed male figure between two animals may have a conflated Christological and baptismal intention which, combined with its interior positioning (suggested by a lack of weathering) does conjure up a decorated entrance to a baptistery.<sup>5</sup> A variant view of the arch has been recently put for-

<sup>4</sup> For the Constantinian donation to St John Lateran see *Liber Pontificalis* p. 18 (entry 13). Apses in Rome bearing Agnus Dei and the rivers of paradise iconography include S. Maria in Trastevere, S. Cecilia in Trastevere, San Marco, S. Clemente and Ss. Agnese and Costanza. The eighth-century Lateran Triclinium apse of Pope Leo III is illustrated in Kessler and Zacharias 2000, Fig. 30 and see pp. 35–7 for its discussion in terms of its proclamation of Rome as successor to Christ's mission (thus the Forteviot arch might be seen as an acknowledgment of that authority of Rome). Henderson and Henderson 2004, 144 drew attention to the apse of Ss. Cosmas and Damian as a parallel for the Agnes Dei, Cross and rivers of paradise. Outside of Rome, related imagery includes the apse of San Vitale, Ravenna (Zuffi 2006, 28, 239), the vault mosaic of the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna (Zuffi 2006, 223; Bustacchini 1984, 63) and in the same mausoleum the sarcophagi of Constantine III and Valentinian III (Bustacchini 1984, pl. 25, 26). This imagery built around the Lamb and the rivers is evident in the third and fourth centuries in the catacombs (e.g. see Nicolai *et al.* 2006, Figs. 107, 144).

<sup>5</sup> James Fraser (pers. comm.) has expressed some scepticism on the link between royal centres and baptism (though it has to be a royal centre with a key church) but

ward by Aitchison (2006, 192–201) who suggests the figures on the arch are holding stakes and so represent the founding of the church at Forteviot—the stakes used to mark the boundary of the site following Irish parallels. However, the stakes seem more like staffs with parallels both on other Pictish sculptures (notably St Vigean and Aldbar) and in Carolingian and Ottonian manuscript art.<sup>6</sup>

3. *ECMS* Forteviot no. 3 (Fig. 337 a and b)/Alcock and Alcock 1992 Forteviot no. 3 (p. 223 and Illus. 5): A sandstone arm-fragment from a free-standing, ring-headed cross (with one of the quadrants of the connecting ring preserved). The fragment measures 300 × 250 × 150mm. It is decorated with interlace (T-shaped in section) on faces A (which also includes pellets), C and D. The form and style suggest a late ninth- into early tenth-century date. A free-standing cross later than Dupplin and Invermay confirms that Forteviot's importance was not of the moment but continuing; it was a site that was maintained and evolved with new programmes of sculpture and architecture as appropriate. This fragment of free-standing, ring-headed cross hints that this form was more common in the East than the surviving concentration in the West (notably Iona and Islay) might suggest, adding weight to the fragment of ring-headed cross from St Vigean, Angus (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 194,

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at the same time reminded me that Burghead, a power centre (probably royal) with a significant church (as evidenced by high-status sculpture) within its rampart area, also boasts an elaborate subterranean well, one function of which—and about which I, like Fraser, remain doubtful given its subterranean character—has been postulated as baptismal (see Ralston 2004, 31–2; Shepherd 1996, no. 72).

<sup>6</sup> The idea of boundary-marking has great appeal, rooting the sculpture in a commemoration and proclamation of place, but the figurative attitudes and relationships (in an admittedly difficult space) are not entirely persuasive and there is no clear indication of a sharpened stake (though I recognise we do not know precisely what such stakes looked like). A staff certainly fits better with Aitchison's identification of the main figure as royal, and though apparently lacking a rounded knop it might be compared with depictions of royal staffs in Carolingian and Ottonian manuscripts, including Lothar, in the Lothar Psalter of c. 840–55 (Backhouse 1997, 20, pl. 7); Otto II (in the Epistles of St Gregory of c. 983) and Otto III (in his Gospel Book of c. 998 and in the Bamberg Apocalypse of c. 1001), all three in de Hamel 1994 (plates 47, 49 and 57). The staffs shown on St Vigean no. 11 (*ECMS*, 271) are knopped and held by ecclesiastics, that on the right is higher perhaps indicating seniority or possibly raised in a greeting gesture. The staff on the back of Aldbar (*ECMS*, 246; Henderson and Henderson 2004, pl. 193) may have a pointed terminal so could be a javelin or a staff, either way it is designated as a royal attribute of King David (Henderson and Henderson 2006, 131). In addition, the cross-slab Kirriemuir no. 2 includes a giant, St Christopher-like figure, walking with a staff (*ECMS*, 227; Henderson and Henderson 2004, 125 and pl. 183).



pl. 284—and note also their discussion (192–3) of the free-standing crosses at St Andrews, there are up to four of these; it is possible that at least one of them was ring-headed.) The frequent depiction of ring-headed crosses on cross-slabs is a further indicator of extensive knowledge of the form. A further indicator of knowledge of and familiarity with the form in the Forteviot area is a siltstone spindle whorl (Perth Museum registration number 1992.563) (Fig. 3.2), found in the graveyard of Ecclesiamagirdle chapel (King and Robertson 1992, 77). It measures 31mm in diameter and is 9mm thick; one face carries an incised graffito of a ring-headed cross. Ecclesiamagirdle (also known as Exmagirdle) is now in the parish of Dron but in the medieval period was a separate, small parish nestling beneath Castle Law, Forgandenny, less than 5 miles from Forteviot. An early church is further indicated by its place-name, containing the early, possibly Pictish, element ‘Ecclesia’ (church) and the saint’s name Grillán (in the diminutive form, Grill, and the whole meaning ‘my Grill’s church’—Watson 1926, 324, esp. n.p. 519; Rogers 1992, 255). St Grillán was apparently one of the twelve companions of St Columba. The spindle whorl certainly reaffirms that ring-headed crosses were visible enough to be inspirational and copyable in lower Strathearn. The church dedication also provides a further link to the Columban cult evidenced by the iconography of the Dupplin cross (see discussion below) and linked to royal patronage. The church at Ecclesiamagirdle is argued to have been a significant Pictish church prior to the late ninth century, at which point, under a new Gaelic regime it may have had some of its revenues diverted to larger churches, though remaining sufficiently important to retain its territorial integrity over the medieval period (Rogers 1992, 255–6).

4. *ECMS Forteviot no. 4* (Fig. 338)/Alcock and Alcock 1992, nos. 4 and 5 (p. 223): A sandstone fragment measuring 360 × 400 × 180mm, reduced to a pentagonal shape and preserving the much-worn figure of a horseman with downward-pointing spear, moving left. It is in a highly-eroded condition, consistent (for example) with being rolled around the bed of the May for several years. Its rider image and the ogee outline of the panel are consistent with the imperial rider motif on the Dupplin Cross (see discussion below).
5. *ECMS Forteviot no. 5* (Fig. 339): A sandstone fragment measuring 300 × 150mm, bearing an eroded panel of interlace. *ECMS* notes that it was built into a wall (either the farmhouse or outbuildings)



Fig. 3.2: Spindle whorl incised with ring-headed cross from Ecclesiamagirdle. (Photograph: Paul Adair, courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland. Actual size: 31mm (diam.) × 9mm (th.))

at Milton of Forteviot, situated just above the point where the May joins the Earn. It was last recorded there in 1964, when the slide reproduced here as Fig. 3.3 was taken by Mrs D. Lye (Perthshire Society of Natural Science). The farm has lain empty and abandoned for several years now and visual inspection by this author in 2007 did not find any trace of early medieval sculpture. Parts of the out-buildings have been demolished which may account for the loss of the fragment. The present house is a modern bungalow, perhaps constructed in the 1960s/1970s—it may be that its construction, and therefore demolition of the older house, led to the loss of the fragment. Further demolition work deserves careful monitoring. The adjacent remains of the eighteenth- to nineteenth-century mill pond (with grassed over banks and sluice gates) and a former well/spring site would also repay survey and assessment for sculptural remains.



Fig. 3.3: Forteviot sculptural fragment no. 5. (Photograph: Dorothy Lye, reproduced courtesy of Perth Museum & Art Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland.)

6. *ECMS* Forteviot no. 6 (p. 327): There is no recorded description of this fragment and *ECMS* notes that it “was built into the walls of one of the outhouses of the Mill of Forteviot and when the outhouse was pulled down was used in the construction of a retaining wall along the E side of the Water of May, being now invisible.” (p. 324). This retaining wall runs intermittently for the entire length of the May between Forteviot and its junction with the Earn; it is made with copious amounts of stone possibly concealing further early medieval fragments, a convenient resource but one that could possibly be seen as apotropaic in terms of diverting flood waters.
7. Forteviot no. 7 (Fig. 3.4): A fragment not certainly recorded in *ECMS* or Alcock and Alcock 1992 though it remains a possibility that it is no. 6 above, recovered from the retaining wall sometime in the twentieth century. It is a sandstone fragment measuring 500 × 600 × 180mm, roughly pentagonal in shape with the broad face decorated with a narrow, diagonal-seeming (due to the shape of the stone but actually horizontal) panel of interlace (three-cord plait), carved in false relief. One of the narrower faces bears a truncated, narrower panel of interlace (four-cord plait) with a cruciform break within a double-beaded frame, directly comparable to that on 8



Fig. 3.4: Forteviot sculptural fragment no. 7. (Photograph: Tom Gray, reproduced courtesy of RCAHMS.)

below. The fragment is much eroded. It has clearly been moved to the church post the publication of *ECMS* and arguably from the woods at Long Plantation (unless it had already been moved to Forteviot or Milton). Given the close comparison of the ornament across numbers 7 and 8 it is, as Ian Scott has observed during his drawing of it, a strong contender for identification as another piece of the Invermay Cross.

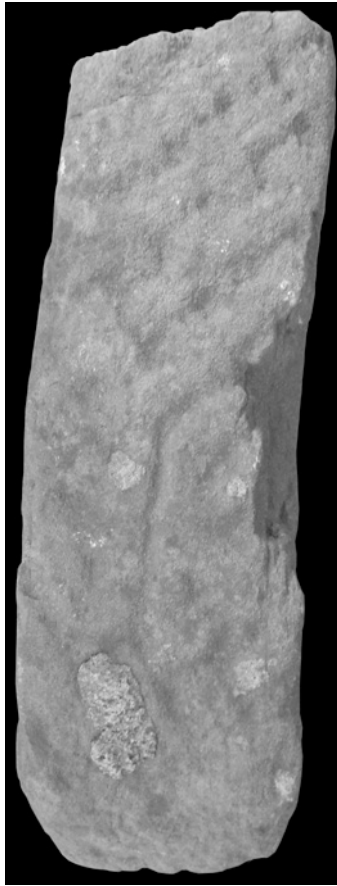


Fig. 3.5: Invermay sculptural fragment no. 1 (Forteviot no. 8). (Photograph: M. A. Hall, reproduced courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland.)

8. *ECMS* Invermay no. 1 (Fig. 340) or (given its location in St Andrew's Church) Forteviot no. 8 (Fig. 3.5 this paper): An irregular, four-sided sandstone fragment measuring  $300 \times 340 \times 120$ mm. On its narrow face it bears a panel of eight-cord plait interlace with a cruciform break in the middle, matching that for 7 above (and paralleled, for example, on the St Vigeans no. 1 slab—*ECMS*, Fig. 250A). When recorded by Allen in 1891 it was in the woods (Long Plantation) beside the site of the Invermay Cross. He was shown the fragment by the then minister of Forteviot, Rev D. Anderson. It may be he who had the fragments (including 9 and 10 below) moved to the church.

9. and 10. *ECMS* Invermay 1a and 1b (Fig. 341) or (given their location in St Andrew's Church) Forteviot nos. 9 and 10:<sup>7</sup> Two conjoining sandstone fragments (differentially weathered) of irregular four-sided shape, measuring 650 × 450 × 180mm (no. 1a/9) and 730 × 520 × 160mm (no. 1b/10). The two pieces join perfectly along one of their broad faces (Fig. 3.6). The *ECMS* description is based on the two pieces being joined together and records the relief sculpture on the narrow edge (face D) forming a continuous piece of ornament. This comprises a narrow, horizontal band of key pattern above a rectangular panel of diagonal key pattern (double-beaded as on the Dupplin Cross) above a corner of a panel of diagonal key pattern. Recent photography by Tom Gray has revealed that the broad face (A) of 1B bears a very worn, faint trace of a figurative panel (Fig. 3.7), showing a tall figure between two different animals and which bears some resemblance to the David panel on the Dupplin Cross (see below). The orientation between the two elements of decoration is very difficult to make sense of. If the edge bearing key pattern is positioned vertically then the figures on the broad face are walking diagonally across that face at an angle close to 45 degrees. At the time of writing this appears to be without parallel. Nevertheless, the nature of the fragments suggests they could well be part of the mid-shaft section of the Invermay Cross. The identification of fragments 8, 9 and 10 as parts of the Invermay Cross suggests—given its near identical pattern of plaitwork with cruciform break—that fragment 7 is also part of the Invermay Cross. A fuller argument for this reconstruction will be made at a future date.

There is one further sandstone fragment at Forteviot (measuring 370 × 220 × 170mm), which bears some evidence of tooling marks but is much worn and not diagnostically early medieval. Likewise there is a simple stone basin—a shallow bowl pecked out of an irregular block, again insufficiently diagnostic as early medieval for consideration here. One further object, however, should be noted, the bronze hand-bell

<sup>7</sup> Discussions with Ian Scott, who had begun the full drawing of the Forteviot material as this paper was in preparation, suggest that the known Invermay fragments are better and more logically re-numbered, along with the surviving cross-base (with tenon) from Invermay, as Invermay 1 (*ECMS* 1), Invermay 2a and 2b (currently *ECMS* 1a and 1b), Invermay 3 (currently Forteviot 7 above) and Invermay 4 (the cross-base). See full catalogue publication forthcoming.



Fig. 3.6: Invermay nos. 1A and 1B (Forteviot nos. 9 and 10). (Photograph: M. A. Hall, reproduced courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland.)

formerly dated to the late-ninth/early-tenth century (Bourke 1983, 466–7; Clouston 1992, 453 and 482) and of a type indicative of royal patronage of churches in eastern Scotland in the later ninth century. One would certainly expect such bells to have played a role, liturgically and as relics in a significant reliquary and royal church such as the one postulated for Forteviot. However, recent re-analysis of the bell, and in particular its enigmatic letter M (comparable to post-medieval bronze-makers and more general apotropaic marks) cast in low relief on one side, indicates that the bell as it now stands was made in the seventeenth century, either as a replica or, perhaps more likely, as a recasting of an early medieval bell (Bourke 2008, 25–6).



Fig. 3.7: Invermay no. 1B (Forteviot no. 10), broad face. (Photograph: Tom Gray, reproduced courtesy of RCAHMS.)

The association of the Dupplin and Invermay crosses with Forteviot had always seemed self-evident (e.g. see Anonymous 1796–7, 198–200; Robertson 1843, 1172–75; Allen 1892, 251–2 and Meldrum 1926), but it was not until work in the early 1990s revealed the presence of an inscription on the Dupplin Cross that this seems to have become irrefutable (Forsyth 1995; Alcock and Alcock 1996). Katherine Forsyth was able to identify the words CU[STA]NTIN FILIUS FIRCUS—‘Constantine son of Fergus’—from an otherwise illegible inscription (Fig. 3.8a). This gave the cross a reasonably narrow date range which, allowing for the inscription running to formula, could not have been erected before Constantine’s accession to the throne of Pictland in 789 (extending to Dál Riata by 811) and possibly does not extend beyond Constantine’s death in 819/20, though it cannot be ruled out that the inscription (and so cross) was a retrospective gesture by a son or grandson, as with the Pillar of Eliseg in North Wales (Katherine Forsyth, *pers. comm.*, reiterating her argument in Forsyth 1995; see Woolf 2007, 57–67 for a cogent summary of the house of Wrguist/Urguist).

Previously, having been more often than not characterised as Scottish rather than Pictish had neatly allowed the cross to be fitted





Fig. 3.8: The Dupplin Cross: a) faces A, B, C and D; b) base. (Drawings by I. G. Scott, reproduced courtesy of Historic Scotland.)

into the political framework built around the pivotal importance of Kenneth MacAlpin and his dynasty, something further justified by the monument's lack of Pictish symbols that too easily for some meant it was not Pictish. The Constantine connection re-dates Dupplin and has implications for the associated sculptures in Forteviot, especially the arch and the cross-slab. It confirms the long-held view of Isabel Henderson that Dupplin is a Pictish monument, demonstrating Pictish art that was fully Insular, commissioned by patrons and sculpted by craftsmen fully in touch with elite taste and the deployment of that taste to demonstrate effective and divinely-sanctioned use of power (Henderson 1978, 198; 1999; Henderson and Henderson 2004, 189–94). Its Pictishness, of course, does not fully define the sculpture just as it does not fully define its ruling dynasty, whose Pictishness is nevertheless confirmed by the use of the British form of the names of kings Constantín, Onuist and Wen in the *Liber Vitae* of St Cuthbert's *familia* (Woolf 2007, 67 and fn. 38).

The inscription, in recording in stone the name of Constantine, enables us to re-forge the link between an individual king and the supremely political gesture that the cross represents. It is a gesture in stone, like its counterpart across the valley at Invermay (and by extension also the Forteviot fragments). To focus on Dupplin (which as Isabel Henderson has recently observed deserves to be renamed Constantine's Cross),<sup>8</sup> it works as a gesture in two key ways. Firstly, its erection is a physical enactment of royal power and rhetorically so in the vein of 'I rule in this place, you who see this stone behold me and obey my laws'. Its rhetoric may extend to future generations—including ourselves—that its named king ruled here. Gestures of permanence were clearly important in a world where kingship was still peripatetic, not least as reminders of a king's power and the renders owed whilst he was in absentia. The perhaps unintended element of its rhetorical gesturing is the Ozymandias effect it should have upon us, reminding us that such works inevitably fade. It is itself decayed and most of its context has disappeared, which also makes its second level of gesture harder to appreciate, that is, demonstrating the reciprocal relationship between realm (or proto-State) and Church

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<sup>8</sup> The comment was made (to general assent) at the Pictish Arts Society conference in St Vigeans, 4 October 2008, in her discussion of how major centres of Pictish sculpture should be characterised.

(between Man and God) each endorsing the other, with the individual panels and motifs of the cross reflecting this in precise ways. The whole range and nuances of these we cannot recover—we are too far from their social contemporaneity. Gesture is, after all, a largely short-term, NOW mode of communication. Wider social gestures can also be short-lived. The boulder shown in Fig. 3.9a was erected in 1968 to commemorate the opening of the Pomerium playground in Perth (to serve a block of high-rise flats beside the bus station); it bears a bronze plaque (Fig. 3.9b) inscribed: “This playground was donated by the Forteviot Charitable Trust and was opened on 21st August 1968 by the Rt. Hon. Lord Forteviot of Dupplin M.B.E..T. ? ? [damaged] J.P.” This inscribed boulder articulates a gesture of children’s playground provision but it has been the only trace of the playground for ten years now. Ozymandias strikes again, as well as the Dupplin estate.

Returning to the Dupplin Cross, we can recognise that studying its art-historical and landscape contexts can help us to recover something of the range of gestures on it and the Invermay cross. Three brief examples will suffice to demonstrate the point and the reader is referred to the full art-historical accounts of Dupplin in Henderson (1999) and Henderson and Henderson (2004, 189–94). Two of the scenes on the Dupplin cross (Fig. 3.8a) are interpreted as showing King David, as harpist and as slayer of the bear and lion, and so by association identifying Constantine as a model Christian king in the mould of David. It is a scene that may be echoed on the Invermay fragments (Fig. 3.7). Likewise they display a key pattern also found on Dupplin—the similarities suggest a pair of free-standing crosses with a closely-shared repertoire of imagery.

The single imperial rider, probably after the Emperor Constantine (Henderson 1977, 158–68) (another God-endorsed model of Christian kingship) is found on both Constantine’s Cross at Dupplin (where it may also double as the Pictish Constantine given its oppositional situation to the inscription panel naming Constantine) and on the Forteviot fragment 4. The shaping of the Forteviot fragment and its echoing in the ogee border moulding around the Forteviot rider is reminiscent of the Dupplin cross-head. Is this part of a further, previously unrecognised free-standing cross or either a piece of Forteviot 3 or another piece of Invermay?

The Dupplin motif of a roundel of interlace surrounded by four pairs of dove-like birds (Fig. 3.8a) has been posited by Isabel Henderson (1999, 174) as a Columban reference in line with the teaching of

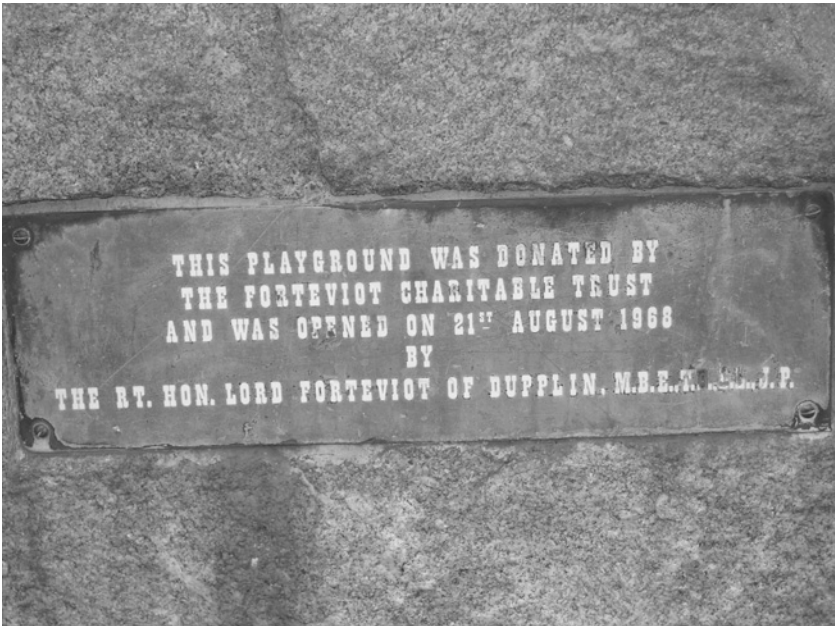


Fig. 3.9: Pomerium Playground dedication boulder, Perth: a) boulder and playground; b) inscription. (Photograph: M. A. Hall, reproduced courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland.)

Adomnán. More widely it may be a manifestation of the resurgence of St Columba's cult in the ninth century: it may have been Constantine who initiated the first church at Dunkeld for the receipt of Columba's relics in 818, a plan not fully achieved until the reign of Cinaed son of Alpín (Kenneth MacAlpin) (Clancy 1996, 112–15; Hall 2005, 65; Woolf 2007, 65–6). If we accept that the earliest church at Forteviot, under the patronage of Óengus, had a St Andrews connection (including some of that saint's relics) that should not blind us to a shift in patronage from that under his brother and predecessor Constantine. A royal church at a royal centre such as Forteviot would presumably have a mediating role in ecclesiastical politics, primarily differentiated as the Dunkeld and St Andrews camps (but in a Strathearn context we should also note the role of Dunblane), and its royal patron might regard it as the key place for a relic collection that included Andrew and Columba as well as other saints. Stuart Airlie (1994, 42–3) has drawn attention to the listing of the kings Constantine and Óengus (probably Óengus I, Constantine's father, who died 761) in the name lists of the *Liber Vitae* of Durham (and which also lists Eoganán, son of Óengus II, Constantine's brother—pers. comm. James Fraser—and see Woolf 2007, 69) which may hint at one of the avenues of contact with Northumbria by which relics (amongst other things) were exchanged. Equally, the link between Constantine and Dunkeld and the Columban imagery of Dupplin may confirm the backwards-projecting propaganda of the St Andrews legend.

### *Dupplin and Invermay beyond Forteviot*

I would like to turn now and explore something of the oppositional situation of the Invermay and Dupplin crosses, interlacing this with episodes from their later life stories. What is true of both crosses is that neither is a stranger to being moved, either in entirety or in fragments. The most recent moves were made by the Dupplin Cross: in 1998 after a protracted period of intense debate, fuelled initially by conservation and taxation concerns, a public inquiry came down in favour of local retention in Strathearn as opposed to removal to Edinburgh and display in the National Museum of Scotland. As a consequence the cross was carefully uplifted and taken to Edinburgh for conservation by Historic Scotland. This process established that the cross had

previously been stabilised on a concrete raft in 1925, a further mark of value attached to its retention in its landscape (see below).

Once it had been conserved it went on display for two years in the National Museum before returning to Strathearn in 2002, relocated in St Serf's church, Dunning. It was very much seen locally as a return of something that firmly belonged to Strathearn and a key signifier of its identity. Wrapped up in this was the perception of a victory having been scored against an arm of the State—i.e. the National Museum—ironic given that the cross was originally set up by the 'State' as a statement of its authority. The other related (if chronologically limited) resonance is that it has now been moved from what was royal land to what was land of one of the crown's leading rival power bases, the earldom of Strathearn—Dunning was the centre of one of the earldom's key thanages (Driscoll 1991, 104–7; 1998; Hall *et al.* 2004).

The opportunity that moving the cross provided to explore the possibility of earlier moves, primarily through excavation of the cross station, proved inconclusive (Ewart *et al.* 2007). The project's documentary search did, however, reveal a late seventeenth-century map—by John Adair<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 3.10)—interpreted as showing the Dupplin Cross on a site in Bankhead in 1683. To the right of Dupplin Castle the map bears a cross and ball symbol representing the parish church of Dupplin beside the river Earn (a small parish on record from the thirteenth century and in the diocese of Dunblane; Rogers 1992, 251–4). To the left of Dupplin Castle is another such symbol, interpreted as symbolising the Dupplin Cross (Kirkdale Archaeology 1999). Despite its name, the cross (which was formerly known as the Bankhead cross or pillar or standing stone) was not in the parish of Dupplin but in the parish of Forteviot, which straddled the Earn with a northern extension taking in Cairnie and Dolcorachy (now Bankhead). The northern part of the parish had its own chapel dependent on Forteviot (as did the detached parts of the parish at Mailer and Whitehill; Rogers 1992, 262–6). It was known as Chapel of Muir and apparently lay close to the site of the Dupplin Cross. Place-name evidence from the Inchaffray Abbey charters (Lindsay *et al.* 1908, 321 fn. 12 and charters cxxi and cxxv) is supported by the label 'Old Parsonage' marked on the 1965 OS 1:25,000 Pathfinder. Were the chapel and the cross associated (the cross could, for example, have

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<sup>9</sup> For John Adair's 1683 map see the National Library of Scotland's website: [www.nls.uk/digitalibrary/map/early/record.cfm?id=74](http://www.nls.uk/digitalibrary/map/early/record.cfm?id=74) and Ewart *et al.* 2007.



Fig. 3.10: Detail of John Adair's map of Strathearn, to show the locations of the Dupplin and Invermay crosses. (Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland.)

influenced the siting of the later chapel)? If so, then Adair's map may indicate both but it may only indicate the chapel, a use consistent with other uses of the symbol. It is also conceivable that the cross was moved there in the later medieval period (after the Battle of Dupplin in 1332, for example) and also influenced by the siting of the chapel.

After many years travelling Scotland and making rubbings of its stone sculptures, antiquarian Christian Maclagan donated her collection to the British Museum and produced a catalogue describing them in 1898. Her entry for the Dupplin Cross (1898, 56–8) calls it “the great cross, Forteviot” and she describes it as having formerly stood in the churchyard of the parish—the clear implication being that it is Forteviot parish—but that it was moved by the Earl of Kinnoull (the then owner of the Dupplin estate, which crossed the boundaries of Forteviot, Dupplin and Aberdalgie parishes) to Bankhead. Given her mode of operation, Maclagan would presumably have acquired this information from talking to locals during her visit to make the rubbings, but we have no corroboration of this and she names no source. The Earls of Kinnoull were certainly much enamoured of the cross; it was perhaps they who christened it the Dupplin Cross to link it firmly



Fig. 3.11: Kinnoull family memorial: granite copy of Dupplin Cross in Dupplin churchyard. Taken in the winter of 1886/7, probably by Magnus Jackson. The flowers are a useful reminder of the elaborate rituals that will have accompanied the erection of medieval monumental sculpture but of which we have no record. (Reproduced courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland.)

with their estate and in the late nineteenth century the eleventh earl had a close but simplified copy made in granite (Fig. 3.11) as a memorial to his son, who died in 1886. It stands beside the ruins of Dupplin parish church, which ceased to function as the parish church when the parish was united with Aberdalgie in the seventeenth century. It was retained as the Kinnoull family burial ground and continued thus even when the family sold the estate at the turn of the nineteenth century (when the new title of Lord Forteviot was created to go with it). The author knows of two further copies of the Dupplin Cross (and there may well be others), both of them First World War memorials. They are slightly reduced in size and have slightly simplified crowns and the addition of pyramid bases on which the names of the dead are inscribed. One is at Nittshell, Glasgow and the other at Gatehouse



of Fleet, Galloway.<sup>10</sup> Both are a long way from Dupplin and suggest a widespread familiarity with the cross as an iconic image. This is probably in large part due to the interpretation of it as a battle memorial, for it was popularly held to have been set up at Bankhead to commemorate the Battle of Dupplin in 1332, no doubt a significant factor in the cross's survival.

The cross of Invermay as it survives is currently split between Forteviot church, where there are at least three certain fragments (see brief catalogue above), and the presumed original site at Invermay, where the cross-base survives, in the field called Dronachy, which gave its name to the cross in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Fig. 3.12). Like the Dupplin Cross, the cross of Invermay was recorded *in situ* at the end of the eighteenth century in the statistical account for Forteviot parish, which itself relies on a newspaper account published 25 years earlier by the then schoolmaster in Forteviot (Anon. 1796–7, 198–200). From this we learn that by the 1760s the cross had already been demolished or collapsed as it is recorded “lying broken over at the pedestal, on which are many emblematic figures” (presumably a reference to figures on the cross-shaft rather than the base). Circa 1840, according to the OS Namebook, a replacement plain pillar had been erected in the original repaired base. Was this the need for a folly on the estate, regret at the loss of the cross or guilt over the demolition? Allen (1892, 251) classes it as “wanton destruction”, his response to Stuart’s account of it being “broken in pieces not many years before 1772” (1867, 59). Certainly a lot of effort was put into restoring some vestige of the cross (perhaps more than was warranted by any desire for a folly?) and the reassembled base is held together by ten, leaded-in iron staples. By 1891 Allen reports three of the fragments to be lying in the woods (Long Plantation) a quarter of a mile from the cross site. At some point the replacement cross itself was broken in two and cemented back together perhaps supporting a long-lived determination to put an earlier mistake right?<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> I encountered the Nittshill example serendipitously on 10/11/2007, and I am grateful to Stephen Driscoll and Katherine Forsyth for information on the Gatehouse of Fleet example.

<sup>11</sup> We should keep in mind that Allen may have made an assumption that the Invermay cross was deliberately destroyed, encountering it as he did some 100 years after the event. Such monuments were not immune to the effects of nature, as the collapse of the Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab following a storm in the late seventeenth century reminds us (James *et al.* 2008, 217–18).



Fig. 3.12: Invermay cross-base, 2003: a) Restored monument with replacement pillar; b) detail of original base. (Photographs: M. A. Hall, reproduced courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland.)

The parallels with Dupplin are several. They are both sited in an E–W orientation on rising ground three-quarters of a mile (Invermay) and only fractionally further at five-sixths of a mile (Dupplin) from Forteviot. Both are set towards the N and S limits of the medieval parish. Invermay, like Dupplin is named after the estate land that it now occupies. Like Dupplin, Invermay principally occupies the neighbouring parish, in this case Muckersie with the parish boundary being the Water of May, which flows down through Forteviot. Forteviot and Muckersie were united in the seventeenth century. Like Dupplin, the Invermay estate was significantly landscaped in the eighteenth century—including the construction of a massive estate wall, a new two-mile road and with various follies planned. This was all the intent of the laird, Sir John Belshes, but it proved too great a strain on his purse, he failed to pay his taxes and was summoned for debt in 1802 (Murray 2003). His Edinburgh acquaintances included Walter Scott (whose marriage proposal was rejected by Sir John's daughter; what stories of Forteviot did not get written as a consequence?). It may be the somewhat rapacious Belshes who is at the root of the differential preservation of Dupplin and Invermay, in being responsible for the “wanton destruction” of Invermay. This is certainly in marked contrast to the considered preservation of Dupplin, again noted by Allen (1892, 251–2), who comments: “It is protected by a wooden railing and there is a notice board close by requesting that the cross may not be injured by anyone. This is the only thing of its kind I saw through out the whole of Scotland.”

Let us return to Adair's map. It bears another cross and ball symbol not too far from Invermay.<sup>12</sup> It cannot, as far as I have been able to work out, represent any known chapel and so may well represent the cross at Invermay, though if so it is poorly sited, lacking the accuracy of location that the other sites are depicted with. Once again certainty eludes us but taken on balance (and accepting the 800 or so years blank when we do not have a precise record of their location) the likelihood seems that the crosses of Bankhead and Dronachy (Dupplin and Invermay) were sited where they appear to have long been. The St Andrews foundation legend talks of Regulus and his clergy erecting a cross at Forteviot in thanks for the land grant from Óengus for their church—we have, though, at least three crosses which suggest a wider

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<sup>12</sup> See note 9.

territorial significance than a single church cross. A closer parallel may be the second reference to cross construction in the *Legend*, this time in St Andrews itself: when Óengus gave the monks land about St Andrews the monks erected twelve crosses as a sign of the king's wishes (quoted in Stuart 1867, 60).

As this paper reached final editing its author had recourse to take a fresh look at the Gask Stone, which may add weight to the argument for the crosses being in their original locations. Since the mid-nineteenth century the Gask Stone has stood in at least two locations beside Moncrieffe House, Bridge of Earn, but prior to that stood in Trinity Gask parish. Long recognised as a pivotal Pictish monument, both for its array of fabulous beasts and its transitional cross form (*ECMS*, 290–1; Henderson 1997, 29–33), it stood (possibly on a parish boundary) 7.6km (4<sup>3/4</sup> miles) ESE of the site of the Dupplin Cross and, like it, just short of the 90m contour, in a position short of the crest of the Gask ridge and looking down steeply to the river Earn.<sup>13</sup>

### *Conclusion*

There are still many questions to be answered about Forteviot, Invermay and Dupplin, and so I prefer to conclude my discussion by asking some of them. I do so in the knowledge that they and the preceding discussion will begin to be answered and amended by the Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) project. This is a University of Glasgow project that commenced in 2006, seeking to “explore the early prehistoric origins of the Pictish royal centre at Forteviot and document the area's subsequent evolution” (<http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/departments/archaeology/research/projects/serf> and see Driscoll this volume). The questions include:

- Are any of the several small, abandoned quarries in the parish—including south-west of Dupplin castle, Kildinny, Newmill Cottages, Dupplin South Lodge and Jacksstairs Wood—the source of the stone used for the sculptures? A measurement of their magnetic susceptibility as against that of the surviving sculptures may repay dividends in terms of raw material sourcing and working.

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<sup>13</sup> A full analysis of the Gask Stone is in preparation by the author of this paper.

- What is the date of the hillfort close by in Jacks chairs Wood—could it have been the immediate predecessor power centre to Forteviot and did it serve as a place of refuge when Forteviot was threatened? (not an original thought on my part—it is a possibility also raised by Skene in 1857).<sup>14</sup>
- What could future environmental analysis tell us of the immediate landscape—for example, was Forteviot surrounded by water and marsh, adding to its defences?
- Did the landscape lend itself to livestock control given the food render needs of such a place?
- Was there a dynamic between the crosses and the holding of royal assemblies at Forteviot?
- How do we reconcile the changing nature of the values applied to such sculptures and their landscapes?

I hope that this exploration of early medieval sculptural inheritance has demonstrated the value of a cultural biography approach, and without pretending that such an approach is the answer to everything. It does though focus on the crucial link between people and their things and the reciprocal cycles of change they live through, whether this is within a chronological horizon or period, or whether it is over a much longer time frame. The crosses in question have remained fairly fixed for well over 1000 years but the values attached to them have changed with the changes in the layout of their surrounding landscapes and the identities of the change-makers and the change-endurers.

### *Acknowledgements*

I am grateful to several colleagues for the opportunity to present a version of this paper at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, July 2006 and to Isabel Henderson for inviting me to give a further variant (with a valuable change of title which I have retained) in Portmahomack, August 2007, as part of the Tarbat lecture programme. I am also grateful to several colleagues (including the stalwart band

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<sup>14</sup> A start has certainly been made in answering this question—initial excavations at Jacks chairs hillfort as part of the SERF project produced radiocarbon dates for the late first millennium BC, suggesting there may be no link, though this is as yet not conclusive (Poller 2007, 155–6).

that joined me for a walk around the Forteviot landscape following the *Able Minds and Practised Hands* conference in 2003) for discussion of several of the issues raised, in particular Stephen Driscoll, Simon Taylor, Katherine Forsyth, James Fraser and Thomas Clancy. The Rev Colin Williamson and Lady Wemyss of Invermay ensured access to the stones was never a problem. A study trip to Rome under the brilliant guidance of Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Richard Gem provided huge stimulation to think about the function of the Forteviot arch in particular. All remaining errors are my own.

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## SAINTS, SCROLLS AND SERPENTS: THEORISING A PICTISH LITURGY ON THE TARBAT PENINSULA

Kellie Meyer

While much about the Picts remains a mystery, a great deal of knowledge has been added to our general understanding since *The Problem of the Picts* was first published 55 years ago. The publication of Martin Carver's *Portmahomack: Monastery of the Picts*, which details the results of the archaeological excavations on the Tarbat peninsula, in Easter Ross, Scotland (Fig. 4.1), is responsible for a great deal of this new knowledge and has opened doors for further investigations. Being privileged to work on the dig for five seasons, as well as writing my PhD thesis (Meyer 2005) under Carver's supervision, allowed me to pursue new lines of inquiry in regard to the Picts of the Tarbat peninsula, the nature of the monastic estate, and the meaning of the images carved on the monumental sculpture and numerous fragments uncovered at the Portmahomack site.<sup>1</sup> While the meaning of the native Pictish symbols remains obscure, close study of the Christian iconography, decorative motifs and secular scenes can illuminate the political and religious relations the Tarbat peninsula enjoyed with the rest of the early medieval world.

It is known that Picts were introduced to Christianity at a relatively early date, and some, at least, successfully converted, to the extent that they carved Christian symbols on many of their monuments. However, which sect of Christianity they followed at particular periods is somewhat unclear. The two obvious candidates are the Irish and the Roman, the result of missions originating from Iona and Northumbria. A great deal of discussion exists about these missions, in terms of their agendas and their success, which this article does not attempt to duplicate. Instead, it is an investigation of the actual liturgical rites that may have

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<sup>1</sup> The excavation under the direction of Martin Carver concluded in 2007, with the results published in yearly bulletins (<http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat/bulletins>) and in Carver 2008.

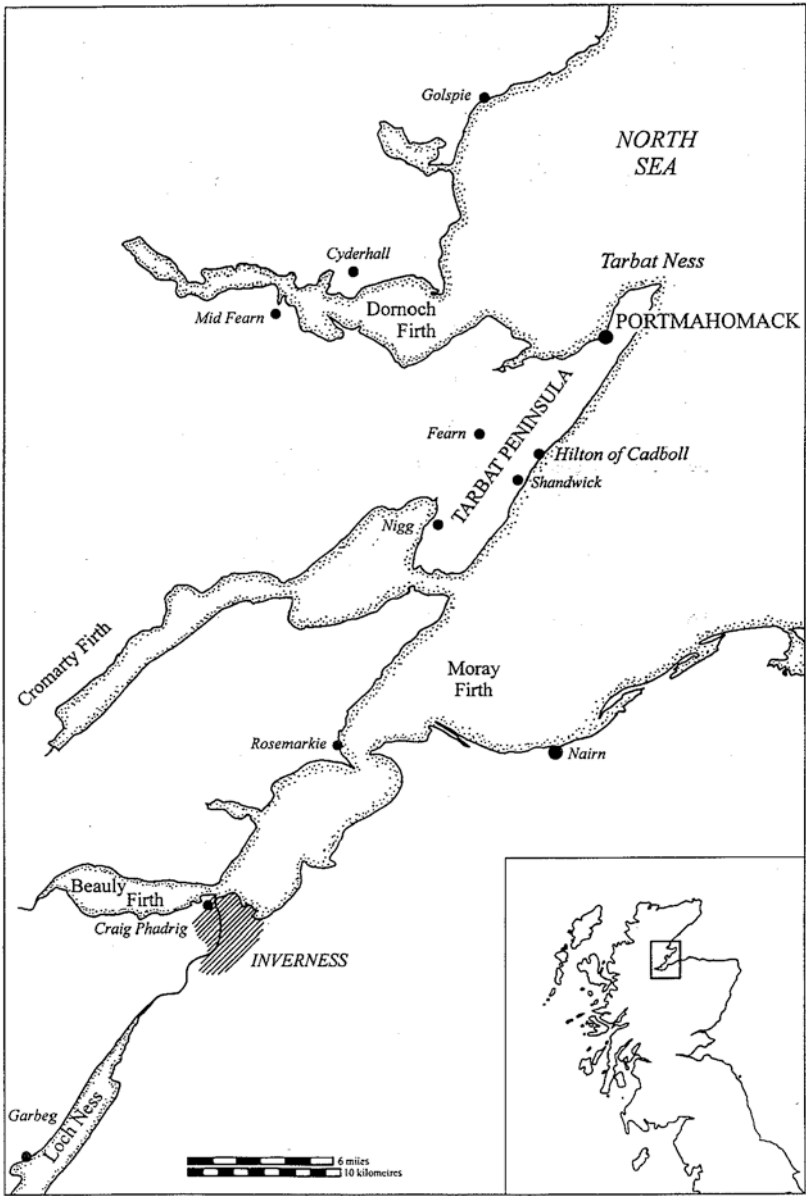


Fig. 4.1 Map showing the Tarbat peninsula. (Tarbat Discovery Programme Bulletin 1, reproduced by permission of Martin Carver.)

been practised by the Picts, as evidenced by their artwork. As there are no liturgical records of the Pictish practices, evidence must be found elsewhere, in particular, on their Christian monuments. This study focuses on certain decorative and figural scenes carved on cross-slabs (or fragments thereof) associated with the monastic settlement excavated on the Tarbat peninsula, and proposes that certain iconography and decoration points to the observation of, or at least knowledge of, specific liturgical practices. In turn, this artistic evidence allows for fruitful speculation as to which sect of Christianity the Picts in this area adhered to most closely.

It has long been known that the Tarbat peninsula was associated in some manner with an ecclesiastical centre. Higgitt's pronouncements about the learned and artistic nature of the Latin inscription carved on one of the sculptural fragments, known as TR10, cemented this relationship,<sup>2</sup> while Harden's archaeological investigations led to further research of the area around the Old Church at Portmahomack, and to the full-scale archaeological intervention by Martin Carver and the University of York.<sup>3</sup> The results point conclusively to the religious nature of the settlement, which most likely was monastic in nature (Carver 2004, 1–30; 2005, 13–36; 2008). In addition to the sculptural fragments from at least three cross-slabs, numerous grave-markers and the architectural sculpture found at the Portmahomack settlement, the peninsula was host to three Pictish cross-slabs associated with the present-day sea-board villages of Nigg, Shandwick and Hilton of Cadboll. Certain carvings on these monuments may add much to our understanding of the practices of the Pictish church in this region.

Historical records relating to the subject are slim, relying primarily on brief accounts in Adomnán, Bede and the Irish Annals. For instance, Adomnán reports that St Columba set out from Iona in 565 AD on a mission to convert the northern Picts, and while his personal

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<sup>2</sup> According to Higgitt (1982, 318) the inscription attests to the existence of at least one ecclesiastical centre in Pictland populated by those “with the knowledge to enable them to write and decorate fine manuscripts in the Insular tradition”. See *ECMS* III, 82, 94, no. 10 for the fragment known as Tarbat 10. The fragment is also listed as TR13 in “The Tarbat Discovery Sculpture Catalogue” <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat/stonecat/sculptureShow.html> (last accessed July 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Harden 1995, 226. See “Tarbat Discovery Programme Bulletin 1” <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat/bulletins/bulletin1/contents.html> for detailed discussion of the research programme, project design, and methodology of the archaeological interventions on the site.

success was unclear, 'Columban' style monasteries were subsequently founded in Pictland that were still flourishing in the latter half of the seventh century (VC 1.1, 1.33, 1.37, 2.31, 2.33–34, 2.42). Considering the late sixth-century date of the earliest graves excavated at the Old Church at Portmahomack, it is very possible that this settlement was one of these Columban foundations (Carver 2004, 9–12). The late seventh century also saw the introduction of the Roman episcopal hierarchy into the area, when St Curretán (Boniface in the Latin tradition), was made Bishop of Ross in the Black Isle (MacDonald 1992; Watson 2004; Williams *et al.* 1991, 94–5; Smyth 1984, 127–8.) The relationship between a probable Columban monastic estate on the peninsula and a Roman-style bishop located at Rosemarkie is unknown, but certainly not unprecedented in the Insular world, particularly in Northumberland, where monastic estates belonging to different federations co-existed within the same episcopal territorial boundaries. The relationship between York, Lindisfarne and Wearmouth/Jarrow demonstrates how a Columban monastic estate could include Benedictine establishments within its territory, all while being under the nominal jurisdiction of the see of York.<sup>4</sup>

The Tarbat peninsula might also have been exposed to a Roman mission originating from Northumbria in the early eighth century. According to Bede, in 710 AD the southern Pictish king, Nechtan, sent messengers to Ceolfrith, abbot of the sister monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth, requesting guidance in his struggle to induce his people to observe the proper Catholic dating of Easter and mode of tonsure as well as instruction in the 'Roman' method of building in stone (Bede, *HE*, 5.21). Seven years later the Irish Annals (*anno* 717) record that Nechtan "*Expulsio familie Ie trans dorsum Britiannie*." This entry has most commonly been interpreted to mean that Nechtan drove the Columban monastics out of Pictland (presumably after they refused to conform to the Roman rites). However, Duncan has interpreted this entry to mean that Nechtan expelled the Columban monastic communities out of the southern regions of his kingdom into north-eastern

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<sup>4</sup> See Bede, *HE*, 1.20, 1.29, 2.17, 3.1, 3.3, 3.23–25, 3.28, 4.2, 4.12, 4.28. The following scholars have all discussed the relations between monasteries and the ecclesiastical hierarchy in England, Ireland and Scotland: Herbert 1988; Thacker 1992, 137–70; Charles-Edwards 1992, 63–80; Sharpe 1984, 230–70, and 1992 81–109; MacQuarrie 1992, 110–33; T. Ó Carragáin 2003, 127–52.

Pictland. Duncan states that “by 717 someone, perhaps Egbert, had persuaded Nechtan to act again and in that year the community (*familia*) (or stubborn part of it) was expelled by him across Drumalban into Pictland” (Duncan 1981, 35). Geographical discussion as to the exact location of the “ridge of Britain” (or Drumalban) aside, Duncan’s analysis seems to point to Nechtan’s control over Iona (lying within the traditional boundaries of the Scottish Dál Riata kingdom) and his concern for its orthodoxy, rather than the presence of Columban monasteries in north-eastern Pictland (*ibid.*). Even if one were to translate the passage in the more common manner, that Nechtan expelled the Columban *familia* out of Pictland, it is difficult to conceive of how he may have enforced such a ruling across the length and breadth of Pictland. Discussion about Nechtan’s motivation, the actual authorship and intention of Ceolfrith’s letter of reply, the outcomes of the communication, and the meaning behind the entry in the Irish Annals is prolific, and beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>5</sup> The primary concern here is simply to consider how a monastery quite possibly founded by Columba or one of his followers, located in the far north-eastern part of the kingdom, might have been affected. As the focus of this paper, we may ask if such changes affected the liturgical rites practised in the area, what these rites may have been, and what the relationship was between these rites and the figural and decorative images carved on the Tarbat peninsula cross-slabs and fragments.<sup>6</sup>

In order to determine this relationship we must first establish the characteristics of the Irish and the Roman liturgies, a rather convoluted task at best. In the fourth century, when the liturgy began to be written down, four parent rites emerged, from which all other variations

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, in addition to Duncan 1981 *passim*, see Hughes 1980, 38–52; Smyth 1984, 60–2, 74–8; G. Henderson 1987, 23–6; Taylor 1996, 93–110 *passim*; Lamb 1998, 41–56 *passim*; Clancy 2004, 125–49 *passim*; Henderson and Henderson 2004, 176–77.

<sup>6</sup> Henderson and Henderson 2004, 180–1, present several theories in regards to the function of the cross-slabs and the monastic estate on the Tarbat peninsula, favouring “a centre with associated burial grounds and chapels functioning in different ways, analogous to what has been described as the complex ‘liturgical landscape’ of Iona.” Following Carver (2004, “Iona of the East”, 2008) I would like to add the monastic model proposed by T. Ó Carragáin 2003, 127–52 *passim*, in which Irish high crosses were erected to commemorate or mark the expansion of a monastic estate. In this way, in addition to other functions the cross-slabs might have fulfilled, they point to the possibility that the monastic estate grew to encompass the entire peninsula, with its centre located at the Portmahomack site.

grew.<sup>7</sup> Three of the four parent rites originated in the patriarchate cities of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. The fourth parent rite, known as the Gallican rite, is believed to have had a more disparate source of origin in the East, combining elements of the Antiochene and Alexandrine parent rites and later incorporating elements from Syrian and Byzantine practices (Klauser 1979, 46, 56–72; Stevenson in Warren 1987, Introduction, xvi–xx). Likely due to its flexibility and openness to change, the Gallican rite was initially far more popular in the West than was the Roman, and it rapidly extended throughout Western Europe, incorporating local variations as it spread. Thus, it further became divided into the Gallican ‘proper’ (also known as the Milanese or Ambrosian rite), the early medieval Spanish rite (also known as the Mozarabic) and the British/Irish rite (Stevenson in Warren 1987, Introduction, xvi). Ironically, even though the sources of the Roman liturgy were about as mixed as the Gallican throughout the early middle ages,<sup>8</sup> the Roman gradually supplanted the Gallican through the wishes of local bishops or monarchs, such as Charlemagne, who wished to conform to what they thought were the ‘proper’ rites being practiced in Rome (Walker 1998, 27; Klauser 1979, 72–5; Stevenson in Warren 1987, Introduction, xx). Essentially, this seems to be what happened in the Insular world as well.

The first Christian rites practiced in Great Britain and Ireland were the Gallican, which then solidified into a variety of local traditions (Stevenson in Warren 1987, Introduction, xxvii–xxxii, lviii). Indeed, when Augustine arrived in England to convert the Anglo-Saxons (c. 597), he found a profusion of liturgies already in existence among

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<sup>7</sup> Klauser 1979, 10–18. Cf. Mayr-Harting 1972, 172–3, who argues no official Mass books were used in Rome until the late sixth century.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, while the *Sacramentary of Verona* (previously known as the *Leonine Sacramentary*) contains some of the oldest rites as they were practised in Rome and Africa, the ‘Gregorian’ Mass books, such as the *Gregorian Sacramentary*, the *Gregorian Antiphonary*, the *Capitulare evangeliorum* and the *Roman Ordines*, probably only represent the Mass as it was celebrated by the Roman Popes. Elsewhere in Italy and Africa, the liturgy that was practised is represented by the tradition of the so-called ‘Gelasian’ sacramentaries, which contain a mixture of pre-Gregorian Roman prayers (for which the *Verona Sacramentary* may have served as model), Gregorian prayers and Gallican *Ordines*. The *Verona Sacramentary* has been variously dated from the fourth to the seventh centuries, while the oldest surviving copy of the *Gregorian Sacramentary* is dated c. 812, but was in use in Rome by 650. The oldest ‘Gelasian’ Sacramentary is seventh century, while the one that best represents its mixed character, the *Gellone Sacramentary*, is dated to the eighth century. See Klauser 1979, 21–3, 45, 54–9, 73; Stevenson in Warren 1987, Introduction, xviii; Mayr-Harting 1972, 172–3, 272.

the native Britons, and asked the Pope which was the proper one to embrace. Gregory's reply, to take the best and synthesise them, indicates that no real attempt was yet being made to impose any strict liturgical regulations on Christian practice (Bede, *HE*, 1.27). Augustine's successors, however, were more resolute about regularising and enforcing the Roman rites, whichever they might have been at that time. By the late seventh century a Mass book containing the old Roman rites was in circulation in Anglo-Saxon England, and by the mid-eighth century, Mass books of the Gregorian type were known and regarded as authoritative (Mayr-Harting 1972, 273–5). However, the fact that the Council of Clovesho (747 AD) had to order the general adoption of Roman sacramental usage throughout the Anglo-Saxon dioceses demonstrates that the Roman rites were still only in partial use at that time (Cubitt 1995, 125–52). As a matter of fact, Warren (1987, 77) states that at the close of the eighth century, York was still allowing the old practices of the “Scottish” liturgy, forcing Alcuin to rebuke the archbishop. While the text of Alcuin's letter does not quite support Warren's views of a specifically “Scottish” (Irish) rite being practised at York, it does point to an ongoing confusion as to which rites should be being practised (as well as to a certain amount of exasperation by Alcuin). Alcuin writes:

I don't know why you asked about the order and arrangement of the missal. Surely you have plenty of missals following the Roman rite? You have also enough of the larger missals of the old rite. What need is there for new when the old are adequate? I would have wished you to introduce the Roman order among your clergy, that you might set the precedent and church offices be carried out in a reverent and praiseworthy manner.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the possible continuation of Irish rites at York (most likely initially introduced into the area by the Ionan-founded monastery of Lindisfarne), the desire to imitate Rome was so strong in Ireland that the Roman liturgy was adopted as early as the mid-seventh century, at least among the majority of monasteries in the South (É. Ó Carragáin 1994, 410–11). However, many of the Roman ceremonies still had to

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<sup>9</sup> *Nunc quid non habes Romano more ordinatos libellos sacratorios abundanter? Habes quoque et veteris consuetudinis sufficienter sacramentaria maiora... Aliquid voluisssem tuam auctoritatem incepisse Romani ordinis in clero tuo, ut exempla a te sumantur, et ecclesiastica officia venerabiliter et laudabiliter vobiscum agantur.* Alcuin, Epistle 19 (PL 226). Translation from Allot 1974, 27–8.



be adapted for local audiences, who were sometimes versed only in the vernacular and did not wish to abandon their own traditions (ibid.). The resultant mixture of local Irish, Gallican and Roman rites can be seen in the Irish *Stowe Missal*, which has often been taken as a characteristic example of the Irish liturgy as a whole.<sup>10</sup> Stevenson (in Warren 1987, Introduction, xxxii, xli–xlix), however, argues that the *Stowe Missal* is not in fact representative because Irish liturgical practices varied from one religious centre to another, as each place followed the traditions laid down by the founder or founders. Indeed, she states, “a unifying and controlling centre of evangelisation, deferred to by all parties, is an anachronistic concept”.

Within this context, it is most likely that the monastery at Tarbat initially followed some variation of the Irish liturgy as practised by its Columban founder and continued with these rites, at least until the events of the eighth century, when Nechtan’s actions might have paved the way for the practice of Roman-based rites and the establishment of an Roman-style ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>11</sup> However, such a conversion might not have lasted long, as the Columban liturgy may have been re-introduced to the area in the early to mid ninth century. Both Clancy (1996, 111–30 *passim*) and Wormald (1996, 131–60 *passim*) have argued that the *Céli Dé* (an extremely ascetic Irish monastic movement), which began as early as 814 in Iona, could have been making inroads into Pictland by the second quarter of the ninth century, though it did not manifest its full strength until after the Dál Riata dynasty took political control of Pictland sometime after 850. Wormald, in particular, has argued that the successful Scottish take-over of the Pictish kingdom was intricately linked to a Columban reform of the Pictish church, stating, “since the Picts had sent his [Columba’s] clergy packing in 717, the Scots could now portray themselves as agents of his irate return” in a political mission that carried religious authority (Wormald 1996, 143).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Dublin, Royal Irish Academy Library, MS D II.3. The *Stowe Missal*, which also contains an Old Irish Treatise on the Mass, has been variously dated from the seventh to ninth centuries. See Warner 1906, vol. 2, xxii–xxxix, 37–42.

<sup>11</sup> See Foster 1996, 90–3 for the view that Nechtan’s actions led to the hierarchical reorganisation of the Pictish church.

<sup>12</sup> Follett 2006, 1–99, 171–215 *passim*, has recently argued that the *Céli Dé* movement was not, as previously believed, intent upon monastic reform, at least not in Ireland. Instead, they were small groups annexed to the regular monastic institutions whose practices were even more ascetic than those noted in the Rule of Columba or

It is likely, therefore, that both Columban and Roman rites were practiced at the Tarbat community at different, or, perhaps, even the same times, considering the mixed nature of both the Roman and the Irish liturgies during this period. To prove an association with one, to the exclusion of another, would be an exercise in futility. However, an analysis of certain figural compositions and decorative details carved on the cross-slabs and fragments associated with the monastery may point to at least knowledge of, if not actual practice, of a few very specific rites.

The first item under consideration is the figural composition carved on the pediment of the Nigg cross-slab (Fig. 4.2). In this composition, two robed, human figures bend over books held open in their hands, while the head of a bird, with a circular loaf in its beak descends between them. Beneath the humans, two beasts flank what might be a chalice. This scene, convincingly identified as St Paul and St Anthony in the desert, due to its similarity to a figural panel on the Ruthwell monument that is identified as such by inscription, has been thoroughly discussed by myriad scholars.<sup>13</sup> The only Anglo-Saxon monument to depict the meeting of Paul and Anthony, the Ruthwell panel features two inward-facing, standing figures that both bow slightly over a circular loaf they grasp in their hands (*ECMS* 2, fig. 468b). Unlike the composition on Nigg, however, the Ruthwell scene contains no descending raven, flanking quadrupeds or object that can be identified as a chalice.<sup>14</sup> However, many of these details can be seen in depictions of the saints on other Pictish monuments and on Irish high crosses.

For instance, Ó Carragáin (1989, 6–8) has identified the figures carved on St Vigeans 7, comprising two inward-facing, seated figures

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Columbanus, and who were deeply concerned with matters of devotion, both private and public. However, Follett does not address the *Céli Dé*'s actions outside of Ireland, and it may be that once the movement reached Pictland, its agenda became oriented towards reforming the monasteries that had begun practicing the Roman rites in preference to the Columban.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, I. Henderson 2001, 15–117, Henderson and Henderson 2004, 139–40; I. Henderson 1982, 89–90; Kitzinger 1993 9; Meyvaert 1989, 131–5; É. Ó Carragáin 1989, 1–58 *passim*. While all have discussed the pediment scene, Ó Carragáin is the most comprehensive.

<sup>14</sup> Meyvaert 1989, 132, 135, 150–64, argues that the community at Ruthwell was monastic and essentially “Celtic” in the “Lindisfarne tradition”, which may explain why the monument displays the only known representation of Paul and Anthony on an “Anglo-Saxon” monument.

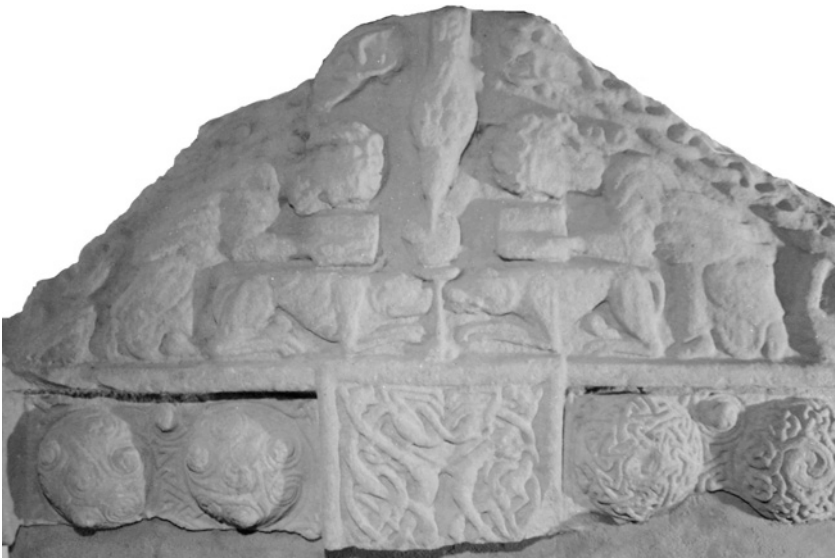


Fig. 4.2: a) Nigg cross-slab pediment. (Photograph: K. Meyer.); b) Nigg cross-slab pediment: detail of loaf in raven's mouth. (Photograph: K. Meyer.)

grasping a loaf in their hands and the remains of what may be the head of a raven, as a Paul and Anthony scene. In addition, Ó Carragáin has also cautiously identified the two inward-facing seated ecclesiastics revering a small cross on the reverse of the cross-slab at Dunfallandy as Paul and Anthony, an interpretation resting primarily upon the composition's similarity to a scene on the smaller cross-slab (no. 2) at Fowlis Wester (*ECMS* II, fig 305b). Here, the human figures are located to either side of the cross-shaft; the two saints are identified by their respective symbols: a date palm for St Paul and a winged figure for St Anthony. (Henderson and Henderson 2004, fig 222.)

The Irish representations are more numerous and readily identifiable. Appearing on at least ten high crosses, a number of the depictions share certain details, but no single scene displays them all. For instance, the tenth-century Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice, Co. Louth, the ninth- to tenth-century Market Cross at Kells, Co. Meath and the ninth-century North and South Crosses at Castledermot, Co. Kildare all feature standing ecclesiastics with a descending raven and loaf, while both Muiredach's Cross and the Kells Market Cross also incorporate a chalice into the design. The ninth-century Buadan's Cross, at Culdaff, Co. Donegal and the eighth- to ninth-century Cross of Patrick and Columba at Kells feature seated ecclesiastics revering small crosses, while the eighth- to ninth-century crosses at Moone, Co. Kildare and Duleek, Co. Meath, depict seated figures with a descending raven and loaf (Harbison 1992, II, Figs. 101, 107, 122, 243, 330, 346, 485, 518).

Against this background, the composition on Nigg constitutes the fullest Insular treatment of the episode, incorporating as it does kneeling (genuflecting?) saints, open books (missals?), the descending raven with the loaf, a possible chalice and two beasts that are featured in none of the aforementioned scenes. The primary literary source behind this iconography is Jerome's *Vita Sancti Pauli*, which details the meeting of Paul and Anthony in the desert, the raven arriving with a whole, rather than a half, loaf of bread for the saints to share, and the subsequent contest of courtesy, wherein they argue over who is to break the bread and then agree to break it together (Jerome, *Vita Sancti Pauli* (PL 23. 17–28)). In addition, Jerome's *Vita* also includes the episode of the two lions that arrived to help Anthony bury Paul, thus possibly explaining the identity of the two beasts supporting the saints on the Nigg pediment (Henderson 1967, 148).

At the same time, the scene conveys a liturgical meaning, referring as it does to the sacrament of the Eucharist. According to the Antiochene

tradition of interpreting the liturgy (a field known as *mystagogy*), the liturgical rites were viewed as a mystical re-enactment of the passion of Christ (Taft 1980–1, 65). Therefore, the breaking of the bread by Paul and Anthony (not actually shown in the Nigg scene as the loaf is still in the raven's mouth, but seen in many of the other previously mentioned portrayals) is a re-enactment of the Eucharistic rite begun by Christ at the Last Supper and continued by his disciples. Ó Carragáin (1989, 3–6, 31–38) argues that the extreme popularity of such scenes in Ireland and Scotland was due to the fact that Paul and Anthony were revered as prototypes of Irish monasticism and as exemplars of the rite of *co-fractio* (as practised at Iona), wherein when two priests were present they broke the bread for communion together.<sup>15</sup>

While the Nigg scene does not actually show the saints engaging in *co-fractio*, other specific details in the Nigg scene may reflect the practice of another Irish liturgical rite. It can be seen that the loaf in the raven's beak has a segment missing from the lower left-hand quadrant, which may allude to a specific rite in the Mass that is recorded in the *Stowe Missal*. This rite, described in the early ninth-century Old Irish treatise on the Mass attached to the Missal, records how the priest would break off a piece from the Eucharistic loaf and insert it into the wine (Warner 1906, vol. 2, xxii–xxxix, 37–42). The Antiochene interpretation of this act directly follows the rubric:

The particle that is cut off from the bottom of the half which is on the (priest's) left hand is the figure of the wounding with the lance in the armpit of the right side; for westwards was Christ's face on the Cross, to wit, *contra ciuitatem*, and eastwards was the face of Longinus; what to him was the left to Christ was the right. (Warner 1906, vol. 2, 41)

The piece is then dipped into the chalice, signifying “the submersion of Christ's Body in His Blood after His wounding on the Cross” (*ibid.*). If the Nigg carving does indeed depict this rite, then the thin-stemmed

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<sup>15</sup> It is not the intention of this paper to repeat the many permutations of meaning that this scene conveys which previous scholars have noted (See above, note 13). Of particular interest, however, is the discussion surrounding the rite of *co-fractio* (in which whenever two priests were present at the Mass, they broke the bread for communion together) and whether or not it was a rite particular to the Columban liturgy. Warren (1987, 128–9) was the first to argue that the rite was likely practised in Columban communities throughout Ireland and Pictland, and has been followed in this by Ó Carragáin 1989, 31–8, and Meyvaert 1989, 134–5. However, Sharpe (VC 306, n. 192) has argued that the incident, recorded in the *Life of St Columba* 1.44, was an anomalous practice even on Iona.

vessel located between the two saints is most likely a chalice, and as Ó Carragáin (1989, 9) argues, these details may “provide reliable evidence of the way in which the communion rite was performed at Nigg when the scene was carved”.

Repeated close analysis of the loaf has suggested that it may not have been carved initially in this manner (Fig. 4.2b). Isabel Henderson (2001, 125–6) has convincingly argued that the missing section is not the result of random or even deliberate damage, an assessment with which I wholeheartedly agree. However, the somewhat jagged sides of the cut as well as the rough, unfinished area within the ‘slice’ do lead to an alternative interpretation; that the segment was carved out sometime after the original design was completed, and in an inferior manner. It is possible that a later alteration was made in response to the practice of this specific Eucharistic rite on the Tarbat peninsula. Indeed, such a modification may point to a scenario of changing rites at the monastery. The Nigg cross-slab was likely carved and erected in the late eighth century, during the time when the Roman liturgy may have held the greatest sway. However, a return to the practice of the Irish liturgy, possibly occasioned by the advent of the *Céli Dé* sometime in the early to mid ninth century, may have occasioned a sculptural modification.<sup>16</sup> Carving off a specific piece of the loaf could have signified the observation of this very specific liturgical practice at the site. Finally, the *Stowe Missal* has been categorically defined as a *Céli Dé* product,<sup>17</sup> leading to the intriguing possibility that the Nigg pediment displays a detail that relates not just to the practice of Irish or Columban rites, but to the specific practices of the *Céli Dé*.

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<sup>16</sup> The speculative range of dates for the original manufacture of the Nigg monument and its later modification coincide with the range of dates evidenced by carbon dating of the destruction of the Portmahomack monastery (most likely by marauding Vikings) sometime between 780 and 830 AD. The possible relationship between the Viking raid and the expansion of the monastic estate that likely occasioned the erection of the monument (see note 6, above) deserves much greater attention, but, in the meantime, it is interesting to note the propagandistic possibilities the Viking raid may have held for proselytising *Céli Dé*. Much like Pat Robertson and other contemporary televangelists (in a tradition stretching through Bede and Gildas back to the writers of the Old Testament) who are fond of blaming tragedies on the victim’s lack of Christian faith and piety, it’s quite possible *Céli Dé* missionaries preached that the destruction of the monastery was due to the monks’ practice of Roman rites, rather than the “proper” Columban liturgy introduced by its founder saint.

<sup>17</sup> See Follett 2006, 100–70; 203–4, for a full survey and analysis of the texts ascribed to the *Céli Dé*, and for a discussion of the *Stowe Missal*’s probable relations to other liturgical practices in Ireland.

Another sculptural motif present on several of the Tarbat sculptures may also point to a specific liturgical rite practiced on the peninsula. The monuments at Nigg and Shandwick, as well as fragments from the Portmahomack monument known as Tarbat 2,<sup>18</sup> are all carved with numerous intertwined serpents placed to either side of a cross-shaft (Figs. 4.3a, 4.3b, 4.4 and 4.5).<sup>19</sup> Interpreting the meaning of serpents in conjunction with crosses depends upon various associations. In the Christian literary tradition the serpent had a dual or even triplicate nature. Associated with the fall of man in Genesis, its wise and cunning nature was simultaneously deplored and admired throughout the Bible.<sup>20</sup> While it is outside the parameters of this paper to discuss all the sources, the exegetical literature also shows that serpents could be interpreted in several, seemingly contradictory ways.<sup>21</sup> They were seen as symbols of evil, sin, death and heresy, but were also regarded as creatures which it would be wise to emulate, particularly in their ability to shed their skin, an action Augustine and the *Physiologus* regarded as a metaphor for casting off the material life and embracing

<sup>18</sup> These fragments are also listed as TR4 in "The Tarbat Discovery Sculpture Catalogue" <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat/stonecat/sculpture-show.html> (last accessed July 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Serpents carved in close proximity to, or even on crosses was a popular motif in Pictland, Iona, western Scotland and Ireland. See, for instance, the end piece of the St Andrews Sarcophagus, the Scottish high crosses at Iona and Kildalton, and, in Ireland, the South Cross, North Cross and Cross of Scriptures at Clonmacnoise; Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice; the Cross of Patrick and Columba and West Cross at Kells; and the cross at Moone. See ECMS II, Figs. 228a, 410; RCAHMS, *Iona*, nos. 6, 80, 82, 83; Roe 1988, plates 4, 5, 16, 18; Harbison 1992, II, Figs. 129, 131, 132, 133, 138, 141, 477, 487, 490, 492, 497, 515.

<sup>20</sup> For example, see Deut. 32:23–24; 2 Kings 18:4, Psalms 58:3–4, 139:1–4, 140:1–3; Proverbs 23:32; Isaiah 14:29; Amos 5:18–19; Matthew 10:16; John 3:14–15 (Douay-RheimsVersion).

<sup>21</sup> See Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 1.60 (Roberts ANCL 2:58) Cyril of Jerusalem, *Procatechesis* 16, *Catechesis* 13.20 and 15.27 (Church NPNF 2nd series, 7:5, 87,113) Basil of Caesaria, *Homily on the Spirit* 14.31 (Jackson NPNF 2nd series, 8:20); Ps-Ambrose, *Sermo* 46: *de Salomone* 2.4 (PL 17: 695–696); Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius: Preface to Letter 2, Catechesis: De Trinitate* 30, and *Letter 17: To Eustathia, Ambrosia and Basilissa* (Wace NPNF 2nd series, 5:34, 498, 542); Ambrose, *In Psalmum XLVIII Enarratio* (PL 14:1155), *De Officiis Ministorum* 3.15.94 (Testard CCSL 15: 188–189.29–37); Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 41.3 (Dekkers and Fraipont CCSL 38:461–462.1–26), *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 12:28, 12:30 (PL 42: 269, 270) *Sermones De Vetero Testamento* 6:7, 8:3 (Lambot CCSL 41: 65.104–109), *De Trinitate Libri* 3:10.21 (Mountain CCSL 50A: 148. 54–67), *In Iohannis Evangelium* 12:1 (Willems CCSL 36:127.19–46).

a new life in Christ, or in other words, baptism.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the brazen rod in the Old Testament, which cured the Israelites from the bites of the serpent, was considered a prefiguration of the Cross of Christ, a typology especially popular with the Insular exegetes such as Pseudo-Bede, Aldhelm and Bede.<sup>23</sup> Such typology also had an Insular tradition in art, as Bede demonstrates with his discussion of the cycle of pictures brought back from Rome by Benedict Biscop, which he said showed “how the Old Testament was foreshadowed by the New”, and which, in particular, included a set in which “the Son of Man lifted up on the cross was paired with the serpent raised up by Moses in the desert”.<sup>24</sup>

This Antiochene typology might also lie behind the performance of a liturgical rite reported by Warren (1987, 53), wherein a procession bearing a serpent-headed staff travelled down to the church door on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Eve. At the church door, a fire was first blessed and then used for lighting a candle in the serpent’s mouth, which was subsequently used to light all the other candles. In this way, the connection between the redemptive power of the brazen serpent and the crucifixion was enacted ritualistically on the anniversary of Christ’s death.

Warren declares that this “Anglo-Saxon rite” was “perpetuated from their Celtic predecessors” and he may have been referring to this practice when he states that the “Scottish” liturgy was still being practiced in York at the close of the eighth century. Subsequent liturgical scholars,

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<sup>22</sup> Augustine, *Sermo* 64: 3: *On Matthew 10:16* (PL 38: 425–426), *De Trinitate* 3.10.21 (Mountain CCSL 50A:148. 54–67); Curley 1979, 16–19. Parts of the *Physiologus* were definitely known in Britain and Ireland, and I. Henderson (1997, 9–13) has argued that the chapter on serpents was definitely known in Pictland. Almost all of Augustine’s works were known in the Insular world through Bede, Aldhelm, Alcuin and the Hiberno-Latin exegetes. See Lapidge 1985, 45–50, 52–5, 58–62, 76–82; Lapidge and Herren 1979, 52; Gneuss 2001, 29, 44, 53, 82, 87, 110, 112, 119, 120, 121, 140, 141, 255, 320, 792, 799.5; Biggs, Hill and Szarmach 1990, 71; Bede, *Commentary on the Acts* passim; Bede, *Seven Catholic Epistles of Bede* passim. See also FONTES, s.v. “AVG” [http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/data/content/sources/source\\_auth.asp](http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/data/content/sources/source_auth.asp). (accessed February 2007).

<sup>23</sup> For instance, see Ps-Bede: *In Pentateuchum Commentarii: Explanatio in Secundum Librum Moisis* 14, (PL 91. 310). This Hiberno-Latin commentary was in circulation by Alcuin’s time, was possibly a direct source for the anonymous author of the OE *Exodus*, and was probably used by Aelfric in his preface to Genesis. See Biggs, Hill and Szarmach 1990, 89, 93–4; FONTES, s.v. “Anon. Ps. Beda” [http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/data/content/sources/src\\_title\\_list.asp?SourceAuthor=ANON.PS.BEDA](http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/data/content/sources/src_title_list.asp?SourceAuthor=ANON.PS.BEDA) (accessed February 2007). See also Lapidge and Herren 1979, 154.

<sup>24</sup> See Bede, *Vita Sanctorum Abbatum Monasterii in Wiramutha et Girvum* (PL 94: 720–721); Translation from Farmer and Webb 1983, 194.





Fig. 4.3: a) Nigg cross-slab: serpents on left side of shaft. (Photograph: K. Meyer.); b) Nigg cross-slab: serpents on right side of shaft. (Photograph: K. Meyer.)



Fig. 4.4: Shandwick cross-slab: serpents and serpentine beasts.  
(Photograph: K. Meyer.)

such as Meissner, repeated Warren's assertions (Warren 1987, 52–3, 76–7; Meissner 1929, 9, 14–17, 134–58). While its “Celtic” origin may be suspect, the inclusion of this rite within both the *Regularis Concordia*, the tenth-century document of monastic reform written by Æðelwold, and the *Apostolatus Benedictinorum*, a seventeenth-century document compiled to prove that England had always been Benedictine,<sup>25</sup> points to a probable Roman origin, or at the very least, a belief in its Roman origin. However, there is no denying that it is the Irish, Scots, and the Picts, rather than the Anglo-Saxons, who demonstrated a marked proclivity for decorating their crosses and cross-slabs with serpent imagery

<sup>25</sup> *Qua cantata, ob arcanum cuius dam mysterii indicium, si ita placuerit induant se fraters et pergant ad ostium ecclesiae ferentes hastam cum imagine serpentis, ibique ignis de silice excutiatore; illo benedicto ab abate, candela, quae in ore serpentis infixata est, ab illo accendatur* (Symons 1953, *Regularis Concordia*, 39); See also Reyner 1626, *Apostolatus Benedictinorum*, appendix, p. 87.

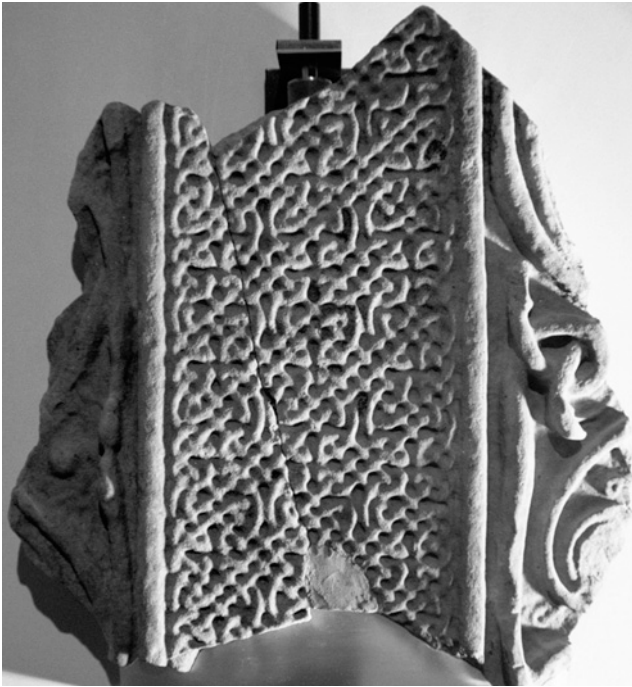


Fig. 4.5: TR2 fragment: serpents. (Photograph: K. Meyer.)

and it may be that sites featuring monuments carved with a plethora of serpent imagery reflect the practice of a liturgical rite that was more popular in the Columban tradition than in the Anglo-Saxon. In fact, serpents are featured prominently on Irish and Scottish monuments that are particularly associated with monasteries that were likely part of the Columban *familia*, such as the Cross of Patrick and Columba and West Cross at Kells, the cross at Moone and the high crosses at Iona.<sup>26</sup> Such imagery on the Tarbat monuments and fragments could, therefore, be another piece of evidence pointing to a specific association with the Columban *familia*.

One other piece of sculpture associated with the Tarbat monastery may point to a specific liturgical rite. The fragment known as TR20 features a composite beast on one side and a row of human figures placed beneath an animal composition on the other (Fig. 4.6). Since

<sup>26</sup> Roe 1988, plates 4, 5, 16, 18; Harbison 1992, II, Fig. 515. *RCAHMS Iona*, nos. 6, 80, 82, 83; *ECMS II*, Fig. 410.

robes can be seen on three out of the four humans depicted in this fragmentary panel, and the one on the right holds a book in his right hand, the four figures were originally identified as monks, thus giving rise to TR20's appellation as the 'monk' stone.<sup>27</sup> However, the elaborate drapery and designs on the robes, which may indicate *pallia* over tunics, the lack of hoods, and the individual characteristics of each may point to the identification of these figures as either specific apostles,<sup>28</sup> or portraits of very high-ranking ecclesiastics, rather than anonymous monks.<sup>29</sup> The remains of the fourth figure situated on the left edge of the fragment, with the larger head, indication of an halo, and a lower shoulder line suggests an enthroned Christ; therefore, when complete, the configuration would likely have featured another three apostles to the left.<sup>30</sup> While exact parallels are difficult to find (especially considering the fragmented nature of TR20) groups of apostles are featured on many Insular monuments,<sup>31</sup> and the meanings conveyed by such a

<sup>27</sup> See the description of TR20 in "The Tarbat Discovery Programme Bulletin 2, 1996 "Discovery of New Sculpture" at <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/sites/tarbat/bulletins/bulletin2/newsculpture.html> (accessed August 2007).

<sup>28</sup> This interpretation was originally suggested by G. Henderson at a public lecture given at the Old Church, Portmahomack, July 2001, published 2007, 473–94. See also Henderson and Henderson 2004, 146–7.

<sup>29</sup> A number of Pictish cross-slabs featuring cloaked figures with peaked hoods, sometimes with crosiers and book satchels, appear to be much more likely candidates for monks than the elaborately-draped figures on TR20. For instance, see Bressay, Papil, Monifieth 2 and St Vigeans 7 (*ECMS II*, Figs. 4, 6, 242b, 278).

<sup>30</sup> This exact scheme has been identified on the Ahenny cross base, where a central, larger figure is flanked on both sides by three other frontally-faced figures with inward-pointing feet (Harbison 1992, II, Fig. 16). However, even closer parallels may be seen in a series of early medieval apse mosaics within Roman churches, such as SS. Cosma e Damiano, S. Lorenzo Fuori le Mura, S. Prassede, S. Cecilia, and S. Marco. These mosaics all feature a central Christ flanked on both sides by three figures. While at least two of these flanking figures in each composition are apostles (usually Peter and Paul) the other figures are patron saints, popes and donors. See Bolgia 2006, 1–34, Figs. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9. While the latter three mosaics were commissioned in the early to mid-ninth century by Popes Paschal and Gregory IV, and therefore may have been too late to have influenced the iconography on the Tarbat fragment, the other mosaics all date from the sixth century, and such compositions could certainly explain thefiguration on the TR20 fragment, a subject that I am currently investigating further.

<sup>31</sup> Kirriemuir 1 and St Vigeans 11 depict frontally-faced figures on either side of a cross-shaft that are most likely representations of Peter and Paul (*ECMS II*, Figs. 239a, 282a), while the Dunkeld cross-slab is carved with two rows of six extremely worn figures identified by the Hendersons as apostles (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 147, Fig. 214). Irish crosses also feature several groups of figures that can be identified as apostles, such as on the cross-head of the North Cross at Castledermot, the east face of the broken cross-shaft at Old Kilcullen, and the west face of the tenth-century West/Tall Cross at Monasterboice (Harbison 1992, II, Figs. 101, 495, and



Fig. 4.6: TR20 fragment: figural composition. (Photograph: K. Meyer.)

group of apostles are varied, such as a proclamation of Roman orthodoxy, Christ's mission to his apostles to preach his message to the world (recorded in Matthew 10:9–11 and Mark 6:8–9), or a reference to the second apostolic mission of baptism, wherein the geographical placement of the monument depicting the apostles would indicate a baptismal site.<sup>32</sup>

One additional reading of the human figures on the TR20 fragment may also be suggested, however, which once again might reflect a spe-

532). Apostles have also been identified on several late eight- and early ninth-century Deiran and Mercian monuments, such as those at Breedon-on-the-Hill and Castor; those carved on the cross-shafts (or fragments thereof) from Otley, Easby, Collingham and Dewsbury; the figures on the column at Masham; and those carved on the Hedda Stone at Peterborough. See Collingwood 1989, Figs. 52, 53, 87, 90–1; Hawkes 2002, 345; Lang 1999, 271–82 and Bailey 1996, 58–9, plate 5, Fig. 5, and 1990, 8, Fig. 4.

<sup>32</sup> See Hawkes 2002, 345; Lang 1999, 272, 280–1 and Henderson and Henderson 2004, 146–7.

cific liturgical practice. It may be that the row of figures does not represent apostles, or Christ and the apostles, but rather a priest flanked by attendants as they celebrate Mass. Indeed, the book held in the hand of the rightmost figure might be meant to recall the Lenten liturgical ceremony of *Apertio aurium*, wherein the four gospel books were brought in procession to the altar and presented to a congregation of catechumens (Ó Carragáin 1994, 400–7). Arguing that the ceremony was known in the Insular world, Ó Carragáin (*ibid.*, 402) writes that:

The overwhelming visual effect of the *Apertio aurium* ceremony must have been to associate the four gospel books with the altar, and so to drive home the words of the opening homily, that all four gospels announce the same truth: Christ, known through his incarnation and actions... This visual progression is analogous to the structure of the Mass, which began with readings from scripture and the gospels, and ended with the Eucharistic sacrifice, celebrated on the altar.

Such an interpretation would also complement those of the mission of spreading the word and of baptism, and it would not be unusual if the scene were meant to convey all three meanings at once.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to these intriguing associations with some specific liturgical rites that may have been practiced on the peninsula, it may also be fruitful to analyse these images according to the Alexandrine mystical tradition, rather than the Antiochene. Heavily influenced by Greek Platonism, Alexandrines interpreted every part of the liturgy, whether it was chanted prayers, processions, seating arrangements or the performed rites of the Eucharist, as a reflection of the holy order in the Heavenly Kingdom upon the Second Coming. This philosophy was also reflected in the art and architecture of the Church. For instance, Christian church buildings were not considered the actual dwelling place of the God (unlike Roman and Greek temples), but instead were meant to be a reflection of the cosmos that God created and inhabits, from the upper reaches of His throne upon the cherubim to the lower stage where human life is enacted. While this philosophy could be perfectly exemplified in the entire fabric and decoration of structures like the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, lesser churches had to make

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<sup>33</sup> It has been successfully argued that the medieval audience, especially the monastic, was trained to interpret images on several different levels at once. See Neuman de Vegvar 1997, 171–2; Benton 1992, 112; Ó Carragáin: 1986, 378–9; 1987, 122–3; 1989 38; 1994, 418.



Fig. 4.7: Shandwick cross-slab: spiral panel. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

do with symbolising this relationship to the divine cosmos through mosaic and fresco (Taft 1980–1, 47–8).<sup>34</sup>

Presumably, in Britain and Ireland where mosaics and frescoes were somewhat unknown, this concept could have been expressed through their carved sculpture. Ó Carragáin has suggested that Irish high crosses might have been erected in *imitatio Romae*, and ‘pilgrimage’ to each cross site was meant to take the place of actual pilgrimage to Rome.<sup>35</sup> It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that such an Alexandrine interpretive view, in which the microcosm is a valid reflection of the

<sup>34</sup> This idea was first systematised in Christian literature by Maximus Confessor and first applied to the Christian church in a sixth-century poem about the cathedral of Edessa. See Mango 1986, 57–60.

<sup>35</sup> Ó Carragáin (1994, 411–3, 434–5) also states that the high crosses might have played a liturgical role in clerical processions about the monastic enclosure.



Fig. 4.8: Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab: spiral panel.  
(Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

macrocosm (in this case, Irish monuments for actual holy sites in Rome) could also pertain to the decorative schemes carved on the monuments. Within this schema, it is easy to see how the spiral patterns on such monuments as Shandwick and Hilton of Cadboll might be meant to reflect the cosmos and the divine order (Figs. 4.7 and 4.8).

A further Alexandrine mystagogical interpretation is also possible, in regard to the probable prayers and processions performed within the liturgy. For instance, within the Byzantine church, the mystagogical interpretation of the *Introit* (the prayers sung/chanted by the patriarch and his retinue upon entering the church and processing to



the altar)<sup>36</sup> paralleled the ritual with the imminent appearance of the heavenly celebrant Himself, and the coming of the gospels and Christ into the world (Taft 1980–1, 51). Furthermore, the ascension of the patriarch to his throne was seen as an enactment of Christ's ascension and enthronement in majesty at the right hand of God. The next rites, including the *prokeimenon* (gradual psalm), the reading of the epistle, the alleluia psalm, and the Gospel, all herald the appearance of Christ. Indeed this appearance, or 'Second Coming' of Christ (known as *parousia*) is the main theme stressed over and over by the Alexandrine mystagogues in their interpretations of the opening rites of the liturgy.<sup>37</sup> As the Byzantine's liturgy is known to have influenced the Gallican, and it is likely that the Irish (and, therefore, the Columban) liturgy grew out of the Gallican, it is quite possible that not only the forms of the liturgy, but also its interpretation were known to members of the Columban federation of monasteries. In turn, it might be allowed that this mystagogical interpretation was reflected in the iconography carved on those monuments associated with those monasteries.

Certainly there is no doubt that the theme of the recognition and worship of Christ is one that is thoroughly explored in myriad ways on the Tarbat peninsula, most frequently by a configuration symbolising Christ recognised or worshipped between two beasts. It has been argued that this schema is a visual depiction of the Old Latin text of the Cantic of Habakkuk 3:2–3 which states, "In the midst of two animals you will be revealed; when the years come to pass you will be known."<sup>38</sup> This passage was explicated at length by Jerome, Augustine and Bede, and was also a familiar part of the Insular liturgy.<sup>39</sup> Ó Carragáin has

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<sup>36</sup> The *Introit* consisted of several prayers, one of which includes Ps 94.6, which directs the audience to rejoice in the Lord and fall down and worship him. See Taft 1980–1, 51.

<sup>37</sup> Taft 1980–1, 52 cites the mystagogues Germanus and Maximus Confessor.

<sup>38</sup> *In medio duorum animalium innotesceris; dum appropriaverint anni cognosceris* Habakkuk 3:3. The Old Latin text of this cantic, which is not in the Vulgate, can be found on folio 145r of the *Vespasian Psalter*, along with eight other canticles used in the Roman rite specified by St Benedict. See Kuhn 1965, 150.

<sup>39</sup> Jerome, *Commentarii in Prophetas Minores*, In *Abacuc* 2:3.2 (Adriaen CCSL 76A: 620–621.52–68); Augustine, *Civitate Dei* 18:32 (Dombart and Kalb CCSL 48:623.5–10); Bede, In *Canticorum Abacuc* 3:2 (Hurst CCSL 119B: 383. 60–68). Jerome's commentary on Habakkuk was most likely known throughout the Insular world, at the very least in Ireland, where the compiler of the *Irish Reference Bible* was reliant on Jerome's commentaries on the minor prophets. See Ó Carragáin 1989, 29, note 1. In addition, many of Jerome's works were known in the Anglo-Saxon world. See Lapidge and Herren 1979 32, 36, 52, 153, 177–8; Bede, *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles* passim; Bede, *Commentary on the Acts* passim; Greenfield and Calder 1986, 19–20;



Fig. 4.9: Shandwick cross-slab: *crux gemmata*. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

pointed out that not only was the Canticle of Habakkuk sung every Friday morning at Lauds in the Roman office, but that there is also evidence that it was intoned during the ninth hour of the Veneration of the Cross Ceremony on Good Friday, and used weekly in “those Celtic monasteries of which we have evidence”.<sup>40</sup> One of the most easily decipherable manifestations of this theme can be seen on the face of Shandwick, where the jewelled cross (also known as the *crux gemmata*), a standard representation of the Second Coming and Christ’s victory over sin and death, is situated between two cherubim and also two beasts (Fig. 4.9).

Werner 1990, 201, note 37. Indeed, the argument that practically the whole corpus of Jerome’s writings must have been known and studied throughout the Columban monastic federation seems justified. See Meehan and Bieler 1958, 13–14; Breen 1984, 209; Ó Reilly 1999, 184.

<sup>40</sup> Ó Carragáin, 1994, 422. See also 1989, 4–5; 1986, 383–88; 1987, 118–19;. Ó Carragáin does not specifically identify any of the “Celtic” monasteries.



Fig. 4.10: TR1 fragment: detail of vine-scroll root and winged quadrupeds. (Photograph: K. Meyer.)

Other manifestations of this theme can be seen on the Nigg cross-slab and the TR1 fragment. For instance, the chalice that is placed between the two beasts on the Nigg pediment can be interpreted in this manner (see Fig. 4.2a), as can the root of vine-scroll carved between the two winged quadrupeds in the vine-scroll border carved on the fragment known as TR1 (Fig. 4.10). Indeed, any symbol of Christ situated between any two beasts or angelic creatures could be taken as a reference to the particular rituals associated with the Habakkuk verse and its exegesis, or, perhaps the mystagogical interpretation of the opening rites of the liturgy, which also stressed the worship and recognition of Christ, both within our midst and at the Second Coming.

It would be premature at this point to conclude that these images and their various interpretations point more to the practice of Irish or Columban liturgical rites, or to the use of the Roman rite, though at present the evidence does seem to point to a stronger connection with the Columban. This connection would, of course, make perfect sense, considering the probable foundation date of the community, as well as the place-name of Portmahomack, which both antiquarians and linguists have connected with Columba, most commonly translating it as

the “Port of Columba”.<sup>41</sup> While this does not prove the monastery was founded by Columba, it does point to a conscious decision by those within the community to associate themselves with Columba at some point before the tenth century.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the fragment carved from the raven’s loaf in the scene on the pediment of Nigg, might point to a reaffirmation of loyalty to the Columban *familia* and the reinstitution of Columban liturgical rites sometime in the monastery’s history. In any case, a focus on the various liturgical rites and their traditions of mystagogy can certainly open up new ways of understanding not only the Christian iconography on Pictish cross-slabs, but also the decorative schemes, and therefore, add to our understanding of Pictish spirituality and the culture of the Picts as a whole.

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#### *Abbreviations:*

ANCL = Ante-Nicene Christian Library. 1867–97.

CCSL = *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*. 1953–2003.

FONTES = *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: A Register of Written Sources Used by Anglo-Saxon Authors*.

NPNF = *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. 1886–99.

SASLC = *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture: A Trial Version*.

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<sup>41</sup> Antiquarian reports of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries popularised the notion that the area, especially Portmahomack, was connected to St Columba. For instance, see Innes, Anderson, Brichtan *et al.* 1851–5, 2, 434; Cordiner 1780, 66–7; Miller 1889, 443. The reading of *Cholmag* [modern English ‘homack’] as Colm and thus Columba was owed to Brian Lacey and then to T. O. Clancy in 1999 and 2002. Martin Carver, pers. comm., April 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Katherine Forsyth (pers. comm., April 2003) has suggested that the elements of the possessive and diminutive elements of the place-name exemplify linguistic forms no longer in use after the tenth century.

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## THE FORMS OF TWO CROSSES ON PICTISH CROSS-SLABS: ROSSIE PRIORY, PERTHSHIRE AND GLAMIS NO. 2

Robert D. Stevick

The crosses on the front of the cross-slab of Rossie Priory, Perthshire (Fig. 5.1) and that of Glamis no. 2 (Fig. 5.2) afford an excellent exercise in recovering essential plans for major artefacts of Insular art. They are two of a kind in provenance, in style, in the designs backgrounding the cross forms, even in the notably identical patterns of interlace encircled at the intersection of upright and arms. They also put this question plainly: how much, and on what basis, can we invoke 'distortion' or 'inaccuracy' of workmanship when arguing for a rigorous and cohesive scheme of line and proportion underlying the form of each cross, or of other objects. This paper proposes to add one item, called here 'coherent geometry', to the inventory of elements of two Pictish cross plans. This geometry is associated with the early Insular (Hiberno-Saxon) tradition, being essentially an extension to findings, based primarily on the study of symbols by Robert B. K. Stevenson in F. T. Wainwright's *The Problem of the Picts* (1955, 97–128).

Begin with asymmetries where symmetry can be expected. The two arms of a decorative cross should be mirror images of each other in form and size. Lay a straight-edge across a photograph of the Glamis no. 2 cross (or a taut string across the slab) and immediately an imbalance becomes obvious: the arm on the left is lower than the one on the right (Fig. 5.2). The interlace designs filling the arm-extensions are unmatched, making the imbalance in their extensions doubly noticeable. Both sides of the stem and the top of the cross, on the other hand, are well aligned. Apply the same simple test to the Rossie Priory cross, and the observations are the opposite: it is the alignment of the upper and lower boundaries of the cross-arms that is good, while the right sides of the top and shaft are misaligned. In both figures a symmetrical outline of these features has been drawn over a photograph. Accordingly, the incursive arcs (the 'armpits') of the cross outlines are regular (and simple) in the Rossie Priory cross, but quite irregular (and also less simple) in the Glamis no. 2 cross. We can put these asymmetries down to 'distortion' or 'inaccuracy', provisionally at least.



Fig. 5.1: Rossie Priory cross-slab, Perthshire, with schematic drawing superimposed on a photograph. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS. Drawing: Ingrid Shearer.)

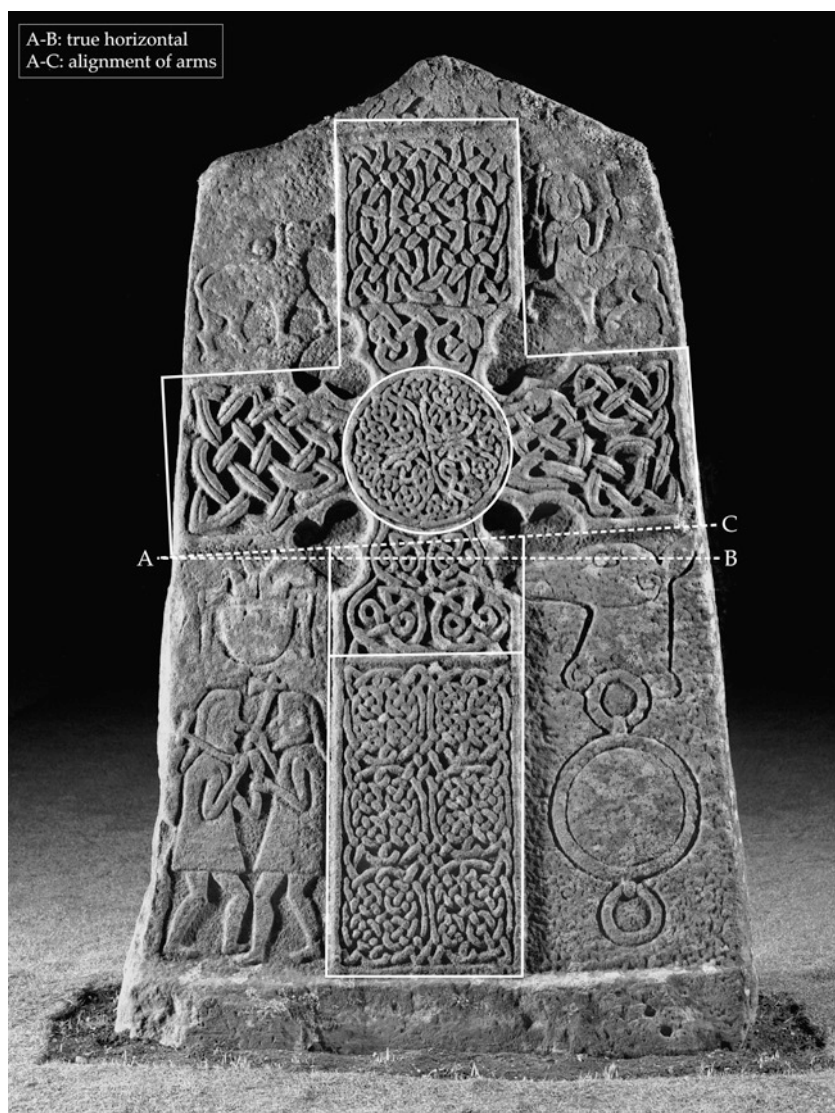


Fig. 5.2: Glamis no. 2 cross-slab, with schematic drawing superimposed on a photograph. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS. Drawing: Ingrid Shearer.)

Then try to ascertain what the forms of these crosses would be, and how to create them, if symmetry had not gone awry. It requires trial and error in constructing models, assuming one then another then another of the mismatched structural lines is the right one (or the wrong one). The following account describes an exercise in recovering these cross plans, mainly in terms of trials that succeeded. The exercise was guided by the principles of designing in Insular art that I have documented in several studies of stone crosses, as well as analyses of a number of manuscript illuminations and some pieces of fine metal-work (listed in the bibliography).

The fundamental principle is that there will be iteration, or recurrence, both of measures and ratio of measures. The same measures can be expected for the extensions of the cross-arms. Where they are not quite the same, some accommodation will have to be made, just where and how much being part of the exercise to determine. Turn first to the Rossie Priory cross. The left arm remains in only a trace of its outline, but seems to have been a bit shorter than the right arm. One may have been carved short, or the other long (or a bit of both). The vertical symmetry of the cross-head seems to be intact, though, with equal measures from top to centre of the circle at the axis, and from there to the bottom of the angular-decorated segment of the stem (bottom of the cross-head). Along the vertical axis, that is, we have an instance of 'here is that measure again', above and below the centre of the cross-head. Further, the vertical arms are very close in length to both of the (unequal) horizontal arms. So provisionally let us posit equal measures for all four extensions of the cross-head in the original design for this piece of sculpture.

The Glamis no. 2 cross has a differently disposed set of vertical and horizontal extensions from its centre. The lengths of the arms are slightly unequal, following the limits of the slab. But assume that they would have been equal in length in the model prepared for the sculpting. In this instance, though, unlike that of the other cross, the upper and lower segments of the head do not repeat each other, and neither equals the measure of the arm extensions. Yet, as illustrated in Fig. 5.3a, the measure (*c*) from top of the cross to centre of the cross-head is found again in the measure from the bottom of the cross-head to the bottom of the whole plan. Yet again, the height (*b*) of the cross-head is the same as the distance from the centre of the head to the foot of the cross. That is in addition to being the same as the provisional measure of the span of the cross.

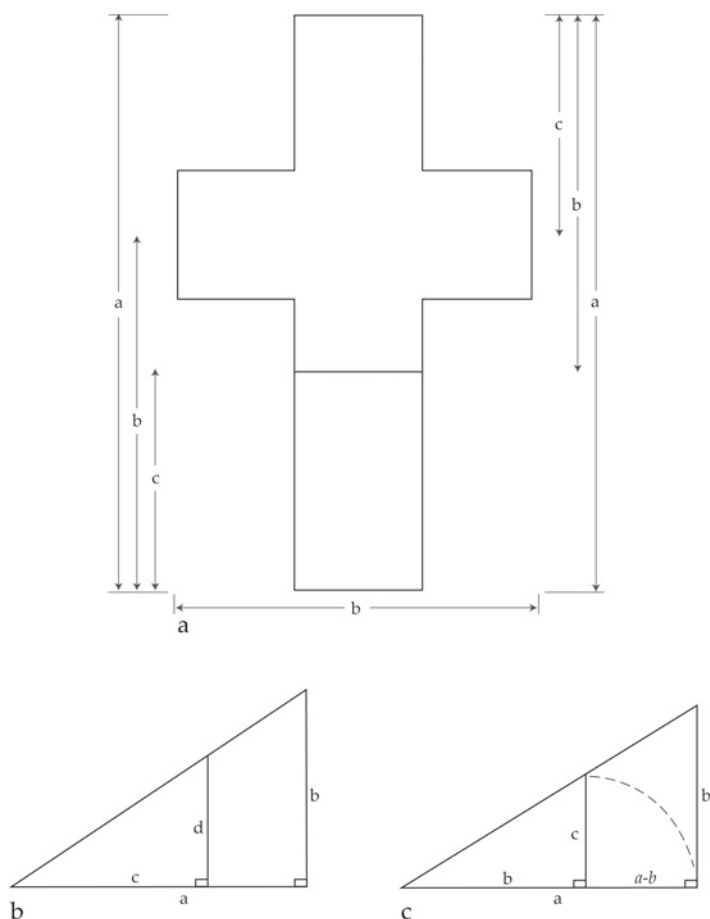


Fig. 5.3: Illustration of an equal ratio for two pairs of measures.

The next step is to test whether there is ratio of measures (as distinct from fixed-scale measures) that may recur. Graphic expression, as in Fig. 5.3b, will make this notion visually-tactilely comprehensible. Select a pair of measures  $a, b$  and mark them along two lines that have been joined at a right angle; then join the two open ends with what will be the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle. Next, mark the measure  $c$  along one side of the triangle. From that point, a line at right angle will intersect the hypotenuse at the remaining measure  $d$ . The ratio of  $a : b$  is repeated for  $c : d$ , while the measures differ. That is,  $a : b :: c : d$ .

In the form of the Glamis cross, a special repeating ratio is found among its repeating dimensions. Call the height of the whole cross  $a$ ,

and (as above) call the height of the cross-head  $b$ , and plot a right-angled triangle with these measures for its sides, as in Fig. 5.3c. Then mark the measure  $b$  on the longer side of the triangle. From that point, a line at a right angle to the long side will intersect the hypotenuse with a length to be called  $c$ . This time, the ratio  $a : b$  is equivalent to the ratio  $b : c$ . That is,  $a : b :: b : c$ . And observe that identical measures occur in inverse order for this cross, doubling the recurrence of the ratio.<sup>1</sup>

Or turn back to the Rossie Priory cross. It must be noted first that, different as the cross-head shape of this cross and that of the Glamis cross may be, the two crosses share a ratio of fundamental dimensions: the relation between the cross-head height and the overall height is the same in both plans. That this recurrence along the vertical layout may be less than coincidental is supported by the reuse of the pattern of interlace wrought at the centre of the cross-head. Its design “was evidently recorded in some handbook of motifs, since it is used again...at the centre of the cross on the front of the cross-slab at Rossie Priory...and at the centre of the cross at St Vigean’s” (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 35). Recurrence of ratio within the plan will be described later.

The elementary method of representing identical ratios among pairs of dimensions (Fig. 5.3) does not employ numerals. These iterations can also be expressed with numerals, of course, obtained when a measuring scale is used to record the lengths of various parts of the plan. Lengths are expressed in the units and fractions on the measuring device:  $[84/136]=[136/220]$ , would be an example (in close approximation) for the configuration in Fig. 5.3c. Use of numerals in this way is customary nowadays, whether confined to arithmetical expressions (like the one just given), or those employing plane geometry or trigonometry.

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<sup>1</sup> Equality between two ratios constitutes proportion, in mathematical terms. In this latter instance, one measure  $b$  occurs as the middle term in the pair of ratios. A further characteristic, represented by dotted line and italic labelling in Fig. 5.3c is this: the longer measure  $a$  is the sum of the two shorter measures  $b$ ,  $c$ . Or put it the other way about: measure  $c$  is equal to  $a-b$ . That being the case, the proportional relations among all these dimensions of the Glamis cross can be expressed as functions of only two measures, the ones here called  $a$  and  $b$ , thus:  $a : b :: b : (a-b)$ . This proportion is unique in that respect, and constitutes what later came to be called the divine proportion, and later still, the golden section ratio.

The people who designed crosses in this tradition did not have these modern methods of expressing their measures and their relations, of course. Neither, obviously, did they need them. So any exercise in studying the plans of crosses of this kind will need to express the patterns or webs of recurring measures and ratios in a way that the designers themselves could have employed. It will be at its best if we can see not only the patterns, but the kind of procedures by which those patterns can be (and must have been) devised.

The form of the Rossie Priory cross will be set out first. We can assume that the slab was cut and sized for a cross-plan that had already been drawn up and authorised. The prototype and the carved cross did not need to be of identical size, unless the initial plan was somehow to be traced on the surface of the stone (and repeatedly traced, as the cutting proceeded). It is the relations among the dimensions that constitute the plan, and they can be copied on any scale that is needed, by following the same methods of construction. All that was needed for selecting the slab was the relative height and breadth.

The plan can be constructed by methods illustrated in Fig. 5.4. The basic measure for the plan will be the span of the cross-arms.

5.4a. Bisect a line (1) representing the basic measure with a line (2) through its centre and perpendicular to it, the latter to be the centreline of the cross.

5.4b. Copy the half-measure of the breadth above and below the intersecting lines (1, 2).

5.4c. From each of the four ends of the crosslines sketch arcs (1, 2, 3, 4) with the half breadth measure to intersect, marking corners for drawing a square.

5.4d. Extend the sides of the square downwards. Then find with dividers the distance (1) between the midpoint of a side of the square and the lower corner opposite; from either side in turn, copy (2) that distance along the extended sides to mark the lower limit of the plan, and draw a line (3) to delimit the lower extension of the cross-form.

At this stage the height and breadth of the cross have been set. It will be all that is needed for preparing the stone to receive its cross design. These ratios are sufficient for the complete designs of both the Rossie Priory cross and the Glamis no. 2 cross.

The Rossie Priory cross-head, as noted, appears to have height equal to its width, that is, it can be drawn within a square.



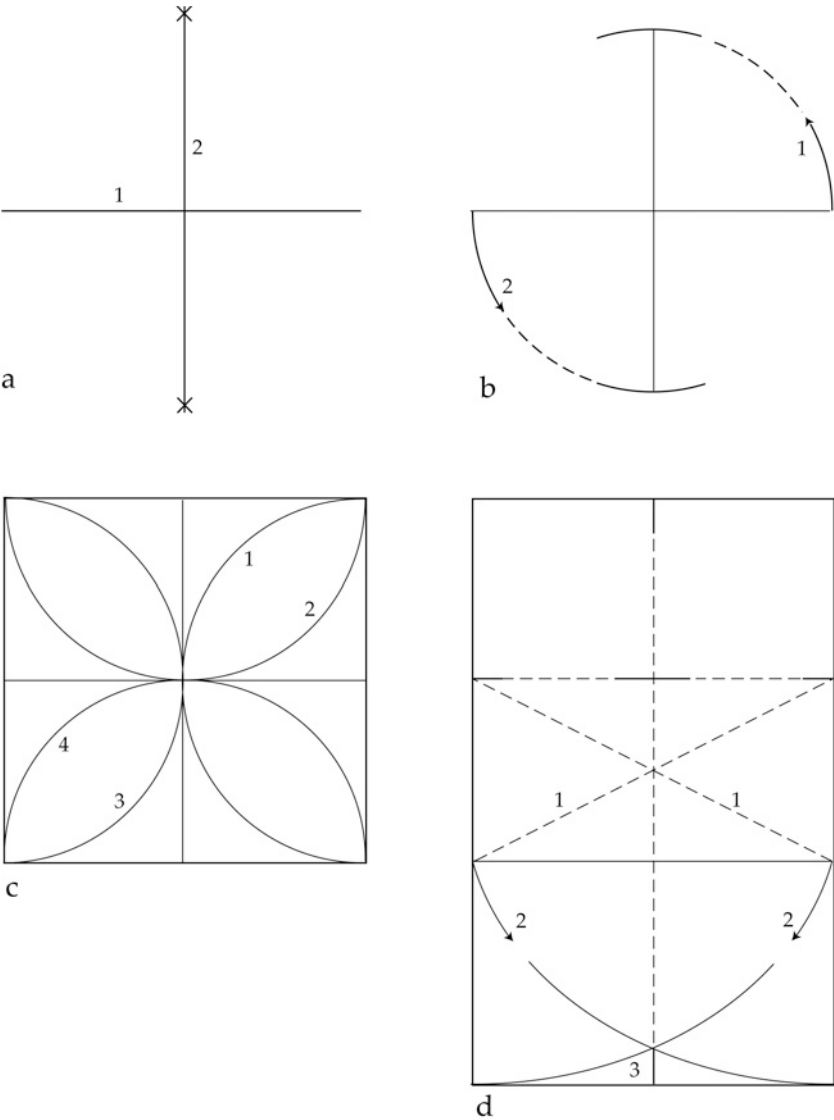
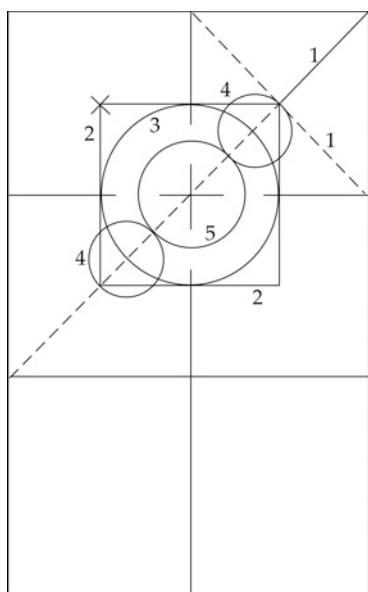
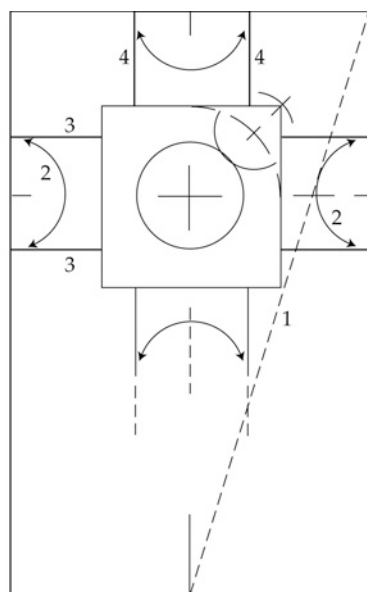


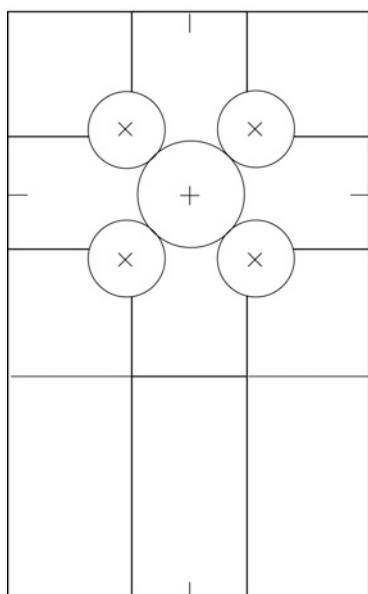
Fig. 5.4a-d: One way to set the overall ratio of width to height for the two crosses.



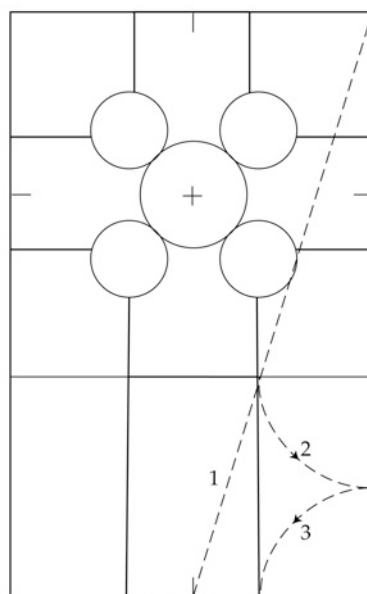
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Fig. 5.4e-h: One way to complete the form of the Rossie Priory cross-slab.

5.4e. Sketch diagonals (1) in each quarter of the basic square. Connect their points of intersection to construct a smaller square (2), each side being half the length of the larger one. Next, draw a circle (3) with radius half the length of the quarter-square. In each quarter then draw a circle (4) with centre where the prior circle (3) intersects a diagonal of that quarter, radius set by intersections of the diagonals of the quarter-square. Finally, draw a circle (5) with centre at the original intersection of the figure (5.4a, b) with perimeter tangent to the circle (4) just drawn.

5.4f. Sketch a diagonal (1) from the lower limit of the centreline to an upper corner of the plan, marking its intersection with the midline of the basic square. Take the measure then from the end-point of the midline to the intersection just marked, and mark it (2) above and below along the side of the plan. Connect with parallel lines (3, 3) pairs of marks thus plotted on both sides of the plan. Use the same measures to set vertical pairs of lines (4, 4).

5.4g. The form of the cross as devised thus far.

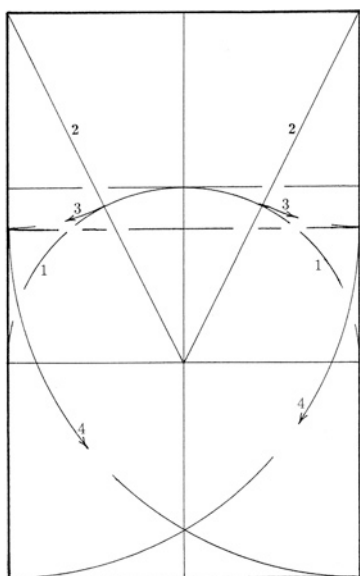
One further operation remains: changing the upright element from having a constant breadth to having a taper, steadily widening as it descends. It was probably carried out as follows:

5.4h. Mark the intersection of the diagonal (1) in 4f with the lower side of the basic square. From the nearest corner of that square copy the distance to that point and mark a point lower along the side of the plan (2); then copy the remaining measure (3) along the lower line of the form. Use these points to set the vertical sides of the cross, keeping the breadth at the top as originally set. The cross-page fol. 94 in the Lindisfarne Gospels probably made similar use of diagonals to set relative measures, within a rectangular frame whose sides stand in a ratio related to the ratio for the rectangle enclosing this cross. (See Stevick 2004b, Fig. 12.6)

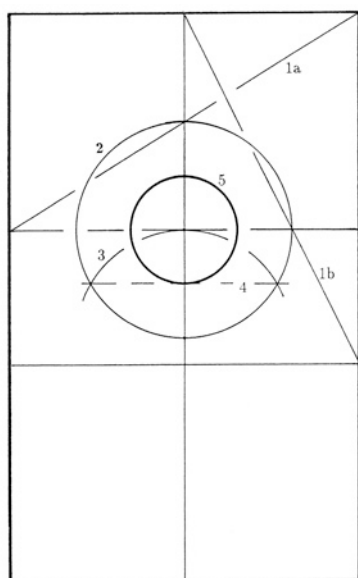
This last step would then require adjusting slightly the four circles surrounding the central circle to accommodate the splay of the cross-shaft.

Next, let us set out the form for the Glamis no. 2 cross. The plan can be constructed as described next. Because the relation between the cross-head height and the overall height is the same as that of the Rossie Priory cross, there will be no need to show again the initial steps (which would otherwise be Fig. 5.5a–d) setting the overall limits of the plan. Fig. 5.5e shows an alternative to the procedure illustrated in 5.4d.

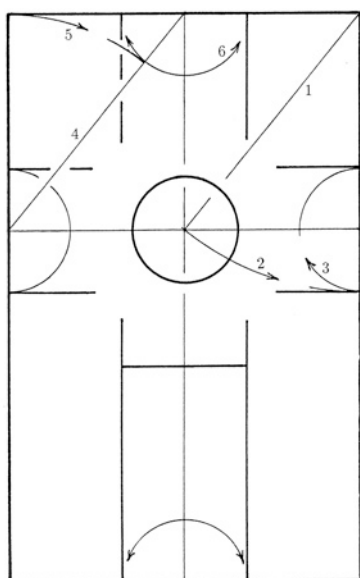
5.5e. Use the centreline intersection with the lower side of the basic square (4c) as the centre for an arc (1) with radius equal to half the basic



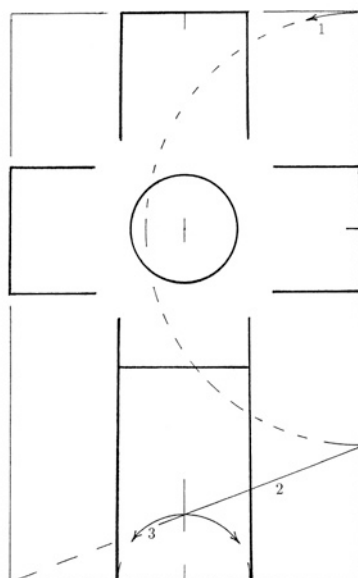
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Fig. 5.5e-h: One way to complete the form of the Glamis no. 2 cross-slab.  
(Initial steps identical to those in Fig. 5.4a-d.)

measure. Sketch a diagonal of two lateral quarters of the basic square (2). Copy (3) the measure from each corner in turn to intersection with the arc to mark a point along the side of the square. Then copy (4) the basic measure (= side of the basic square) along extensions of its sides, to set the lower limit of the cross and slab.

The midline of the cross-arms will be a line whose endpoints are set by 5.5e.1–3.

5.5f. Where the midline for the arms intersects the centreline will be the centre of a circle (2). Its radius is half the distance to the top of the plan, that half measure plotted by a diagonal (1a) of one-half of the upper portion being laid down for the cross-head. Alternatively, the radius can be set by using a diagonal of two lateral quarters of the basic square (1b). The circle can be seen clearly in the two quadrants on the left side. Another circle (5) is then drawn concentric with the first one, with radius measuring one-half that of the other (3–4).

5.5g. The breadth of arms and upright is derived from diagonal measure (1, 4) of the two rectangles above the midline, for the arms by one way as shown (2–3); this procedure works for some Irish crosses as well. (See Stevick 2004b, Fig. 12.6) The same measure for breadth of the upright is shown derived by another method (5–6). (Either way would be sufficient, if the dimension were then simply copied to the other positions.)

The plan also modifies the upright dimensions by introducing a taper, steadily widening as it descends. This can be carried out as follows (one of alternative ways).

5.5h. Along the side of the plan, double the distance from top to midline of the cross (1), halve the remaining measure with a diagonal (2) of the plan, and copy on either side of the centreline (3) the remaining measure: this sets the breadth of the foot of the cross-shaft.

Now draw the outline of the arms and upright.

The incursive arcs of the Glamis no. 2 cross outline, clustered in threes at the joins of the upright and the arms, are shaped very irregularly. The inside of the innermost one touches the circle surrounding the interlace once; in the other three clusters it is separated by a bordering device. The other two arcs in each cluster vary from being the same size as the innermost one to being considerably larger, with variations as well in their approximations to circularity. All this irregularity may result (in part) from a problem in the design caused by the thickness of the borders of the arcs and of the main cross outlines. For the straight-line elements of the cross this is not a problem because the rope-like borders are contained within the lines of the design; the

enclosed circle of interlace at the centre is similar, its border falling within the circle of the design. With the 'armpit' clusters, however, while the inner lines of the rope-borders must join the outer lines of the borders of the shaft and arms, it is the outer lines of these borders which abut the circle at the centre.

The principal cause of irregularity of the armpit patterns, however, was most likely the asymmetrical execution of the cross-arms, the left arm being lower than the right one. A layout procedure (with a template, perhaps) for the clustered arcs that was based on symmetrical location of the arms in the master plan would be put askew, resulting in asymmetry and the need for a fair amount of ad-hoc adjustments.

Whatever the cause and symptoms, the irregularities among the armpit shapes are such that any formula for a rational model involves a measure of guesswork. Fig. 5.6 illustrates a method of layout which is consistent with the scheme of the rest of the form and is a natural development from it, and which gives a very good approximation to three of the four clusters of arcs.

5.6a. Run a diagonal (1) within each upper quadrant of the cross-head (cf. 5.5g.1), and run an opposing diagonal (2) of the two upper quadrants of the cross-head. Where those diagonals intersect, the outlines of the cross upright and arms define the centres and radii of two interlocking circles (3, 4).

5.6b. Copy (1) the half-width of the cross from the midline of the cross to mark a point, above, on the side of the underlying square. Run a diagonal (2) from that point to the centre of the cross. Along that diagonal copy (3) the half-width of the cross from the point already marked, to mark a point on the diagonal that will be the centre for an arc (4) with same radius as those of the circles in 5.6a.

The 'fit' of schematic plans described here can be observed by overlaying careful drawings on photographs of the crosses; the schematic outlines superimposed on photos, in Figs. 5.1 and 5.2, are the end-products of the constructional procedures described above. For the Rossie Priory slab (Fig. 5.1) the shape and proportions all show close congruence. The aberrations are minor. The armpit circles, especially the lower pair, don't match up well, but the ones in the drawing have not been adjusted from first plotting, in Fig. 5.4e, to the tapering of the shaft, in Fig. 5.4h. Otherwise, the differences are limited to those places noted earlier in which there is asymmetry where symmetry should be expected: the right side of the upright member does not follow a straight line, even though the left side does; and the arm extensions differ slightly even though they should be equal as well.

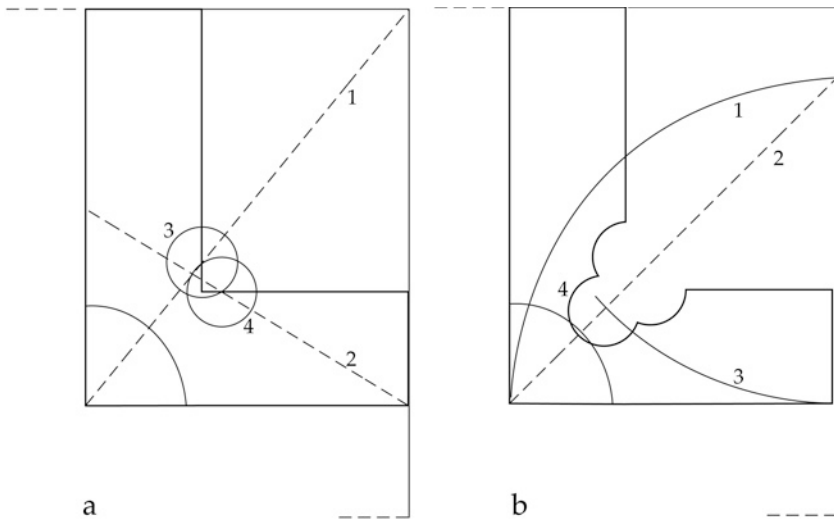


Fig. 5.6: Tentative derivation of armpit designs for the Glamis no. 2 cross-slab.

For the Glamis no. 2 slab (Fig. 5.2) the story is much the same. The overall shape and proportions correspond generally in the photo and overlay. The armpits are not included in the drawing for reasons explained above. Otherwise it is only the asymmetry of the midlines and extensions of the arms that shows up as difference between plan and artefact: it is the arm on the left which misses most. For the cause of the aberration one can only speculate, but it may be observed that the asymmetry is of the same kind as that found in the cross-page in the Lichfield Gospels, and may have a similar cause.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> It would be a challenge indeed to impute identical 'artist's intentions' to the identical asymmetries of the two crosses, one in ink and paint on parchment within a Gospels codex, one in a relief stone carving, the two of them originating in distant areas of the large island of Britain. 'Artist's errors' would be an equally efficient cause, and has the advantage of not being entirely opaque. Initial layout for either medium would be an outline something like that developed in Fig. 5.5, the one that then was superimposed on the photo in Fig. 5.2 for the cross-slab, or in Fig. 13-2 in Stevick 1994 for the Lichfield Gospels cross-page. Development of the design then required drawing lines parallel to the outlining to make borders for decorations of the members of the cross. The lines parallel to the outline drawing would be placed inside the outlining. The exception in each instance is the placing of the parallel line for the border outside the outlining, albeit keeping a constant thickness for the border. This is also the explanation suggested by Lloyd Laing (Laing 2001, 226-7). It is a natural enough error if the artist routinely inverts or rotates the page or shifts his position while work-

The distinctive thing about these cross plans is the cohesion of form that depends upon iteration of both measure and ratio, as noted earlier. Nothing is left 'loose', so to speak. How such coherence can be created has been demonstrated in Figs. 5.4 and 5.5. It should be mentioned at this point, perhaps, that alternative methods of setting dimensions will often serve. Three examples, in fact, have been included. The procedures in Figs. 5.5e and 5.4d give identical height-to-width ratios for the two crosses. In Fig. 5.5f two methods (1, 2) of setting the radius of the large circle are included. Besides these, the radius of the larger circle in Fig. 5.4e can be set by the method used in 5.5f.1 (and other ways as well). These examples will make clear that reconstruction of the underlying forms depends upon a method of designing, which we can recover, without need for recovering the historically exact set of steps for any given design.

With the plans set out as they appear in Figs. 5.4 and 5.5, the inventories of repeating measures and ratios can be expanded, demonstrating the cohesion in more detail. For example, in the Rossie Priory plan, the breadth of the top of the cross is repeated in the vertical measure of the cross-arms. That same measure then appears again along the lower limit of the plan as the measure between either side of the shaft and the corners of the enclosing rectangle: it is this contraposed iteration of measure that determines the taper of the upright. (In this respect it is similar to the reuse of measures at top and bottom, but in chiasmic arrangement, to determine the taper within the head of the Kilfenora West Cross.)<sup>3</sup> This measure need have been generated only once, then mechanically copied to the other parts of the plan; the separate generatings shown in Fig. 5.5, however, are just as likely, more likely probably, for their creation of cohesion of the plan 'as built'.

The Glamis cross has a 'richer' structural form, providing an excellent example for both measure and ratio being used and reused as they combine into a coherent design. The alternative devising of the overall height and width relation in Fig. 5.5e is the place to start. The cross-head is square, and so is the area from midline of the cross to the bottom of the plan. Above the midline of the cross (5.5e.3 or 5.5f) is a rectangular area having the same shape (same ratio of dimensions)

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ing on the stone, to keep a constant orientation of inner and outer lines of the border as he executes them: a lapse in the routine for one of the pair of arm-elements would produce just the asymmetry that is found in the finished pieces.

<sup>3</sup> See Stevick 2004a (n. 1), 7–13, especially Fig. 2e.



as does the overall rectangle enclosing the cross-form: it is the ratio of the height to width of the cross proper. Similarly, a rectangular area of size and shape identical to the top half of the cross-head lies below the cross-head—the area below the line which demarcates the three pairs of interlace on the lower shaft. That same ratio occurs once again between the length of the radius of the large (first) circle derived in 5.5f.2 and the half-measure of the plan, i.e. the arm extension measure from the centre of that circle. Yet again, from the lower corners of the overall rectangle to the sides of the shaft, and from the sides of the shaft to the centreline, these two measures have the same ratio. That ratio is now called the ratio of the golden section of a line. If the derivation for the incurive arcs (Fig. 5.6) were determined to belong to the original plan, the 'richness' of the form would be greater still.

In sum, the cross-forms on the front of Rossie Priory cross-slab and on the front of the Glamis no. 2 cross-slab show some inaccuracies in execution of their underlying plans. This assessment arises from inspection of the asymmetries where symmetry is required by the nature of the form and the traditions of embodying it. It is an inference strengthened by conformity of their plans to full coherent schemes of measures and ratios when their symmetries are restored; those coherent schemes being of exactly the same kind as those found in the finest Irish stone crosses, metalwork, and especially the precisely-wrought 'carpet' pages in the best illuminated Gospels of the early Insular tradition. The schemes derive from exercises in constructional geometry within a culture whose artists understood profoundly the thorough geometrical bonding of line and area.

*Appendix*

For some readers the coherent geometry of these forms may be more readily comprehended if the measures and ratios are expressed in modern notation. There is a 'given' measure, the span of the cross, which is divided equally for bilateral symmetry. The measure on each side will be designated as 1, the span as 2. In addition, two simple 'geometrical' measures are derived for binding the forms of these crosses; both evolve from the same elementary geometrical figure: a square, quartered. The Rossie Priory cross employs both geometrical measures, while the Glamis no. 2 cross employs only one of them.

In Fig. 5.4a–c the span of the cross-arm is developed into a square, which is quartered into smaller squares. The integer ratios embodied at this stage involve only 1 and 2, with the overall square whose measure is 2 and each quarter square whose measure is 1. In Fig. 5.4e, the measure of each inner square in turn is divided by two, thus the measure  $\frac{1}{2}$ . Also in Fig. 5.4e there are diagonal cuts of constituent squares. In effect the diagonal of any square is the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle with equal-measure sides; its measure, relative to the length of each side, is  $\sqrt{2}$  (by Pythagorean theorem). This is one of the 'geometrical' measures used in the tables of measures.

The other 'geometrical' measure is generated by the golden section of a line, as it is commonly called nowadays. In Fig. 5.4d, the diagonal measure of two adjacent squares (1) is added to the measure of a constituent square (2) to set the height of the plan. In modern notation, that diagonal is  $\sqrt{5}$ : that is, it is the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle with sides measuring 2 and 1; in decimal approximation, it is 2.236. That measure is added to 1, with a total measure of 3.236. In this computation, height of the rectangle is 3.236 in relation to the overall width which measures 2; this reduces to 1.618 : 1, a familiar decimal approximation to the golden section ratio. (Its reciprocal is 1 : 0.618.) Its conventional symbol, used in the tables of measures, is  $\phi$ .

An alternative construction, in Fig. 5.5e, again runs a diagonal of two adjacent squares (2), subtracts (1) the measure of a constituent square from that diagonal length, and copies (3) the remainder to the side. The diagonal is again  $\sqrt{5}$ , from which is subtracted 1, for 1.236. To that measure is added (4) the dimension 2 (span of the cross), to set the height of the plan. Once more, the key ratio of height to width is 3.236:2, which (again) reduces to 1.618 : 1, or  $\phi$ . Conversely, the ratio of width to height is 0.618 : 1.

Simply: from 1 at 1 at a right angle is derived  $\sqrt{2}$ , and from 1 and 2 at a right angle is derived  $\sqrt{5}$ , and from that  $\phi$ .

Table 2: Linked measures in the form of Rossie Priory cross-slab.

Feature	Measure	Approximation
Cross, width	2	2(1.000)
—— height	$2\phi$	2(1.618)
Cross-head, width	2	2(1.000)
—— height	2	2(1.000)
Centre of cross-head, from top	1	1.000
Shaft, below cross-head	$\frac{2}{\phi}$	2(0.618)
Armpit centres, from cross-centre	$\frac{1}{2}$	0.500
Armpit circles, outer radius	$\frac{1}{2}(\sqrt{2} - 1)$	0.207
Central circle, outer radius	$\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}(\sqrt{2} - 1)$	0.293
Cross-arms, vertical measure	$\frac{1}{\phi}$	2(0.309)
Cross-shaft width, at top	$\frac{1}{\phi}$	2(0.309)
Cross-shaft width, at base	$1 - \frac{1}{\phi}$ , or $\frac{1}{\phi+1}$	2(0.382)
Top of cross to lower limit	$2(1\frac{1}{2})$	2(1.500)
of full-circle interlace pattern		
Centre of cross to lower limit	2	2(1.000)
of full-circle interlace pattern		

Or, reducing the largest dimensions to simplest expression, overall measures of this cross, width to height, are in the ratio  $1:\phi$ , with the ratio of cross-head measures, width to height, being 1:1. The same observation can be made regarding the plan of the Glamis no. 2 cross-plan.

Table 3: Linked measures in the form of Glamis no. 2 cross-slab.

Feature	Measure	Approximation
Cross, width	2	2(1.000)
—— height	$2\phi$	2(1.618)
Cross-head, width	2	2(1.000)
—— height	2	2(1.000)
Centre of cross-head, from top	$\frac{2}{\phi}$	2(0.618)
Shaft, below cross-head	$\frac{2}{\phi}$	2(0.618)
Incised ring (outer)	$\frac{1}{\phi}$	0.618
Central circle, outer radius	$\frac{1}{2}(\frac{1}{\phi})$	0.309
Inner armpit centres, from cross-centre	$\frac{1}{2}(\frac{\phi}{2})$	0.405
Cross-arms, vertical measure	$2[\sqrt{1 + (\frac{2}{\phi})^2} - (\frac{2}{\phi})]$	2(0.354)
Cross-shaft width, at top	same	2(0.354)
Cross-shaft width, at base	$2(1 - \frac{1}{\phi})$ , or $\frac{2}{\phi+1}$	2(0.382)

The form of this cross was characterised earlier as ‘richer’, for both measures and ratio of measures being used and reused more extensively. Comparing the two tables will show why: the only measures in the Glamis cross-form are functions of 1, 2,  $\phi$ , whereas the measures in the Rossie Priory cross-form are 1, 2,  $\sqrt{2}$ ,  $\phi$ .

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# THE INTERPRETATION OF NON-FERROUS METALWORKING IN EARLY HISTORIC SCOTLAND

Andrew Heald

## *Introduction*

The narratives normally associated with non-ferrous metalworking in Early Historic Scotland (c. AD 500 to AD 800) are usually confined to evidence from important, and probably high status, sites. This is particularly true in studies of the Gaelic and British Kingdoms where evidence of high status metalworking, particularly the production of brooches and use of precious metals, has been recovered from strongly fortified sites with a suite of specific characteristics and sometimes documentary evidence that indicates royal status, such as Dunadd, Argyll. Discussions of metalworking in other areas, for example Pictland, are similarly centred on iconic assemblages, such as that from the Brough of Birsay, Orkney.

This paper considers sites with evidence for Early Historic non-ferrous metalworking in the form of crucibles and moulds. Analysis of this corpus and the associated objects reveals that sites like Dunadd and Mote of Mark in Kirkcudbrightshire only form part of the story. In certain areas, particularly the Western and Northern Isles, non-ferrous metals were worked on a larger number and wider variety of sites than normally considered. The smiths who worked on these sites sometimes produced objects that were not mundane, everyday objects but items of some status hitherto considered to be manufactured only on 'higher status' sites. They also used precious metals. A series of possibilities are considered for these emerging patterns that are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

## *The evidence*

Figure 6.1 and the appendix (Table 4) outline the sites with evidence for non-ferrous metalworking believed by the author to date to the Early Historic period.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The dataset and the actual material are more fully discussed in Heald 2005. This article was written in 2008 and does not include material published thereafter. It is

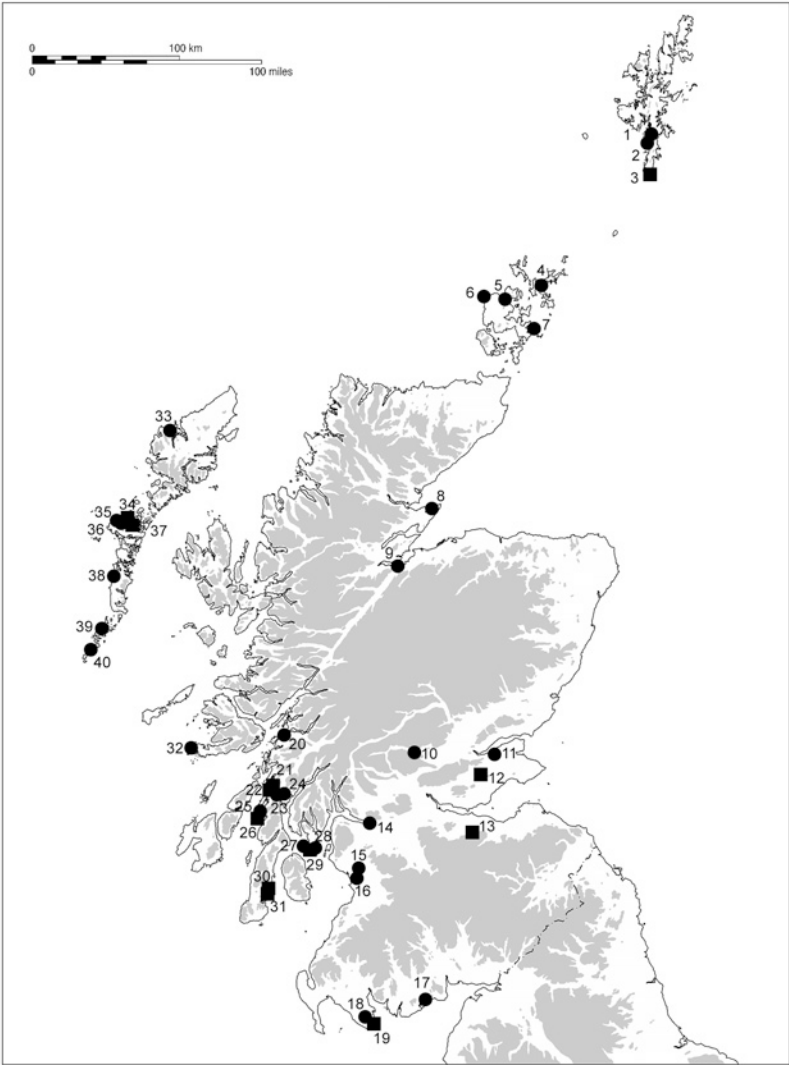


Fig. 6.1: Non-ferrous metalworking sites in Early Historic Scotland (squares represent probable sites and numbers correspond to site numbers in the appendix).

The majority of evidence is from nuclear- or hill-forts, sites believed to be chiefly or kingly residences, or 'Dark Age' capitals, for example Dunadd (Christison and Anderson 1905, 311–14; Craw 1930, 120–3; Lane and Campbell 2000, 106–49); Dunollie, Argyll (Alcock and Alcock 1987); Mote of Mark, Kirkcudbrightshire (Curle 1914; Longley 2001; Laing and Longley 2006); Alt Clut, Strathclyde (Alcock and Alcock 1990, 114–15); Dundurn, Perthshire (Alcock, Alcock and Driscoll 1989); Clatchard Craig, Fife (Close-Brooks 1986); Craig Phadrig, Inverness-shire (Small and Cottam 1972; Stevenson 1972) and Brough of Birsay, Orkney (Curle 1982). Metalworking on monastic sites is also well documented, for example at Iona (Barber 1981; Reece 1981; McCormick 1992); Portmahomack, Ross and Cromarty (Carver 2004); Whithorn, Galloway (Hill 1997); St Blane's, Bute (Anderson 1900; Laing, Laing and Longley 1998) and Inchmarnock, Bute (Heald 2008). These sites have understandably dominated many discussions of non-ferrous metalworking. However, there are other Early Historic sites with evidence for the craft, even though the material remains are often few and fragmentary.

Any discussion of mid-first millennium AD structures and their assemblages is hindered by problems of chronology, taphonomy and reuse. Many structures, although built before the Early Historic period, were reused and modified during this time. Particularly with nineteenth- and early twentieth-century excavations it is difficult to be confident that the metalworking debris dates to the Early Historic period. That said, some patterns undoubtedly emerge. Metalworking debris has been recovered from crannogs, for example at Loch Glashan, Argyll (Crone and Campbell 2005; Campbell 2005) and Buiston, Ayrshire (Munro 1882a and b; Crone 2000; MacSween 2000, 150–1). Although some duns may have been built prior to the mid-first millennium AD, many were still integral settlement units in the Early Historic social and political network (see Harding 1997, 122–32; Nieke 1990, 133; Alcock and Alcock 1987, 131). Three such sites in Argyll have evidence for non-ferrous metalworking which could be Early Historic in date: Kildonan Bay (Fairhurst 1939, 211, 213, 215, 220); Ugadale Point (Fairhurst 1956, 19–20) and Ardifuvar (Christison

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important to note that some Scottish metalworking assemblages date to the third/fourth centuries. These are not discussed in this paper.



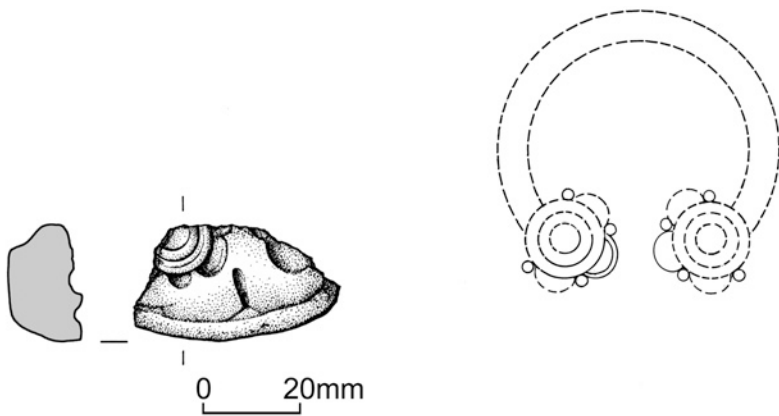


Fig. 6.2: The mould from Cnoc a' Comhdhalach and the object produced.

and Anderson 1905, 267–9; see also discussions by Alcock and Alcock 1987, 131–2; MacKie 1997, 142; Harding 1997, 128).

Similarly, many Middle Iron Age Hebridean sites were reused over considerable periods, shown well by the recovery of Early Historic pottery from many sites (Lane 1983, Fig. 26). Therefore, although poor recording makes dating difficult, it is plausible that a proportion of the non-ferrous metalworking debris dates to the second half of the first millennium AD. This is demonstrated well at Cnoc a' Comhdhalach, North Uist (Beveridge 1911, 200–6) where a mould for the production of an eighth-century AD St Ninian's Isle-type penannular brooch was found (Fig. 6.2; Campbell and Heald 2007). Although impossible to date, it is possible that the metalworking evidence from A' Cheardach Mhor, South Uist (Young and Richardson 1960, 155–6, Fig. 13 no. 46), Bac Mhic Connain and Garry Iochdrach, North Uist (Beveridge and Callander 1932, 42, 49, 61–2, Fig. 17) could be pulled into discussions. Analysis of the Bac Mhic Connain crucible suggests that silver was a component of the smith's alloy pool.

More recent excavations provide much clearer examples of metalworking in reused structures. Originally the site of a Middle Iron Age Atlantic roundhouse, Eilean Olabhat, North Uist was reused as a non-ferrous metal workshop around the sixth or seventh centuries AD (Armit 1996, 176–8; Armit, Dunwell and Campbell 2009). Amongst the items produced were handpins and a disc decorated with trumpet spiral decoration, which can be paralleled with one from Dunadd. Analysis of the crucibles shows that silver was also used. Although

there is still some argument over Dun Cuier, Barra (e.g. Armit 1992, 38; 1996; MacKie 2007, 1106–1110), some of the metalworking debris appears to date to the Early Historic period. A mould, possibly for a small brooch, was found in the same area as an elaborate high-backed zoomorphic composite comb (Young 1956, 303, 315), an archetypal Early Historic object. It is pertinent to mention the crucible from the interior of the multi-phased Atlantic roundhouse at Dunan Ruadh, Barra (Foster and Pouncett 2000). The crucible was from the upper deposits that had been disturbed by structural collapse and reworked; it is therefore possible that the metalworking activity took place late in the site's history. A handpin indicates activity on the site during the mid to later first millennium AD.

Excavations of cellular buildings in the Western and Northern Isles have also uncovered metalworking evidence, for example at Loch na Beirgh, Lewis (Harding and Gilmour 2000, 64–6, Table 3; Harding 2004, 267); Scalloway, Shetland (Sharples 1998, 205; Campbell 1998); Gurness (Hedges 1987, Close-Brooks 1987) and Pool, Orkney (Hunter 2007, 106–7). Such debris has also been recovered from rectilinear buildings at Skaill, Orkney (Buteux 1997, 50, 53) and Burland, Shetland (Heald forthcoming), while some of the metalworking debris from the wheelhouse phases at Jarlshof, Shetland (Hamilton 1956) may also date to the mid to late first millennium AD. There is also material from open settlements and caves. Analysis of the crucibles from the open settlement at Bruach an Drumein, Argyll suggests use of metal with a significant silver component (Heald and Hunter 2008). Also in Argyll, Early Historic metalworking evidence has been recovered from St Columba's Cave (see Tolan-Smith 2001, 49–51) and, perhaps, Ellary Boulder Cave (*ibid.*, 95–6).

### *Discussion*

Around forty Early Historic sites have produced evidence for non-ferrous metalworking. Numerically, the greatest quantities and range have been recovered from sites argued to be of importance to Early Historic society, namely nuclear- and hill-forts and monastic sites. It has been well argued that the former were important power centres during this formative period. Not only did their inhabitants control access to exotic goods and maintained their power through redistribution (see Alcock and Alcock 1987; Alcock 1988; Campbell 1996a

and b; 1999; Foster 1998; 2004), they may also have used their surplus resources to support a range of specialised activities, including fine metalworking, and hence also controlled the production and/or distribution of prestige goods (Foster 2004, 61–2). On these sites the work of the smith supported individual and group authority through the production of specific goods. Similarly, fine metalwork was fashioned within monastic enclosures, objects made for the glory of God. These recurrent associations have understandably led to a common narrative, that the control of jewellery manufacture was the “prerogative of the elite” (e.g. Crone 2000, 9) and that “specialised craftworkers, particularly fine-metalworkers, appear to have largely confined their activities to high status sites” (Foster 2004, 62).

A connection between non-ferrous metalworking and sites at the top of the hierarchical ladder in some regions is generally accepted. Indeed, in many areas, such as the eastern and southern mainland, metalworking evidence has only been encountered thus far from sites of this type. But it is clear that in some areas a wider range of sites were also foci for metalworking, particularly in Argyll and the Western and Northern Isles. The evidence from many of these sites is extremely small, just the odd crucible and/or mould fragment, making it difficult to ascertain the nature and scale of the metalworking activity. However, aside from the wider distribution it also appears that on some sites the objects produced were not mundane, everyday objects, but objects found on other ‘higher status’ sites and widely distributed over the Celtic West and beyond, such as penannular brooches. Further, some sites hint at the working of silver, often believed to require the patronage of the upper echelons of society. Although these patterns are not entirely new—similar evidence has been recovered from undefended sites such as Dooey, western Ireland (O’ Ríordáin and Rynne 1961) and Longbury Bank, Dyfed (Campbell and Lane 1993)—at least in a Scottish context their implications have never been adequately discussed. How are we to interpret these emerging patterns?

An initial consideration must be whether all of the sites with metalworking can be ascribed high status, thus fitting the evidence into conventional wisdom. It is plausible that some sites, particularly duns and crannogs, may have been domains of the upper echelons of society, the nobles and important freemen (see Alcock 1988, 29; Campbell 1999, 22). Such suggestions are supported by other inferences; in the case of crannogs, for example, it is argued that only important nobles could command the large resources of timber and labour needed to

build these artificial islands. Some crannogs may even have belonged to kings; there is evidence that Irish kings had more than one residence, with the royal fort perhaps matched by a crannog (Campbell 1999, 28). Loch Glashan's proximity to Dunadd may have allowed it to function as a residence where individuals could exploit upland hunting, fowling and fishing resources (Lane and Campbell 2000, 256). Crone (2000, 164–6) suggests that Buiston crannog may have been the seasonal habitation of a wealthy freeman farmer who controlled local resources and manpower but who was bound to a more powerful overlord, the ability to acquire additional services, goods and manpower guaranteeing the community access to the socio-political hierarchy of Strathclyde. Crone (*ibid.*) agrees with Nieke and Duncan's (1988, 17) broad definition of the occupants of duns and crannogs as persons of considerable social status who had close connections with the ruling elite. The status now seemingly defined, the metalworking evidence may be pulled into normative models on the presumption that the individuals occupying these sites were of suitable status to procure such practices (Alcock 1988, 25; Nieke and Duncan 1988, 17). The relationship between metalworking and privileged groups stands firm. But, at least in this author's opinion, it is difficult to accept that all sites with metalworking debris were the domains, seasonal or otherwise, of high status individuals or groups.

Another, more prosaic, explanation for the emerging distribution is that some debris is evidence of smiths working within long-abandoned domestic structures, a convenient workshop for the production of products that would ultimately end up in other locations. With modern-day tinkers as an analogy, this may account for some of the evidence, perhaps those from caves. But populating disparate areas of Early Historic Scotland with itinerant smiths working in long-abandoned buildings, hidden from society, surely cannot credibly account for all of the evidence.

Given the complexities of Early Historic society and geography, it is of little surprise that one narrative will not adequately explain all of the emerging patterns. But it is clear that smiths produced a range of items and worked on different sites situated in disparate landscapes. Our narratives, therefore, have to move beyond the confines of royal and monastic enclosures. Doing so encourages us to consider a more active role for smiths across the Early Historic landscape. Were, for example, some smiths largely peripatetic, free to visit periodically a range of sites and different patrons, to undertake a range of commissions?

This scenario needs close scrutiny. If true, who were the patrons? Did certain smiths make different kinds of objects, perhaps from different materials? More fundamentally, was metalworking really open to a wider range of social groups than hitherto appreciated, with little control?

These are all important areas for research. For the moment we can consider one of the recurrent themes that has emanated from the excavated data for decades: the association of non-ferrous metalworking and smiths with power centres, either secular or monastic. As we have seen, many narratives assume that for important groups to achieve a monopoly of access to objects it was necessary for them to control the smiths who produced such items. In other words, in our explanations we need to accommodate two apparently polar opposites: close control of metalworking by status groups versus the greater distribution of access to the craft than hitherto appreciated.

The royal site of Dunadd, Argyll is one of the key sites in Early Historic Britain and Ireland. Central to the geography of Dál Riata, it housed an important metalworking workshop that has rightly dominated discussions of the craft in the period and area. However, probable Early Historic metalworking debris has also been found on other sites in the area (Fig. 6.3). This distribution has been explained in relation to the Dunadd repertoire. For example, shared traditions are suggested at Loch Glashan where the lidded crucible is of the same type and fabric as those used at Dunadd (Campbell 2005, 63). Nieke and Duncan (1988, 17) suggest that the Kildonan brooch may have originated in the Dunadd workshop. It seems entirely appropriate, therefore, to suggest that there was some connection between these sites. Perhaps the smiths working in and around the landscape were intimately linked, perhaps even the same individual(s).

We have seen how the control of goods and products was central to Early Historic kings extending their authority over greater distances. As well as accumulators these sites were also redistributors, as the occurrence of lesser quantities of imported pottery from duns and crannogs attests. The few luxury goods, including brooches, from Ardifuair, Kildonan and Loch Glashan have been interpreted as gifts from kings that helped to cement social relations (Campbell 1999, 47). The importance of imported goods to royal elites is well documented. Dál Riata was part of a trading network which linked France with western Britain and Ireland in the late sixth and seventh centuries AD (Campbell 1996a and b; 1999, 43–52; 2007). Dunadd has the largest

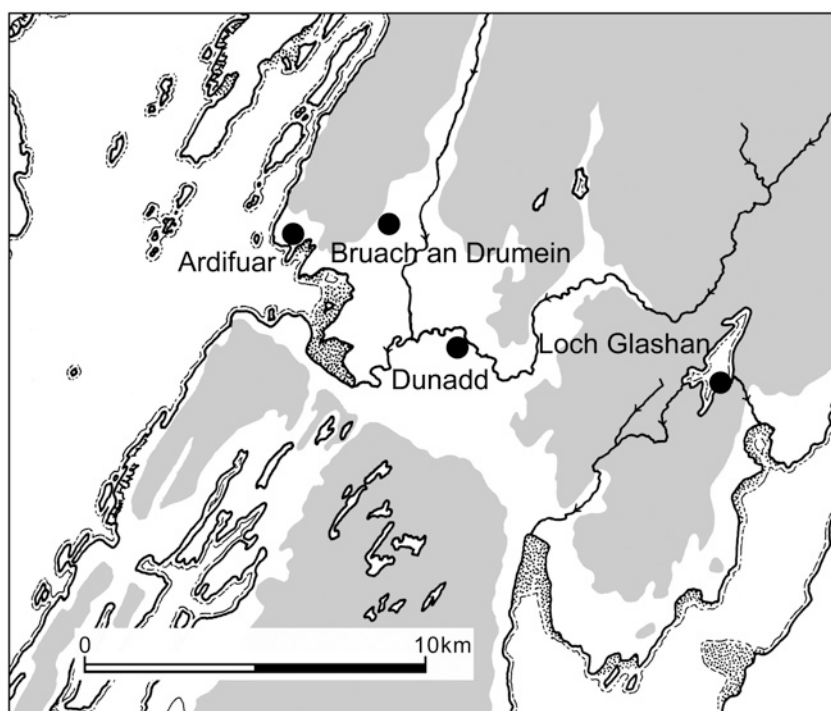


Fig. 6.3: Metalworking sites in and around Dunadd.

quantity of continental pottery of any contemporary site in Britain, while Whithorn has the largest quantity of glass vessels (Campbell 1999, 45; Campbell, Hill and Price 1997).

This may provide a platform on which to interpret the distribution of non-ferrous metalworking debris across Argyll. As Nieke and Duncan (1988, 13–14) highlight, the control of craft activity may have been important to the Dalriadic kings for the enhancement of their power and position. It seems appropriate, therefore, to ask whether metalworking was part of these redistributive packages, with raw materials, expertise or the actual specialist being part of a complex political exchange network across regional landscapes. Thus, rather than the Kildonan and Glashan brooches being made at Dunadd (Nieke and Duncan 1988, 17), they were perhaps made at the crannogs or duns. This may also explain why the smiths working on some of these sites had access to silver and similar crucible forms: they may have obtained them through links with Dunadd.

However, in accepting this model we have to ask why the finished objects themselves were not traded. Why send the smith when you could more easily send the product? This can be understood within traditional redistribution or gift-exchange models, provided we accept that the metalworker's role had a number of socio-political implications that went beyond the function of the finished product.

Evidence from the Irish Law Tracts and iconography indicates that both brooches and precious metals were a prime means of expressing status and building relationships in material culture (Nieke 1993; and see Etchingham and Swift 2004). For example, brooches like those made at Cnoc a' Comhdhalach had a long history of use as indicators of status; their gift endowed authority and legitimisation upon the wearer, who was hence obliged to the patron (Henry 1965, 102; Small, Thomas and Wilson 1973, 105; Nieke and Duncan 1988, 14; Nieke 1993; Foster 1998, 17). Brooches and pins were not simply clothes fasteners; they were insignias of important individuals and groups, a medium through which wider affiliations were constructed and maintained. Embedded in social relationships, such objects may have had social identities affiliated with peoples and groups. Objects could have embodied and triggered social memories and their involvement in both everyday and ceremonial events could actively and repeatedly have reminded people of important ideals and accepted modes of conduct. This suggests that the significance of some metalwork during the Early Historic period was grounded as much in symbolism and politics as function. With this in mind it can be suggested that smiths, controlled by the upper echelons, were sent to use metals and produce objects that tied individuals into wider socio-political relations.

We are still left with a nagging thought: why were finished items not sent to inhabitants of crannogs and the like? What purpose did it serve sending the smith? Arguably, our answer lies within the previous suggestion—that the artefacts produced and the materials used by the smith were inextricably bound up in wider social, economic and ritual trajectories. The presence of the smith at the receiving site may have been as important as the objects made or the materials used. The smith may have been sent as an explicit expression of the wealth and expertise that the king could control and redistribute. They may have been sent as messengers. As Hinton (1998, 11) suggests, smiths may have been uniquely able to “communicate”, acting as intermediaries between aristocrat and those further down the social ladder.

Numerous studies have highlighted the recurrent link between smiths—both ferrous and non-ferrous—and non-economic trajectories (e.g. Budd and Taylor 1995; Hinton 1998; Prescott 2000; Haaland, Haaland and Rijal 2002; Barndon 2004; Card and Downes 2003, 17–18; Giles 2007). Central to such discourse has been the work of Mary Helms (1993) who suggests that in pre-literate societies smiths were often viewed as powerful since their work required esoteric knowledge to enable them to manipulate the dangerous forces unleashed in the process of transforming shapeless metal into a finished product. This relationship between magic, status and power embodied in the smith is echoed in Irish texts (MacNeill 1923, 273–81; 1935, 94–5; Williams and Powell 1942, 26–7; Richards 1954, 41–2; Gillies 1981, 76; Comber 2004, 15). These demonstrate that some smiths may have obtained their status through their perceived superior knowledge, skill and links to the supernatural world (Kelly 1998, 39). Indeed, some saints regarded descent from a craftsman as conveying acceptable social overtones (Gillies 1981, 77), with many of them made out to be the sons of craftsmen (see Plummer 1910, xcvi). In this light it is also worth noting that some very important saints were craftsmen of great renown. The archetypal example is perhaps the Merovingian St Eloy (also Eloi or Eligius) (c. 558–660 AD), a hugely renowned goldsmith in the service of royalty who also became a priest (giving him a further ‘magical’ dimension) and Bishop of Noyon in 641 (James 1988, 196–7; Alcock 2003, 334–5). His reputation as both bishop and metalworker was such that his cult spread throughout Europe and he is invariably found as the patron saint of metalworkers and their guilds. In an Insular context one could also cite the example of Dunstan, tenth-century Archbishop of Canterbury, prior to which he was a hermit monk at Glastonbury where he became an accomplished metalworker (and also a painter and an embroiderer—see entry in Williams *et al.* 1991). We can see with such figures something of the Christianisation of the magical role of smithing and a continuing recognition of their status, something also suggested by the eighth-century hymns asking God for protection from the spells of women, druids and smiths (Kelly 1998, 60).

This cumulative suggestion that smiths were perceived as more than just object manufacturers may be supported by consideration of itinerancy. Some smiths were equal to the lowest grade of noble and enjoyed certain rights, such as freedom of movement (Comber 2004,



97). Whilst this enabled smiths to move from region to region it may also have heightened people's perception of craftspeople. The notion that they were individuals who had links to, or even embodied, the supernatural qualities of a different, perhaps dangerous, world may have been heightened by the distances the smiths travelled (see Helms 1988; 1993, 44–9; Hedeager 2001, 487). This may have enhanced both their own and their patrons' reputations (also see Helms 1993, 34).

Some skilled artisans may have been sent to work in areas not only to produce goods that tied individuals and groups to wider social affiliations and ideals but also as an explicit message and expression of the powerful, indeed fearful energies that important individuals could control. Smiths, therefore, provided valuable services far beyond the products of their craft. They may have been integral to the continuing formulation and maintenance of social ties, largely as symbolic messengers. Through their presence, the visible act of creation and the products produced, they significantly contributed to the recognition and acceptance of political leaders and a structure of life in certain parts of Early Historic Scotland.

Understanding the non-ferrous metalworking evidence from other areas, particularly the Northern and Western Isles is more problematic. Discussions of non-ferrous metalworking in these areas are normally associated with the Brough of Birsay, Orkney (Curle 1982), whose range and quantity of finds rank it alongside sites such as Dunadd. This site has, consciously or otherwise, influenced interpretations of other Northern Isles metalworking assemblages where the recovery of such material is often taken to indicate high status (e.g. Sharples 1998, 210). All this, of course, may be true and it may well be that the distribution of metalworking debris across the Northern and Western Atlantic seaboard was influenced by important potentates living within the confines of places such as Birsay or Scalloway. Their influence may even have extended down the western seaboard. As no site from the Hebrides stands out as the central place in the region, influence from the north may explain the occurrence of material such as the Cnoc a' Comhdhalach brooch mould.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> However, a Pictish association for all the debris does not necessarily follow. We have seen that some of the Hebridean moulds can be paralleled on the western mainland, particularly Dunadd. Given the location of the islands a mixture of cultural influences should not be unexpected. Perhaps if we are looking for a central place then one should consider looking north or east, or perhaps even west to Ireland.

Again, such distributions and patterns may have been closely associated with the definition of status, gender and identity across the seaboard. Sharples (1998; 2003) has argued that during the second half of the first millennium AD the role of architecture and artefacts in areas of Atlantic Scotland was different from the preceding period because the production and use of artefacts became central to social discourse. Architecture was no longer the medium through which status and identity was defined. Artefacts took centre stage.

But perhaps the search for central places obscures more subtle trajectories. Numerous scenarios for the distribution of metalworking debris across Scotland have been articulated throughout this paper, and perhaps in some areas, such as the northern and western islands, the role and use of metalworking was different. Perhaps the patterns point to a more egalitarian distribution of wealth. Perhaps metalworking was more widespread and real social difference is seen in attributes such as the quality and decoration of the objects. We should also be open to the suggestion that in some areas fine-metalworkers were not tied to aristocratic sites. This forces us to consider why there should be regional differences in the control of fine metalwork. One possibility is that centralisation on high status sites is a sign of political development, and/or some areas lay outwith the direct control of power centres (see also Campbell and Heald 2007). This could explain the situation in the Western and Northern Isles prior to the Viking incursions. At the very least, the emerging evidence suggests that there was complexity, and no doubt regional variations, in the organisation of metalworking in Early Historic Scotland, and the areas of differing organisation may or may not coincide with the conventional boundaries drawn by archaeologists and historians.

### *Conclusion*

Discussions of non-ferrous metalworking debris from the Early Historic period are often centred on assemblages from high status sites. Narratives are often influenced by the perception that the craft was a high status activity controlled by kings who lived in forts and other central places. Analysis of the dataset shows that, particularly in the Gaelic and British Kingdoms, this is true. However, these patterns and associations only tell part of the story. Non-ferrous metalworking took place on a wider variety of sites than hitherto realised, including sites occupied by people arguably at the lower end of the social ladder.

Often the smiths who worked on these sites produced objects that were not mundane, everyday objects, but objects of some status, previously considered to have been manufactured only on 'higher status' sites. They also used precious metals. The possibility that all of these sites were high status or convenient workshops cannot be sustained either on the available evidence or the prevailing socio-political models.

Consideration of the wider socio-political implications leads to alternative interpretations and emphasises the role of the smith *beyond* the confines of nuclear centres and their wider role in the first millennium AD landscape. One suggestion is that, in some parts of Scotland, the upper echelons did control non-ferrous metalworking and that both the finished products and the actual act of creation were integral components in maintaining power relations. The finished objects were powerful statements through which wider group affiliations could be constructed and maintained. Furthermore, within this social transaction the presence of the smith at the receiving site was as important as the objects made, an explicit expression of the wealth and expertise that royalty controlled and redistributed. The magical components and perceptions of itinerancy inherent within their craft may have heightened this significance. However, we should also be aware that in some areas metalworkers were not tied to ostensibly aristocratic sites.

It is clear that one model will not explain all of the evidence and there are models to be assessed in future work. One thing, though, is clear—the need to appreciate the active role of individuals like smiths in our narratives. Individuals and groups created, maintained and dissolved relationships across Early Historic Scotland. Smiths may have been pivotal agents in this ebb and flow. If so, we should unleash them from the site-specific and allow them, and our minds, to wander across the wider Early Historic landscape. If we do not, how else are we to understand the role of object and crafts in Early Medieval society?

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*Appendix*

Table 4: Sites with non-ferrous metalworking of arguable Early Historic date. (Sites in italics are probable).

	SITE	SITE TYPE	REFERENCE
Shetland			
1	Scalloway	Cellular building	Sharples 1998
2	Burland	Rectilinear building	Moore & Wilson 2002; Heald forthcoming
3	<i>Jarlshof</i>	<i>Wheelhouse phases</i>	<i>Hamilton 1956</i>
Orkney			
4	Pool	Cellular building	Hunter 2007
5	Gurness	Cellular building	Hedges 1987; Close-Brooks 1987
6	Brough of Birsay	Settlement	Curle 1982
7	Skaill	Rectilinear building	Buteux 1997
Ross & Cromarty & Inverness-shire			
8	Portmahomack	Monastic	Carver 2004
9	Craig Phadrig	Fort	Small & Cottam 1972; Stevenson 1972
Fife & Perthshire			
10	Dundurn	Fort	Alcock, Alcock & Driscoll 1989
11	Clatchard Craig	Fort	Close-Brooks 1986
12	<i>East Lomond Hill</i>	<i>Fort</i>	<i>RCAHMS 1933</i>
Edinburgh & Lothians			
13	<i>Dalmahoy</i>	<i>Fort</i>	<i>Stevenson 1949</i>
Strathclyde & Ayrshire			
14	Alt Clut	Fort	Alcock & Alcock 1990
15	Buiston	Crannog	Munro 1882a & b; Crone 2000; MacSween 2000
16	Dundonald	Fort	Caldwell & Campbell 2004

Table 4 (*cont.*)

	SITE	SITE TYPE	REFERENCE
17	Mote of Mark	Fort	Curle 1914; Laing & Longley 2006
18	Whithorn	Monastic	Hill 1997
19	<i>Isle of Whithorn</i>	<i>Stray find</i>	<i>Radford 1956</i>
Argyll, Bute & Inner Hebrides			
20	Dunollie	Fort	Alcock & Alcock 1987
21	<i>Bruach an Drumein</i>	<i>Open settlement</i>	<i>Heald &amp; Hunter 2008</i>
22	<i>Ardifuar</i>	<i>Dun</i>	<i>Christison &amp; Anderson 1905</i>
23	Dunadd	Fort	Christison & Anderson 1905; Craw 1930; Lane & Campbell 2000
24	Loch Glashan	Crannog	Crone & Campbell 2005; Campbell 2005
25	St Columba's Cave	Cave	Tolan-Smith 2001
26	<i>Ellary Boulder Cave</i>	<i>Cave</i>	<i>Tolan-Smith 2001</i>
27	Inchmarnock	Monastic	Heald 2008
28	St Blane's	Monastic	Anderson 1900; Laing, Laing & Longley 1998
29	<i>Little Dunagoil</i>	<i>Fort</i>	<i>Marshall 1964</i>
30	<i>Ugadale Point</i>	<i>Dun</i>	<i>Fairhurst 1956</i>
31	<i>Kildonan Bay</i>	<i>Dun</i>	<i>Fairhurst 1939</i>
32	Iona	Monastic	Barber 1981; Reece 1981; McCormick 1992
Outer Hebrides			
33	Loch na Beirgh	Cellular building	Harding & Gilmour 2000
34	<i>Bac Mhic Connain</i>	<i>Reused wheelhouse</i>	<i>Beveridge &amp; Callander 1932</i>
35	Eilean Olabhat	Cellular building	Armit 1996; Armit, Dunwell & Campbell 2009
36	Cnoc a' Comhdhalach	Reused wheelhouse	Beveridge 1911; Campbell & Heald 2007
37	<i>Garry Iochdrach</i>	<i>Reused wheelhouse</i>	<i>Beveridge &amp; Callander 1932</i>
38	A' Cheardach Mhor	Cellular building	Young & Richardson 1960
39	Dun Cuier	Cellular building	Young 1956
40	Dunan Ruadh	Cellular building	Foster & Pouncett 2000



PART THREE

LANDSCAPES FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD



PICTISH ARCHAEOLOGY:  
PERSISTENT PROBLEMS AND STRUCTURAL SOLUTIONS

Stephen T. Driscoll

*Problems in perspective*

No archaeologist or historian of early Scotland can be unaffected by *The Problem of the Picts*. Despite the exponential growth in Pictish studies since 1955 when the book was published it remains a benchmark and valuable introduction to the subject. It is no mean achievement for an academic book to provide a touchstone for the subject after more than fifty years. The golden anniversary of *The Problem of the Picts* was certainly an appropriate point to take stock of its legacy in Pictish studies and reflect on what remains to be done.<sup>1</sup>

We should begin by acknowledging that the enduring value of *The Problem of the Picts* stems from the interest in Pictish studies that it kindled and the interdisciplinary approach that it advocated. Of course, Wainwright and his collaborators never thought in terms of a single problem; rather they presented a set of interconnected reflections on the available evidence. Nevertheless, for some the use of the word *problem* has come to be seen as a problematic admission of academic difficulty, which has served to encourage the Pictomania that has flourished alongside scholarly interest in the subject. It is, of course, unreasonable to hold Wainwright *et al.* to account for the wilder flights of fancy that have appeared under the banner of Pictish studies. Primarily, he and his colleagues were attempting to revive a subject area that had been written off as impenetrably obscure, so they

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<sup>1</sup> This paper derives from the two versions of a lecture entitled 'The Problem with Pictish Archaeology: a Southern Perspective' delivered at conferences in Perth in 2004 and then Leeds in 2006. The purpose there was to provide a wide overview of the state of Pictish archaeology. Although this paper retains that general thrust, it has been altered to take into account the various contributions collected in this volume, some of which cover the same ground more comprehensively. It has also benefited from numerous conversations with colleagues in the SERF team, with Ian Ralston and, of course, Katherine Forsyth. I am particularly grateful to Mark Hall who helped to clarify a number of points here, to improve my expression and who has done the most to drive this entire project forward from the Perth conference to this publication.

can be forgiven for emphasising the romantic and mysterious dimension of a 'lost people'. The fact that Pictomania has flourished in their wake just as steady and substantive progress was being made in academic Pictish studies is no more than an indication of the increasing popular interest in Scotland's ancient origins.

In the last major review of the Picts, held in Dundee on the 30th anniversary of *The Problem of the Picts*, Leslie Alcock presented a paper which attempted to demystify, even normalise, the Picts by emphasising the shared European characteristics of Pictish material culture (Alcock 1987). This discussion follows Alcock's demystifying approach in playing down the peculiarity of the Picts, but also suggests that the problematic aspects of Pictish studies are its strength and potentially the source of more widespread academic recognition. As mentioned already, there is no denying that *The Problem of the Picts* is useful for reflecting upon how the subject has developed, which in this case will serve as a platform for considering how archaeology can make a more significant contribution to Pictish studies, and how Pictish Studies might warrant more attention within Britain and the wider scholarly world. How can we capitalise on the unique visual appeal of Pictish sculpture to bring Pictish studies to the attention of the wider world? More than fifty years on it does not seem good enough that the Picts remain relegated to the backwaters of regional history or that most early medieval scholars fail to recognise or appreciate the cultural and political achievements of the Picts.

In what follows, attention will focus on how archaeology has contributed to Pictish studies and how material culture studies (in their widest sense) might make a significant contribution to Pictish studies over the next generation. Elsewhere in this volume there are more authoritative reflections on aspects of the historical, linguistic and art-historical scholarship on the Picts, however these topics also need to be considered from an archaeological perspective because all of the contributions to *The Problem of the Picts* included some archaeological content. The prominence of archaeology in discussions of the Picts can be explained partially by the scant historical evidence, but the fascinating character of Pictish material culture also plays a part. An important aspect of the Pictish phenomenon is that it encompassed the heterogeneous and sprawling landscapes of northern Scotland as far as both the Northern and Western Isles, with the consequence that Pictish material culture blends universal Pictish traits with distinctive regional traditions.

Despite the grand spread of Pictish culture, this discussion will concentrate on the mainland south of the Mounth, at the principle interface between the Roman world and Caledonia. This is not to diminish the potential value of material in the Northern and Western Isles, only to recognise that in the Isles the Pictish horizons are obscured by the dense Norse cultural overlay and that the preceding Iron Ages societies on the isles were physically and conceptually distinctive from those of the southern midlands. These differences require that they be considered in their own right and can be seen to be peripheral to cultural developments on the mainland.<sup>2</sup> This does beg the question of whether it is appropriate to speak of a single Pictish heartland. Famously, Isabel Henderson argued that the original Pictish heartland was in Moray on the basis of sculptural evidence (1958) and more recently this has been argued from a historical basis by Woolf who has proposed relocating Fortriu from Strathearn to Moray (2006). While acknowledging the importance of the North-East, it seems increasingly clear that proximity to the Roman Imperial frontier, participation in post-Roman trade networks and engagement with the Northumbrian, British and Gaelic worlds are keys to understanding the social evolution of the Picts, influences which are most pronounced in Southern Pictland.

It is not just the political geography that dictates the importance of the southern perspective, physical geographic factors are at least as relevant. The most significant developments in archaeological evidence have been the discoveries made by aerial archaeology, which have had their greatest impact in south-eastern and central Scotland—in the fertile corn-lands of the southern Picts where cereal agriculture flourishes. These revolutionary changes in the archaeological record allow us to understand how this area developed into the core of the medieval Scottish kingdom. It is precisely such questions of long-term social and political evolution which will interest scholars operating beyond the bounds of Pictland and allow them to link the unique artistic legacy with more familiar historical processes of state formation and institutional growth.

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<sup>2</sup> Wainwright, of course, recognised this northern distinctiveness by reprising a summer school on *The Northern Isles* (1962b).



*A critical appreciation of The Problem of the Picts*

For many working on northern Britain in the early medieval period, *The Problem of the Picts* provided their initial Pictish encounter, even preceding their first sight of a symbol stone or view of the north side of the Ochils. This influence shows how successful Wainwright and his colleagues were at reviving a somewhat dormant subject area and legitimising the Picts as an acceptable topic for scholarly endeavour. However stimulating their volume has been though, it must be recognised that while the individual elements are coherent, collectively it presents a challenging introduction. Given the origins of the book at a summer school meeting, some oblique comments stemming from discussion are to be expected, but the high level of background knowledge presumed reveals the scholarly ambition at the heart of the project.

Wainwright's visionary contribution was to conceive of this as "a composite work" bringing together the archaeological, historical and linguistic evidence which can now be recognised as a vanguard of interdisciplinary studies. As Barbara Crawford in this volume points out (pp. 1–2), Wainwright's inspirational move was to bring the expertise of several scholars together to examine the evidence for the Picts from different angles. It is a moot point whether the project was conceived of as 'interdisciplinary' in the sense of a genuinely collaborative venture—the lack of fit between the individual papers suggests that there was limited interaction between the contributors—but there can be little doubt that this approach has set the agenda for future research.

It is commonplace for Pictish scholars to bemoan the poverty of the textual evidence, but we must admire the way that Wainwright attempted to turn this flaw into a virtue. Intellectually, his greatest contribution was to demonstrate the value of discussing the archaeology and the texts on equal terms, which makes *The Problem of the Picts* a seminal work in the field of historical archaeology. Two of the most significant scholars to have been influenced by this agenda, Leslie Alcock and Martin Carver, have gone on to make substantial contributions to both Pictish studies and historical archaeology. Moreover Wainwright, now best remembered for his work in Scotland, also studied medieval England (1962a). In this respect he also set out a path followed by Lelsie Alcock, who believed that there is much to be learned from *not* separating Early Historic Scotland into Anglo-Saxon,

British, Gaelic and Pictish ghettos and that there is much to be gained from disregarding the modern English border, a key theme also in the recent historical analysis by Fraser (2009). Such cross-border movement has defined Carver's work since he began working in Scotland.

This methodological innovation, which should be more widely appreciated as a defining work of historical archaeology, has been overshadowed by the wider academic context which dominated archaeological studies at the time, culture history. Although this essentially descriptive and empiricist intellectual position was about to be superseded by the New Archaeology on both sides of the Atlantic (Trigger 1989), in the 1950s it was reasonable to argue that knowledge of Pictish material culture was so 'incomplete' that culture history (that is the naive study of ethnic groups from their material remains) still provided a valid research agenda. Certainly, at the time culture history dominated the intellectual agendas of the major national institutions concerned with archaeology.

In considering the strengths and limitations of *The Problem of the Picts*, it goes without saying that the subject has moved on. For instance, Wainwright's historical contribution has been steadily eroded as successive scholars have engaged with the primary sources. While his readings of the classical sources and his broad account of Pictish political organisation into northern and southern regions has survived, almost nothing can be salvaged from the more detailed narrative which Wainwright proposed. This is not a serious criticism. He acknowledged the tentative nature of his conclusions and there seems little doubt that had he lived he would have responded to the work of Henderson (1967), Anderson (1973) and others to refine his own understanding of Pictish history.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the historical discussion was Wainwright's willingness to consider all available sources and his ability to look beyond the text as in, for instance, using the twelfth-century *De Situ Albanie* to reconstruct Pictish political geography (1955, 46–8).<sup>3</sup> In this respect he is truly remarkable, because alongside the traditional political history he introduced new narrative

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<sup>3</sup> The validity of this reading has been comprehensively questioned by Dauvit Broun (1994), but Wainwright's willingness to consider the full range of sources cannot be faulted.

strands, not least a concern for the domestic rhythms of social life represented by houses and graves, and a desire to situate these events geographically. The distribution maps set a standard of legibility and utility that is only now being surpassed through digital mapping and Geographical Information Systems (Fig. 7.1). However, one puzzling point, is the lack of correspondence between Wainwright's historical work, which concentrated on high status people and places, and his archaeological work which was concerned with peasant settlements well below the historical radar. This would suggest that he did not fully appreciate the strength of the historical archaeological method he was developing even as he was articulating a well-considered interdisciplinary approach (1962a).

Naturally, the dominant paradigm of early medieval Scottish history has moved on and there is a wide consensus that narrative in the sense of traditional political history is probably impossible for this period. The potential of source criticism to reveal processes, shifting values and long-term social evolution has, to a significant extent, replaced the effort to construct convincing accounts into which all the pieces fit. Moreover, there is a consensus that there is more to be gained from understanding how and why the Pictish king-lists assumed their shape than from using them to animate sparse annalistic information (Broun 1999). This paradigm shift is not confined to the historical scholarship but is apparent in archaeological studies as well, where there has been a move away from site-based investigations to an interest in structure and process, a development which underpins *landscape archaeology*. This shift from event and site to structure is a feature of medieval archaeology generally (Gerrard 2003), but is particularly timely for Pictish studies.

What, then, of the individual studies in *The Problem of the Picts*? Robert Stevenson's paper on Pictish art was essentially an archaeological essay concerned with recognising large-scale patterns and broad chronologies within a corpus of sculpture that had been widely accessible since the appearance of the *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (Allen and Anderson 1903). Stevenson wisely decided against exploring the meaning of the Pictish symbols, instead he focused on a typological analysis. His decision to sidestep a key issue in Pictish studies has largely been followed in academic discourse. The position he sets out, that the symbols are significant cultural markers, but their specific meanings are essentially beyond knowing, might be



Fig. 7.1: Early Scotland Political Map 1b from the inside cover of *The Problem of the Picts* which remains a model of cartography even if many of the regional identifications are no longer accepted.

termed the 'contemporary consensus'. Such a perspective did not permit Stevenson to focus on specific monuments, and as a result, his pioneering work on what would now be described as a 'biographical approach' to monuments which he was to articulate at Inchyra (1959), does not feature here.

Stevenson's paper did not really shape contemporary art-historical studies of the Picts; that was done by Isabel Henderson, who managed to emphasise the local geographical context while embracing the full range of decorated material culture and exploring wider European themes (1958, 1967). This established an agenda fully developed in the definitive study of Pictish art, *The Art of the Picts: Sculpture and Metalwork in Early Medieval Scotland* (Henderson and Henderson 2004). That said, Stevenson's biographical approach has proved particularly effective when dealing with the archaeology of monuments with a complex iconography and history of use, as with the Crieff Burgh Cross (Hall *et al.* 2000), the St Andrews Sarcophagus (Foster 1998) and the Hilton of Cadboll Cross-slab (James *et al.* 2008). Its value is not confined to high art and such an approach can sustain a range of readings (Clarke 2007). Both the general studies of locations and trends and the detailed assessments of iconography and biography have created a new sort of Pict, a sophisticated consumer of early medieval artistic trends and an innovative contributor to the Insular Art tradition. To date, art-historical discussions have been dominated by the high art perspective—influences, iconography and patronage—with relatively little consideration given to assessing the wider social significance of Pictish decorative arts. Untangling the symbolic meaning embedded in decorative art is challenging, but in the case of the Picts the symbol stones create a link with literacy which invites further research.

Pictish literacy is an implicit theme of Jackson's study of Pictish language although archaeologists have wished he had directed more attention to inscriptions, which feature only marginally in Jackson's discussions. The significance of the ogham inscriptions and their potential relationship to the symbol stones was never explicitly examined. Indeed, Jackson's limitations as an epigrapher encouraged him to see a non-Indo-European strand in Pictish, an ideal with remarkable widespread popular appeal and virtually no following within contemporary linguistic scholarship (Forsyth 1996; 1997, but see Talyor, p. 68).

Probably the most influential contribution and the most widely reproduced images from *The Problem of the Picts* are Jackson's place-

name distribution maps which, more than anything else, reinforced the notion that the North-East was the cultural province of the Picts (Fig. 7.2). Although our understanding of the semantics of Pictish place-name elements has advanced in recent years (see Taylor this volume), Jackson's work stimulated a significant body of geographical research by Graeme Whittington and colleagues which has provided the basis for modern understanding of Pictish settlement geography (Whittington 1975; Cottam and Small 1974). Despite Halliday and Fraser's reservations about *Pit*-names as accurate indicators of Pictish settlement—of course they are survivors of a larger pattern which is mostly lost (pp. 309–10 this volume)—the geographical studies based upon the *Pit*-names were an invaluable start. They were the first systematic attempts to analyse the Pictish agrarian economy and their key finding, that *Pit*-names and symbol stones occupy the most desirable land, underpins all subsequent studies of the Pictish landscape.

In many respects these three papers in *The Problem of the Picts* have come to define the core of modern Pictish studies—sculpture, place-names and medieval texts—and there can be no question that they advanced the Pictish cause significantly. However, we may reflect on the merits and weaknesses of them collectively. There were two major gaps. Neither the Roman Empire nor the Church feature prominently in the book. At the time Romano-British archaeology in the north was probably too insulated in its own military paradigm to be of much use in explaining the development of Pictish society, so the marginal role of Roman studies is understandable. However, as post-colonial theory has gradually penetrated Roman-British studies (Mattingly 2006), it has become plain that the influence of the Empire extended well beyond its frontiers and that despite the short period of occupation the Romans had a profound impact on the Picts (Hunter 2007). Arguably the most important Roman legacy was the introduction of Christianity (Thomas 1971; 1981).

Of these two omissions, the Church's is perhaps the more striking given that the great masterpieces of Pictish sculpture were ecclesiastical works, and that the majority of the Pictish textual references were transmitted via monastic scriptoria, and that the Church provided a social cohesion capable of spanning regional and political divisions. This ecclesiastical blind spot probably reflects the research perspectives of the time, but was also symptomatic of the influence of the post-Reformation Scottish Church, which discouraged interest in the archaeology and history of the early Church.

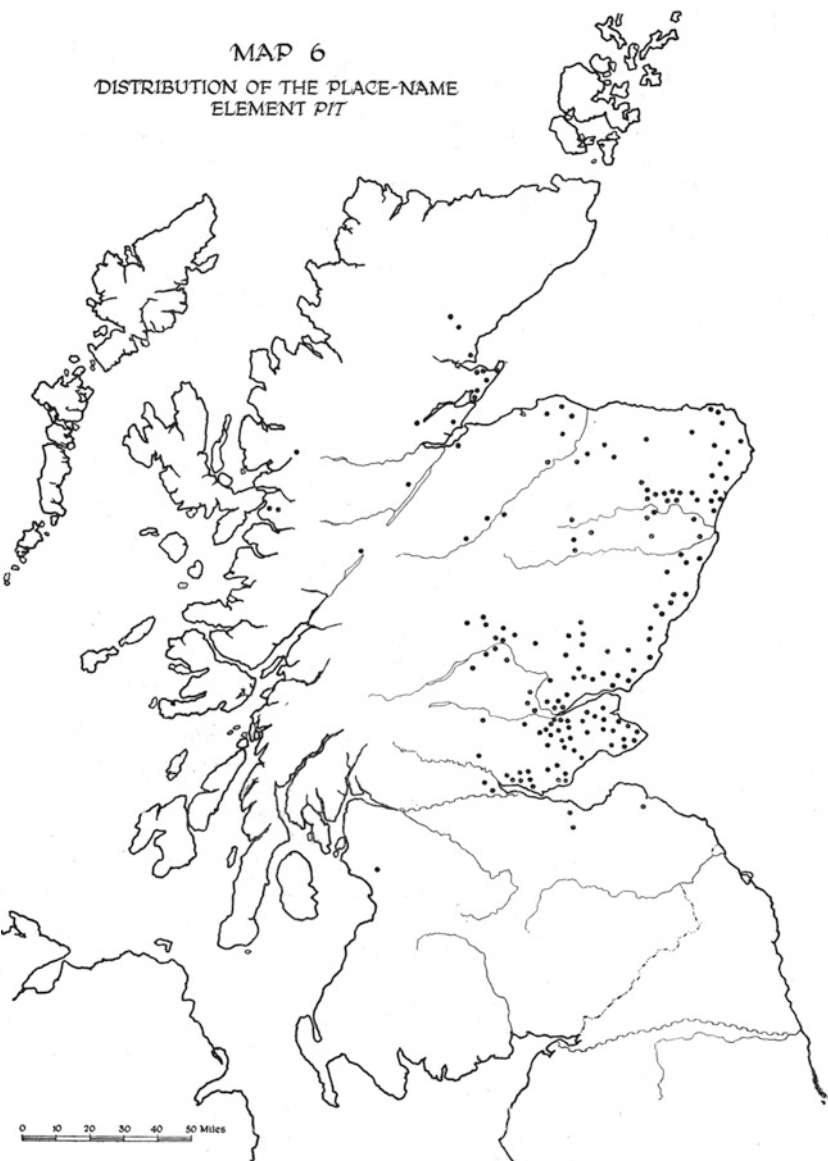


Fig. 7.2: Distribution of the place-name element *Pit* from *The Problem of the Picts*, p. 147, perhaps the most influential visual representation of Pictish settlement.

*Archaeology in The Problem of the Picts*

The technological changes of the past fifty plus years and the professionalisation of the discipline make it difficult to assess the archaeological chapters even-handedly. Dick Feachem's endorsement for the 1980 reprint—"this must surely remain the final statement for years to come"—has proved to have been overly optimistic. These papers were composed on the eve of the radiocarbon revolution that reshaped prehistoric chronologies across the globe. Moreover, they were conceived of before the New Archaeology when British archaeological theory was defined by Hawkes' 'ladder of inference', the invasion hypothesis and the post-Roman continuity debate. Absolute chronologies and shifting research agendas have rendered much of the prehistory written in 1950s Britain quaint and this is true in part for *The Problem of the Picts*.

Of the three archaeology papers, Stuart Piggott's overview of later prehistory has fared the worst. It never really engaged with Pictish issues and has been rendered meaningless by radiocarbon dating. One might even question his engagement with the Pictish project. On the other hand, it is a measure of Wainwright's intellectual agility that he tackled the combined topic of "Houses and Graves", just as it is a measure of the poverty of the evidence available to him that he could cover the topic in ten pages. The explosion of information generated by aerial reconnaissance and rescue archaeology in the decades that have followed has rendered Wainwright's account redundant for both Pictish settlements and cemeteries.<sup>4</sup>

It is Feachem's chapter on fortifications that has stood the test of time best, largely because there have been relatively few excavations to challenge his suggestions based on the survey of upstanding field monuments. Feachem made two observations that still influence our understanding. Firstly, he proposed that a group of smallish circular fortified settlements, 'ringforts', which were found in the Pictish area and especially the glens of Perthshire could be Pictish in date. Subsequent excavations in Strath Tummel at Litigan and Queen's View (Taylor 1990) and at Aldclune near Blair Atholl, all Perthshire

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<sup>4</sup> Wainwright's *Souterrains of Southern Pictland* (1963) where he explored aspects of domestic settlement archaeology is still useful, even if his suggestions about subterranean cattle byres are no longer tenable.



(Hingley *et al.* 1997) revealed a broader chronology extending from the later Iron Age to the end of the Pictish era. These excavations indicate that these buildings were partially or completely roofed, so the term 'homestead' is now preferred to 'ringfort', but they were very substantial structures with walls up to 3m thick. Feachem also noted that in a few instances these massively built round-houses were located within earlier fortifications, as a sort of citadel within the extensive fortifications of the hillfort, as at Turin Hill, Angus and Moncrieffe Hill, Perth. Feachem noted a formal similarity between these sites and so-called 'nuclear forts', such as Dunadd, Argyll, which Stevenson had recently suggested was the characteristic type of Dark Age "capital" (1949). These observations are important not least because they set up propositions to be examined archaeologically. In addition, they provided the first indication of how the settlement sequence might be identified and how a settlement hierarchy might be conceptualised.

Over the past fifty years or so a substantial body of information on the chronology and morphology of fortifications in Scotland has accumulated, which has refined understanding of Pictish fortifications and moved academic discussion beyond the descriptive issues identified by Feachem. As far as excavation goes, Leslie Alcock's reconnaissance excavations at Early Historic sites,<sup>5</sup> some of which were Pictish (Dunnottar, Kincardineshire; Urquhart, Inverness-shire, and Dundurn and Forteviot, both Perthshire), have had the highest profile, but complementing this work geographically has been a series of excavations by Ian Ralston at Burghead and Portknockie in Moray (usefully summarised by Ralston 2004) and his regional study of Angus (Dunwell and Ralston 2008). Alcock's work, though small-scale trial excavations, nonetheless provided ample material for commentary and has been influential in establishing the credibility of historical sources. In the late 1980s and 1990s the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) overcame their aversion to working in the Pictish heartlands with sustained surveys in Perthshire and Aberdeenshire, both of which have enhanced our understanding of Pictish hillforts.

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<sup>5</sup> This programme of research underpinned Alcock's final book *Kings and Warriors, Craftsmen and Priests* (2003) but full reports for each of the sites previously appeared in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*.

Just as there has been a significant shift in approaches to historical evidence since 1955, there have been equally profound shifts in the paradigms that govern archaeological research. The fundamental concept underlying this intellectual change is the realisation that to understand complex social and political developments, such as the formation of Pictish kingdoms, one needs to understand the material and intellectual structures that sustained the Picts. From a methodological perspective this requires a different approach to archaeological investigation: descriptive site-based studies in themselves are insufficient. Sites must be situated in their economic and social landscape and analysed with respect to their wider cultural context.

### *Advances in evidence and approach*

Even if ways of thinking about archaeological sites had not changed over the past fifty years or so, the large quantities of new evidence generated by aerial photography and rescue archaeology would have required new approaches. Systematic aerial reconnaissance began in Scotland during the 1970s and by the 1980s it was recognised that the evidence would revolutionise settlement archaeology in the fertile eastern districts where the soils and climatic conditions generated cropmarks of archaeological sites (Maxwell 1983; Driscoll 1987; RCAHMS 1990; Brophy and Crowley 2005).

The impact of aerial archaeology on Pictish studies has been greatest in southern Pictland—Fife, Perthshire, Angus—where it has been possible to populate the fertile arable zones with a range of settlement forms. These new discoveries provided a counterbalance to the record of surviving archaeological monuments which was largely confined to the upland margins (Fig. 7.3) (Driscoll 1987; RCAHMS 1990). As the recent RCAHMS survey *In the Shadow of Bennachie* (2007) makes plain, this is a southern phenomenon; the soil and climatic conditions which prevail north of the Mounth have been less productive in producing cropmarks.

The new discoveries coincided with the adoption of a landscape approach to the archaeological survey by the RCAHMS, leading to the first intensively-surveyed ‘Pictish’ landscapes in *North-east Perth* (1990) and *South-east Perth* (1994). Of course, these are not Pictish surveys in a chronologically-specific sense; they are studies of multi-period landscapes, some elements of which can be dated with

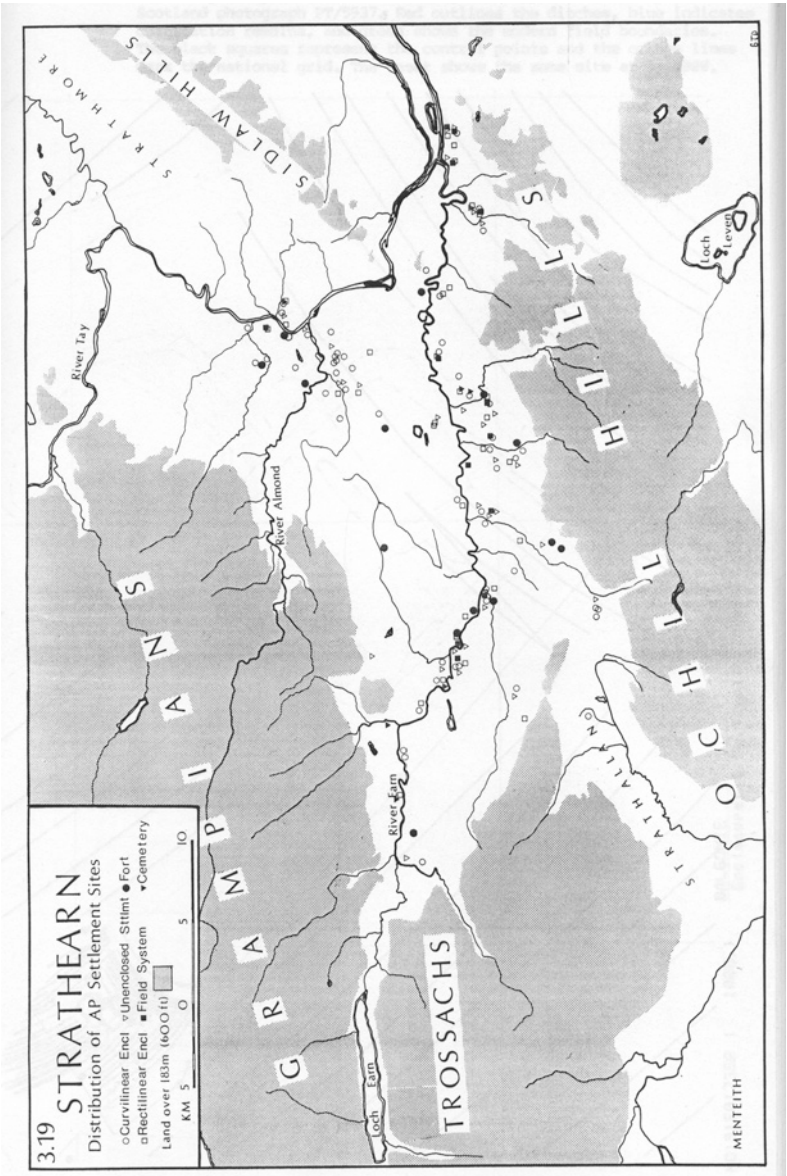
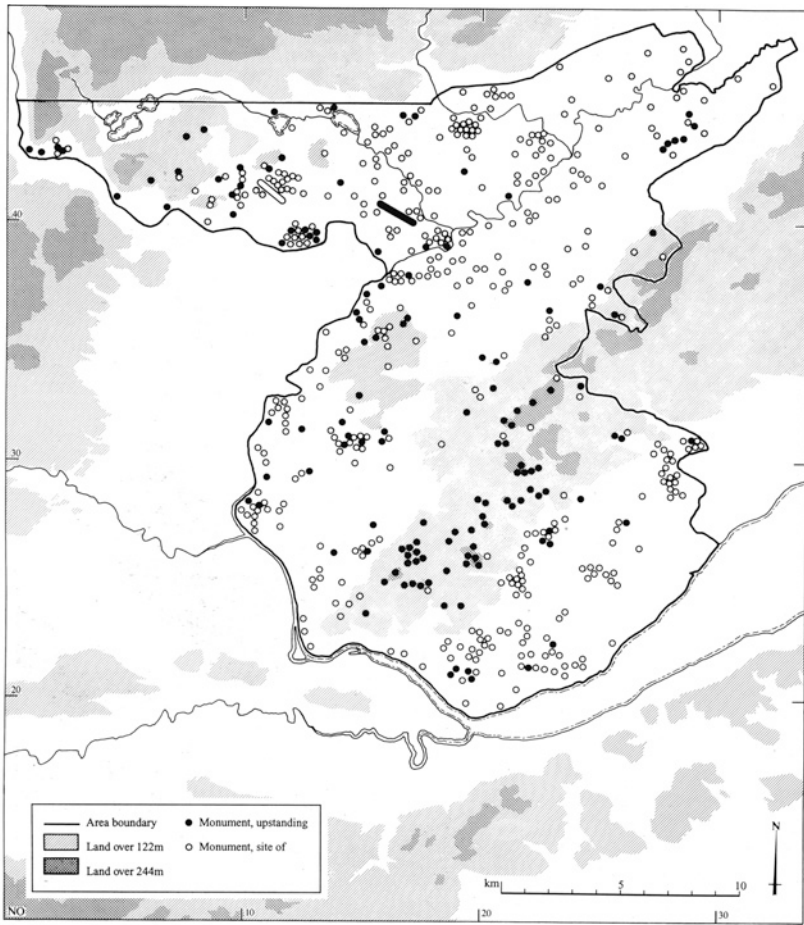


Fig. 7.3a: Distribution map illustrating the influence of aerial photography on settlement archaeology in Strathearn, Perthshire (Driscoll 1987).



*Distribution map of recorded archaeological monuments (NMRS DC 25011)*

Fig. 7.3b: A second distribution map illustrating the influence of aerial photography on settlement archaeology, here in south-east Perthshire (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS).

confidence, while others are not morphologically-specific enough or require ground truthing.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the RCAHMS surveys, there have been two other regional studies which grappled with aerial archaeology, one, a PhD thesis on Strathearn, was not supported by excavations (Driscoll 1987; 1991) and the other in Angus (Dunwell and Ralston 2008), which was able to integrate survey and excavation. The main intention behind the Angus project was to produce a new synthesis of the prehistoric and Early Historic landscape through an integrated programme of survey of upstanding monuments, examination of the aerial record and targeted excavations. The project advanced understanding of the cropmark archaeology and clarified the chronology of unenclosed settlements, but some sites, notably the hillforts, proved more difficult to date, even when extensively excavated. From a Pictish perspective, this work improves our understanding of lower status settlements, but also emphasises the challenges of working in intensively cultivated (i.e. the best) land; a point also made by Fraser and Halliday this volume.

The Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) project has recently sought to address this problem of chronologically-insensitive cropmark morphology by using the aerial record to guide more intensive investigations—excavation, survey and arable field-walking—in a tightly-defined study area consisting of three modern parishes (see below pp. 270–4). In summary, although detailed landscape studies in Pictland are limited in extent and have encountered a number of methodological problems, they remain the most promising way forward.

There has been more progress with the identification of Pictish settlement forms and particular house types, which have been assessed in some detail by Ian Ralston and colleagues (Ralston 1997; Dunwell and Ralston 2008). Ralston has shown that it is possible to write meaningfully about regional variation in architectural and settlement layout, and emphasises the particular nature of the northern architectural traditions as practiced by the ‘peripheral’ Picts. The discussion on Iron Age and Early Historic houses by Dunwell and Ralston (2008) addresses the difficulty posed by longevity and variability now

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<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the RCAHMS were only able to adopt landscape survey methods in Perthshire at the expense of ceasing to conduct excavations as they had done in Argyll.

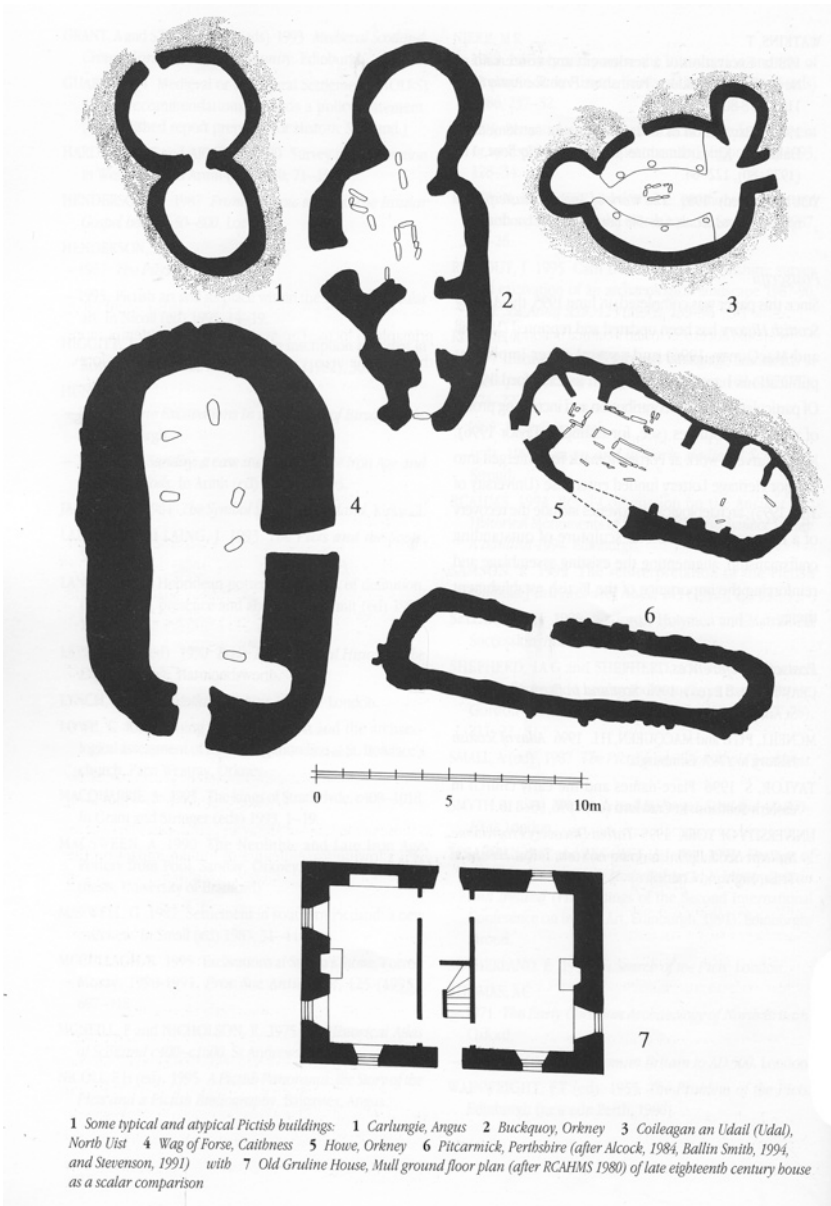


Fig. 7.4: Plans of Pictish houses at a common scale showing the range of architectural traditions practised in the first millennium. (Ralston 1997, 18.)

recognised in the round-house tradition and the emergence of the rectangular house forms (Fig. 7.4). Since the Pictish long-house was identified by the RCAHMS at Pitcarmick, excavations have confirmed that these buildings, which range from about 18–25m in length with a width of 6m, were of Early Historic date and it has been possible to identify such buildings in the arable Lowlands where they were built with earth-fast timbers and can be detected in the cropmark record (Dunwell and Ralston 2008, 136–40). This has not resolved the more interesting question of why the basic domestic form changed from round to rectangular, but at least allows us to identify the sites where we can investigate the chronology and explore the meaning of the shift in domestic architecture.

It has always been easier to identify the subterranean buildings known as souterrains. The classic stone-built curving passages were prone to being exposed accidentally by agriculture, and more recently these sites have been recognised in the aerial photographic record where they are a reliable indication of an Iron Age settlement. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the stone-built examples are only part of a range of subterranean structures, which appear to have been used primarily for the storage of food (Dunwell and Ralston 2008, 113–26).<sup>7</sup> It is clear that the majority of those that are dated are Iron Age and in so far as the few dated examples allow us to generalise, they seem to have gone out of use by the fourth century AD, in many cases being deliberately filled in. The potential importance of these structures in the context of the development of Pictish society was first identified by Trevor Watkins (1984) who linked them to the management and control of agricultural surpluses. Ian Armit (1999) subsequently extended this to argue that the abandonment of souterrains was caused by the withdrawal of the Roman military and the collapse of a command economy. Whether or not there is sufficient dating evidence to support such a chronologically-specific reading is a matter of debate,<sup>8</sup> however

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<sup>7</sup> The frequent incorporation of stones carved with prehistoric rock art, as for instance at Tealing, Angus, raises the possibility that souterrains may also have had religious or ritual functions, perhaps associated with agricultural fertility. Subterranean structures of similar, but not identical character are known from south-west Britain, Ireland, Brittany and Denmark (Clinton 2001). Some of the Irish examples have ogham inscriptions which imply a religious or cultic function, as for instance at Oweynagat, Rathcroghan (Waddell, Fenwick and Barton 2009).

<sup>8</sup> For instance the excavators of Shanzie, Perthshire, contest Armit's argument (Coleman and Hunter 2002, 79–80).

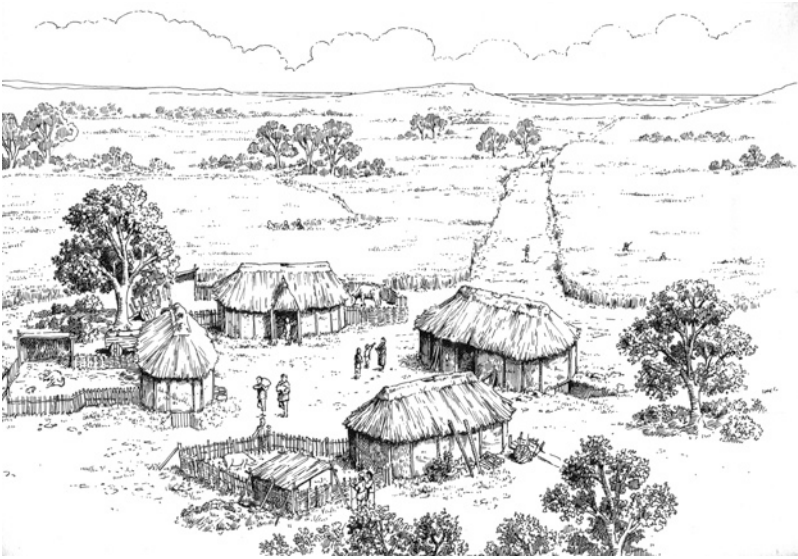


Fig. 7.5: An artist's impression of the Pictish settlement at Easter Kinnear, Fife based on excavation evidence (Driscoll 1997) and a great deal of imagination (from Driscoll 2002, 57, Crown Copyright).

the idea that late Iron Age, or 'proto-Pictish' society was capable of producing agricultural surpluses is of relevance when thinking about the emergence of Pictish kingdoms.

Although there have been huge advances in the ability to recognise and date Pictish settlement, there remain major gaps in our knowledge. We know that house architecture was radically altered in the Early Historic period, but on current evidence we are at a loss to explain why. Given the centrality of domestic architecture to social life this indicates a major social transformation, of which we have little understanding. The relative rarity of large-scale excavations, coupled with poor conditions for preservation of organic materials within the cropmark zone, mean that while we can locate Pictish farms we know next to nothing of the workings of a typical Pictish farm (Fig. 7.5). We are some distance away from understanding whether settlements were interconnected or how groups of farms might have been organised. In short, the Pictish roots of the medieval estates remain elusive.

This is probably the main challenge for Pictish settlement archaeology. Now that it is possible to identify sites, albeit imperfectly, attention must now shift to the systematic investigation of the settlement structure and its evolution. Such a structural focus requires a shift in methodology away from the site-based approaches to treating the



landscape as the unit of analysis and this requires a shift in thinking away from type-sites to issues of inter-relationships and organisational frameworks. The value of a structured, landscape approach has been demonstrated in Strathearn (Driscoll 1991), but until recently the readings of field monuments have not been supported by excavation. In the 1980s the RCAHMS took their first steps in this direction with their landscape studies of Perthshire (1990; 1994). Their cross-period approach reveals the long-term stability of the use of parts of the landscape as well as the ebb and flow of occupation in the uplands. If nothing else, these surveys reveal the longevity of the structures influencing the use and occupation of the land. These studies also suggest that we need to analyse how and in what circumstances sites are reused. This must go beyond explanations that rely purely on convenience and coincidence, we must allow that people in the past recognised the antiquity of their landscape and exploited it for religious and political ends and not merely for pragmatic ones (Driscoll 1998; 2004). The idea that peoples had an interest in the physical remains of the past and actively sought to reuse them is well accepted in Early Christian Ireland (Aitchison 1994; Newman 2007) and early medieval Northumbria (Bradley 1987), and provides the key to understanding the Pictish landscape.

### *Early Historic fortifications*

The main intellectual advance since *The Problem of the Picts* has been driven by Leslie Alcock, whose programme of investigating sites mentioned in early medieval sources led him to coin the term 'Early Historic' and to investigate several Pictish sites. Apart from generating welcome new evidence relating to specific sites, the way in which Alcock used the historical evidence not just to identify sites but to put them in their social and cultural context marked a significant advance. This integrated approach to the evidence, characteristic of a mature historical archaeology, contrasted sharply with Feachem's approach to the hillfort which was, in effect, ahistorical.

There has been other important work on Pictish forts, most notably by Ralston and colleagues in Moray and latterly in Angus (Ralston 2004; Dunwell and Ralston 2008). While this work has helped to refine our understanding of monument form and chronology—we are better

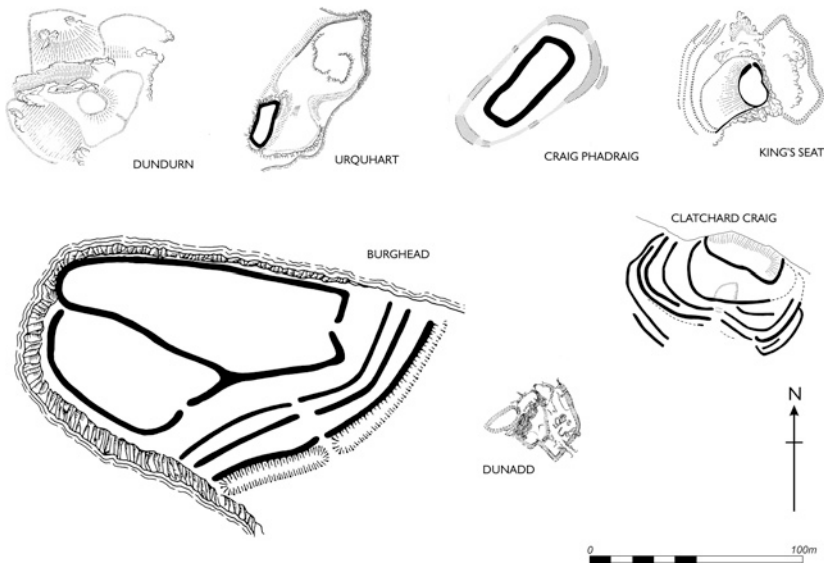


Fig. 7.6: Comparative plans of hillforts were a characteristic device used by Leslie Alcock; this composite of Pictish hillforts has been drawn from three such diagrams. (Alcock 2003, Figs. 55, 56, 60.)

able to differentiate prehistoric forts from Early Historic ones than Feachem was (Fig. 7.6)—the scale of these investigations has been relatively small. Consequently, we may be able to recognise the organisational similarities shared by the ‘nuclear’ forts at the royal sites of Dunadd, Argyll in Dál Riata (Lane and Campbell 2000) and Dundurn in Perthshire (Alcock *et al.* 1989), but our understanding of the workings of Dundurn is considerably less than at Dunadd. This is entirely a consequence of the exploratory scale of the Dundurn excavations, which were intended to confirm the historical identification and provide a site chronology. The dig did reveal remarkable conditions of preservation, including waterlogged structures, artefacts and ecofacts.

Pictish hillforts remain imperfectly understood, but thanks to Alcock’s work we can identify priorities for Pictish hillfort studies: 1) a sustained excavation on a Pictish hillfort, where organic preservation conditions are excellent, like Dundurn; 2) an investigation of an Iron Age type of hillfort which appears to have been reused in the Pictish period, such as Turin Hill, Angus (Fig. 7.7) or Moncrieffe Hill, Perthshire or

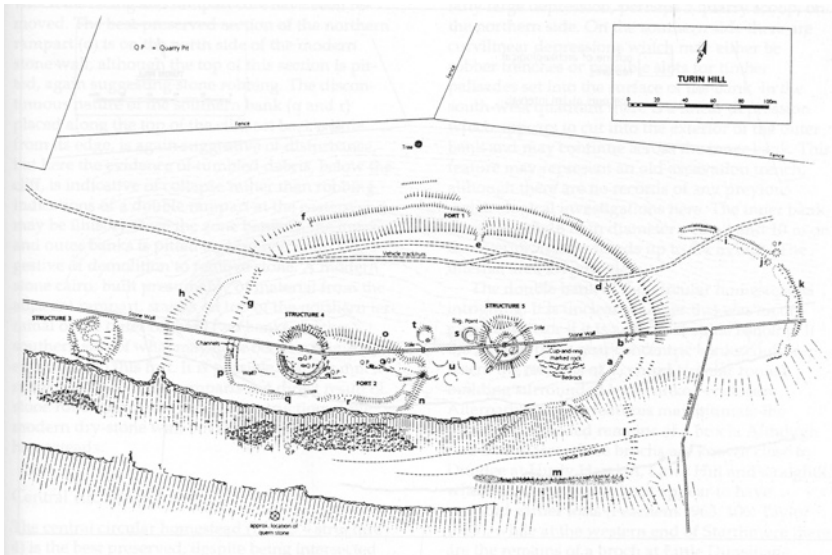


Fig. 7.7: This modern topographic survey of Turin Hill, Angus makes it plain that the smaller dun-like structure sits within an earlier set of ramparts. (Alexander and Ralston 1999, 41.)

Bennachie, Aberdeenshire; and 3) excavation of a later medieval power centre which continued to be significant in the Middle Ages, such as Urquhart or Dunnottar Castle.

Such excavations are needed not simply to understand the structural evolution of the most visible of Pictish settlement remains, but more importantly to provide a context for understanding Pictish material culture. We are blessed with an exceptional collection of brooches and other personal ornaments (Youngs 1989, Henderson and Henderson 2004, 87–121), supported by sculpture which contains the best representation of secular peoples in early medieval Europe, but we know very little about key aspects of Pictish material culture. How were the objects made and what was their social spread? How was the built environment physically and socially engineered? In short, we have very little to say about the symbolic and social importance of Pictish material culture, life ways and economics—the meat and drink of archaeologists. Archaeologists working in the Northern Isles could challenge this generalisation, but in both areas our understanding of Pictish social life remains inadequate.

*Christianity: burials, monuments and the Church*

For most of their recorded history the Picts were Christian, and most of what we know about the history of Picts comes down to us via ecclesiastical sources, so the reluctance of Wainwright and colleagues to investigate the Church is doubly surprising (1955, 94). Nevertheless, in the 1950s cemeteries of east-west oriented burials in stone cists without grave goods were thought to reveal the arrival and expansion of Christianity (Henshall 1956; Thomas 1971; Proudfoot and Aliaga-Kelly 1996). However, as more of these cemeteries have been excavated archaeologically and dated scientifically (e.g. Rees 2002), it has become clear that the long-cist tradition predates the coming of Christianity. The long-cist tradition impinges upon southern Pictland (cf. Greig *et al.* 2000, 606–8), but the characteristic Pictish grave form is identified with square barrows and low cairns (Ashmore 1980). These monuments also have their origins in the late Iron Age and predate the conversion (Alexander 2005), but they cannot be simply consigned to pagan practices as some (e.g. Forteviot) have produced dates in the eighth or ninth century by which time Christianity is well established (Poller 2008). As has been noted by both Ian Smith (1996) and Martin Carver (1998), there is an interface in southern Pictland between the long-cist and square-barrow traditions, but it does not appear that the existing chronology will allow this to be seen as a Christian-pagan dichotomy. A more complex picture of the relationship between Christianity and burial is now emerging in this rapidly developing area of study (see Winlow this volume).

The coming of Christianity has long been bound up in discussions of the Pictish symbol stones, which are perhaps still assumed to be expressions of pagan ritual practice. Pictish sculpture has always been the most fascinating aspect of Pictish material culture, but it was not until the 1970s that the Pictish burial record was examined systematically and that excavation evidence allowed the relationship between burials and the erection of some symbol stones to be established (Close-Brooks 1980; 1984, Winlow this volume). In the years that have followed, there have been a number of important interpretative breakthroughs, which have produced an uneasy academic consensus. Perhaps a majority of scholars in the field are persuaded by Samson (1992) that the symbols represent personal names rather than tribal names, markers of social rank or religious expressions. Independently,

study of ogham inscriptions on symbol stones revealed what may be bilingual texts (Forsyth 1996), a suggestion that supports the personal name interpretation. The reading of the symbols as names and the link with burials further supports the argument that what Allen and Anderson (1903) defined as the Class I symbol stones functioned as a means of asserting claims of a kindred's authority over land (Driscoll 1988). The unease surrounding these propositions arises because it is not possible to 'prove' these assertions through archaeological investigation. Broad correlations between the distribution of Class I sculpture and good land are convincing (Fig. 7.8), but to get at the relationship between monuments and land requires a more fine-grained approach, such as the investigation of early boundaries and symbol stones in Aberdeenshire pursued by the RCAHMS (2007, 116–30). Fortunately, there has been considerable advancement in appreciating the importance of the original findspots of Pictish stones (Mack 1997, 2002; RCAHMS 2008), which is now beginning to be exploited. When the sites of symbol stones can be identified, they invariably throw up interesting conjunctions, as with Ritchie's work at Meigle (1995). Although such associations are not proof, they echo patterns seen among the early Christian inscribed stones of the northern Britons (Forsyth 2005) and western Britons (Edwards 2001).

The ecclesiastical significance of what Allen and Anderson defined as the Class II monuments has never been in doubt and here distribution analysis makes it clear that by the eighth century, if not earlier, the patronage of sculpture was being monopolised by monasteries or other religious houses (Alcock 2003, compare Figs. 158 and 176; Gondek 2006). The potential of the sculpture to reveal aspects of land organisation is apparent in the relationships between sculpture and the Gaelic notes of the *Book of Deer* (Forsyth 2008). Whether this can be extended back to the Pictish period is a matter of debate. Similarly, many of the insights in the various biographic studies of stones, as for instance at Crieff (Hall *et al.* 2000) and Hilton of Cadboll (James *et al.* 2008), relate to the post-Pictish period. However, these studies also illuminated the topography of Pictish power at Strowan, the original site of the Crieff cross, and Hilton. Monumental sculpture, more than any other evidence, reveals the increasing importance of the Church in the social and political landscape of the Picts.

Were it not for the spectacularly successful excavations at Portmahomack (Carver 2004; 2008), the body of Pictish church archaeology would be confined to the study of sculpture as there are no upstanding

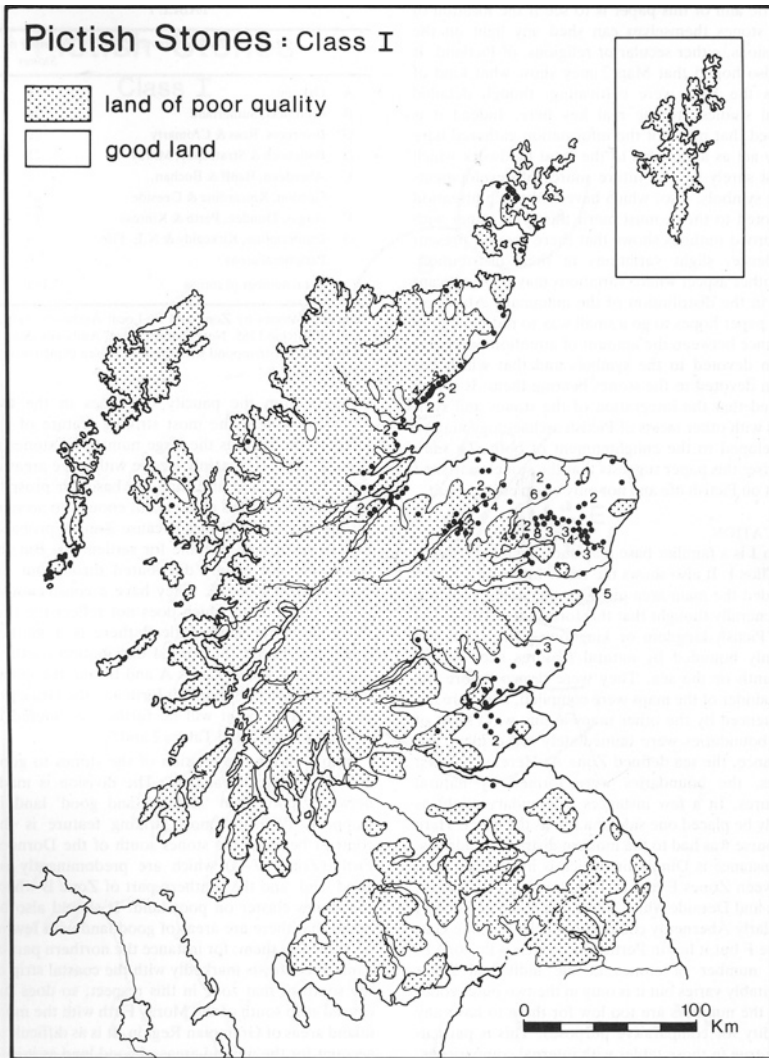


Fig. 7.8: Elizabeth Alcock's display of the distribution of Pictish stones against a background of the good agricultural land makes the relationship between landed resources and the patronage of sculpture plain. (Alcock 1989, 4.)

church buildings and precious few excavations. Portmahomack reveals how the monks marshalled their agricultural resources to sustain a sophisticated suite of workshops producing devotional objects including metalwork, manuscripts and sculpture. These excavations reinforce the European links and our appreciation of the advanced theological

knowledge evident in the sculpture. The insights from these excavations illuminated our understanding of better-documented church sites like St Andrews and Iona where archaeological work has been less successful. That we can seriously compare this undocumented site with Iona says a great deal about the potential of archaeology to contribute to this subject. The only other substantive modern excavation of a Pictish church, on the Isle of May (James and Yeoman 2008), also revealed a monastery. However, unlike Portmahomack, it was something of a hermitage, divorced from its hinterland in Fife and therefore less illuminating about the Pictish Church. These excavations make it plain that Pictish archaeology has a great deal to contribute to understanding the physicality of monasticism in the Early Historic period.

There is ample evidence to guide us towards the sites of other Pictish churches in the form of sculpture and place-names, but almost nothing is known about the origins of the Church and its development before the eleventh century, apart from what has been long visible in the sculpture. This must be a priority for the future. Part of that exploration must consider the connection with the pre-Christian past, which has been ignored even when it seems hard to avoid it. Across northern Europe the links between sacred pagan places and later centres of both Christian and political activity have been usefully explored (e.g. Uppsala, Sweden (Brink 2004), and Yeavering, Northumbria (Frodsham and O'Brien 2005) and Armagh, Ireland (Aitchison 1994)) and there is every reason to believe it is relevant in Pictland.

*Integrated study of the Pictish landscape: the SERF project*

This last point brings us to some thoughts about how future Pictish studies might proceed. Our grasp of the typology, distribution and chronology of Pictish monuments has improved greatly since 1955 and, while there are many gaps and uncertainties, the challenge now is to understand the structures that ordered the Pictish landscape and their social, political and cosmological significance. These are determinedly ambitious goals that are currently being ground-tested in Strathearn as part of the SERF project.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> When this paper was originally presented, a nameless project was on the drawing board. What follows is not intended as a manifesto; it is an exposition of some of the principles being utilised in a particular context. The SERF project was initiated in 2006

The SERF project is an integrated landscape study of the ancient Pictish royal centre of Forteviot and its hinterland. The rationale behind the project builds upon the foundations of Pictish studies that have developed since 1955. Forteviot was selected as a focus for the study because the historical accounts indicate that it was a place of outstanding political importance. It also has an exceptional collection of Pictish sculpture (Hall this volume), as well as being the site of one of the largest complex of prehistoric ritual monuments in Scotland. This conjunction of political and religious components active over a long-term timespan is rare within Pictland and invites comparison with provincial royal sites in Ireland (Driscoll 1998).

In terms of the research agenda articulated in *The Problem of the Picts* and extended by Alcock, Forteviot's historical portfolio, slim though it is (Alcock and Alcock 1992; Aitchison 2006), establishes it as one of the few Pictish royal centres with a contemporary citation. Its identification as the site of a palace occupied by Cinaed son of Alpín and his successors is particularly intriguing given that most of the other Early Historic sites identified by the Alcocks were fortified and Forteviot is not. It suggests that there might be something unusual about the seat of this successful dynasty. Forteviot's outstanding collection of sculpture indicates exceptional patronage and reveals a sophisticated ideological agenda (Hall this volume), the significance of which would not have been lost on Wainwright *et al.* Archaeologically, however, Forteviot is an enigma; the village is tiny and apart from a modern plaque there is little to reveal its former character. The most remarkable archaeological evidence is invisible from the ground and was only discovered in the 1970s and 1980s through aerial photography (Fig. 7.9). The dominant cropmark complex, in a field south of the village, consists primarily of Neolithic and Bronze Age ritual monuments. To the east of the village is a cemetery including Pictish barrows. Together they indicate that Pictish and prehistoric Forteviot were much more extensive than the modern hamlet. The conjunction of the historical palace and the sculpture with the cemetery and ritual complex provides an ideal opportunity to explore the relationship between the Picts and their prehistoric ancestors.

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to follow up on the potential identified in Driscoll (1987). The plan has now been realised and is beginning to produce results which are available through Discovery and Excavation Scotland and via the web <http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects/serf/>.





Fig. 7.9: The cropmarks of Forteviot, here shown in a rectified aerial photograph with the archaeological features transcribed, are grouped in two concentrations: to the south a dense concentration of prehistoric monuments and to the east a cemetery including square barrows, round barrows and dug graves oriented E-W. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

Ritual and belief can only be part of the story. One cannot eat by conducting ceremonies on the tombs of one's ancestors, although such veneration might well have a role to play in the agricultural cycle. Therefore, the SERF project has taken as its study area Forteviot and the two adjacent parishes of Dunning and Forgandenny to provide a suitably extensive and geographically diverse hinterland that is representative of the local settlement history (Fig. 7.10). Within this area there are sufficient settlements recorded as cropmarks or upstanding monuments (Driscoll 1987) to produce a fined-grained settlement his-

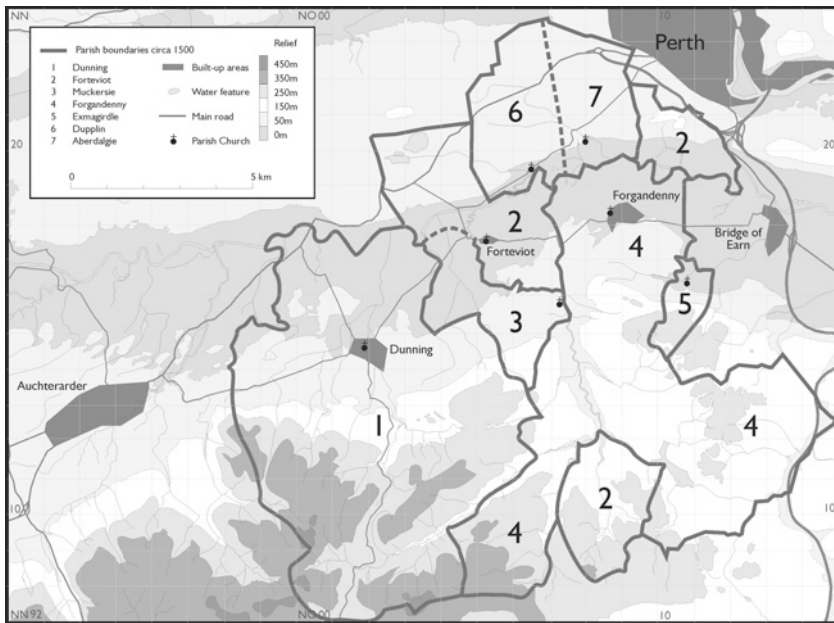


Fig. 7.10: The SERF study area is defined by the three modern parishes of Forteviot, Dunning and Forgandenny which run from the uplands of the Ochils to the banks of the River Earn. (L. McEwan.)

tory. The initial phase of fieldwork has focused on excavating the hill-forts, but in due course unenclosed settlements will also be targeted.

Understanding the structure of the settlement history is another of the overarching goals of the project and it is being approached from several directions. Ideally, the connections and dependencies between the different sites will be established as the chronological framework is developed and environmental evidence is analysed. As well as working forward from the prehistoric archaeological monuments (which are the most obvious on the ground), SERF is also working back through the study of post-medieval and medieval evidence for land use. Some of the earliest evidence for the management of landed resources is preserved in terms used for officials, *thanes*, linked to Dunning and Forteviot (Barrow 1973; Grant 1993).<sup>10</sup> The presence of these thanages

<sup>10</sup> Elsewhere I have suggested that the thanages of Forteviot and Dunning provided some of the apparatus of Pictish royal government, without fully comprehending the problematic nature of the evidence. The earliest evidence dates from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which is some distance from the Pictish era. Moreover, there are

has been taken as evidence of incipient estate organisation, although there is no consensus on their form or origin. For instance, should they be compared with the 'multiple estates' of Northumbria and Wales (Jolliffe 1926; Jones 1976; 1984)? What is the relationship between the thanage and the later medieval parish? This is a particularly challenging problem, because although it is possible to reconstruct late medieval parish boundaries, at present there is no way of determining their antiquity. Investigation of the early churches may provide one way into the chronology of the parishes, but the boundaries moved over time. By exploring the boundaries it is hoped to identify physical features which can be investigated archaeologically. Such identifications require fieldwork and a familiarity with later post-medieval field systems, which in this instance includes a systematic programme of upland field survey initially focused on the ancient Common of Dunning. Thus there is a methodological sweep which runs from hill tops to valley bottoms, from the recent rural past to the earliest farmers, from royal residence to peasant farmstead, from prehistoric megaliths to high Christian art. This broad, cross-period, interdisciplinary approach to the data surrounding Forteviot offers the best possibility of understanding how Pictish society was sustained and grew, and in particular what use the Picts made of their prehistoric monumental resources to legitimise political authority, and how that Pictish inheritance was in turn manipulated by succeeding generations.

### *Conclusion*

The question of Pictish settlement history returns us to the importance of making Pictish studies relevant to the wider community of historical archaeology which has grown since Wainwright's day (Dalglish and Driscoll 2010). The long-term health of Pictish studies requires that its potential contribution to the study of European social evolution is more widely appreciated. Only then can we move on to stake a claim for wider significance and so expect a wider interest in the Iron Age–Medieval transition. We will know that we have arrived when

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questions of scale; to appreciate the challenge to the settlement archaeologist compare the massive early medieval shires of Yeavering (O'Brien 2002) with the much smaller one at Forteviot (Driscoll 2005)—which suggest that we may not be comparing like with like.

Pictish symbols are popularly appreciated as a unique experiment in the development of literacy linked to power structures and not some romantically-charged myth of ethnic isolationism. Given the available resources, we will never know everything about the Picts, but we can know a great deal more. We will know enough about the Picts when scholars looking to understand better the Anglo-Saxons, Irish, Bretons or Asturians turn to north-east Scotland.

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# TOGETHER AS ONE: THE LANDSCAPE OF THE SYMBOL STONES AT RHYNIE, ABERDEENSHIRE

Meggen Gondek and Gordon Noble

## *Introduction*

Pictish sculpture was the one thing, in Wainwright's opinion, that could definitely be called 'Pictish' (1955, 31), and Wainwright and Stevenson's consideration of Pictish monumental sculpture more than fifty years ago set out quite clearly the then state of 'problematic' Pictish art (Stevenson 1955; Wainwright 1955). Since *The Problem of the Picts*, work on 'Pictish monuments'—a term here used to represent all types of carved stones and stone sculpture—has developed considerably. A recent culmination of art historical study has appeared in the Hendersons' *The Art of the Picts* (2004), integrating Pictish art within Insular and wider European artistic traditions and contexts. In terms of understanding the symbols themselves, scholarly opinion currently favours a link to 'names' or commemoration (Thomas 1963; 1984; Jackson 1984; Samson 1992; Forsyth 1997; 1998). However, Wainwright highlighted problems which still exist in symbol stone studies, such as the ambiguity of antiquarian accounts of discovery of Pictish sculpture as well as the lack of known Pictish period locations and settings of monuments (1955, 96). He saw the questions of symbol stone/burial association as a target for urgent attention, and while the knowledge of Pictish burial practices has grown considerably, we still cannot identify indisputable examples of symbol stones in direct original association with burials, despite the growing circumstantial evidence (Ashmore 1980; Close-Brooks 1980; Smith 1996; Clarke 2007). The generalised memorial character of the interpretation of Class I symbol stones has also recently come under scrutiny (Clarke 2007).

The question of the archaeological contexts of Pictish sculpture thus remains largely unanswered. In terms of the archaeology of Pictish carved stone monuments, excavations of or around individual standing monuments are rare and often frustrating to interpret and date (McCullagh 1995; James 2005). When sculpture (with or without Pictish symbols) is found archaeologically, such as the impressive collection

from Carver's (2004) excavations at Portmahomack and the discovery of the lower portion of Hilton of Cadboll (James 2005), they often do not seem to be in their 'original' positions or are broken. Surprisingly, perhaps, little prospective work appears to be occurring around monuments or their findspots, or if it is, it is not reaching publication. Recent developments in the archaeology of Early Historic sculpture in Scotland, and the Insular world, have drawn generally on advances in archaeological theory and method, particularly in terms of landscapes (Driscoll *et al.* 2005). However, notably lacking in this upsurge of research devoted to sculpture is direct archaeological analyses of the Class I symbol stones, those carved monuments bearing only Pictish symbols, themselves. This case study is concerned with Class I monuments. There is variety in the types of carved stone marked by symbols, but in general it seems most symbol stones were meant to be upright with the symbols clearly visible. The layout of images on Class I stones is usually centred on a pair of symbols normally located at the upper end of erect stones (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 167). Traditionally, Class I symbol stones are recorded and presented as individual monuments (or sculptures), numbered consecutively according to the site or location they are from. This recording system, derived from the earliest compilations of the data such as Allen and Anderson's *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (or *ECMS*) has become part of the stones' identities; to the initiated, the mention of 'Aberlemno no. 1' can automatically conjure up the iconic image of this monument. This traditional recording system highlights both the individual nature of each monument and also the occurrence of multiple monuments at many locations; but it is usually the individual monument that is the focus of discussion and interpretation. However, using the RCAHMS (1999) gazetteer as a dataset, even discounting the grouped monuments at Burghead and in caves (e.g. Covesea, Morayshire), 39% (101 out of 263 listed examples of Class I or II stones) are part of a pair or group of monuments. This suggests to us that relationships between monuments are an important avenue for investigation.

The Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project (REAP) was designed to explore one of these groups of monuments from the village of Rhynie in Aberdeenshire (Gondek and Noble 2006; Noble and Gondek forthcoming). At Rhynie (Fig. 8.1), there is a relatively large concentration of Class I symbol stones. Such a large number of monuments offers the opportunity to investigate potential relationships amongst the monu-

ments and also to the landscape they inhabited. The relatively open agricultural landscape where many of the stones were found enabled us to investigate potential associations of these monuments with other archaeology. REAP is not only interested in the stone monuments themselves and the symbols they bear, but also in the space around and in between the monuments. The project began in 2005 with a large geophysical survey focused on the area around Rhynie no. 1, the so-called 'Craw Stane' (NJ 4974 2634). This survey was enhanced by additional geophysical survey in 2006, which complemented the previous work and revealed further features in the immediate environs of the symbol stone findspots. Excavation of one of the anomalies detected in 2005 uncovered the remains of a Mid-Bronze Age burnt timber structure.

### *Visible monuments at Rhynie: Symbol stones*

Eight Class I symbol stones are known from the village of Rhynie and its immediate environs (RCAHMS 1999, 18–19; Fraser and Halliday 2007, 119–22). The Craw Stane is the only one still standing in its likely original position. Exploration of the post-Pictish biographies for this group of monuments (Table 5) reveals that the collection is likely to be from the immediate vicinity of Rhynie, and their original findspots can be located with varying degrees of confidence and precision. The distribution of findspots follows a roughly linear north-south spread, beginning around the location of the Craw Stane and ending near the centre of the modern village (Fig. 8.1). The 'Rhynie Man' (no. 7) and Rhynie no. 8 were found downslope from the Craw Stane and have been argued to have originally come from the top of the hill nearer the Craw Stane (Shepherd and Shepherd 1978). Two others, Rhynie nos. 5 and 6, came from the demolished foundations of the old parish church towards the foot of the hill. The northern end of the distribution is at the centre of the modern village, where Rhynie nos. 2 and 3 were recovered during the construction of the turnpike road in the 1830s. During their removal human remains were found (NMRS No: NJ42NE 22.00; Name Book 1866; Stuart 1856, 5; Fraser and Halliday 2007, 121). The lost stone (no. 4) also came from the area of the modern village, where it was found reused as a building stone. In terms of pre-Pictish biographies, no. 5 has cup marks and appears to be a reused prehistoric monument. Of the others, although not



Fig. 8.1: Location of Rhynie, showing findspots of the symbol stones. (Base map Crown Copyright/database right 2007. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.)

physical ‘proof’ of an earlier life, the Crow Stane, no. 8 and the lost no. 4 have megalithic characteristics of being large, bulky and unshaped. The remaining stones could all be reused prehistoric monuments as well. The two ruinous recumbent stone circles to the east and west of Rhynie at Corstone Wood and Upper Ord could well have provided a source for some of these stones. Clarke has recently suggested up to fifty potential examples of Class I stones that were reused prehistoric standing stones, which includes three of the Rhynie stones (2007, 38–9).

The surviving symbols are all carved by incision, without any obvious Christian motifs (Table 5). Carving techniques used on Class I symbol

stones generally include incision and deep gouging, sometimes using a method of pecking and grooving into the stone surface (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 159). It is unknown whether the monuments or designs were picked out in paint and colour, but this would not be surprising given the tendency towards brilliant colour in contemporary manuscripts and jewellery. All of the stone types used at Rhynie are hard rock types (granites and whinstone, which is a term for hard basalt or chert rock). Carving hard rocks such as these requires different techniques and in modern contexts different tools than softer stones such as sandstone (Rockwell 1993, 18–19). The confident and complex curves and patterns of the Rhynie symbols suggest considerable artistic skill and knowledge. The symbols, discussed further below, include a range of abstract, animal and human designs.

It is impossible to consider Pictish symbol stones without discussing the symbols they bear, especially when so many questions remain. However, REAP is not attempting to offer new ‘translations’ of the symbols; we have approached looking at the symbols and monuments in new ways, by looking at the wider monumental landscape, rather than focusing on the symbols alone. The monuments are treated as markers within a socially significant landscape; the monument is not merely the venue for symbol display, and the display of symbols may not even be the reason why a monument was erected (see also Clarke 2007). By altering our focus on these monuments, we aim to break down preconceived notions of symbol stones as isolated objects and attempt to recontextualise them within their surroundings through our landscape approach to fieldwork.

Having said that, the symbols do play an important role in exploring new ways of looking at monuments. At Rhynie, where we have a group of monuments from a relatively defined spatial entity, iconography, in particular, may contribute to our understanding. Iconographic studies of Pictish symbols are difficult; the symbols themselves are at once both standardised in form and individual in detail. Quality of carving skill and design varies, as does degree of elaboration, the size of symbols and their pairing and placement on the monuments. Art historical analyses can suggest parallels, cultural links and date ranges (Henderson and Henderson 2004); however, iconographic studies are generally more fruitful with ‘embedded’ imagery, which has more obvious social and intellectual contexts and interpretations. For example, the use of ‘David imagery’ on a variety of early medieval sculpture

Table 5: Monuments from Rhynie (information compiled from *ECMS*; Logan 1829, RCAHMS 1999, NMRS; Fraser and Halliday 2007, 119–22).

Stone no.	Material/ Condition	Symbols	Location	Info
Rhynie no. 1 The 'Craw Stane' NJ42NE 35	Grey Granite Complete	Fish Pictish beast	Still standing in field	Concreted base at some point Recent focus of archaeological work
Rhynie no. 2 NJ42NE 22.01	Whinstone Very weathered	Double disc and Z-rod Crescent and V-rod	Currently in village square	Removed/moved in 1836 from near Plough Inn in village. Logan (1829) reports was ploughed up near the village.
Rhynie no. 3 NJ42NE 22.02	Whinstone Very weathered	Man with spear and shield and other possible weaponry	Currently in village square	Removed/moved in 1836 from near Plough Inn in village. Logan (1829) seems to suggest was still standing.
Rhynie no. 4 Mains of Rhynie NJ42NE 36	Granite? Fragmentary	Pictish beast Crescent and V-rod? Mirror	Now lost	Recorded in 1803 as broken up for reuse in buildings locally. A fragment was in former schoolhouse and then built into a stable. In 1826 the larger portion was completely broken up and used in buildings. By 1903 all fragments were of unknown location.
Rhynie no. 5 Rhynie, Old Church NJ42NE 32.02	Whinstone Fragmentary	Beast head Double-disc and Z-rod Mirror and Comb 13 Cup marks	Now displayed near old parish church	Dug up from founda- tions of old parish church in 1878. Displayed near churchyard.
Rhynie no. 6 Rhynie, Old Church NJ42NE 32.02	Red Granite Fragmentary	Double-disc and Z-rod Crescent and V-rod Mirror	Now displayed near old parish church	Dug up from founda- tions of old parish church in 1878. Displayed near churchyard.

Table 5 (*cont.*)

Stone no.	Material/ Condition	Symbols	Location	Info
Rhynie no. 7 Barflat The 'Rhynie Man' NJ42NE 52	Gabbro Complete?	Man with axe- hammer	Now displayed in Aberdeenshire County Council offices	Ploughed up by landowner March 10th or ?Oct 3rd 1978. Acquired by Grampian Regional Council 1988.
Rhynie no. 8 NJ42NE 53	Pink granite Largely complete?	Pictish beast Curvilinear symbol Comb	Now displayed near old parish church	Ploughed up by landowner in 1978

(e.g. the St Andrews Sarcophagus or the Dupplin Cross) has been successfully read as signifying that early medieval ideas of church and 'state' were entwined with the concept of the Old Testament dynastic leader (Henderson 1986). When we have these historically-situated contextual understandings of images, it is possible to develop more layered ways of looking not only at individual sculptures, but also at groups of monuments from a site. A compelling Irish example of this is the site of Monasterboice, County Louth in Ireland, which has three recorded high or free-standing crosses, all likely to date to the later ninth to tenth centuries (Richardson and Scarry 1990, 44–6). Two, the South (Muiredach's) Cross and the West (Tall) Cross, are elaborately carved with figural scenes featuring multiple images of King David, including the anointment of David and David as warrior. When both of these crosses were complete and erected, there would have been at Monasterboice a compounded iconographic message of early medieval church-associated kingship (amongst other ideological themes). Thus, the stones were linked thematically even though physically they were separate and also had their own sculptural identities.

Without knowing the intellectual and social contexts of Pictish symbol stones, iconographic interpretations are difficult. Considering the relative frequency of clusters of monuments from sites (the 39% of monuments noted in the current gazetteer (RCAHMS 1999)), it seems reasonable to consider the possibility that some of the meanings of Pictish symbol stones derived from the relationships between individual stones within a group, in this case iconographically or symbolically. If we consider the Burghead bulls, for example, it is quite clear



that individual monuments were in part meant to be understood in relation to the other carved symbols nearby. It is this symbolic repetition that ties the Burghead stones together and makes their collective significance unambiguous.

If we consider that individual symbol stones may be linked to form an iconographic programme, then we might also consider that they are conceptually linked to constitute a larger ceremonial landscape. They still retain their individual significances, but work on a collective level too. The perception and meaning of the monuments comes not only from the symbols they bear, but also from the relationships between the stones and the way that both the stones and the designs are related to an experience through patterns of movement or ritual actions within the overall landscape of which they are part (Robb 2004). We cannot recreate these ceremonial landscapes in order to physically experience them ourselves, and even if we could there are too many unknown variables (weather, date of stones, vegetation, wooden structures, taboo etc.) to get very far in developing an experiential archaeology of symbol stones. However, adopting the concept of symbol stones as akin to 'landscape art' (Whitley 2005, 1) implies that the symbol stones structured the field of action around them; they defined their own space/place, alongside other features that may no longer survive. The ceremony or actions around them, which may sometimes be archaeologically visible, represents the contextualised social moments we are interested in when we ask 'what do these stones mean?'

At Rhynie, a 'symbol map' can be created to investigate symbols and their potential links to each other and the landscape of which they were part and which they defined (Fig. 8.2). Some potential patterns emerge, although it is difficult to interpret them. Physically, the findspots of the monuments are spread out from the crest of the terrace where the *Craw Stane* stands down towards the modern village of Rhynie, reflecting the significance of the natural routeway of this ridge of the Strathbogie. If we treat the stones as a group, and look only at where the symbols appear in the landscape we can see that the two carved men of Rhynie were located at the northern and southern extremes of the known spread of stones (Fraser and Halliday 2007, 121). It may be interesting to note that these two carved men are seemingly opposites of each other. Both are armed, but one with spear and shield and the other with an axe-hammer. The spear-carrier, from what can be discerned from antiquarian drawings of him, is elegant

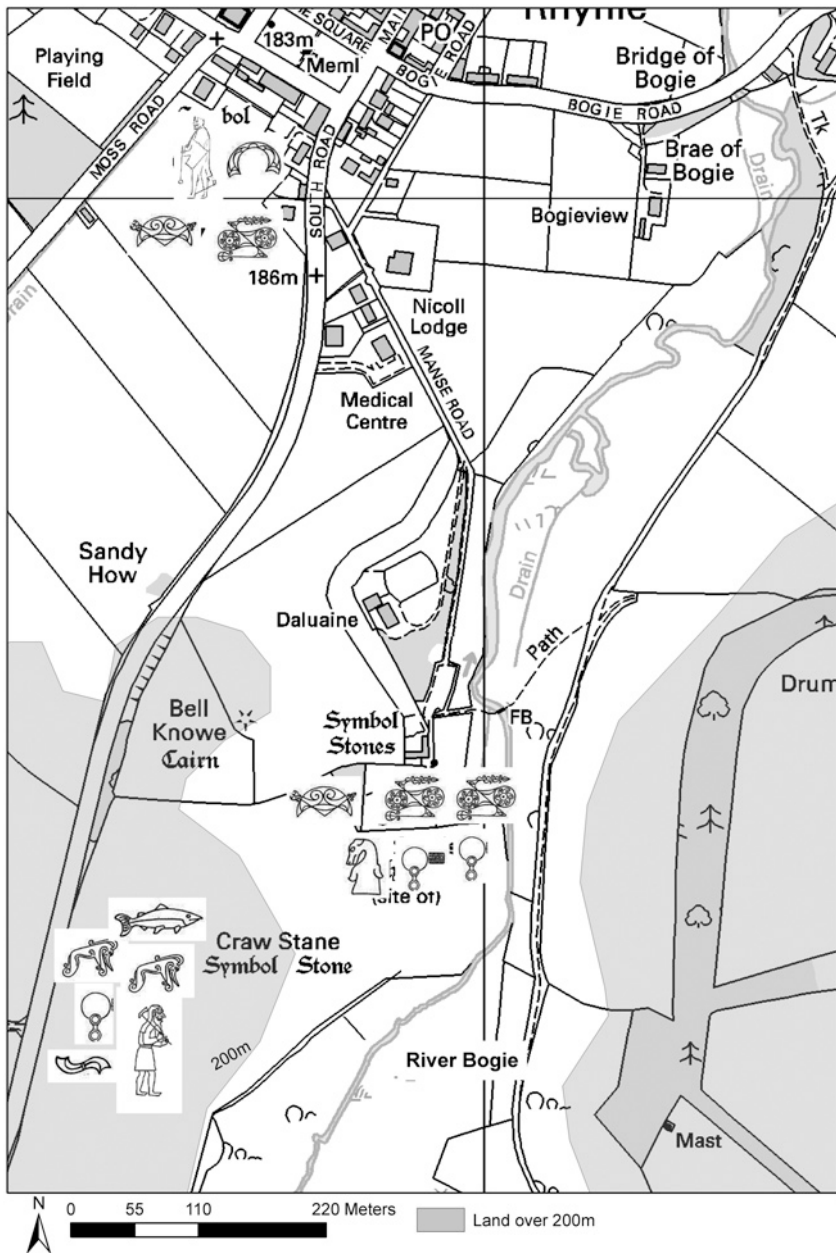


Fig. 8.2: The symbol map of the symbol stones of Rhynie. The lost no. 4 is not included on this map. (Base map Crown Copyright/database right 2007. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.)

and striding to the left. The axe-wielder has features that are highly exaggerated and strides to the right. It has also been noted that the Rhynie group has animal symbols only associated with watery contexts ('swimming' Pictish beasts, the fish and the flippered beast's head) (Noble forthcoming). The proximity of the River Bogie and the boggy areas around provides a local context for this symbolic association. The 'watery' beasts tend to concentrate to the south around the Craw Stane field. However, we do not know where the church stones originated. Natural springs are visible on the 1st Edn. OS map (1867) near the church boundary, thus increasing the connection between a natural watery place and 'watery' symbols. The abstract symbols are seemingly less frequent at the southern end of the distribution and appear on more monuments to the north, which has been associated with the occurrence of human remains in the antiquarian accounts (NMRS No: NJ42NE 22.00; Name Book 1866; Stuart 1856: 5). The community who erected these monuments used the double disc and Z-rod, the crescent and V-rod, and the mirror symbols most frequently. Whatever the symbols meant, the symbolic landscape of Rhynie was populated by armed men, 'watery' beasts and the three common abstract symbols. Although not as repetitive as Burghead, the patterns noted above do suggest a degree of coherency to the symbolic landscape.

The posited reuse of prehistoric megaliths for at least some of the stones at Rhynie is unlikely to be purely for functional or opportunistic reasons. The decision to reuse pre-existing monuments reveals an attitude towards this resource—that the existing monuments were appropriate for incorporating and remodelling into new practices and meanings. Clarke, following on from the work of Carver (2001), has argued that the reuse of prehistoric monuments, or the purposeful invocation of the size and shape of prehistoric standing stones for Class I monuments, is directly linked to a reassertion of existing ideological and social identities in the face of new Christian ideology in Pictland (Clarke 2007, 33–4). With the symbol stones at Rhynie, the carving of symbols onto pre-existing megaliths, potentially moving them and also adding new stones may reflect a concern for permanently displaying information and marking the landscape in this context. However, it was not only the physical nature of the monuments themselves or even the ubiquitous 'link to the past' that meant they were ideal for use, but also the *process* of linking them through carving the symbols and displaying them within this new cultural context that was significant.

*Visible monuments: Other upstanding archaeology*

If the monuments of Rhynie make up the visible 'marked' Pictish landscape and are potentially linked to each other, what of the spaces in between where the rituals and actions that were defined and structured by these monuments took place? Upstanding archaeology (Fig. 8.3) within the landscape between the Craw Stane and the village includes a cairn, the Bell Knowe, and the site of St Luag's Church. The view from the Craw Stane is, however, dominated by Tap o' Noth c. 3km to the north-west, which acts as a landmark and focal point for the valley. The symbol stone spread is actually surrounded by hillforts with another enclosure at Wheedlemont to the south-west and one at Cairnmore c. 3km to the east of Wheedlemont (Simpson 1932, 99). All of these constructions are undated. Tap o'Noth is an unusual form of vitrified enclosure, without any obvious entrance and located at a heightened elevation (Harding 2004, 85–90; Halliday 2007, 103–4). The enclosure is likely to date to the Iron Age. The other two enclosures are much smaller and at lower elevations. A sherd of possible Iron Age pottery was found at Wheedlemont (PSAS 1971–2), but the small size of these two enclosures in relation to their boundaries could also indicate possible early medieval occupation. Whatever the case, these would have been substantial landscape features in the Pictish period and may have retained significance even if not actively used at this time.

A parallel may be drawn here between Rhynie and the situation at Aberlemno, Angus. Aberlemno, too, is overlooked by impressive hillforts of likely multi-period use at Finavon and Turin Hill. At Aberlemno, the monuments include a Class I and Class II (and an uncarved stone), possibly in their original locations, along the modern Forfar to Brechin road, with another Class II monument now located nearby in the modern churchyard. These monuments all stand on higher ground on a ridge of the Lemno Burn/south Esk river valley. Anna Ritchie (1995, 7–8) highlighted the significance of this relationship between Pictish monumental sculpture, hillforts and a natural routeway along a river terrace or ridge, and this is a strong parallel for the situation at Rhynie and suggests that the relationship of a concentration of major hillforts and a significant symbol stone concentration is not fortuitous. There also appears to be a strong link at both of these locations with movement through the landscape, with the symbol stones located on ridges associated with waterways, which suggests that meanings and experiences of these monuments involved

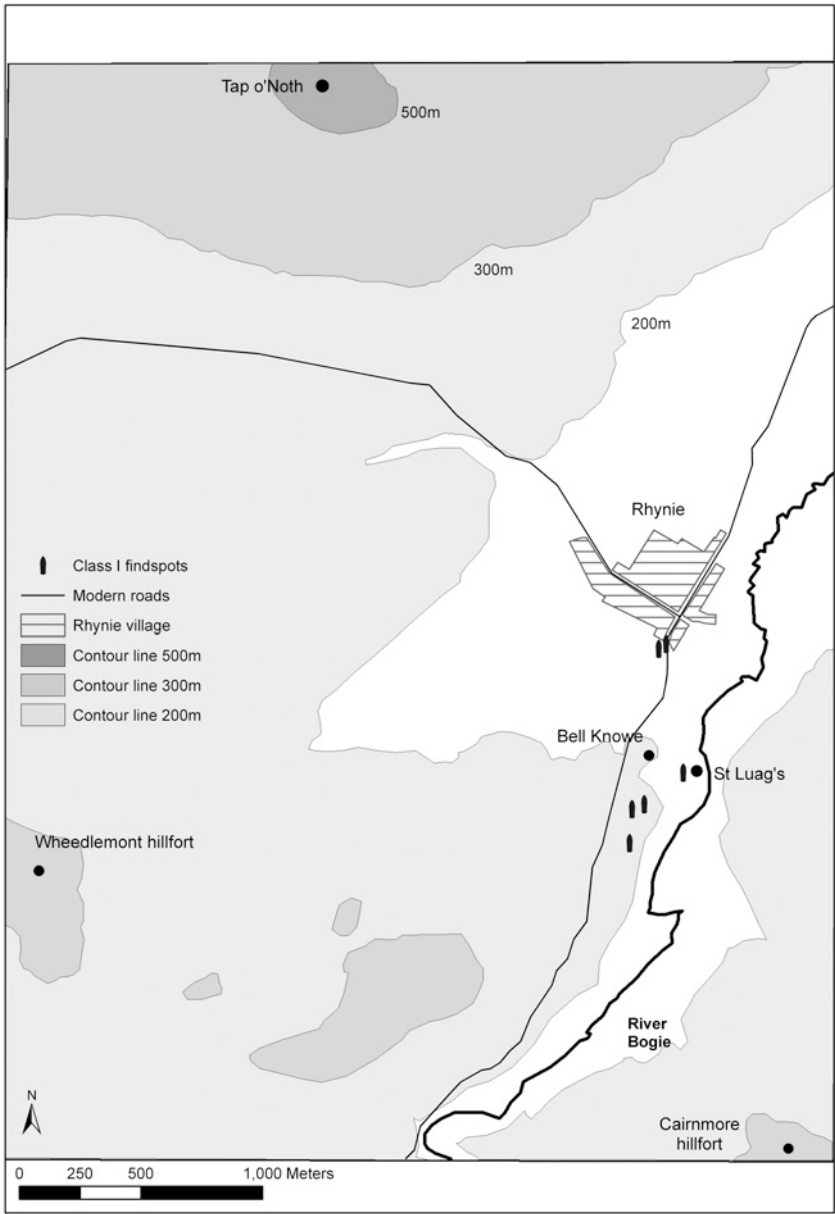


Fig. 8.3: Symbol stone distribution in relation to other upstanding monuments. (Base map Crown Copyright/database right 2007. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.)

relationships created by the physical and ideological links across and between the individual stones in the landscape.

There are also older archaeological sites in the Rhynie landscape, including two recumbent stone circles and a pair of standing stones. Only about 100m to the north of the Craw Stane is the Bell Knowe, a cairn that probably dates to the Early Bronze Age, but so-called because it was reused in the medieval period as the base of a belfry (Eeles and Clouston 1958, 102). The old parish church, St Luag's, down by the Water of Bogie which runs to the east of the village and at the bottom of the slope to the east of the Craw Stane, has a dedication that may be suggestive of an early date. Luag (Lugaidh) is an Irish name, probably a version of the name Moluag. St Moluag founded the monastery at Lismore in Argyll and his death is recorded in the Annals of Ulster in AD 592 (*AU* 592.1; Dransart 2003). While the Rhynie Luag may not be the same saint or dedicatee, there could be a compelling juxtaposition here between an early church, a natural spring and a major concentration of symbol stones. There are no early forms of incised crosses from Rhynie, but these are generally quite rare in Aberdeenshire (Henderson 1987; Fraser and Halliday 2007, 124–30). There are also no recorded or known relief-carved cross-slabs from Rhynie (Class II or III), but again these are generally rare in the Aberdeenshire area. The boundaries of the church are modern, but the site of the old parish church is undoubtedly related to a medieval, if not early medieval, foundation here.

The visible monuments of Rhynie hint at the depth of chronology and archaeology within this landscape spanning from at least the Early Bronze Age to the medieval period. When looking at the visible monuments, the use and transformation of stone particularly stands out in its carving in the early medieval period, its use in construction for the Bronze Age cairn and its construction and transformation within the hillfort at Tap o' Noth. Concepts of permanence embedded within the materiality of stone can be gleaned from analysis of the visible monuments. However, such a focus on the uses and dominance of stone within this landscape may be false as the invisible monuments of Rhynie draw us into a world not only of stone but also of timber and earth.



Fig. 8.4: The Craw Stane enclosures. (Image reproduced through kind permission of Aberdeen Archaeology Service.)

### *Invisible monuments*

A remarkable series of aerial photographs taken by Aberdeen Archaeology Service (Greig and Shepherd 1979; see Fig. 8.4 of this paper; NJ42NE 54; Fraser and Halliday 2007, 121–22; M. Greig pers. comm.) show at least three concentric enclosures surrounding the Craw Stane. Two of these are substantial ditched features, while the outermost appears to be the remains of a timber palisade. The smallest enclosure is only *c.* 30m across at its greatest extent (*c.* 30 × 20m NE–SW × NW–SE), while the central is around 50m in diameter (*c.* 50 × 40m NE–SW × NW–SE). The possible palisade is around 60m across (*c.* 60 × 50m NE–SW × NW–SE). The Craw Stane appears to stand at the entrances to the inner and outer ditched enclosures. The date of these enclosures and their relation to the Craw Stane is unknown, but in early 2005 Paul Edwards, a visitor to the site, discovered sherds of an All-Over-Corded decorated Beaker in an eroding cattle scrape adjacent to the Craw Stane. A rescue excavation concentrated on the findspot of the pottery identified what appears to have been a shallow pit, within which the pot was buried (Cook 2005). The presence of

the Beaker pottery highlights the potential chronological depth of the features in the vicinity of the Craw Stane.

The occurrence of the enclosures could provide a context for the erection and use of the Craw Stane and at least two of the other stones from Rhynie that came from the vicinity (no. 7, the Rhynie Man, and no. 8). The initial stages of REAP in 2005 involved a programme of geophysical survey aimed at clarifying these features and identifying further features of the archaeological landscape. It covered the scheduled area of the Craw Stane, the surrounding enclosures and an area extending to the north where cropmark evidence was absent. The survey identified the three enclosures around the Craw Stane, confirming the probable ditched nature of the inner enclosures and the outer palisade (Fig. 8.5). The ditched enclosures appear to have entrances to the east, while the Craw Stane lies between the two ditches at the southern side of this entrance area. There are also hints in this survey (further supported by the subsequent resistivity survey) of two circular features within the smaller of the two ditched enclosures that may represent circular buildings. Smaller anomalies may represent pits or posts within the enclosures, which are more evident in the aerial photographs.

As well as identifying and adding detail to the known cropmark enclosures, the survey also identified a number of potential sites out-with the area of the Craw Stane enclosures. A series of anomalies were identified extending towards the northern end of the symbol stone distribution, the Bronze Age Bell Knowe and the modern settlement of Rhynie. Most apparent were two large sub-circular anomalies detected some 60m to the north and 90m to the north-east of the Craw Stane, in areas where the cropmark evidence was diffuse. These anomalies produced very high magnetic readings. Surrounding these are possible traces of a large enclosure (around 50 × 90m), aligned NE–SW, which may enclose the area of the two sub-circular anomalies (Fig. 8.5). Further anomalies are evident to the east of the Craw Stane enclosures and elsewhere within the survey area. One of these anomalies excavated in 2005 turned out to be a Mid-Bronze Age roundhouse that had burnt down (Noble and Gondek forthcoming).

We returned in 2006 and a resistivity survey identified further elements to the Craw Stane enclosures. In addition to the two ditched enclosures and the palisade, the resistivity survey confirmed a further outer enclosure, hints of which were visible in aerial photographs (Fig. 8.6). This outer enclosure appears to butt onto the palisade, forming a



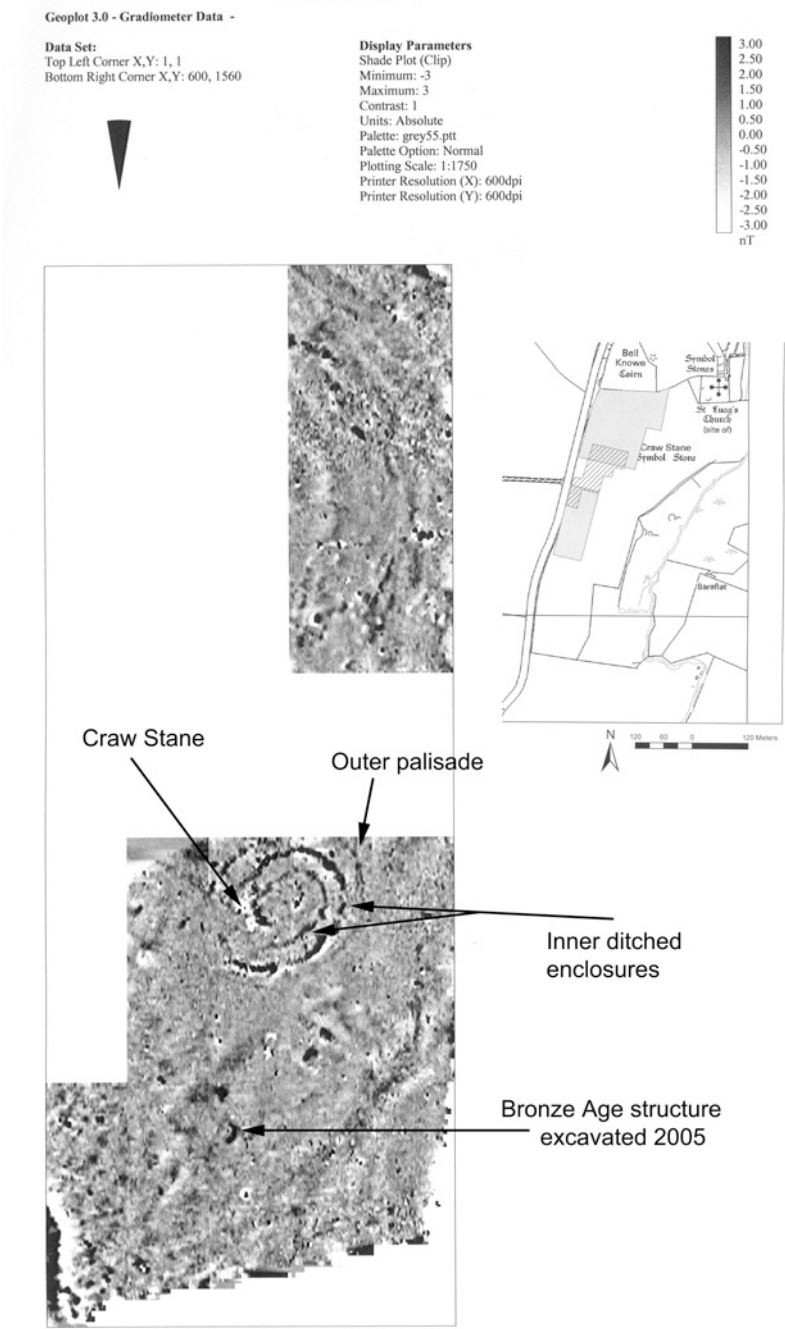


Fig. 8.5: The magnetometer survey carried out in 2005. Grids marked by grey area on map. (Base map Crown Copyright/database right 2007. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.)

western annexe. There is also a possible fifth enclosure that may spring from the south corner of the western annexe. To the south-west of the Craw Stane, the resistivity survey identified further features, which include what may be a barrow or another roundhouse. The intensity of activity in the vicinity of the Craw Stane is remarkable, but there are suggestions that the northern end of the symbol stone distribution was similarly situated in a dense area of archaeological sites. While we may not be able to recover the exact context of the stones at the northern end, which now lie within the modern village, there are a number of other features that may relate to the archaeological setting of the stones situated on the edges of the village. By the village, aerial photography has revealed two square enclosures without obvious entrances, these could conceivably be large Pictish or Late Iron Age enclosures (Greig 1994; Fraser and Halliday 2007, 121) (Fig. 8.7).

### *The Rhynie symbol stones in context*

The anomalies detected during the 2005 survey, based on the discovery of the Mid-Bronze Age roundhouse during excavation (Noble and Gondek forthcoming), suggest that the southern end of the Rhynie symbol stone distribution lies amongst the remains of a substantial unenclosed settlement, some of which at least dates to the Mid-Bronze Age date. The Craw Stane enclosures are unusual and do not have any close morphological parallels (Fraser and Halliday 2007, 122). Halliday, however, does suggest that the ploughed-out earthworks likely fall into a small fort classification of the later prehistoric period (ibid., 100). The 2005 excavation evidence suggests that there may well be an extensive (potentially multi-period) settlement focus here, with the most elaborate remains around the Craw Stane itself. While the small-scale excavation undertaken in 2005 did not identify deposits contemporary with the supposed dates of the Craw Stane and the Rhynie Man (c. 400–700 AD), it did identify that the southern stones of the Rhynie distribution are set amongst an area full of archaeological sites and deposits. Unfortunately, the northern end of the distribution is no longer available for the type of survey undertaken in the Craw Stane field. However, the presence of human remains revealed during the removal of Rhynie nos. 1 and 2 and of the possible barrows nearby suggests that these too were not simply isolated stones carved with symbols, and reinforces the point that the symbols were part of a landscape that had wider significance and use.

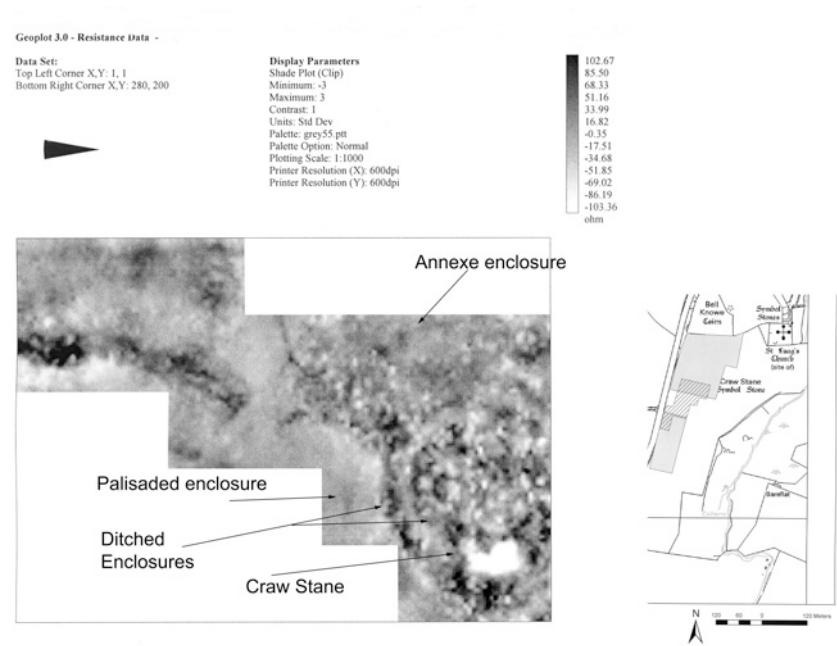


Fig. 8.6: The resistivity survey of 2006. Grids marked by hatched area on map. (Base map Crown Copyright/database right 2007. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.)



Fig. 8.7: The square enclosures at the southern outskirts of the village of Rhynie. (Image reproduced through kind permission of Aberdeen Archaeology Service.)

Undoubtedly the most impressive remains at Rhynie are the series of enclosures around the Craw Stane itself. The combination of aerial photographs and geophysical survey suggests that the stone stands within a series of highly-demarcated boundaries surrounding a relatively small area. The discovery of an Early Bronze Age Beaker adjacent to the Craw Stane (Cook 2005) suggests the area will contain features of prehistoric date as well as the probable early medieval date associated with the Craw Stane itself. The boundaries consisted of ditched and probably banked enclosures, a series of timber palisades and what may have been a free-standing timber circle or other form of palisade construction. The Craw Stane sits at the entrance to the inner enclosure. The eastern entrances are oriented towards the River Bogie at the base of the hill slope and the accompanying natural springs that were once located in that part of the field. Anyone leaving or entering the enclosure on the left-hand side would encounter the symbols of the Craw Stane as they passed. The contemporaneity of these features remains to be established, but even if these enclosures were of an older date, they obviously remained a visible and upstanding presence in the early medieval period, and the Craw Stane was clearly placed at a significant transitional point in accessing the inner area marked by these enclosures. If the Craw Stane is a reused prehistoric megalith, the act of carving the symbols in the stone in the early medieval period again points to the emphasis on boundary demarcation and the passage through one space to another.

The enclosures at Rhynie could fall generally into the category of site often referred to in older literature as 'ringforts' (Harding 2004, 238). This term has been used to describe small enclosures between 15 and 60 metres in diameter with internal round structures and one or more boundaries around the central focus. The name 'ringfort' conjures up connections with Ireland and it is interesting to note that the chronology of these sites in Ireland is predominately Early Historic (Stout 1997). In Scotland structures of this type, which includes sites such as Aldclune, Perthshire (Hingley *et al.* 1997) are more difficult to date, but the scant evidence does point to a first millennium AD date, which would of course coincide with the first millennium AD dating for Class I symbol stones (Harding 2004, 239–40, 246). Aldclune no. 1 in its first phase (dating to the first to fourth centuries AD) has been argued to consist of a wooden palisade and porch surrounded by banks and ditches, and perhaps gives us an idea of what some aspects of the structure at Rhynie may have looked like (Hingley *et al.* 1997, 419–20).

The closest parallels for symbol stones set within potentially multi-period settlements are found in the Northern Isles. These stones may not have the size and mass of the Rhynie monuments, but contextually they may provide some of the closest comparisons for the evidence at Rhynie. In the Orkneys, a series of stones or slabs carved with symbols has been found in brochs or other buildings within multi-period settlements. At the Broch of Gurness, for example, a stone with incised symbols was found amongst the multi-period settlement remains directly opposite the 'Shamrock' house, a probable Pictish-phase element of the broch village (Ritchie 1969). The use of Class I symbol stones within architectural contexts in the Northern Isles, for example at Pool, Sanday and in the broch village at Scatness (Hunter 1990; Henderson and Henderson 2004, 229), is often interpreted as reuse of the monuments and not primary. The sites noted above were of long-term significance and went through many periods of building and reuse, and obviously remained significant in the Pictish period. Clarke (2007) has recently highlighted the need to break down our assumptions of the functions, dates and use of Class I monuments and Pictish symbols, including monuments found in structural contexts. The use of Class I stones within architectural contexts in the Northern Isles is as yet too unclear to serve as a clear comparison, but the evidence from the north hints at the type of contextual evidence we may be largely missing in other areas of Scotland. This is, however, undoubtedly preserved at Rhynie and further work will be crucial to investigating the role and function of the symbol stone landscape here. The association of a Class I symbol stone near the recently-excavated prehistoric complex at Broomend of Crichtie, Aberdeenshire suggests another possible parallel for Rhynie (Bradley and Clarke 2007).

As a way of investigating the enclosures around the Craw Stane it is also interesting to compare the enclosures at Rhynie with the pattern of small enclosed sites, of generally unconfirmed date, recently catalogued by the Strathdon survey (Halliday 2007, 92–6). One of the compelling differences between the Craw Stane complex and other enclosures in Aberdeenshire (*ibid.*, 94) and a structure such as Aldclune no. 1 is its complexity and the placement of the palisade element *outwith* the other enclosure forms. These observations add to the intriguing nature of the Craw Stane complex and suggest that this may not have been an everyday settlement enclosure, but rather a site where more specialised and perhaps ritualised activities were undertaken, possibly out of view, screened by the external palisade. The chronology and the

nature of activity here remains to be confirmed through invasive techniques, but comparison with other Early Historic and multi-period sites of similar complexity would seem to indicate that a combination of ritual/ideological, political and a degree of settlement activity may be appropriate. This would make the occurrence of the extensive symbol stone distribution here more understandable, as the erection and carving of the symbol stones would have been part of articulating the significance of this landscape across major periods of settlement and social change.

### *Conclusion*

While morphologically unusual and thus difficult to date, the enclosures and other archaeological features around the Craw Stane point to the reuse and reinvention of an already significant prehistoric landscape in the Early Historic period. Associations with prehistoric monuments and landscapes is a theme seen at several other Early Historic sites including Forteviot (Perthshire), Dunadd (Argyll), Yeavering (Northumberland) and Tara (County Meath) (Bradley 1987; Driscoll 1998; Newman 1998; Campbell 2003, 55). Associations with the past at these sites is linked to active promotion of political interests and legitimization of power. These sites are all strong political and ideological centres in the Early Historic period, suggesting that Rhynie should also take its place amongst the undocumented power centres of Early Historic Pictland. Where Rhynie stands apart from these is in its concerted use of monumental non-Christian sculpture to demarcate and make statements in the landscape. Even at Forteviot, the Pictish palace, which did have elaborate monumental sculpture of a Christian nature, there are no known Class I stones. If we are to see the permanent marking of the landscape with Pictish symbols as an affirmation of Pictish identities in the face of changing world views, then the combination of a reused multi-period landscape and the monumental statements at Rhynie indicate the area may have been a particularly significant arena for the origins, creation and subsequent manipulation of such identities through ritual and other activities.

The work conducted in the landscape of Rhynie's symbol stones has, in typical archaeological fashion, raised many questions. At Rhynie, the chronology of the buried archaeological features and their relationships to the visible features are the key research questions still to

be answered. The surveys have underlined the potential for retrieving the context of the Craw Stane and other stones at Rhynie, and hinted at the potential evidence here. The relationship between these features will be all the clearer with excavation and the recovery of datable evidence from the enclosure features.

Perhaps surprisingly absent from the geophysical anomalies are clearly recognisable Pictish barrow features in the immediate vicinity of the Craw Stane, despite potential barrow features being visible from aerial photography in other nearby fields. So, despite prospective work around the known findspots of three of the Rhynie monuments, we are no closer to addressing the issue of burial and symbol stone association identified by Wainwright some fifty years ago. It is clear from recent discussions and from the work at Rhynie that we should not assume that all Class I symbol stones had the same function (Clarke 2007). We must instead look in detail at the unique landscapes around all known symbol stone findspots to further elucidate the potentially complex roles of symbol stones in Pictish society. The complex archaeological landscape around the Rhynie symbol stones offers a rare chance to investigate the context of the erection and use of a group of Class I monuments. The erection and use of the symbol stones may provide a link between the later Iron Age activities represented by the dominating hillfort at Tap o'Noth and the Christian and later medieval ritual focus by the River Bogie at St Luag's.

Since *The Problem of the Picts*, a much greater appreciation of the variability and the landscape contexts of Pictish, and in particular Class I, carved monuments has developed. This recognition that Class I monuments, and indeed all Pictish carved monuments, are part of a complex interplay of actions and landscapes is perhaps the most significant change in the way we approach and interpret this once 'problematic' aspect of Pictish archaeology.

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# THE EARLY MEDIEVAL LANDSCAPE OF DONSIDE, ABERDEENSHIRE

Iain Fraser and Stratford Halliday

## *Introduction*

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) has conducted a detailed survey of Donside in north-east Scotland, aimed at recording and interpreting the landscape from the source of the Don at the foot of the Lecht to its mouth at Aberdeen, some 70km to the east. Initiated in 1995, most of the fieldwork was completed by 2001, but the process of interpretation and synthesis has been more drawn-out, and the volume containing a synthesis of the results, *In the Shadow of Bennachie*, was not published until autumn 2007 (RCAHMS 2007). The choice of Donside was partly driven by the concentration of Pictish symbol stones that are known along the banks of the lower Don, the Urie and the Gadie Burn. This, however, was but part of the opportunity that Donside appeared to offer. Its catchment embraced the core of numerous distributions of prehistoric artefacts and monuments in the North-East, and a rich vein of medieval documentation offered the possibility of reconstructing parts of its later landscape in some detail.

For those who do not know the topography of Scotland, Aberdeenshire lies beyond the Mounth, the mountain barrier that sets the North-East apart from the eastern lowlands of Angus to the south. The landscape itself is particularly ancient and the underlying topography of mountains, hills and basins is inherited from long before the last glaciation some 10,000 years ago. Nevertheless, the imprint of its glacial history is all too evident. While the Dee, the southernmost of three rivers draining eastwards from the Cairngorms, was deeply scoured by the principal flow of ice, the lowlands of the Don are choked with thick deposits of glacial till. These underpin Donside's wealth, for they are mineral rich, giving rise to fertile, if stony, soils. The Dee and the Don debouche into the North Sea some 4km apart at Aberdeen, while the mouth of the third river, the Ythan, lies a further 15km north along the sandy strand that forms this stretch of the Aberdeenshire coast. Each river catchment presents a rather different character; the

Don forming the middle ground between the sluggish meanders of the Ythan to the north and the rugged glens of Deeside to the south. The Dee retains its sense of a mountain glen almost to the sea, but the Don quickly enters more open rolling country, punctuated by granite bosses of higher ground. Here, improved farmland extends well back into the hill ground and the land is patently rich and fertile, as we see it today. The contrast with the Dee is reflected in a popular rhyme dating from at least the nineteenth century—‘a mile of Don’s worth twa o’ Dee, except for salmon, stone and tree’. The Garioch, the basin drained by the Urie and the Gadie Burn, was reputedly ‘the meal giral of Aberdeenshire’, a ‘giral’ being a meal chest in old Scots.

The principal town in the Donside hinterland of Aberdeen is Inverurie, a royal burgh founded by Earl David of Huntingdon at the *caput* of the Lordship of Garioch, which he was granted around 1178 by his elder brother, William the Lion (Stringer 1985, 30; see also Carter 1999). This has always been a key strategic location in the North-East, its importance in the medieval period marked by the massive motte-and-bailey castle known as the Bass of Inverurie. Roman armies are known to have passed this way, their passage marked by the remains of marching camps at Normandykes on the banks of the Dee, Kintore lower down the Don, and Logie Durno a little north of Inverurie. Indeed, the topography of the confluence of the Urie and the Gadie Burn and the Bennachie range has been presented as a likely site for the Battle of Mons Graupius, the scene of Agricola’s triumph over the Caledonians around AD 83–84 (St Joseph 1978; Maxwell 1990, 104–10). The massively defended fort on the Mither Tap o’ Bennachie occupies one of the most distinctive and commanding landmarks in the North-East.

### *Traditional approaches to the early medieval landscape*

With the greater proportion of the land under plough, visible traces of earlier periods are always at a premium in lowland landscapes. This raises a question as to how an archaeological survey can expect to create a sense of landscape for any period. In Donside, the principal archaeological evidence for the early medieval period was forty-one symbol stones, three cross-slabs, two massive silver chains and a handful of early Christian crosses. Traditional approaches by archaeologists to populate the landscape around the carved stone monuments

have simply begged, borrowed and stolen from other disciplines and periods, rendering them as little more than the ingredients of a cooking recipe. Typically, the souterrains that form the last visible episode of Roman Iron Age settlement form the stock. This is spiced with a handful of Iron Age forts, and then liberally seasoned with selected place-names, usually those prefixed with *Pit-*, supposedly signifying the locations of Pictish estates (see Taylor this volume).

Taken in turn, these sources of evidence do not make a particularly good starting point for any reconstruction of the early medieval landscape. The presentation of souterrains in this context simply perpetuates an idea encapsulated in the title of Wainwright's synthesis of the evidence, *The Souterrains of Southern Pictland*, published in 1963. Since then, aerial photography has dramatically extended the distribution of souterrains south of the Mounth (RCAHMS 1994, 64–7), but the dating evidence still resolutely points to their abandonment at or before the beginning of the third century AD; an early medieval radiocarbon date from an isolated pit on the site of a souterrain cannot be convincingly construed as evidence of ongoing and continuous occupation (Halliday 2006). Though aerial photography has not had quite the same impact on the numbers of souterrains found north of the Mounth, the survey of Donside reveals a similar pattern of occupation. So much so that it is impossible to maintain the pretence that the souterrains north of the Mounth are in some way different from their cousins to the south (Halliday 2007, 88–92). To all intents and purposes, tangible traces of settlement disappear from the eastern lowlands for almost 1000 years after the beginning of the third century AD.

If the thread of prehistoric settlement cannot be traced into the early medieval period, at least it is possible to show that some of the forts are of this date (fully discussed in Ralston 2004). The problem, however, is which ones. The category of 'fort' covers a multitude of sins, ranging in the North-East from the enclosure taking in 16.4ha on the lower slopes of the summit of Tap o' Noth to the tiny Maiden Castle at the foot of Bennachie, which only encloses 0.07ha. In truth, forts such as these are not simply undated, but without excavation they are undatable. However, recent work at the Mither Tap o' Bennachie by Headland Archaeology (Pitts 2007, 9), and at Maiden Castle by Murray Cook (pers. comm.), has demonstrated early medieval activity, though the contexts of the radiocarbon dates have yet to be fully published. Apart from the sheer scale of the main ramparts at the Mither

Tap, now partly reduced to huge screes of rubble, the defences present several unique features not seen anywhere else. Consequently, even if one period of its defences represents a Pictish *caput*, this does not provide useful comparanda upon which to identify any others in the region. It should also be borne in mind that limited excavations have singularly failed to resolve the chronology of the series of lozenge-shaped vitrified forts that are found at intervals along the eastern seaboard from Perth to just north of Inverness. In Donside, the summit forts on Tap o' Noth and Dunnideer belong to this series, but the three separate dating techniques that have been applied to the group as a whole—radiocarbon, thermoluminescence and archaeo-magnetism—have produced wildly divergent results; the most coherent are from archaeo-magnetism and probably place their destruction in the last centuries of the first millennium BC (Ralston 2006, 150–1; Halliday 2007, 102–3).

The last ingredient in the recipe, the place-names, fares little better on critical examination. Place-name studies have an important role in their own right, particularly in relationship to their contemporary landscape (see Taylor this volume), but they should not be abused simply to patch over the shortcomings of archaeological data. The presentation of this paper at the *Fresh Picts* conference held in Aberdeen passed over the place-name evidence, but the overall synthesis of the survey of Donside (Fraser and Halliday 2007, 130–3) considers this sort of evidence alongside other sources. In particular, it points out that the interpretations of the observation that the majority of *pit*-names fall on the best agricultural land (Watson 1926, 407; Whittington 1975) tend to misunderstand the relationship. Far from signifying any link between the formation of the names and the agricultural land, and thus choices exercised in the early medieval period, these place-names are a pattern of survival. The relationship between the names and the agricultural land is with the mechanism by which they have been conserved, not the names themselves. For those that do indeed originate in the early medieval period, they are the manifestation of a conservative estate administration in a later period (Halliday 2006; Fraser and Halliday 2007), but Taylor has also demonstrated that *pit*-names were being coined until the very end of the Gaelic-speaking period (Taylor 1994, 3).

*Survey strategies in Donside*

Having rejected this traditional archaeological approach, the Donside survey adopted different strategies based on wide experience of landscape recording throughout Scotland. These strategies recognise that the recovery of archaeological evidence from the landscape depends on understanding the pattern of land use, and matching it to different survey techniques. Thus, the mosaic of fields, forests and moors is as much a mosaic of different land-use types as it is of the potentials of different prospection and recording techniques to recover archaeological remains. Ground-based prospection in the arable lowlands is largely restricted to searching for artefact scatters in the ploughsoil and looking for visible remains in the lacunae of relatively undisturbed landscape shielded from modern agriculture by old shelter belts, plantations and the policies of country houses. Other techniques for recovering hidden archaeological sites in this zone are by remote sensing, either through aerial photography or geophysical survey. Aerial photography, however, is entirely dependent on the extent to which cropmarks form, while geophysical survey is only a practical option if it can be targeted into relatively closely-defined areas of land. In the uplands, the improved fields tend to be under grass or fodder crops, which are notoriously poor for cropmarking. Surface prospection for visible remains is most rewarding beyond the enclosing dykes of the improved land, where there is often a fringe of rough pasture containing relatively undisturbed remains of earlier settlement.

At the outset, the Royal Commission survey anticipated that there was sufficient arable land planted with cereals for cropmarks to reveal the character of settlement in the lowlands. In the uplands, based on experience in Perth and Kinross and Angus (RCAHMS 1990), and the remarkable landscapes recorded in the Howe of Cromar in Deeside (Ogston 1931), it was expected that there would be extensive traces of earlier settlement and land use. In north-eastern Perthshire, such traces included extensive hut-circle groups, some of which were accompanied by long buildings with partly sunken floors. Known as Pitcarmick-type houses, one example has been shown by excavation to be early medieval (Barrett and Downes 1994). Cropmarks in the lowlands of Angus, Fife and Perth and Kinross have also revealed some thirty examples of long structures that are probably buildings, though none has yet been excavated. Smaller, sub-rectangular structures with



sunken floors have also been recorded, and one of these has proved to be early medieval (Driscoll 1997; but see also Halliday 2006).

There was then some expectation that conventional fieldwork in the uplands of Donside and aerial reconnaissance in the arable lowlands would allow the survey to piece together some elements of the early medieval settlement pattern to complement the fine series of Pictish symbol stones. Unfortunately, this optimism was dashed by two factors for which no allowance had been made. The first was the relatively poor potential for the formation of cropmarks, and the second, the overall history of settlement.

Despite a long history of aerial reconnaissance north of the Mounth by Aberdeenshire Archaeological Services, the Royal Commission and Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography, which has recorded some very fine cropmarks, the combination of crops, rainfall, freely-draining soils and sunshine do not favour the formation of either extensive or detailed cropmarks across the greater part of Donside. Apart from some freely-draining gravel terraces tightly confined along the lower Don, cropmarks are thinly scattered, mainly comprising traces of timber roundhouses and ditched enclosures. In the event, analysis of the cropmark record has shown that archaeological cropmarks occur three or four times more frequently to the south of the Mounth. It is salutary to note that of over forty roundhouses that have been excavated in advance of development at Kintore, only one was recorded as a cropmark. With the possible exception of an unusual enclosure above Rhynie, more properly in Strathbogie than Donside, most of the cropmarks are probably the remains of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements.

While this first factor acted against the recording of archaeological remains in the improved land, the second, the history of medieval and post-medieval settlement in the district, operated against the discovery of traces of earlier settlements in that marginal fringe of rough pasture. By far the majority of the settlement remains that have been recorded are relatively modern, abandoned in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a result of the subsequent analysis, it is clear that ever since the Lordship of Garioch was granted to Earl David in the late twelfth century, the general trend in the settlement pattern has been one of expansion. Incoming Anglo-Norman families appear to have planted a number of new settlements within the existing settlement pattern, including both planned villages and burghs (Dixon and Fraser 2007,

183–7). Rather later, from the fifteenth century onwards, documentary evidence suggests that townships (essentially farms), were regularly split (*ibid.*, 190–3), a sure sign that the settlement pattern was expanding: Pitfodels, near Peterculter, had been split by 1430; Knockinblewis, near Inverurie, by 1511; Noth, Merdrum and Forest between 1600 and 1658. By 1695, some 20% of the names that appear in the Poll Tax are prefixed Old/New, Upper/Nether, Little/Mickle or Easter/Wester. In the parish of Clatt, documented settlements expand threefold from 1511 to 1770. This, however, was as nothing compared to the expansion of crofts and small farms from the late eighteenth century into the nineteenth century, driven by the landlords to secure a source of rural labour and to improve their estates (Dixon and Fraser 2007, 195).

Between the 1860s and 1901, improved farmland continued to expand, increasing from about 550,000 acres to 630,000 acres. This pressed settlement and cultivation even deeper into the hills, effectively removing the fringe of rough pasture in which traces of earlier settlement might have been expected to survive. Indeed, very few remains of any pre-improvement settlements have survived this expansion, let alone any evidence of early medieval settlements. The subsequent rationalisation of small improved farms and crofts into larger holdings in the face of the harsh economic realities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has left many of the croft-houses and steadings abandoned, and it is these that form the mainstay of the surviving settlement remains in the hills.

### *Investigating the early medieval landscape in Donside*

The opportunities for survey under these circumstances are evidently limited; the majority of the remains are post-medieval and only the largest burial cairns and earthworks survive from earlier periods. Accordingly, the approach to the early medieval landscape was rethought and focused on the early medieval carved stone monuments. Rather than study them as art historical objects, however, the survey aimed to place them in some kind of landscape setting. Three strands to this approach can be identified, the first of which was simply to record the known stones, employing both traditional measured drawings by John Borland and photography by Steve Wallace, and to look in likely places to find new ones. The second strand was to observe the

topographical settings in which the stones stood, or at least where they were found. The third was to explore the relationship between these locations and the medieval landscape.

### *Recording the stones*

Several new stones turned up in the period of the survey, though not as a result of our efforts. Of particular note is the complete stone bearing a crescent with V-rod and a triple disc symbol, discovered on a field clearance heap at Cairnton, near Fintray, and the possible fragment from the very top of the Don at Delnadamph (illustrated in Fraser and Halliday 2007, 117, Fig. 7.2). Found at an old shooting lodge, the latter bears the crude incised outline of a bird, possibly a goose, though its legs stop short of the bottom of the stone and there is no sign that it has webbed feet. Despite the style of the carving, the possibility remains that it is a piece of later graffiti depicting a grouse (*pace* Ian Shepherd). The survey itself turned up one or two surprises. For example, the carving of a mirror was discovered on the much visited and discussed inscribed Newton Stone, which also has traces of a spiral design on its back (Fraser and Halliday 2007, 125, Fig. 7.11). The true significance of the carvings reported on a cross-marked stone at Mains of Afforsk was also recognised, resolving into no less than two lines of an ogham inscription (DES 1994, 27; Fraser and Halliday 2007, 126–7, Fig. 7.15).

### *The topographic settings of the stones*

The observation of the topographic setting of the stones poses rather different problems, if only because so few are still *in situ*. Of the forty-one symbol stones in Donside, only four are thought to be in their original positions: Ardlair, Nether Corskie, the Picardy Stone and the Craw Stane. A major part of this aspect of the survey involved sorting through the antiquarian records to establish as closely as possible the location in which stones were first reported. This revealed some extraordinary biographies of stones that had been moved in steps and stages around the landscape. In itself this stands as a warning about the nature of the data upon which our observations are based. Nevertheless, it is striking how many have been found in or near churchyards, reused in the foundations of a medieval church, incorporated into the churchyard wall, or recovered in grave-digging. The discoveries of no less than thirteen are first reported in these circumstances—Dyce, Kinellar,

Kintore, Bourtie, Clatt, Inverurie and Rhynie—and a further five come from close by a churchyard. In discussion at the conference it was suggested that churchyards may have acted as magnets for stones found quite far afield, but while this may have been the case for one or two, the pattern recurs widely and there is no reason to believe it has been the case for the majority. None of the recorded biographies of stones reveal stones moved from far afield to a churchyard and the collections at places like Rhynie and Kintore include stones that were arguably in their original positions nearby.

About half of the stones were found singly, but the others belong to larger groups, and it is probable that many of the single stones are the sole survivors of larger groups. As recorded at Ardlair and Rhynie, these groups may have included uninscribed slabs. Rhynie has the largest collection of stones in the area surveyed, with at least eight scattered southwards from the village, including two from the site of the parish church and three on the slope above it. Other groups include: a mixture of symbol- and cross-bearing stones from the kirkyard at Dyce; four symbol stones on the Moor of Carden, three of which were removed to Logie Elphinstone; four from Kintore, two of which were found in the Castle Hill, and a third probably in the nearby kirkyard; three from the kirkyard at Clatt; and four from the fabric of the old parish church in Inverurie churchyard.

By and large, the first known findspots of the stones fall between 50m and 260m OD, usually with at least an easterly aspect, and apparently a preference for a south-eastern or open outlook. The topographical features favoured are quite varied. Some are in elevated positions with broad views, and there is again an apparent preference for low knolls forming relatively prominent local features. Others are close to or overlook the confluences of burns and rivers, such as those from the Moor of Carden on the rising ground above the confluence of the Gadie and the Urie, or from Inverurie churchyard on the haugh-land (floodplain) at the confluence of the Urie and the Don, a position recalling those from the cairn cemetery a little to the north of Donside on Donaldstone's Haugh at Tillytarmont (*DES* 1975, 6). This presence of water nearby is certainly a recurring theme of the locations, and has been observed throughout the North-East (Inglis 1987, 76). Within the Garioch, the distribution not only closely follows the line of the lower Don, the Gadie and the Urie, but also displays a noticeable bias towards the confluence of lesser tributaries with the main stream. Curiously, however, whereas the valley of the lower Don

contains numerous stones, with the exception of the possible new stone from Delnadamph and the cross-slab at Monymusk, none has been recorded in the middle and upper reaches of the Don above Inverurie. In a few cases, symbols have apparently been carved on the stones of prehistoric monuments—Brandsbutt, Nether Corskie and possibly Kinellar and Kintore. Much is sometimes made of this relationship, but it should be borne in mind that of perhaps 700 prehistoric cairns and stone circles recorded in north-east Scotland, the incidence is limited to but a handful.

The general characteristics of the topographical settings occupied by symbol stones are best illustrated by the group at Rhynie, in Strathbogie (see Gondek and Noble this volume). Only the Craw Stane (Rhynie no. 1), standing on the rising ground to the south of the village, is in its original position, but two were recovered from the old parish church, and the findspots for another five are known in some detail. The village was established on its present site on the Muir of Rhynie in the early nineteenth century, and occupies part of a low spur between the Bogie on the east and the Ord Burn on the west. Their confluence lies a little way to the north, while southwards the ground rises in a series of gentle knolls to the position of the Craw Stane. Two of the stones (Rhynie nos. 2 and 3) that now stand in the village square were found around 1836 on the first of these low knolls at the south end of the village, where human remains were also found nearby. A third stone (Rhynie no. 4) stood some 50m to the south-west, but was broken up around 1803 and is now entirely lost. In addition to the symbol stones, in 1866 two small uninscribed slabs stood in the garden of the Free Church manse, on the south-east side of the square about 100m to the north-east.

South of the village, aerial photography has revealed two possible square barrows at Mains of Rhynie, before the ground begins to climb to the position of the prominent Bronze Age cairn, known as the Bell Knowe, and the Craw Stane. The rest of the symbol stones have also been found south of the village. Two (Rhynie nos. 5 and 6) were recovered in 1878 from the foundations of the old parish church, and two others (Rhynie nos. 7 and 8) were ploughed up in 1978 on the farm of Barflat, on the slope dropping away from the Craw Stane towards the west bank of the Water of Bogie (Shepherd and Shepherd 1978); one of the latter bore the well-known carving of a man. The old parish church stands within its burial-ground on a terrace at the foot of this slope, while the Bell Knowe cairn stands on a knoll overlooking it.

These positions share most of the topographical characteristics that have already been identified. To varying degrees they have open outlooks, apparently from a slightly elevated local feature in proximity to a watercourse. The presence of a large Bronze Age monument nearby and the recovery of stones from the walls of a parish church have also been noted elsewhere. Collected over a period of about 200 years, the various records indicate that the stones were strung out over some distance, but they were probably disposed in two main groups, one focused on the knoll at the south end of the village, the other around the Craw Stane, the latter the likely source for the two found in the foundations of the parish church. Here, aerial photography has also made its contribution, revealing that the Craw Stane itself stands at the entrance to a small defended enclosure (see Gondek and Noble this volume). In each group of stones, one bears an incised human figure. Although these do not bear symbols of the core group as defined by Forsyth (1997b), their appearance in association with symbol-bearing stones indicates a common function.

### *The structure of the medieval landscape*

In the twelfth century, the greater part of the country from Aberdeen to the watershed between the Garioch and Strathbogie was in the hands of the crown. The lands to the north fell to the Earldom of Buchan, while the whole of upper Donside lay in the Earldom of Mar. By the end of the century, however, the crown had reduced its holdings to the thanages of Aberdeen, Belhelvie and Kintore, and the rest of this swathe of royal territory had been variously granted to Earl David of Huntingdon or the Church. Many of the lands granted out apparently extended to whole parishes, fifteen of which can be shown to retain their medieval boundaries to this day. For this reason the survey concentrated on the parochial structure, though in the light of the research by Alisdair Ross into the origins of *dabhachs* (2003; 2006) there are other ancient units of land that would repay enquiry.

Following the lead of Stephen Driscoll's work in Perthshire (1987), the survey focused on the thanage of Kintore (Figs. 9.1 and 9.2), not only because it was likely to be an ancient unit of land (see Barrow 1973; Grant 1993, 74), but also because it showed evidence of some internal structure. The thanage was extensive, probably including the royal forest of Kintore, and extended well beyond the bounds of the

modern parish. Various strands of evidence allow its full extent to be reconstructed, and it probably equated to the parish of Kinkell, itself a remarkably large parish and one of the largest in Donside. The church of Kinkell stood on the opposite bank of the Don some 2.8km to the north-west of Kintore, but its parochia was divided into six pendicles, each served by a dependent chapel and subsequently erected as a parish in its own right—Dyce, Kinellar, Kintore, Kemnay and Skene forming a single block in the lower Don, and Drumblade a detached territory some way to the north. This structure implies the origin of Kinkell as a minster, in the sense of a mother church, but the coincidence of its parish with the extent of the thanage suggests that its pendicles may also reflect the substructure of the secular landscape. In effect, the smaller parishes into which Kinkell is eventually broken encompassed the lesser estates that made up the thanage. The handful of *pit*-names in the lower Don hint at another, sub-parochial, tier of lesser holdings, as Barrow has argued elsewhere (1973, 64–8).

Kintore is not the only large territorial unit that can be identified in the parochial structure in Donside. The very top of the Don largely falls in the parish of Invernocht (Figs. 9.1 and 9.2), but by a quirk of tenure two of the side valleys, Glen Ernan and Glen Buchat, fell in the parishes of Tarland and Logie respectively, both of them lying in the Howe of Cromar, a large basin in the hills across the watershed with the Dee to the south. Glen Ernan is also known to have been one of those ancient land units known as a *dabhach*, and there can be little doubt that Glen Buchat was one too, along with the intervening Glen Nocht. On purely pragmatic grounds the head of the Don appears to have been a single large unit divided topographically into five or six *dabhachs*. There is no documentation to imply the sort of ecclesiastical arrangement seen at Kintore, but tradition identifies a scatter of recorded chapel sites throughout the parish. One of these, in the glen of the Deskry Water, is associated with two *annait* place-names—Ennot Hillock and the nearby Burn of Badnahannet—and probably located by the nineteenth-century farmsteads of East and West Chapelton, both now removed. The significance of *annait* as a name has been much discussed (Watson 1926, 250; MacDonald 1973), but a recent study has identified it as indicating a ‘mother church’, providing pastoral care for a secular estate, and therefore of some local significance (Clancy 1995, 114). If there is any veracity in the origin of Kinkell as a minster, perhaps its dependent pendicles are echoing a similar undocumented arrangement in Invernocht, though here

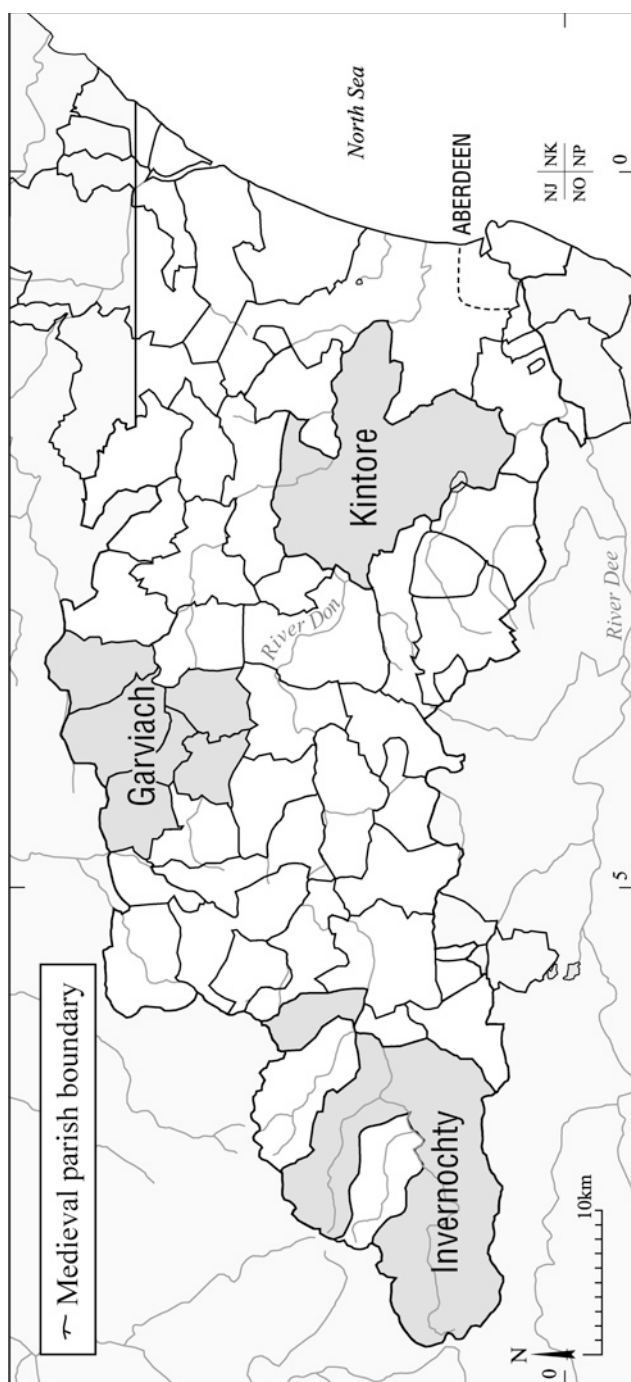


Fig. 9.1: Map of Donside showing the medieval parish boundaries and Kintore, Invernochty and Garviach. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)



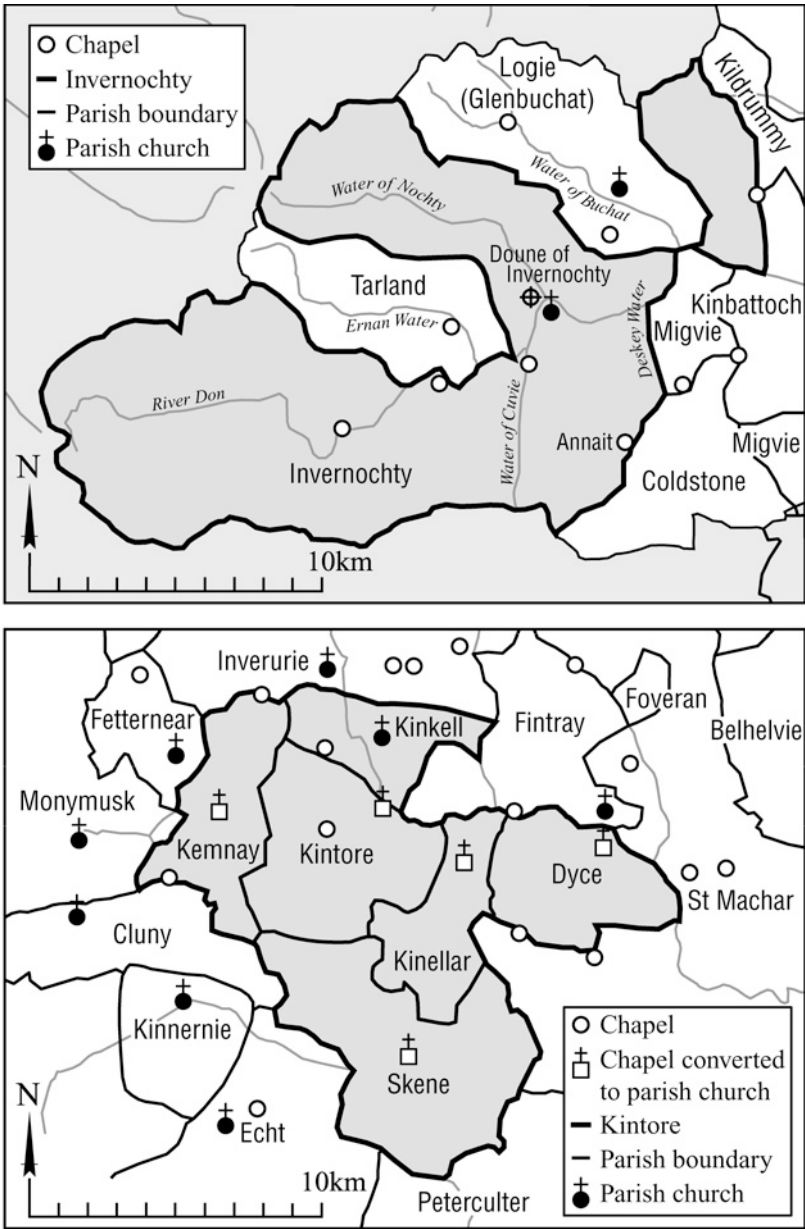


Fig. 9.2: Maps of the territorial units at Invernochty (top) and Kintore (bottom). (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

indicated by no more than the *annait* place-names and a scatter of chapels. As at Kintore and Kinkell, the secular *caput* of lordship—the Doune of Invernochty at Strathdon—is topographically divorced from the site of the *annait* place-name. Curiously, whereas Glen Ernan and Glen Buchat are given whole to parishes in the Howe of Cromar, Deskry is split between Invernochty itself, Migvie and Coldstone. Likewise the mother church at Kinkell appears to occupy an odd wedge of territory on the opposite side of the river to Kintore, perhaps indicating a similar subdivision of a topographical unit.

As recorded, the parochial structure introduced in the twelfth century appears to reflect an earlier secular landscape of large territorial units in a state of flux. While Kintore survives complete, probably on account of its status as a royal thanage, Invernochty was already breaking down. In the heart of the Garioch a third large unit can be identified (Fig. 9.1), but by the time the parishes are first recorded it had been broken into its constituent parts. Identifiable in the original grant to Earl David as *Garviach*, it was made up of the lands of the parishes of Culsalmond, Inch, Rathmuriel, Kennethmont, Leslie and Premnay (Dowden 1903, 2–5; Stringer 1985, 65–7). On topographical grounds, Clatt might have formed a further estate in this unit, but by then it was already held as a shire by the Bishops of Aberdeen. The smallest of these parishes, Rathmuriel, contains yet another *annait* place-name, the obsolete *Anit Hill*, a shoulder of the Hill of Christ Kirk above the former parish church. While it has no documented dependents, it is striking the way that the church stands separate from the obvious secular *caput* in the area, the stone castle occupying the summit of Dunnideer on the opposite side of the valley; the castle occupies the site of the vitrified fort discussed earlier.

### *Pictish symbol stones in the medieval landscape*

Having established the boundaries of the parishes documented in the twelfth century, and that they almost certainly contain a legacy of earlier estate organisation, allows some comparison with the distribution of Pictish symbol stones. The result of superimposing the distribution of stones over the pattern of parishes is remarkable, for by far the majority are evidently situated towards the margins of the medieval parishes (Fig. 9.3). Furthermore, most of the Christian sculptured stones—Pictish cross-slabs, cross-incised stones and ogham

inscriptions—are found in very similar positions. This is not to say that any of the stones are necessarily marking a boundary as such, so much as occupying a position close to a boundary. To take the example of Rhynie, the Ord Burn and the Water of Bogie are both parish boundaries. At Inverurie too, the old parish church from which the stones were recovered stood on the haughland at the confluence of two major rivers that are also parish boundaries. At Kintore, where a burn joins the Don, the main river forms the parish boundary, and again downstream at Dyce.

The pattern is repetitive, but it is perhaps no more than we should expect if the position of choice for a Pictish symbol stone was a local eminence overlooking a watercourse or a confluence. These are natural features that in the lowlands are typically employed as markers for the boundaries of farms, estates and parishes. Again, monuments strung out along the bottoms of valleys in the lowlands—and the distribution is evidently lowland—will always tend to display a riparian distribution. This is particularly so on a small scale map with large symbols. Nevertheless, the observation provides a working hypothesis—that the stones are set up not so much to mark the boundaries of territories as to mark particular locations at the edges of territories. These locations might include cemeteries, cult centres at river confluences (Nicolaisen 1997), routeways, or possibly even hosting grounds. Given the concentration of symbol stones in the North-East into the lower reaches of the Don and into the Garioch, one might further modify the hypothesis to say that it is not a feature of all territories, but of particular territories. This also chimes with the observation that Ian Shepherd made on the day of the conference with regard to the concentration of ogham inscriptions around Bennachie.

### *Testing the hypothesis*

One of the more common discoveries associated with Pictish symbol stones are the remains of burials (but see Clarke 2007). The evidence is fairly thin in Donside, though some burials came to light in the course of agricultural improvements at the original site of the Newton Stone at Pitmachie, and Charles Dalrymple uncovered a long pit adjacent to the Picardy Stone; this may have been a grave, but no human remains were identified (Stuart 1856, xxiv). Nevertheless, square cairns elsewhere, occurring both singly and in cemeteries, are in several cases associated with Pictish symbol stones (Ashmore 1980, 352; Close-

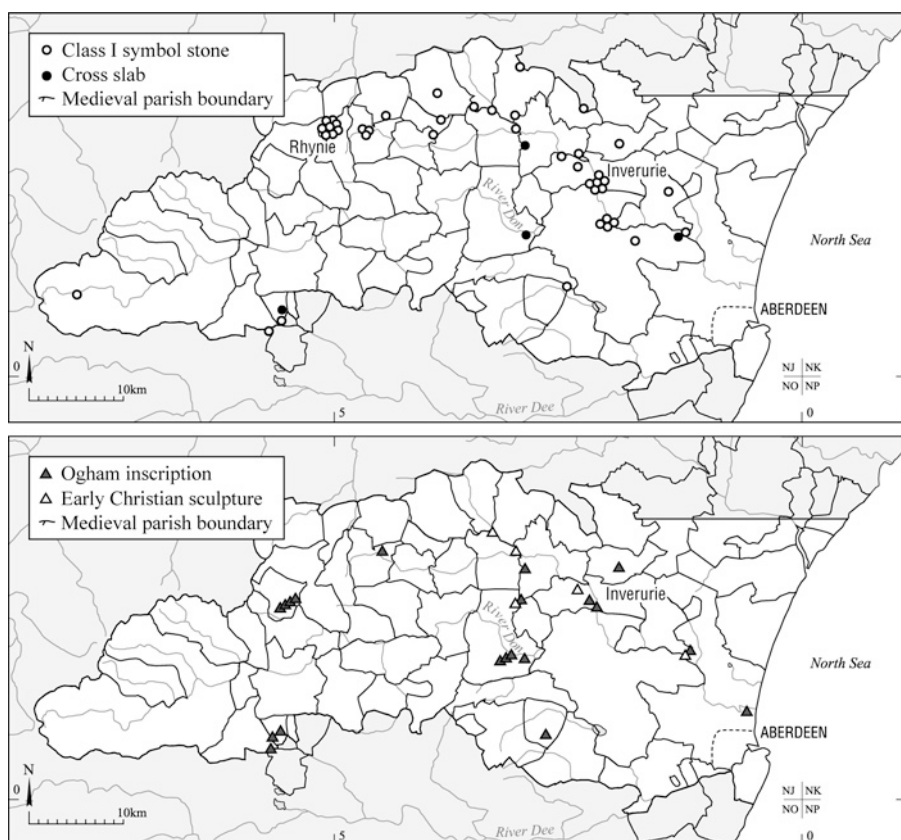


Fig. 9.3: Maps showing the distributions of Pictish symbol stones, cross-slabs, crosses and ogham inscriptions. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

Brooks 1980, 334–6; Mack 1997). At the Picardy Stone, Dalrymple also discovered a small round cairn. This link between Pictish symbol stones and cairn cemeteries suggests that they are facets of related patterns of activity, but there was no way of testing this in Donside. Accordingly, a brief examination of this wider dataset was carried out south of the Mounth, where most of the known cemeteries occur as cropmarks. The square barrows form a particularly distinctive marker in these cemeteries, though with the breadth of their current distribution now stretching from eastern Scotland to the Western Isles, Galloway and northern Wales, they cannot necessarily be claimed as Pictish.

A full analysis would require detailed work on the history of the medieval parish boundaries up and down eastern Scotland, but at face

value at least there is a recurring coincidence between square barrow cemeteries and watercourses, seen for example at Burnbank south of Blairgowrie in Perth and Kinross, or along the Lunan valley in Angus. The relationship, however, is even more fraught with uncertainty than that of the Pictish symbol stones in Donside. Cropmarks form most readily on freely-draining gravels, and freely-draining gravels are most commonly found in river terraces. It is inevitable that the majority of cropmark square barrow cemeteries will be found adjacent to watercourses, *ergo* they will be found adjacent to parish boundaries. However, amongst the cropmarks there are several that are coastal, for example overlooking the mouth of the Lunan Water at Redcastle (Alexander 2005), and the North Esk above the lowest bridging point. These match a series of upstanding cairn cemeteries that have been discovered in coastal locations, such as in sand dunes at Lundin Links in Fife (Greig, Greig and Ashmore 2000), the Dairy Park, Dunrobin in Sutherland (Close-Brooks 1981), Ackergill in Caithness (Edwards 1926; 1927) and, most recently, at the top of the storm beaches in Laig Bay on the island of Eigg. Those excavated indicate that such cemeteries are unequivocally of early medieval date.

These locations also recall those of a series of long cists found singly and in cemeteries around the shores of the Forth estuary and northwards into Angus. These are often all lumped together under the heading of long cist cemeteries, though this classification should be reserved for those where the graves are typically oriented in rows. The burials at Redcastle, Angus, for example, are also in long cists, but they are not in oriented rows and are therefore not long cist cemeteries. Long cists, singly or in loose groups, either with barrows or without, occur much more widely than oriented long cist cemeteries, and should be treated as a substrate of burial practice that probably occurs throughout Scotland at this time. Surprisingly, however, most of the single long cists and the formal long cist cemeteries that have been found inland along the Lothian plain are situated close to watercourses. In most cases these are also parish boundaries, though again there is the caveat that some of these may not be medieval parish boundaries. At Thornybank, Midlothian, a long cist cemetery is situated no more than 200m from one of these boundaries; excavation also revealed two square barrows (Rees 2002). At the Catstane, an early Christian inscribed stone near Edinburgh Airport (Cowie 1978), the associated cemetery is situated on a narrow spur between the River Avon and the

Gogar Burn, a position that compares with the Pictish symbol stones and burials at Rhynie, or the five symbol stones associated with the square cairn cemetery at Tillytarmont (DES 1975, 6).

This observed pattern is not limited to burials dating from the early medieval period. A surprisingly high proportion of the relatively small numbers of Iron Age burials that are known in southern Scotland come from similar locations inland or along the coast. The most spectacular example is probably the drystone-built cist found in 1923 at Burnmouth, Berwickshire, in which there was an extended inhumation accompanied by two bronze spoons (Craw 1924). This was discovered in a quarry on the boundary between the parishes of Ayton and Mordington. By no means all of the recorded Iron Age burials fit this pattern, but, to return to the North-East, the probable Roman Iron Age grave group recovered from Waulkmill in the Howe of Cromar is certainly in a comparable location adjacent to the boundary of the parish of Tarland. Discovered in the nineteenth century in a sand-pit midway between a prehistoric stone circle and the boundary, the grave group comprised a bronze cauldron, a silver penannular brooch, and glass and stone 'playing pieces' (Inglis 1987, 77).

### *Conclusion*

Despite the uncertainties of the sort of evidence that is marshalled here, there is at least a *prima facie* case that a wide range of related archaeological remains—Pictish symbol stones, square cairn/barrow cemeteries, long cist burials and long cist cemeteries—are routinely set close to watercourses and confluences. Those on the coast, however, such as the cemetery at Redcastle, are not simply overlooking a confluence, for they are clearly also set at the physical limits of a land territory, at the boundary between the land and the sea. However, for peoples with a host of important water deities (e.g. see Green 1986, 139–66), tacitly referenced in the names of rivers such as the Don and the Dee (Rivet and Smith 1979, 337–8), such a boundary probably has a much wider significance; and by extension, the major rivers and their tributaries are these same boundaries. That boundaries adopted in the twelfth century to delineate parishes preserve within them elements of an earlier secular organisation is hardly surprising. Whether their antiquity can be credibly stretched back into the late Iron Age

is another matter, but it should not be forgotten that Hadrian's Wall cuts through a series of Northumberland parishes without reference to their boundaries (Barrow 1976, 14). There is at least a case to answer that some of these parishes may preserve the boundaries of pre-Roman territories. The same case can be made for the Antonine Wall in central Scotland; in all likelihood the parochial system preserves components of ancient territorial boundaries. But these were not simply physical markers of territories in the landscape, they were also conceptual markers, they were multi-purpose boundaries, and were probably being referenced at various times and in various ways that included burials and the erection of carved standing stones.

Seeking the explanation of the pattern of Pictish symbol stones in the contemporary territorial framework of Donside is an attractive hypothesis. It not only mirrors the relationship between pagan burials and estate boundaries that has been observed in some parts of southern England (Bonney 1972, 171–2; 1976), but also provides a pragmatic solution to the carvings on stones belonging to prehistoric monuments. Yes, these may be associated in some way with claims to ancient rights and privileges, but more importantly they were simply marking significant geographical reference points in the Pictish landscape; to look at the relationship from the opposite perspective, this explains why so few prehistoric monuments are marked in this way.

But what of the function of the carvings on the symbol stones, which are evidently not marking the boundaries themselves. The clue here is probably provided by the symbol stones that have also been inscribed in ogham. Such inscriptions rarely provide any more than an apparently garbled personal name (Forsyth 1997a, 31–6); these essentially project an identity. This surely is the message of the symbols. They are statements of identity set up at the edges of territories. This provides a ready explanation of the stones inscribed with two separate sets of symbols, usually only identifiable when one of the sets is inverted over the other, such as at Inverurie in Donside, or Inchyra in Perth and Kinross. This was surely a powerful political statement of change in the old order to the contemporary people who saw it, in its way as powerful as the statement of a timber-laced fort burnt to the point of vitrification (Ralston 2006, 163). Where the carvings are simply superimposed, as on one of the Donside stones from Moor of Carden, now at Logie Elphinstone (Fig. 9.4), the message was possibly more benign, simply indicating a change in identity. The presence of an ogham inscription on this stone or the one in the stone circle at

Brandsbutt near Inverurie perhaps carries the same message, though it must be conceded that it is difficult to demonstrate whether such inscriptions are contemporary with the symbols or additions (see discussion in Clarke 2007, 21).

If this is correct, however, the sudden appearance of carved symbols on stones in the landscape itself signals a dramatic social or political change. As we have seen, earlier activity in these locations seems more likely to have involved a burial, although the stone hole in the top of the grave pit beneath a square barrow at Boysack (Murray and Ralston 1997) serves as a warning that uninscribed standing stones may have been erected in the Roman Iron Age also. The burials, however, were covert statements of identity in the landscape for people who did not need a physical marker in order to exercise their rights. Indeed, the significance of burials in this respect can be seen with reference to Irish law tracts dating from the late sixth or early seventh century (Charles-Edwards 1976). By comparison, the symbol stones are overt statements, though no less important. Their very visibility indicates that they were directed at people who did not understand or recognise other expressions of such rights. In this sense they may be a manifestation of upheaval and change. The stimulus was perhaps Christianity, which is likely to have elicited complex responses from the more conservative sections of Pictish society (cf. Foster 1996, 78–9; Clarke 2007, 32–5). A similar hypothesis has been advanced for the appearance of pagan barrow cemeteries in southern England (Carver 1998).

In summary, the symbol stones in Donside are a manifestation of the territorial organisation of the Pictish landscape, though their uneven distribution across the whole of eastern Scotland implies that they were not typical features of all territorial units. Nevertheless, the erection of symbol stones formed part of a long tradition of activity at selected places at the edges of these territories. The stones strung along the spur at Rhynie, at a crossroads in traditional routeways through the hills, possibly indicate that points of access to territories were important places where stones and barrows might be erected. Points of access might also be linked to hosting grounds, places of assembly for friend and foe alike, and possibly more likely to be on the routeways into territories than at their centres. It is tempting to see this role at Kintore, where the monument in which the symbol stones were found beneath the motte seems to have stood adjacent to an area where extensive excavations have revealed a gap in the settlement record spanning the first half of the 1st millennium AD. It is



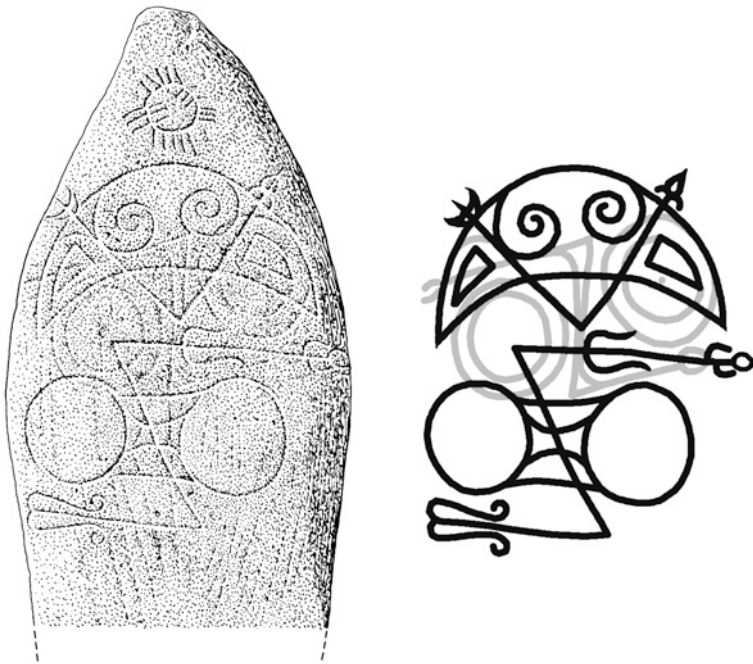


Fig. 9.4: The stone at Logie Elphinstone, which bears an ogham inscription at the top, below which a crescent with V-rod and a double disc with Z-rod are superimposed upon another double disc with Z-rod. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

usually assumed that the sites of Roman temporary camps such as that at Kintore were chosen for tactical reasons and by force of arms, but it is equally likely that they were sited through local preferences, and that places of assembly were the places that contemporary peoples would have expected to meet large bodies of strangers. The stones at Kintore are perhaps a legacy of such a use, though they also stood close to a confluence of a minor burn with the Don, identifying what may be another thread in this territorial geography. There is no reason, however, why in some cases cult centres at confluences (Nicolaisen 1997), the sites of cemeteries, routeways and hosting grounds should not all occur at the same location.

It was perhaps the threat to social mores that is represented by the first erection of carved symbol stones. The stimulus was possibly a time when Christianity was exerting sufficient grip on society to pose a threat to secular authority and its association with traditional deities. The believers owed their allegiance to a higher authority than any

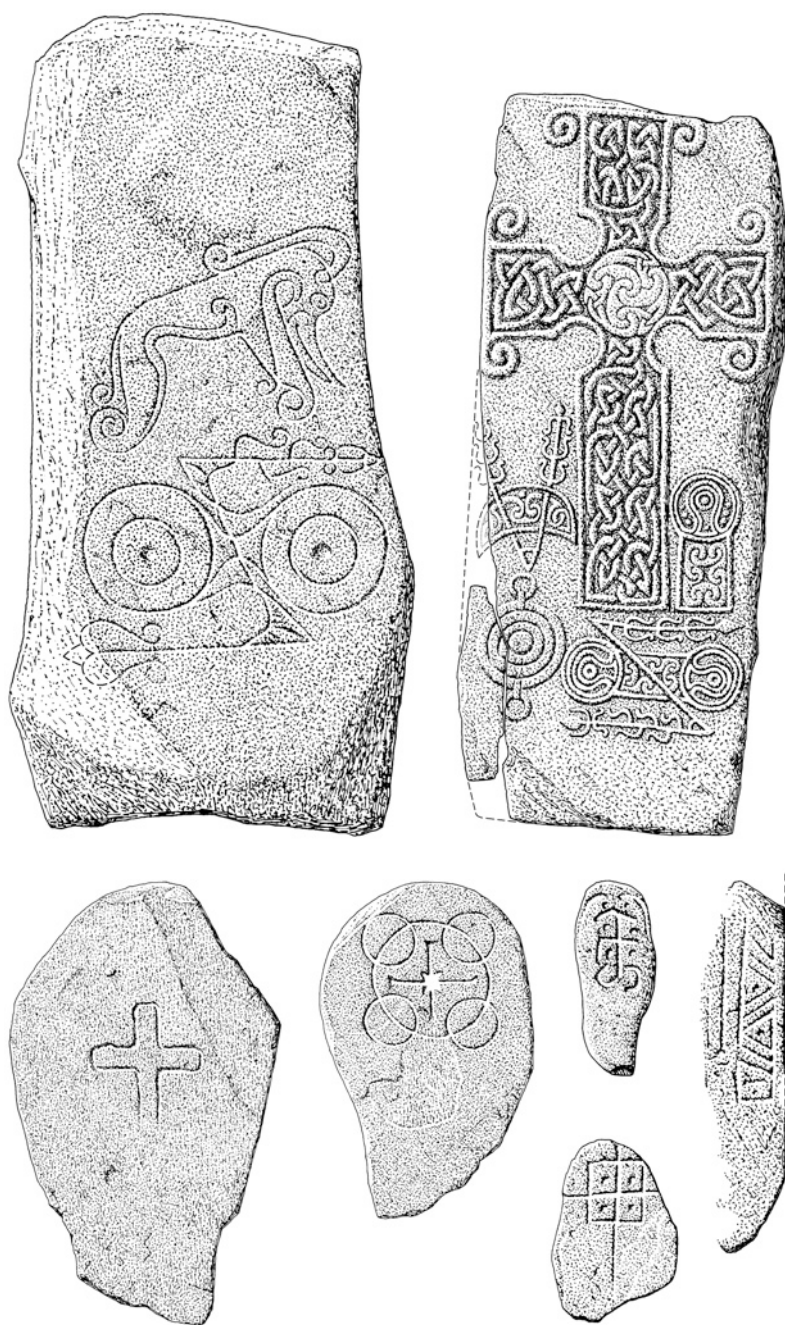


Fig. 9.5: Carved stones found at Dyce. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

secular power. This would surely have been sufficient to provoke crisis amongst the old order, manifested in the erection of symbol stones with their overt statements of identity. The ogham inscriptions on some of the stones, though it cannot be shown whether ogham was added to symbol or vice versa, is the same practice, but it is likely to have been made in a Christian milieu. The erection of cross-slabs bearing Pictish symbols, of which there are relatively few in the North-East, completes the transition. Where once the higher, spiritual, authority was a threat, now it was the ultimate ally of secular power, and so a relationship to be advertised through secular patronage. The whole process is manifested at Dyce, with its collection of stones comprising a symbol stone, at least three Early Christian cross-marked stones, and an ogham-inscribed cross-slab (Fig. 9.5). These chart the stages by which a pagan cult centre at the edge of a territory became a Christian centre and, finally, a medieval parish church.

### *Acknowledgements*

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## A REVIEW OF PICTISH BURIAL PRACTICES IN TAYSIDE AND FIFE

Sarah Winlow

In his chapter “Houses and Graves”, published under the title *The Problem of the Picts* more than fifty years ago, Wainwright recognised that the study of Pictish burial practices was a basic requirement to reaching an understanding of their society. The problem was, however, that not a single grave had with any degree of certainty been identified as Pictish. Nonetheless, Wainwright forecast diversity in Pictish burial tradition, anticipated its prehistoric origins and suggested the possibility of a relationship between burial practices and symbol stones (Wainwright 1955, 87–96).

Aerial survey in 1976 identified the cropmarks of square-ditched enclosures with central pits, a type of site previously unknown in Scotland (RCAHMS 1978, 9–10). These sites were similar, but on a reduced scale, to the Iron Age Arras cemeteries in East Yorkshire (Stead 1979, 30). Like the Arras graves, these square-ditched enclosures have been interpreted as the remains of ploughed-out earthen barrows (Stead 1979, 29; Ashmore 1980, 353). Both upstanding barrows and ditched graves belong to a tradition of marked or defined inhumation, with subsequent land use the most significant factor determining the appearance of monuments today. The lexicon is important as ‘bar-row’ suggests monumental architecture, the construction of which has involved purposeful effort to create a memorial.

Boysack Mills, Angus (Fig. 10.1) was one of these newly identified sites and consisted of two square barrows measuring approximately 6m in diameter, one of which had a central grave pit aligned SE–NW. Excavation of this grave revealed that the individual had been buried within a wooden coffin at a depth of 1.5m and the grave pit backfilled with large boulders. The inclusion of a ring-headed pin, typologically dated from the first to third centuries AD, suggests the burial took place in the early centuries AD (Murray and Ralston 1997, 362–70). Since the excavation of Boysack Mills, discussion and analysis of Pictish burial practices (e.g. Ashmore 1980 and 2003; Cowley 1996) has included square barrow cemeteries identified by aerial survey along with low





Fig. 10.1: Aerial view of Boysack Mills. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

kerbed cairns (e.g. Lundin Links, Fife excavated 1965–7 (Greig *et al.* 2000), see Fig. 10.2) and flat grave cemeteries (e.g. Hallow Hill, Fife excavated 1975–7 (Proudfoot 1996)). The number of known and possible Pictish cemetery sites has greatly increased since Wainwright's day and this paper presents a review of the aerial photographic record for Pictish burial sites supplemented by evidence from excavation and records of chance discoveries within a study area of Perth and Kinross, Dundee, Angus and Fife (see Fig. 10.3). Detail from excavated sites has been collated in Table 6.

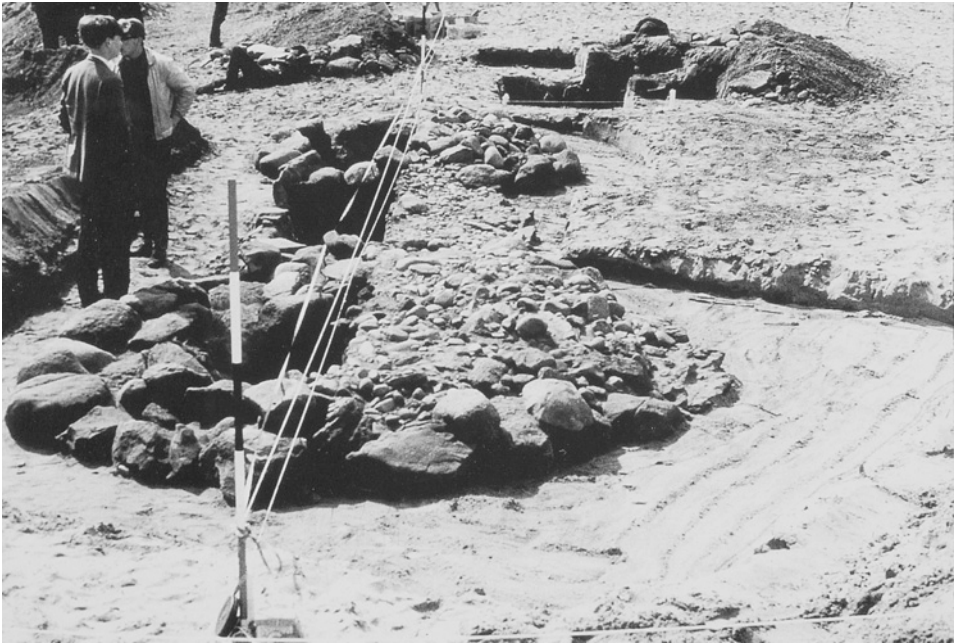


Fig. 10.2: 'Double disc' cairn complex, Lundin Links during excavation in the 1960s. (Photograph courtesy of Moira Greig.)

### *Barrows and cairns*

The geology, coupled with the largely arable nature of the study area, determines that the evidence for the majority of sites consists of the truncated remains of ditched enclosures surrounding a central grave, and over seventy barrow cemeteries have been discovered within the study area through aerial survey. Examples of upstanding monuments are few; the cairn cemetery at Lundin Links is the most remarkable, and examples of barrows can still be seen at Hallhole (Fig. 10.4) and Inchtuthil, Perth and Kinross. Square-ditched enclosures are distinctive features and perhaps this distinctiveness has resulted in the impression that Pictish burials are typically found below square barrows. However, Pictish cemeteries do not just contain square monuments; more often than not they contain round barrows. Just over half of the cemeteries within the study area contain both circular and square monuments. It is likely that Pictish cemeteries consisting solely of round monuments exist but are currently classified as ring ditches (RCAHMS 1994, 17). Examples of probable Pictish cemeteries

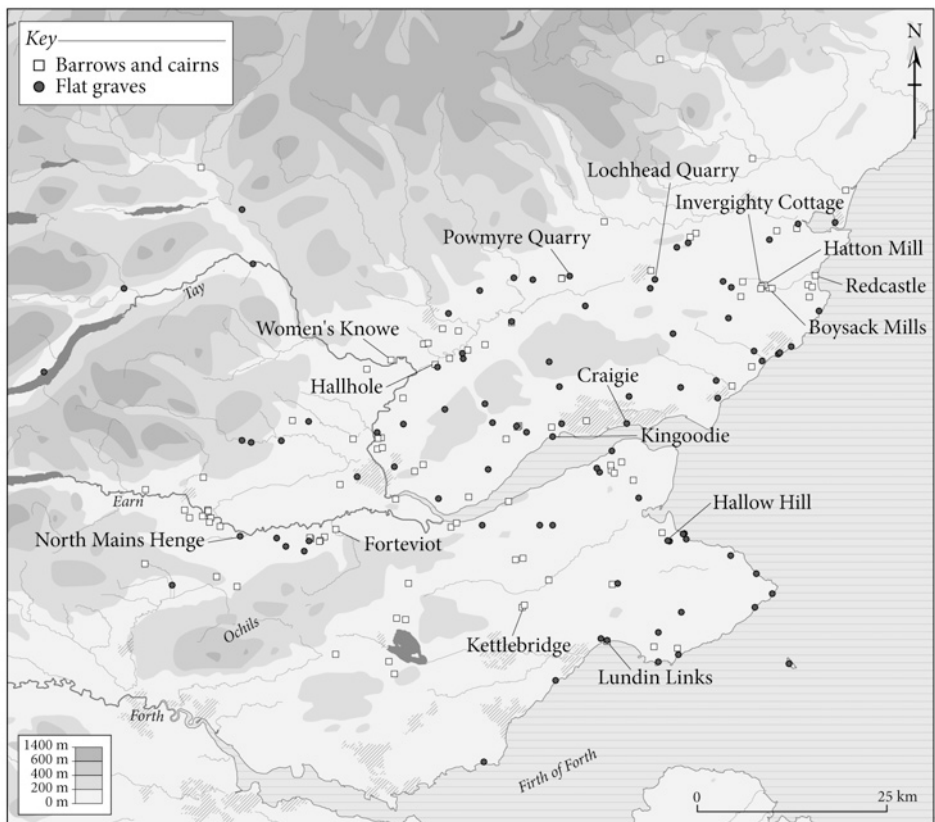


Fig. 10.3: Distribution of barrows/cairns and flat graves. (Map: Ingrid Shearer.)

consisting solely of round monuments have been photographed at Carse of Lennoch and Kemphill, Perth and Kinross.

Barrow and cairn cemeteries can also include simple graves without any enclosing ditch. At Redcastle, Angus the excavated cemetery consists of at least seven unenclosed graves, five (possibly seven) square barrows and two round barrows (Alexander 2005, 94). Lundin Links includes six graves without a defining cairn or ditch, and the cemetery may have been more extensive (Greig *et al.* 2000, 591; Williams 2007, 151). Trial trenching at Hatton Mill, Angus has revealed long cists and dug graves alongside at least two square barrows (Suddaby and White 2004, 29). The number of barrow cemeteries with unenclosed grave pits is currently in the minority, perhaps only because aerial photography hints at a site rather than revealing it as excavation



Fig. 10.4: Aerial view of Hallhole barrow cemetery. (Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

does or geophysics might. Examples known from aerial survey include Invergighy Cottage (see Fig. 10.8) and Lendrick Lodge in Angus; and Burnbank, Carse of Lennoch and Lagg, Perth and Kinross.

The well-preserved Highland sites of Whitebridge (see Figs. 10.5 and 10.6) and Garbeg give a useful idea of what the Tayside cropmark sites may have looked like. The monuments have been created from a mix of features—a stone kerb or earthen bank, small ditches and berms, and a central mound or cairn—all relatively slight in scale. Each of the monuments within these Highland cemeteries is unique and slightly different from its neighbour, and similar variation is visible within the truncated remains of ploughed-out barrows. However, certain traits reappear across all Pictish cemeteries. The corners of monuments may be differentiated either by complete or gapped corners. Barrows may be contiguous and share common sides to form honeycomb complexes. It has been suggested that these clusters mark the graves of family groups (Alexander 2005, 108–9) and this is supported by the results of skeletal analysis from Lundin Links (Greig *et al.* 2000, 603; Williams 2007, 157).



Fig. 10.5: View of square barrow 3, Whitebridge. (Courtesy of RCAHMS (Historic Scotland Archive Project). Photograph: Derek Alexander, Centre for Field Archaeology, sponsored by Historic Scotland.)



Fig. 10.6: View of round barrow 1, Whitebridge. (Courtesy of RCAHMS (Historic Scotland Archive Project). Photograph: Derek Alexander, Centre for Field Archaeology, sponsored by Historic Scotland.)

The average diameter of the barrows is between 8–12m across, with the smallest and largest examples at 4–6m and 25–30m respectively. Monuments of differing sizes are found within the same cemetery; at Kettlebridge, Fife three small square barrows 8m in diameter have been recorded adjacent to massive square and circular enclosures 25–30m in diameter. At Hallhole, the upstanding barrow spans 25m in comparison to the 10m diameters of the smaller monuments. The large rectilinear enclosure to the north of the cemetery at Forteviot, Perth and Kinross may be another example. The scale of these large enclosures raises doubt whether these features are burial monuments, however their location and, in some cases, visible central grave pits supports this notion. The number of graves within each cemetery is relatively small and Henshall's (1956, 265) criterion of six graves used in classifying long cist cemeteries works well for the barrow cemeteries. Over 70% of barrow and cairn cemeteries contain less than six graves, with 40% of these sites appearing to consist of a single monument. Some 15% of barrow cemeteries contain between six and fifteen graves (Fig. 10.7). Invergighty Cottage (Fig. 10.8) is the largest site recorded, with twenty-three monuments (seventeen square and six round) and a number of unenclosed grave pits.

The layout of the graves within cemeteries is structured in that the monuments respect each other and do not intercut, and grave pit alignment tends to be more or less uniform. Grave pits are placed

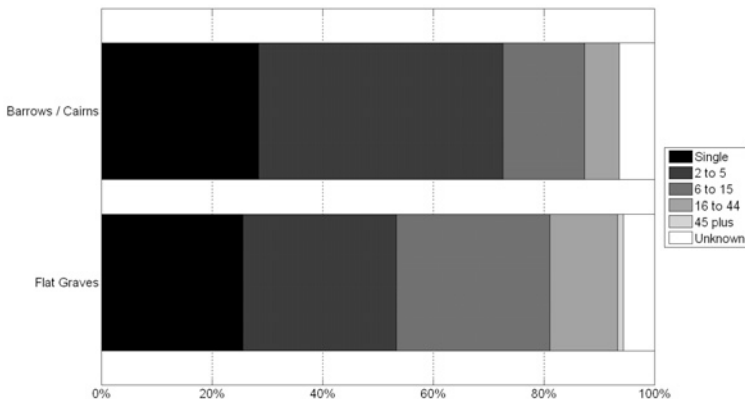


Fig. 10.7: Size of barrow/cairn cemeteries and flat grave cemeteries.



Fig. 10.8: Aerial view of Inverighty Cottage barrow cemetery.  
(Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.)

centrally within monuments and usually the grave and ditches follow the same alignment. One notable exception is Square Barrow 1 (SB1) at Redcastle where the grave pit was placed diagonally and off-centre, slightly to the north of the monument (Alexander 2005, 94). To date, no evidence for man-made boundaries enclosing cemeteries has been found (though this does not preclude the possibility that cemeteries

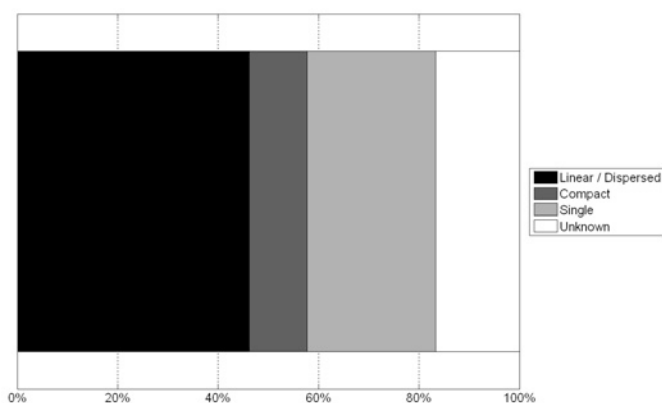


Fig. 10.9: Analysis of layout of barrow cemeteries.

may have been bound by banks or hedges that would have left little trace). However, it is unlikely that cemeteries were enclosed as their layout tends to be linear or stretched rather than compact. Simple morphological analysis of barrow cemeteries known from aerial survey is presented in Fig. 10.9, with the majority of sites distributed over areas 50m to 200m in length. The results of excavation and radiocarbon dating indicate the random growth of cemeteries as opposed to development from A to B along a river terrace or hillside (Dunwell and Ralston 2008, 152).

Inhumation within monuments is extended and supine, either in a dug grave or stone-lined cist. The depth of the grave varies, with some burials interred over a metre deep beneath the cairn or barrow whereas other graves are found within the matrix of the capping material. Over two-thirds of all barrows recorded through aerial survey have visible grave pits. Alignment of the grave pit is usually E–W (some 40%) but can be along other alignments (with 15% aligned NE–SW and SE–NW respectively). Within cemeteries there can be slight differences of grave pit alignment but only one example, at Westside, Angus, has grave pits on completely opposed alignments, with the central grave of the square barrow aligned NE–SW and that of the round barrow aligned NW–SE. Of the excavated cemeteries, where comparison is possible, individuals are found orientated in the same direction, i.e. interred with their heads at the same end of the grave. Evidence from Redcastle reveals variety in construction of graves. The cist of SB1 was well made from massive sandstone slabs whereas another twelve cist graves were constructed from smaller slabs. Two graves (G258 and G262) were



dug graves with no stone lining and SB5 may have contained an inhumation interred within a log coffin (Alexander 2005, 107).

### *Flat graves*

In her discussion of the Parkburn long cist cemetery, Henshall (1956, 278–81) presented a gazetteer of long cist cemeteries, and whilst the majority were from the Lothians, at least fifteen examples were known from Tayside and Fife. The number of sites consisting of long cists and/or dug graves currently stands at around ninety. With no evidence surviving for a marking mound or cairn, ditch or kerb, flat grave cemeteries are more or less invisible to aerial survey. The majority are known from excavation (both antiquarian and modern) or the historical records of discoveries made as a result of agricultural improvements, construction and quarrying. For the purposes of this study an assumption has been made that historical records of ‘stone coffins’ are more likely to be describing Pictish long cists than prehistoric short cists. The questionable reliability of historic references has led to their exclusion from some discussions (e.g. Rees 2002, 345–6), however to omit such evidence would be to ignore a large number of sites that can make a useful contribution.

The categorisation as a flat grave cemetery rather than a barrow cemetery may be as much the result of circumstantial survival of evidence rather than any difference between burial traditions. As the upstanding Highland cemeteries illustrate and the multiple historic references to ‘stone coffins’ found in tumuli long since ploughed-out attest, Pictish barrows are not as monumental and, therefore, as durable as their prehistoric predecessors. The possibility that evidence for ditches and barrows may have been destroyed by subsequent land use should be taken into account, with graves marked by turf mounds or small cairns long since disintegrated to leave no trace in the archaeological record. Certainly, some form of grave marker must have been used given that few graves intercut each other (Henshall 1956, 258; Proudfoot 1996, 416, 441; Rees 2002, 350).

Over half of the flat grave sites within the study area contain less than five graves. Some 20% of sites appear to be single graves, a trend also observed in the evidence for barrows. The group of four long cists at Kingoodie, Perth and Kinross is typical and, as with all small groups of graves, there is the possibility that this site was more extensive. All

four cists were constructed of local stone and aligned E–W. Three were positioned ‘side by side’ in a row north to south, with the fourth some 8m to the west (Taylor 1962).

The eight long cists recently discovered at Powmyre Quarry, Angus are significant given that their disparate, linear distribution mirrors that of many of the barrow sites known from aerial survey. Uncovered to date are two groups of E–W aligned long cists separated by some 60m (Groups A and B), with a solitary long cist discovered a further 100m distant. Group A consists of four long cists constructed of sandstone slabs, arranged in a ‘head to toe’ string, a characteristic recorded in larger long cist cemeteries. Group B is made up of three long cists built with cobbles and sandstone slabs (Bailey 2007).

Some 40% of flat grave cemeteries are larger with between six and forty-five inhumations. A cemetery made up of at least twenty long cists at Lochhead Quarry, Angus was excavated in 2004. Again the layout of this cemetery is similar to that of many of the barrow cemeteries, with two clusters of graves arranged in ad hoc rows and separated by 15m and a further grave found 25m to the NW (Dunbar forthcoming). Rather than indicating that these cemeteries were more extensive with the evidence for some graves lost, the ‘gaps’ at Lochhead Quarry, Powmyre Quarry, Hatton Mill and in many of the barrow cemeteries appear to be real.

The exceptional cemetery at Hallow Hill consists of long cists, dug graves and boulder graves of at least 150 individuals. Orientated W–E or NW–SE in all but two instances, the graves form rows both ‘side by side’ and ‘head to toe’ with little intercutting. As a result of its size, this cemetery has been interpreted as that of early Christians with burial overseen by clerics. Three graves, differing in construction and alignment, and with evidence for a capping cairn, are interpreted as pagan, foundation graves around which the Christian cemetery grew (Proudfoot 1996, 436–47; 1998, 57–73). The size of the Hallow Hill cemetery is unique in Tayside and Fife, though historical records of discoveries of ‘many’ cist burials (for example, at Carlungie, Angus and Kingswood, St Leonard’s and Lundin Links in Fife) plus the aerial photographic evidence for unenclosed graves at Forteviot perhaps suggest this scale of burial ground, or at least sites with scores of graves, may be more common.

*A single Pictish funerary tradition?*

The distributions of barrow and flat grave cemeteries are not as opposed as previously thought, with overlap found throughout the study area (Williams 2007, 149). With the exception of Hallow Hill, the size of flat grave cemeteries is comparable to that of the barrow cemeteries. The morphology of cemeteries is also comparable in their seemingly random growth and the clusters of graves within an overall linear layout. One difference is the density of graves within cemeteries. Monuments within barrow cemeteries are not as tightly knit as some clusters of flat graves, as the ditches of the monuments, even when contiguous, ensure a thinner spread of graves over an area. Other shared characteristics include variation in grave orientation, depth of grave pit and cist construction, or lack thereof. What follows is a discussion of further characteristics that these cemeteries share: their location within the landscape, the kinds of artefacts recovered and their date. The populations of the excavated cemeteries are also considered.

*Location of burials within the landscape*

Systematic analysis of the location of burial sites within the landscape and in relation to other sites (for example, with settlement, possible boundaries and routeways, and prehistoric monuments) has not been carried out in this study. However, in reviewing the evidence, it is clear that the cemeteries are not found along the skyline but in the straths, often upon terraces above rivers or gravel knolls in rolling lowland terrain. This may be an archaeological construct as the majority of evidence comes from cropmarks or discoveries made during agricultural improvements. Cemeteries appear to run with the local topography, with graves placed along a river terrace or hillside. Valleys and coastal plains are not marginal places and despite the relatively low visibility of monuments in comparison with prehistoric barrows and cairns, the prime position of cemeteries is notable (Alexander 2005, 109).

The majority of sites are not delineated by man-made boundaries, with only one definite example of graves bounded by a ditch at Ballumbie, Angus (Derek Hall pers. comm.) and a further possible example at North Mains, Perth and Kinross where the dug graves are within a prehistoric henge (Barclay 1983). The incidence of single graves and the linear layout of many of the cemeteries may indicate burial was made alongside a route or territorial boundary. At present

the only evidence for burial associated with an actual routeway is from Hallow Hill, where the cemetery grew up on either side of a cobbled road (Proudfoot 1996, 399). Pollock (Dunwell and Ralston 2008, 148) has suggested that Invergigthy Cottage and Boysack Mills, on opposite banks of the Lunan Water might be situated on a territorial boundary defined by the Lunan Water. Study of the location of early medieval graves and memorial inscriptions in Ireland suggests that their frequent situation on boundaries was to demarcate and protect family lands (Driscoll 1988, 228–9; Blair 2005, 59 citing Charles-Edwards and Fry). Similarly, the situation of Anglo-Saxon graves has been suggested as supporting territorial claims with around one-fifth falling within 50m of what became a parish boundary (Lucy 2000, 148–9 citing a study by Goodier), though these boundary burials are dated to the sixth and seventh centuries and the lack of historical references to such a practice, if it existed, has been noted as unusual (Cramp 1988, 71 citing Bullough).

Pictish burials have been found during the investigation of older monuments, both from distant millennia and from the then more recent past (Thomas 1971, 53–6; O'Brien and Roberts 1996, 161). Various examples recorded by antiquarians are listed by Hutcheson (1903, 233–40) and could include the coincidence of long and short cists at Cairnbeddie, Perth and Kinross; Carnoustie and Carsegowrie, Angus; and Mare's Craig Quarry, Fife. Excavation of North Mains henge revealed thirteen E–W aligned dug graves within the eastern half of the henge (Barclay 1983, 145). Burial sites have been recorded in proximity to cursus monuments, with examples near the Cleaven Dyke and Blairhall, Perth and Kinross; Inchbare, Balneaves and Powis, Angus; and Star Inn Farm, Dundee.

Burials are occasionally found in proximity to settlement, both defensive and vernacular. Examples of burial at enclosed sites include a long cist found cut into the entrance of a second century AD promontory fort at Mains of Ethie, Angus (*DES* 1966, 3), the three or four graves at Elliot Burn promontory fort, Angus (Cameron *et al.* 2007, 71) and the barrows at the multi-ditched fort at The Welton, Perth and Kinross. Analysis of the cropmark evidence suggests that roughly half of the barrow sites are within 100m of settlement remains, however it is unlikely that many of these sites are contemporary. If later—as at Redcastle, West Grange of Conon and Hawkhill (Alexander 2005; Jervise 1863; Rees 2009) where burials have been discovered adjacent to souterrains in use centuries before—as to whether settlement remains

would have been 'known' or visible, and of influence in the location of graves, is unknown. The remains of Roman fortifications would have been visible and at some forts and camps there is evidence for burial, with barrows and dug graves recorded during survey and investigation of Inchtuthil and Carpow, and the camps at Strageath and Longforan, all Perth and Kinross. On the Inchtuthil plateau, the Women's Knowe tumulus is situated between the fortress and the 'redoubt', and a second, smaller barrow sits on top of the fortress' eastern defence. Both barrows were investigated in the early 1900s, revealing an E-W aligned long cist and dug grave respectively and, in his report, Abercromby relates earlier accounts of similar burial monuments found across the plateau (1901, 191, 197–202).

### *Finds from burials*

The majority of burials are unfurnished. Wisps of textile on the Boysack Mills pin and a penannular brooch from a long cist found at Craigie, Dundee are likely to indicate that these individuals were buried fully clothed (Murray and Ralston 1997, 366; Dunwell and Ralston 2008, 155). The occasional artefact recovered appears to be either functional or an accidental inclusion, with a fastening ring, bracelet and pendant from possible dug graves at Elliot Burn (Cameron *et al.* 2007, 67), a pin from Lundin Links (Greig *et al.* 2000, 598), a bracelet from Ballumbie (DES 2005, 21) and an amber bead from Lochhead Quarry (Dunbar forthcoming). However, a number of the artefacts are broken fragments that may have been deliberately included as some sort of talisman (F. Hunter in his contribution to Cameron *et al.* 2007, 67). A barbed and tanged arrowhead in the upper fill of one of the unenclosed graves at Forteviot may have been deliberately deposited or could just attest the dense prehistoric occupation of this part of Strathearn (Poller 2007, 13, 18).

In contrast, high status Roman artefacts have been recovered from three Pictish burials. At Hallow Hill, two of the possible foundation graves, Cists 51B and 54, included a seal box, a disc brooch, a snake-head bracelet and two glass cups; dating from the first to fourth centuries AD. These expensive, presumably curated artefacts, along with an assortment of cattle teeth, pebbles and quartz crystal or bead have been interpreted as the favourite playthings of the children of wealthy families (Proudfoot 1996, 437–9). Cist 54 was found beneath the remains of a small cairn and it is likely that Cist 51B may have been capped by

a small cairn (Proudfoot 1996, 388, 413). A complete third- to fourth-century glass cup was found within a small cist, perhaps another child burial, at Airlie School, Angus. The cist was one of four discovered (Davidson 1886, 136–8). The other find that occasionally turns up at Pictish cemeteries is sculptured symbol stones (Ashmore 1980, 352), a phenomenon discussed below.

### *Dating burials*

Burial under barrow or cairn begins in the first to third centuries AD, flourishes in the fifth and sixth and goes out of practice by the ninth century. A similar scenario exists for flat graves with the late first to early fourth century long cist from Craigie, Dundee indicating this form of burial also dates from the pre-Christian era (DES 2004, 176). As with barrow cemeteries, most flat grave cemeteries date to the fifth and sixth centuries with the tradition waning in the eighth century. The actual date of burial cannot be achieved because all radiocarbon dates require calibration; radiocarbon date ranges are presented in Table 6 calibrated at 2 $\sigma$  or 95% probability. Calibrated date ranges at 95% probability tend to be around 160 years for this period and therefore are not refined enough to chart the development of a cemetery decade by decade. Despite this limitation, a striking characteristic is the apparent longevity of the cemeteries in contrast with the small numbers of people buried within them. Over a period of 500 to 700 years only twenty people were buried at Redcastle (Alexander 2005, 110). Dates for the Lundin Links cemetery, consisting of over twenty graves, span the fourth to the seventh centuries, as do those for the twenty graves at Lochhead Quarry, with the excavators suggesting periods of use lasting between 150 and 300 years (Greig *et al.* 2000, 603–5; Dunbar forthcoming). As mentioned above, Hallow Hill is an exceptional cemetery within the study area given its sheer size. The calibrated date range for this cemetery is from the mid fifth to the late eighth centuries (some 400 years) if the late dates from Cist 51C and Long Cist 48/1 are ignored as erroneous as is likely given the stratigraphic interpretation of these graves.

The small scale of the cemeteries coupled with the lengthy time they were in use has led to the interpretation that the cemeteries were exclusive to a certain section of society. Barrow cemeteries tend to be interpreted as the high status cemeteries of the elite whereas small long cist/dug-grave cemeteries are thought to be those of newly-converted

or incoming groups of Christians (Alexander 2005, 110; Dunbar forthcoming). Further, the relative paucity of long cists in comparison with the number of prehistoric short cists has been observed (Dunwell and Ralston 2008, 143), and such observation could be used to support the suggestion of long cist burial as restricted.

Estimates of population size are notoriously difficult to make. Miles (2006, 154, 183) has calculated the population of northern Britain in the fifth century at about 250,000 but falling dramatically over the next few centuries, perhaps even halved, due to disease and a colder, wetter climate. Alcock (2003, 115) suggests a figure of 300,000 for the seventh century. These estimates raise two scenarios—if the cemeteries were exclusive, what happened to everyone else and, conversely, if these cemeteries were for all, shouldn't they be more common? To address the first scenario and account for the rest of the population, it seems unlikely that excarnation or cremation was practiced alongside inhumation though there is some evidence for cremation from other parts of Scotland (Ashmore 2003, 39–40) and, tantalisingly, possible cremation deposits were recovered from the central mound of the Hallhole barrow during Abercromby's (1903, 91–6) excavations. A large number of burial sites may be missing from this discussion, hidden beneath medieval church graveyards. Excavations at Ballumbie (Angus), the Isle of May (Fife) and Balnahanaid, Meigle, and possibly Coupar Angus Abbey Church (all Perth and Kinross) revealed long cist burials (Derek Hall pers. comm; James and Yeoman 2008, 174–6; *DES* 1998, 75; Jervise 1854–7a, 245; Hutcheson 1888, 147). Further evidence for continuity of burial site may be the grassy mounds, possible early medieval barrows, noted in the churchyards of Meigle (Smith 1996, 34) and Tullibole, Perth and Kinross.

In certain areas, cemeteries are more densely distributed, with the best example being the five sites identified along a 1.5km stretch of the Lunan Water between Hatton Mill, Invergighty Cottage and Boysack. Could these distributions represent what may have been lost elsewhere? The dispersed distribution of three groups of long cists excavated at Powmyre Quarry, between 60m and 100m distant from each other, and the linear layout of the majority of barrow cemeteries support the possibility of hundreds of small burial sites throughout the landscape. Certainly, the acidic soils in which people were buried beneath turf and earthen mounds in soft sandstone cists or dug graves followed by some 1500 years of agricultural activity has surely depleted the evidence, with the number of sites recorded only a fragment of those that existed.

*Foundation graves?*

An alternative explanation for cemetery longevity could be that rather than one or two individuals interred every generation, cemeteries may have gone in and out of use over the centuries. Evidence for episodic use can perhaps be seen at Redcastle. Round Barrow 1 (RB1), dating from the late first to early fourth centuries, is much earlier than the majority fifth- to seventh-century dated graves, with a date span that only overlaps with one other grave (GO30). However, it sits adjacent to Round Barrow 2 (RB2), creating what appears in plan to be a pair, more or less equal in diameter with cists of a similar depth, construction and orientation (Alexander 2005, 98–9). The radiocarbon dates of these two barrows indicate that these two graves were constructed at least 250 years apart. This unusual scenario questions the validity of the early dates produced by RB1 and GO30, perhaps due to contamination of the bone sampled affecting the results by returning incorrect dates (Dunbar forthcoming; Ashmore and Ramsey 2002, 36–7). Nonetheless, the majority of sites discussed within this paper are either single graves or cemeteries comprising a small number of graves. Of this group, only two sites—the square barrow from Boysack Mills and the Craigie long cist, possibly one of a group of five graves (Murray and Ralston 1997, 379; DES 2004, 176; Hutcheson 1903, 236)—have evidence for date. Both these sites have been dated from the early to mid centuries AD rather than the fifth and sixth centuries. It is possible that solitary graves and small groups of graves are early in date and, if we can take the radiocarbon dates from Redcastle and the typological evidence from Hallow Hill at face value, sometimes develop into larger cemeteries. However, the sixth to seventh century dates recently returned from the two groups of long cists from Powmyre Quarry (Bailey pers. comm.) indicate a persistence of burial in small cemeteries. The results of radiocarbon dating skeletal material from Kingoodie (Winlow and Cook forthcoming) will add to the body of evidence.

In larger cemeteries with instances of both flat graves and defined graves, the relationship between the two is often not clear. There is a tendency to assume that flat graves are later than barrow or cairn burials but this has not been conclusively proven. None of the long cist graves at Lundin Links have been dated, and the paucity of skeletal remains at Forteviot means the relationship between the flat graves and square barrows cannot be tested. At Lochhead Quarry, differences in cist alignment has been suggested to indicate two phases, with the



five centrally-grouped cists orientated NE–SW proposed to be earlier than the nine ENE–WSW orientated cists (Dunbar forthcoming). The radiocarbon dates do not appear to support this interpretation with some ENE–WSW cists returning earlier dates, however taking into account calibration this may not be the case. At Forteviot, the grave cuts of the barrows are narrower and slightly deeper than those of the flat graves, suggesting two, not necessarily contemporary, phases (Poller 2007, 11, 17). In contrast, radiocarbon dates of some enclosed and unenclosed graves at Redcastle are contemporaneous (Alexander 2005, 106).

### *The population of cemeteries*

Relatively few Pictish cemeteries have been scientifically excavated and of those that have, the skeletal assemblages are often incomplete and poorly preserved. Despite this partiality, the following comments can be made, largely as a result of analysis of the eighty plus skeletons from Hallow Hill, though palaeo-demographic and pathological information is included from Redcastle, Lundin Links, Lochhead Quarry and the Isle of May (Proudfoot 1996, 424–31; Alexander 2005, 101–5; Greig *et al.* 2000, 601–3; Dunbar forthcoming; James and Yeoman 2008, 83–91). Life expectancy was short with the average age of death between 26 and 30 years old, with few individuals reaching their fifth decade. The populations appear relatively healthy but their skeletons show signs of wear and tear. Most common is arthritis in backs and hips, and Schmorl's nodes, a scoring of the vertebrae indicative of heavy physical work when the body is not fully developed. The strong, healthy teeth of the majority showed no signs of hypoplasia, a symptom of infection, injury or malnutrition in childhood. Of more severe pathologies, one woman from Hallow Hill suffered from leprosy and a skeleton from Lundin Links shows signs of hemiplegia, where one side of the body is paralysed either congenitally or as a result of stroke or brain injury. Most surprising is the evidence for episodes of trepanning in one male from Hallow Hill, the third treatment of which he does not seem to have survived. There is some evidence of trauma and violence. Two, possibly three, skeletons from Hallow Hill had suffered fatal injuries to the head. The hand bones of one of the women interred crouched and contorted in a shallow grave pit at Hawkhill were broken, indicating that her wrists had been tightly bound (Rees 2001, 22–3; Alexander 2005, 111).

Child burials were not found at Redcastle or Lundin Links but have been found at Hallow Hill and Lochhead Quarry. The absence of children has been used to suggest barrow and cairn cemeteries were used for selective, and in some cases pagan, burial (Williams 2007, 156; Dunwell and Ralston 2008, 153; Dunbar forthcoming). This may be the case, however two of the 'special graves' interpreted as pagan at Hallow Hill were those of children. A round barrow discovered at Hatton Mill contained an E-W aligned long cist but also a secondary feature interpreted as a dug grave with dimensions suggestive of a child's grave (Suddaby and White 2004, 11).

The ratio of women to men buried at Redcastle and Lundin Links is higher than that of Hallow Hill and Lochhead Quarry. These ratios, along with the female burial from the exceptionally well-made cist of SB1 at Redcastle and an all female cairn complex at Lundin Links, raises the much discussed notion of Pictish women being accorded a status different to that of their contemporaries in other Early Historic societies. Whilst the ratio is not statistically significant at Lundin Links (Greig *et al.* 2000, 606) and the small size of the Redcastle skeletal sample biases results, Alexander (2005, 110–11) suggests that the higher proportion of women in these cemeteries may be the result of men dying away from home, either at sea or at war. Certainly the suggestion that Pictish society was matrilineal rather than patrilineal is not supported by analysis of other strands of archaeological and historical evidence (Woolf 1998).

### *Discussion*

A new burial tradition appears in the early Pictish period as people begin to bury their dead in small groups, in either stone-lined or simple dug graves marked by mounds of differing size and complexity. This tradition continues into the fifth and sixth centuries, with the majority of burials taking place in small cemeteries where clusters of graves indicate close family ties. By the eighth century, these cemeteries begin to go out of use with a shift of burial to the church and the relics held therein (O'Brien and Roberts 1996, 160–1). Before discussing what we can infer about the nature of Pictish society from these observations it is worth setting out the theory with which this burial tradition has been approached. Burial rite is a culmination of geography, ethnicity and tradition and may evolve organically, just like a regional

architecture or dialect. The dead can be the ideological resource of those they leave behind as burial rite is a process by which the living can project their ideal identities (Pearce 1997, 179). Burial tradition can reaffirm social relationships with the physical landscape, impressing territorial claims, land ownership and ancestral associations (Parker Pearson 1999, 141). When 'variation' or 'monumentality' characterises the archaeological record—in this case the appearance of small groups of extended inhumations, sometimes with the construction of barrows or cairns—a shift in ideology is key in shaping funerary practice, rather than tradition and ethnicity (Driscoll 1988, 227–8; Carver 1998, 13–16; 2001, 1–9).

Christianity has been suggested as the spur for change in burial practices and, probably due to the paucity of other types of early ecclesiastical site, long cist cemeteries have been cited as a field monument with which to trace the spread of Christianity (Thomas 1971, 48–51; 1980, 292; Alcock 2003, 64). The distribution of long cist cemeteries in the Lothians and along the coasts of Fife and Tayside has been identified as evidence of the historic conversion of the 'Southern Picts' by 'St Ninian' in the fifth century (Thomas 1971, 48–51; 1980, 292; Proudfoot 1996, 440–7), a narrative recently critically reviewed (Fraser 2009, 71, 83–92). These sites are referred to as 'undeveloped' Christian burial grounds in that they do not contain a church (Thomas 1971, 50–2). Further, the distribution of barrows and long cists has been suggested to catch the point of transition to Christianity, with flat grave cemeteries indicative of "where Christianity would seem to be pervasive" and the barrow and cairn cemeteries found in "areas apparently still pagan" (Smith 1996, 28–9). Comparison with conversion to Christianity elsewhere in Britain and in Europe, where barrow burial tradition has been observed in a rippling reaction to Christianity, has consolidated this interpretation (Carver 2001, 5–10). Flat grave cemeteries found in 'pagan' areas are interpreted as the cemeteries of incoming or newly-converted Christian communities choosing to be buried together (Proudfoot 1996, 447).

However, the division of Pictish cemeteries into categories of 'pagan' and 'Christian' is problematic, if not impossible, and it is unlikely that the transition from pagan to Christian was straightforward (Rees 2002, 349–50; Alexander 2005, 111; Dunbar forthcoming). Certainly, the adoption of a new religion is significant in terms of a wider social change from a kin-based society to the formation of an early state, overseen by powerful regional potentates (Driscoll 1988), but is not the

sole reason for change of burial tradition. The evidence presented illustrates that the characteristics of 'undeveloped' cemeteries—size, layout and distribution—cannot be used to indicate adoption of Christianity because long cist cemeteries share these characteristics with barrow cemeteries. If the erosive impact of subsequent land use is taken into account, two distinct burial traditions seem unlikely. Further, the physical manifestation of a 'Christian burial', as we understand it, would not have been recognised by fifth- to eighth-century Christians (Blair 2005, 58–9). Just as Christianity borrowed motifs from pagan art, it also adopted existing burial practices (Philpott 1991, 240), and unaccompanied, extended inhumation in either a dug grave or a stone cist first appears in use in the first few centuries AD, prior to Christianity's widespread acceptance in the Roman world and its arrival in northern Britain (Close-Brooks 1984, 89; O'Brien and Roberts 1996, 160–1; Fraser 2009, 36).

*Single graves, small groups of graves, monumental graves*

The small scale of the majority of the cemeteries is significant and discussion of large and small burial sites without reference to size is misleading. The majority of graves, both with and without barrows, are found as solitary graves or in small groups of less than six (see Fig. 10.7). Few exceed 15 interments, implying burial is a local affair with each family having its own cemetery. The vast majority of flat grave cemeteries do not fall into the category of large, managed cemeteries thought to be characteristic of Christian cemeteries (Proudfoot 1996, 444); long cist cemeteries like that found at Powmyre Quarry have more in common with barrow cemeteries than Hallow Hill.

While the interpretation of large long cist cemeteries as containing a Christian population may be valid in the case of Hallow Hill, reasons other than the desire to be buried beside fellow Christians have been put forward to explain the appearance of large cemeteries. Studying burial practices in southern Britain, Philpott (1991, 227) concludes that large dug-grave cemeteries were the result of aggregation of settlement or increased urbanism as population patterns changed. A similar explanation for Scotland is possible in that their distribution mirrors the best agricultural land, providing the means to support a substantial, settled population within the sphere of influence of (former) Roman provinces and the emerging kingdom of Northumbria (Rees 2002, 344–50).

At Thornybank in Midlothian, a flat grave cemetery of over 100 burials, two of the graves were surrounded by a square-ditched enclosure and a third by four postholes. Rees (2002, 347–50) does not suggest these graves are earlier, pagan graves but discusses them in terms of variation of burial tradition and difficulties of classing cemeteries as strictly ‘pagan’ or ‘Christian’. ‘Special graves’ in amongst a majority of flat graves are found at Hallow Hill, Forteviot and possibly Lundin Links. At Hallow Hill, these graves have been interpreted as pagan graves on which the later cemetery is founded but this has not been conclusively proven and other than at Redcastle the relationship between the monumental and flat graves within the same cemetery remains ambiguous due to lack of reliable dating evidence. An alternative interpretation would be that the ‘special graves’ are contemporary with the majority of flat graves and may even be the graves of Christians. Adomnán in the *Life of Columba* tells of an old man called Artbranan, a pagan who “lived his whole life in natural goodness”, receiving baptism as his life ebbed away and the marking of his grave by a “heap of stones” (Sharpe, VC II 33). This story suggests that the accepted burial tradition in the sixth century was by marked inhumation, in this case by a small cairn, but also that there was no differentiation in commemoration of a Christian or a pagan. The Vetta stone from the Catstane long cist cemetery, near Edinburgh demonstrates the difficulty of using the construction of barrow or cairn, or grave alignment as indicative of pagan or Christian graves. The commemorative stone with a Latin inscription for Vetta, daughter of Victricus, marked the top of a low kerbed cairn, and whilst there is the possibility that the cairn and stone may represent reuse of a Bronze Age funerary monument, taking the evidence into account from the ‘special graves’ at Thornybank and the Pictish cairns at Lundin Links, the cairn as well as the inscription may be Early Historic.

In summary, Christianity is not the impetus for the change in burial tradition observed. Early Christians were concerned with the first rite of baptism, with arrangements for the last rite unstructured (Blair 2005, 51–60). Historical documents reveal that burial in ancestral graveyards was accepted (O’Brien and Roberts 1996, 160–1 referring to *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*; Alexander 2005, 108–9 citing McCullagh’s reference to the *Book of Armagh*). The archaeological evidence from Tayside and Fife supports the notion of continuity of burial in small familial graveyards, suggesting that burial in ancestral

cemeteries was the norm. That some cemeteries contain monumental graves need not be a chronological or typological issue as burial monuments cannot assuredly be used as indicators of faith—the barrow may have contained a Christian and the flat grave a pagan, and of course, vice versa.

*Why a distinctive burial tradition?*

Extended inhumation replaces the existing, and archaeologically invisible, later Iron Age burial tradition. The development of the barrow and long cist cemeteries from the fourth to eighth centuries represents the inception of a burial practice still in use today where the individual is commemorated within a communal cemetery. Long cist cemeteries in particular have been seen as the first apparently egalitarian burial rite (Rees 2002, 350). Why does this change occur and, in some cases, why expend effort to produce visible, lasting and different monuments to the deceased within the cemeteries? Carver (1998, 12–16) sets out two useful principles—that any burial monument should be considered in terms of the energy invested within its creation and that this energy or effort translates as a political message.

It would take a small group of people two or three days to prepare and transport slabs to the graveside and build a cist (McAdam and Watkins 1974, 383–6). Barrow or cairn burial would take more effort; material was not simply dumped on top of the grave. Excavated examples illustrate the effort that went into the creation of burial monuments, for example, the cairns at Lundin Links were variously made up of graded fills of tightly-packed beach pebbles, different coloured sands, and sandstone and schist slabs (Greig *et al.* 2000, 590–1). Stone from the seashore was carried up to the cemetery at Redcastle, pebbles from the River Tay transported onto the Inchtuthil plateau to create a thick capping over the Women's Knowe grave, and stone slabs for the cists at Hallow Hill sourced from the coast one and a half miles distant (Alexander 2005, 107; Abercromby 1901–2, 198; Proudfoot 1998, 65). The decision to create permanent cemeteries as *places* is certainly a break from tradition and an investment of energy, both in time and resources of the family of the deceased. It is also an investment in prime locations within the landscape (Alexander 2005, 109) suggestive of use and control, if not ownership, of land.

*Variation in burial rite*

Another revealing characteristic of Pictish burial traditions is the variation found both within and between cemeteries. There are no distinct regional groupings of sites, for example, traits observed in the cemeteries within the study area can be found in the Highlands, the Western Isles and Dumfries and Galloway. Analysis of aerial photographs and excavation reports reveals that variation upon a common theme is recurrent and that each cemetery has a different selection from a mixed bag of characteristics as illustrated by the following consideration of enclosing ditches of barrows, clusters of graves and grave pits.

The ditches (and banks) of monuments within barrow cemeteries can be either complete or interrupted. Cemeteries with gapped- or causewayed-cornered square barrows are in the minority, with just over a third of all cropmark sites including barrows with broken ditches. Examples of complete and causewayed-cornered barrows can be found in the same cemetery. Of the total number of square barrows within the study area, about 150 individual monuments, around thirty have gapped-corners, though it is unknown how many had broken banks or were differentiated by other means, for example, by corner stones as at Garbeg (Wedderburn and Grime 1984, 165). The complete corners of the Boysack Mills barrow, dated to the first to third centuries AD, has led to the suggestion that barrows without causewayed-corners may be earlier (Maxwell 1987, 34; Murray and Ralston 1997, 378–9; Greig *et al.* 2000, 609). Whilst not unproven by a programme of excavation and dating, corners are likely to be indicative of variation rather than phasing in burial practice. Definition of barrows by bank or ditch need not be confined to one enclosing circuit, however only ten sites recorded to date contain monuments, both round and square, with multiple ditches or banks. Hallhole provides a complex example of a multi-ditched barrow with a sub-square barrow surrounded by three sets of segmented ditches and banks (see Fig. 10.4).

Contiguous monuments are not found in all cemeteries, with only about a third of sites containing a barrow or cairn complex, however these complexes are found throughout the study area. The form of the contiguous monuments is extremely diverse: linear runs, simple couplets, clusters or unique arrangements as at Lundin Links. In flat grave cemeteries, clusters of graves have been noted as well as strings of burials aligned head to toe. Of course, there is the possibility that

if mounds or cairns marked these burials, as suggested by the lack of inter-cutting graves, they could have formed contiguous or more elaborate monuments long since disintegrated or removed by subsequent land use.

The defining ditch or cairn is the most obvious characteristic of variation, but as divergent is the nature of the actual grave. At its simplest, this forms a shallow elongated pit, but can be a well-made stone coffin with base, side and top slabs. Variations include examples of long cists without basal slabs but floors of earth, shell or pebbles, of pebble- or boulder-lined graves, and of grave pits containing plank coffins or hollowed tree-trunks. The vast majority of graves tend to be relatively shallow, cut so that the top of the grave would have been approximately level with the surface of the subsoil. The depths of the square barrow grave at Boysack Mills, Redcastle SB1 and of Cist 51B and Grave 119 at Hallow Hill, all cut between 1–1.5m into the subsoil, stand out. Some of the cists at Hallow Hill were backfilled at the time of burial, in some instances with material bought from elsewhere. In the case of Boysack Mills the grave pit was backfilled with a massive stone fill.

Why this variation? The manifold size, shape and arrangement of graves does not appear to be indicative of date or locality but of the (now inscrutable) characteristics of individuals. Factors behind the decisions to bury one individual in a long cist beneath a square barrow and the next in simple dug grave could be kinship, wealth, status, experience, age and gender. Funerary architecture was probably one of many aspects of burial rite that would have been a symbolic resource, an opportunity to create and convey messages in a society that would have had a coherent rationale (Carver 1998, 12–14). Of course, meaning can change over generations and given the lengthy currency of the burial traditions described, comparison of the Boysack Mills square barrow with the latest grave at Redcastle is inevitably unproductive.

#### *Symbol stones: another form of Pictish expression*

Class I symbol stones are carved with incised motifs of animals and seemingly abstract and decorative designs. Similar to the burial tradition, the symbols have an older currency, with the style and design originating in the last few centuries BC. The symbol stones, however, are a fifth- to seventh-century phenomenon, broadly concurrent with the floruit in use of the cemeteries discussed above (Foster 2004,



71–8). The symbols, of which there are about fifty, represented authority. Interpreted as popular figures and motifs of a late Iron Age culture that would have been instantly recognisable and made real when carved in stone, symbol stones have been suggested to bind together the powerful within Pictish society with the religious beliefs, if not gods, of their society. The symbols afforded guardianship and had totemic, propitiatory or cultic functions (Foster 2004, 71–8; Henderson and Henderson 2004, 171–2). Class I symbol stones are authoritative statements (the equivalent of Early Historic charters or texts) of a society locked into an upward spiral of increasing organisation and hierarchy (Driscoll 1988).

There are over 200 examples of Class I symbol stones, with eighteen known from Tayside and six from Fife (RCAHMS 2008). The distribution of the symbol stones is similar to the barrow and cairn cemeteries, although the symbol stones have a more dense distribution in Aberdeenshire (Smith 1996, 27). Symbol stones had a memorial function (Driscoll 1988, 227–9; Mack 2007, 232; Williams 2007, 147–8) though this need not preclude marking important places where contracts of, for example, marriage, land, or sale of goods could have been sealed; where political and social relationships were impressed and reinforced (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 167–72). The evidence for the memorial function of the symbol stones is by no means absolute, but cumulative and associative. Mack has examined the findspots of all known symbol stones and whilst direct evidence for a symbol stone marking an individual's grave is rare, the majority have been found in a funerary context (Mack 2007, 232–7).

Recent excavations within the study area have not uncovered any symbol stones, though at Forteviot and, less convincingly, at Redcastle, there is evidence for postholes that may have held markers or formed some sort of superstructure above the square barrow graves (Poller 2007, 9–11; Alexander 2005, 108). At Boysack Mills, a column of charcoal was interpreted as evidence for the removal of an upright stone, originally held in place by large stones within the grave packing and removed in the medieval period (Murray and Ralston 1997, 366–8). Symbol stones could have lain prone over a grave or have been incorporated into a cairn as at Dunrobin, Sutherland (Mack 2002, 11). Symbols inscribed on timber or made of composite materials will have long disintegrated. Evidence for markers of a different kind have been recorded at Wester Denhead, Perth and Kinross and the multiple burial pit at Hawkhill. The double-ditched barrow at Wester Denhead

has evidence for a palisade trench within the monument's inner ditch (St Joseph: unpublished archive held at RCAHMS: Canmore ID 30958). The unique triple burial from Hawkhill may have been marked by a crescent of large posts (Rees 2009).

A concrete connection between the symbols and Pictish funerary tradition has recently been recognised at Lundin Links where two of the cairn complexes render the 'double disc' and 'forked' symbols on a monumental scale (Williams 2007, 155; see Figure 10.2). Remote sensing techniques have revealed a handful of coincidences of Pictish cemeteries and standing stones, for example, recent geophysical survey around the symbol stone at Peterhead, Perth and Kinross revealed traces of three possible square barrows, some 50m to the south-east of the stone (Gondek 2008, 7–8). The cropmarks of a possible round barrow and a square barrow at Melville Home Farm, Fife are within 100m of the Collessie Stone, a Class I symbol stone with the rare depiction of a Pictish warrior (Murray and Ralston 1997, 378). The Falcon Stone, Perth and Kinross (admittedly with no symbols visible) is encircled by a ring ditch with small linear barrow cemetery to the south-west.

For further examples of incidences of Class I symbol stones and burials in Tayside we are reliant on historic records, second-hand descriptions and chance finds. The Bruceton symbol stone, Perth and Kinross (Fig. 10.10) has a Pictish beast and arch symbol on its southern face. In the mid-nineteenth century 'stone coffins' were found near the stone (RCAHMS 1990) and during early aerial reconnaissance in the late 1930s, Crawford remarked that "many cairns" were visible in its vicinity (RCAHMS Canmore ID 31052). The Keillor symbol stone, Perth and Kinross stands on a cairn some 13m in diameter and 0.7m high. While the cairn is likely to be prehistoric, "ancient sepulchral remains" found in the field adjacent may have been Pictish (Stuart 1856, 34). Similarly, during Jervise's investigation of the Aberlemno Class I symbol stone (Angus), a parishioner informed him of cist burials found in the field to the immediate south (1854–7b, 192). The Inchyra symbol stone, Perth and Kinross was employed as a cover slab above what may have been a boulder-lined grave. The stone is noteworthy for the depiction of three pairs of symbols and ogham inscriptions, embodying several phases of use, a characteristic observed elsewhere in Scotland (Stevenson 1958–9, 33–6). Further examples of symbol stones found in association with burial monuments in Tayside include Dunnichen and, perhaps, Linlathen, both Angus (Mack 2002, 17). More tenuous is the observation that a number of possible early medieval burials



Fig. 10.10: View of Bruceton symbol stone. (Photograph: S. Winlow.)

have been found within a kilometre radius of the findspots of the Longforgan fragment (Murray and Ralston 1997, 379), the Fairygreen stone, the possible Moonshade stone (all Perth and Kinross) and the symbols carved into the walls of Jonathan's Cave, Fife (*DES* 1988, 12; *DES* 1993, 29). While these co-occurrences have not been conclusively proven (and in some cases never will be), it seems likely that they represent a real association of symbol stones and burial tradition, rather than chance.

### *Conclusion*

As is often the case with archaeological enquiry, we are left with as many questions as definite answers. However, in drawing together evi-

dence from aerial survey and excavation, the complexity and variation in burial traditions between the later Iron Age and the acceptance of state-sponsored Christianity in the eighth century has been illustrated. In particular, the distribution of Pictish cemetery sites cannot be used to capture the transition to Christianity given the existence of these burial practices prior to the arrival of Christianity, the longevity of the cemeteries and the nature of early Christian belief. Further, no real differences can be maintained between barrow/cairn burial and flat grave burial given subsequent land use. Comparing single graves and small cemeteries with Hallow Hill is not comparing like with like. The variation observed in burial is more likely to be the result of increasingly communicative and competitive communities demonstrating an investment of time, resources and land. On a macro scale this involves a shift from tribal to early state society throughout the 700-year period under study. At a local level, burial rite is used to create connections with place and with kin through establishing cemeteries and familial groups of graves within those cemeteries. Other expressions of this social and political change are visible through material culture, including carving of sculptured stones, the establishment of powerful centres like Forteviot, and the adoption of Christianity (Foster 1998).

One could begin to address those unanswered questions by securing a sounder chronology for Pictish burials, particularly to understand the relationship between solitary graves and the development of larger cemeteries. Other lines of enquiry would be to establish whether the 190-odd sites recorded in Tayside and Fife are fortuitous survivals of what was a widespread, common tradition of small familial cemeteries or, as burial on boundaries might imply, a more restricted practice.

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Appendix

Table 6: Detail from excavated sites from Tayside and Fife.

Name	No. of graves excavated	Site Type	Radiocarbon / typological date (earliest and latest burials given)	Lab no.	Date BP	Calibrated Date (2 $\sigma$ )	Alignment of grave pits (orientation in bold when known)
Ballumbie	40	Flat graves at site of early church	Context 747 (cist below E wall of church)	-	1435+/-35	560-660	<b>E-W</b>
Balnahanaid, Loch Tay	10	Flat graves at site of early church	Charcoal from lower tier of two-tiered cist	OxA-8972	1344+/-36	635-772	<b>E-W</b>
Boysack Mills	1	Barrow	Ring-headed pin typologically dated from first to third centuries AD				<b>SE-NW</b>
Craigie	1	Flat grave	Long cist, one of a number in the vicinity	GrA-27259	1815+/-35	80-330	<b>E-W</b>
Elliot Burn	3	Flat graves	Long Cist 1 Long Cist 2	GU-10582 GU-10668	- -	530-710 540-690	2 long cists: <b>E-W</b> 1 possible dug grave: <b>NE-SW</b>
Forteviot	7	Barrows and flat graves	Carbonised hazel fragment from lower fill (possible body stain) of grave cut 32 (Square Barrow 2)	SUERC-22854	1175+/-30	770-970	<b>E-W, ENE-WSW</b>
Golf Course Road, Blair Atholl	1	Possible cairn	Long cist beneath possible cairn capping	-	-	340-615	<b>E-W</b>
Hallow Hill	150+	Flat graves and possible cairns	Long Cist 107 B Long Cist 69	GU-1868 GU-1851	1490+/-55 1325+/-50	430-660 630-780	c. 81 graves: <b>E-W</b> c. 52 graves: <b>NE-SW</b> c. 7 graves: <b>SE-NW</b> 2 graves: <b>SE-NW</b>

Table 6 (*cont.*)

Name	No. of graves excavated	Site Type	Radiocarbon / typological date (earliest and latest burials given)	Lab no.	Date BP	Calibrated Date (2 $\sigma$ )	Alignment of grave pits (orientation in bold when known)
Hatton Mill	20+	Barrows and flat graves	Not excavated as yet				E-W
Hawkhill	1	Burial pit containing three contorted inhumations	Burial 3 Burial 1		1325+/-45 1185+/-50	632-800 693-972	-
Isle of May	18	Flat graves	Long Cist 835 Grave context 832	GU-4214 GU-42114	1520+/-70 1400+/-100	400-660 430-853	ENE-WSW
Kingoodie	4	Flat graves	Not dated as yet				E-W
Lundin Links	20	Cairn	Cist P from square cairn 6 Cist A from round cairn 1	OxA-8904 OxA-8896	1610+/-40 1455+/-35	340-560 540-660	E-W
Lochhead Quarry	20	Flat graves	Cist 7 Cist 20	SUERC-6873 SUERC-6880	1625+/-35 1400+/-40	340-540 570-680	5 graves: NE-SW 15 graves: ENE-WSW
North Mains Henge	13	Flat graves	Long Grave 3	GU-1382	-	687-974	E-W
Powmyre Quarry	8	Flat graves	Long Cist context 35 Group A Long Cist context 105 Group B	SUERC-25797 SUERC- 25798	1415+/-40 1455+/-40	560-670 540-660	E-W
Redcastle	16	Barrow	Round barrow 1 G250 (unenclosed grave)	OxA-8412 GU-9674	1815+/-40 1055+/-55	80-330 860-1160	NE-SW
Women's Knowe, Inchuthil	1	Barrow	Not dated as yet				E-W



## INDEX

Figures in italics denote illustrations and tables

- A' Cheardach Mhor, 222, 224, 241  
 A' Chruach, 74  
 \**ab(b)or*, 83  
 Aber, 83  
 \**aber*, 71, 74–5, 83  
 Abercorn, 76  
 Abercromby, J., 348, 350  
 Aberdeen, 317  
 Aberdeen Archaeology Service, 294  
 Aberdeenshire, 256, 307–33  
 Aberdeenshire Archaeological Services, 312  
 Aberdona, 70  
 \*Abergarf, 83  
 Aberlemno, 291, 361  
 Abermilk, 83  
*Aber*-names, 76  
 Abernethy, 60, 61, 76  
 Abertarf, 83  
*Able Minds and Practised Hands*, 128  
     conference, 128, 130  
 Abriachan, 83  
 Achiltibuie, 92  
 Achilty, 92  
 Ackergill, 324  
 Adair, John, 157–8, 158, 162  
 Adomnán, 71, 74, 76, 80, 83, 156, 171, 356  
 Áedán mac Gabráin, 69  
 Æðelwold, 185  
*Aeneid*, 30, 54  
 aerial archaeology/photography, 247, 255, 257, 260, 262, 271, 294, 295, 297, 299, 302, 309, 311–2, 316–7, 338, 361  
 aerial survey, 335, 337, 339, 343, 344, 345  
 Agathyrus, 31  
 Agnus Dei, 142  
 agricultural surpluses, 262–3  
 Ahenny cross base, 187  
*Ainm*, 72  
 Airlie School, 349  
 Airlie, Stuart, 156  
 Aitchison, Nick, 140, 141, 143  
 Al Clud, 68  
 Alba, 31, 32, 49, 57, 59, 70, 79  
*Albani*, 31  
*Albania*, 49  
 Alcock and Alcock, 124, 271  
     on fragments from Forteviot, 140–9  
 Alcock, Elizabeth, 269  
 Alcock, Leslie 121, 124, 125, 138, 246, 248, 256, 264, 265, 265, 271, 350  
 Alcuin, 175, 183  
 Aldbar, 143  
 Aldclune, 255, 299, 300  
 Aldhelm, 183  
 Alexander, Derek, 353  
 Alexander, Jonathan, 124  
 Alexander, William, M., 97  
 Allen, J. Romilly, 122, 131, 148, 160, 162  
 Alt Clut, 222, 223, 240  
 Altyre, 112  
 Anderson, Joseph, 122, 127  
 Anderson, Marjorie, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 57, 249  
 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 69  
 Angus, 257, 260  
*annait* place-names, 318, 321  
 Annals of Tigernach, 72, 102  
 Annals of Ulster, 69  
 Antonine Wall, 67, 74, 75, 326  
*Apertio aurium*, 189  
 apostles, 187–9  
*Apostolatus Benedictinorum*, 185  
 Apostolic mission, 142  
 Appadurai, Arjun, 136  
 Applecross, 76, 83  
 Appledore, 83  
 aqua de Kethok, 86, 87  
 Arbirlot, 83  
 Arbroath, 83  
 Arbroath, Declaration of, 50  
 Arbuthnott, 83  
 archaeology of personhood, 137  
*Archaeology, place-names and history*, 6, 9–10  
 archaeo-magnetism, 310  
 archers in Pictish sculpture, 36–7  
 Ard Lemnachta, 53  
 Ardestie, 8  
 Ardifuar, 222, 223, 228, 229, 241

- Ardlair, 314, 315  
 Armit, Ian, 262  
 Arras cemeteries, 335  
*Art of the Picts, The*, 127, 252, 281  
*Auch*-names, 77  
 Auchterless, 107  
 Augustine, 174–5, 182–3, 192  
 Avon, River, 69, 324  
 Ayton, 325  
  
 Bac Mhic Connain, 222, 224, 241  
*bad*, 103  
 Badentyre, 103  
 Balgrummo, 102  
 Balfour, 105  
 Balkeith, 85  
 Ballumbie, 346, 348, 350, 368  
 Balnahanaid, 350, 368  
*Bal*-names, 77  
 Balneaves, 347  
 Balrymonth, 103  
 Balwearie, 101  
 Bankhead, 157, 160  
 Bankhead cross, 157, 162 *see also*  
     Dupplin Cross  
 Barflat, 316  
 Barlanark, 90, 91  
 Barncluith, 84, 97  
 Barnweill, 84  
 Barrow, G. W. S., 73, 83, 100, 103, 105,  
     318  
 barrow cemeteries, 327, 335, 337, 338,  
     341, 343, 343, 344, 346, 349, 351, 353,  
     355, 360  
 Bass of Inverurie, 308  
 Bathgate, 86, 87  
 Beaker pottery, 294–5  
 Bede, 171, 172, 183, 192  
     *Chronica Maiora*, 58, 59  
     *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*  
     (HE), 23, 26, 27, 28, 48, 51, 52, 58,  
     59, 97  
     on Iona, 30, 31  
     Peanfahel, 29  
     Pictish language, 37  
     Pictish origin legend, 23, 27, 28, 29,  
     30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 39, 54  
*beinn*, 73, 105–6, 107  
 Belhelvie, 317  
 Bell Knowe, 291, 293, 295, 316  
 Belshes, Sir John, 162  
*Ben*, 106  
 Bennachie, 266, 308, 322  
*Bennachie, In the Shadow of*, 130, 257, 307  
 Biffie, 71, 112  
 Birnam, 84  
 Biscop, Benedict, 183  
 Blair, 106  
 Blair Atholl, 106  
 Blair Gowrie, 106  
 Blairadam, 106  
 Blair-Crambeth, 106  
 Blairhall, 347  
 Blairhosh, 106  
*blàr*, 106  
 Blebo, 71, 112  
 Bogie, River, 290, 293, 299, 302  
 Bogie, Water of, 316, 322  
 Boniface *see* St Cùretán  
*Book of Deer, The*,  
     conference on, 128  
     Gaelic notes of, 268  
 Book of Fermoy, 52  
 Book of Kells, 124, 127  
*Book of Kells* (Françoise Henry), 124  
 Book of Leinster, 52  
 Borland, John, 128, 131, 313  
 boulder graves, 345  
 Bourtie, 315  
 Boysack Mills, 327, 335, 336, 338, 347,  
     350, 351, 358, 359, 360, 368  
     pin, 348  
 Bradbourne Cross, 137  
 Braegrum, 102  
 Brandsbutt, 316, 327  
 Brechin, 112  
 Breeze, Andrew, 81, 101, 109  
*\*bren*, 84, 85, 96–7  
 Brenego, 84  
 Bressay cross-slab, 187  
 Bridei son of Der-Ilei, 28  
 British (language), 67, 68, 70, 76, 84  
*Brittones*, 26, 34  
 Brittonic, 51, 58, 59, 67, 68, 92, 97  
 Broch of Gurness, 222, 225, 300  
 Brockman, Barbara Mary, 4  
*\*Bronie*, 97  
 brooches, 124, 221, 225, 226, 228, 229,  
     230, 266, 325, 348  
     penannular brooch from Cnoc a'  
     Comhdhalach, 224, 230, 232  
 Broomend of Crichtie, 300  
 Brough of Birsay, 221, 222, 223, 232,  
     240  
 Broun, Dauvit, 20, 31, 32, 49, 50, 60  
 Brown, Julian, 123, 124  
 Bruach an Drumein, 222, 225, 229, 241  
 Bruceton, 361, 362

- \*brun*, 84, 97  
*Brut y Brenhinedd*, 52  
 Buadan's Cross, 179  
 Buiston, 222, 223, 227, 240  
*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 68  
*Bulletin of Ulster Place-Name Society*, 72  
 Burghead, 256, 282, 290  
     bulls, 287–8  
     well, 143  
 Burland, 222, 225, 240  
 Burn of Badnahannet, 318  
 Burnbane, 84  
 Burnbank, 324, 339  
 Burnmouth, 325  
 Burnturk, 84  
  
 Cadwallon, 56  
 Caerlanrig, 89, 91  
*Caerpentaloch*, 72  
*\*cair*, 77, 100–1, 109  
 cairn cemeteries, 337–8, 341, 349, 351,  
     353, 360  
     links with symbol stones, 323–5  
 Cairnbeddie, 347  
 Cairnmore, 291  
 Cairnton, 314  
 Caledonii or Calidonii, 73  
 Cambo, 112  
 Cambridge University Committee for  
     Aerial Photography, 312  
 Cameron, 84  
 Camuston, 37  
*Can a mbunadas na nGaedel*, 52, 53  
 Cantic of Habakkuk, 192, 194  
*caput*, 308, 310, 321  
 Cardean, 100, 109  
*\*carden*, 74–5, 80–1, 101–2, 109  
 Cardoness, 81  
 Cardross, 81, 101–2  
 Carey, 100  
 Carey, John, 53  
 Cargill, 100  
 Carlenrig, 88, 90, 91  
 Carlungie, 8, 345  
*càrn*, 73, 106–7  
 Carnoustie, 347  
 Carolingian manuscript art, 143  
 Carpow, 77, 100, 348  
 Carse of Lennoch, 338, 339  
 Carsegownie, 347  
 Carver, Martin, 129, 169, 171, 248–9,  
     267, 282, 290, 357  
 Castlemilk, 83  
 Cathcart, 86, 87  
  
 Cathluan son of Caitming or Gub, 56  
 Catochil, 86, 87, 94, 95  
 Catstane, 324, 356  
 Cawdor, 112  
*Céli Dé*, 176–7, 181  
 Ceolfrieth, 172–3  
*\*cēt*, 85, 86, 87, 92  
 Chadwick, H. M., 45, 46, 47, 51  
 Charlemagne, 174  
 child burials, 349, 353  
 Childe, Gordon, 17, 21, 24  
 Christian graves, 345, 350, 356–7  
 Christian sculptured stones, 321–2  
 Christianisation,  
     and Pictishness, 27  
 Christianity, 37  
     and burial, 267  
     and changes in burial practices,  
         354–6, 363  
     evidence for in Pictish art, 171, 173  
     introduction of, 253  
     Pictish conversion to, 169  
     and symbol stones, 327–8, 330  
*Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, 49  
*Chronica Maiora*, 58, 59  
*Chronicle of the Kings of Alba*, 45, 47  
 Cinaed son of Alpín, 25, 153, 156, 271  
 Circinn, 56  
 cist burials, 345  
 Clackmannanshire, 68–70  
 Clancy, Thomas, 70, 131, 176, 195  
 Clarke, David, 122, 127, 284, 290, 300  
 Clatchard Craig, 222, 223, 240  
 Clatt, 313, 315, 321  
 Cleaven Dyke, 347  
 Clesketts, 86, 87  
 Cnoc a' Comhdhalach, 222, 224, 230,  
     232, 241  
     penannular brooch, 224, 224, 230, 232  
*co-fractio*, 180  
 'coherent geometry', 201  
 Coldstone, 321  
 Collessie Stone, 361  
 Columban *familia*, 173, 186, 195  
 Columban monasteries, 173, 186  
 Constantín mac Cináeda, 49  
 Constantine's Cross, 153 *see also*  
     Dupplin Cross  
 Constantine's gifts to St John Lateran, 142  
 Constantine son of Fergus, 125, 151,  
     153, 154, 156  
*Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*  
     *in England*, 124  
 Corrstone Wood, 284

- Council of Clovesho, 175  
 Council for Dark Age Studies, 6  
 Coupar Angus, 85  
 Coupar Angus Abbey Church, 350  
 Covesea, 282  
 Cox, Richard, 103  
 Craig Phadrig, 222, 223, 240  
 Craigie, 338, 348, 349, 351, 368  
 Craigsanquhar, 101  
 Crail, 101  
 Cramond, 100  
 crannogs, 223, 226–7, 229  
 Craw Stane, 283, 284, 286, 288, 290, 291,  
     293, 294, 294–5, 297, 299, 300, 301,  
     302, 314, 316–7  
 Crawford, Barbara, 121, 248  
 cremation, 350  
 Crieff Burgh Cross, 137, 252, 268  
*Crog reth*, 74  
 Crone, Anne, 227  
 cropmarks, 260, 311, 312, 323–4, 335,  
     339, 346  
 crucibles, 221, 224–5, 228, 229  
 Cruden, Stewart  
     preface to *The Northern Isles*, 4  
*Cruithin*, 51, 53, 56, 57, 60 *see also*  
     *Cruithni*  
*Cruithne* (also *Cruithne* son of Cinge),  
     49, 56, 57, 60  
*Cruithni*, 26, 32 *see also* *Cruithin*  
*Cruithnig cid dosfarclam*, 32, 53, 54, 56  
*crux gemmata*, 193  
 Culgaith, 86, 87  
 Culperso, 105  
 Culsalmond, 321  
 cult of saints, 136  
 cultural biography, 135–6, 164  
 culture history, 249  
 culture-historical paradigm, the, 16, 17,  
     18, 19, 24, 25, 39  
 Cumbria, 75  
 Cumbric, 68, 76–7  
 Cupar, 85  
 \**cuper*, 72, 76, 85  
 cursus monuments, 347  
 Cusantini filius Fircus *see* Constantine  
     son of Fergus  
  
*dabhach*, 107, 317, 318  
*dail*, 103  
 Dairsie, 71, 112  
 Dairy Park, 324  
 Dalfouper, 85  
 Dalkeith, 86, 87  
  
 Dallas, 85  
 Dalmahoy, 222, 240  
 Dalmigavie, 89  
 Dalnaspidal, 103  
 Dál Riata, 59, 69, 151, 265, 228  
 Dál Riata kingdom, 173  
     take-over of the Pictish kingdom, 176  
 Dalriadan origin legend, 29, 30  
 Dalrymple, Charles, 322–3  
 Dankeith, 86, 87  
 Dark Ages, 121, 122, 223, 256  
     Wainwright and the, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9  
 Dark Age Studies, Council for, 6  
 ‘David imagery’, 285, 287  
 David panel on Dupplin Cross, 149, 154  
*De bello Gallico*, 26  
*De excidio Britanniae*, 58  
*De Situ Albanie*, 49, 249  
 Dee, River, 307–8, 325  
 Deer, 71, 112  
 Delnadamph, 314, 316  
 Der-Ilei, sons of, 28, 29  
 Deskry Water, 318, 321  
 distribution maps, 74, 78, 250, 253  
 Dixon, Norman, 84  
 Dochfour, 105  
 \**dol*, 71, 85  
 Dollar, 69, 70  
 Don, River, 307–8, 315, 318, 322, 325  
 Donaldstone’s Haugh, 315  
 Donside, 307–33  
 Dooley, 226  
 Douernach Uetalec *see* Uuradech Uecla  
 Doune of Invernochty, 321  
 Driscoll, Stephen, 36, 125, 317  
 Dronachy, 160, 162  
 Drosten Stone, 130  
 Drumalban, 173  
 Drumblade, 318  
 Drumchardine, 81, 102  
 Drumlanrig, 88, 90, 91  
*Duan Albanach*, 56  
 dug graves, 338, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347,  
     348, 349, 350, 353, 355, 359  
 Duleek, 179  
 Dull, 85  
 \**dull*, 71  
 Dumbarton, 70, 73  
 Dumville, David, 22, 53  
 Dumyat, 69  
*dùn*, 73, 107  
 Dun Cuier, 222, 225, 241  
 Dunadd, 221, 222, 223, 224, 227, 228,  
     229, 229, 232, 240, 256, 265, 301

- Dunan Ruadh, 222, 225, 241  
 Duncan, A. A. M., 48, 172–3  
 Dundee, 73  
 Dundonald, 222, 240  
 Dundurn, 222, 223, 240, 256, 265  
 Dunfallandy, 179  
 Dunfermline, 73  
 Dunkeld, 73  
 Dunnichen, 361  
 Dunnideer, 310, 321  
 Dunnikier, 101  
 Dunning, 272, 273–4, 273  
 Dunnottar, 107, 256, 266  
 Dunollie, 222, 223, 241  
 Dunrobin, 360  
 duns, 223, 227, 229  
 Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, 231  
 Dunwell, Andrew, 260  
 Dupplin, Battle of, 158, 160  
 Dupplin Castle, 157  
 Dupplin Cross, 125, 135, 138, 139, 144, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 163, 287  
     copies of, 159, 159  
     David panel on, 149, 154  
     inscription on, 125, 151  
     removal to National Museum, 157  
 Durie, 112  
 Dwelly, Edward, 100  
 Dyce, 314, 315, 318, 322, 329, 330  
  
 Earldom of Buchan, 317  
 Earldom of Mar, 317  
 early centres of power, 73  
 early Christian crosses, 308  
*Early Christian Monuments of Scotland, The, (ECMS)*, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 250, 282  
     on fragments from Forteviot, 140–9  
 Eassie, 129  
 East Lomond Hill, 222, 240  
 Easter Kinnear, 263  
 Ecclesiamagirdle, 88, 144  
     place-name evidence for, 144  
 Ecgbert, 48  
 \*eclēs, 88  
 Edderton, 130  
 Eigg panel, 137  
 Eilean Olabhat, 222, 224, 241  
 Ellary Boulder Cave, 222, 225, 241  
 Elliot Burn, 347, 348, 368  
 Emmaus, 142  
 Ennot Hillock, 318  
  
 Erchless, 107  
 ethnicity, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24  
     and language, 37  
 ethnogenesis theory, 20, 21, 22, 23  
 ethnonym, 25, 26  
*Etymologiae*, 31  
 Eucharist, sacrament of the, 179–80  
 Evans, Nicholas, 32  
 excarnation, 350  
 Exmagirdle *see* Ecclesiamagirdle  
  
 Fairygreen stone, 362  
 Falcon Stone, 361  
 false friends, 72–3, 105–8  
 Feachem, R. W., 3, 38, 255, 256, 264  
 Fedderate, 107  
 Feradach Finleg *see* Uuradech Uecla  
 Ferret of Keith, 86, 87  
 Fettercairn, 107  
 Fetteresso, 107  
 Fetternear, 107  
 Fiachua albus *see* Uipoignamet  
 Finavon, 291  
 Fife, 257  
*Fifty Years on from Wainwright: Are the Picts the Problem?*, 122  
 Finberg, H. P. R., 9  
 flat graves, 344, 349, 351  
     flat grave cemeteries, 346, 354, 356, 358  
 Fodderty, 107  
*foithir*, 107  
 Follett, Westley, 176–7  
 Fordun, John of, 48, 49  
 Forest, 313  
 Forgan, 102  
 Forgandenny, 102, 272, 273  
 Forsyth, Katherine, 35, 51, 59, 61, 67, 68, 125, 317  
     inscription on Dupplin Cross, 151  
 Forteviot, 107, 135, 138, 139, 256, 267, 271, 272, 272, 273, 273, 274, 301, 338, 341, 348, 351–2, 356, 360, 363, 368  
     early church at, 156  
     place-name evidence for, 140  
 Forteviot arch, 141–3, 153  
 Forteviot, Lord, 159  
 Fortriu, 49, 50, 56, 247  
 forts, 309–10  
 Foster, Sally, 121, 124, 125, 176  
 four rivers of paradise, 142  
 Fowlis Wester, 179  
 Fraser, James, 61, 249  
*Fresh Pict: Problems Revisited in Aberdeen* conference, 122



- Fresh Picts* conference, 310  
 Friell and Watson, 121  
*From Durrow to Kells*, 124  
  
 Gadie Burn, 307–8, 315  
 Gaelic, 72–3, 74, 78, 79, 83, 100, 103  
 Gaelic in Medieval Scotland: the  
     Evidence of Names, 82  
*Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer, The*, 77  
 Garbeg, 339, 358  
 Garioch, the, 308, 315, 317, 321, 322  
 Garioch, Lordship of, 308, 312  
 Garry Iochdrach, 222, 224, 241  
 Gartnait son of Donuel, 48  
 Garviach, 319  
 Gask Stone, 163  
 Gelonus, 31, 32, 54  
 Geoffrey of Monmouth, 52, 58  
 geophysical survey, 311  
*Georgicon*, 31, 54  
 Gildas, 29, 30, 58, 59  
 Glamis no. 2 cross-slab, 201–20  
 Glasslie, 112  
 Glen Buchat, 318, 321  
 Glen Ernan, 318, 321  
 Glen Nocht, 318  
 Glen Ogle, 89, 94, 95  
 Glenelg, 79, 105  
 Glenferness, 37  
 Glow, (Loch), 112  
 Goffart, Walter, 22, 23  
 Gogar Burn, 325  
 Golf Course Road, Blair Atholl, 368  
 Graham-Campbell, James, 126  
 Gray, Tom, 128  
 Gregory, Pope, 175  
 Groam, 102–3  
 Groam House, 129  
 Groan, 102  
 \**gronn*, 102–3  
 Grundcruie, 102  
 Gurness, 222, 225, 240, 300  
  
 Haddo, 107  
 Hadrian's Wall, 326  
 Hall, Mark, 122, 130, 271  
 Hallhole, 337, 338, 339, 341, 347, 350,  
     358  
 Halliday, Stratford, 297  
 Hallow Hill, 336, 338, 345, 346, 347,  
     348, 349, 351, 352, 353, 355, 356, 359,  
     363, 368  
 Haly Hill, 138  
 hand-bell found at Forteviot, 149–50  
  
 Hatton Mill, 338, 338, 345, 350, 353, 369  
 Hawkes, Christopher, 255  
 Hawkhill, 347, 352, 360–1, 369  
 Helms, Mary, 231  
 hemiplegia, 352  
 Henderson and Henderson, 36, 142  
 Henderson, George, 124  
 Henderson, Isabel, 46, 47, 49, 121, 124,  
     130, 142, 183, 249, 252, 247  
     on the Dupplin Cross, 153, 154  
     on Meikle 22, 142  
 Henery, Robert, 77  
 Henry, David, 126  
 Henry, Françoise, 124  
 Henshall, Audrey, 341, 344  
 Heracles, 31, 32, 54  
 Hercules *see* Heracles  
*Herkunft der Germanen, Die*, 16  
 Herodotus, 31, 32  
 Higgitt, John, 10, 125, 128, 130, 171  
 hillforts, 256, 260, 264, 265, 265, 291  
 hill-words, 73  
 Hilton of Cadboll, 127, 129, 137, 160,  
     171, 191, 252, 268, 282  
 Hinton, David, 230  
*Historia Brittonum (HB)*, 32, 55, 56, 58,  
     59, 69, 72  
*Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*  
     (*HE*), 23, 26, 27, 28, 51, 52, 58, 72, 97  
*Historia Regum Britanniae*, 52, 58  
*History of Celtic Place-Names of*  
     *Scotland, The*, 70  
 Howe of Cromar, 311, 318, 321, 325  
 Hughes, Kathleen, 59, 61  
 Huntingdon, Earl David of, 308, 312,  
     317, 321  
 Hutcheson, Alexander, 347  
  
 iconography, 122, 123, 141, 252, 285  
 illuminated Insular manuscripts, 124  
 imperial rider, 144, 154  
 improved farmland, 313  
 Inchbare, 347  
 Inchkeith, 85, 86, 87  
 Inchmarnock, 222, 223, 241  
 Inchtuthil, 100, 337, 348, 357  
 Inchyra, 252, 326, 361  
 Inglismaldie, 88  
 inhumation, 335, 343, 350, 354, 355, 357  
 Innerpefferay, 96  
 Insch, 321  
 Insular Art, International Conferences  
     on, 125  
*Introit*, 191

- Invergighy Cottage, 338, 339, 341, 342, 347, 350  
 Inverkeithing, 85, 87  
 Invermay cross, 135, 138, 139, 147, 148, 149, 151, 153, 154, 156  
   destruction and restoration of, 160, 161, 162  
 Invernochty, 318, 319, 320  
 Inverpeffer, 96  
 Inverurie, 308, 315, 316, 322, 326, 327  
 Iona, 124, 270  
   evidence for non-ferrous metalworking at, 222, 223, 241  
   high crosses at, 186  
 Irish (language), 70  
 Irish Annals, the, 45, 171, 172, 173  
 Irish high crosses, 177, 179, 186, 187, 190  
 Iron Age forts, 309  
 Isaac, Graham, 68  
 Isidore of Seville, 26, 31, 36  
 Isle of Man, 69  
 Isle of May, 270, 350, 352, 369  
 Isle of Whithorn, 222, 241
- Jackschairs Wood, hillfort, 163, 164  
 Jackson, K. H., 3, 24, 25, 37, 45, 46, 51, 57, 67, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 82, 92, 252–3  
 Jarlshof, 222, 225, 240  
 Jerome, 179, 192  
 Jonathan's Cave, 362  
 Jones, Siân, 22, 24
- Kair, 100, 111  
 Keillor, 361  
 Keir, 100, 110–11  
 Keirs, 111  
 Keith, 85, 86, 87  
*keith*, 71  
 Keith Hills, 86, 87  
 Keith Inch, 85  
 Keith Lundie, 86, 87  
 Keithack, 86, 87  
 Keithen, 85, 86, 87  
 Keithick, 86, 87  
 Keithing Burn, 85, 86, 87  
 Keithmore, 85, 86, 87  
 Keithny (Burn), 86, 87  
 Keithock, 86, 87  
 Kellie/Kelly, 71, 112  
 Keltie/Kelty, 112  
 Kemnay, 318  
 Kempfill, 338
- Kenneth MacAlpin *see* Cinaed son of Alpin  
 Kennethmont, 321  
 Kercock, 100  
 Kethock (Burn), 86, 87  
 Kethymyre, 86, 87  
 Kethyn, 86, 87  
 Kettle, 112  
 Kettlebridge, 338, 341  
 Kildonan Bay, 222, 223, 228, 241  
 Kildonan brooch, 228–9  
 Kilfenora West Cross, 215  
 Kincardine, 72, 80, 101  
 Kinellar, 314, 316, 318  
 King David, 143, 287  
 Kinghorn, 102  
 Kinghornie, 102  
 king-lists of Dál Riata and Alba, 50  
 Kingoodie, 338, 344, 351, 369  
*Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland*, 48  
*Kings and Warriors, Craftsmen and Priests*, 124, 256  
 Kingswood, 345  
 Kinkell, 318, 321  
 Kinneil, 29, 72  
 Kinnoull, Earls of, 158  
 Kinnoull family memorial (copy of Dupplin Cross), 159  
 Kinpurney, 97  
 Kintore, 308, 312, 315, 316, 317–8, 319, 320, 321, 321, 327  
 Kirby, David, 59  
 Kirkbuddo, 100  
 Kirkcaldy, 77, 101  
 Kirkintilloch, 72  
 Kirriemuir, 130, 187, 143  
 Kitattie, 86, 87  
 Knockinblewis, 313  
 Koch, John, 51, 67, 68, 74, 76, 83, 92  
 Kodi people, the, 136  
 Kossinna, Gustaf, 16, 17, 21
- 'ladder of inference', 255  
 Lagg, 339  
 Laig Bay, 324  
 Laing and Laing, 124  
 Lanark, 88, 90, 91  
 Landrick, 88, 90, 91  
*\*lanerc*, 74, 76, 88, 90, 91  
 Lanercost, 89, 90, 91  
*Language in Pictland*, 68  
 Lanrecereini, 90, 91  
 Lanrechaithin, 90, 91  
 Lanrecorinsan, 90, 91

- Lanrequeitheil, 90, 91  
 Lanrick, 88, 90, 91  
 Larbert, 75, 98, 99  
 Last Supper, the, 180  
 Lathrisk, 107  
*Lebor Bretnach (LB)*, 32, 47, 52, 53, 54, 59  
*Lebor Gabála Éirenn (LGE)*, 47, 52, 53, 54  
 Lendrick, 76, 88, 90, 91  
 Lendrick Hill, 88, 90, 91  
 Lendrick Lodge, 339  
 leprosy, 352  
 Leslie, 321  
 Lichfield Gospels, 214  
*Life of Columba*, 71, 74, 76, 80, 180  
 life expectancy, 352  
 Lindifferon, 112  
 Lindisfarne, 172, 175  
 Lindisfarne Gospels, 124, 210  
 Linlathen, 361  
*lios*, 72, 107  
 Little Dunagoil, 222, 241  
 liturgical rites, 169, 171, 173  
     Alexandrine, 174, 189–92  
     Antiochene, 174, 179, 180, 183, 189  
     British/Irish, 174, 175  
     Columban, 177, 180, 186, 192, 194, 195  
     Gallican, 174, 176, 192  
     Irish, 173, 176, 177, 180, 181, 192, 194  
     Milanese or Ambrosian, 174  
     Roman, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 181, 194  
     “Scottish” (Irish), 175, 183  
     Spanish or Mozarabic, 174  
 Loch Glashan, 222, 223, 227, 228, 229, 241  
     brooch, 228–9  
 Loch na Beirgh, 222, 225, 241  
 Lochaber, 76, 83  
 Lochhead Quarry, 338, 345, 348, 349, 351, 352, 353, 369  
 Logie, 318  
 Logie Durno, 308  
 Logie Elphinstone, 315, 326, 328  
 long cists, 267, 324  
 long cist cemeteries, 324, 341, 344–5, 349–50, 354–5, 357  
 Longbury Bank, 226  
 Longforan, 102, 348, 362  
 Lunan valley, 324  
 Lunan Water, 324, 347, 350  
 Lundie, 71, 112  
 Lundin Links, 324, 336, 337, 337, 338, 338, 339, 345, 348, 349, 351, 352, 353, 356, 358, 361, 369  
 MacDonald, Aidan, 72, 73  
 Mac Eoin, Gearóid, 32, 52, 53, 54, 55  
 Mack, Alastair, 360  
 MacLagan, Christian, 158  
 Máel Coluim III, 59  
 Máel Muru Othna, 52, 53, 54, 56  
 Magnusson, Magnus, 122  
 Maiden Castle, 309  
 Mains of Afforsk, 314  
 Mains of Ethie, 347  
 Manau, 69  
     battle of, 69  
*Manau Guotodin*, 69  
 Mare’s Craig Quarry, 347  
 Market Cross at Kells, 179  
 Mass, 127  
 Mass books, 175  
 matriliney, 28, 29, 46, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57  
     burial evidence for, 353  
 Maxwell, H., 106  
 May, Water of, 162  
 McCone, Kim, 22  
 medieval parishes, 101  
     boundaries, 323–6  
 Megdale, 89  
 Meggat Water, 89  
 Megget Water, 89  
 Meigle, 37, 89, 129, 268, 350  
 Meissner, John Ludwig Gough, 185  
 Melville Home Farm, 361  
 Menteith, 49, 76  
 Merdrum, 313  
 metalwork, 126, 127  
 metalworking, 221–41  
     moulds, 221, 224, 225  
     relationship between metalworking and privileged groups, 226–7  
     use of precious metals, 221, 224–6, 229, 230, 234  
 Miathi, the, 69  
 Midmar, 89  
 Midstrath, 89  
 \**mig*, 89  
 Migdale, 89  
 Migvie, 321  
 Míl, sons of, 53, 54  
 Miles, David, 350  
 Miller, Molly, 46, 48, 49, 53, 55, 58, 59  
 Minehowe, 8  
 Mither Tap o’ Bennachie, 308, 309

- monadh*, 103, 104  
 Monasterboice, 287  
     South (Muiredach's) Cross, 179, 287  
     West/Tall Cross, 187, 287  
 monasteries, 268, 270  
     Tarbat, 176, 186, 194  
 monasticism, 270  
 Moncrieffe Hill, 256, 265  
 Monifieth 2, 187  
 'monk' stone, 187, 188  
 Mons Graupius, battle of, 308  
 Montrave, 112  
 Monymusk, 316  
 Monymusk casket, 129  
 Moone, 179, 186  
 Moonshade stone, 362  
 Moor of Carden, 315, 326  
 Moray, 247  
 Mordington, 325  
 Mote of Mark, 221, 222, 223, 241  
 Mounth, the, 103, 307, 309, 312, 323  
 Muckersie, 162  
 Muir, Chapel of, 157  
 Muiredach's Cross, 179, 287  
 Myot Hill, 69  
 Myregornie, 102  
 mystagogy, 180  
  
 Naiton son of Der-Ilei *see* Nechtan  
 National Committee on Carved Stones  
     in Scotland, 130  
 National Museum, 129, 131, 156, 157  
 nationalist historiography, 20  
 'nativist' approach, 21, 22  
 Nechtan son of Der-Ilei, 28, 35, 37, 47,  
     50  
     and expulsion of Columban  
         monastics, 172–3, 176  
 Nechtan son of Uerp, King, 60  
 Nechtansmere, battle of, 5  
 \**nemed*, 100  
 Nether Corskie, 314, 316  
 New Archaeology, the, 249, 255  
 'New Art History', the, 125  
 Newburn, 84, 97  
 Newton Stone, 314, 322  
 Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 67, 74–9, 83, 105,  
     106  
 Nieke and Duncan, 227, 228, 229  
 Nigg, 128, 171, 177, 178, 179–181, 182,  
     184, 194  
 Normandykes, 308  
 North Cross at Castledermot, 179, 187  
 North Esk, 324  
  
 North Mains henge, 346, 347, 369  
*North-east Perth*, 257  
 Northern Isles, 246–7, 266, 300  
*Northern Isles, The*, 6, 7, 247  
     Stewart Cruden in preface, 4  
 Northumberland, 172  
 Northumbria, 172  
 Noth, 313  
 nuclear forts, 256, 265  
  
 object-human relationship, 137  
 Ó Carragáin, Éamonn, 177, 180–1, 189,  
     190, 192  
 \**ochil*, 92, 94, 95  
 Ochils, 89, 92, 94, 95  
 Ochiltree, 89, 92, 94, 95  
 Óengus son of Fergus *see* Onuist son of  
     Uurguist  
 Óengus II (Constantine's brother), 138,  
     156, 162  
 \**ogel*, 89, 92, 94, 95  
 ogham, 36  
     inscriptions, 252, 262, 268, 314,  
         321–2, 326, 330, 361  
 Ogil, 89, 94, 95  
 Ogilface, 94, 95  
 Ogilvie, 89, 94, 95  
 Ogle, 94, 95  
 Ogle Burn, 94, 95  
 Ogle Hill, 94, 95  
 Ogle Linn, 94, 95  
 Oglegarth Wood, 94, 95  
 Old Church, Portmahomack, 171, 172  
 Old Kilcullen cross-shaft, 187  
 Onuist son of Uurguist, 50  
 Ord Burn, 316, 322  
 Orkney, 71, 300  
 Ottonian manuscript art, 143  
 Oweynagat, 262  
 Oykel, 94, 95  
 Oykel, River, 92, 94, 95  
 Ozymandias effect, 153–4  
  
 pagan burials, 345, 353, 354, 356–7  
 Panbarthill, 96, 98, 99  
 Panbride, 93  
 Pandewan, 93  
 Panholes, 93  
 Panlathy, 93  
 Panmure, 93  
 Pannanich, 93  
 \**pant*, 93  
 Papert Hill, 98, 99  
 Paperthill, 98, 99

- Pail, 187  
 Pappert, 98, 99  
 Pappert Hill, 98, 99  
 Pappert Law, 98, 99  
 Parcock, 96, 98, 99  
 parish boundaries, 347  
 Parkburn, 344  
*parousia* see Second Coming of Christ  
 Partick, 75, 96, 98, 99  
 Parton, 75  
 passion of Christ, 180  
 Patrick and Columba, Cross of, 179, 186  
 P-Celtic, 67, 68, 70, 74, 80, 83, 100, 103, 105  
*Peanfahel*, 29, 72  
 Peebles, 112  
*\*pen*, 72, 93  
 penannular brooches, 124  
 Pencaitland, 86, 87  
*\*Pencarden*, 72, 102  
 Pennan, 93  
*\*Penrimond*, 72  
 Pert, 93, 98, 99  
*\*pert*, 71, 74, 93, 98, 99  
 Perter Burn, 98, 99  
 Perth, 93, 98, 99  
 Perthbeg, 98, 99  
 Perthshire, 256, 257, 259  
 Perthudden, 96  
 Perthumie Bay, 96  
 Peterhead, 361  
*\*pett*, 77, 103, 105  
 Petts of Monymusk, 103  
 Petty, 79  
 Pettymarcus, 79  
*\*pevr*, 71, 74, 96  
 Philpott, R., 355  
*Physiologus*, 182  
 Picardy Stone, 314, 322–3  
 Pictavia, 32, 33, 129  
*Picti*, 15, 17, 25, 26, 28, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39  
*picti Agathyrsi*, 30, 31, 54  
*picti Geloni*, 31, 54  
 Pictish agrarian economy, 253  
 Pictish art, 121–34, 252  
     evidence for Christianity in, 171, 173  
     Stevenson on, 250  
 Pictish Arts Society, 126  
 Pictish barrows, 302  
 Pictish burial practices, 281, 324, 335–69  
     date, 346, 349, 351  
     finds, 346, 348  
     grave alignment, 358–9  
     grave construction, 343, 345, 357–9  
     grave forms, 267  
     grave orientation, 343, 345  
     location within the landscape, 346–7  
     population of cemeteries, 349–50, 352–3, 355  
     radiocarbon dating, 349, 351  
 Pictish cemeteries, 255, 267, 335–69  
 Pictish Christianity,  
     nature of, 169, 171  
 Pictish ethnicity, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38  
 Pictish ethnic consciousness, 24, 26, 27, 33, 34, 38  
 Pictish farms, 263  
 Pictish fortifications, 255–6  
 Pictish heartland, 247, 256  
 Pictish houses, 260, 261, 262, 263  
     long-house, 262  
     round-house, 256, 262  
 Pictish kingdoms,  
     emergence of, 257, 263  
 Pictish king-lists, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 52, 55, 56, 57, 60, 250  
     duplication in, 50  
     as evidence of Pictish literacy, 59, 60  
     survival of, 60, 61  
 Pictish language, 37, 45, 51, 67, 68, 70, 71, 73, 74, 77, 252  
 Pictish literacy, 59, 60, 61, 252, 275  
 Pictish liturgy, 169–200  
 Pictish origins, 15–43, 45–65  
 Pictish origin legends, 45–65  
     Scythian 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, 39, 45, 54, 58, 53, 55, 56, 57, 60  
     Thracian, 33, 54  
 Pictish orthography, 47, 51  
*Pictish Panorama*, A, 126  
 Pictish place-names, 7, 67–118, 310  
     distribution of, 67  
     elements, 67–118, 253  
 Pictish power centres, 301  
 Pictish royal centres, 271  
 Pictish sculpture, 37, 121, 124, 127, 135, 137, 246, 267, 281  
     archers, 37  
     ecclesiastical nature of, 253  
     evidence for Christianity/importance of the Church, 268  
     reuse of, 137  
 Pictish settlement, 7, 253, 255, 260, 263, 263, 266, 274  
     in northern Britain, 58

- in the Orkneys, 58, 59
- Pictish settlement accounts, 45, 51, 52, 53
- Pictish studies, 3, 15, 16, 17, 21, 39–40, 245–50, 253, 270, 271, 274
  - and aerial archaeology, 257
  - and archaeology, 246, 248
- Pictish symbols, 169, 250, 275, 281, 282, 283, 285, 289, 300, 301, 360
- Pictish symbol stones, 122, 123, 252, 307, 308, 312, 313–4, 317, 321–2, 326–7
  - and burials, 327
  - and burial practices, 335, 349, 359–61
  - Christian iconography on, 169
  - and Christianity, 267, 290, 327–8, 330
  - classification of, 122
  - Class I, 268, 281–4, 290, 299, 300, 301, 302
    - and burial, 359–61
  - Class II, 268
  - Class IV, 127
  - multiple lives of, 127, 137
  - recording of, 128
  - representations of Picts on, 36, 37
  - reuse of, 314
- Pictish Symbol Stones of Scotland, The*, 130
- Pictland, 49, 50, 56, 75, 173, 221
- Picts, The*, 124
- Picts: a new look at old problems, The*, 121
- Picts, Gaels and Scots*, 124
- Picts and the Scots, The*, 124
- Piggott, Stuart, 3, 17, 24, 255
- Pillar of Eliseg, 151
- Pinderachy, 93
- Pinkfoot Press, 126
- Pinnel Hill, 93
- Pitcarmick, 262
- Pitcarmick-type houses, 311
- Pitfirrane, 105
- Pitfodels, 103, 313
- Pitfour, 105
- Pitfourie, 105
- Pitgorno, 102
- Pitmachie, 322
- Pit-names*, 75, 77–9, 105, 253, 254, 309–10, 318
- Pitprone, 97
- Pittentail, 79
- Pluscarden, 102
- Pohl, Walter, 22, 23, 28, 29, 34, 37
- Pomerium playground, 154, 155
- Pool, 222, 225, 240, 300
- Poppleton manuscript, 47, 61
- pòr*, 105
- Portknockie, 256
- Portlethen, 96
- Portmahomack, 129, 169, 171, 172, 173, 181, 268–70, 282
  - evidence of non-ferrous metalworking at, 222, 223, 240
  - place-name evidence for, 194
- Portmahomack: Monastery of the Picts*, 169
- Pourie, 105
- Powis, 347
- Powmyre Quarry, 338, 345, 350, 351, 355, 369
- preas*, 105
- prehistoric monuments, reuse of, 262, 284, 290, 301, 316
- prehistoric settlement, 309
- Premnay, 321
- \*pren*, 71, 74–5, 84–5, 96–7
- Prescalton, 105
- \*Priteni*, 26
- Pritenic, 67, 68, 71, 76
- Problem of the Picts, The*, 3, 6, 10, 15, 39, 45, 67, 74, 121, 123, 201, 245–6, 248–50, 252–3, 255, 267, 271, 281
  - archaeology in, 255
  - on the origins of the Picts, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
- \*Pronie*, 97
- Prony, 97
- proto-Picts, 15, 17, 18, 23, 24
- 'proto-Pictish' society, 263
- Pseudo-Bede, 183
- Purin, 105
- Q-Celtic, 67
- Queen's View, 255
- radiocarbon dating, 255, 310
- Ralston, Ian, 256, 260, 264
- Rannoch, 74
- ràth*, 72, 107–8
- Rathmuriel, 321
- reception theory, 127
- Redcastle, 324–5, 338, 342, 343, 347, 349, 351, 352, 353, 356, 357, 359, 360, 369
- Regularis Concordia*, 185
- rescue archaeology, 255, 257

- Rhynie, 281–305, 284, 312, 313, 316–7, 322, 325, 327  
 Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project (REAP), 282–3, 285, 295  
 Rhynie Man, 124, 283, 287, 297  
 ring ditches, 337  
 ringforts, 255–6, 299  
 ring-headed crosses, 143–4  
 Ritchie, Anna, 268, 291  
 Roderbren, 84  
 Roman Empire, 253  
 Roman forts, 77, 92–3, 95, 100–1, 109, 110  
 Roman Iron Age, 309, 327  
 Roman marching camps, 308, 328  
 Rosemarkie, 71, 112, 130, 172  
 Ross, Alisdair, 55, 317  
 Rossie Priory cross-slab, 201–20  
*\*roth*, 97, 107  
 Rothes, 107  
 Rothie, 107  
 Rothiemay, 107  
 round barrows, 337  
 roundhouses, 256, 262, 312,  
 Royal Commission on Ancient and  
 Historical Monuments of Scotland  
 (RCAHMS), 128, 130, 268, 307, 311  
 landscape surveys, 256, 257, 260, 262, 264  
 Ruifour, 105  
 Ruthven, 107  
 Ruthwell archer, 37  
 Ruthwell cross, 37, 127, 137, 177  
  
 Samson, Ross, 267  
 Sanquhar, 101  
 Scalloway, 222, 225, 232, 240  
 Scatness, 300  
 bear, 130  
 Schmorl's nodes, 352  
 Scone, 112  
 Scoonie, 112  
 Scowcroft, Mark, 52, 53  
*Scoti*, 31  
 Scotia, kingdom of, 50  
 Scott, Ian G., 128, 149  
 Scott, Walter, 162  
*Scottish Language*, 81  
*Scottish Place-Names*, 74  
 Scottish Place-Name Society, 77  
 Scythes, 31  
 Scythia, 23, 27, 30, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38  
 Second Coming of Christ, 192–4  
 Sellar, David, 55  
  
*Senchas Arda Lemnachta lain*, 53  
*Senchas Síil hÍr*, 52, 53, 54, 56, 60  
*Series breuior* (SB), 46, 47, 50, 60  
*Series longior* (SL), 46, 47, 49, 50, 60  
 serpent imagery on monuments, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186  
 Servius, 30, 31, 34, 54  
 settlement archaeology, 257, 260, 263  
 settlement pattern, 312–3  
 Shampher, 101  
 'Shamrock' house, the, 300  
 Shandwick, 37, 128, 129, 171, 182, 185, 190, 191, 193  
 Shannacher, 101  
 Shanquhar, 101  
 Shanzie, 262  
 Sharpe, Richard, 180  
 Shepherd, Ian, 314, 322  
 Shetland Place-Name Project, 82  
 Sims-Williams, Patrick, 59  
 Skaill, 222, 225, 240  
 Skene, 318  
 Skene, W. F., 47  
 Small, Alan 121  
 smiths, 227–34  
 Smyth, Alfred, 55  
 "social life of things, the", 136  
 Solport, 75, 98, 99  
*South-east Perth*, 257  
 spindle whorl found at Ecclesiamagirdle, 144, 145  
 spiral patterns on monuments, 191  
 square barrows, 267, 316, 323, 324, 335, 339  
 square-ditched enclosures, 337  
 souterrains, 262, 309, 347  
 Wainwright on, 8  
*Souterrains of Southern Pictland, The*, 8, 255, 309  
 South Cross at Castledermot, 179  
*srath*, 108  
 St Andrew, 138  
 St Andrews, 270  
 crosses at, 143, 163  
 ecclesiastical centre in the Pictish period, 60, 61  
 Historic Scotland's collections at, 129  
 place-name evidence for, 72  
 St Andrews foundation legend, 45, 138, 156, 162  
 St Andrews Sarcophagus, 126, 252, 287  
*St Andrews Sarcophagus, The* (Sally Foster), 126

- St Anthony, 177, 179–80  
 St Blane's, 222, 223, 241  
 St Brigit, 60  
 St Christopher, 143  
 St Columba, 144  
     and the conversion of the northern  
         Picts, 171–2  
     and Portmahomack, 194–5  
 St Columba's Cave, 222, 225, 241  
 St Columba's cult, 156  
 St Curetán, 172  
 St Eloy, 231  
 St Grillán, 144  
 St John Lateran, 142  
 St Leonard's, 345  
 St Luag's Church, 291, 293, 302  
 St Moluag, 293  
 St Ninian, 354  
 St Ninian's Isle hoard, 124  
 St Paul, 177, 179–80  
 St Serf's church, Dunning, 157  
 St Vigean, 37, 129, 130, 143, 148, 177, 187  
*Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, 21  
 Star Inn Farm, 347  
 Stenton, Sir Frank, 4  
 Stevenson, Jane, 176  
 Stevenson, R. B. K., 3, 115, 121, 122, 123, 250, 252, 256, 281  
*Stowe Missal*, 176, 180, 181  
 Strath Tummel, 255  
 Strathairly, 112  
 \*Strathannan, 108  
 Strathbogie, 312, 316, 317  
 Strathbrock, 108  
 Strathclyde, 68, 70  
 Strathdon, 130, 321  
 Strathearn, 49, 76, 138, 247, 258, 260, 264, 348  
 Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) project, 163, 164, 260, 270–3, 273  
 Strathmartine, 130  
 Strathmiglo, 89  
 \*Strathnith, 108  
 Strathpeffer, 96  
 Strowan, 268  
*Studies on the Book of Deer*, 128  
     substrate influence, 73, 105  
 Sueno's Stone, 129  
 Summer Schools in Archaeology, 4, 6, 8, 15, 247  
 'swordland', 56  
 symbol stones *see* Pictish symbol stones  
 Tap o' Noth, 291, 293, 302, 309–10  
 Tara, 301  
 Tarbat,  
     evidence for manuscript making at, 127, 129  
 Tarbat Discovery Centre, 129  
 Tarbat peninsula, 127, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 181, 182, 189, 192  
 Tarbat stone,  
     Latin inscription on, 125  
 Tarland, 318, 325  
 tattooing, 32, 34, 35, 36  
 Taylor, Simon, 140, 310  
 Tealing, 262  
 thanages, 273–4, 317, 321  
*thanes*, 273  
 thermoluminescence, 310  
 Thomas, Charles, 123  
 Thornybank, 324, 356  
 Thrace, the soldiers of, 56  
 Tillypronie, 97  
 Tillytarmont, 315, 325  
 toponymics, 82  
 "Towards a 'New ECMS'", 130–1  
 TR1, 194  
 TR2, 182, 186  
 TR20, 187, 188  
 Trabrown, 84  
 Trabroun, 84  
*Traditionskern*, 21  
*Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory, 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 32, 33, 39  
*Transformation of the Roman World*, 126  
 \*traus, 97  
 trepanning, 352  
 \*tros, 97  
 Trusta, 97  
 Trustach, 97  
*Túatha Dé Danann*, 53, 54  
 Tullibole, 350  
 Turin Hill, 256, 265, 266, 291  
 Ugadale Point, 222, 223, 241  
 Uipogonet *see* Uipoignamet  
 Uipoignamet, 50  
 \*uotir, 107  
 Upper Ord, 284  
 Urie, River, 307–8, 315  
 Urquhart, 80, 102, 256, 266  
 Uuradech Uecla, 50  
 Van Hamel, A. G., 46, 47  
 Vergil, 30, 31, 54



- Vetta stone, 356  
 Vienna School, 21, 23  
*Vita Sancti Columbae*, 26  
*Vita Sancti Pauli*, 179  
*Vita Sancti Teiliaui*, 58  
*Vita Sancti Wilfrithi*, 26
- Wainwright, F. T., 248, 249, 255, 267,  
 281, 302, 309  
   academic biography, 3–12  
   *Archaeology, place-names and history*,  
   6, 9–10  
   and the Dark Ages, 4, 5, 8  
   “Houses and Graves”, 3, 255, 335  
   interdisciplinarity, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10,  
   123, 248  
   Nechtansmere, the battle of, 5  
   *Northern Isles, The*, 247  
   place-names, 4–5, 7  
   on the origins of the Picts, 15, 16, 17,  
   18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29,  
   36, 39  
   on Pictish burial, 335  
   on the Pictish king-lists, 45, 46  
   on Pictish matriliney, 55  
   *Problem of the Picts, The*, 15, 45, 123,  
   245, 248, 249, 251, 267, 335  
   on sculpture, 251  
   *Souterrains of Southern Pictland, The*,  
   8, 255, 309  
   Summer Schools in Archaeology, 4, 6,  
   8, 9, 15, 247  
   on symbol stones, 123  
 Wainwright Five, 16, 17, 19, 24, 25, 38  
*Warlords and Holy Men*, 55  
 Warren, Frederick, 175, 183, 185  
 water deities, 325
- Watkins, Trevor, 262  
 Watson, William, J., 67, 70, 71, 73, 78–9,  
 85, 88, 89, 92, 93, 96, 97, 99, 100, 102,  
 103, 140  
 Watt, James Crabb, 96  
 Watts, V., 88  
 Waulkmill, 325  
 Wearmouth-Jarrow, 35, 172  
 Welsh (language), 68, 70  
 Welton, The, 347  
 Wenskus, Reinhard, 20, 21, 22, 23, 39  
 West Cross at Kells, 186  
 West/Tall Cross at Monasterboice, 187,  
 287  
 West Grange of Conon, 347  
 Wester Denhead, 360  
 Western Isles, 246–7  
 Westside, 343  
 Wheedlemont, 291  
 Whitebridge, 339, 340  
 Whithorn, 222, 229, 241  
 Whittington, Graeme, 253  
 William the Lion, 308  
 Wolfram, Herwig, 22, 23, 26  
 Woolf, Alex, 20, 31, 50, 55, 70, 247  
 Women’s Knowe, 338, 348, 357, 369  
*Work of Angels, The*, 125  
*Worm, the Germ and the Thorn, The*, 121  
 Wormald, Patrick, 176  
 Wright, Neil, 58
- Yeavinger, 97, 301  
 York, 172, 175  
 Ystrad Clud, 70  
 Ythan, River, 307–8  
 Zumbuhl, Mark, 56