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SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN THE ATLANTIC PROVINCE
OF SCOTLAND IN THE 1ST MILLENNIUM A.D.:

A STUDY OF ARGYLL

VOLUME 1

Margaret R. Nieke

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of
Arts University of Glasgow.

July 1984

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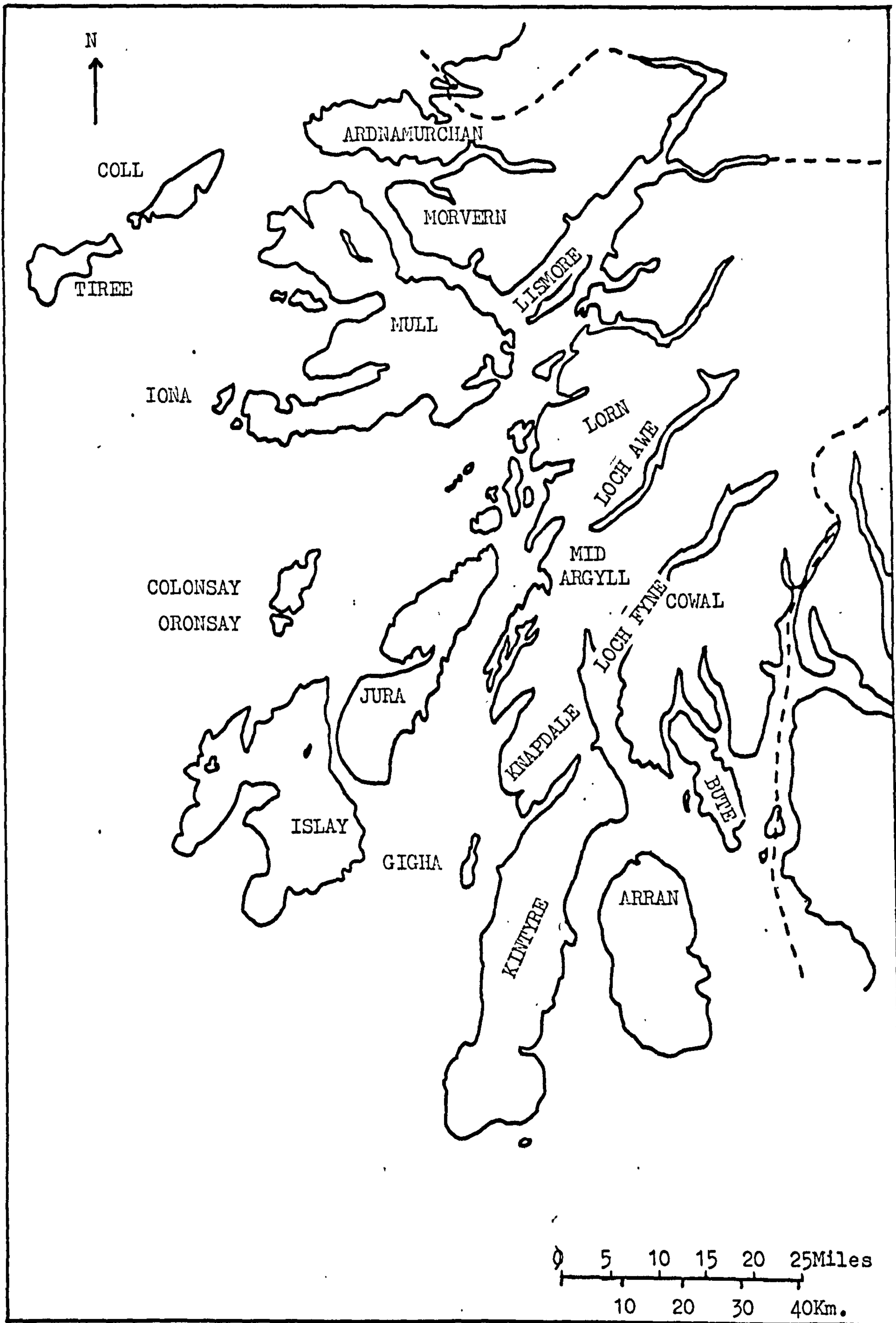


Fig. 1 Argyll.

SUMMARY

This thesis is concerned with the history and archaeology of Argyll in the 1st Millennium A.D. The main focus of discussion is the development here of the Early Historic Kingdom of Dalriada, the manner in which this Kingdom was controlled, and the eventual Norse impact upon it. Dalriada was one of the major political groupings to develop in Northern Britain after the collapse of Roman power in the 4th and 5th centuries. A clear understanding of the manner in which it developed is important not only to Argyll, but to Northern Britain as a whole.

The work is presented in three volumes. Volume 1 deals with the whole of the study area and discusses the historical background of the 1st Millennium A.D. and the variety of archaeological evidence for activity during the period.

Chapter 1 presents a general introduction to the study, Chapters 2 and 3 present introductions to the area of Argyll, and the resources available in the area, paying particular attention to those of importance in the 1st Millennium A.D. Together these chapters provide a background against which subsequent analysis of the settlement pattern of Argyll in the 1st Millennium A.D. can be set.

An introduction to the history of the area during this period is provided within Chapter 4. This provides an important basis for subsequent critical analysis of the range of documentary sources used to reconstruct a "history" of the area. Chapter 14 uses this work as a basis for discussion of a range of problems related to Dalriada

raised by this historical documentation. New perspectives are provided on some of these problems.

Chapters 5 to 12 discuss the archaeological evidence for the types of settlements which were in use in the 1st Millennium A.D. These chapters concentrate initially upon the various defended sites which are a particularly frequent feature of the Argyll landscape, and which have tended to dominate previous archaeological considerations of the area. These chapters discuss the nature of these various sites, and the problems inherent in previous approaches to them. Chronologies for their occupation and usage are discussed, along with the nature of communities inhabiting them, and the types of activity which were occurring within them.

In addition to these defended sites it is likely that a range of other sites were also in use, hence Chapter 11 considers the range of evidence for occupation of other sites. Few sites which fit this category have been identified or excavated, and thus discussion is also directed to a consideration of further sites which must be examined.

Chapter 12 deals with the archaeological evidence for the establishment of the Early Christian Church within the area, looking at the types of evidence which must be drawn upon, and the range of problems inherent in its analysis. The establishment of Christianity is one of the major themes of Dalriadic history, and hence the evidence for it within the area must be considered in some detail.

Using the information discussed in preceding sections, Chapter 15 provides a critical overview of the archaeology

of the area specifically related to the Early Historic Period. It aims to question previously accepted views on this material, and critically consider it in relation to the historical events of the 1st Millennium A.D. This allows new perspectives on the material to be presented. In concentrating largely upon the archaeological material this chapter must be seen to complement Chapter 14 which deals with the historical background of Dalriada.

Chapter 16 draws together the various strands of evidence indicating Norse settlement and activity in Argyll in the late 1st Millennium A.D. Its main aim is to examine the Norse impact on the Kingdom of Dalriada, in particular attempting to analyse the relationships of the Norse to the native communities of Argyll.

Finally Chapter 17 considers the evidence for later patterns of settlement and land-exploitation in the area. This illustrates the manner in which these may have destroyed or altered former patterns. It also illustrates the lack of detailed study of the medieval period in the area which causes problems for any analysis of earlier periods.

Volume 2 of the present work presents five detailed case studies of areas of Argyll (Fig. 2). While an overview of the history and nature of activity in Argyll in the 1st Millennium A.D. as presented in Volume 1 is of importance, it is clear that different areas of the Kingdom participated in this history in different ways. This is well illustrated by these case studies. They also indicate more clearly the general problems discussed within Volume 1. Such studies



Fig 2 The location of Case Study areas.

of small areas are particularly important for archaeological purposes, since they suggest new lines of approach to the archaeological data, particular directions in which further work should be conducted, and the types of question which must be asked.

Volume 3 presents a range of appendices referenced within Volumes 1 and 2.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the product of 4 years research work. I am grateful to the Department of Education and Science for providing a Major State Studentship for the work, and also to the Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow for providing space in which to work, and a wide range of other facilities.

I have been fortunate in having two academic supervisors without whom my ideas would have come to nothing. Professor Leslie Alcock has always willingly shared his extensive knowledge of the Iron Age and Early Historic Periods within Britain and Ireland. I am especially grateful for his rigorous assessment of detail. Mr John C. Barrett has also generously shared his personal knowledge. In particular he has always encouraged a critical examination of the methodology of Historical Archaeology. In addition he has assisted and encouraged field work.

My fellow graduate students, past and present, have provided a continual source of support and criticism, hence contributing greatly to the final work. Holly B. Duncan has helped direct my thoughts, and has had the patience to discuss her own work ad nauseam with me. Andrew D. Foxon David Fraser and Stephen T. Driscoll have also provided major support. In addition I must also thank Nicholas B. Aitchison, Ross Samson and Duncan B. Campbell.

Other members of staff of the Department of Archaeology have also helped with specific problems, hence I must thank

Dr W.S. Hanson Dr E.A. Slater Mr A. Morrison Mr E.J. Talbot Ms. A. McGhie Ms. E. Cochrane Ms. A. Clydesdale and Miss J.F. Godfrey.

Several other Scottish Institutions also require acknowledgement. The work would not have been completed without the relevant R.C.A.H.M.S. inventory volumes. I am grateful to their staff for advice throughout the period of my work. In particular I would like to thank Mr J.B. Stevenson and Dr J.N.G. Ritchie.

The officers of the former Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey in Edinburgh, in particular Mr J. Davidson, were invariably extremely friendly and helpful.

During fieldwork throughout Argyll many individuals assisted me - often unwittingly. Unfortunately it is impossible to name all of them I would, though, like to thank Dino and Alison Wright of Dunans for continued support, Donald Maclean for help on Mull, Greta Daniels for help in Kintyre, and Margaret and Worthy Taylor on Islay.

In addition to the above many other individuals found time to discuss my work with me, these included Dr Lesley Macinnes and Dr Alan M. Lane. Many other personal friends also provided support in different ways - Karen E. Lockwood, Jane Foxon, Mike Spearman and Dave Start. I am grateful to all for massive support during the final stages of writing up.

In addition to those noted above my main support has come from my family and close friends in York. The former

have always happily supported my activities I chose to undertake; provided a welcome haven for retreat from the present work and cheerfully suffered my prolonged absences. Without this my work could not have been begun let alone completed.

Finally, but by no means last I must thank Mrs L. Peedle for preparing most of the typescript from a difficult hand-written text.

Glasgow June 1984.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for written replies to queries from the following individuals:

H. Adamson.	Keeper of Archaeology, Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow.
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The late E.R. Cregeen.	School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.
A.R. Easson.	Department of Scottish History, University of Edinburgh.
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The late W.D. Lamont.	37 Kirklee Drive, Glasgow G12 0SP.
A.M. Lane.	Department of Archaeology, University College Cardiff.
D.N. Marshall	Kames Gardens Cottage, Port Bannatyne Bute.
R. Martlew	Department of Archaeology, University of Leicester.
I.A. Morrison.	Department of Geography, University of Edinburgh.

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Comment Upon Abbreviations Referencing and Bibliography

Abbreviations

R.C.A.H.M.S.	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.
D.E.S.	Discovery and Excavation , Scotland.
b.c.	Uncalibrated radiocarbon years before Christ.
a.d.	Uncalibrated radiocarbon years after Christ.
B.C.	Calibrated radiocarbon years before Christ.
A.D. * <i>see below</i>	Calibrated radiocarbon years after Christ.
O.S.A.	Old Statistical Account
N.S.A.	New Statistical Account.

Referencing

Throughout this work the Harvard style of referencing is used. On occasion footnotes are used, these being located at the end of the relevant chapter.

Bibliography

This is presented within Volume 2. It is an alphabetical listing using the Council for British Archaeology's Signposts of Archaeological Publication (London 1976) for guidance.

* this applies only when the abbreviation is associated with a calibrated radiocarbon date, and not when a historical reference is cited.

CHAPTER ONE

OUTLINE OF STUDY

The aim of this thesis is to present a detailed and critical assessment of the history and archaeology of the former county of Argyll in the 1st Millennium A.D. The reason for the choice of this geographical extent lies in the evidence that during the Early Historic Period⁽¹⁾ this area made up the territory of the Kingdom of Dalriada. (Fig. 3)

According to the available historical sources the Kingdom of Dalriada was established in 501 A.D. by Fergus Mór mac Erc, who migrated to Northern Britain from North Eastern Ireland.

The early history of this Kingdom, the establishment of Christianity, the eventual take-over of Pictland and the Norse incursions are essential themes of early Scottish history.

The territorial extent of this early Kingdom is traditionally seen as coterminous with the former county of Argyll, (which is now part of Strathclyde region) although it may also have extended over Arran and Bute. The name Argyll, indeed is an English modification of the original Gaelic "Earra-ghaidheal" which can be translated as the "Coastland of the Gael" (MacDonald N.D., 12) and obviously refers to the Irish settlers established there. This name can be related to the area from at least the 11th century A.D. Annalistic sources tell how Kenneth MacAlpin 'led the Scots from Argyll into the land of the Picts' in the mid 9th century. (Anderson 1922, 289). Later in another source



Fig. 3 Dalriada in Early Historic Northern Britain.

one of the local rulers, Somerled, was styled 'Regulus of Argyll' (Steer and Bannerman 1977, 201). This last source can be dated between the 10th and 13th centuries. Unfortunately the precise territorial extent this name was then associated with is not specified in these accounts. For the Early Historic Period, however Bannerman has presented evidence that Dalriada probably had the same territorial extent as the former county of Argyll.

The main aim of the present thesis is to examine the manner in which the Irish Dalriada were able to move to Northern Britain and establish themselves within the area of Argyll, and having done this how they were able to maintain their political control over such a vast geographical area. This led to a critical re-examination of the available documentary sources relevant to Dalriada; an analysis of linguistic evidence (mainly Place-names) and also an examination of all the archaeological evidence for settlement and activity in Argyll in the 1st Millennium A.D. The latter analysis aimed to identify the types of site which had been in occupation during this period; the nature of the social units inhabiting them; and the range of activities which may have been occurring within them.

The Kingdom of Dalriada may have been established as the result of the transference of a ruling dynasty from Ireland to Northern Britain rather than a mass folk migration. This establishment was a lengthy process, probably involving intermarriage with local British lineages. By this means the dynasty was able to establish control over the area. Reanalysis of the evidence suggests that not one, but three

distinct groups of people may have been infiltrated in this way to allow the Dalriadic Kings to control such a large geographical area. This process must have extended over several generations. In its initial phases it would have been greatly aided by the presence of a community within the area which had had prior contact with Ireland, and may have included persons of Irish descent. In view of the close proximity of Ireland and Argyll, it would seem likely that such contacts did exist, and had developed from a very early date.

Probably the most important settlement sites were the defended sites which are a major feature of the landscape of Argyll. Excavated evidence illustrates that at least some of these sites were in occupation in the Early Historic Period. These defended sites range in size and architectural form widely.

Traditionally this large group of defended sites has been subdivided into various groups - forts, duns, brochs and crannogs. Because of the nature of the ~~siting~~ and structural form of the last group their classification as a distinct subgroup is justifiable. In the case of the other three groups however, all of which take the form of massively constructed stone-walled enclosures, the subdivisions used are based on somewhat arbitrary distinctions. These are related primarily to the size of enclosed area and the presence or absence of supposedly characteristic architectural features. Since the use of these various classifications has become engrained within archaeological literature chapters, ^{separate} in the present work deal with each group

in turn. A major unifying theme throughout, however, examines the problems inherent in the subdivision into discrete categories of what is really a continuum of data.

The chronologies suggested for the use of these various types of site indicate that many of the duns and crannog sites may have been in occupation in the Early Historic Period. Taking the example of dun sites. Of the 20 sites in the area which have been examined in some way by excavation, the majority has produced little artefactual material, even this being generally inherently undatable. At 5 sites, however, material clearly of Early Historic Date has been recovered. (cf. Chapter Seven). These duns and crannogs may have been the homesteads of persons of considerable social status, who had access to a variety of prestigious artefacts, and could mobilise the labour needed to construct such dwellings. Many of these duns may have been totally roofed house structures. There is some evidence that these smaller defended sites were replacing the larger forts during the 1st Millennium A.D.

The most important of the defended sites of Argyll are a small group which are mentioned in documentary sources, and which appear to have been associated with the Kings of Dalriada. These are termed Early Historic Fortifications within the present work. The most well-known of these is the site of Dunadd in Mid-Argyll. This site may, along with others may have provided a major link between the Kings of Dalriada and their Kingdom, being centres at which tribute raised from the population was collected and consumed.

Evidence from Dunadd also suggests that the site was an important centre of craft-working activity, and had access to the products of trade or exchange with the continent. The key to understanding this activity may have been the site's Royal associations. The control of the production and distribution of the products of fine craft-workers, as well as external trade links, may have been of major importance to the Kings of Dalriada since it helped define and maintain their power and position within society. These types of activity may have been concentrated within a number of such defended sites within Dalriada. Dunadd may, however, have served a more important role than other sites, since it may also have been the site at which Kings were inaugurated.

The establishment of Dalriadic control over Argyll was probably aided by the establishment of the Early Christian Church in the area. The monastery of Iona was founded by Columba in the mid 6th century. The early ecclesiastics realised that the conversion of Kings was of major importance to their establishment, and hence we see the beginnings of a close relationship developing between Columba and King Aedan of Dalriada, and the development by Iona of the Christian concept of Kingship. A major reason for this close link was the need the early Church had for land and wealth upon which to establish itself and maintain its activities. As a result of the founding of Iona we see the spread of Christianity throughout Dalriada, indicated by the establishment of further monasteries, as well as chapels and burial grounds, and the erection of sculptured

crosses. Of particular interest are the various monasteries which developed around Dalriada, particularly on islands such as Iona and Tiree which lie close to the fringes of Dalriadic territory. The land on which these monasteries were established may have been granted to the Church by the Kings of Dalriada. In so doing it might be speculated that they were deliberately given lands in such peripheral locations in order to strengthen royal control over such areas, the monastic communities taking control over them for the royal lineage of Dalriada.

As the numbers of people converted to Christianity grew in number, so the Church came to have a major impact on the social organization of society. The early Church was responsible for the rise in importance of the nuclear family unit, the support of unmarried women, and the decline of a variety of strategies of heirship including fosterage and concubinage. An understanding of the manner in which Christianity was established within the Kingdom is important to an analysis not only of Dalriada, but also Early Historic Britain as a whole. It was ^{probably} from Iona that Pictland was converted to Christianity, while early Kings of Northumbria were also converted while in exile in Dalriada. Early monasteries within Northumbria were established by missions from Iona. The importance of Iona was only to begin to fade as a result of the triumph of the Roman Church over the Celtic one on the question of the method of calculation of the date of Easter.

In the mid 9th century, ~~Cin~~ Mac Alpin, King of Dalriada, was able to unify Dalriada and neighbouring Pictland, and become King of the joint territories. This union vastly expanded the area of interest of the Kings of Dalriada, ^{itself.} and must have had its effects on Dalriada. The territorial expansion must have overstretched the mechanisms of control used by the Early Historic Kings, resulting, perhaps, in weaknesses within Dalriada, especially in peripheral areas which had always lain on the fringes of the political control exercised by the Kings. This may well be the reason for the regroupings of political control of the latter areas in the 9th century. This led to the formation of an Island lordship which was eventually to develop into the Medieval Lordship of the Isles.

At the same time as the Kings of Dalriada were becoming increasingly involved in Pictland, the Vikings were making their presence felt on the west coast. Within this area of northern Britain these people came largely from Norway. The initial raids on monastic sites may well have begun processes which further weakened the peripheral areas of Dalriada mentioned above, by destroying the main centres of control within such areas. Hence the Norse may have taken advantage of the weaknesses within Dalriada caused by the union of Pictland and Dalriada. It would seem, however, that the political control of Dalriada did not collapse entirely in the ninth century. Norse settlement appears to have been restricted mainly to these peripheral islands.

including Islay, Tiree, and Colonsay and Oronsay. They do not appear to have been able to settle on the mainland.

The relationship between the Norse and Native communities probably varied from area to area, being heavily dependent upon local circumstances. On Tiree their establishment may have been the result of the violent destruction of monastic communities, one result of which was to open up areas of land for settlement. On Islay in contrast their establishment was more peaceful, and involved infilling of settlement around the pre-existing pattern.

In many of these island areas, the arrival of the Norse could have been, to a certain extent, welcomed since some of the early settlers were engaged in trading activities. The establishment of trading links between Ireland and Norway, which is indicated by finds of balance sets and, perhaps, coin hoards, brought new wealth to these areas. Involvement in such trading networks may have been welcomed by the local inhabitants, since these areas lay distant from the heartland of Dalriada and the wealth and mechanisms of exchange which were helping to maintain the position of the Kings there.

Over the course of the next 2-300 years the Norse were to claim authority over many of the Western Islands of Scotland, and established settlements throughout the area. While the Norse crown may have claimed authority over many of the Western Isles, it is questionable to what extent they really controlled and administered the area. They never established their power or position here as they did in the Northern Isles where a major Norwegian Earldom was established. Reanalysis of the available evidence suggests that the medieval Lordship of the Isles which controlled most of the

Islands and mainlands of Argyll from the 12th century may have had its origins in the regroupings of political power within Dalriada organized by Cinaed Mac Ailpin. Its early rulers were of mixed Norse and Gaelic descent, and were able to establish themselves within the area despite the claims of the Norwegian and Scottish crowns to authority over the area. The Norwegian crown did not abandon its claims to authority over the Western Isles until 1266 under the terms of the Treaty of Perth.

Studies of the Early Historic and Norse periods in Northern Britain are not well advanced. Many of the various strands of evidence for activity during this period - documented history, linguistic evidence and archaeological evidence have often formerly been treated as disparate. The present thesis attempts to draw these various strands of evidence together to allow a detailed discussion of events in Argyll in the 1st Millennium A.D. to be presented. Detailed discussion of the Kingdom of Dalriada and the pattern of settlement associated with it provides a firm base for analysis of the Norse impact within the area. This is of particular importance since many previous analyses of Norse settlement and activity have been conducted in something of a vacuum because of the difficulties faced in attempting to link them to pre-existent settlement pattern of areas.

In presenting a critical analysis of the manner in which the Kingdom of Dalriada was established it is hoped that many issues relevant to the establishment of other similar political units are raised. Hopefully this will provide impetus not only to further work on Dalriada, but also to critical studies of other Kingdoms throughout northern Britain, and indeed Europe.

Chapter One. Footnotes.

1. The Early Historic Period is used throughout this work to denote the period between 500 A.D. and the mid 9th century.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION TO THE AREA OF STUDY

II.1. The Physical Landscape

Argyll forms the south-western end of a range of highlands which stretch along the western coastline and across a large part of the interior of Scotland. Geologically the area is composed in the main of metamorphic rocks of the Dalradian and Moinean assemblages; that is rocks of sedimentary origin that have experienced prolonged pressure due to compressive forces in a mountain building episode, metamorphism by contact with hot molten material from deep magmatic sources, or metasomatic metamorphism due to chemically active fluids infiltrating the rock itself. (Whittow 1977, 25). Volcanic activity in the area is also indicated by numerous doleritic and basaltic dykes, and by extensive plateaus of lava. The best known of these is that found on the island of Mull which covers in the order of 300 square miles.

The highlands created by these rocks are extensive (Fig. 4). Of the total area of Argyll, 66% has an altitude of over 76 m O.D., while almost 18% of the area lies above 300 m. O.D. The highest relief is found inland, and in the Ardnamurchan Peninsula in the North.

Some of the evident landscape features result from glaciation during the Pleistocene period. Ice gathered on the highest ground from which it flowed outwards, creating the overdeepened valleys characteristic of the Scottish Highlands. Many of these are presently occupied by lochs of either fresh or sea water. It is this glaciation which



Fig. 4 The relief of Argyll.

created the deeply indented coastline of the west of Scotland. On the mainland of Argyll major valleys such as Glen Orchy, Loch Awe, and Glen Etive were over-deepened by ice which flowed from a major gathering point on the Moor of Rannoch.

Isostatic readjustment of the area since the period of glaciation has led to the creation of a series of raised beaches along areas of the coastline. These are particularly noticeable in Kintyre and the Island of Arran. Another phenomenon which appears related to coastal readjustment after glaciation is the formation of machair deposits in certain areas. These are areas of accumulated sand which appear to be derived from glacial drift deposited on the shallow off-shore platforms around the coastline. Once deposited upon land they were (and still are) eroded, mainly by wind action. Their complete erosion was prevented by stabilisation of the sand by plant growth. Further erosion and movement has occurred over time as a result of various agencies, some natural, some related to human activity. This movement has led on occasion to the burial of former settlement sites, and hence they may prove of importance for archaeological purposes. In the West of Scotland machair landscapes are most common in the Outer Hebridean Islands. ^{Similar} areas are also found further south, however, notably on Coll, Tiree and Islay.

II.2. Climate

The present-day climate of the area is mainly warm and damp. This is due to the warming and moderating influence of the Atlantic Ocean, in particular the Gulf Stream Drift current which flows along the western coast from the

south. Air masses moving inland from over the Atlantic also bring with them the heavy rainfall characteristic of the area.

As a result of the detailed analysis of climate, past, present and future by Lamb (1977, 1981, 1982) it is possible to provide an outline description of the climate of the British Isles in the first millennium A.D. It would appear that the climate of the first millennium B.C. was cool, but was becoming milder towards the close of that millennium. The climate of the first century A.D. may have been slightly warmer and drier than today; a situation which appears to have been maintained until around 400 A.D. From ^{around} 400 A.D. a colder and wetter period ensued. During the second half of the millennium the climate may have been of continental type, with the development of drier, warmer summers and colder winter months.

The sources of information used to make such suggestions about past climates have been summarized by Lamb (1982, 94-100). They include pollen evidence, tree-ring evidence, evidence of changing water levels in rivers and lakes, and in certain instances, the use of documentary records. Unfortunately it would appear that the available evidence is not susceptible to detailed refinements. Hence no ~~synopsis~~ of probable temperature or rainfall values during the first millennium A.D. has yet been worked out. This makes ^{any} ~~weather conditions in~~ detailed assessment of Argyll during this period difficult. It is clear that agricultural exploitation of land is closely linked with climate (cf. Parry, 1978). Thus climatic change could have important implications for the

agricultural exploitation of the area. A period of warmer climate, for example, may allow higher land to be cultivated. A reversion to colder weather might then lead to an abandonment of such land, a change which may be traceable archaeologically if traces of former patterns of cultivation can be identified.

Since the climate at the beginning of the first millennium A.D. may have been broadly similar to the present day, it is worth considering recent climatic details further.

Temperature figures indicate that the west coast is one of the warmest areas in Scotland in winter with a mean seasonal temperature of around 4.5°C calculated for the period 1931-1960. Summer temperatures, modified by the cooling influence of the sea are not as hot as some areas of Scotland, with an annual mean for the same 30 year period of between 13°C and 14.5°C . For most of the year the growing season has a length of 7 to 8 months a year, being calculated as the number of months with a mean temperature above 6°C . This is similar to that noted in lowland areas of Scotland, but contrasts with the major areas of highland where lower temperatures occur during the winter months, and hence shorten the growing season.

Rainfall in the area is heavy, reflecting the disposition of the land towards the Atlantic Ocean, over which the winds collect much moisture. This is condensed out as the winds meet the ^{high} land and are forced to rise upwards, cooling in the process. The greatest levels of rainfall are felt upon the highest ground which can experience over 2000 mm rainfall per annum. The seasonality of the rainfall is highly variable, but shows a tendency for the period between February and April

to be somewhat drier than the rest of the year. This heavy rainfall can prove a constraint to cultivation in the area, since it is frequently heavy enough to damage standing crops, in particular cereals. This is frequently noted in the Parish descriptions contained within the Old and New Statistical Accounts.⁽¹⁾

A third major factor which must be taken into account in discussing the climate of the area is that of wind. Wind speeds in the western coasts and Islands are amongst the highest in the world, with mean speeds of 10.3 m per second in winter and 5.15 m per second in summer having been recorded (Macaulay Institute, 1983). This again relates to the dominantly oceanic origin of the weather, since wind speeds can build up without disruption over the ocean as air masses move about in an attempt to reduce pressure differences. A map of exposure produced by Birse and Dry (1970) indicates that while lowlands on the islands and mainland peninsulas are very exposed, the area of Mid Argyll is more sheltered, presumably by the offshore island chain. Wind exposure can influence the nature and location of settlements, but also affects the vegetation of certain areas. Along the coast vegetation may be inhibited by salt spray, while in other areas a combination of wind speed and shallow soils can inhibit the growth of tall vegetation such as trees. This is particularly the case on the island of Tiree.

An attempt has been made to define climatic sub-regions within Scotland (Birse & Dry, 1970) which is of use to the present study since it does help indicate the climatic

variation within Argyll. (Fig. 5) This was based upon climatic information gathered for a map indicating accumulated temperature and potential water deficit figures. This is particularly useful for the area of study since it takes into account the effect of increasing altitude on the climate. Accumulated temperature figures were defined as,

'the integrated excess of deficiency of temperature with reference to a fixed datum, usually called the base temperature over an extended period of time'

(Shellard, 1959)

potential water deficit is defined as,

'the excess of potential evapotranspiration over rainfall'

(Green, 1964)

The map presented illustrates well the maritime influences upon the climate, which in most areas can be categorized as moist and wet. Inland on higher ground areas of colder, wet climate are encountered.

To conclude this discussion of climate, it is worth noting that the majority of Argyll does not have a marginal climate. Areas of climatically marginal land have recently been discussed by Parry (1978, 83). These can be defined as areas in which the possibility of cultivation is inextricably related to climatic conditions, in particular temperature figures (Fig. 6). Slight changes in the latter can influence the limits of limits of cultivation. From this it can be seen that in contrast to most of the rest of highland Scotland, the climate of Argyll is reasonably affable. A common misconception is that the Dalriadic dynasty transferred from

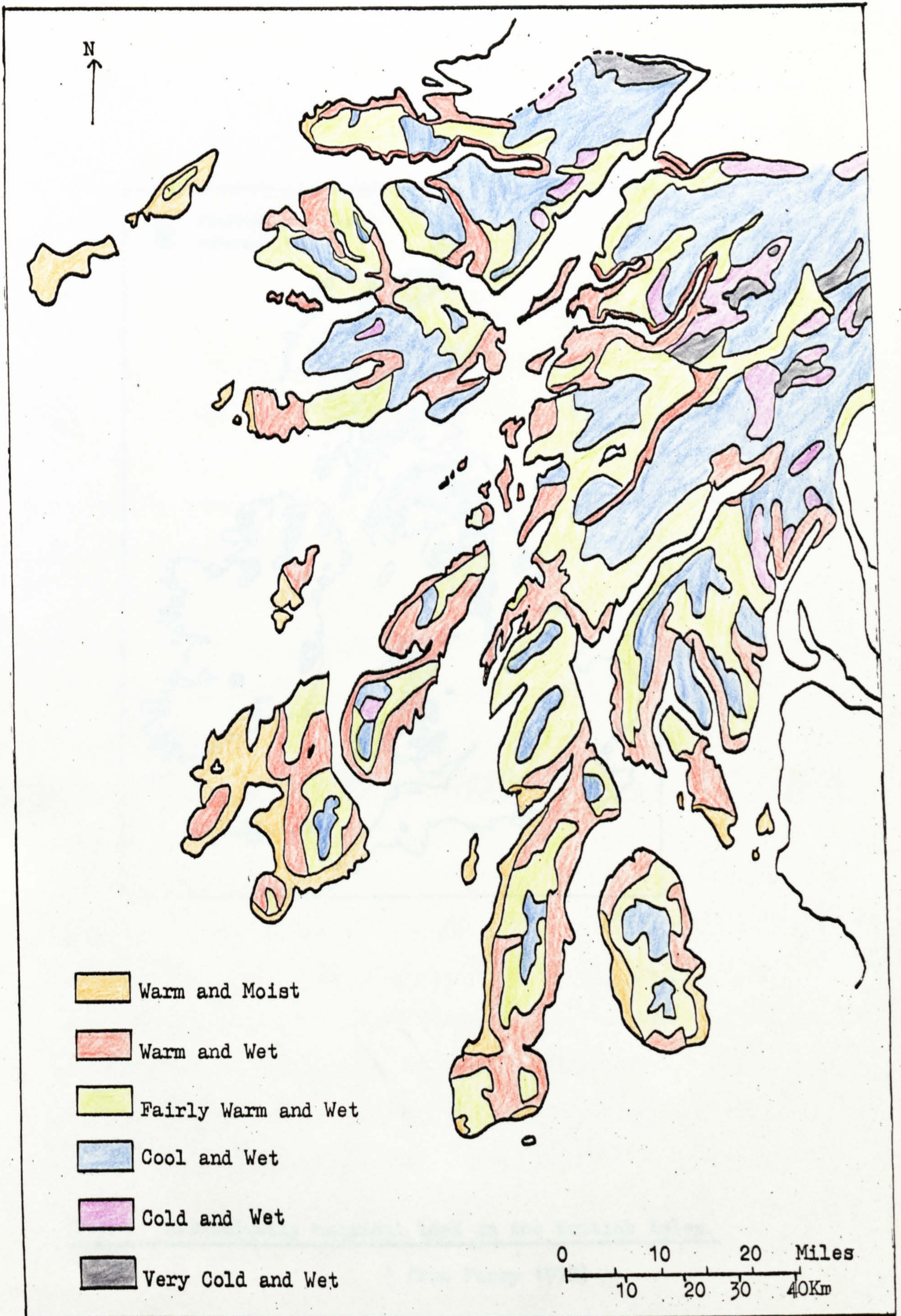


Fig. 5 Climatic Sub-Regions of Argyll. (After Birse and Dry 1970)

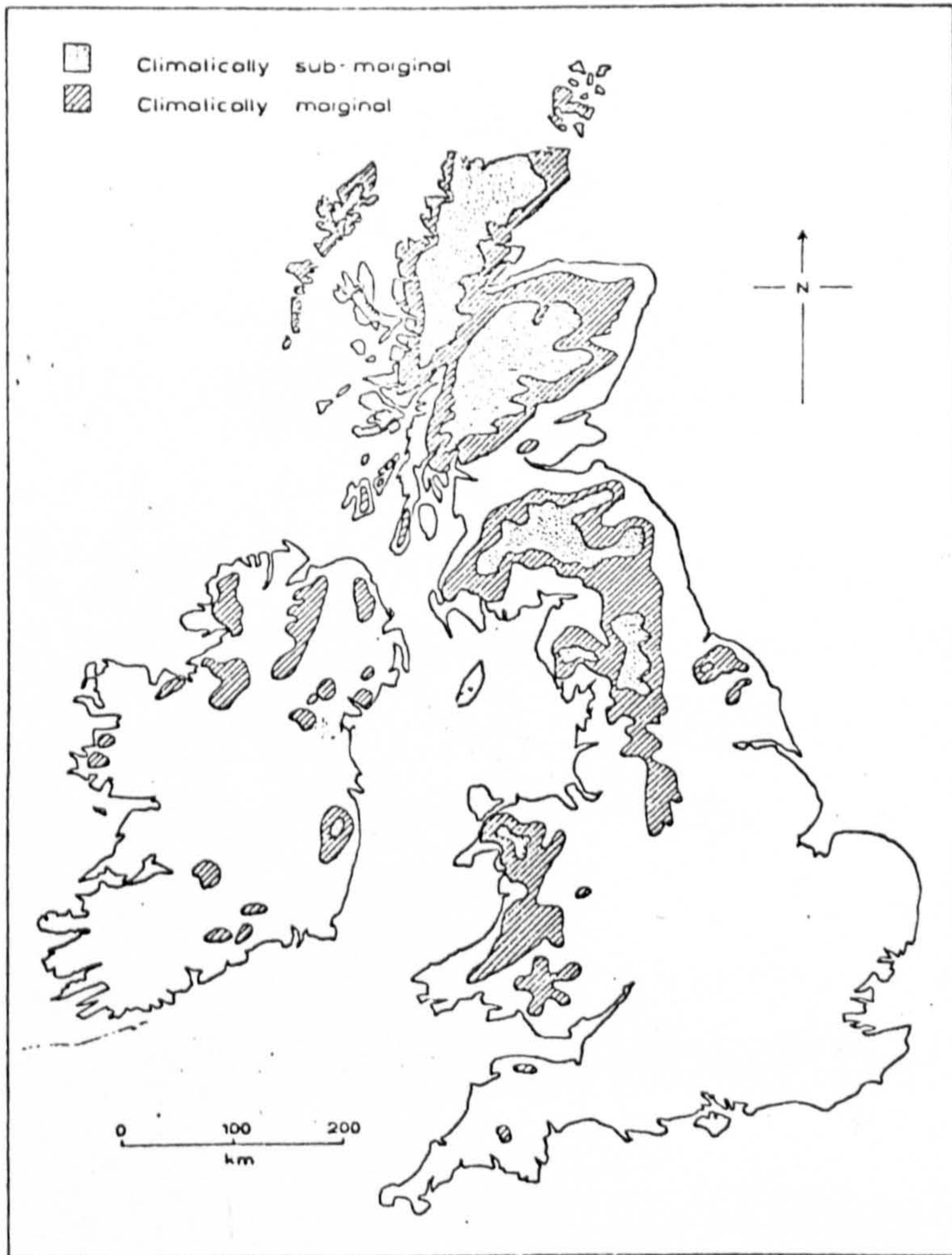


Fig. 6 Climatically marginal land in the British Isles.

(from Parry 1978)

Northern Ireland to an area of inhospitable landscape and climate. While obvious differences exist between the two areas, Parry's work illustrates that such suggestion is misconceived.

Chapter Two: Footnotes.

(1) The Old and New Statistical Accounts of Scotland were parish descriptions compiled by the local minister of each parish. The Old Statistical Account was compiled in the 1790's; the New Statistical Account 50 years later in the 1840's. Their content is variable, but includes details on local topography, population, agriculture and in certain instances antiquities. Most of the references within the present work are taken from the Old Statistical Account (O.S.A.). The original volumes of this are somewhat confusing since the parish descriptions were published in the order in which they reached the editor, Sir John Sinclair. Recently these accounts have been re-ordered on a regional basis with a modern introduction, a volume for mainland Argyll being published in 1983. Subsequent references in the present work related to mainland Argyll use this new presentation.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESOURCES OF ARGYLL

The following Chapter will discuss the resources within Argyll which may have been exploited by humans during the first millennium A.D., and which helped support the dense network of settlement within the area which will be discussed in due course.

III.1. Soils

Discussion of the resources of Argyll must begin with the soils of the area, and their potential for arable production and pasturage, since the majority of inhabitants of the area were linked to the productive capacity of the land.

The soils of Argyll vary from area to area, but several principal groups have been identified and discussed (Macaulay Institute, 1982). The major subgroups derive from the differing geological formations of the area, the richest soils being related to volcanic rocks which are particularly rich in minerals. Glaciation of the area led to erosion of rock and soil material from certain areas, and its re-deposition elsewhere. Often the drifts deposited by the melt-waters are shallow and stony, but in some instances light sandy soils may have developed, which are well suited to cultivation. The path of glaciation in the south can be traced by the extent of a reddish brown or red deposit of sandy till found in the glens of Cowal and the Loch Fyne Basin (Macaulay Institute, 1982, 4,6).

The nature of the soil can also depend upon climatic factors. The rate of erosion of parent materials can be influenced by temperature; generally being more rapid at high temperatures. In many areas the hard nature of the bedrock and erosion caused by gradient means that soils are generally shallow. Climatic factors also influence the amount of organic matter, and the wetness of soils. The warm and wet climate provides conditions which are ideal for rapid plant growth, but this may often exceed the rate at which such growth can be broken down within the soil. This leads to the accumulation of organic matter both on the soil surface, and within its profile. This has led to the predominance of peaty soils within the area. The organic material which accumulates within such soils has a high capacity for water retention, which means that many soils are extremely wet. This further slows down and prohibits soil formation processes.

While much of western Scotland is characterised by wet, shallow soils with a high organic content there are some exceptions. Areas of sandy soils exist, notably on the raised beaches and adjacent to machair deposits discussed earlier. Water can percolate through such soils rapidly, and their lightness aids cultivation. A major problem with them, however, is ^{the} ^{out of minerals} leaching, which can seriously reduce their agricultural potential.

Along some river valleys fertile alluvial soils have been deposited, and are widely exploited for cultivation; the best examples of such are the valleys of the Laggan and

Sorn on Islay, and the Carradale Water in Kintyre.

The only detailed maps of soil associations in the area are those recently produced at a scale of 1:250,000 by the Macaulay Institute (1982). Obviously there are many limitations to the usefulness of maps at such a scale since much detail will be lost. Their publication does, however, provide a valuable means of assessing the agricultural potential of the area. since previously detailed soil mapping had been restricted to areas of arable importance; mainly located in the eastern lowlands of Scotland. In describing each soil group the Macaulay Institute comments upon its agricultural potential. From this it can be seen that the majority of soils are suited only to rough grazing of varying qualities. Some soils are, however, suggested to have some arable potential. In the case studies presented in Volume 2 of the present work an attempt has been made to map those soils within each area for which arable potential is suggested, to provide a basis for the analysis of location of former settlement sites. At this point it must be made clear that the pattern of agriculture suggested by such maps may be somewhat misleading. To begin with a technical point; often the description of the soil group contained within the relevant handbook may suggest only that 'some areas' covered by the soil unit are suited to arable cultivation. Unfortunately there appears no way of determining which of the mapped areas this may refer to. For the purposes of the present work, it was considered that the benefits of being able to map areas of potentially arable land in this manner far out-weighed the

limitations.

At this point the use of soil maps as an indicator of the agricultural potential of the area rather than the land-use capability maps which accompany them must be justified. The land-use capability maps attempt to present a system of land evaluation which assesses the potential of the land for a range of possible^{modern} uses, for example agriculture, forestry, recreation etc. (Macaulay Institute 1982). They attempt to integrate information on soils, climate, and relief for this evaluation. To begin with it should be noted that there is no simple way in which such varied information can be drawn together, and the subject remains one of debate amongst geographers. Coppock illustrates that while some believe soil to be the main factor in such classification, others may stress the importance of physiographic features (1980).

The criteria used by the Macaulay Institute to evaluate land also include technological variables such as the use of machinery. This is an important point for archaeologists to realise since the land use patterns allowed by modern mechanised agricultural practices may well be at variance with former ones. The main area of difference being the ability to cultivate and utilise hillsides. Gradient is a critical factor in the usage of modern machinery, and Bibby and Mackney have discussed some of the problems faced in the use of machinery on gradients (1977). It is clear, for example, that on slopes over 11 degrees the use of machinery is limited, and it is rare on gradients steeper

than 15 degrees. A practical limit of 25 degrees is given, above which only specialised machinery can be used.

In earlier times different technology was one of the many factors which produced very different patterns of land exploitation. Observation of the landscape of many areas would seem to suggest, for example, that rig cultivation is found on much steeper gradients than those presently exploited. This was the product of spade cultivation, or animal-drawn ploughs with which it was possible to deal more easily with variations in gradients. In highland areas it is also clear that traces of former cultivation may have become fossilised within the landscape on terraces of hillsides. In the present day these terraces are often too small and difficult of access to be economically worthwhile using for cultivation. This, however, was not always the case.

It is important also to remember that land capability classifications are not static. Some areas may well have become suitable for cultivation only after the introduction of new technology. The best example of this would be advances in drainage technology which has allowed the reclamation of considerable areas of land for agricultural purposes. Coppock has discussed this point, using as an example the changing evaluation of the English Fenlands. This was initially changed from a watery waste to first class agricultural land by the injection of major investment for the purposes of drainage. More recently, however, the nature of present agricultural practices are degrading the landscape, since erosion and aeration are destroying the

peat upon which the agricultural wealth was based (1980).

In the west of Scotland drainage improvements were being introduced along with other agricultural improvements from at least the late 18th century. Parish descriptions contained within the Old Statistical Account of Scotland often speak of the benefits to be gained from drainage (cf. O.S.A. 1983, 53; 189). The Aros moss in the south of Kintyre is a good example of an area presently suitable for pasture, and in some areas arable cultivation, which was formerly wet and marshy. The latter is clearly indicated by records of crannogs found upon it. (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 94-5). A similar example is the Crinan moss in Mid-Argyll, which is presently used for pasture and arable agriculture. It was formerly extremely wet, at least until the late 18th century when the O.S.A. account suggests that it could be "improved" by drainage (1983, 253) and hence, presumably, could be used for agricultural purposes.

A glance at the land-use capability maps of Argyll suggests that the area of land the Macaulay Institute would classify as suited to arable cultivation is extremely limited. The largest areas are found in Kintyre and Bute, but these barely extend to cover an area 5 km. square. Smaller areas of between 1 and 2 km. square are found on the islands of Arran and Islay. The rest of the land-surface of Argyll is suggested to be suited only to rough pasture of varying grade.

In contrast an analysis of accounts of parishes contained in the Old and New Statistical Accounts can be used to illustrate a quite different pattern of land exploitation, one which involved much more widespread cultivation. The

account of the parish of Kilchoman, in the west of Islay, for example suggests that,

'the ground all around the coast is arable, producing corn and barley, flax and potatoes the produce of the country in good seasons is sufficient to support its inhabitants'

(O.S.A. 1794, 277)

In the parish of Craignish on the mainland the Old Statistical Account tells^{us} that although the climate was seen as unsuitable for agriculture because of the heavy rain and wind, oats, barley and potatoes were raised (1983, 72-85). The population in 1791 was 770, of whom 300 were under the age of 20. Of the 26% of the adult population for whom occupations were specified, 77% were engaged in agriculture of some form. The present land-use capability map, however, suggests that the land is suited only for improved grassland.

The above are only two examples of patterns of former land-use at variance with those indicated by recent land-use capability maps, but similar patterns could be illustrated from elsewhere in Argyll. They serve to indicate why such land assessment maps are unsuited for archaeological purposes.

It is worth pointing out that even the soil classification maps may present a somewhat limited view of the agricultural potential of the area. An analysis of accounts of agricultural practices contained within the Old and New Statistical Accounts frequently indicate the improvement of land by a variety of means. These include the use of sea-weed as fertiliser; the addition of limestone to reduce the acidity of soils as well as the addition of sand in quantities to produce a lighter drained soil. The cycle of improved productivity of such soils is closely related to the human input, and when this declines so too does the soil productivity. With the

passage of time it is extremely difficult to work out which areas were formerly under cultivation in this manner.

The types of problem discussed above illustrate well the major problem inherent in any attempt to consider patterns of former land exploitation in terms of available soil types and their suitability for cultivation. Agricultural production is the product of a complex set of variables. As well as relating to technological factors, as previously mentioned, it also relates to the social relationships within any given area, for example the size of population, the nature of land holding, and the pattern of obligations owed by one group of people to others. These types of factors cannot be reduced and simply related to soil and climatic conditions. Within Scotland this poses a major limitation to detailed studies of former patterns of land exploitation, since so little documentation survives from early periods which could be used to present more detailed analyses.

III.2. Agricultural Produce

Having made comment upon the agricultural potential of Argyll, and the problems inherent in the analysis of former patterns of agricultural activity, it is important now to turn to the specific evidence which we have for agricultural activity in the area in the first millennium A.D.

To begin with crop production, evidence exists for the cultivation of various types of cereals in the area. Arable cultivation is noted in Adomnán's Life of Columba (I:37) and the threshing of grain is specifically noted (I:28). Supporting this, cereal pollens were obtained from excavations of the monastic settlement of Iona which appear to relate to

the Early Historic period (Bohncke in Barber 1981). Unfortunately the type of cereal represented does not appear to be specified. Cereal cultivation is also noted at various secular sites. Excavations at the broch of Dùn Mór Vaul in Tiree produced carbonized barley of hulled six-row variety (Hordeum vulgare) and the naked form (Hordeum vulgare var Nudum) (Renfrew in MacKie 1974). Both these varieties of Barley were also recovered at the hillfort of Balloch Hill, Kintyre⁽¹⁾ along with oats (Avena sp) and emmer wheat (Triticum dicoccum) (Dickson in Peltenburg 1982). At the site of Brouch an Drummin in Mid-Argyll, a settlement site which may have been in occupation in the Early Historic period (cf. Chapter Eleven) revealed several pits full of carbonized grain on excavation. One of these held in the order of 12 cubic feet of grain (Cregeen, pers. comm.). It seems most reasonable to see this grain as the product of local arable production on the adjacent gravel terraces which had been stored, possibly for seed purposes.

Many of the sites which will be discussed subsequently in this work have produced quern stones, the majority of flat rotary form, which indicate at least the processing of the products of arable cultivation.

Discussion of the soils of Argyll in the preceding section indicated the methods of soil improvement recorded in the Old Statistical Account. There is no reason to think that many of these practices^{did not have} a considerable antiquity. Indeed there is evidence from the monastic settlement of Iona which suggests that shells were being burnt to provide lime

which may have been used for soil improvement. Excavations by Reece revealed a lime clamp within the monastic enclosure. This was dated to the Early Historic period by a sherd of imported pottery of Class A which was found in undisturbed humus above the clamp (1975). As there is no evidence for the use of lime mortar for building purposes until the late medieval period, a reasonable motive which could be suggested for the production of this lime would be that it was used for agricultural purposes.

In addition to arable cultivation, it appears that domesticated stock were also being raised. The discovery of animal bone has been recorded at many excavated sites in Argyll.⁽²⁾ Many of these excavations, however were conducted at the end of the last century, or the beginning of the present one, and the bone material was not subjected to detailed analysis. In most instances this bone was not kept after the excavation and hence does not survive for modern analysis. Only two large groups of bone material recently excavated have been analysed in any detail, these being from the broch of Dùn Mór Vaul on Tiree (Noddle in MacKie 1974) and the monastic settlement of Iona. (Noddle in Reece 1980; McCormick in Barber 1981). On the basis of these two groups of material it is possible to present some discussion of the range of domesticated species being kept in the area.

On Iona the domesticated animals present included cattle, sheep, pig and horse. Of these the most important were the cattle. Noddle states that many of the bones recovered were from first class joints, particularly the hind limb.

Hence the community were eating prime cuts of beef.

McCormick argues that the reason for the predominance of cattle is that they are more efficient producers of meat than other animals. Although it would have been possible to raise five times as many sheep as cattle on the island, cattle produce much more meat, and also provide more highly protein-rich milk. The bone material from Reece's excavations was examined to determine the age of the animals. This indicated that most were under 5 years old, and hence must have been raised for meat as they were too young for use in traction. Unfortunately a similar analysis was not undertaken by McCormick. The pig bone also seemed to indicate the consumption of prime cuts of meat.

The only signs of butchery noted were found on the horse-bones. This is worthy of further comment in the present context, since the eating of horse (if this is what is implied by the butchery marks) would not be expected on an ecclesiastical site. Literary sources for the period indicate that the eating of horse-meat was frowned upon by the early Church. In Adomnan's Life of Columba, for example, it is suggested as a practice suited only to thieves. (I:21)

At the secular site of Dùn Mór Vaul the domesticated species represented were cattle, pig, sheep and goat (Noddle in Mackie 1974). Analysis of the age of all the animals represented suggested a very high proportion of juvenile animals of under one year old. It was argued that unless midden areas containing the remains of mature animals had not been excavated (which seems unlikely) this indicates that herds were kept mainly to supply meat.

The young age of slaughter was taken to indicate a shortage of winter feed, since older animals would have produced better carcasses. The eating of sheep was also suggested by the species represented, a type related to modern Soay sheep, which does not give a fleece which can be plucked or clipped.

The range of species available appears to have been the same throughout all the major phases of activity on the site, but the pattern of exploitation does appear to have varied. In the pre-broch and broch phases of occupation sheep appear more numerous than cattle. In later phases, however, the numbers appear similar. This provides a contrast with Iona where, as discussed above, cattle bones predominated. The excavator discusses this point in greater detail and illustrates one particular context, a gallery chamber within the broch wall, in which 87% of the bone material represented was from sheep (Mackie 1974, 80-81). He argues that this preponderance of one species of domesticate indicates that the site was built and inhabited at this stage by an elite group who were being given sheep meat as gift or tribute by the native population. Hence he implies that ~~the presence of meat~~ need not reflect a direct participation in agricultural production by the inhabitants of the site.

The analysis of domesticates presented above can be augmented by information derived from Adomnan's Life of Columba. In this we are told of the use of milk, presumably from cattle, sheep or goats (II:16) as well as the keeping of pigs on Islay (II:23). A reference to the riding of horses indicated their domestication and use as beasts of

burden. (II:33). The keeping of horses in Argyll may also be indicated by the tribal name of 'Epidii' noted by the classical geographer Ptolemy, which can be associated with the Kintyre peninsula. (Rivet & Smith, 1979; 360). This is derived from an early British word meaning 'horse' (Jackson, 1955; 34).

A particularly important group of references in the Life of Columba relate to the keeping of cattle, and the possibility that they may have been a means of expressing social position. On two occasions the text tells how, after visiting the homes of poor men, the saint miraculously increased the number of their cattle before leaving. (II : 20; II : 21). In each instance the number of cattle the poor men were left amounted to 105. Frequently Irish legal tracts imply that social position could be related to the number of cattle one owned. In view of the listings contained within such tracts it could be postulated that this number equated with a particular social grading and hence what the saint was really doing was raising the social status of the individuals concerned. Unfortunately it has not been possible to identify the social grade indicated by this specific number of cattle.

III.3. Wild Animals

While it is clear that at both Iona and Dùn Mór Vaul the site economy was related to agricultural production and the keeping of domesticated herds, it is also clear that at each site "wild" resources were also of major importance, hence discussion will now turn to these.

A variety of wild animals were exploited in the first millennium A.D. Both Iona and Dùn Mór Vaul produced ^{red and roe} deer bone, suggesting their exploitation. _____ presumably for meat, possibly with some of the skin being tanned into leather. In Adomnan's Life of Columba the hunting of wild boar with the aid of hunting dogs is noted. (II: 26).

A considerable range of birds, including species inhabiting ^{both} inland and coastal habitats exist within the area. At Dùn Mór Vaul the bones of puffin, gull, shag, gannet, auk, cormorant, goose, swan, owl, starling, dove, thrush, golden plover, redstart and carrion crow were encountered in the excavations. Of course many of these might only represent the bones of birds which nested and died in the broch; or they may have reached the site in owl pellets and hence were not necessarily being exploited by the inhabitants of the site. It was suggested, however, that if the bones were food refuse, then shag was the favourite species, being represented by 19 or 20 examples. (Bramwell in Mackie 1974). Excavations at Iona produced bones of a variety of birds, ranging from cormorant and shag to Golden Eagle, raven and goose (Bramwell in Reece 1980; Barber 1981). Of particular interest is the keeping of domesticated fowl suggested by Bramwell.

The abundance of water in Argyll, both fresh and salt, probably led to the widespread exploitation of marine and fresh-water resources. Fishing is noted on several occasions in Adomnan's Life of Columba, on one occasion the catch,

salmon, being specifically noted. (II: 19, III: 23). The instances recorded all seem to be of inland fishing in rivers and lochs rather than sea-fishing. That the latter also occurred, however, is suggested by the bones of Hake and Cod recovered in excavations at Iona. (Reece 1975, 44).

Most of the inland rivers and lochs appear to abound in fish. Accounts contained within the Old Statistical Account indicate the presence of salmon, char, trout and eels in Loch Awe, and Salmon in the bay of Crinan (1983, 250f).

Sea-fish are also recorded in the Old Statistical Account, where exploitation of flounder, cod, mackerel, whiting and (possibly the most well-known) the herring. The latter are traditionally associated with Loch Fyne. Fish bones require much effort to recover in excavations since they are generally of small size, hence their apparent absence from Dùn Mór Vaul and Iona may relate to the nature of excavation techniques used rather than the failure of the inhabitants of the site to exploit such an available resource.

Shellfish are also a particularly abundant resource in the area. The inhabitants of Dùn Mór Vaul exploited large numbers of the common winkle, periwinkle, limpets and crabs, all of which can be eaten. Similarly the inhabitants of Iona collected limpets, winkles, whelks and oysters (Reece, 1973; 44).

Another sea animal which was also exploited was the seal. Adomnan's Life of Columba tells that the Iona community killed seals which bred locally (I:41). Bones of seal were found on Iona and may indicate their use as a food resource (McCormick in Barber 1981) their skin was certainly being

tanned into leather (Groeman-van Waateringe in Barber 1981). Another reason for their exploitation may have been for oil (possibly used for lighting) although there is no archaeological or literary evidence for such.

The exploitation of animal resources, whether wild or domesticates, provided a range of products other than meat which could be used. Fragments of sawn antler, and finished bone and antler objects at Dùn Mór Vaul indicate the working of such material on the site (Mackie, 1974; 143-6). Leather working is indicated by numerous fragments from Iona, a major product being shoes (Groeman-van Waateringe in Barber 1981). Most of the leather used was cowhide. Leather-working may also be indicated at Dunadd by a range of iron tools (Duncan, 1982; Vol. 2, 12f).

Some wild animals may have been hunted for their skins which could be used for dress. In the Goddodin poem, a coat of many colours made of the skin of martens is mentioned in a cradle song (A.87; Jackson 1969, 151). Doherty has recently indicated that hides and skins were often used for trading purposes in early medieval Ireland (1980) and there appears no reason why this might not have been the case in Northern Britain as well. The presence of a terra cotta model of a bale of hides or fleeces found at the broch of Dun Fiadhairt, Iardhard, Skye (MacLeod, 1915) has been taken to indicate Roman trading for such in the Western Isles (Breeze 1982). The terracotta model may have been a votive offering left by a Roman merchant. While such trading may have occurred during the Roman period, it may have had a specific function, to supply the Roman army with the leather needed for tents

among other things. This being the case the withdrawal of Rome may have removed this need, and hence trading may have ceased. If the model indicates a trade in furs, however, there is no need to envisage such a decline after the Roman period. Of particular importance from this area may have been white furs developed as winter coats by many animals. These are only found in colder climatic regions, and hence would not be available further south in the British Isles or indeed in large areas of the continent. The specific use of white furs in modern times can be illustrated by the use of white ermine in Royal coronation garb. It would seem reasonable to think that this practice may have had a respectable antiquity. Hence white furs may have been a luxury product used for external trading. These furs are particularly useful for this since they are light, and unbreakable. Because of their small bulk, however, it is extremely unlikely that whole cargoes were made up of such products.

III.4. Mineral and Stone Resources

Discussion of the resources of Argyll has so far concentrated on those which were associated primarily with the sustenance of the human population of the area. The area also has a variety of other resources which were probably being exploited from early times, some of which formed the basis for a variety of industrial activities.

To begin with mineral deposits, metal ores are found in various areas and records of their exploitation exist. Several deposits of copper ores are known, and were discussed by Scott in 1951. The best known of these are those of Loch

Fyne and the Crinan isthmus. Since copper is a major component of bronze Scott suggested that these sources may have been of importance from the 2nd millennium B.C. The introduction of iron may have diminished their importance somewhat, but during the early Historic period bronze was used widely in decorative metal-work. Unfortunately we have no direct evidence for the mining of such metals during the Early Historic period, and hence we do not know whether the metals being used at sites like Dunadd were newly mined, or simply reworked material.

Copper was still being exploited in Kilmartin in the mid 18th century (O.S.A. 1983, 254) while Cobalt, silver, jasper and talc were being mined in Glenorchy and Innishail (O.S.A. 1983, 125) and iron, zinc and copper in Kilbrandon and Kilchatten (O.S.A. 1983, 180). Lead mines are recorded in Lochgoilhead and Kilmarich (O.S.A. 1983, 331) and Morvern. (O.S.A. 1983, 375). Whether these were exploited in antiquity would depend upon the ease with which their metal content could be extracted, and the technology required to mine them in the first instance. These are questions which at present are difficult to answer. In contrast we do have evidence from Dunadd of the working of bog iron-ore, presumably extracted from a local source (Lane, pers. comm.).

Stone suitable for building purposes was widely available and readily exploitable. The majority of defended sites (excluding crannogs) which will be discussed in this work, were constructed largely of stone. Stone was also exploited for the production of artefacts such as quern-stones, and several quern-quarries have been noted in Mid-Argyll.

(Campbell and Sanderson 1962).

III.5. Timber

Timber was also probably widely available for exploitation in many areas of Argyll, apart that is, from windswept areas such as Tiree. (cf. Chapter Two). The quality of timber available may, however, have varied from area to area. In Adomnan's Life of Columba the transportation of oak timber from the River Sale to Iona is noted (II: 45). This has been identified as the River Shiel in Northern Argyll (Watson 1926; 76) which indicates that the monks were prepared to travel long distances to obtain suitable timbers. Evidence from Iona (Barber 1981) and Loch Glashan Crannog (Scott 1960) indicate the use of timber to make a range of artefacts which included wooden bowls, paddles, canoes and structural timbers. The massive quantities of timber used in crannog construction, and the skillful craftsmanship involved in this work indicates the development of elaborate timber architecture in the area; an important point to remember in an area in which the major surviving monuments are of drystone construction.

Discussion so far in this Chapter indicates the existence of a variety of resources in Argyll which could have been exploited during the first millennium A.D. Many of these may only have been exploited for local use. Some, however, may have been suited for long distance trading. While furs were suggested as suited to the latter, it is possible that some minerals may also have been exported, though no specific evidence for this has yet been identified. In general it is difficult to suggest a list of locally

available products which might have drawn foreign traders primarily to this area.

III.6. Population

A useful means of assessing the available resources of an area is provided by available population estimates. In common with the rest of the British Isles no documentary evidence exists which might provide a basis upon which to make population estimates for Argyll in the Early Historic period could be made. In Argyll the situation is made more dire by the lack of medieval documentation. Indeed the earliest assessments which exist are those contained within the Old Statistical accounts. These are worth presenting in this work since they do represent a population still largely dependent upon the natural resources, in particular the products of agricultural practices. These can be listed on a parish basis, (Appendix A, Vol.3) but are summarized here on the basis of island or mainland location.

Area	1755	1790-98
Mainland Argyll	47,404	51,317
Argyllshire Islands	15,889	24,784

It must be noted, however, that there are limitations inherent in the use of such figures to indicate possible Early Historic population levels. It is clear that advances in medical practice had reached the area by the late 18th century when these accounts were first being drawn up. There are, for example, frequent mentions of the introduction of smallpox vaccination which had led to a decrease in mortality, particularly amongst children (O.S.A. 1983; 102; 115; 116).

It is also clear that the introduction of a new crop, the potato, had had a marked effect on the area so much so that it had become the main food crop supporting people through a large part of the year. It is suggested that prior to the introduction of this crop,

"the poor and lower classes pined away nearly half of their time in want and hunger"

(O.S.A. 1983, 112)

This may well have influenced population levels in the area. The population figures may also have been influenced by the agricultural improvements which were being introduced throughout Scotland from the 18th century. References to the eviction of tenants, and depopulation and union of farms occur in the accounts, and in some instances outward migration seems to have occurred. These are common events in Scotland during this period, and can be related to new agricultural practices, such as the widespread introduction of sheep.

III.7. Communication

As Argyll formed a major political entity in the Early Historic period, the Kingdom of Dalriada, it is important to consider the system of communication which allowed this political grouping to develop and be maintained. While important for the internal cohesion of the unit, it is clear also that important external contacts were also established, for example with Ireland, and the other Kingdoms of Northern Britain.

With so much of the land surface being dominated by mountains, peat bogs and lochs it is likely that overland communications were difficult. We do not have any documentary evidence for the length of time involved in making overland

journeys of the sort recently summarized by Davies (1982, 14-19) for Wales. Because the nature of the landscape of Wales and the west of Scotland are somewhat similar, however, both being dominated by highland, some comparison of possible journey times is justifiable. In the 12th century we are told that an overland journey across Wales by Giraldus took 8 days, covering a distance, which, measured as the crow flies, is of the order of 210 km (Davies 1982, 16). Unfortunately it is not clear whether this journey was undertaken on foot, or with the aid of animals (Thorpe, 1978. 220). By analogy a similar journey between Dunollie and Dunadd, a distance of around 40 km. might have taken just under two days.

References to horse riding in Adomnan's Life of Columba have already been noted and this no doubt provided the most rapid means of overland communication.

In overland travels the major valleys probably provided the major routeways allowing contact both within the Kingdom, but also with northern and western neighbours. It would appear that access to several important routeways across the highlands into Pictland was easy. One such routeway was probably from Mid-Argyll along Loch Awe, Glen Lochy, Strath Fillan, Glen Dochart and hence into Strathearn and the heart of the Pictish lowlands (Fig. 7). The importance of this route way in the present day is clearly indicated by the main road, and railway which utilise the whole, or at least parts of it. Its importance in the medieval period is indicated by the construction of the castle of Fraoch Eilean on an island in the north of Loch Awe in the 13th

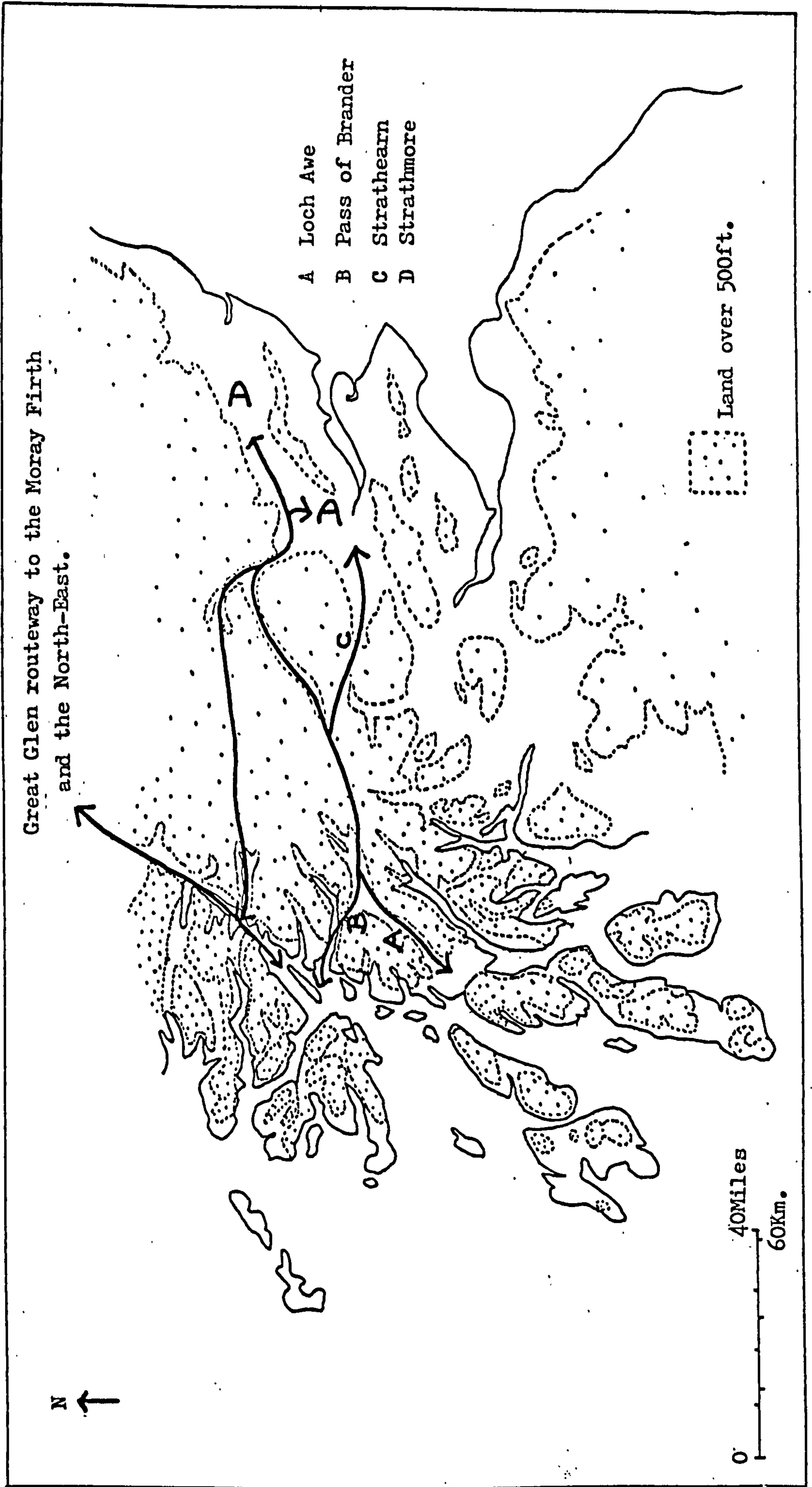


Fig. 7 Major natural routeways from Dalriada into Pictland.

century (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1975, 212-7). Alcock has noted the likely importance of this routeway in Early Historic times (1977) and it may well be the routeway used by invading Picts in the mid 8th century, when documentary sources indicate the wasting of areas of Dalriada (Anderson 1922, 232-3).

In an area as dominated by water as Argyll is it would seem likely that boats provided a major means of transport and communication. These would certainly have been necessary in order to reach the islands of the Kingdom; but as nowhere on the mainland was all that distant from the sea, water-borne vessels may have been more important than over-land communication networks throughout the kingdom. A major key to understanding the establishment and maintenance of the Kingdom of Dalriada must be the development of fleets of boats, a suggestion which is maintained by the existence of a specific military levy of oarsmen which the King could expect to raise from the Kingdom (Bannerman 1974; 148 f; and Chapter Thirteen). The importance of sea-going transport is well illustrated in Adomnan's Life of Columba in which sea voyages by the monks are frequently noted; these have been listed by Bannerman (1974; 149).

At this point we must discuss the nature of the boats which may have been in use in Dalriada in the Early Historic period. The best evidence for these can be drawn from Adomnan's Life of Columba in which several vessels are described. The smallest ones are currachs which were made of hides sewn together over a wooden framework (II:42, II:45). Unger has indicated that these were a common type of vessel in the celtic world (1980, 56). He also indicates that they could reach a

length of 12 m. and could be fitted with masts, although commonly they would be rowed. Adomnan notes that they were versatile craft which could, for example, be used on land. inverted, as temporary shelters (I:41, I:47).

It would also seem that larger vessels were in use. In Adomnan's time it appears that a long-ship was made for Iona. This was built of pine and oak timbers which had to be brought a distance by sea and land to the site (II: 45). Unger describes similar vessels from the continent (1980, 56 f).

The only archaeological evidence we have from the Irish Sea province for the forms of ship in the Early Historic Period is a model boat with fittings, fashioned of beaten gold, which was found in a field at Broighter, Co. Derry in 1895 (Farrell and Penny 1975). Associated finds included a tubular torc probably dating to the first century B.C. The minute detail illustrated by the fittings of this boat have been taken to indicate that it is a fairly accurate representation of a real vessel, rather than a rough representation produced merely for votive purposes. Thus it seems to represent a large vessel with a crew of at least 18 oarsmen and one steersman. Farrell and Penny also discuss whether it represents a skin or timber boat without reaching any firm conclusions.

The Broighter boat is particularly relevant to any study of Dalriada, since the vessels described in the Senchus fer nAlban are described as seven-benchers (Bannerman 1974, 48-9). Bannerman takes this to indicate a vessel with 14 oars (1974, 154).

It has normally been assumed that the crew consisted of two persons to each oar (i.e. four people to a bench) (cf. Bannerman 1974, 153; Anderson 1980, 159) with a steersman

this would have provided a full crew of 29. This may, however, be a minimum figure since it makes no allowance for relief crews or more than two oarsmen to an oar. In contrast later Viking ships could have had more than two men to an oar (McGrail 1980, 49). If the oarsmen were also expected to fight on land as well then a larger crew would have been necessary to ensure some were rested ready for potential conflict.

It is possible to make some estimate of the speed of travel of such vessels. In 1963 Green presented calculations of the speed of vessels which may have crossed the North Sea in the Anglo-Saxon period. These appear to have been large vessels, which were rowed at least part of the time, and hence are comparable to celtic vessels. He suggested that a steady speed of 5 knots could be maintained for periods of up to six hours or more. At such speeds, making no allowance for favourable or adverse winds, tides or currents, some estimates of possible journey times can be made. The relative speed of such journeys is illustrated by the time of 9 hours suggested between Dunollie and Dunadd, which contrasts markedly with 2 days suggested earlier for overland journeys. Fig. 8 presents some hypothetical journey times for other sea voyages around Dalriada. In actual fact, of course, actual journey times may have been much faster or slower, depending on weather conditions. It is clear that many vessels had sails with which to take advantage of prevailing winds and speed journey times (Bannerman 1974, 151 f).

The speed at which it was possible to move around the Kingdom by boat may have been increased by the use of overland portage points, thus reducing the distance which would otherwise

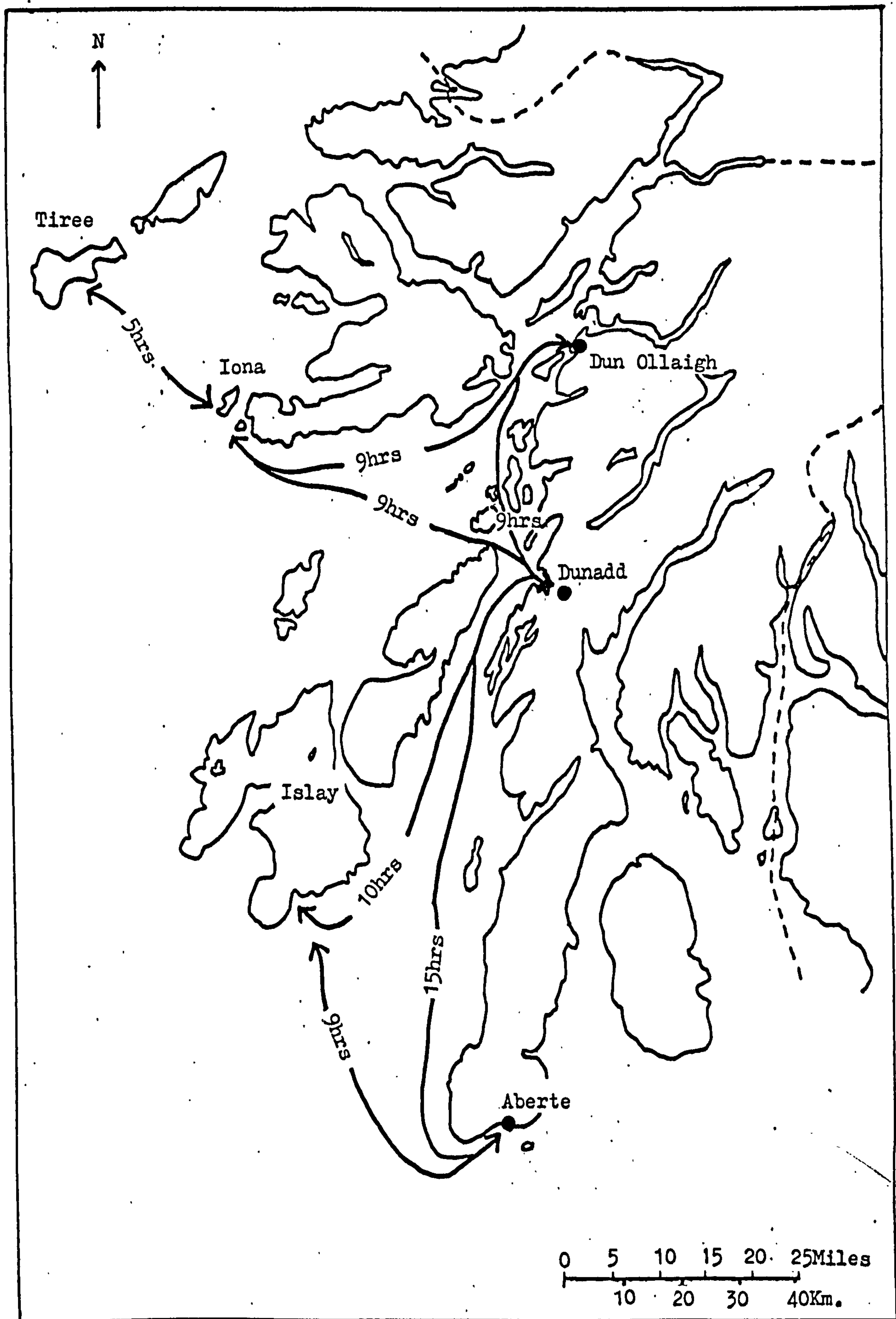


Fig. 8. Hypothetical journey times for sea voyages around Dalriada.

(after Green 1963.)

have had to be sailed around the land masses. The best known portage point in Argyll is that of Tarbert, Loch Fyne. The name of the settlement here derives from the gaelic 'tairm-bert' or 'overbringing' (Watson 1926, 505). It has been identified with the site 'Tairpert Boittir' recorded as being destroyed in the Early Historic period in annalistic sources (Bannerman 1974, 15-16; Alcock 1981 and Chapter Ten). The verification of this identification will be discussed later in the present work. The use of the term 'Tairpert' which clearly relates to a crossing point serves to indicate that the practice was known in the Early Historic period. Another example of such a portage point may have been the Crinan Isthmus between Loch Gilp and Crinan Bay which would have allowed more rapid transport between the south and west coast than would have been allowed by a sea-voyage around the Kintyre peninsula. This is a point previously discussed by Scott (1951).

While several good harbour sites exist around the coastline of Argyll, of which the best include Loch Crinan, Loch Craignish and Loch Melfort, as well as Loch Sween (all of which are in mainland Argyll, and are sheltered by the various Western Islands) this was not a prerequisite for shipping in the Early Historic period, however. Vessels then had shallow drafts and could easily be drawn up onto beaches in many areas (Unger 1980, 64; 94-5).

Sea travel was not without its perils. Much of the coastline of Argyll is formed of rock, shoals of which stretch out from the coast and can prove a danger to shipping. The storms which gather over the Atlantic and blow onto the western

coast further exacerbate the problems of shipping. Adomnan's Life of Columba frequently notes storms affecting sea voyages (I:4: I:20: II:12) and the Saint appears often to have been able to miraculously quell them. In one instance, however, the sinking of a vessel as the result of a storm is recorded (II:22).

Storrie has recently summarized the number of wrecks known to have occurred around the shores of the island of Islay, which amount to 250 recorded examples covering the period from the early 19th century (1981, 209). Notable dangerous areas of Argyll include the Gulf of Corryvreckan between the islands of Jura and Scarba where a major whirlpool is found, and the Mull of Kintyre where sea currents are forced to divide and flow around the peninsula.

It is clear then that sea-borne transport provided the most rapid and most effective means of communication around Argyll in the first Millennium A.D. Its use, however, was dependent on access to suitable vessels, and craftsmen to produce them. Unfortunately the description of the naval muster within the Senchus Fer nAlban does not tell us who supplied the boats for the crews which were recruited. Small-scale vessels probably had a widespread occurrence within Argyll for local use. For longer-distance travel, however, greater resources and skilled craftsmen would have been needed to build larger vessels. We know that the monks of Iona could have large vessels built for them (II:45). The Kings of Dalriada also, presumably, had ready access to such vessels and craftsmen. It is difficult to assess, however, who else may have had such vessels.

Chapter Three: Footnotes.

(1) Balloch Hill is listed within the R.C.A.H.M.S. inventory of Kintyre as Bealloch Hill (1971, 66). Throughout the main text of this work the excavator's site name has been used in discussion of it. In the appropriate appendices, however, the alternative spelling is used in the name form, to maintain consistency with the relevant inventory.

(2) The following is a list of all excavated sites at which animal bone was recorded:-

Forts:-

Dunadd (Lane pers. comm.)

Dun Ollaigh (Alcock pers. comm.)

Dun Scalpsie, Bute (MacCallum 1963)

Dùn Mac Sniachan, Lorn (Angus Smith 1874; 1876; 1878)

Dùn Còl Bhuirg, Iona (Ritchie and Lane 1980)

Dunagoil, Bute (Marshall 1914; Mann 1925)

Little Dunagoil (Marshall 1964)

Duns:-

Tòrr a Chaisteil, Arran (Balfour 1910)

Dùn Beag Vaul, Tiree (Mackie 1963)

Dùn Mhic Choigil (J & M. Hedges 1977)

Leccarnore Luing (Macnaughton 1891, 1893)

Caisteal Suidhe Chennaidh (Christison 1891)

King's Cross Point, Arran (Balfour 1910)

Crannogs:-

An Diorlinn, Eriska (Munro 1885)

Loch o'Mhuillinn (Odo Blundell 1913)

Lochan Dughail (Munro 1893)

Others:-

St. Columba's Cave, Ellory (Campbell 1973)

Keil Cave, Kintyre (Ritchie 1967).

CHAPTER FOUR

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF ARGYLL IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM A.D.

The following Chapter provides a brief summary of the recorded history of Argyll in the first Millennium A.D. to provide a framework against which the archaeological evidence can subsequently be examined. By necessity it will focus mainly upon the history of the Kingdom of Dalriada to which most of the surviving documentation is related.

To begin with, however, it would be of value to consider documentary references to the area contained within the works of classical scholars, since these provide the earliest surviving records of Northern Britain. The most detailed of these early sources is the Geography written by the Greek scholar Ptolemy in the mid 2nd century A.D. (Breeze, 1982, 28). This manuscript contains a listing of named geographical places and peoples within the British Isles, along with a note of the latitude and longitude of the ^{of the first.} position. Ptolemy drew his information about the British Isles from Marinus of Tyre who appears to have been writing in the 1st and 2nd century A.D. (Rivet and Smith 1979, 106). Neither Ptolemy nor Marinus visited Britain, but Marinus seems to have had access to detailed information on Northern Britain, possibly derived from military activity there led by Agricola.

From Ptolemy's information it has been possible to create a map of North Britain as he perceived it at this time. Within the Atlantic province he locates four major groups of people, the Epidii, the Creones, the Carnonacrae

and the Caereni. (Fig. 9). Rivet and Smith suggest that translations can be provided for three of the four names. The Epidii were the 'horse people'; the Carnonacrae the 'folk of the cairns or rocky hills' and the Caereni the 'sheep folk' (1979). It is normally understood that these represent major, but not necessarily the only, Tribes in the area. (cf. Breeze 1981, 28). Of these peoples, the Epidii ^{probably} lived on the Kintyre peninsula; (Rivet and Smith 1979, 360) and the Creones in Central and Northern Argyll. (Rivet and Smith 1979, 326-7).

The major problem inherent in of Ptolemy's work is that his is the ^{only} source for these suggested social groupings. Elsewhere in the British Isles his identification of such groups can be substantiated by other documentary references. In contrast it must remain questionable to what extent Ptolemy's conception of tribal groups in Northern Britain is really accurate, since most of the area was never conquered by Rome, nor saw concerted Roman military activity.

The 3rd century author Solinus also produced a geography text which contains information about the Western Isles of Scotland. He implies the existence of five Hebridean islands all of which were under the government of one King (22:13-15). Unfortunately the actual islands are not named, and it is impossible to determine whether it is islands of the Inner or Outer Hebridean group which are under discussion. It does, however, introduce the concept of a Kingdom of the Isles lying somewhere off the western mainland. Later in the historically documented period, as we shall see, evidence

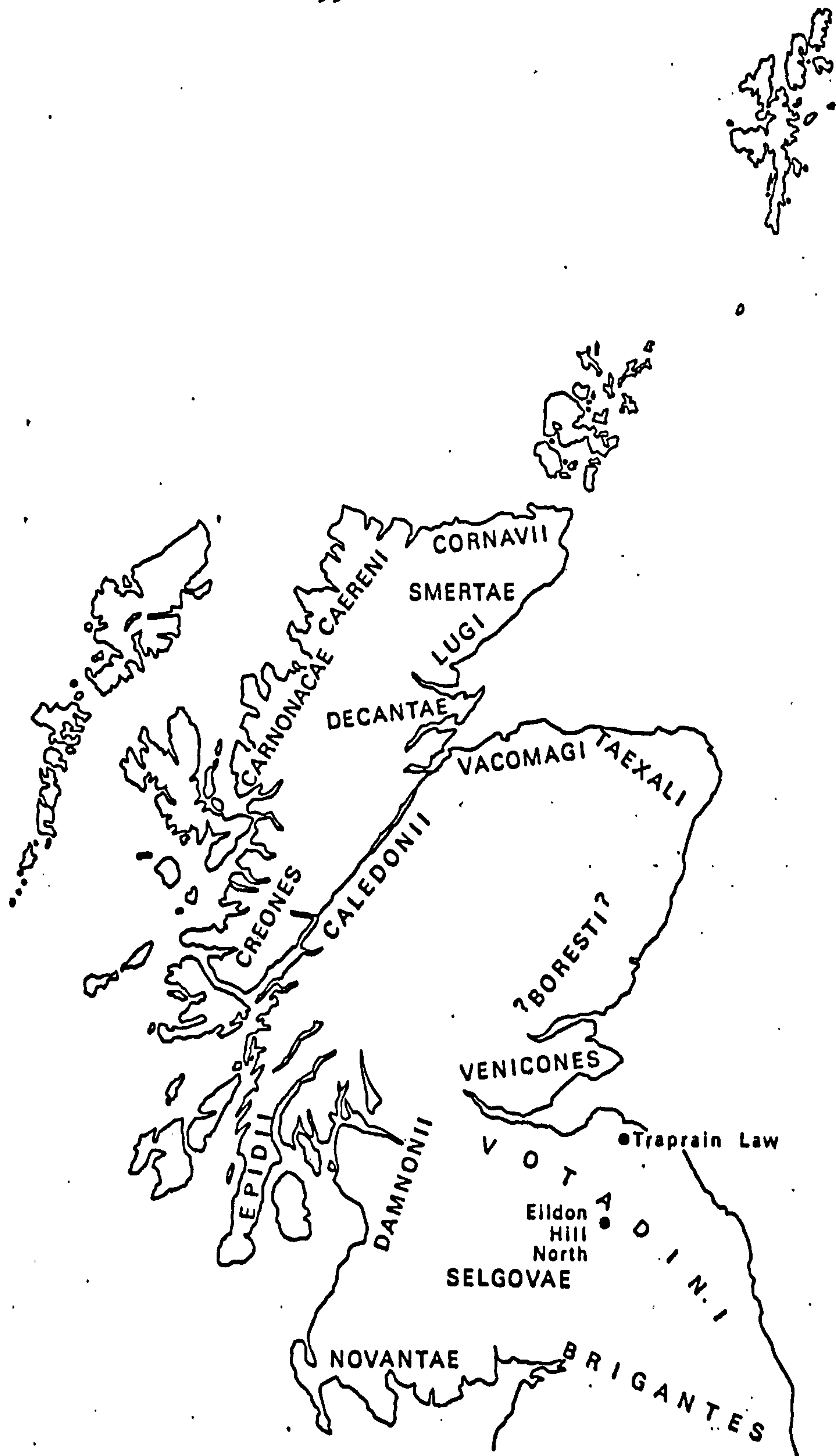


Fig.9 The tribes of North Britain in the first century A.D.

(after Ptolemy)

(from Breeze 1982)

exists for the development of political units based upon western island groups.

The third main classical source of information about North Britain is the work of Tacitus, who produced an account of the campaigns of the Roman Agricola at the end of the 1st century A.D. The work can be related primarily to eastern Scotland where most of Agricola's activity was directed, but by analogy they may have value for any consideration of the inhabitants of western Scotland. Tacitus notes that the natives of North Britain had formerly been subject to Kings, but were then distracted by ~~party conflicts~~ ^{petty} through the influence of chieftains. Because of this they rarely united together, and hence were easily conquered by the Romans. (Agricola, 12). In suggesting this, however, Tacitus may just be presenting a standard Roman Imperial viewpoint, believing that disorganized barbarians could easily be conquered by Roman military might.

Thus it would appear that while some information about what is now Scotland can be obtained from classical sources it is of limited nature. Much of the material presented by these authors was gained second hand, and the authors were, anyway, distant both in terms of location and culture from the people they describe.

The period of the first millennium A.D. for which most documentation survives is that between 500 A.D. and the 840's A.D. when the Kingdom of Dalriada existed within the area. An outline of the history of this Kingdom can be drawn from references contained in a variety of documentary sources. The main such sources are the Irish Annals of

Ulster and Tigernach, the Senchus fer nAlban, Adomnan's Life of Columba, Bede's History of the English Church and People and the Scottish Regnal lists.

The exact antiquity of the annals has been a matter of much dispute. The earliest period to be recorded is the annal for 431 A.D. contained within the Ulster collection (Bannerman 1974, 10). Smyth records the dispute over whether such early references were really contemporary (1972). It was generally agreed that the early entries derived from a common source (O'Rahilly 1946, 253 ff; Bannerman 1974, 9). Smyth has now established that the earliest of these annals were written in the monastery of Iona sometime between 550 and 650 A.D. (1972) (Duncan 1981).

The Senchus Fer nAlban or 'history of the men of Scotland' survives in a 10th century document, but seems to contain within it a 7th century original (Bannerman 1974, 27). This contains a geneology of the descendants of Fergus Mór, who supposedly established the Kingdom, down to the sixth generation (Bannerman 1974, 70). It also has an important military and civil survey of Dalriada which will be discussed at greater length subsequently (Chapter Thirteen). Adomnan's Life of Columba survives in a manuscript written in or before 713 A.D., ^{the original text} probably dating to around 690 A.D. (Hughes 1972, 224). Bede's History of the English Church and People was written in the early 8th century at the monastery of Jarrow in Northumbria (Sherley-Price 1968). The Scottish regnal lists are all descended from one which was extant in Ireland in the 11th century (Anderson 1980, 44). Analysis of these lists has allowed the formation of a chronological

listing of the Kings of Dalriada (Anderson 1980, 228-9). A simplified version of this is presented as Appendix B, Volume 3.

These sources suggest that the history of the Kingdom of Dalriada begins with the advent of Fergus Mór, son of Erc, who crossed from Ireland to Northern Britain around 500 A.D. (Bannerman 1974, 73-5). Fergus appears to have died soon after this migration (Bannerman 1974, 74-5) and the Senchus Fer nAlban suggests that the Kingdom was then divided between the descendents of Fergus Mór, and Fergus' two brothers, Oengus Mór and Loairn Mór. From these three groups the three main lineages or cenéla of the Kingdom were supposedly descended.

These were named the Cenéla nOengusa; the Cenéla Loairn and the Cenéla nGabraín. While the first two are obviously named after the brothers of Fergus Mór, the latter would appear to have been named after Fergus Mór's grandson.

On the basis of his analysis of the early sources Bannerman has attempted to locate the territorial holdings of these three groups within Argyll (1974; 111-15) (Fig. 10). This map was constructed as a result of analysis of the available documentary sources, in particular Adomnán's Life of Columba. These three major divisions appear to have been maintained throughout the history of the Kingdom. In the early 8th century, however, a fourth division, that of the Cenéla Congaill first appears. (Bannerman 1974, 105). It seems plausible that the formation of the latter group represents a split of the Cenéla nGabraín, whom we are told

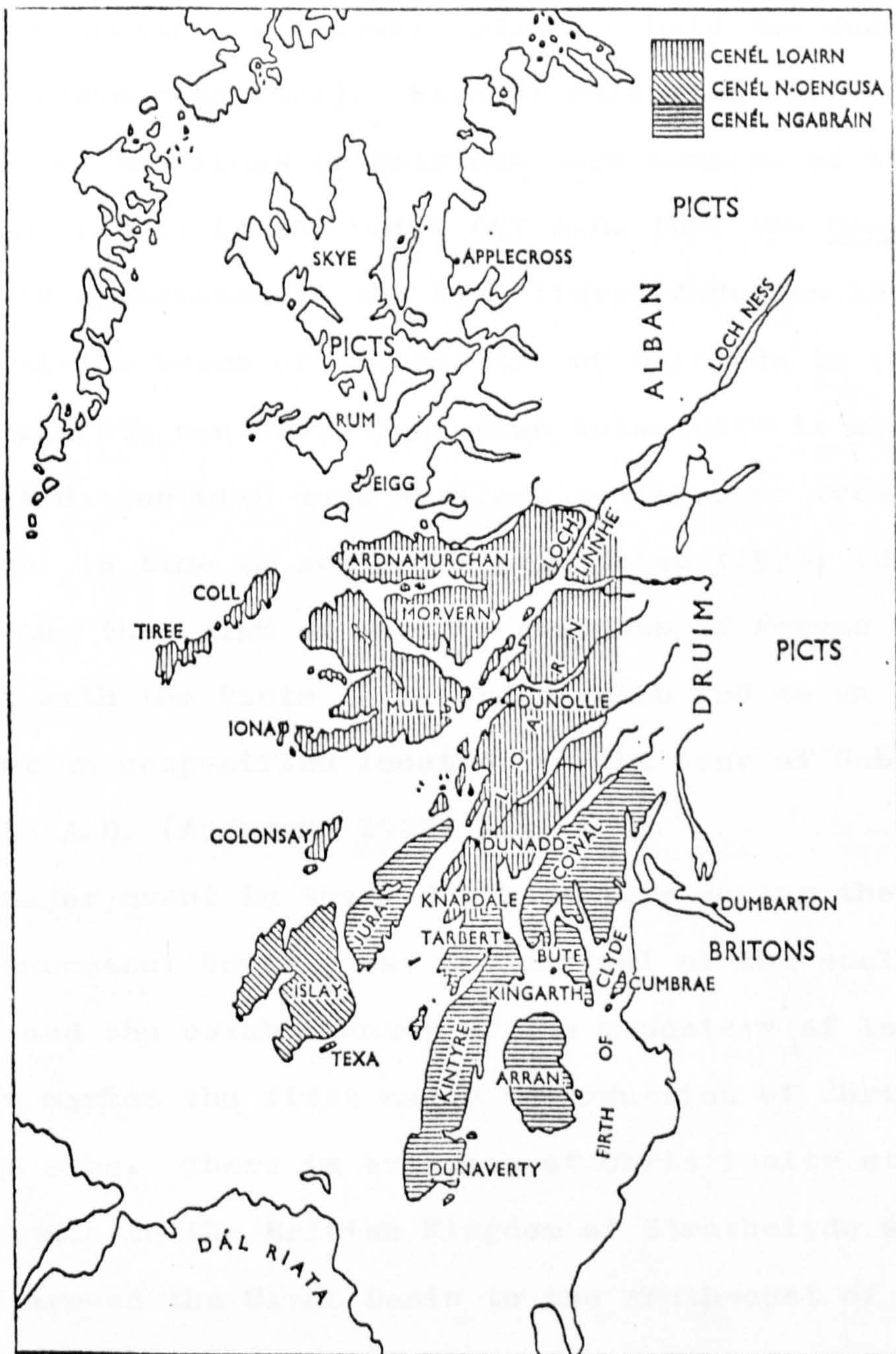


Fig. 10 The territorial extent of the Kingdom of
Dalriada. (from Bannerman 1974)

inhabited Kintyre and Crich Chomgaill; the latter location presumably being related to the Cenél Chomgaill (Bannerman 1974; 108).

From the establishment of the Kingdom until the close of the 7th century, the Cenél nGabráin held the dominant position (Bannerman 1971). Without exception during this early period the Kings of Dalriada were members of the Cenél nGabráin, and it is not until 697 A.D. that the Cenél Loairn make their appearance in the King lists (Anderson 1980; 157).

Little is known of the history of Dalriada in the 1st half of the 6th century. Bannerman interprets it as a period of consolidation with more settlers coming over from Ireland from time to time to swell the population (1974; 104).

During the reign of Gabrán, grandson of Fergus Mór, conflict with the Picts is recorded which led to an unsuccessful battle at an unspecified location in the year of Gabrán's death 558 A.D. (Anderson 1922; 21).

A major event in the mid 6th century during the reign of his successor Conall, was the arrival of the ecclesiastic Columba and the establishment of the monastery of Iona. This may have marked the first major introduction of Christianity into the area. There is evidence of Christianity at an earlier date in the British Kingdom of Strathclyde which was located around the Clyde Basin to the south-east of Dalriada. Patrick's Letter to the soldiers of Coroticus, supposedly written around 450 A.D. (Kirby 1962; 77) contains an admonishment to the soldiers of Coroticus against trafficking in Christian slaves. The letter does not state who Coroticus

was, but Alcock has noted a subsequent reference in Muirchu's Life of St. Patrick which suggests he was a ruler of Strathclyde _____ (1971, 16-17). There is no evidence, however, to suggest that such christianity or its diocesan structure extended into Dalriada at all.

In Adomnan's Life of Columba we are told how Columba ordained the next King, Aedán as ruler of Dalriada (III:5) thus establishing the close relationship between Church and the secular powers which marked Dalriadic history.

Aedán was the most noteworthy King of Dalriada during this early period. He was a major war-leader, and campaigns led by him against the inhabitants of the Orkney's are recorded in 580 A.D. (Anderson 1922, 86). In 582 A.D. he led an expedition to Manau, presumed to be the Isle of Mann (Bannerman 1974, 83-4) while activity against the Picts is noted on two occasions. In 580 A.D. victory was gained over the Miathi, who are presumed to be the Maetae of Roman times (Bannerman 1974, 84) while a battle with the Picts of Circenn is recorded sometime between 598 A.D. and 608 A.D. which Aedán lost (Bannerman 1974, 85). Involvement with the Angles of Bernicia is also noted on two occasions. In 598 A.D. there was a battle in which two sons of Aedán died (Adomnan I:9; Bannerman 1974, 85). In 603 A.D. a major battle was fought against the Angles at Degsastan. The site of this battle remains unidentified, but is presumed to have been within Anglian territory (Bannerman 1974, 86). Bede records that Aedán suffered a massive defeat and retreated to Dalriada (H.E. I:34).

In 575 A.D. we also know that Aedan attended the Convention of Druim Cett in Ireland (Bannerman 1974; 157 ff). This meeting ^{seems to have been} concerned primarily with the status of Irish Dalriada in relation to the Kings of the Northern Uí Néill and the Kings of Scottish Dalriada. The agreement reached entitled Dalriada the Scottish group to the tribute and taxes of Irish Dalriada, while the military service of the region was sworn to the King of the Northern Uí Néill. (Anderson 1980; 147; Bannerman 1974; 1-2).

The ascendancy of the Cenél nGabrain began to wane during and after the reign of Aedan's grandson, Domnall Brecc. He was defeated in four major battles in 634 A.D.; 637 A.D.; 638 A.D. and 642 A.D. In 634 A.D. and 638 A.D. his opponents may have been the Picts (Bannerman 1971) but in 637 A.D. his defeat was in Ireland, by the Uí Néill, led to the loss of all his Irish territories. In 642 A.D. he died fighting the Britons of Strathclyde.

From the death of Domnall Brecc until 697 A.D. the ruling Kings of Dalriada continued to be drawn from the Cenél nGabrain. We know little of the history of this period, but in 683 A.D. records tell of the siege of Dun Ait, and in the same year, the siege of the Pictish stronghold of Dun Dairn. It is generally thought that these references indicate hostilities between the Picts and Scots but there is some evidence that the Angles of Bernicia may also have been involved. Bede has references which might be taken to indicate Anglian dominance over Dalriada, Strathclyde and

the Picts in the mid to late 7th century (Bede H.E.IV; 26; II:5; Anderson 1980; 156-7; Miller 1976; 264). This being the case, the sieges mentioned might indicate attempts by the Picts and Scots to regain their independence.

After this period the Cené1 Loairn rose to ascendancy, the first King drawn from this lineage being Ferchar Fota. Overall the following years appear much more unstable than the preceding ones, marked by internal struggles within the Kingdom. Annals record conflict between the various lineages of the Kingdom, but also conflict within the Cené1 Loairn itself. In 698 A.D. annals record the burning of Dun Ollaigh, one of the centres of the Cené1 Loairn, and entries can be taken to suggest that this was the result of internal warfare within the Cené1 Loairn.

Anderson has suggested that by 700 A.D. the three major Cenéla had dissolved into seven families, each lording it over a territory. The areas thus held were Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Cowal, Islay and three divisions of Lorn (Anderson 1980; 160-5).

Conflict with external powers continued, and in 711 A.D. and 717 A.D. battles with the Britons of Strathclyde are again recorded. (Anderson 1922, 213, 218). The disunity of Dalriada provided an open invitation for aggression from her Pictish neighbours, and a series of battles between the Picts and Scots culminated in 741 A.D. with the overthrow of Dalriada by Óengus, son of Fergus (Anderson 1922, 237).

Between 736 A.D. and 750 A.D. the annals do not refer to a King of Dalriada, and it is possible that during this

period there were Pictish overlords, although there is no documented evidence for such. In 750 A.D., however, it appears that the Cenél nGabráin rose into ascendancy again under the King Aed Find. The later history of Dalriada is difficult to establish since sources such as regnal lists then become confused and the annals have few references to events in the Kingdom.

Anderson has recently produced the most detailed survey of this period, and by a close study of Pictish and Dalriadic genealogies has suggested that from 789 A.D. Kings existed who appear to have held both the crowns of Pictland and Dalriada (1982). The first such ruler was Constantine (789 - 820 A.D.) who may have inherited his position as a result of inter-marriage between the Dalriadic royal house and the Pictish royal house of Fortriu. The latter area was one of the seven provinces of Scotland mentioned in a 14th century document the De Situ Albanie, which developed in its present form in the 12th century (Wainwright 1955). It lay on the eastern borders of Dalriada.

Subsequent Dalriadic Kings do not seem to have had any blood-relationships with the Picts, and hence it has been assumed that the Picts were imposing superiority over Dalriada (Anderson 1982). It is possible, though, to present a different interpretation of the available evidence. Bannerman argues that the rise of Aed Find., King of Dalriada, marks a resurgence of Dalriadic power. He was even able to lead an army of Dalriada into Pictland where they had a battle with the Picts in 768 A.D. (Anderson 1922, 246;

Bannerman 1971, 75-6). Bannerman thus sees the eventual union of the crowns of Pictland and Dalriada under a Dalriadic King as an outcome of this resurgence of power.

The manner in which Cinaed MacAlpin, King of Dalriada (c 841-858 A.D.) was able to take over the crowns of both Pictland and Dalriada is extremely difficult to assess, and will probably never be fully understood. There is a major lack of historical sources for the period (Anderson 1982). In what records that do exist, however, a peaceful take-over is suggested. Bannerman suggested that this may relate to the fact that Cinaed had a valid claim to the Pictish succession due to previous inter-marriage between the royal houses. Anderson, in contrast, argues that although this may have been the case for earlier Kings, it cannot be said to be true of Cinaed (1982). Neither he, nor his father appear to have any tradition of Pictish ancestry. The actual recorded position of Cinaed also varies in that he was recorded as King of Picts rather than just King of Fortriu, as had been the case with previous Kings. It is difficult to assess the possible significance of this, however, as from 692 A.D. the Kings of Fortriu had occupied a dominant position among the Picts (Duncan 1975, 48) hence this reference may not really record any major difference with former joint rulers.

Duncan believes that Cinaed won his position because of his abilities as a warrior (1975, 58). This is difficult to accept entirely, though, as Anderson stresses the lack of recorded events connected with him. It is clear that some events such as the disastrous battle in Fortriu in 839 A.D.

when numerous Picts fell against 'Gentiles' who may have been Danish (Anderson 1922, 268) were considered worthy of merit. This being the case it would seem difficult to accept that if Cinæd established his position by force, this was not considered important enough to note in the sources (Anderson 1982).

However the unification occurred, Cinæd quickly made an inroad into Pictland. The main Pictish family or faction opposing him disappeared fairly quickly (Anderson 1982) by what means we do not know. Anderson also makes the important point that Cinæd's career was not merely a personal adventure in Kingship since we are told that he "led (the Scots) from Argyll into the land of the Picts" (Anderson 1982, 1980, 267, 274, 283). If this is true then it has important implications for any study of the Kingdom of Dalriada after this date.

It has been suggested that the presence of the Norse in the west of Scotland may have aided the move to the east. They are first unequivocally recorded in 795 A.D. when we know of the devastation of Iona (Anderson 1922, 256). Norse presence in the west may have prevented expansion of the Dalriada northwards. Norse raids in Fortriu in this same period may have provided openings for settlement by the Dalriada in the rich agricultural lands of this area of Pictland (Anderson 1982). Even so it would seem unlikely that vast numbers of people would have left established homes in the west to seek uncertain futures in Pictland. By analogy the Dalriadic migration to Northern Britain was not a total migration, and Irish Dalriada continued to exist.

It may be that Cinæd had a following of military

retainers similar to those noted as the due accompaniment of a King in the Irish law tract the Crith Gablach (MacNeill 1924). These may have had no option but to move with the King. Apart from such retainers, it is conceivable that the orders of society most affected by the union were the regional sub-kings and higher orders of nobility - those members of society most involved in internal and external politics.

It could be argued that the movement of Cinaed MacAilpin to Pictland greatly overstretched whatever mechanisms of power were used to maintain control over the Kingdom of Dalriada, obviously Cinaed was now involved in much more expansive territories. In turn this could have caused weaknesses within Dalriada, particularly in peripheral areas which had always lain on the fringes of power of the Kings. Interestingly evidence does exist which could be taken to suggest such weakness and the measures attempted by Cinaed to rectify this situation. In 836 A.D. the Annals of the Four Masters record how Gofraith, chief of Airgialla in Ireland, came to Scotland to reinforce Dalriada at the bidding of Cinaed (Anderson 1922, 267). When the same annals record his death in 853 A.D., they also record that by then he held the title of 'Lord of the Hebrides'. This could be interpreted as the deliberate creation of a new political unit on the fringes of Cinaed's former territory.

Assessment of the later history of the area is difficult because of the lack of reliable documentary sources. The Iona chronicle which, as we have seen, was a major contemporary

source of information about earlier periods appears to have come to an end around 740 A.D. (Bannerman 1974, 25). The majority of the early documentary sources were recorded by clerics in ecclesiastical centres, and as these were a major target of early Norse raids it is not surprising that their work was disrupted and in some instances abandoned. Those centres which continued to produce documentation are also liable to produce biased records of events, seeing themselves particularly in the role of the persecuted.

Varied and occasional references to Norse presence and activity are made in some Scandinavian sagas, of which the only one wholly relevant to Scotland is the Orkneyinga Saga which purports to reconstruct the history of the Northern Isles and Caithness during a period from the 9th century to the 13th, when they formed a Norse Earldom based in Orkney (Palsson and Edwards, 1978).

The validity of the use of such Saga-evidence for any reconstruction of the history and events in Argyll in the period from the 9th century is a question much debated by historians. Smyth attempted to produce a detailed history of the Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles which included a chapter on the Hebrides based to a great extent on saga-evidence (1977). This was subsequently severely reviewed by Ó'Corráin who suggested that Smyth swam against the mainstream in making generous use of such sources in the creation of his history (1979). Ó'Corráin pointed out that the first sagas were written down in the early 12th century, often in Iceland, and hence were often divorced in terms of time and distance from the events they were relating. This being the case,

he argued, few present-day scholars would regard them as historically reliable.

Such problems mean that any detailed analysis of the Norse presence and activity must be based largely upon archaeological evidence, and the linguistic evidence offered by a study of place-names. These will be the subject of a later chapter in the present work. It would seem, however, that Norse influence and settlements extended along all of the Atlantic coast of Scotland, with the most favourable areas for settlement being the islands. Linguistic evidence suggests that the Norse presence in Argyll may not have been as great as in the Outer Hebridean Islands, but concentrations of settlement are apparent on Islay, Colonsay and Tiree.

The Norse did develop overlordship over many of the Atlantic islands of Scotland, a situation which was finally recognized by the Scottish Kings in 1098 A.D. (Duncan and Brown 1957, Barrow 1981, 106 f) under the terms of a treaty which confirmed Norwegian suzerainty over all the islands west of Kintyre and thence northwards to Lewis. These islands were jointly known as the 'Sudreys' or Southern Isles (Fig. 11) a term used to distinguish them from the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland. This pattern of Norse overlordship was maintained until the mid 13th century, although it was weakening steadily from the earlier decades of the 12th century. This was due in part to civil war within Norway itself, which weakened their control over far-flung dominions (Barrow 1981, 106). Scottish infiltration into the area could not be halted by the Norwegians, and finally



Fig. 11 The territorial claims of the Norwegians in Northern Britain
c. 950A.D. (from McNeill and Nicholson 1975)

under the terms of the treaty of Perth in 1266 the Isle of Man and the Western Isles of Scotland were sold to the Scots (Duncan 1975, 582).

The nature of Norse overlordship is far from clearly understood; and it is questionable to what extent it ever existed other than in the minds of Norwegian rulers. It is clear that Gaelic influence was maintained in the west throughout the period of supposed Norse supremacy (Barrow 1981, 107 f). Barrow's suggestion of a hybrid ruling class in the Hebrides in the early 11th century would seem to indicate intermarriage and the development of a racial mix within the area. Such mixing may have been occurring from the first appearance of the Norse in the area. Irish annals record the existence of 'Gall-Goidil' fighting in Ireland in the mid 9th century (Anderson 1922, 285, 286, 287, 290). Ó'Corráin suggests that they were,

"a racial mix of Vikings and Gaelic Scots (with whatever others of whatever provenance who attached themselves to them) who were adventuring in Ireland on their own account".

(1979, 301)

While some would argue that such people came from the Hebrides (cf. Duncan 1975, 89; Smyth 1977, 115) Ó'Corráin argues that there is no suggestion that they formed a single unit or came exclusively from the Hebrides (1979, 301).

While the historical sources appear neither explicit or reliable enough for the problems of the Gall-Goidil to be resolved, the concept of such intermarriage may be of importance in any consideration of the Norse impact on the area, since it would suggest that contact between the two groups was not totally hostile.

The weakness of Norse control in the Inner Hebrides is well illustrated by the development there of the medieval lordship of the Isles. In Gaelic tradition the title King or Lord of the Isles goes back to Somerled who lived in the 12th century (Munro 1981). While his name is obviously Norse, his descent may trace back to the Gofraith, chief of Airgiolla, mentioned earlier, who died in 853 A.D. Perhaps Somerled is an example of Barrow's Hybrid ruling clan. Somerled and his descendants were able to carve out a large lordship in the Western Isles with lands stretching from Islay in the South as far north as Skye. This was achieved despite claims by both the Scottish and Norse crowns to the areas they held.

In conclusion then, it can be seen that the history of Argyll in the first millennium A.D. is complex. The area may have been the home of at least two tribal groupings in the 2nd century A.D. Around 500 A.D. a migration from Ireland may have occurred, and led to the formation of the Scottish Kingdom of Dalriada. The next 200 years is the best documented period, from which an outline of major events related to this Kingdom can be drawn. After the beginning of the 8th century, however, the sources become more difficult to interpret. One of the most significant events in early Scottish history, the unification of Dalriada and Pictland, which occurred during this later period is very difficult to document clearly. During the Norse period, the lack of sources, or controversy about the validity of those that do exist make any attempt at producing a detailed history virtually impossible. From the various strands of evidence which do survive, however, it would seem that while some Norse did settle in Argyll, and

the Norwegian crown claimed authority over the majority of the islands, this control was more apparent than real.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The following seven chapters will examine the various types of archaeological evidence for settlement and activity in Argyll during the first three-quarters of the 1st Millennium A.D. Initially these will be directed towards an analysis of the various defended sites which have been located within the area. In addition to these, however, the range of other sites which may also have been in occupation are also discussed. Finally Chapter Twelve will deal with evidence for sites which may be associated with the Early Christian Church. Before turning to discuss these various sites in detail some comment must be made about the manner in which this work was approached, and is now presented.

To begin with the defended sites which are a frequent feature of the landscape of Argyll. Traditionally these have been subdivided into various groups - forts, duns, brochs and crannogs - each group being defined by a range of characteristic features including enclosed area, shape and structural form. When the present work was begun, it was decided to examine each of these supposed groups of sites separately. This was a necessary decision since much published discussion of these has taken a similar approach. This sort of framework of analysis was necessary to allow previous work on such sites to be discussed, along with the problems inherent in these approaches. Throughout the work, however, it became increasingly clear that these groups really presented somewhat arbitrary subdivisions of what is really a continuum of data. While crannogs can still be considered a distinct

type of site in view of their location, it is quite clear that no clear dividing line can be drawn between 'forts', 'duns' and 'brochs'. Architectural similarities exist between each supposed group of monuments. Also our understanding of the nature of social group associated with each type of site is too imprecise to allow clear distinctions between types of site to be drawn. Because of this each of the following chapters, as well as considering the problems inherent in our understanding of each of these groups of sites, illustrates the problems associated with the definition of such sites as forming distinct groups.

A word must also be said about how data relevant to the following chapters is presented. Volume Two of the present work presents detailed case-studies of five areas within Argyll. The choice of these areas dictated the manner in which detailed data about the various sites is presented within the appendices in Volume 3 of the present work. Hence the information relevant to each of these areas is grouped together. The data presented, however is not limited solely to these case-study areas, but attempts to provide detailed information about the whole of Argyll, and also Arran and Bute. The latter information was grouped together on the basis of geographical area. Hence the sites of Lorn are grouped together, as are those of Arran, Bute and Cowal, Coll and Northern Argyll, and Jura and Colonsay (Fig. 12). This framework for data presentation was used throughout the research presented within this work.

Of the areas discussed in the present work, some have recently been the subject of detailed field survey work by

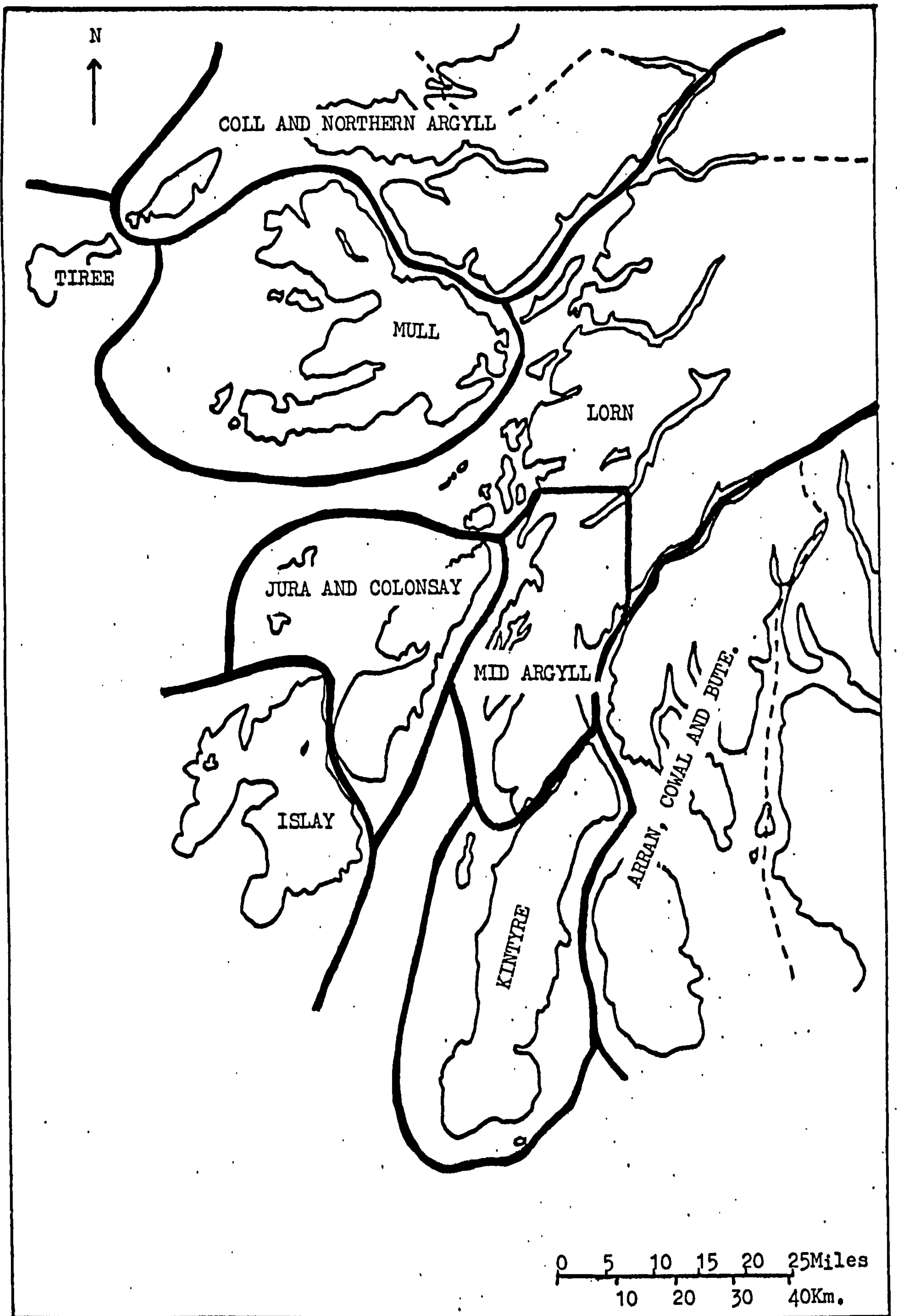


Fig. 12 The areal division of Argyll used within the present work.

the R.C.A.H.M.S. Figure 13 illustrates the geographical areas investigated by the R.C.A.H.M.S. and presented in currently published or forthcoming volumes, or those in preparation .

The present work owes a major debt to the work of the R.C.A.H.M.S. It is only with the detailed survey work which they have undertaken and published that it has really been possible to begin to examine in detail the various sites within Argyll, and the nature of the former settlement patterns to which such sites are related. Prior to the R.C.A.H.M.S. surveys information had to be drawn, initially at least, from Ordnance Survey records compiled by their Archaeology Field Officers. While a valuable source of information, the content of these can be somewhat variable. A serious drawback in their usefulness is also the fact that the production of detailed site plans did not form part of their remit. Within the present work the appendices presented in Volume 3 include detailed information about the size of sites surveyed by the R.C.A.H.M.S. Their plans of sites are also used in the analyses. For areas not presently covered by published R.C.A.H.M.S. inventories, in contrast, it was decided to restrict the amount of information presented, since existing information did not allow the accuracy and detail of the R.C.A.H.M.S. to be matched. At this point the choice to present two case studies, those of Islay and Mid-Argyll, on areas for which R.C.A.H.M.S. surveys have not, as yet, been published must be justified.

The choice of these areas for such detailed analysis becomes self-evident after study of the history of the Early

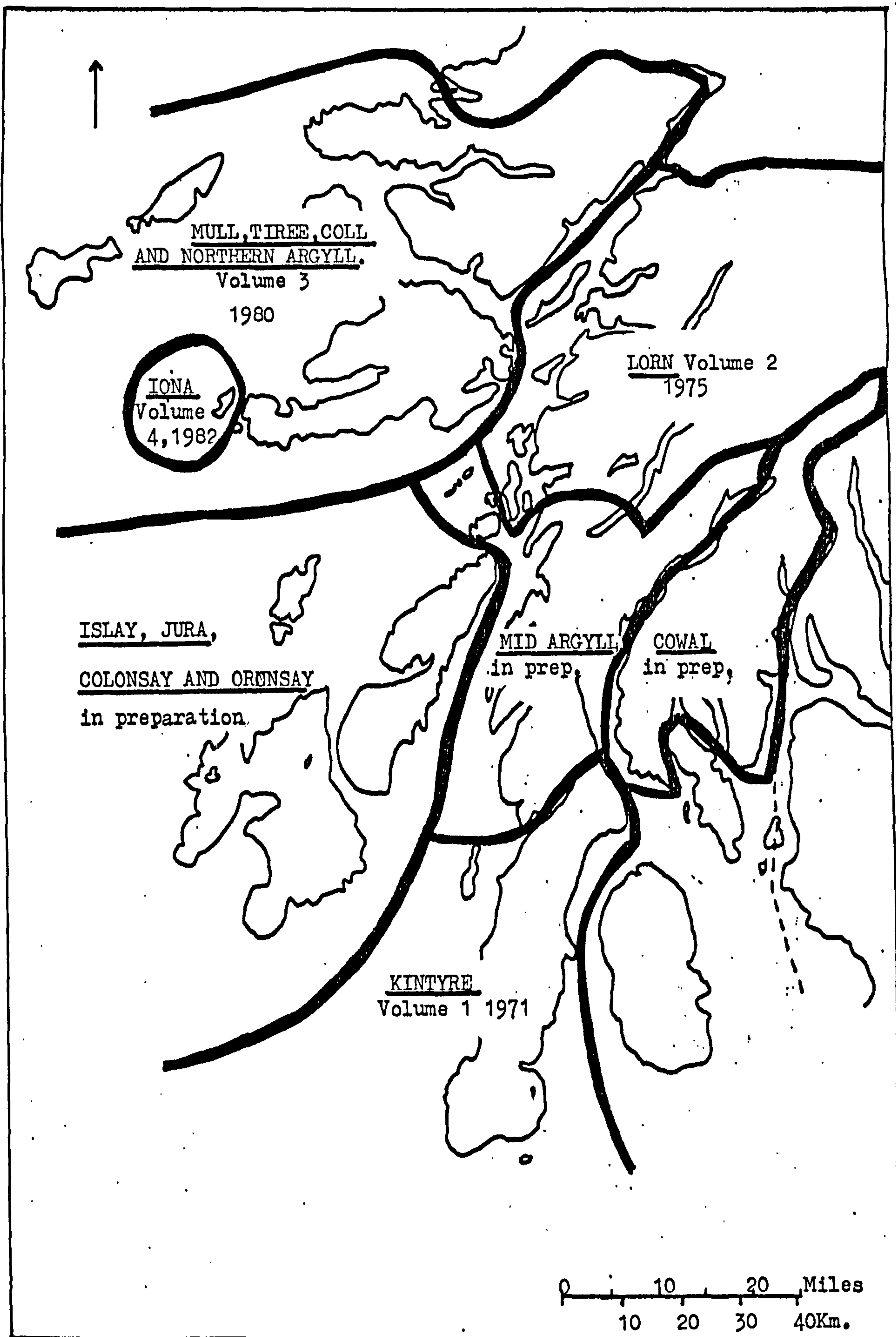


Fig. 13 R.C.A.H.M.S. survey areas within Argyle.

Historic Kingdom of Dalriada. The Island of Islay appears to have formed a distinct island community, inhabited by, and ruled by, one of the three major Cenéla or lineages of the Kingdom, the Cené1 nOengusa. This being the case it seemed of importance to consider the archaeological evidence from the island in relation to its role as an independent political unit.

The area of Mid-Argyll lay at the heart of the Kingdom of Dalriada. The fertile soils of the Kilmartin region appear to have long been an important area for human settlement. This is well illustrated by the concentration of Neolithic and Bronze age burial monuments; standing stones and cup-marked stones of the area. Unfortunately no settlements of this early period have been located there. The continued importance of the area into the Iron Age and Early Historic Periods is indicated by the concentration of defended settlements here, particularly around the area of the Mòine Mhor and Kilmartin terraces. Of these sites the most important was Dunadd, which may also have been of major importance within the Kingdom as a whole. The boundary between the territorial holdings of the two major lineages of Dalriada; the Cené1 nGabraín and the Cené1 Loairn may have lain within this area. Hence it may have been an important zone for inter Cené1 contact. Discussion of the sites of Mid Argyll is easier than for other areas not presently covered by R.C.A.H.M.S. volumes because of a detailed survey of the archaeological sites of the area by Campbell and Sandeman (1962). While there are problems with this survey work, for example no plans of sites were produced;

and recording is not always entirely consistent, it still provides a useful and more detailed set of data about the sites than is available elsewhere.

Prior to discussing these various archaeological sites in detail it seems of importance to consider something of the social background against which their construction and use must be set. The general points raised in the following discussion will be developed further in relation to more detailed discussion of the history and archaeology of Argyll in the 1st Millennium A.D.

Celtic society at a tribal level was organized around two institutions, the kin group, and clientship. The former was the extended family group which in Christian times was normally seen to extend over several generations. Probably the most important group was the derbfine a 'certain kin' a four generation kin group which consisted of all those males who had a great-grandfather in common (Mac Niocaill 1972, 49 f). In certain infrequent circumstances wider kin groups, the iarfine (a five generation group) and the indfine (a six generation group) might also have a function.

This kin group had a variety of functions. They were socially responsible for one another's actions and security. If an individual from a kin-group committed a criminal offence, for example, the whole group could be held responsible. Loyalty to one's kin group was a primary obligation. Exploitation of the land was also controlled by the kin group. All land was, in theory, owned by the kin-group and alienation of it required the consent of the whole group. Cultivation of this land might also be co-ordinated through this kin

group since together its members may have been able to provide a full plough-team of oxen. Of course, these social inter-relationships were not static as new generations were continually coming of age.

Welsh law tracts indicate that land and property^{in Wales} was heritable (cf. Davies 1982, 76 f). Normally it appears that this would be subdivided amongst male descendants. The position of women in Celtic society is difficult to assess. Davies illustrates that within Wales they were often portrayed as weak and inferior (1982, 79). Despite this they could hold land, but they may have played little decisive role in the conduct of community affairs. In Ireland MacNiocaill argues that women did not count (1972, 51) to any great extent. Smyth however, indicates that they may have been more respected than MacNiocaill suggests (1982, 78f). He argues that as in Wales they could hold land. They were also of importance for the establishment of marriage alliances.

The subdivision of land and property between heirs was probably a continual cause of conflict, especially in areas like Wales and the West of Scotland where the land is of limited quality, and patterns of inheritance could have led to the acquisition of extremely limited areas of land.

Within this wider kin group, documentary sources in both Ireland and Wales indicate the importance of the conjugal family - father, mother and offspring (MacNiocaill 1972, 49f; Davies 1982, 78). This may, however, reflect the fact that the documentary sources which suggest this were the product of christian societies. Goody has recently illustrated

well the major impact the establishment of Christianity had on Western European society (1983). In particular the early Church continually argued for the importance of the conjugal family unit, rather than the wider kin group. In undermining traditional social groupings in this manner, the primary interest of the church was related to the acquisition of land. As a transition towards the holding of land by individual conjugal family units began it was more likely that the Church would be able to acquire land, if for example, a family was left without heirs.

While on the subject of the impact of Christianity it is also worth noting other changes within society which occurred as a result of its establishment. Goody also argues that the Church may have been responsible for the declining use of a variety of strategies of heirship such as adoption, concubinage, plural marriages and widow remarriage, all of which had developed as a means of ensuring one had heirs. Again condemnation of these may have been closely related to the desire of the Church to acquire land and property. Of particular interest here is the support the Church offered to women, in particular allowing them to live singly, without being pressurized into marital relationships.

The establishment of monasteries around the Kingdom is also of interest, since it may have provided an important outlet to which sons could be sent, hence reducing the pressure upon the land caused by the laws of shared inheritance. Similarly the establishment of nunneries provided a retreat for females who did not want to marry or re-marry. Unfortunately

we have no documentary record of the establishment of nunneries within Dalriada.

The number or size of settlements a kin group might establish is not clearly understood. Obviously this would vary from group to group, being dependent upon its size, and the number of surviving offspring produced. In Christian times extended family groups seem to have been the normal settlement unit. This may have been more restricted than the derbfine kin group, since the latter may have been large. With the establishment of Christianity we see the growing importance of the nuclear family unit, that is a unit consisting of parents and offspring. This may have led to the establishment of smaller settlement units inhabited primarily by these smaller units.

Turning from kin-groups, an additional means of support within society was established through the institution of clientship (cf. Gerriets 1983). Clientship was a basic economic underpinning of society, but also provided a measure of security for persons of low social status. The establishment of clientship involved the development of a relationship between persons of different social status. A person of high social position, such as a King, could take on a commoner as a client. This clientship involved the establishment of a variety of payments between the two individuals. In acceptance of this relationship the King or whoever made payments to his client, these were often cattle. In return for these outlays he could expect to obtain payment and services from his client. These could include renders of animals, and also other agricultural produce. In addition

a client could be expected to provide labour services, for example for building projects, and also military services.

Two types of clientage may have existed, free and base. The obligations of each type were similar, the major difference being that base clientage could not be terminated whenever the client wished (MacNiocaill 1972, 60f). Clientship permeated all levels of society as Gerriets points out. Kings had clients drawn from other leading members of societies. In turn the latter had clients drawn from lesser ranks of society. Kings themselves were allied together through ties of dependence which included exchanges of military alliances, brides and other goods.

The Church also had clients in the same manner as did secular lords. To the higher grades of society the possession of clients was a necessary means of defining social status. The possession of numerous clients also provided agricultural tribute, so freeing these nobility from the need to engage in agricultural production for their own support. To lower members of society, clientships offered additional protection since by accepting a man as a client, a lord undertook to defend his client's rights (MacNiocaill 1972, 61f.)

Gerriets has argued that in Ireland in the Early Historic Period clientship was not an institution in which custom or heredity circumscribed the individual's choice of partner. Instead she argues that choice of partner was a matter for the individuals involved, and some individuals, indeed, may have avoided such ties altogether. She argues that the ability to end clientship arrangements and enter into new

relationships indicates that Ireland at this time was not tradition bound, but was a dynamic society in which individuals made independent decisions.

The above discussion has illustrated the importance of kinship and clientship within Early Historic Irish and Welsh society. By analogy we would assume that the same was true also of Northern Britain, although there is an absence of documentation to support such suggestion. The absence of such documentation makes it impossible to specify the details of such relationships here.

It is against this background that the use of the various defended settlement sites, and also other settlement sites in Argyll must be viewed. An understanding of it is also a pre-requisite of understanding the establishment of the early church in Argyll. Throughout the following discussion these themes, particularly that of clientship will be returned to in explanations of the inter-relationships of the inhabitants of various types of site.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FORTS OF ARGYLL

The first group of monuments to be considered are those which have been classified as 'forts'. The definition of such a site used by the R.C.A.H.M.S. is that it is an enclosure with an internal area of more than 375 square metres (4000 square feet) (cf. R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 18). Over 180 examples of such forts have been identified in Argyll. These are located throughout the area (Fig. 14). The majority were defended by a single stone wall, though some multivallate examples do exist. Ranachan Hill in Kintyre, for example is surrounded by three outer works. Similar examples are Dùn na Muirgheidh on Mull and Sròn Uamha in Kintyre. Such walls are of drystone construction, never mortared, and normally consist of an inner and outer built face with an internal rubble core.

Some sites exhibit vitrification, indicating the use of timber-lacing within the original construction (Fig. 15). Examples include Carradale Point in Kintyre, and Duntroon in Mid-Argyll.

At Ranachan Hill in Kintyre the construction of a "composite" rampart is indicated. These are described by Avery as of "shell construction" (1976) indicating a built wall to which an additional "shell" of rubble with a stone facing has been added. These are indicated by remnants of rampart with an internal face evident within the core of the wall, termed an "internal revetment" by the R.C.A.H.M.S. (cf. 1971, 16). It is evident that such a constructional



Fig. 14 The Location of Forts in Argyll.

(from R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 1974, 1980; Campbell and Sandeman 1962; and O.S.records.)

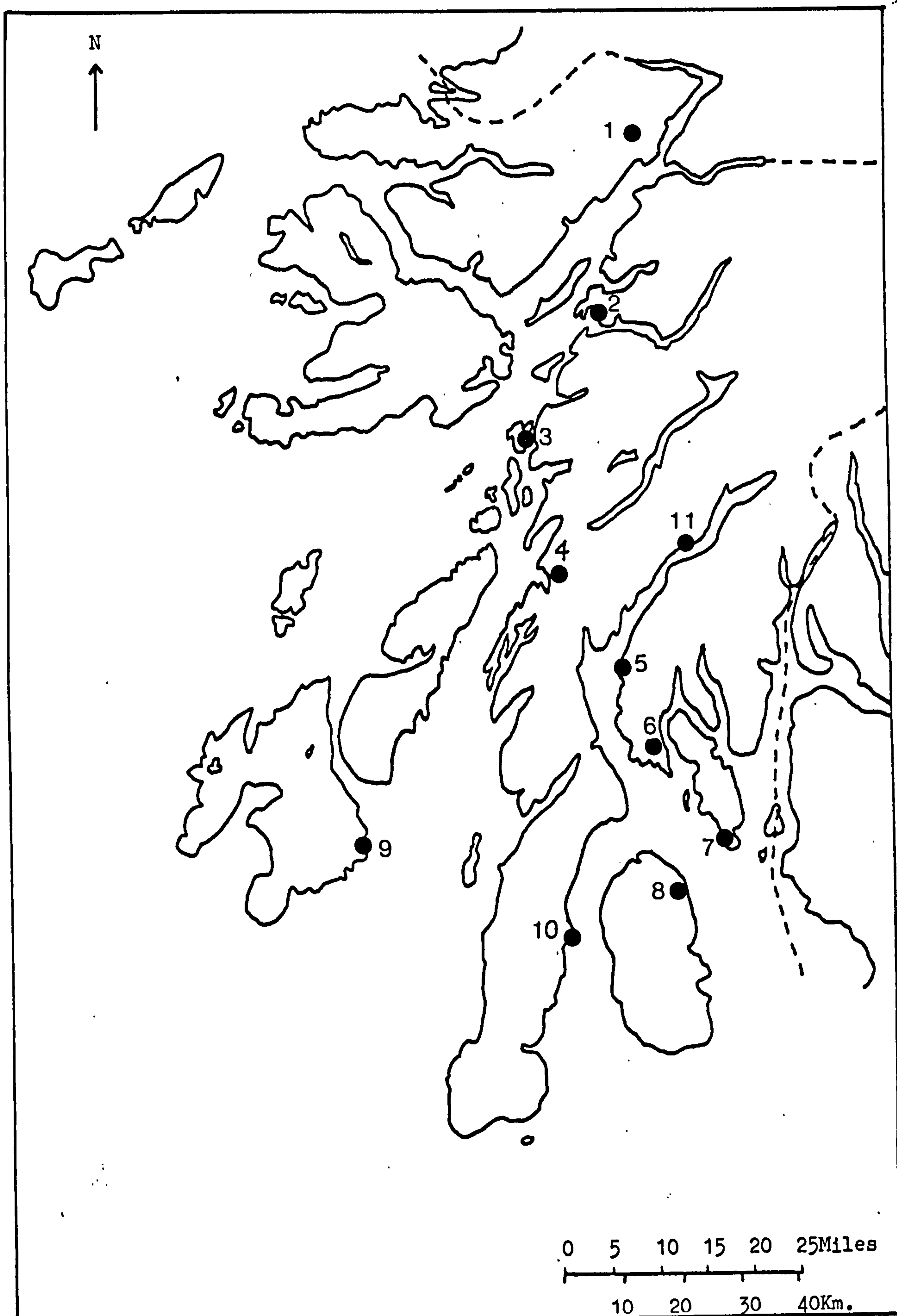


Fig.15 The location of vitrified forts in Argyll.

1. Torr an Duin, Loch nan Gobhar. NGR NM 970 633
2. Dùn Mac Sniachan. NGR NM 903 382
3. Balvicar, Seil. NGR NM 771 164
4. Duntroon. NGR NR 803 959
5. Macewan's Castle. NGR NR 916 795
6. Caisteal na Sithe. NGR NR 962 691
7. Dunagoil, Bute. NGR NS 085 531
8. An Knap, Arran. NGR NS 017 461
9. Dun Trudernish, Islay. NGR NR 467 526
10. Carradale. NGR NR 815 364
11. Pennymore Point. NGR NN 047 005

(after R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 1974, 1980; Campbell
and Sandeman 1961 and O.S. records.)

device was used to create stability within a massive stone rampart. It is a device which is found more commonly in the duns of the area (cf. Chapter Seven).

Other architectural features recorded include the construction of masonry doorchecks as at Knock Scalbart in Kintyre, and Dùn na Muirgheidh on Mull. The latter site also exhibits a bar hole associated with the entranceway, providing a secure means of closing the gates. Unfortunately the entrance-ways of the majority of sites in the area are not preserved well enough for such features, if they existed, to be traced.

A minority of sites in the area have earthen, or earth and stone ramparts, as is the case at Cnoc Araich in Kintyre, Kildalloig also in Kintyre, and Dun Guaidhre and Dun Nosbridge on Islay.

To allow comparison of forts in many areas of Argyll an attempt was made to calculate the internal enclosed area surrounded by the rampart-walls. This was done for all the areas covered by the R.C.A.H.M.S. volumes. Calculations were achieved with the aid of a scale grid, and the results are presented in Appendices D, E and F, Volume 3. It was not possible to calculate the area of all the forts since often the remains were too insubstantial for the full circuit of the ramparts to be determined. In other instances natural erosion, or quarrying processes may obviously have removed areas of the interior of the site. In several cases the remains of the site were so obviously denuded or insubstantial that the R.C.A.H.M.S. had decided not to produce a plan at all. In calculating the area of the site a distinction was

made between sites at which the approximate internal enclosed area could be calculated, and those sites at which only an overall area, including the rampart width was calculable. The percentage of sites in each area for which such area calculations could be made is best expressed in a tabular form.

Region	Total No. of Sites	% for which internal area calcul- ated	% for which overall area calculated
Kintyre	26	58%	73%
Mull	24	58%	70%
Tiree	5	0	20%
Lorn	24	54%	62%
Coll - Northern Argyll	13	31%	31%

For each of these regions the plans of sites are reproduced, ordered in terms of the size of enclosed area (Appendix F, Volume 3). A graph summarizes the size range of sites found in each region (Appendix E, Volume 3). Figure 16 provides a cumulative frequency graph of the internal area of forts of Kintyre, Mull, Lorn and Coll and Northern Argyll. (Tiree is excluded since the area of only one site can be calculated). This illustrates that in Kintyre, Mull and Lorn the majority of sites have an enclosed area of between 500 and 1500 m². On Coll and in Northern Argyll sites are appreciably smaller, all having an enclosed area of 1000 m² or less.

A distinct, and small, group of very large sites appears

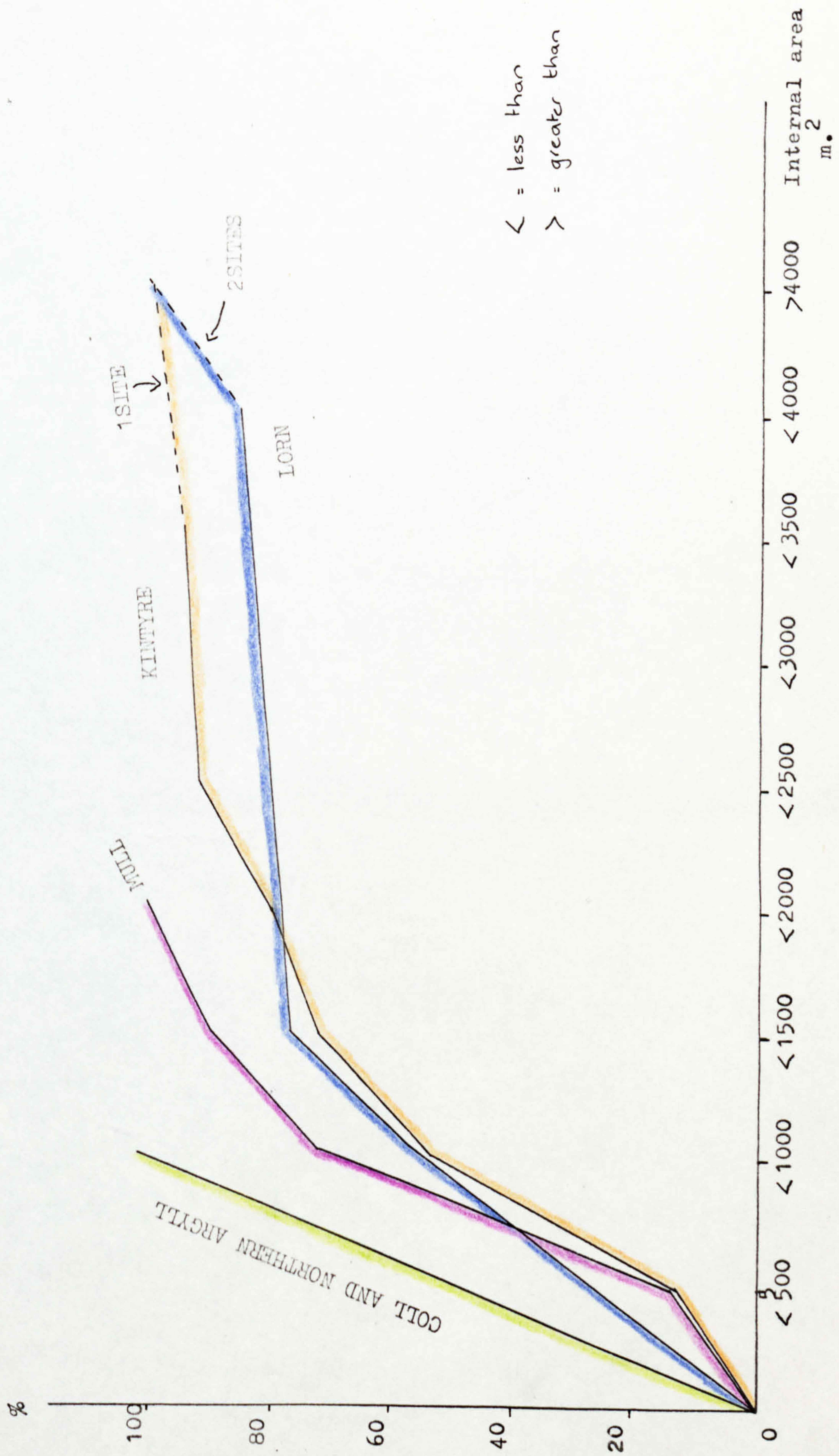


Fig 16 Cumulative Frequency graph of the internal area of the Forts of Argyll.

to exist. In Kintyre the site of Cnoc Araich has an area of 2.5 hectares (6 acres) which is over six times as large as the second largest site in the region. Similar large sites include Dun Ormidale in Lorn which has an area of 3 hectares (7.5 acres), Creag a' Chapuill in Mid-Argyll and Drumadoon in Arran (4.86 hectares or 12 acres) (Balfour 1910; 189-90).

Variations in the size of enclosed area can be related to a number of factors. Larger sites must have required more effort to construct the ramparts. This must relate to a larger and more complex system of labour exploitation and organisation. In turn this may be related to the power of the inhabitants of the site and the size of population they could exact labour service from. It may also reflect the varying size of settlement enclosed within the site. In the latter case a large population would need a larger enclosed area, and would have a larger population to undertake constructional work. The R.C.A.H.M.S. suggest that forts were inhabited by small communities (1971, 16) as opposed to the single family units which they consider may have occupied the smaller defended sites (1971, 18). In this case the size of the enclosed area relates to the size of the community, and the range of structures being built to house it. On this point, however, it is clear that at many sites the rampart is constructed to take the best defensive line, and may often enclose areas of exposed bedrock which would have severely restricted the internal habitable area. In such instances the R.C.A.H.M.S. plans normally illustrate this

limitation on their published plans, as is the case at Ardenstar I in Lorn and Ballywilline Hill in Kintyre.

It has been suggested that Cnoc Araich in Kintyre, and by analogy other large sites in Argyll previously mentioned were Oppida sites (Feachem 1966; R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 16; Maxwell 1975). Oppida are normally seen as distinct from other hillforts since they had an economy largely dependent on semi-industrialised manufacturing and trade (Avery 1976, 76). The concentration of such town-like activities explains the large size of such sites. In relation to Argyll, however, it is extremely questionable to what extent such an attribution is correct. To begin with Avery's definition of an Oppidum is largely based on continental evidence and in particular the site of Manching in southern Germany. It is unclear why the same type of social and economic organization should be expected in Northern Britain. In Argyll none of the sites mentioned have been excavated, and hence we have no indication of their economic base. Avery makes the point that the term was adopted by Feachem and the R.C.A.H.M.S. because it was felt necessary to distinguish these large sites in some way (1976). While it is clear that these sites do differ from the majority of hillfort sites in Argyll, the use of the term Oppida to describe them can only, because of its connotations, be seen as unfortunate.

Very few of the hillforts of Argyll have been examined in any way by controlled excavation, and hence we can say very little about the nature of their population and the

economy upon which the settlement was based. Figure 17 presents a map and list of sites which have been in any way examined. The only site which has been totally excavated is the vitrified site of Duntroon in Mid-Argyll which was excavated in 1904 under the direction of Christison (1905). The published report suggests that the whole of the interior of the site was excavated down to bedrock, and while a range of artefacts were found, no trace of structural remains was to be found. With hindsight this is more likely to be a comment upon the nature of excavation methods than the absence of such structural remains. It is recorded that the work was undertaken by a team of workmen directed by letter from Christison, who himself remained in Edinburgh. In the absence of close archaeological supervision it is perhaps not surprising that no structural remains were recorded, particularly as these may anyway have been of turf and timber construction and hence difficult to trace. Excavation techniques at the turn of the century were anyway generally not very sophisticated, and even had Christison been on site the amount of information retrieved may not have been much greater.

Structural remains within the interior of forts have been encountered at a number of sites, including Dùn Mac Sniachan Lorn (Smith 1872, 1874, 1876) Creag a Chaisteil, Mull (Betts 1964) Balloch Hill, Kintyre (Peltenberg 1982) and Dùn Cúl Bhuirg, Iona (Ritchie and Lane 1980). Only at Balloch Hill has a substantial area of the interior of the site been examined, and even here the total area examined accounts for only about a quarter of the total enclosed area. Within this area, however, post-holes and gullies encountered

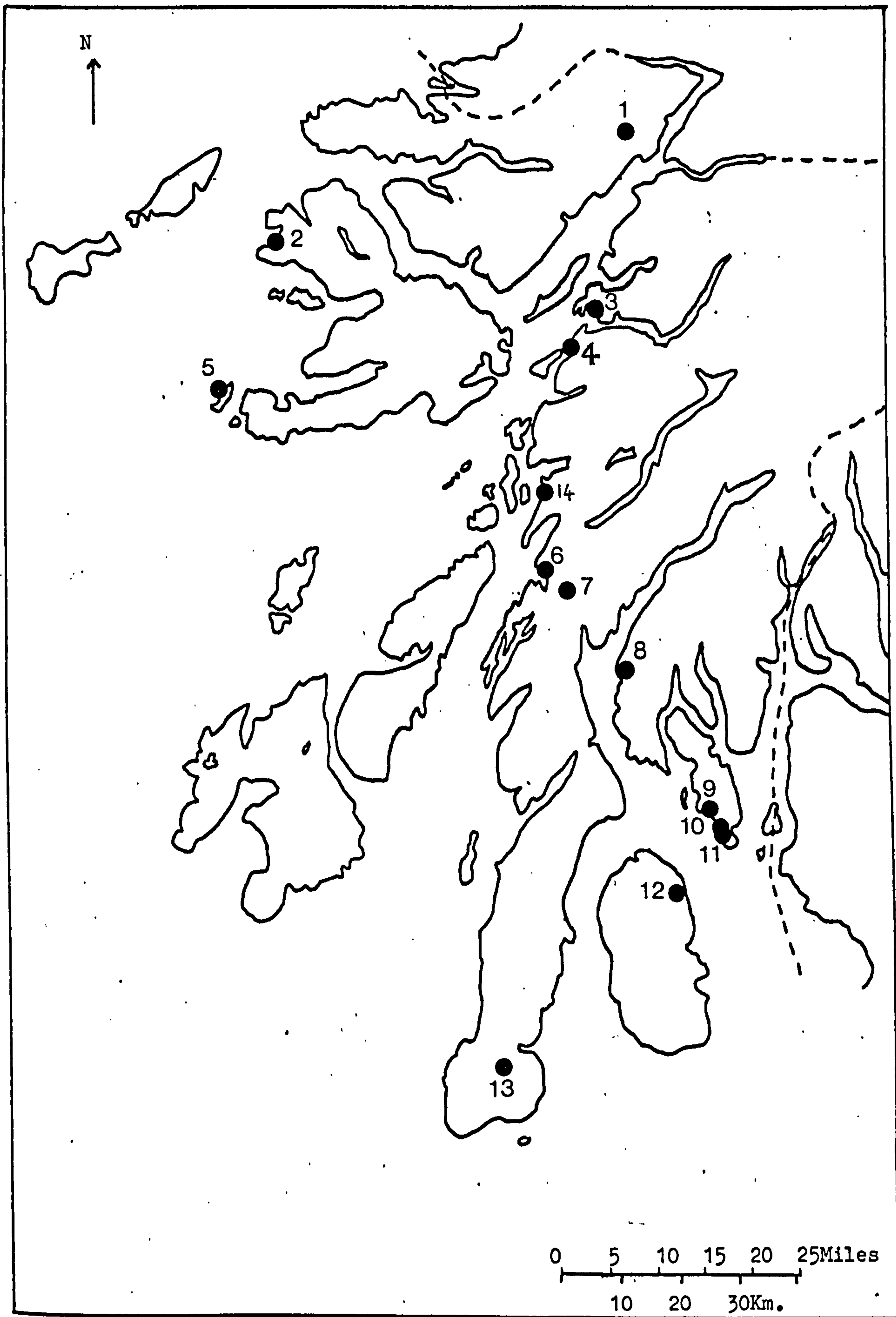


Fig.17 The location of excavated forts in Argyll.

1. Torr an Dùin, Loch nan Gobhar.
2. Creag a' Chaisteal, Mull.
3. Dùn Mac Sniachan.
4. Dunollaigh.
5. Dùn Cùl Bhuirg, Iona.
6. Duntroon.
7. Dunadd.
8. Macewen's Castle.
9. Dun Scalpsie, Bute.
10. Dunagoil, Bute.
11. Little Dunagoil, Bute.
12. An Cnap, Arran.
13. Balloch Hill, Kintyre.
14. Eilean an Duin, Mid Argyll.

led to the suggestion of the former existence of five structures, not all contemporary since some overlay others. These structures were circular post-built, occasionally with evidence for stone-based or timber-framed walls. In some instances centrally placed hearths were noted. The excavator is cautious about extrapolating from this evidence to suggest the total number of buildings which may have existed within the fort. He does, however, tentatively suggest that if areas of bedrock and the central area of the site were left open, then a total of five buildings may originally have existed. This must be treated with some caution. While areas of bedrock may have been impossible to build upon, the evidence for a central open area cannot, on present evidence, be substantiated.

At those sites where excavations have been undertaken, evidence exists for the involvement of the inhabitants in agricultural production. The most numerous finds at Duntroon were saddle querns which would indicate at least the processing of grain. Saddle querns were also recorded at Balloch Hill (Peltenburg 1982). Smith records 'rude' querns from Dùn Mac Sniachan (1872, 1874, 1876) which may have been of the saddle variety. Grains of hulled barley, Emmer wheat and oats were recorded from Balloch Hill (Dickson in Peltenburg 1982) (cf. Chapter Three). Animal bone is recorded from several sites. Smith recorded finding large quantities of cattle, sheep and pig bones at Dùn Mac Sniachan (1872, 1874, 1876). The collection has not, however, survived for modern analysis. Balloch Hill produced a limited number of

finely comminuted bone fragments (Peltenburg 1982). Few identifications were possible, but cattle, pig, deer and hare may be represented. Dùn Cúl Bhuing on Iona produced bones of cattle, sheep, pig, red and roe deer and seal (Ritchie and Lane 1980). Examination of the material was limited since the collection was too small to be statistically significant, and the bone was not in a good state of preservation. It was suggested to be only the remains of larger quantities which had decomposed over time (Noddle in Ritchie and Lane 1980). It would seem however that cattle predominated, and also that the range of animals being exploited included both domesticated and wild species.

The only industrial activity recorded in a hillfort excavation is the copper and iron working represented by slag material and crucibles at Balloch Hill (Slater in Peltenburg 1982). It would be unreasonable to consider that such activity was only occurring at Balloch Hill.

In an attempt to supplement the meagre amount of information about the nature of activities being engaged in by the hillfort inhabitants, some analysis of the location of these defended sites was made. For this the types of information considered included the altitudinal location of the site, and its possible relationship to areas of surrounding agricultural land. Appendix C, Volume 3, contains listings of the altitudinal location of sites, and graphs (Appendix G) present the frequency of location at particular altitudes. The results obtained can be summarized in a simple table:-

Region	Total No. of Sites	% Below 76 m O.D.	% Below 152 m O.D.
Kintyre	26	45%	77%
Mull	24	92%	96%
Tiree	5	100%	-
Lorn	24	83%	87%
Coll + Northern Argyll	13	100%	-
Islay	30	87%	100%
Mid-Argyll	34	56%	90%
Arran, Bute & Cowal	25	66%	90%
Jura and Colonsay	14	92%	100%

This indicates that most of sites are located at altitudes of below 76 m O.D. For a variety of reasons this is hardly surprising. The land best suited for agricultural purposes, particularly cultivation is located at lower altitudes. The climate at such lower altitudes is also most affable. Sites located at higher altitudes are more exposed, particularly to high winds. Perhaps sites located at lower altitude then were engaged in arable production; as they also tend to lie nearer the sea,

this also could have been used for fishing and rapid communication around the area.

The sites located at higher altitudes may also have been closely engaged in agricultural production. Under certain conditions land located at quite high altitudes could be cultivated, as is indicated most clearly by fossilised rig cultivation on many hillslopes. Generally speaking though,

higher land is generally of poorer quality, and more suited to ^{rough} pasture land than cultivation. Agricultural production related to such sites may, therefore, have been more closely related to pastoralism, and hence may have complemented that of the lower sites which were more involved in arable production.

While considering the altitudinal location of hillfort sites it is important to consider factors which may have influenced such situation. The choice of high locations is not really a function of a desire for a good defensive position, since the nature of the relief of Argyll is such that good defensive positions really relate to land-forms, and can be found at a variety of differing altitudes. A deliberate reason for the choice of high locations, however, may have been the desire for prestigious locations. Thus a site located in a dominant position within the surrounding landscape could indicate the political power and position of the inhabitants of such sites. In this context, it may be no coincidence that the largest site in Mid-Argyll, that of Creag a' Chapuill is also the highest site and occupies a dominant location within the region. Another example might be the site of Dun Skeig in Northern Kintyre, which dominates a large area of the peninsula and also the seaward approaches to the area.

All considered, any analysis of the possible significance of locating sites at specific altitudes is difficult, particularly in the absence of excavated evidence about the nature of the settlement and economy of hillfort sites.

Among the many problems related to hillforts of Argyll, the question of the chronology of their usage looms large, and is far from resolved. The only site for which radio-carbon dates have been obtained is that of Balloch Hill in Kintyre. The range of dates produced for this site imply the use of the defended site between the 6th and 1st centuries B.C. (Peltenburg 1982).⁽¹⁾ The rampart was constructed some time after the 9th century B.C.; a date based on charcoal incorporated within the wall core which must pre-date its construction. Post rampart destruction on the site was dated to the period 205 B.C. to 80 A.D. This would suggest that the site may have been abandoned prior to the 1st Millennium A.D.

A later date for the construction and occupation of a hillfort site is indicated by Dùn Cúl Bhuirg on Iona. There hand-made pottery was found within the rampart core, and also in the interior of the site (Ritchie and Lane 1980). The pottery is the only material from the site which can be closely dated, and even then a date range between 100 B.C. and 300 A.D. for all the material is all that can be suggested.

Pottery from midden deposits at the sites of Dun nan Gall, Tiree, and Dun Morbaidh, Coll which is of Hebridean Iron age style have been taken to indicate activity there during the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. A distinction in dating between at least some hillforts and the smaller defended sites classified as duns is suggested by a variety of evidence. At several sites duns replaced forts on the same site. At Dun Skeig in Kintyre a univallate fort was replaced first by a small timber-laced dun. When the latter

was abandoned; presumably after its destruction by fire since the remains are vitrified, a solid walled dun was also built on the site. Duns would also appear to replace forts at Cullan Doon in Kintyre; Belfield in Kintyre, The Torr, Shielfoot in Northern Argyll and Dùn Mac Sniachan in Lorn. At none of these sites has the precise relationship of the fort and dun(s) been examined by excavation; hence it is impossible to suggest whether there was immediate replacement of the forts by duns, or whether there was a time lag between the developments.

Excavated evidence from the site of Duntroon in Mid Argyll can also be used to illustrate a difference in date between forts and duns in Argyll. The main artefactual material recovered from Duntroon consisted of 36 saddle querns (Christison 1905). In contrast smaller sites such as duns and brochs tend to produce rotary querns (Caulfield 1978). The introduction of the rotary quern was a major technological development in the iron-age, providing a much more efficient way of processing cereal grains. Once the rotary quern was introduced it appears to have spread rapidly, and soon replaced the saddle variety. Unfortunately the date of introduction of the rotary quern into western Scotland has not been firmly established. As Caulfield points out, however, Duntroon would seem to clearly indicate a pre-replacement site.

In conclusion, hillforts are a common feature of the landscape of Argyll. The majority are massively constructed, and must have been the product of much worker effort.

Unfortunately few sites have been systematically examined by controlled excavation, and those that have rarely been totally examined, hence any discussion of them must be based largely upon conjecture. Some tentative hypotheses about the nature of their use, and their chronology have, however, been suggested. Generally speaking it is clear that our knowledge of these types of site will only be improved with extensive excavation of several sites.

Chapter Six: Footnotes.

(1) Appendix V, Volume 3 presents those radio-carbon dates from Balloch Hill which can be associated with some certainty to the main period of hillfort occupation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DUNS OF ARGYLL

Having considered the larger defended enclosures of Argyll, discussion must now turn to the smaller sites which have been classified as duns. These are the most numerous of the defended sites recorded in the area. The R.C.A.H.M.S. define a dun as,

"a comparatively small defensive structure with a disproportionately thick drystone wall, usually, but not always sub rectangular or oval on plan, enclosing an area not exceeding 375 square metres (4000 square feet)"

(1971, 18)

Over 200 examples of such sites have been identified in Argyll (Fig. 18). Before discussing these sites in great detail it is important to consider the history of use of the term 'dun'. It has figured in archaeological literature for a considerable period of time, and is commonly used in discussions of defended enclosures in Western and Northern Scotland. Unfortunately it is a term which has been used in relation to a variety of sites, many of which would not conform to the definition of a 'dun' now used by the R.C.A.H.M.S. The history of use of the term has usefully been summarized by Maxwell (1969). He illustrates its earliest use in 1792 by Colin McKenzie to denote any later prehistoric fortified structure other than a broch. In 1890 Thomas used the term to define all fortified structures, this time including brochs. He subdivided this wide ranging group on the basis of natural location into:-

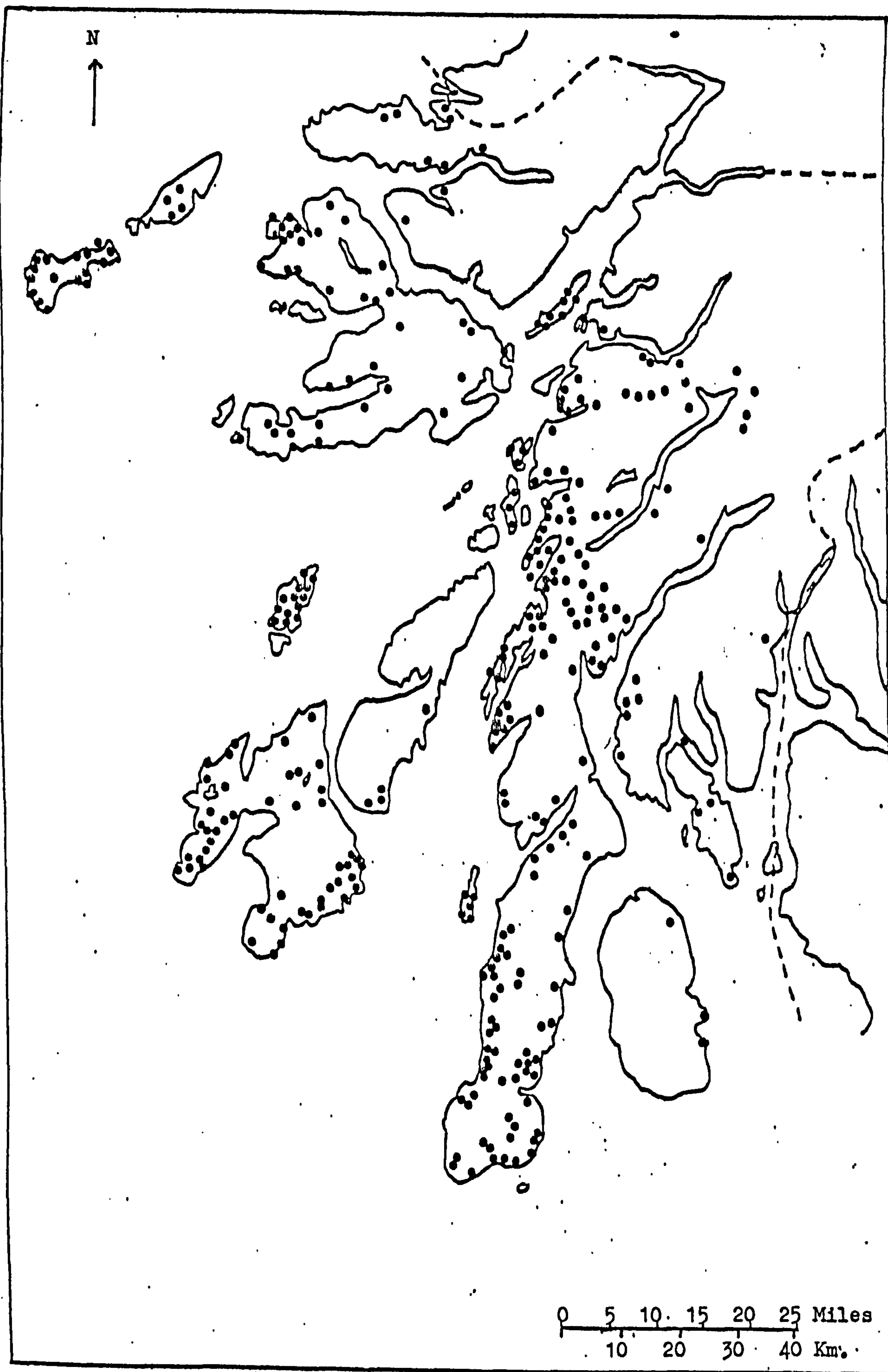


Fig. 18 The location of Duns in Argyll.

(from R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 1974, 1980 ; Campbell and Sandeman 1961:
and O.S.records)

- 1) rock stack sites
- 2) mural promontory sites
- 3) fortified promontory sites
- 4) fortified islets

A distinction was also made between "brochs" and "Pictish towers". Many of these sites would be too large, by R.C.A.H.M.S. standards, and would have to be reclassified as forts. Thomas' classificatory scheme did gain prevalence for a period, and a similar scheme was used by the R.C.A.H.M.S. in their inventory on the Outer Hebrides, Skye and the Small Islands (1928).

In 1955 Feachem attempted to make the definition more precise. He suggested that the term should be used only to indicate 'comparatively small' thick walled enclosures smaller than a hillfort, but larger than a homestead. He then subdivided his group of duns into;

- 1) ring forts
- 2) long duns
- 3) simple duns

This classificatory scheme was developed in relation to the duns of Stirlingshire and south-east Scotland. When applied to sites outside this area, particularly those of Atlantic Scotland, it was soon realised that the scheme was inappropriate. Having considered the wider context of duns, Feachem was able in 1963, to specify a group of "homestead" duns which he subdivided into four main categories;

- 1) galleried duns
- 2) plain duns
- 3) stack duns
- 4) small insular duns.

He also suggested the existence of a group of larger sites which included several on the border line with hill-forts, as well as those that were vitrified and had originally been timber laced.

This illustrates the circularity which discussions of duns took. Originally the term was used to denote all defended enclosures, later it was restricted specifically to the smaller ones. Finally this also was seen as inadequate, and the class was extended to include some larger sites again. The definition of a dun used within the present work is that devised by the R.C.A.H.M.S. in relation to their field-work in Argyll and it is used within all their Argyll inventories. If comparisons between sites in Argyll, and sites outside the county are to be made care must be taken to ensure that sites classified as duns are really comparable. This may, in many instances, necessitate area calculations, to ensure sites conform to the R.C.A.H.M.S. definition of a dun.

In discussing archaeological sites which have been classified as duns it is important to note that the term does not necessarily always have to be associated with any form of defended site. Macdonald has indicated that the term dun is a Gaelic word which can mean heap, hill, hillock, mound, fortified house or hill, fortress, castle, fastness and tower (1980). Thus, as he points out, the term might be applied to a range of natural as well as human-made features. This is an important point to bear in mind when attempting to locate archaeological duns on the ground, since all 'dun' names on maps are not necessarily related to defended sites.

The duns identified within Argyll are all of drystone construction. At present the walls of most sites may appear heavily denuded, often only marked out by foundation courses, and perhaps one or two of the lowest wall courses. At several sites, however, stretches of walling survive to considerable heights, indicating that originally these were massive structures. At Kildonan Bay Dun in Kintyre walling survives for part of its circuit to a height of 2.1 m. (Fairhurst 1939). Similar examples include Caisteal Suidhe Chennaidh in Lorn where walling stands to a height of 2 m, and Dun Aisgain on Mull, where walling stands to a height of 1.75 m. By analogy it is assumed that the wall heights of other sites may originally have been comparable. At many of these sites large quantities of tumbled rubble support such suggestion. Some sites originally had timber-laced walls, illustrated by vitrified examples (Fig. 19).

Several sites exhibit the inclusion of a range of complex architectural features into their construction. Some sites exhibit composite ramparts of shell construction, a feature which was also noted in examples of hillforts discussed earlier. Other features include intramural galleries, cells and stairways, and entrance features such as door checks, bar-holes and guard cells. The incidence of such features are listed in Appendix I, Vol. 3. These intramural and entrance-features are normally seen as characteristic of broch architecture in the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland. Their incorporation into dun architecture illustrates some connection with the broch builders and the development of architectural traditions over wide areas. Analysis of

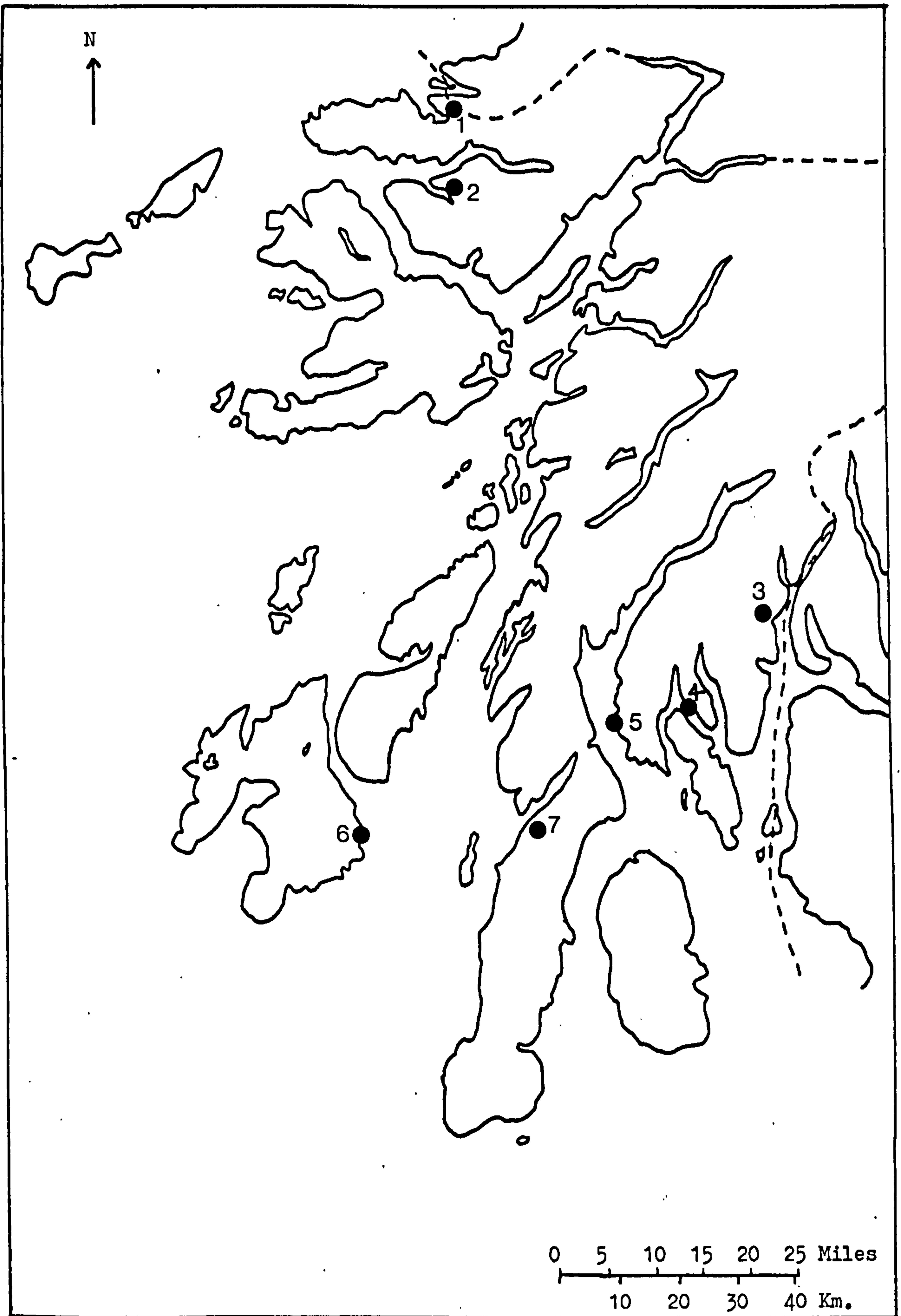


Fig. 19 The location of vitrified duns in Argyll.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. The Torr, Shielfoot. | NGR NM 662 701 |
| 2. Rahoy. | NGR NM 632 564 |
| 3. Dun Daraich. | NGR NS 179 893 |
| 4. Eilean Buidhe, Kyles
of Bute. | NGR NS 018 754 |
| 5. Caisteal Aoidhe. | NGR NR 909 711 |
| 6. Dun an Rubha Buide. | NGR NR 466 540 |
| 7. Dùn Skeig. | NGR NR 757 571 |

(after R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 1974, 1980; Campbell and
Sandeman 1962 and O.S. Records.)

existing information about the frequency of occurrence of such features allows the presentation of the following table:-

Region	Total No. of Sites	% of Total Incorporating Broch-Type Architectural features
Kintyre	65	11%
Mull	33	39%
Tiree	16	37%
Lorn	48	10%
Coll and Northern Argyll	14	0%

While this is unlikely to be an entirely accurate reflection of the original situation, since many sites are so denuded that such features are not readily recognizable, or they are still buried by tumble, it may suggest that the number of sites originally exhibiting such features did vary from area to area. An explanation for the higher frequency of occurrence of such features on Mull and Tiree may be a reflection not of their better preservation there, but of their original greater popularity. In turn this may relate to the position of these two areas in the North of Argyll, the area closest to areas further north where brochs are found in their greatest concentrations. Duns are the most common type of small defended sites throughout Argyll, but in the peripheral area between these two concentrations of architectural type some intermingling of traditions might be anticipated as illustrated here.

Duns do not belong to a narrow chronological horizon, instead their construction, occupation and use may have extended

over lengthy periods of time.

The earliest date suggested for the construction of such a site in Argyll is that for the site of Rahoy in Morven (Fig. 20). This site was excavated by Childe in the 1930's (Childe and Thorneycroft 1938). Among the artefactual evidence recovered from the site was a looped and socketed iron-axe head. Childe suggested that the transitional character of the technique used in its construction indicated a date between the Bronze and Iron Ages. Manning and Saunders have discussed all the known iron socketed axes of the British Isles (1972). They illustrate that such early dating need not necessarily be accepted for such axes. The forging in iron of axe types originally designed to be cast in bronze is, they point out, a considerable technical feat in its own right indicative more of a developed iron technology than one still fumbling in its infancy. They also point out that socketed axes were eventually replaced by shaft-hole axes, and the latter may not have been introduced to the British Isles until the Roman period, hence a date somewhere in the Pre-Roman Iron Age, as it applies to Scotland, is to be preferred for the Rahoy axe.

A bronze fibula from Rahoy belongs to the La Tène series, possibly being an example of a La Tène 1C brooch. On the basis of this a date of around 200 b.c. was originally suggested for the site (Childe 1938). Subsequently Stevenson refined this dating and suggested that these brooches may date to the 3rd century b.c. rather than the 2nd (1966) thus suggesting an earlier date for the site. On the basis of the axe and brooch from the site, and the evidence for timber-lacing within the walls of the site Childe linked

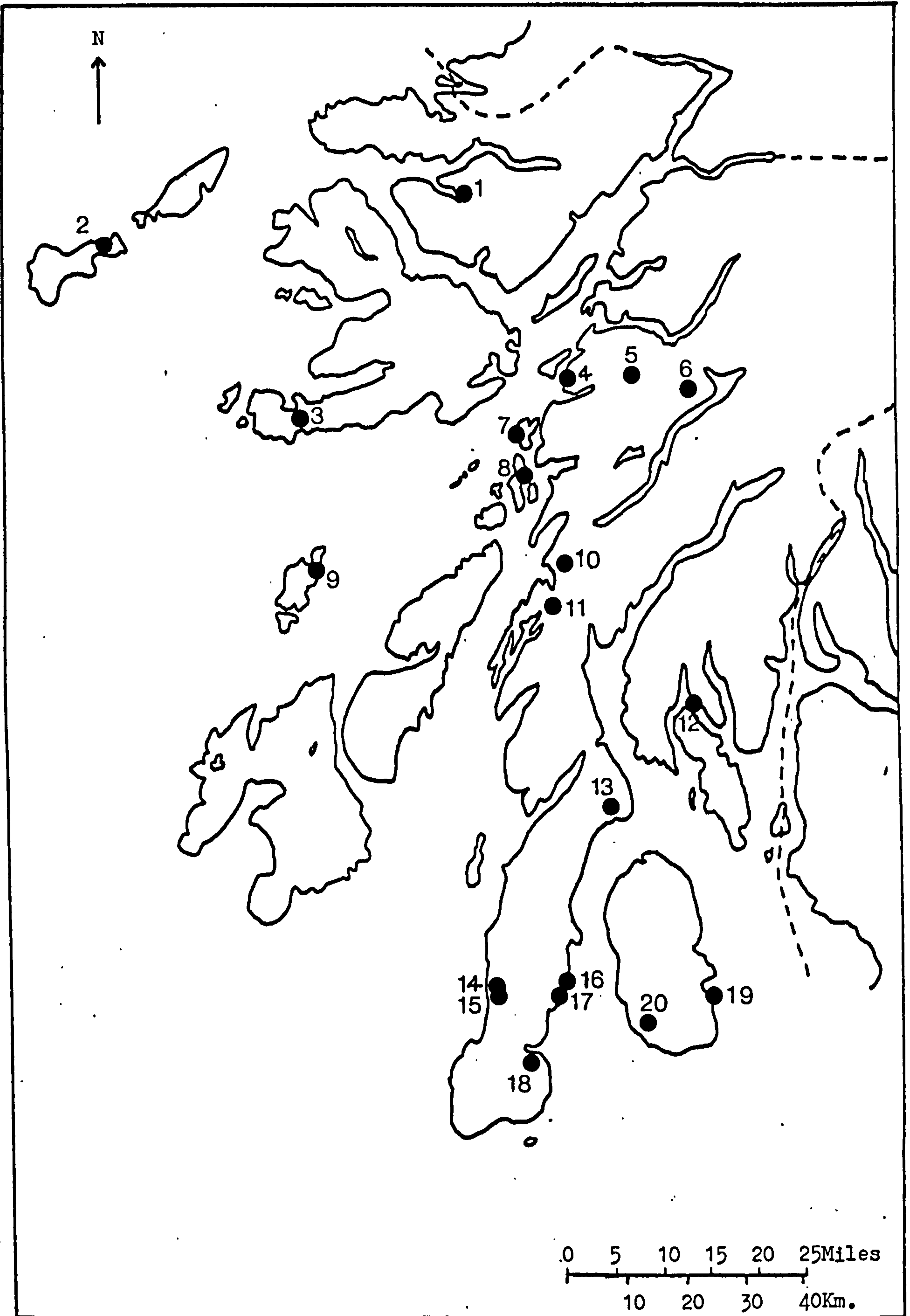


Fig.20 The location of excavated duns in Argyll.

1. Rahoy.
2. Dùn Beag, Vaul, Tiree.
3. An Caisteal, Mull.
4. Dùn an Fheurain.
5. An Dùn, Clenamacrie.
6. Caisteal Suidhe Cheannaidh.
7. Dùn Aorain, Seil.
8. Leccamore, Luing.
9. Dùnan na Nighinn, Colonsay.
10. Ardifuar.
11. Druim an Duin.
12. Eilean Buidhe, Kyles of Bute.
13. Dùnan Breac.
14. Dùn Fhinn.
15. Dùn Mhic Choigil.
16. Ugadale.
17. Kildonan Bay.
18. Kildalloig.
19. King's Cross Point, Arran.
20. Torr a' Chaisteal, Corriecravie, Arran.

Rahoy with the other major timber-laced forts of Scotland. This group of sites he was to define as the Abernethy Culture (1935). He saw these as relating to the earliest landings of La Tène celts in Scotland.

Recent work has destroyed Childe's concept of the Abernethy Culture. It is now clear that all timber laced forts cannot be related to a specific period or cultural group. Excavations at the site of Burghead in Morayshire, for example, have indicated a post-Roman date of construction for a site with timber-laced walls (Small 1969). A similar example is that of Greencastle, Portknockie (Ralston 1978). Within Argyll evidence exists to suggest that in certain instances vitrified duns might be of later date than other stone-walled forts. At the site of Dun Skeig in Kintyre, for example, a timber-laced dun replaced a stone-walled fort for which no evidence of timber-lacing survives.

More recently Childe's dating has been questioned for other reasons. The La Tène phase of the Iron Age in the British Isles was initially developed in relation to Southern Britain. This was taken to have influenced the rest of the British Isles via a process of diffusion. It is now questionable to what extent such diffusion really occurred. Recent research in Ireland has introduced the idea of a non-La Tène Iron age there (Caulfield 1977). Harding has discussed this in relation to Scotland (1982) suggesting that the same may be true here. If this is correct then the Rahoy brooch can be seen as _____ an exotic import to the Atlantic Province. In this case ^{some would argue that} it would be invalid to create a

chronological framework based upon such evidence (cf.

Clarke 1971). Until such time as this problem of whether Scotland has a distinct La Tène phase has been resolved it is necessary to continue using conventional dating for artefacts such as the Rahoy brooch. Hence the site may have been in occupation as early as the 3rd century B.C.

The idea that such drystone sites have their origins in the 1st millennium B.C. could be supported since evidence from other sites (admittedly not in Argyll) have been taken to indicate this. In particular radiocarbon dates from the site of Ruigh Ruaidh, Loch Broom, Ross and Cromarty, have recently been published (Mackie 1980). Of these three were said to come from contexts which would date construction of the drystone wall around the site. These were;

580 \pm 80 b.c. (Ga K 2493) (840 B.C. - 410 B.C.)

275 \pm 80 b.c. (Gu 1366) (543 B.C. - 20 B.C.)

1 \pm 65 b.c. (Gu 1368)⁽¹⁾ (155 B.C. - 220 A.D.)

On the basis of these Mackie argues that the most plausible construction date averages at 205 \pm 57 b.c., and hence represents a date in the 3rd or 2nd century B.C., and perhaps as early as the 4th century B.C. Analysis of the context of the charcoal from which these dates were obtained, however, calls into question Mackie's assertion that they date the construction of the dun. Each sample came from one of a ring of large post-holes within the interior of the site, which the excavator interpreted as related to the first short phase of activity within the dun. The main period of activity within the dun was represented by the laying of a cobbled floor upon which a sizeable occupation deposit accumulated. Published

discussion of the deposits within the intramural galleries and entrance passage suggests that the primary occupation level associated with each of these is the same as that overlying the cobbled area within the interior of the site. The question which must then be raised is whether in this case, the timber structure represented by the post-holes is really associated with a primary phase of the dun occupation. An alternative suggestion would be that this timber structure pre-dated the construction of the dun, and represents a free-standing timber house. A parallel for the replacement of a timber structure by a drystone fort would be the broch of Fairy Knowe in Stirlingshire (Main 1979). The dating evidence discussed earlier would then date this timber structure and not the dun. The range of dates provided by the charcoal may reflect the fact that large timbers were used to construct the building, and the charcoal samples originated in differing parts of these timber posts. With this in mind it is unfortunate that no species analysis or other discussion of the charcoal is presented.

If the preceding discussion on the site is correct, then more emphasis must be placed upon other radio-carbon dates for an understanding of the dating of the drystone dun. In relation to this two dates are of particular importance. One of 10 ± 100 bc. (Ga K 2496) ^(175 BC - 230 A.D.) was obtained from charcoal ^(165 BC - 210 A.D.) lying on the cobbled floor; another of 30 ± 60 bc. (Gu 1367) came from ash on the stone hearth. These indicate primary activity within the fort ^{between the 3rd C. B.C and the 3rd C. A.D.} and a date of construction within this period. Thus Mackie's chronological framework for the site can be subjected to re-interpret-

ation leading to the identification of ^{the possibility of} a much later date for the dun.

While considering the site of Ruigh Ruaidh it is important to take account of another suggestion about the site made by the excavator. Mackie has argued that architecturally elaborate duns exhibiting broch-type constructional features may have been the precursors of brochs (1971). Ruigh Ruaidh is an example of a type of site Mackie would classify as a semi-broch.⁽²⁾ Such sites are similar in size to brochs, but instead of being entirely circular they are D-shaped in plan with walling around three sides only. These sites were all located near the edge of a steep cliff or precipice and did not need additional defences on this side.

In addition to Ruigh Ruaidh, Mackie also examined a semi-broch on Skye, Dun Ardtreck. Charcoal from the foundation platform of the latter site provided a date for the construction of the site of 115 ± 105 b.c. (Gx 1120) ^(385 BC - 205 A.D.). Mackie argued that the dates for Ruigh Ruaidh and Dun Ardtreck were earlier than any for brochs, and hence they may represent prototypes for these sites. It is clear now though that much evidence could be cited to illustrate that this is unlikely to have been the case. The dating evidence for Dun Ardtreck suggests that this site is not significantly earlier than the broch of Dún Mòr Vaul on Tìree also excavated by Mackie for which a date of construction of 60 ± 90 a.d. (Ga K 1097) ^(155 BC - 255 A.D.) was obtained (Mackie 1975, 92f). As Ritchie and Ritchie point out this is barely early enough to make Dun Ardtreck ancestral to the brochs (1981, 105). In view of the suggested re-interpretation offered here for Ruigh Ruaidh, the same

could be argued in relation to this site. It is anyway becoming increasingly clear that brochs or broch-like structures may have a much more ancient origin than Mackie argued for. This will be discussed at greater length in a subsequent chapter.

The other main criticism which can be raised against the theory of broch origins suggested by Mackie is that no comment is made about why a d-shaped structure should evolve into a fully circular one in the manner in which Mackie suggests. It is presumed that the internal organization of space and activity patterns in these two site types would be different, which implies reorganization when fully circular sites were adopted. This would need much fuller discussion before it would be readily acceptable.

It would seem highly unlikely then, that duns could be seen as precursors of brochs. Instead a variety of structural forms must have been found throughout the Atlantic province in the late 1st millennium B.C., and beginning of the 1st millennium A.D. In constructing these various sites elements of a common architectural tradition were being drawn upon, and combined in a variety of ways.

Preceding discussion has indicated that the date range for the initial construction and occupation of many of Mackie's sites is much wider than the excavator indicates.

It should not be taken that this necessarily indicates that none of the duns may date to the later 1st Millennium B.C. Radiocarbon dates obtained from charcoal in the foundation course of the dun wall at Langwell, Ross and Cromarty provided a date of 350 ± 90 bc (Ga K 4862) (755 B.C - 165 B.C.) (Nisbet 1974). This suggests a date of construction between the 8th C. B.C and

the 2nd C. B.C. In the case of this site such dating evidence cannot be critically assessed since excavations at the site were not completed, and no report has been published.

Within Argyll evidence from several sites suggests dates for construction and use of duns in the early first millennium A.D. Excavation in the 1960's at two sites in Kintyre, Dun Kildalloig (Bigwood 1963, 1964, 1965) and Dùn Fhinn (Bigwood 1966) revealed Roman material from phase I occupation deposits, these may indicate an initial date for the site in the 2nd century A.D. Recent analysis of artefactual material from the site of Dùn an Fheurain, Gallanach, Lorn, has also been taken to indicate a similar date for initial activity on the site (Ritchie 1970). Excavations at Kildonan Bay dun in Kintyre were also taken to indicate a date of construction in the 2nd or 3rd centuries A.D. (Fairhurst 1939). Recent work at the latter site has, however, suggested a different chronology for the site. Radiocarbon dates have now been obtained for charcoal which may be from below a phase I hearth. These (620 A.D.-890 A.D.) (630 A.D.-905 A.D.) are 705 ± 60 ad. (Gu 1458) and 740 ± 60 ad. (Gu 1458). This would suggest primary activity on the site between the early 7th century A.D. and the early 10th century A.D. (Peltenburg pers. comm.). In view of this major variation in dating of the site further work is to be undertaken to establish a clear chronology for it (Peltenburg, pers. comm.).

During the Early Historic period activity in duns was continuing. A bronze penannular brooch from Kildonan Bay probably dates to the mid 9th century A.D. (Fairhurst 1939). Dun Kildalloig produced imported pottery of Class E which

has been dated to between 500 and 700 A.D. (Thomas 1981) and a pale green glass bead which can be paralleled in the Early Historic crannog of Lagore, Co. Meath, Ireland (Bigwood 1963; 1964; 1965). Beads have also been found at other sites. From Dùn Fhinn a blue glass dumb bell bead can be paralleled at the Early Historic crannog of Ballinderry Lough, Lough, Co. Offally, Ireland (Bigwood 1966). A 'horned-eye' bead from Dun Ugadale, Kintyre can also be paralleled at the crannog of Lagore (Fairhurst 1954). From the site of Dùn an Fheurain, Gallanach, Lorn, a group of artefacts which includes an antler pottery stamp, bone pins and a fragment of a bone composite comb suggest activity in the 6th century A.D. or later (Ritchie 1970).

At all these sites the evidence for occupation in the Early Historic period is seen as related to a second phase of occupation on the site. There is no evidence to suggest that the nature of this second phase was significantly different to the preceding one. At Dùn Fhinn and Dun Kildalloig it was indicated by the laying of a new paved floor within the site (Bigwood 1966; 1964) suggesting refurbishment of the original interior.

To summarize the dating evidence for duns. The question of whether such sites may originally date back to the 1st millennium B.C. is still not firmly resolved. Evidence from Argyll could be taken to indicate initial phase of activity in the first quarter of the first millennium A.D. Continued use into the Early Historic period can be illustrated at several sites. Finds of medieval glazed and other wheel-thrown pottery at a number of sites including Dùn Fhinn in Kintyre

and Kildonan Bay, Kintyre illustrate activity on these sites later in the Medieval period. At the latter site occupation may have occurred within the site in the late 13th or early 14th century A.D. The excavator argued that this period III occupation at the site occurred after a long gap, which was represented by the build up of a depth of sterile loam on top of period II deposits within the site. During this phase of occupation only the northern half of the site was occupied, a series of "huts" being encountered there.

The occurrence of this medieval occupation raises the question of when such sites finally were abandoned. At Dun Kildalloig and Dùn an Fheurain occupation ended in the Early Historic Period. As we have seen, above, however, this was not the case at all sites. The possibility must also exist that some of these sites may have been first constructed in these later periods, although at present there is no evidence for such suggestion.

In presenting a detailed analysis of duns in Argyll an attempt was made to calculate the area of all sites for which the R.C.A.H.M.S. have been able to produce detailed plans. The enclosed area of such sites must relate in some way to the activities which were occurring within them, and hence variations in size may be of importance. Calculation of the area of sites is also important for any consideration of the distinctions between 'duns' and 'forts' if these exist. The procedure used to calculate the area of sites was the same as that used for fort sites. The results of these analyses are presented within Appendices H, J, K and L, Volume 3. As was the case also with the forts, it was not possible to

calculate the area of all sites. At some sites the remains were too uncertain and robbed to be planned. Despite these problems it was possible to produce estimates of the area of a large number of sites, this can be illustrated by the following table.

Region	Total No. of Sites	% of Total Sites for which internal area was calculated	% of Total Sites for which overall area was calculated
Kintyre	65	66%	66%
Mull	33	73%	73%
Tiree	16	69%	69%
Lorn	49	69%	69%
Coll and Northern Argyll	14	64%	71%

Bar graphs presenting the size-range of sites within each area are presented as Appendix K, Volume 3. Figure 21 provides a cumulative frequency graph comparing the data from the five regions.

It is clear that the majority of duns have an internal area of under 200 m². Larger sites do, however, exist and it is apparent that no clear distinguishing line can be drawn between these sites and forts. The distinction, indeed, is one which eludes the R.C.A.H.M.S. on occasion, since in both the Lorn, and Mull, Coll, Tiree and Northern Argyll inventories calculation of the area of sites revealed several sites classified as duns which have areas greater than 375 sq. m.

In the preceding chapter it was indicated that the R.C.A.H.M.S. suggested a social definition of a fort, as

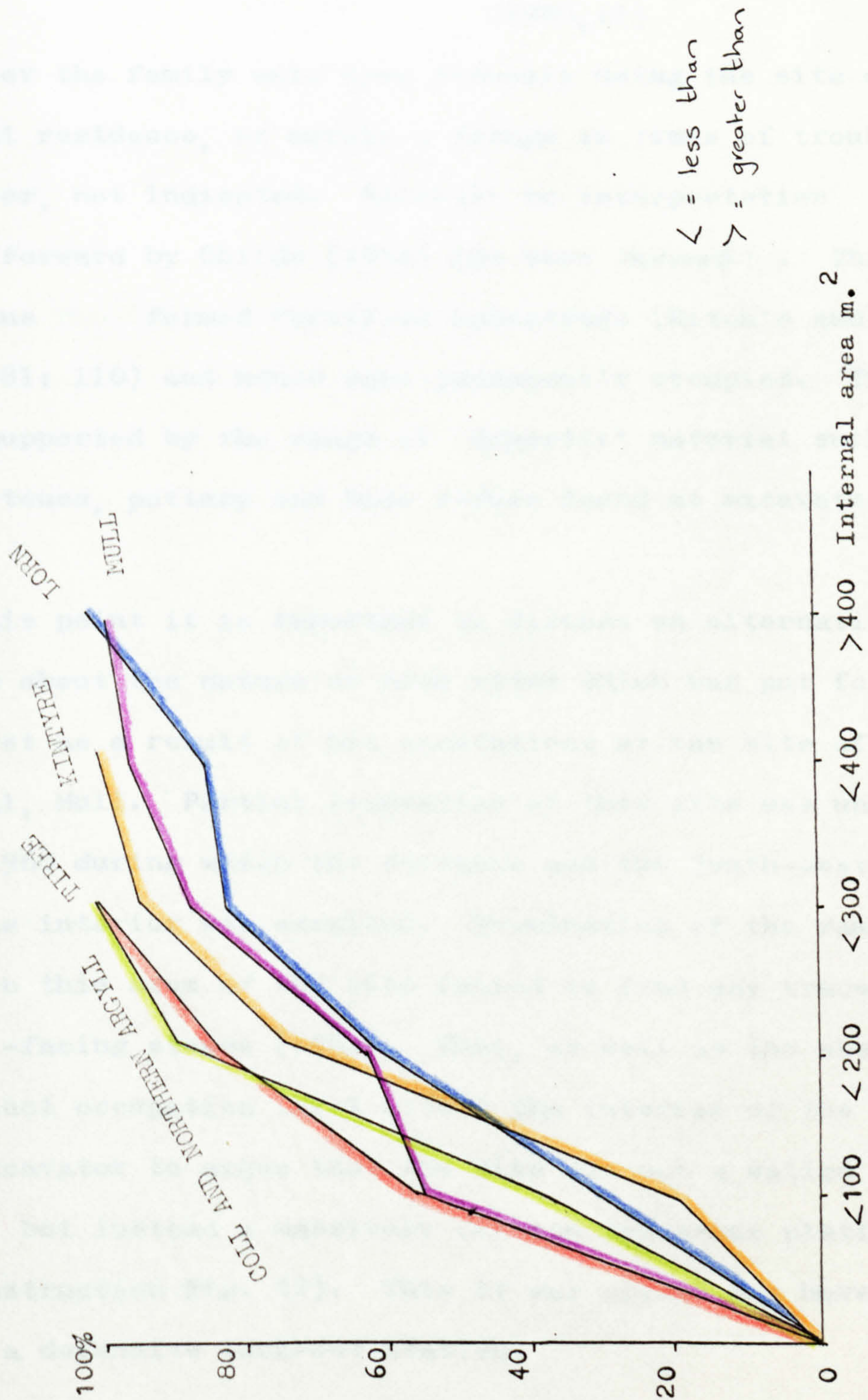


Fig.21 Cumulative frequency graph of the internal area of the Duns of Argyll.

well as one based upon the size of enclosed area. This is also the case with duns. In 1971 they suggested that a dun would normally accommodate a single family group (1971,18). Later this was modified to,

"a dun could have provided protection for an extended family unit".

(1980,17)

Whether the family unit were actually using the site as a permanent residence, or merely a refuge in times of trouble was, however, not indicated. Recently an interpretation first put forward by Childe (1946) has been revived. This is that duns formed fortified homesteads (Ritchie and Ritchie 1981; 110) and hence were permanently occupied. This would be supported by the range of 'domestic' material such as quern-stones, pottery and bone refuse found at excavated sites.

At this point it is important to discuss an alternative suggestion about the nature of such sites which was put forward by Fairhurst as a result of his excavations at the site of An Caisteal, Mull. Partial excavation of this site was undertaken in 1960 during which the entrance and the South-western part of the interior was examined. Examination of the rampart wall within this area of the site failed to find any trace of inner wall-facing stones (1962). This, as well as the absence of a distinct occupation level within the interior of the site led the excavator to argue that the site was not a walled enclosure, but instead a massively constructed stone platform (cf. reconstruction Fig. 22). This it was argued may have served as a defensive look-out station.

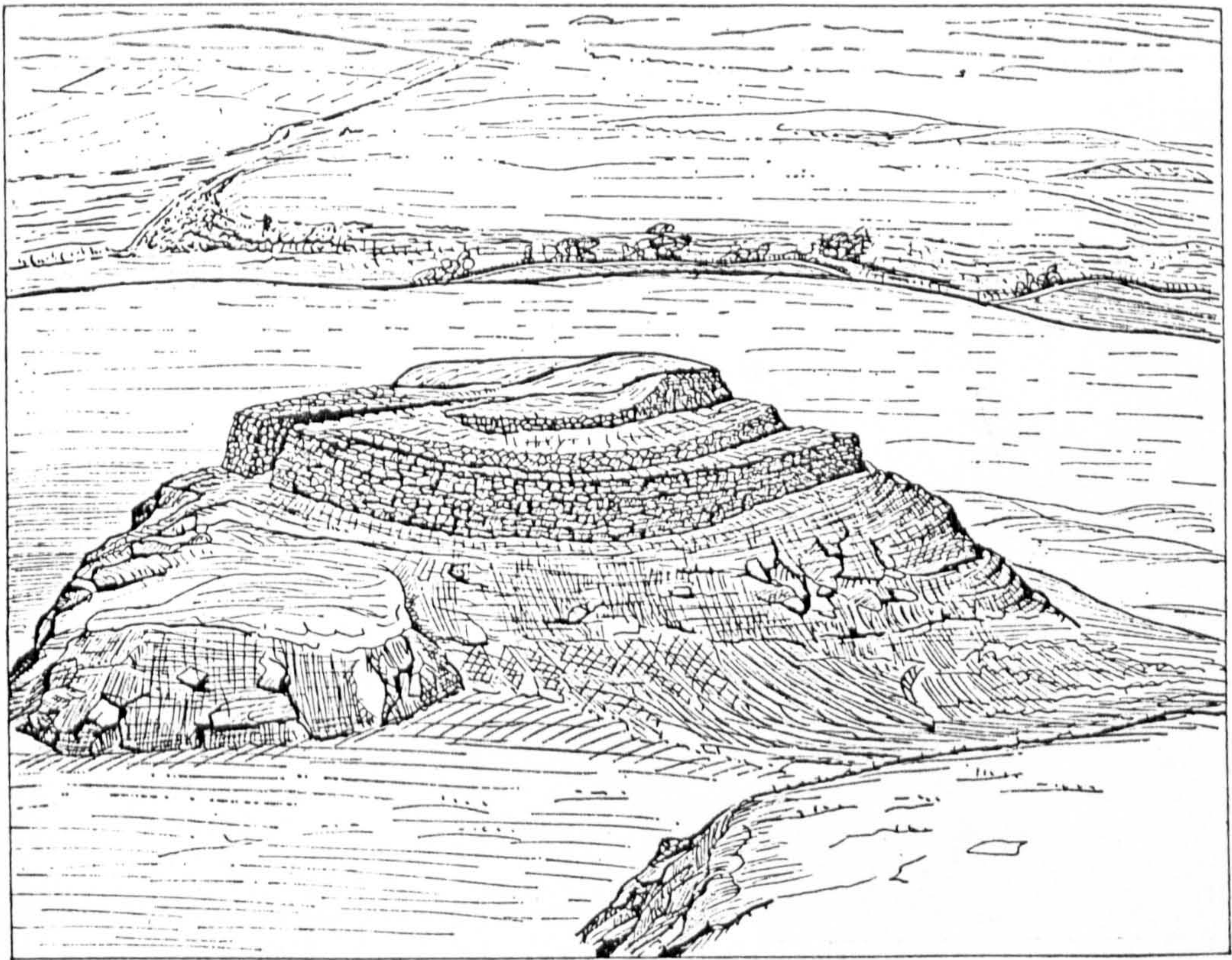


Fig.22 Suggested reconstruction of the dun of An Caisteal,
Mull. (from Fairhurst 1962)

On re-examination, however, it is apparent that this is unlikely to have been the case. To begin with, such a site here would have been very vulnerable, as the R.C.A.H.M.S. point out (1980; 96) since it could easily have been attacked by hand-thrown missiles. Also the concept of a look-out station infers a complex system of military control and command of the area. While such use might be paralleled in the Roman world, or the later medieval period, we have no evidence for such a system in the early 1st millennium A.D. in Argyll.

An alternative explanation of the site is provided by the R.C.A.H.M.S., who argue that originally it was comparable to all the other duns of the west coast. Subsequent stone robbing and the outwards collapse of the fabric of the site have led to the present denuded state.

If it is correct to interpret duns as permanent residential sites it is worth remembering that it is even more unlikely that they could be identified purely on the basis of enclosed area. The size of such a settlement unit may relate to size of population inhabiting, but also the social status of the inhabitants.

Persons of high social status would presumably have been more able to have larger and more elaborate homesteads constructed for them. Analysis of Irish law tracts defining status make it clear that the higher a person's social status, the larger the buildings he or she inhabited might be. When problems like this are considered it becomes apparent that any attempt to associate different types of social group with sites using criteria based largely on analysis of the size of the site's enclosed area must be suspect. In the present

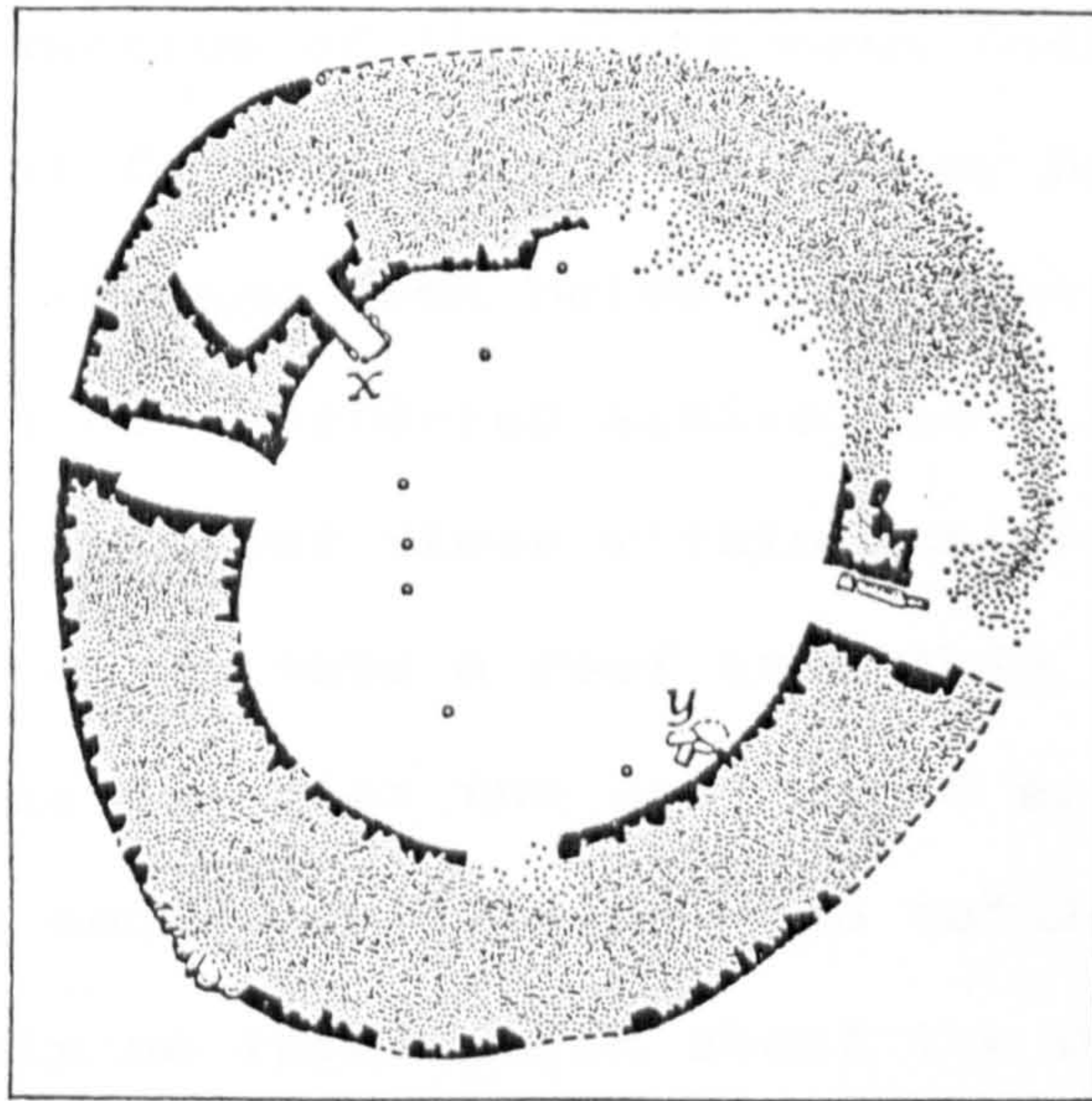
case it is possible to imagine a situation in which an analysis of the settlement pattern of an area and the social status of the inhabitants could be seriously awry. By choosing sites to study primarily on the basis of enclosed area an element of that pattern may be excluded merely because it did not conform to the accepted size limitations. This may be a particularly major oversight when it is considered that the element so excluded may represent the most important people in terms of social hierarchy.

Recently it has been suggested that some duns may have been entirely roofed over, and hence formed defended houses (Ritchie and Ritchie 1981; 110; Barrett 1981). This had been suggested earlier by Childe after his excavations at Rahoy (1946, 88). Here excavation revealed that the uneven bedrock floor of the site had been floored over with timbers. On top of this timber floor an earthen floor was found, this had a central paved area upon which a rectangular hearth had been constructed. In the paving were found the stumps of two oak posts, one cut into a bedrock base, the other resting on a pad-stone (1938). Such a timber floor would have needed a roof over it to protect it from the elements. The presence of a post resting only on a padstone may be evidence of such a roof, since to maintain its position either bracing posts, for which there is no evidence, or downwards pressure from an overhead framework or roof would have been needed.

Possible evidence for the roofing of duns could also be cited from other excavated sites. At Dùn Fhinn, Kintyre,

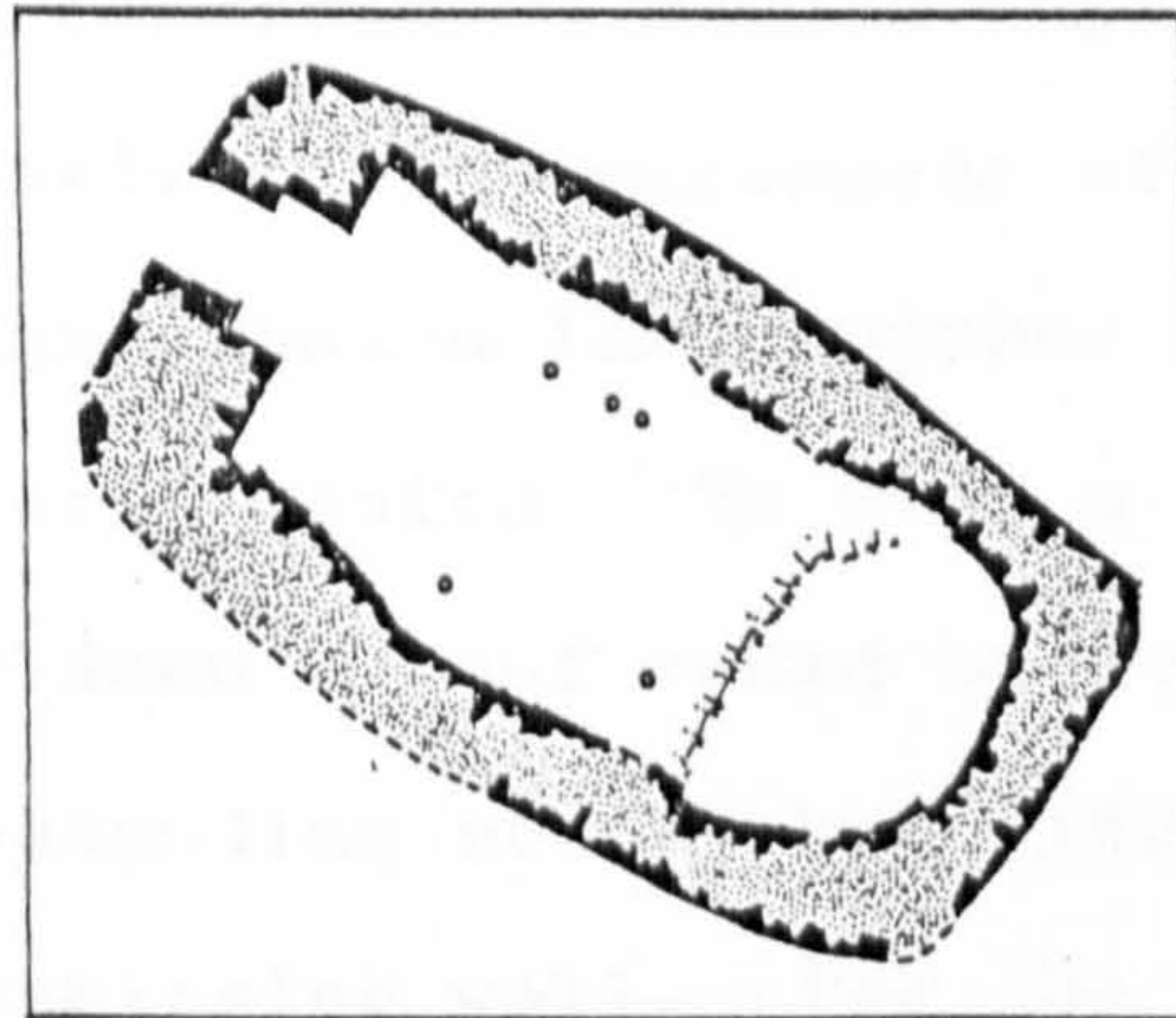
a series of post-holes were found running in two lines, parallel to the outer walls of the site (Bigwood 1966). The R.C.A.H.M.S. suggested that these indicated the former existence of timber buildings constructed against the inner face of the wall (1971; 83-4). These would, however, have been extremely narrow, and a more reasonable suggestion would be that the site was originally entirely roofed over, with the timber posts being roof supports. A similar situation may also be seen at Dun Kildalloig, Kintyre where a ring of post-holes was also found within the site (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971; 87-9) (Fig. 23). The suggestion of timber-ranges was probably based upon the work of Hamilton at Clickhimin in Shetland, where it was suggested that such ranges had existed within the massive stone ring wall which marks the first fortification on the site and also the broch itself (1968; 63-71; 111 ff).

Within Argyll another excavated site which may originally have been totally roofed over is that of Druim an Duin in Mid-Argyll, excavated by Christison in 1904. As at Duntroon fort the interior of the site was excavated down to bedrock. This revealed that the site did not have a horizontal bedrock floor, but that instead it had been constructed on a sloping spine of bedrock. Across the width of the site this bedrock drops by around 30 cm. Structural evidence exists to suggest that this change in the level of the bedrock may have been deliberately exploited by the inhabitants of the site. A scarcement ledge protrudes from the internal wall face along the lower wall of the site. If this ledge had supported timber beams running at right angles from the wall to the centre of the site a more or less level interior would have been created



Kildalloig Dun.

Dùn Fhinn.



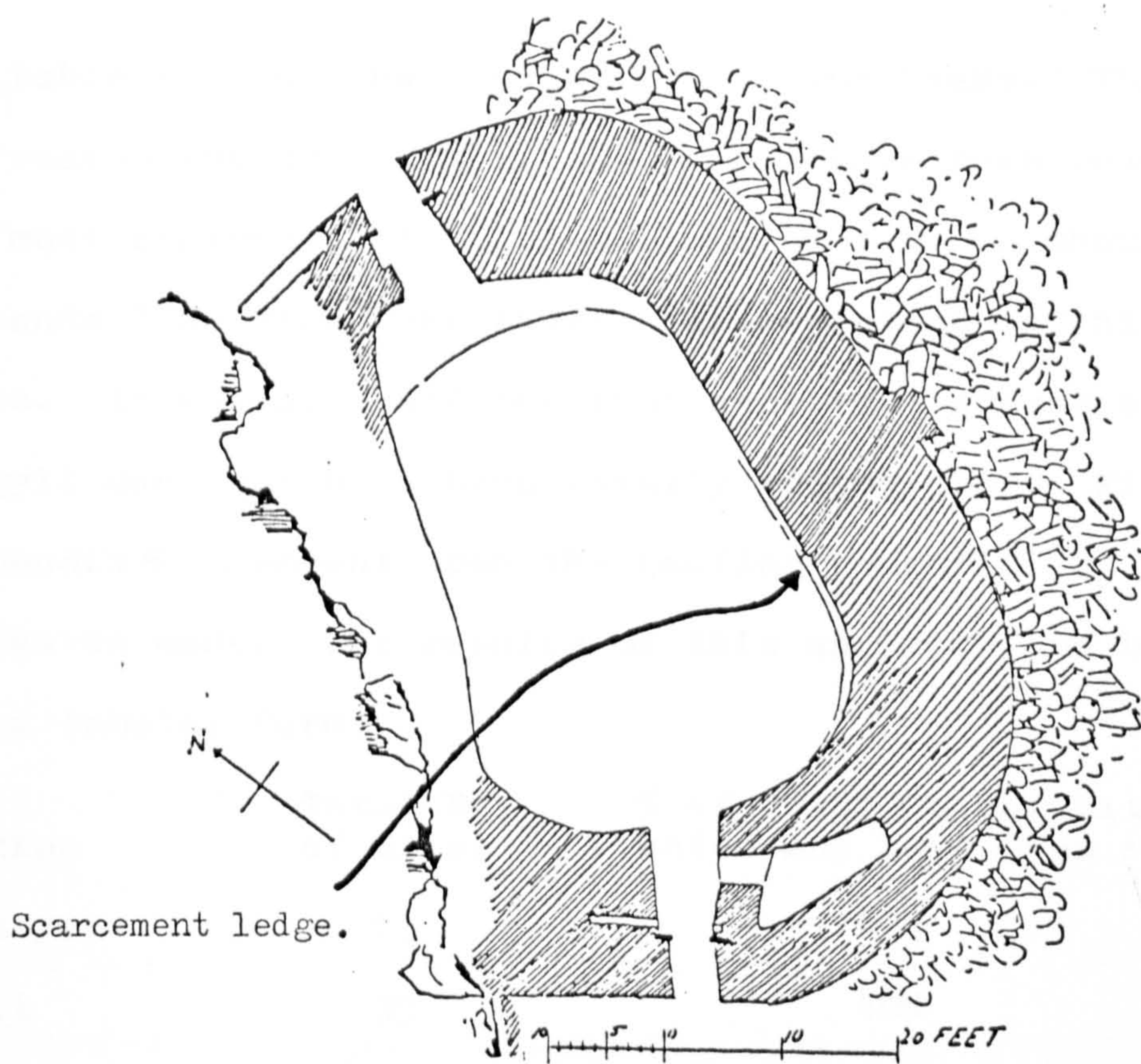
0 10 20m. 50ft.

Fig. 23 Kildalloig Dun and Dùn Fhinn, Kintyre illustrating
internal post holes found on excavation.

(after R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971)

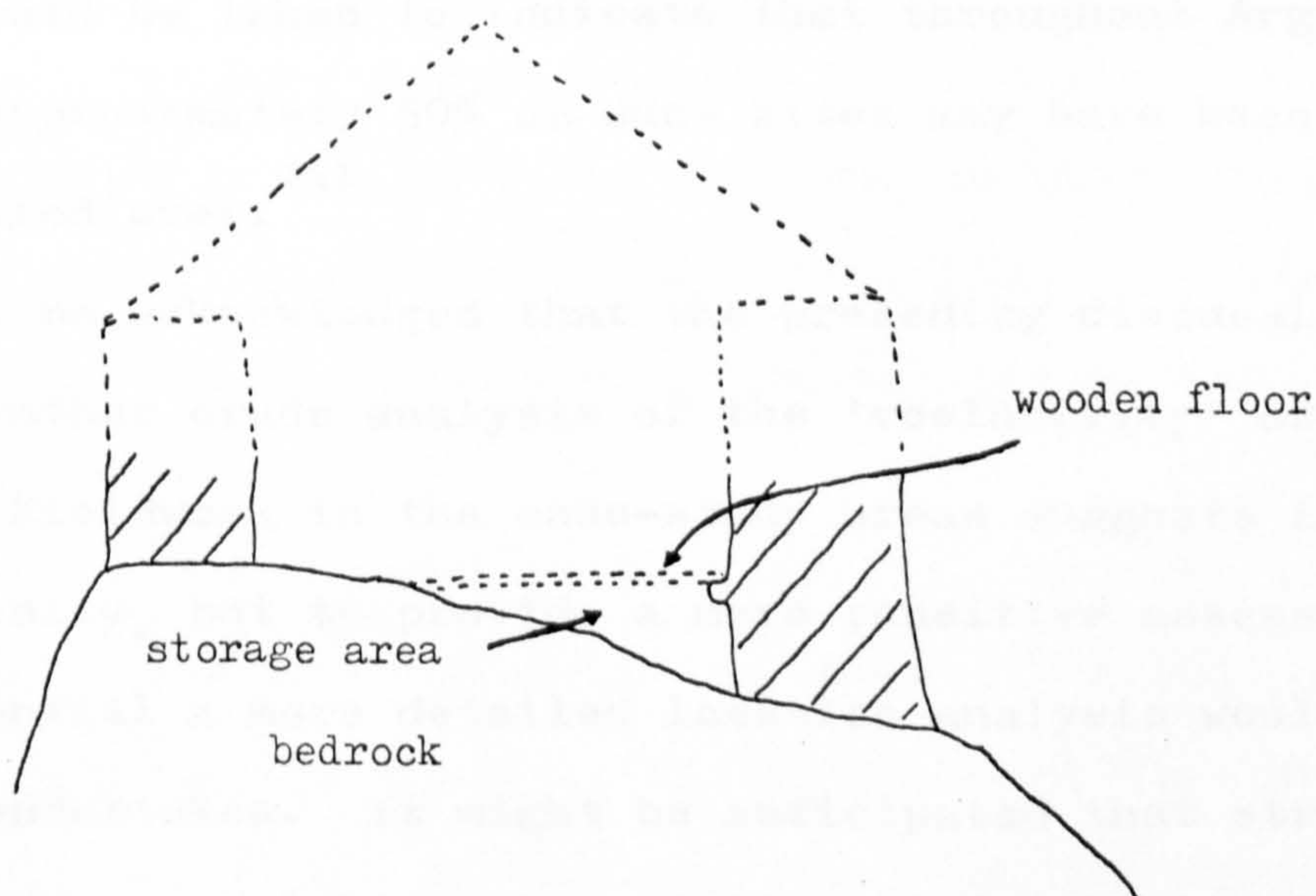
within the walls (see reconstruction Fig. 24). If this suggested function of the scarcement ledge is correct, then an additional feature of this site may have been the existence of a cavity storage area below this timber floor. Such a cavity might be considered similar to a souterrain. The presence of a timber floor within part of the interior of the site would necessitate a roof over this area of the site at least. In actual fact the site would appear of a size and shape which could easily have been totally roofed over. Unfortunately no information about the deposits encountered within the interior, which could be used to refute^{or} further support of this suggestion, is recorded in the published report.

An analysis of the published plans of duns reveals that many were constructed with a regular shape (many being oval or circular). This regularity of shape could be taken to indicate that a large number of the sites were originally totally roofed. In such a situation it is presumed that beams for such a roof would be supported mainly on internal free-standing posts, but with some weight also carried on the stone enclosing wall. For the present analysis it was considered of interest to tentatively suggest which of the duns planned by the R.C.A.H.M.S. may have been totally roofed. The main criterion used to denote a 'roofable' site was regularity of construction to produce a shape of structure which might with ease be roofed over (for example circular and rectangular sites could easily be envisaged as totally roofed). The size of structure which could be totally roofed would be influenced by the availability of timbers



Plan of the Fort of Druim an Duin,
by Thomas Ross, Architect, F.S.A. Scot.

(Christison 1905)



hypothetical reconstruction of interior of site.

suitable for internal posts and roofing beams. There seems no reason why such timber should not have been readily available in most regions in the 1st Millennium A.D., although windswept islands like Tiree may provide an exception to this general rule. It was also assumed that even the largest of the Argyll duns may have been totally roofed over. Within Appendix H comment upon the roofing potential of individual sites is made. The results of this analysis are best presented in a tabular form;

Region	Total No. of Sites	% of Total No. of Sites which may have been roofed
Kintyre	65	48%
Mull	33	40%
Tiree	16	56%
Lorn	49	53%
Coll and Northern Argyll	14	43%

This could be taken to indicate that throughout Argyll as a whole approximately 50% of duns sites may have been entirely roofed over. (4)

It must be acknowledged that the preceding discussion presents a rather crude analysis of the 'roofability' of duns in Argyll. Fieldwork in the case-study areas suggests its general validity, but to provide a more sensitive assessment of such potential a more detailed location analysis would have to be undertaken. It might be anticipated that structures totally roofed over might occupy distinct types of location. For example some protection from exposure, particularly from wind might be anticipated. Fieldwork suggested, however, that

it was difficult to distinguish the use of particular locations for such potentially fully roofed sites. Indeed certain of them appeared located on very exposed hilltops or coastal promontories.

If the supposition that some duns may have been totally roofed structures^{is correct,} then it is of importance to consider how architectural features such as intramural galleries, stairways and cells functioned within such a site. Intramural stairways may have led either to the wall head (which provided a good vantage point) or they may have provided access to higher levels within the dun - for example roof storage space. Either way, if the site were totally roofed, the roof structure would have had to respect the access necessitated by these stairways. Intramural cells may similarly have influenced the nature of the roof of the site. If provided with a timber ladder such cells may have served a similar function to the stone stairways. Alternately if such cells were used simply as storage areas and were lintelled over then the line of the roof would not have had to respect their position. Lintelled wall cells can be cited at Druim an Duin (Christison 1904). Intramural galleries may also have been lintelled over, and hence also would not have placed limitations on the roofing of the site.

Amongst the potentially fully roofed sites there exists a distinct group of very circular and regularly constructed duns. Examples include Borgadel Water, Kintyre; Caisteal Suidhe Cheannaidh, Lorn; An Sean Dùn, Mull; Dùn Aisgain, Mull (Fig. 25) and also Dun Chroisprig, Islay. These sites are all comparable in terms of their regular construction, and also their size. All have central courts ranging between

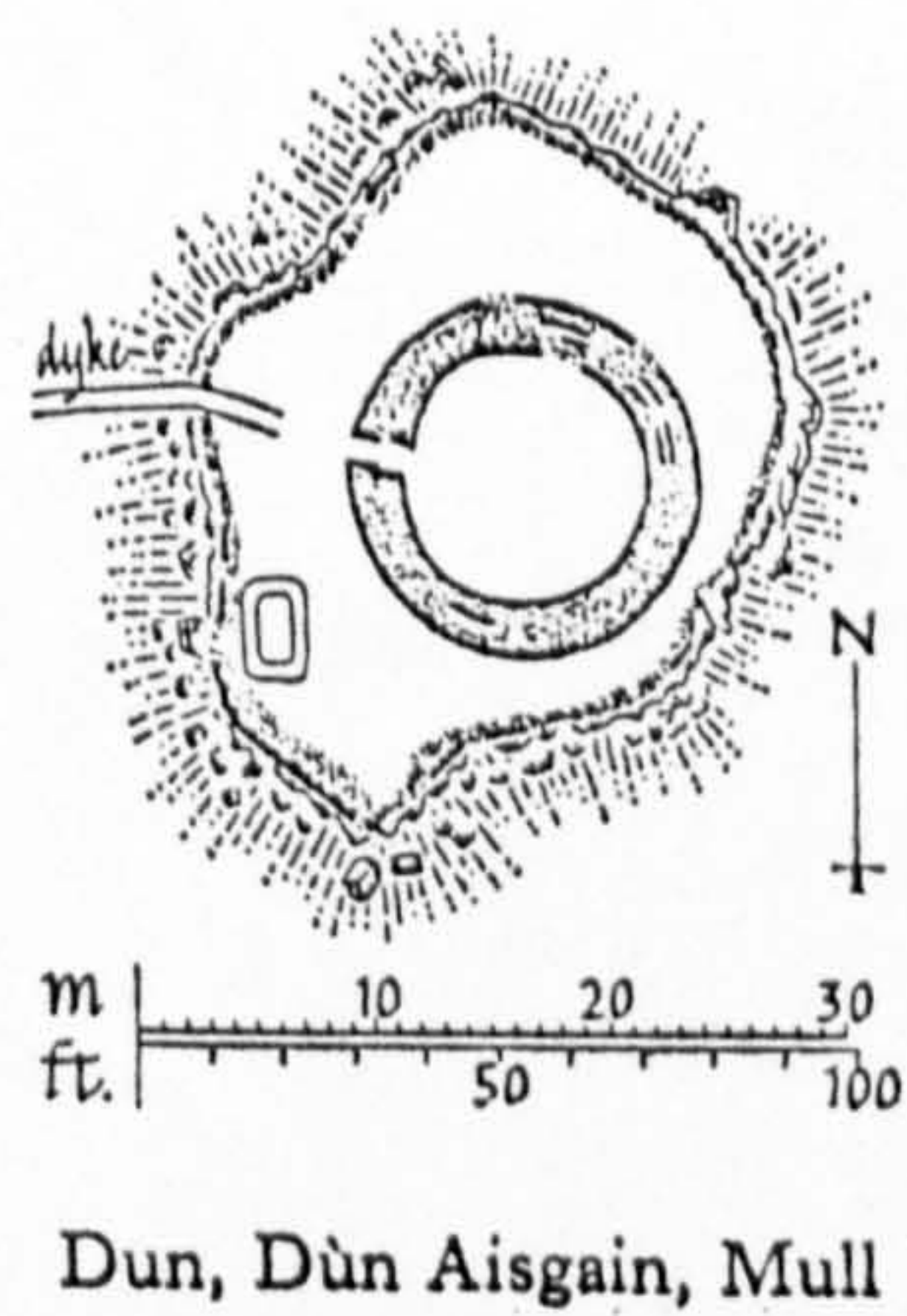
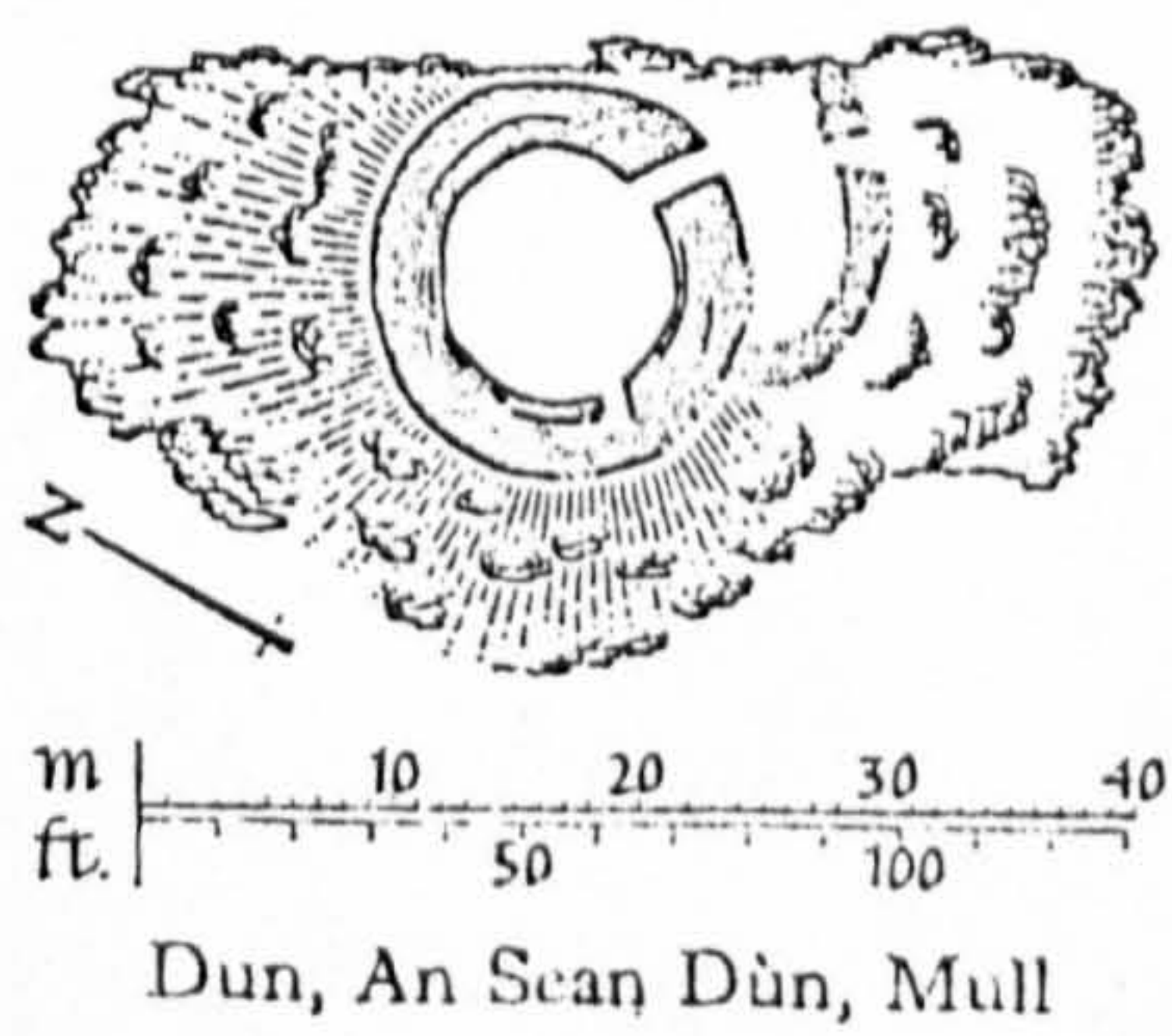
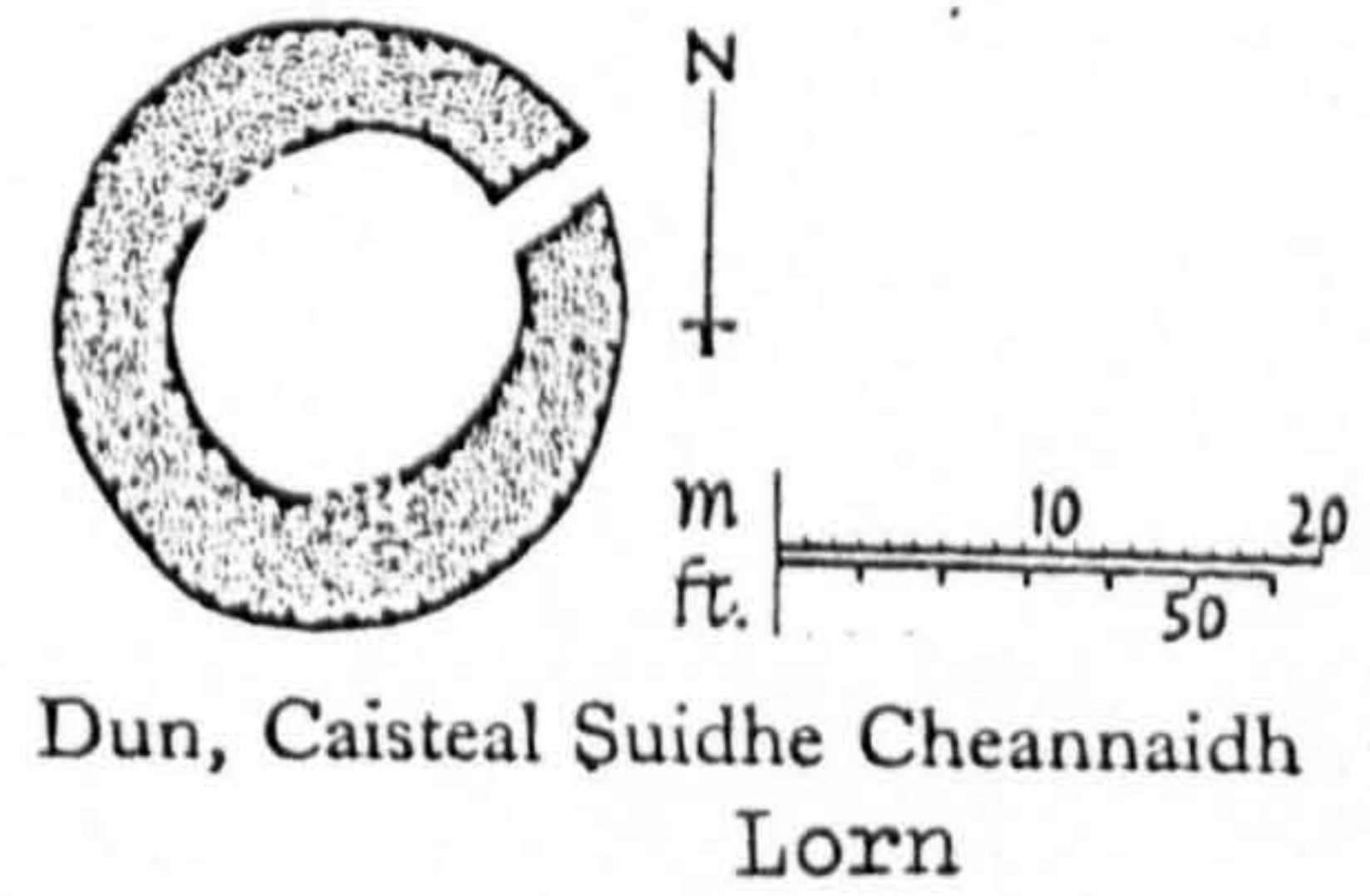
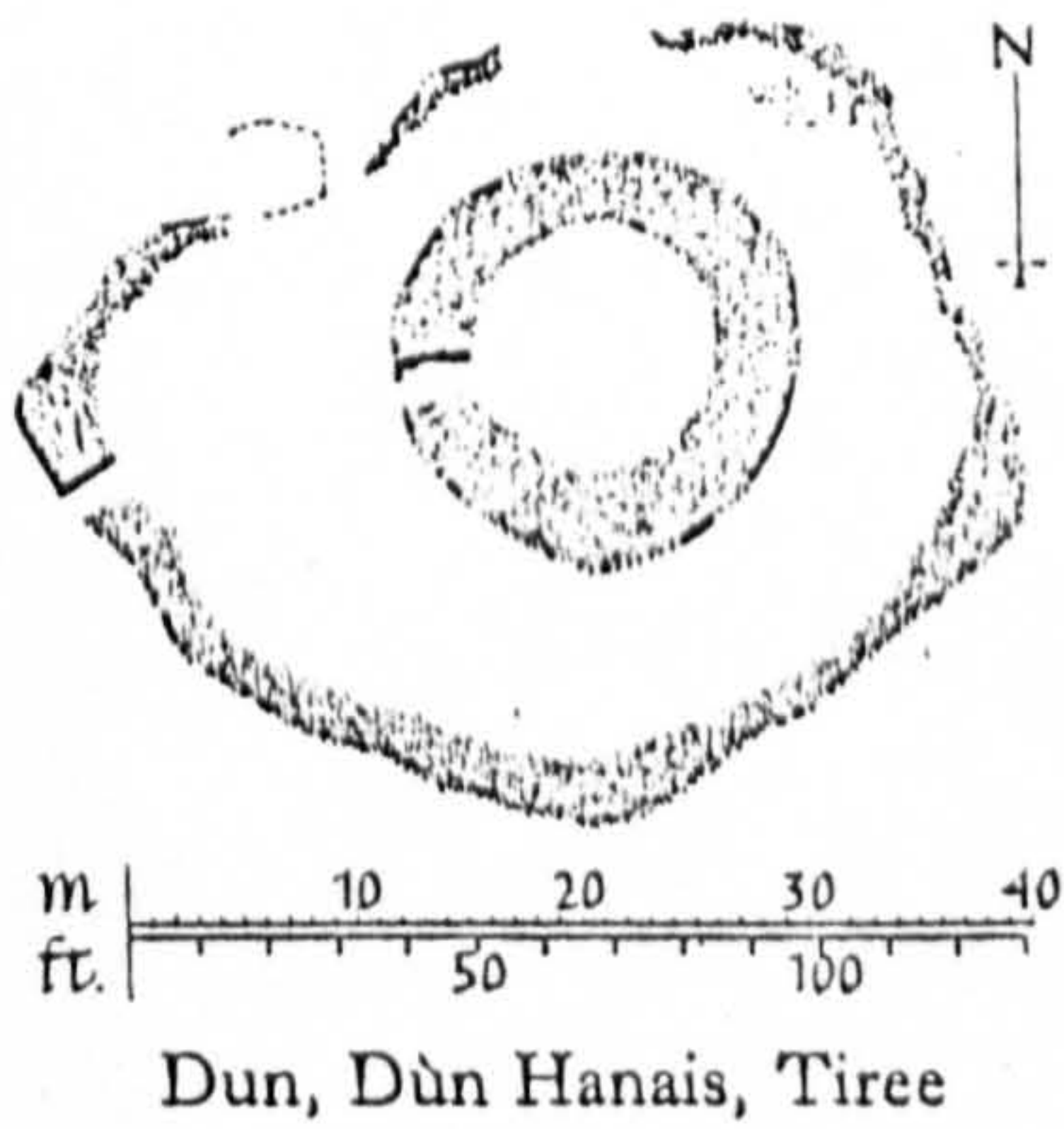
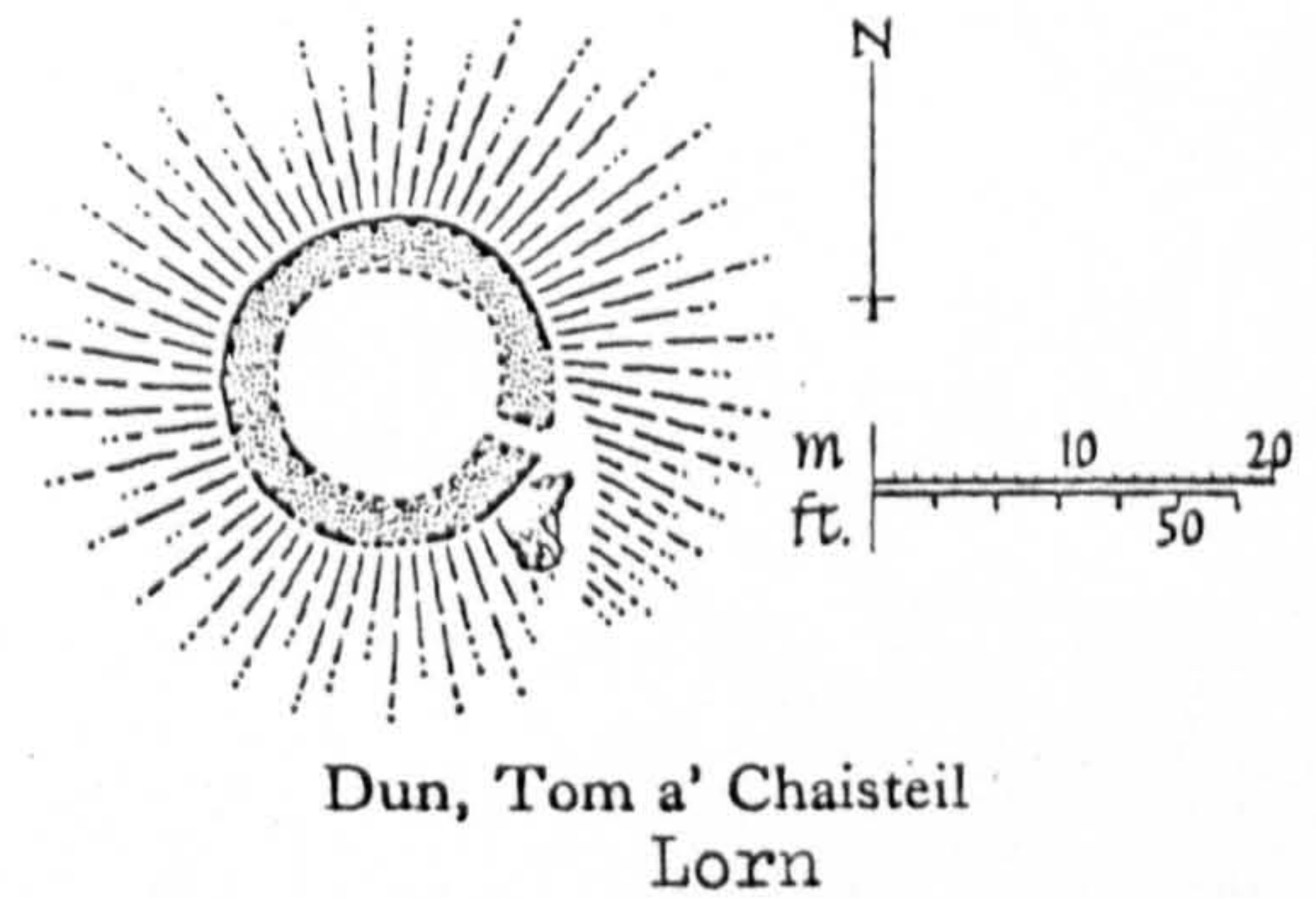
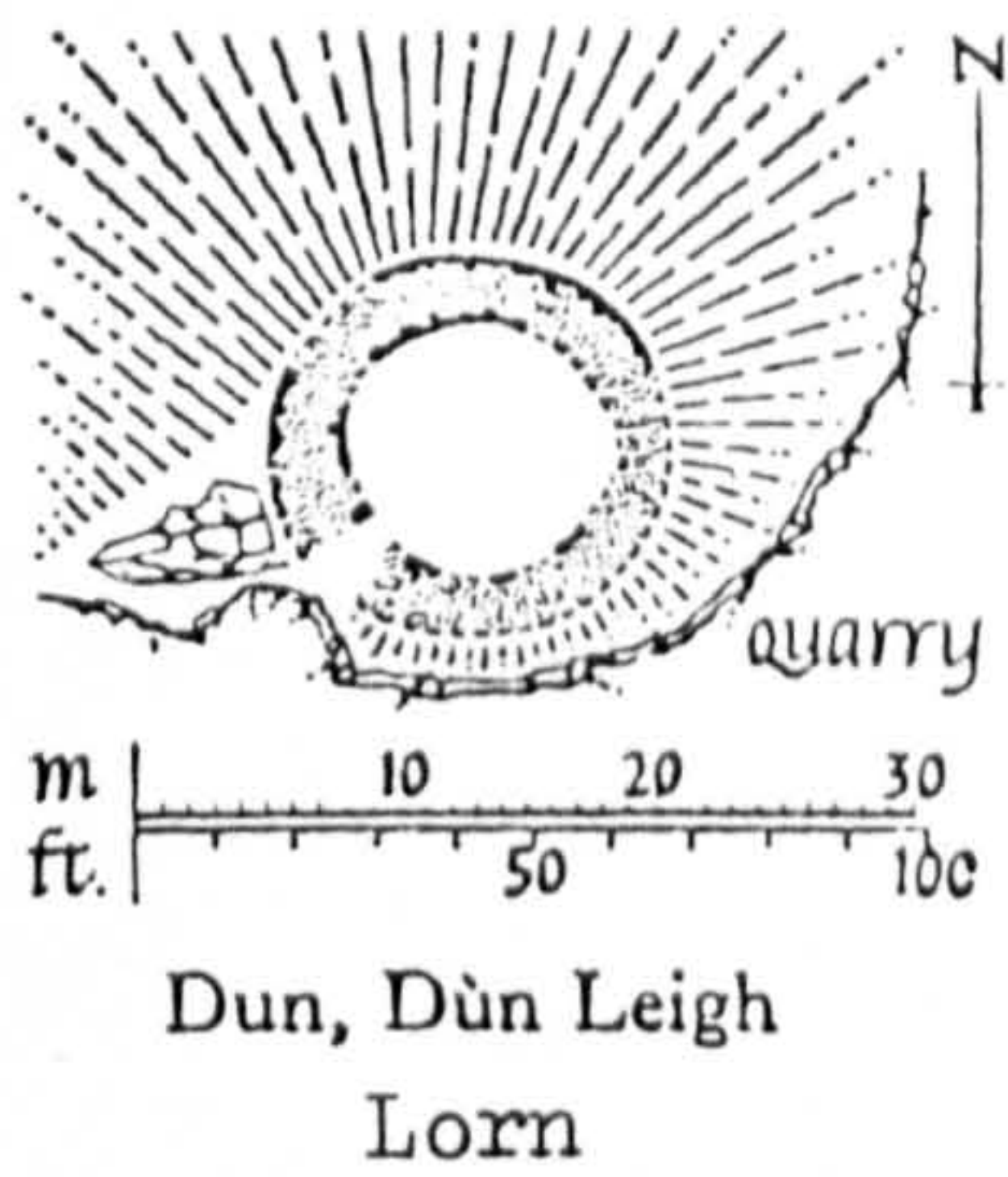
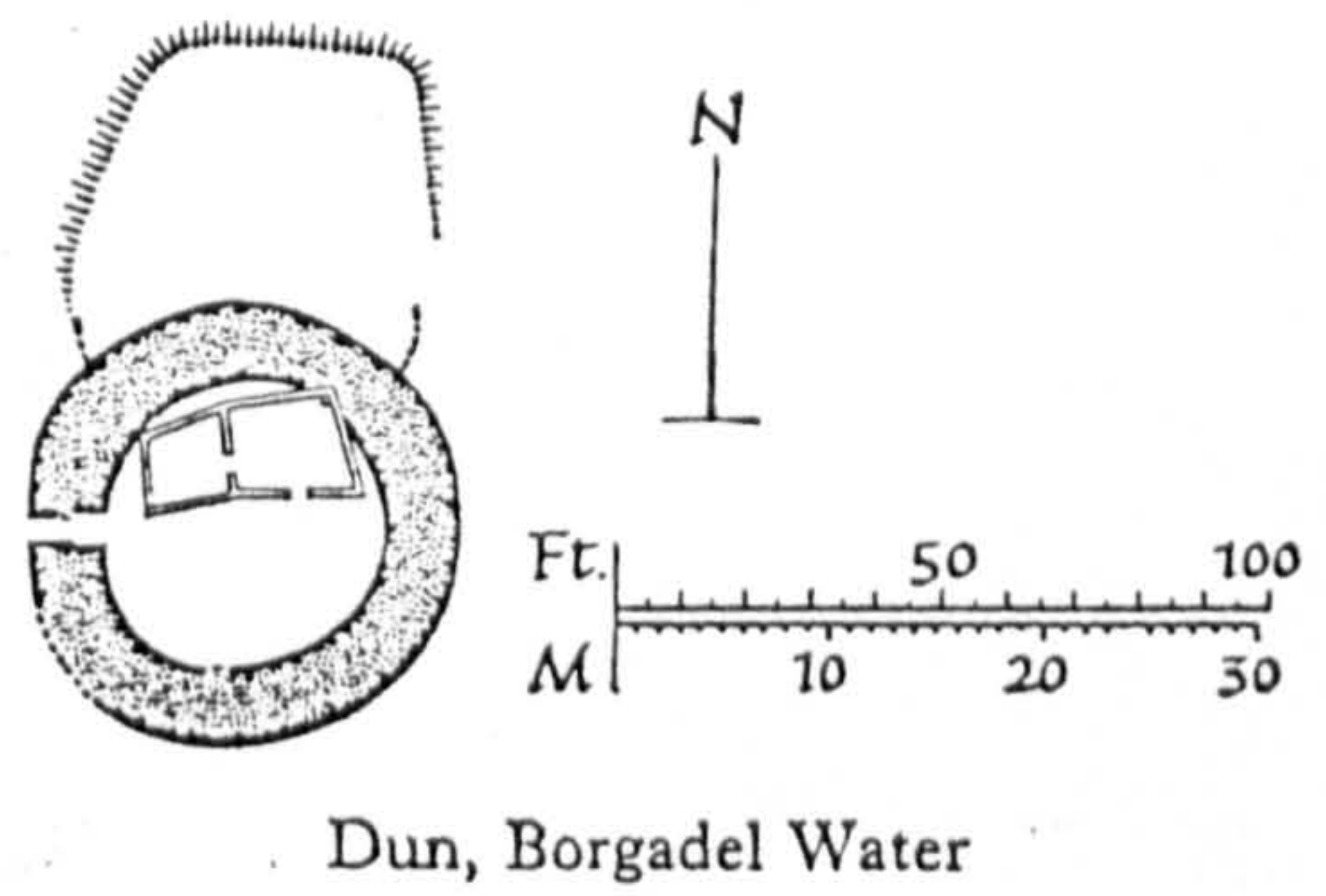
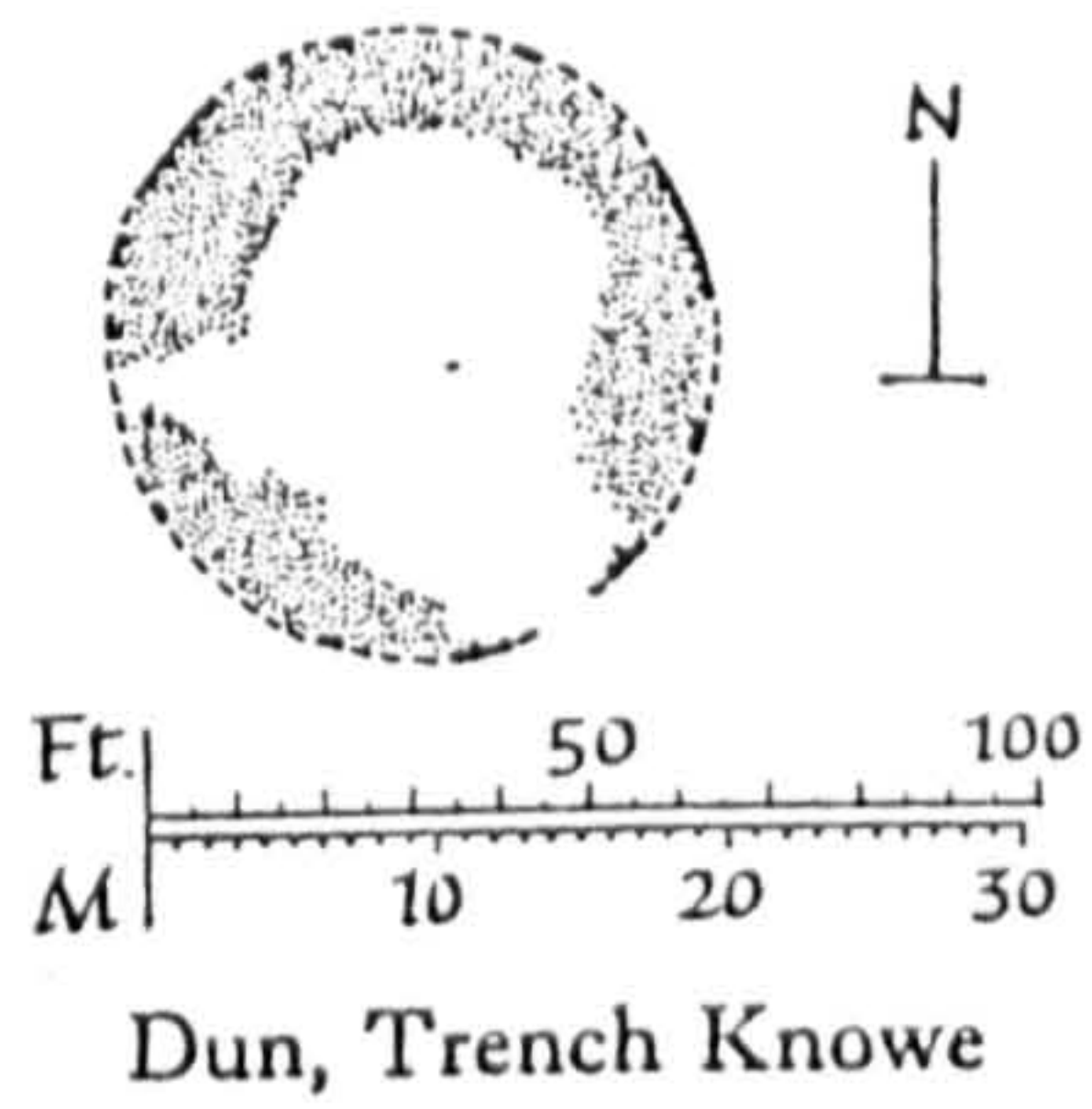
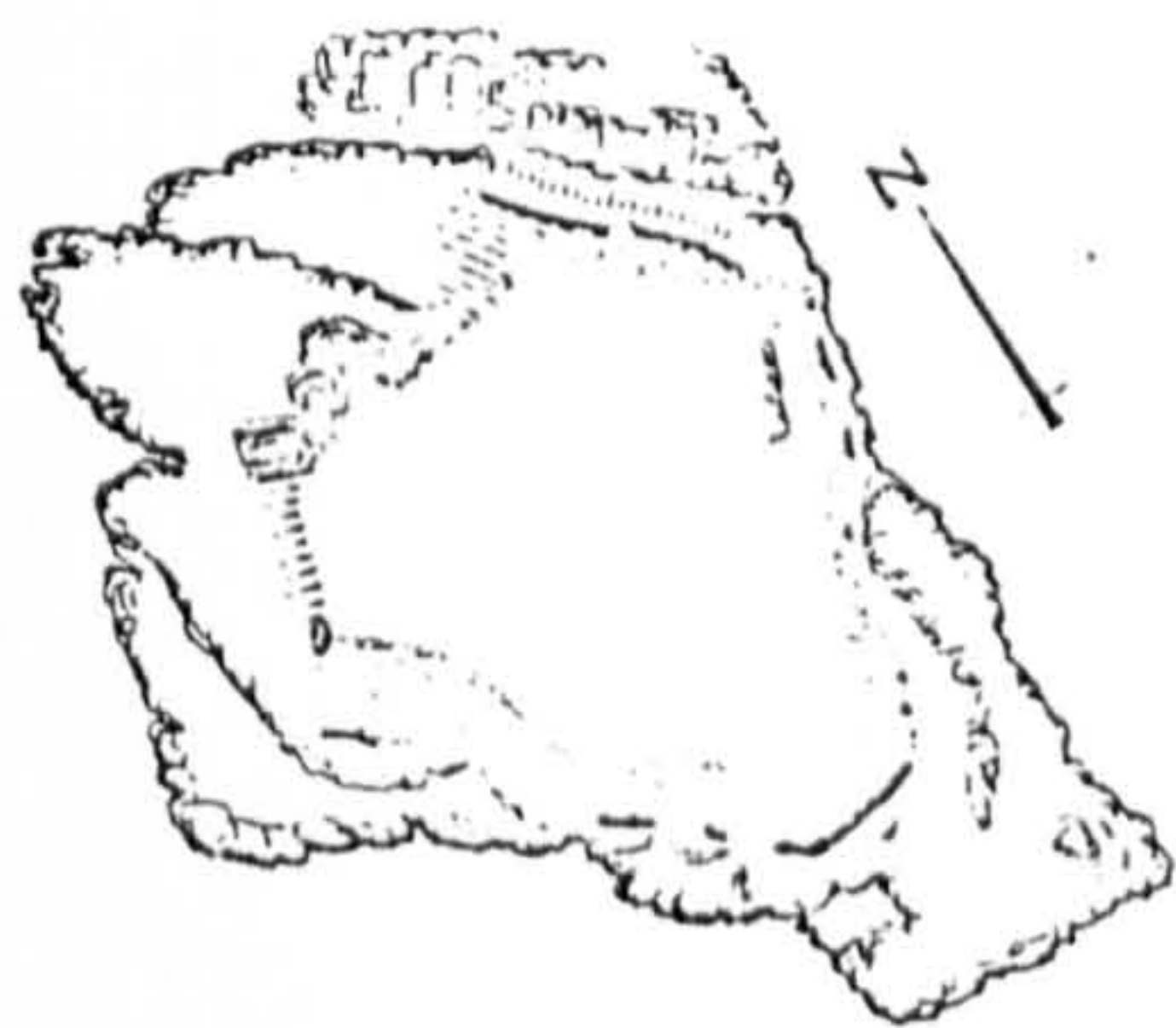


Fig. 25 Circular duns in Argyll. (from R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 1974, 1980)

9 and 13 metres in diameter. The size and circularity of these sites must suggest a comparison with brochs. A closer parallel is suggested by the presence of architectural features such as intramural galleries at Dùn Aisgain and intramural cells at An Sean Dùn, both of which are also features of broch architecture. The similarity between this group of sites and brochs is of major importance not only to studies of Argyll, but to the whole of the Atlantic Province of Scotland, since it must call into question any assestion that brochs are a distinct monument type. This will be discussed in greater detail subsequently (Chapter Eight).

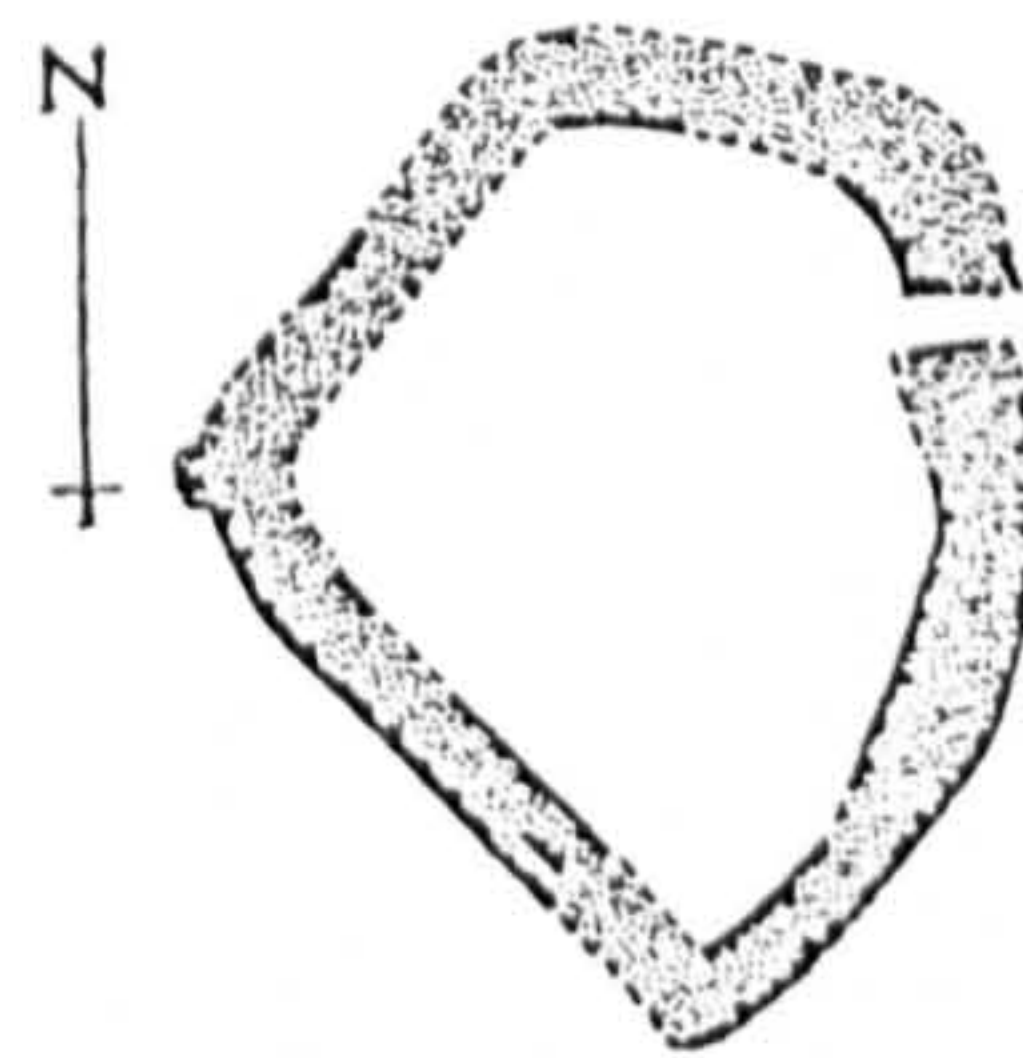
While many duns may have been entirely roofed structures, it would seem unlikely that all were. At many sites the enclosing wall defines an area of irregular shape which it would be difficult to roof over. At these sites the wall line is determined by the natural terrain of the site, and is usually located to offer as much defence as possible for the site. Examples of such sites may include Dùnan an t-Seasgain Gigha, Dun Putechantuy, Kintyre and Dùn Gallanach, Lorn (Fig. 26).

The distinction between sites which may have been totally roofed, and others is an important one. If sites were totally roofed the enclosing rampart wall has a major structural role not only as a defence, but also as a house-wall. In contrast at other sites the rampart wall is a defensive feature enclosing the settlement. As such the patterns of human activity enclosed by such a wall may differ from those enclosed within fully roofed sites.



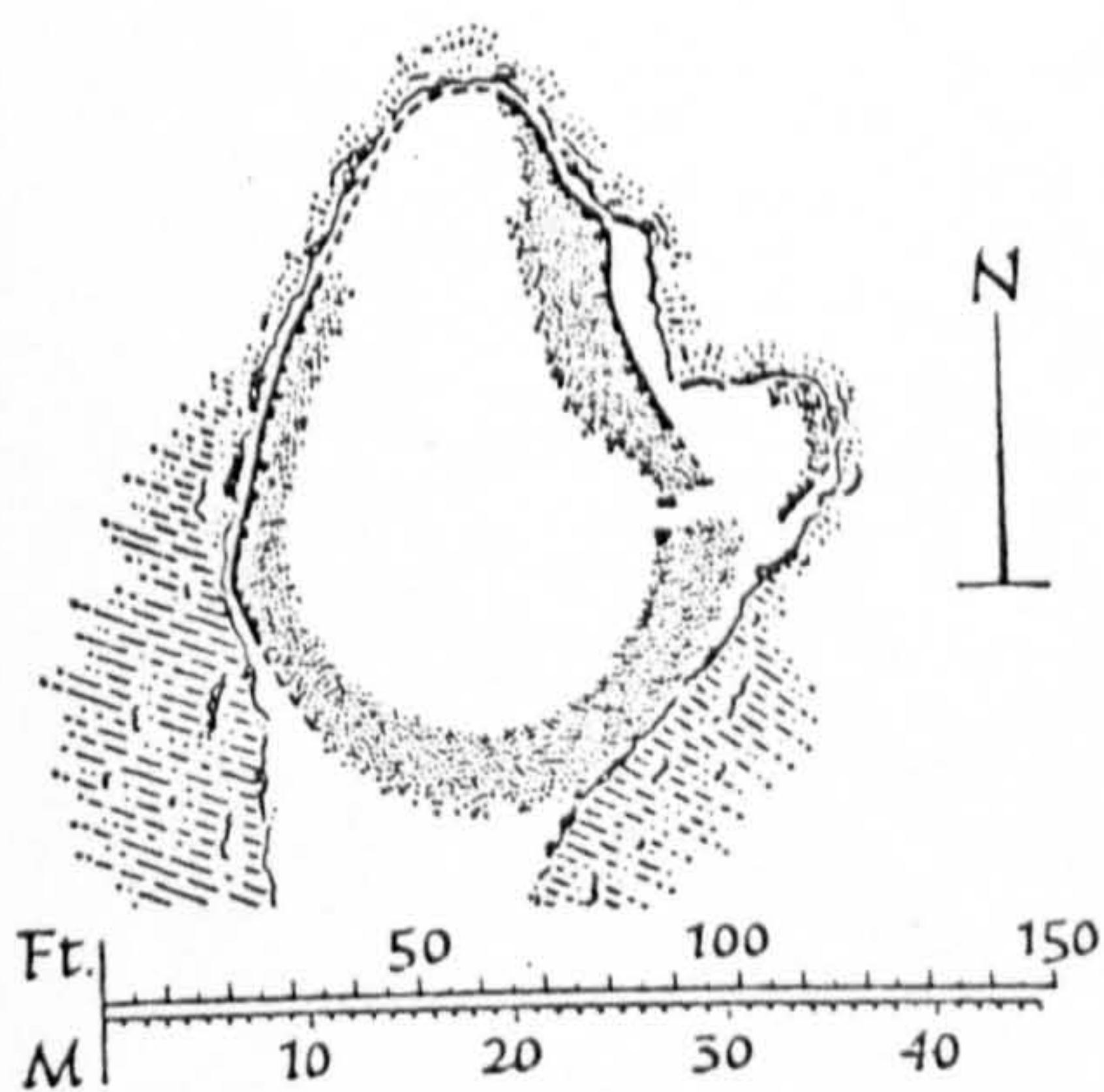
m | 10 20 30
ft. | 50 100

Dun, An Dùn, Eilean Dubh, Tiree



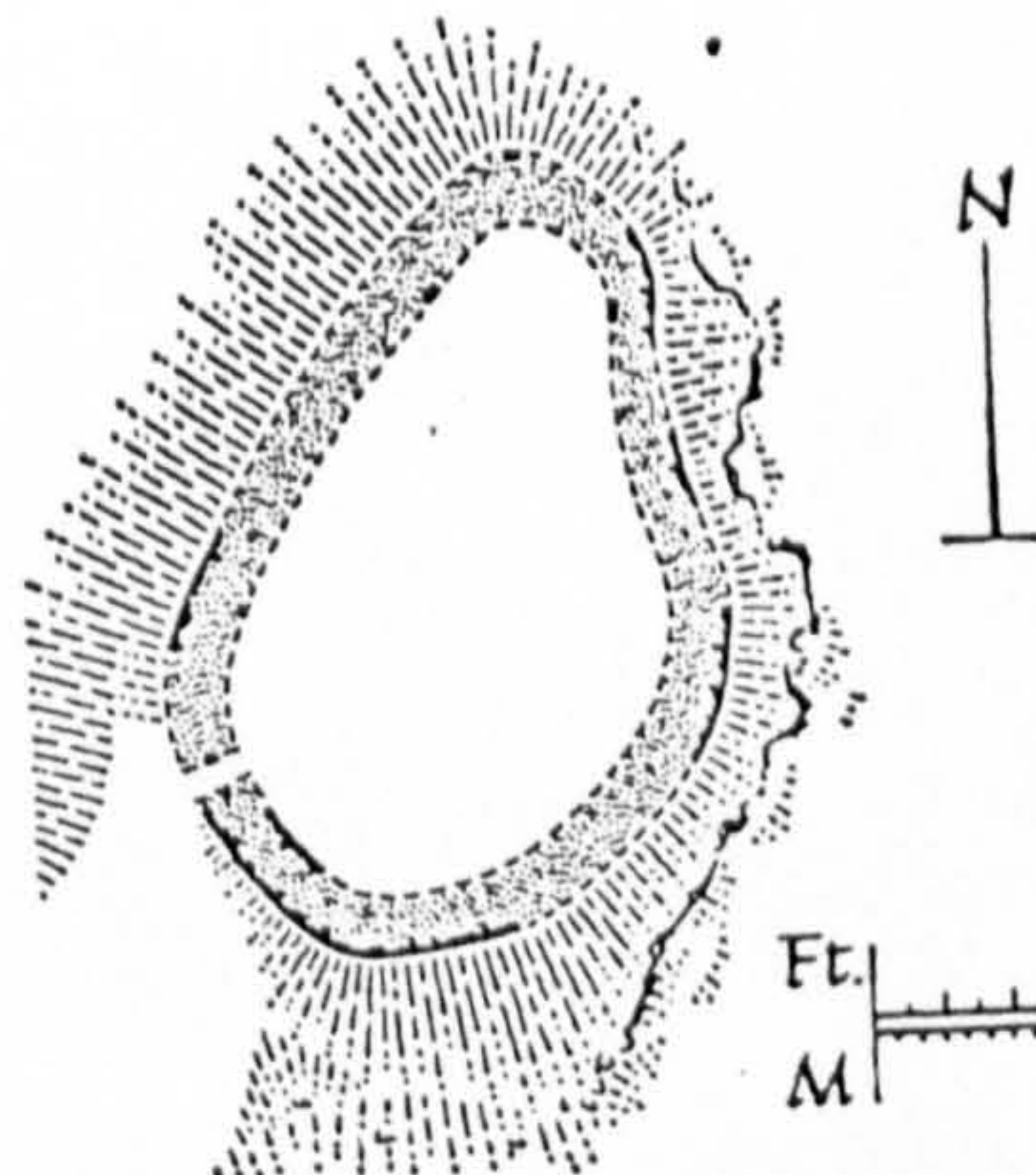
m | 10 20 30
ft. | 50 100

Dun, Gallanach
Lorn.



Ft. | 50 100 150
M | 10 20 30 40

Dun, Putechantuy
Kintyre.



Ft. | 50 100
M | 10 20 30

. Dun, Dùnan an t-Seasgain, Gigha
Kintyre.

Fig. 26 Irregularly shaped duns.

(from R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 1974, 1980)

Within the second group of sites either timber ranges built against the wall face or free-standing buildings should be anticipated. The existence of timber ranges has been suggested at Dun Kildalloig and Dùn Fhinn in Kintyre, but previous discussion has illustrated that these interpretations may be misguided.

The only other excavated site at which evidence for internal structures has been claimed is that of Kildonan Dun in Kintyre (Fairhurst 1939). At this site it was suggested that in the Phase I occupation six small huts had been constructed within the main enclosing wall. The size of these structures could not be clearly defined, but as all six were located within the total enclosed area of 150 sq. m. then each must have been small. Several criticisms could be raised against Fairhurst's site interpretations; however, To begin with the excavator says of them,

"they were presumably small hovels in contrast with the fine rampart around them"

This seems a somewhat illogical state of affairs. The enclosing wall is well constructed and includes architectural features such as intramural galleries, stairs and cells. This being the case it might be anticipated that internal structures would be more substantially constructed also. This leads to an alternative interpretation of the site. Following on from earlier discussion, Kildonan Dun may have originally been a fully roofed structure. If this were the case then the internal structures noted may have been internal subdivisions of a house-structure. In this case the internal arrangements of the site consist of a paved pathway leading from the entrance to the centre of the site where a small

hearth was located. Around this central area were ranged the six partitions represented by the 'huts'. At least two of these had hearths within them, and access to the intramural stair and cell was also gained through one of these partitions (Fig. 27).

The great variation in the enclosed area of duns may relate to a variety of factors. Preceding discussion indicates that it may be related to whether the dun was a totally roofed structure or not. It may also relate to the size and status of the community inhabiting it, a point discussed earlier. It may be possible to detect something of the nature of the community inhabiting the site, and its social status through archaeological excavation. Status was also defined by wealth which was displayed through possessions. Thus a richer artefactual assemblage would be anticipated from a higher status site. In any such work it must be remembered that artefact recovery will vary depending upon whether the dun was a roofed house, or an enclosure around a house. Within a dun-house a clean floor surface with few artefacts would be anticipated. In this case it would be all the more important to consider any midden deposits located outside the structure.

Outside the main dun wall many sites exhibit additional, often less substantial, lines of walling. These are normally interpreted as defensive outworks (cf. Maxwell 1969). The following table illustrates the incidence of such outworks.

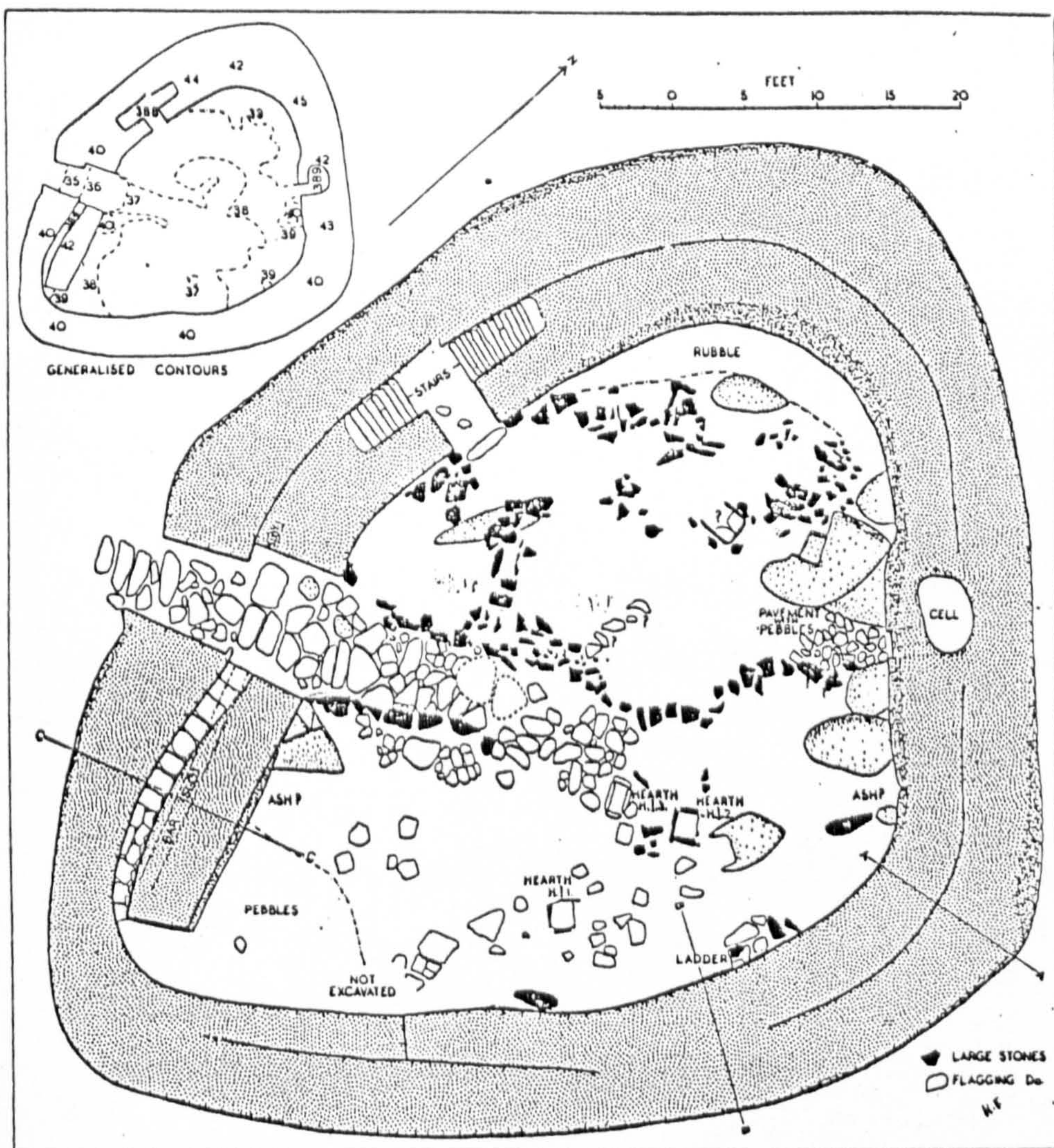


Fig. 4. The Kildonan Fort, Period I.

Fig.27 Kildonan dun, Kintyre. (from Fairhurst 1939)

Region	Total No. of Sites	% of Total Which Have Outworks
Kintyre	65	17%
Mull	33	42%
Tiree	16	69%
Lorn	49	29%
Coll and Northern Argyll	14	14%

Again it is difficult to decide whether this is a true reflection of the original state of affairs. It is possible that trace of such outworks was lost more rapidly because they were of slighter build than the main dun walls. Some of these lines of walling do appear to be designed to impede access through natural gullies to the site, and hence may have some defensive function. The large percentage of the sites of Tiree which have such outworks is probably related to the terrain of the island, which is largely flat, and hence lacks the type of hill top, rock stack or promontory sites favoured for dun location elsewhere. To provide additional defence for low-lying sites it may have been necessary to build additional external walls here.

Many of the lines of outwork appear to define outer terraces or annexes outside the main dun enclosure. These could have provided external working areas associated with the dun. Such areas would have been of particular importance if many duns were totally roofed since they may have been necessary for the performance of activities not suited to the domestic interior. This is an important consideration which has not been a feature of the majority of excavations

which have been polarized towards an analysis of the dun structure and the internal enclosed area. The only site in Argyll at which excavations of structural evidence have been undertaken outside the main dun wall is that of Dun Mhic Choigil in Kintyre. Here, under rescue conditions, a narrow two-metre wide trench was taken from the dun wall across an external walled terrace (Hedges and Hedges 1976). No stratification or artefactual evidence was recovered in this case. Of the many examples of sites with walk external terraces, the sites of Druim an Duin and Dun Toiseich, both in Mid-Argyll provide excellent examples which would be worthy of more detailed analysis.

If some outworks do define external working areas, the problems inherent in attempting to distinguish between fort and dun sites are further exacerbated. If the area enclosed by outworks at dun sites is added to the area of the enclosed site, then areas well in excess of 375 sq. m. may be noted. Here it would be assumed that the range of activities being undertaken within these external working areas would have been occurring within the larger forts.

Other explanations for the presence of outworks at dun sites could also be suggested. Some may be the remnants of earlier defended enclosures on the site. A sequence of defended enclosures was noted earlier at Dun Skeig in Kintyre, and the Torr Shielfoot, when duns both replace forts on the same site (Chapter Six). At a site like Dun Aisgain on Mull, the apparent outworks around the site may be the remnants of an earlier dun, subsequently replaced by the regularly constructed circular site which presently dominates the site. This

hypothesis, of course, would have to be tested by excavation.

The construction of outworks may also have been another means of expressing the social status of its inhabitants, the series of external walls presenting a more impressive exterior to the site.

If duns were a form of defended homestead then it would be of importance to consider their relationship to agricultural production. The presence of quern-stones at a variety of sites including Dun Leccamore, Luing (Macnaughton 1890), Druim an Duin (Christison 1904) and Dun Fhinn (Bigwood 1966) indicates at least the processing of agricultural products. These are all of the rotary variety.

Analysis of the altitudinal location of duns (Appendices H and M; Volume 3) illustrates that most lie at low altitudes, adjacent to the areas of land suited to arable cultivation, which also concentrates at lower altitudes. The results of this study can be summarized in tabular form (Fig. 28) which illustrates that most of sites are located at altitudes below 91 m O.D. The location of other sites at higher altitudes can be explained in a variety of ways. While the best land for arable cultivation may have lain at lower altitudes, it is apparent that in the past higher land, and land on steep gradients was cultivated. This is often clearly indicated by rigs fossilised within later landscapes. These are found throughout Argyll, rising to 100 m and even up to 150 m. Hence the land around these higher sites may also have been suitable for arable cultivation. Sites at higher altitudes may also be more closely associated with stock-raising and hence, perhaps complemented the arable bias of lower sites.

<u>REGION</u>	<u>TOTAL NO.</u>	<u>0-46m.</u>	<u>47-91m.</u>	<u>92-137m.</u>	<u>138-183m.</u>	<u>184-229m.</u>	<u>230-290m.</u>	<u>290m.</u>
Kintyre	65	56%	24%	14%	6%	-	-	-
Mull	33	61%	27%	12%	-	-	-	-
Tiree	16	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lorn	48	61%	25%	8%	4%	2%	-	-
Coll and Northern Argyll	14	79%	21%	-	-	-	-	-
Islay	48	56%	32%	10%	2%	-	-	-
Mid Argyll	49	45%	15%	17%	15%	2%	4%	2%
Jura and Colonsay	17	65%	23%	12%	-	-	-	-
Arran, Bute and Cowal	11	36%	27%	27%	10%	-	-	-

Fig. 28 The altitude of the duns of Argyll.

The choice of high altitudes for site location may also reflect a deliberate desire to use prominent locations within the landscape, a factor also discussed in relation to hillfort sites. The best illustration of this is Dun Chonnallaich, Mid-Argyll, a dun located on a conical hill which rises to 258 m. This is the highest site within Mid-Argyll, and also the most dominant feature of the landscape for several kilometres around. Not only does it dominate the valley running North to Kilmartin but also the southern end of the valley of Loch Awe.

In certain instances the location of dun-sites could be specifically related to areas of arable land. In the west of Kintyre, for example, four duns are located along the valley of the Glen Barr Water (see Kintyre Case Study, Vol. 2). This is a small valley which is not a major routeway. The simplest explanation for the location of these sites would be that they are so located to exploit agricultural land along the valley floor. Today the valley is used mainly for improved pasturage, but the Macaulay Institute survey does suggest the soils have arable potential (1982). A similar situation may be indicated in the valley of Glen Lussa in eastern Kintyre where three duns are located along the valley floor (see Kintyre Case Study, Vol. 2).

While it would seem reasonable, then, to suggest the association of duns with agricultural production, there has been a marked reticence upon the part of fieldworkers to associate duns with obvious traces of former agricultural activity. The types of evidence which might be anticipated are field-walls, lynchets and fossilised rig cultivation.

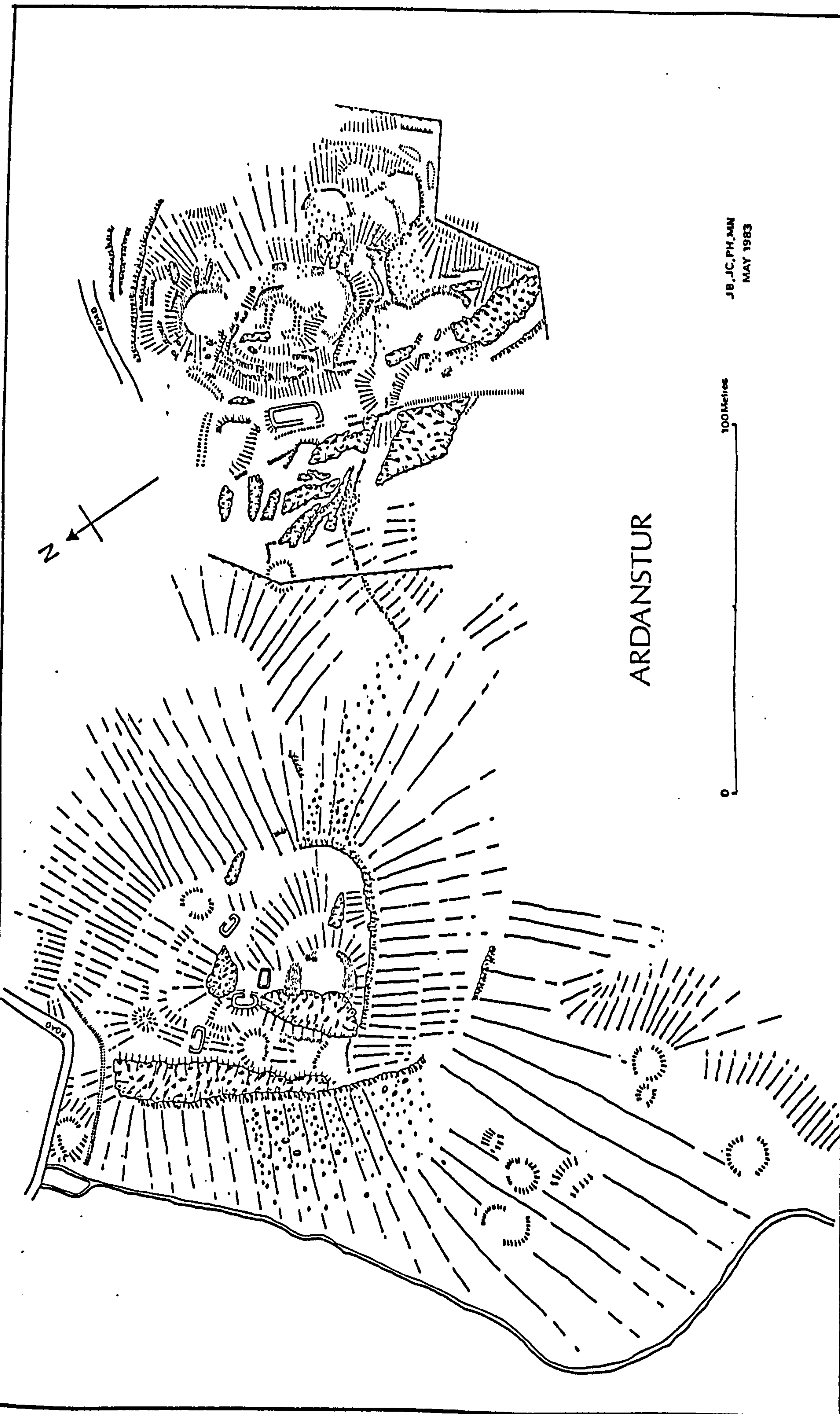
These types of feature have been noted in probable association with prehistoric settlement sites in the border counties of Scotland. (cf. Halliday 1982; Macinnes pers. comm.). Field work in Argyll indicates that extensive traces of former patterns of cultivation - in the form of rig fossilised within the landscape - exist. This was preserved by changing agricultural practices, largely the introduction of sheep farming, but also the growth in mechanisation, ^{which led to the abandonment of areas formerly cultivated.} (In the majority of instances this rig is clearly pronounced, suggesting a relatively recent date. Because of continued extensive exploitation of cultivable land this later rig cultivation probably destroyed all trace of earlier patterns of land exploitation in many areas. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that some evidence of agricultural activity associated with duns may be found. Field walls are often found adjacent to dun sites (cf. R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971; 84-5; 1980; 102; 111). These are normally only recorded by the R.C.A.H.M.S. if they impinge directly upon the site under consideration; in discussion of the site they are normally described as "of relatively recent date". The location of some of these wall lines may reflect the fact that the dun provided a ready source of stone for their construction. It is clear though that at some sites a more ancient origin could be suggested. At Dun Toiseich in Mid-Argyll various field walls are found around the dun site. Lynchets accumulated against certain of these suggest cultivation of the surrounding area, while one is of particular interest since it respects the entrance-route to the site and links up with external walling which defines a prominent outer platform next to the dun. Similar field-walls with associated

lynchets have also been found in possible association with the duns at Ardanstur, Loch Melfort (Barrett, Hill, Nieke in preparation) and Dun Brahunisary on Islay.

While the inhabitants of duns may have been associated with arable production, they were probably also exploiting others of the resources of Argyll. The close proximity of many duns sites to the sea may reflect not only the presence of better agricultural land along the coasts, but also the exploitation of sea-resources and the use of coastal communication networks.

The majority of dun sites would appear to have been homesteads inhabited by small communities, probably family units. In the majority of instances no other obvious structural remains are evident in the immediate vicinity of the site. This may not be the case with all duns, however, since recent fieldwork suggests that at some sites the dun may have formed the centre of a small nucleated community. Within Lorn at the site of Ardanstur I a series of massively constructed walled terraces surround the dun (Barrett, Hill, Nieke (in preparation).⁽³⁾ (Fig. 29) The nature and size of at least one of these strongly suggests that it may have provided a stance for a circular building. Similarly at the neighbouring site of Ardanstur 2 a series of circular and oval platforms around the dun may indicate nucleated settlement around the dun. At both these sites field walls and associated lynchets may also be contemporary with the duns.

The possibility that some duns may be the centre of nucleated communities deserves further investigation.



JB, JC, PH, MN
MAY 1983

Fig.29 Provisional plan of duns and associated structures at Ardanstur. Lorn.

Excavation of sites like Ardanstur is necessary to establish the chronology of activity evident in the area, and the possible interrelationships between sites. More sensitive field analysis of other sites may reveal further examples similar to Ardanstur. In this light it may be of importance to consider some of the rectangular buildings which at times occur in association with duns. The R.C.A.H.M.S. frequently record rectangular buildings impinging upon dun sites (cf. R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971; 78; 1975; 79; 1980; 105) where they are, obviously, secondary to the dun structure. Buildings which do not directly impinge upon the site are not frequently examined or planned. While in many cases the supposition that these are of relatively recent origin may be correct; (and indeed may be obvious given the state of the ruins) it should not be assumed that all must post-date duns. Discussion on crannogs in the present work will illustrate the existence of a rectangular building of Early Historic date on the crannog of Loch Glashan, Mid-Argyll. Until excavation can disprove the suggestion, it must surely remain a possibility that some of the heavily turf-covered rectangular structures which occur near duns may be of early date, possibly a contemporary with the duns themselves. Examples of such sites would include Dun Aisgain on Mull (Alcock; L. E.A. and P.A. 1979) (Fig. 30) where a terrace below the dun has numerous ruined buildings evident upon it, and also Torr nan Fiann on Mull where a series of heavily overgrown foundations again surround the dun.

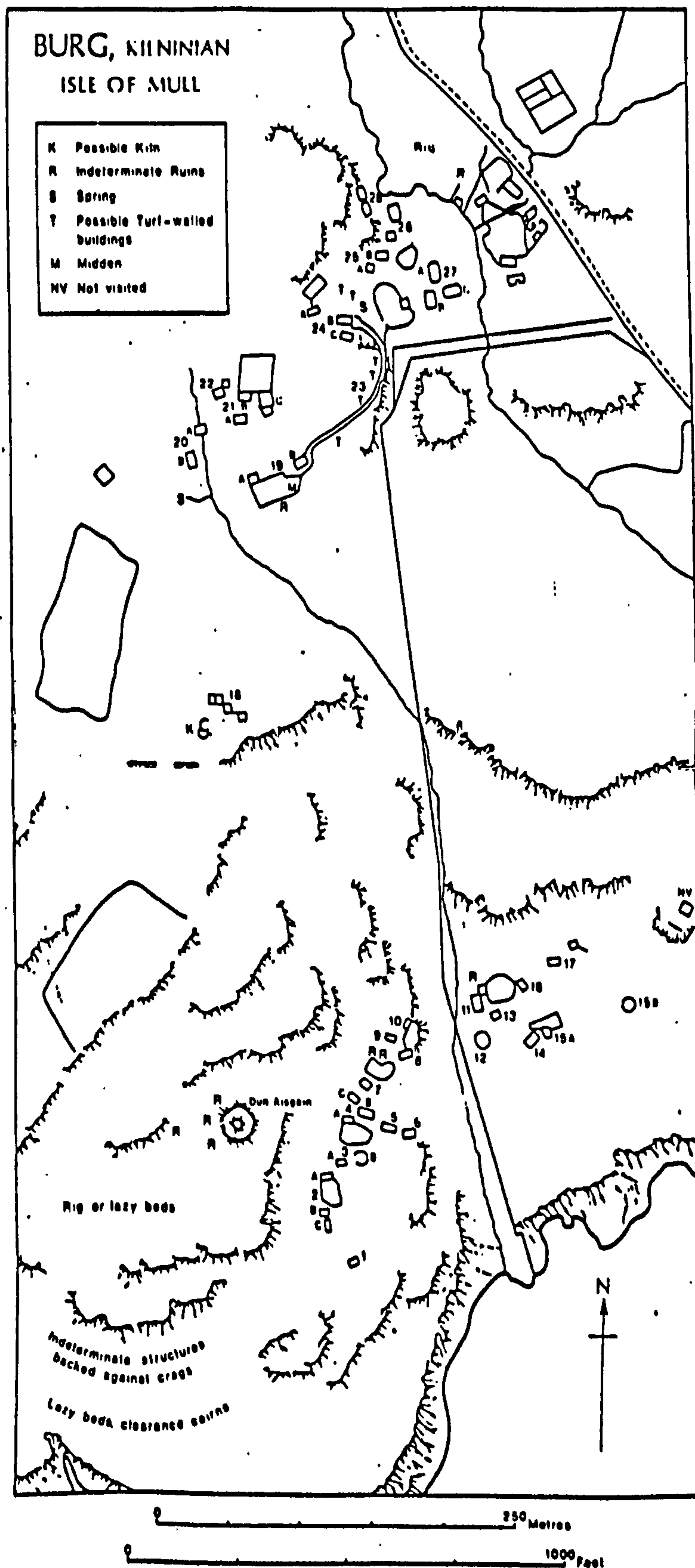


Fig.30 Dun Aisgain Mull and adjacent structural remains.

(from Alcock, L, E.A. & P.A. 1979)

Discussion so far, then, has indicated that duns were defended settlements, on occasion possibly totally roofed house-structures, the inhabitants of which may have been involved in agricultural production. The inhabitants of these sites would seem to have been persons of considerable social status. The massive construction of their rampart walls implies they were the product of a system of labour exaction. That the inhabitants of the site had the ability to exact such labour implies they were members of the higher grades of society. The regularity of construction of some sites, and the inclusion of a range of architectural features may also indicate the work of specialist architects or builders, and again the ability to commission such people would imply the dun-dwellers were of high social position. The location of sites may also indicate the status of the inhabitants, as is particularly well illustrated by the dominant position of Dun Chonnaillaich in Mid-Argyll. Other sites with similar extensive outlooks, and a dominant position within the landscape include Dun Brahunisary in Southern Islay, Dun Mhodaigh on Mull, and Dun Skeig in Kintyre. The construction of additional outworks may also have further enhanced the external view of the site, and may be related to the social status of the dun-dwellers.

During the Early Historic Period artefactual material occurring on dun sites could also infer high social position for the dun-dwellers. Access to external contacts is implied by sherds of imported pottery, while the penannular brooch from Kildonan may have been produced at the Royal site of Dunadd (Duncan and Nieke, in preparation). The implications of the occurrence of such artefactual material will be considered in greater depth later in the present work.

Chapter Seven: Footnotes.

(1) Throughout this thesis radiocarbon dates will be presented ^{primarily} as uncalibrated b.c. or a.d. dates. Appendix W, Volume 3 of the present work includes further details on the various dates as well as calibrated B.C. or A.D. dates (after Klein et al 1982). In view of present uncertainties about calibration curves these latter dates must be treated with some caution.

(2) Erskine Beveridge had already used this term in 1903 to define a group of circular sites which, while similar to brochs, he felt were not typical brochs. This use of the term, however, did not gain currency.

(3) This is a provisional plan of the site. I am grateful to J.C. Barrett, P. Hill and J. Comrie for allowing use of this plan prior to completion of the field-work study.

(4) The suggestion that many duns were totally roofed could be supported by evidence from the early christian rath of Lissue, Co. Antrim, Ireland. (Bersu 1947) Excavations at this site revealed a series of concentric rings of postholes which were interpreted as the supports for a roof covering the entire area of the rath. This indicated a large roofed area in the order of 100ft. (31m.) in diameter. The total area roofed here would have been in the order of 7850 sq. ft. (c. 750 sq.m.) Irish rath like Lissue were defended homesteads probably the equivalent of Scottish duns.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE BROCHS OF ARGYLL

The R.C.A.H.M.S. have identified six structures as brochs within the areas of Argyll covered by their inventories (1975; 75-77; 1980; 90-95; forthcoming) (Fig. 31). The term 'broch' is used to define a circular massively built drystone structure. Normally their external diameter ranges between 15 m and 25 m, with an internal court ranging between 6 m and 13 m in diameter (Mackie 1972). The massively built walls, which normally occupy between 35% and 60% of the overall diameter, are a characteristic feature of brochs. Also characteristic of these sites are a range of architectural features which include galleried walls, intramural cells, guard chambers, stairways and scarcement levels, as well as entrance features such as doorchecks and bar-holes.

Brochs have an extensive distribution in Scotland (Fig. 32). They are most numerous in the Northern Isles, Caithness and the Outer Hebrides. They also occur along the Western Coast as far south as the Ardnamurchan peninsula, although their distribution is not as dense here as in the Northern Isles. South of the Ardnamurchan peninsula they are much less common, being far outnumbered by the duns of the area. The reasons for the prevalence of a different type of drystone fortification in this area have never been satisfactorily examined or explained. In addition to the Argyll brochs, a small number have also been recorded in the southern lowlands of Scotland.

Discussion of brochs has been polarized towards the elucidation of a limited number of questions. Much time has been spent in the investigation of structural characteristics of these sites, and what these may or may not tell us about

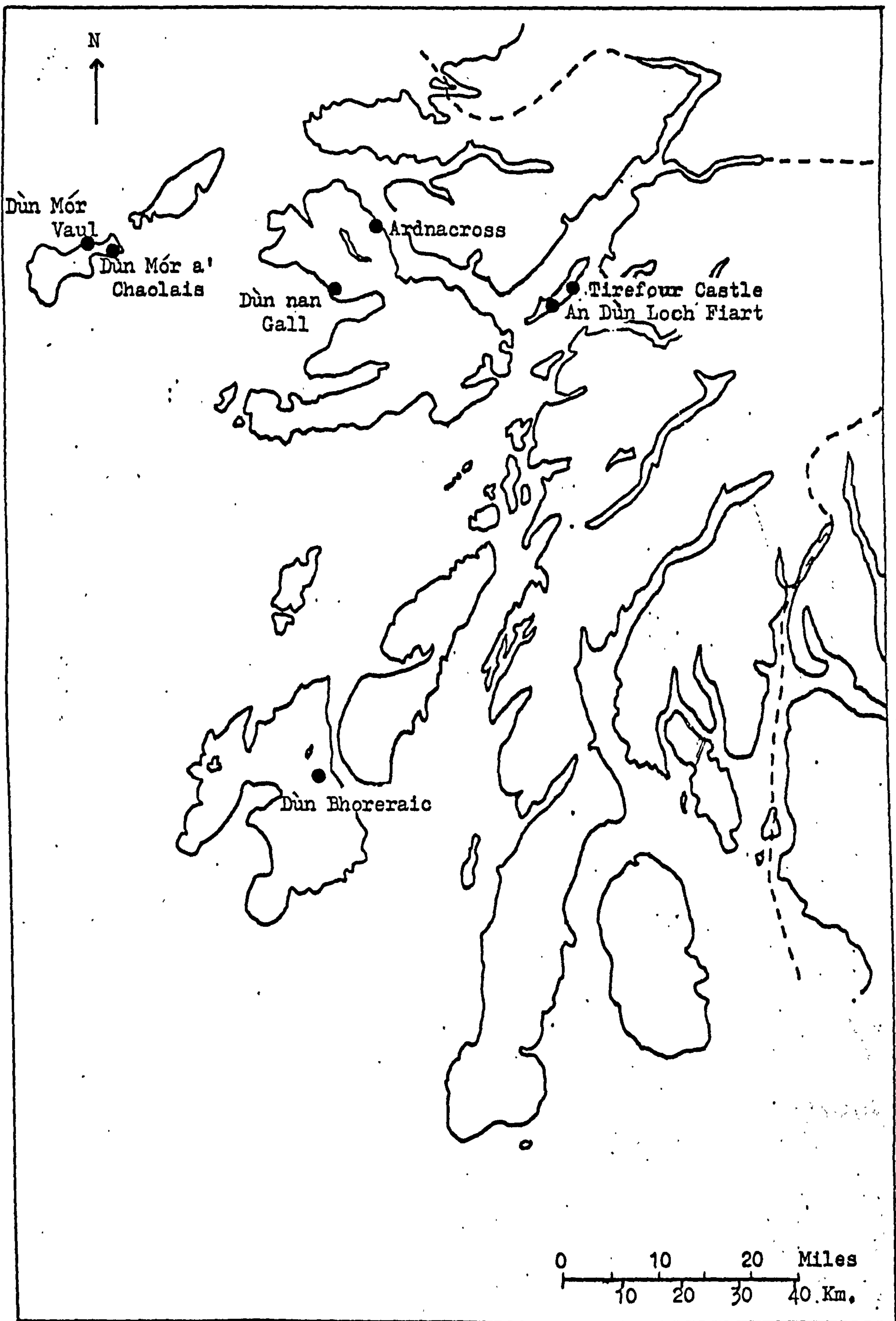


Fig. 31 The location of Brochs in Argyll

(from R.C.A.H.M.S. 1974, 1980 and O.S. Records)

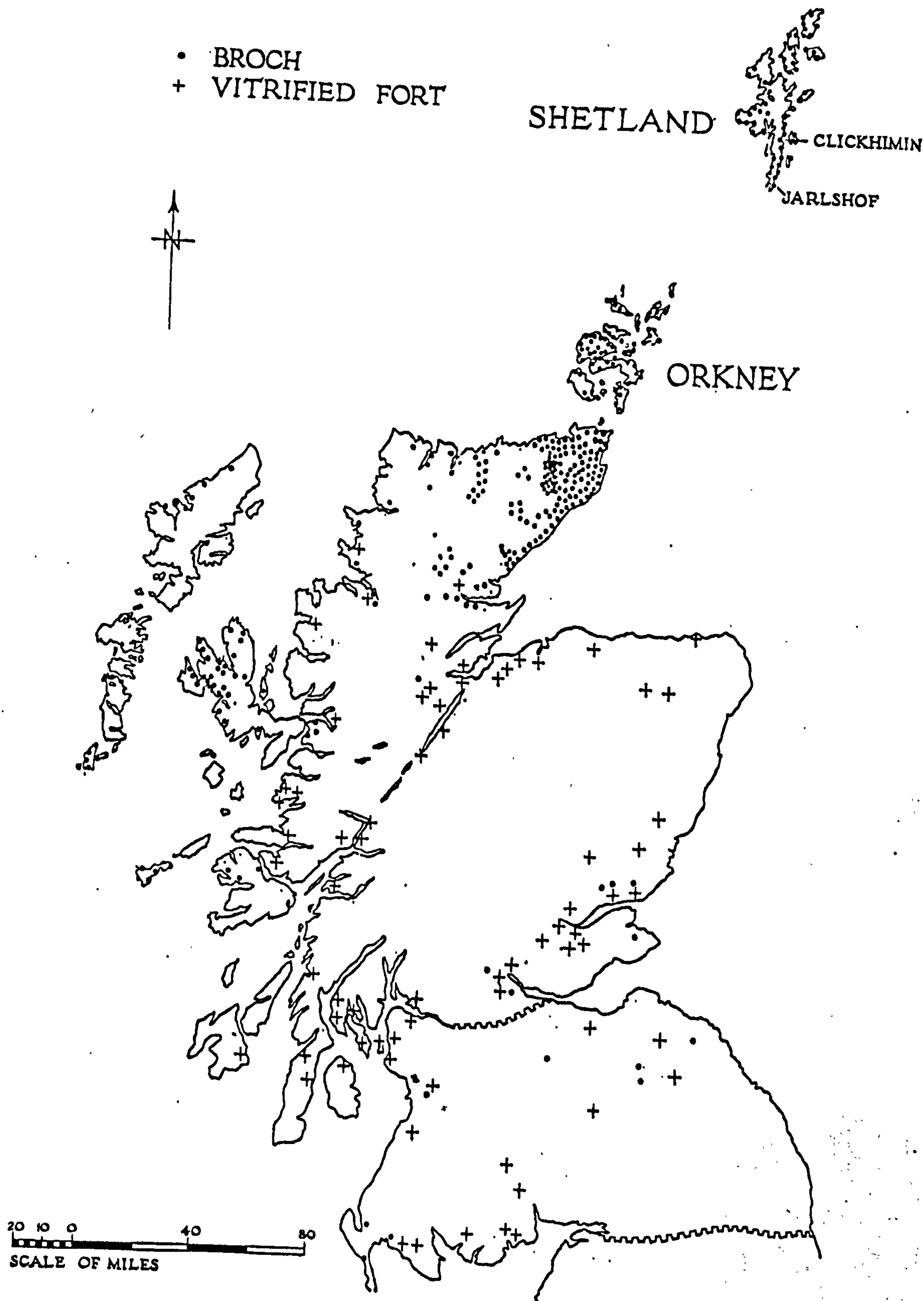


Fig. 32 The location of brochs in Northern Britain.

(from Hamilton 1968)

the original structure. Their origins and predecessors have also attracted much study. These are all subjects which have been widely discussed in print, and need not be reiterated here. Instead only those problems directly related to an analysis of the 'brochs' of Argyll will be commented upon here.

The most pressing and immediate problem must be to what extent the brochs of Argyll can really be seen as distinct from the other defended sites of the area.

While those sites in Argyll which have been described as brochs by the R.C.A.H.M.S. are reasonably comparable with similar sites elsewhere in the Northern and Western Isles, problems arise because of the similarities between these so-called brochs and many duns within the area. (cf. Chapter 7) This is well illustrated by a comparison of dimensions such as diameter, wall thickness and area of these two supposed groups of sites. (Fig. 33 & 34) One characteristic of brochs is said to be that their internal court accounts for between 40% to 65% of the total diameter. (Mackie 1965) In the present instance, however, all but two of the circular dun sites could, if a single trait is used, be described as brochs. The two sites which fail to fit the category lie only just outside it.

Other comparisons between brochs and circular duns also exist for instance Dùn Aisgain has intramural galleries, and An Sean Dun intramural cells. These architectural features are normally seen as characteristic of brochs.

These areas of 'overlap' between members of supposedly distinct monument groups have not been openly discussed by scholars. This state of affairs has arisen because of the way in which the Iron Age of Scotland has been viewed. Traditionally it has been seen as

<u>STTE</u>	<u>OVERALL DIAMETER</u>	<u>INTERNAL DIAMETER</u>	<u>WALL THICKNESS</u>	<u>OVERALL AREA</u>	<u>INTERNAL AREA</u>	<u>% OF OVERALL DIAMETER OCCUPIED BY CENTRAL COURT</u>
Caisteal Suidhe Cheannaidh, Lorn	22.3m.	12.5m.	4.9m.	390m ²	122m ²	55%
Dùn Chathach,	18.5m.	11.7m.	3.4m.	269m ²	107m ²	63%
Dùn Leigh, Lorn	15.8m.	9.8m.	{ 2.4m. - 3.4m. }	196m ²	75m ²	62%
Tom a'Chaisteil	16.2m.	11m.	{ 2.3m. - 2.9m. }	206m ²	95m ²	68%
An Sean Dùn, Mull	15m.	9m.	3m.	177m ²	67m ²	60%
Borgadel Water, Kintyre	20.4m.	13m.	{ 3.4m. - 4m. }	327m ²	138m ²	64%
Dùn Aisgain, Mull	15.4m.	10.4m.	2.3m.	186m ²	85m ²	67%
Dun Chrìsprig Islay	19m.	12m.	3.5m.	284m ²	113m ²	63%

Fig.33 Measurements of circular duns in Argyll.

SITE	OVERALL DIAMETER	INTERNAL DIAMETER	WALL THICKNESS	OVERALL AREA ²	INTERNAL AREA ²	% OF OVERALL DIAMETER OCCUPIED BY CENTRAL COURT.
An dùn, Loch Fiart, Lismore	22.5m.	13m.	4.9m.	398m ²	132m ²	58%
Tirefour Castle Lismore	21.5m.	12.5m	4.5m.	353m ²	117m ²	58%
Ardnacross, Mull	18.7m.	10.7m.	4m.	275m ²	90m ²	57%
Dùn Mor a' Chaolais, Tiree	19.4m. 23.6m.	12m.	{ 3.7m. } b. { 5.8m. }	{ 294m ² } { 439m ² }	113m ²	{ 62% } { 51% }
Dùn nan Gall Mull	17.4m.	10.4m	3-4m.	237m ²	85m ²	60%
Dùn Bhòreraic Islay	23m.	13.4m.	4.8m.	415m ²	141m ²	58%
Dun Mor Vaul, Tiree	18.2m.	9.2m.	4.5m.	237m ²	85m ²	51%

NB Dun Mor a'Chaolais-b includes additional external revetment.

Fig. 34 Measurements of the Brochs of Argyll.

defined by a number of well-known monument types -including brochs, forts and duns. These individual monument types have been seen to present a guiding framework for analysis as Barrett has pointed out. (1981) Inherent in this approach is the view that the greater the precision with which each type of monument is defined, the clearer will be our understanding of it. This would also clarify the pathways for further analysis. This, then, has led to much work being directed towards the establishment of empirically derived systems of classification.

In attempting to categorize small drystone fortifications the fact that each monument type is not really distinct has been approached in different ways. Beveridge's solution was to create another group of sites which he termed 'semi-brochs'. These he defined as,

" a substantial circular or sub-circular drystone erection enclosing a space some 35-40' in diameter. The wall.....has within its thickness a passage or ground gallery ... even the best preserved show no trace of a stair or upper galleries between the double walls, and therefore seem to have been of only one story. In this respect the semi-broch differs essentially from that of the broch-proper, although otherwise somewhat approximating to it".

(1903,73-4)

He identified four such sites on Tiree, all of which really fit the area of overlap between traditional broch and dun classifications.

Subsequently the creation of this sub-group of monuments has not been seen as useful, and hence attempts have been made to place the sites within pre-existing groups. Thus the R.C.A.H.M.S. argue that two of these four sites are "brochs" (1980,91-4) while the other two are "duns" (1980,106-7 ; 109-10)

Similar confusion is also evident in other works. In Mackies's survey of the brochs of Scotland, for example, only two examples of brochs are identified in Argyll. (1972, 126-37;145) As has already been

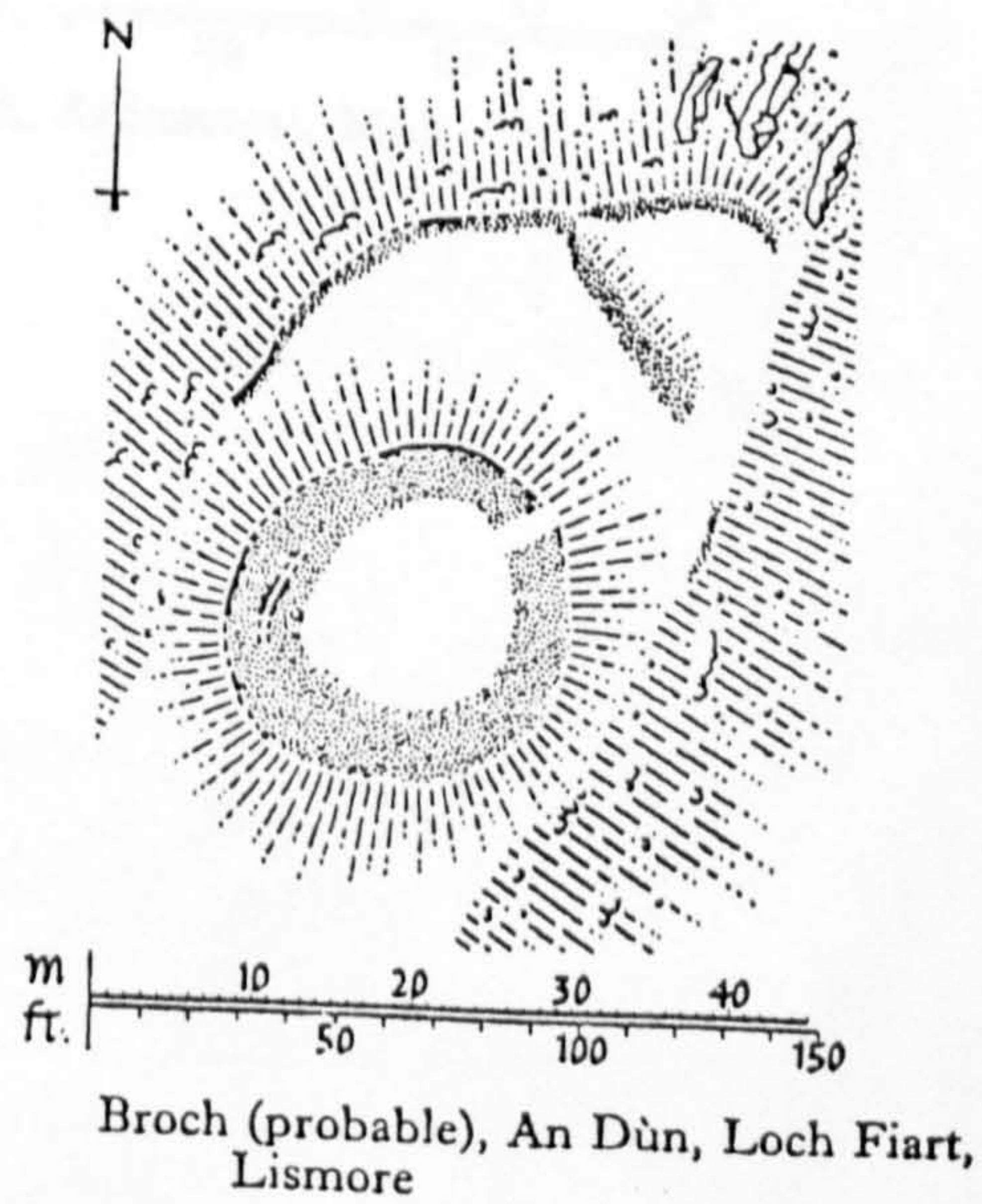
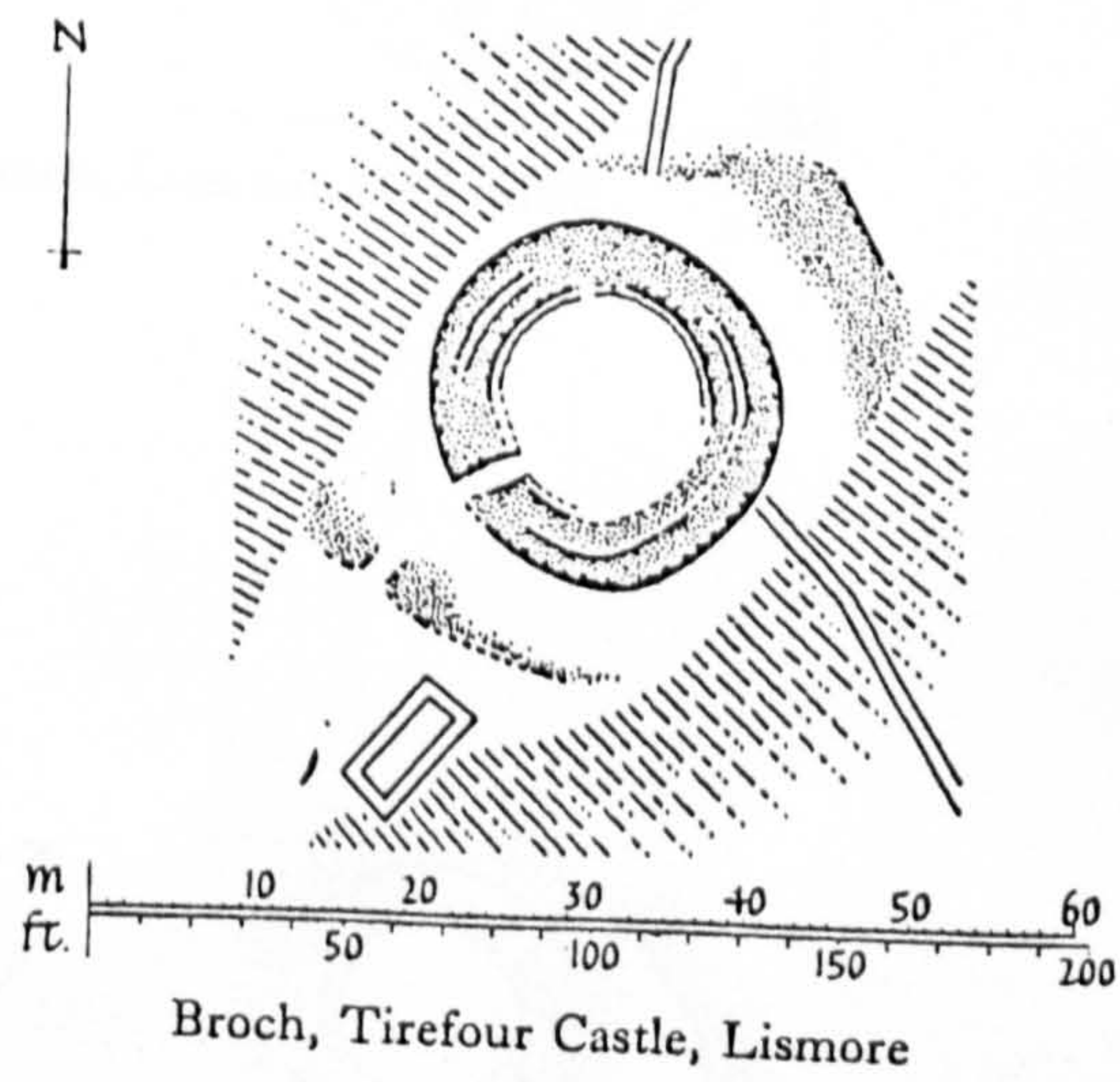
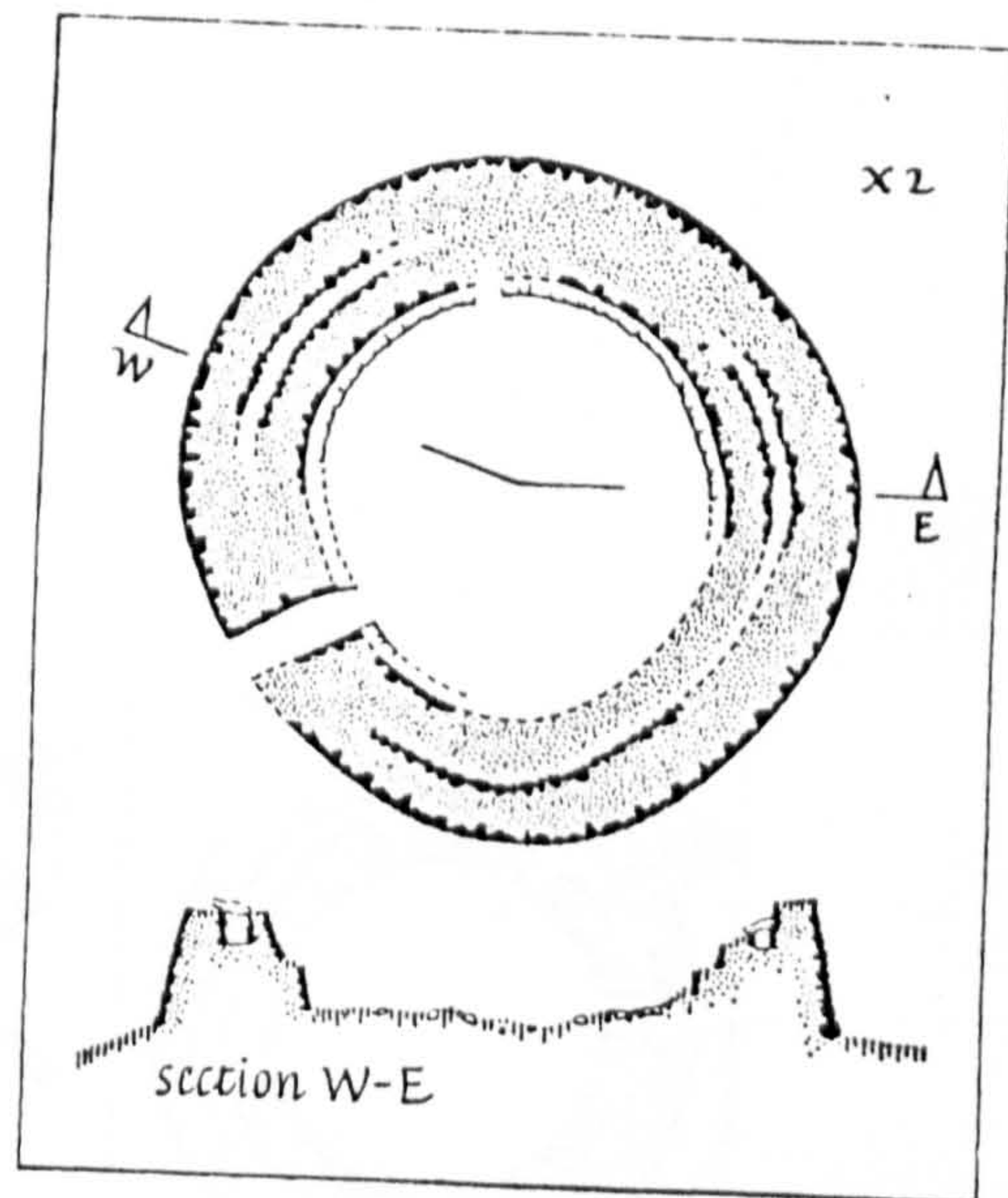
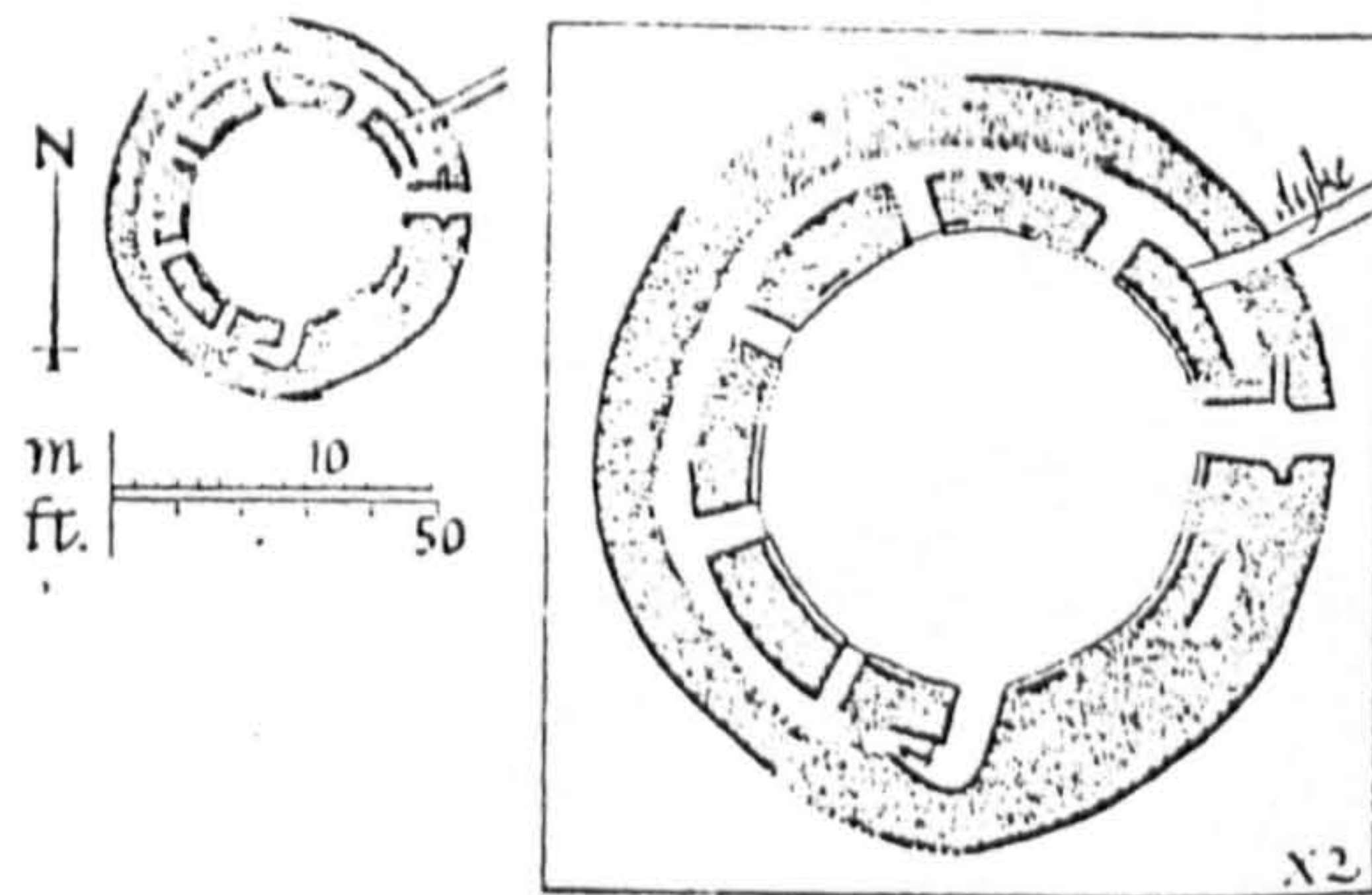
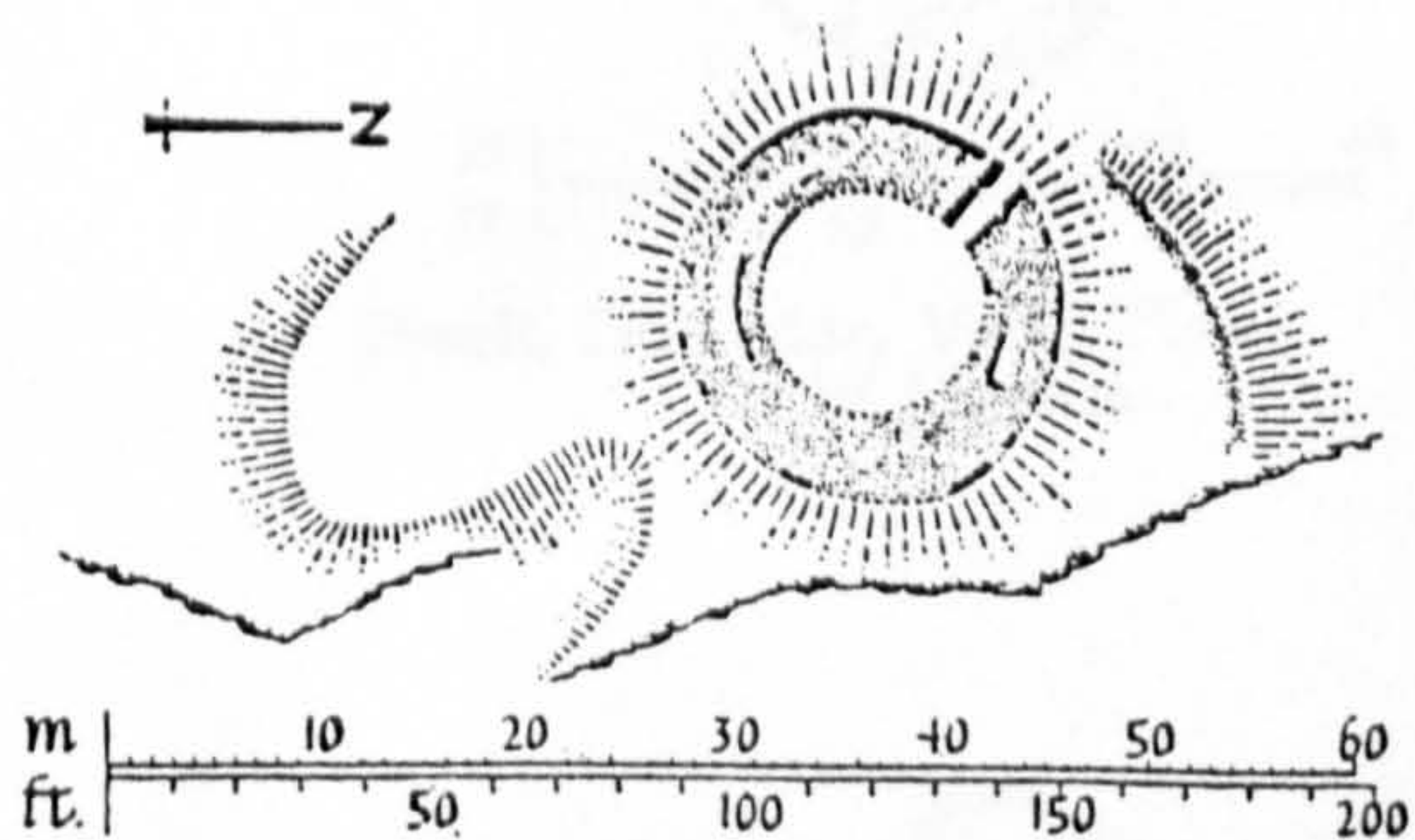


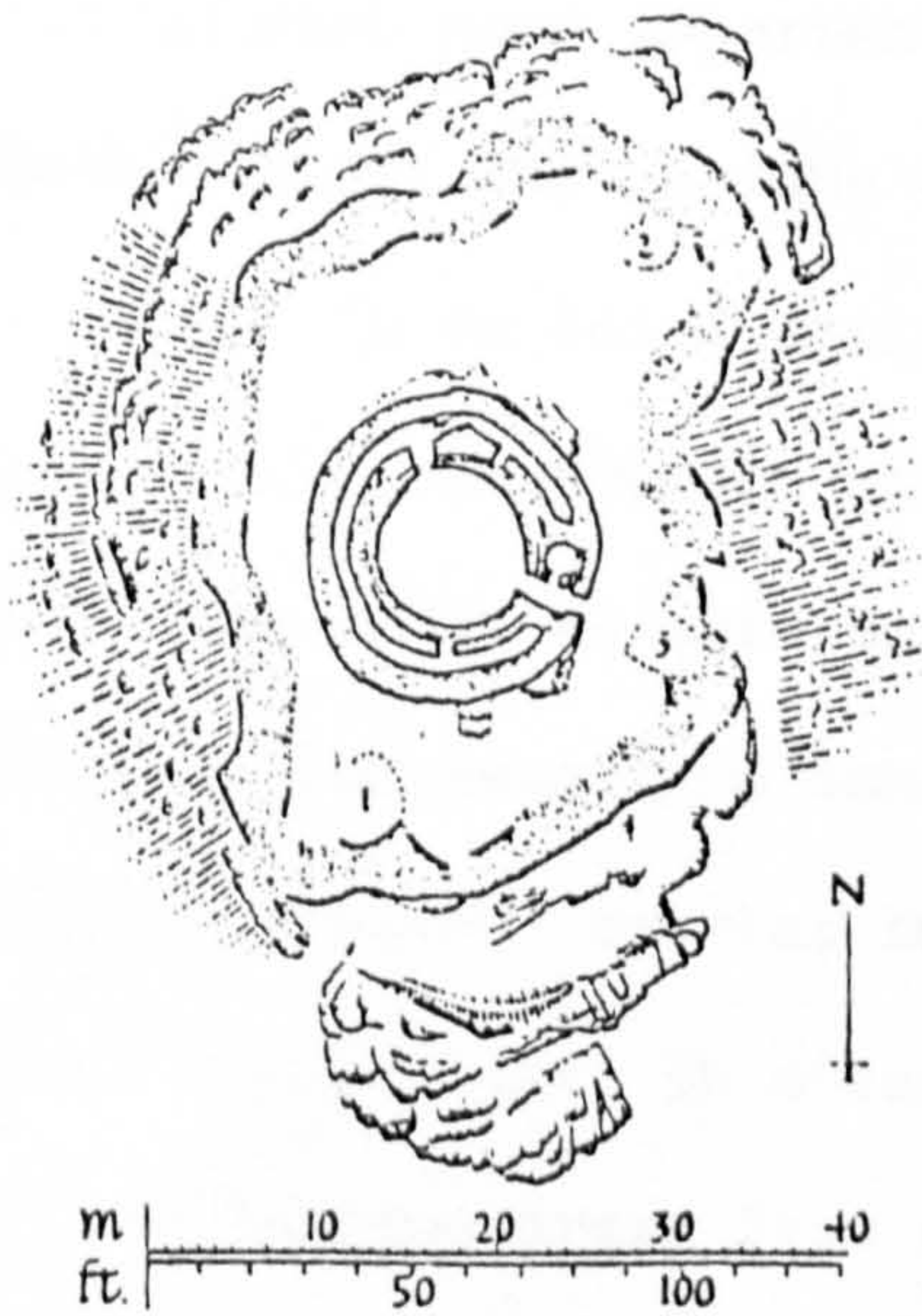
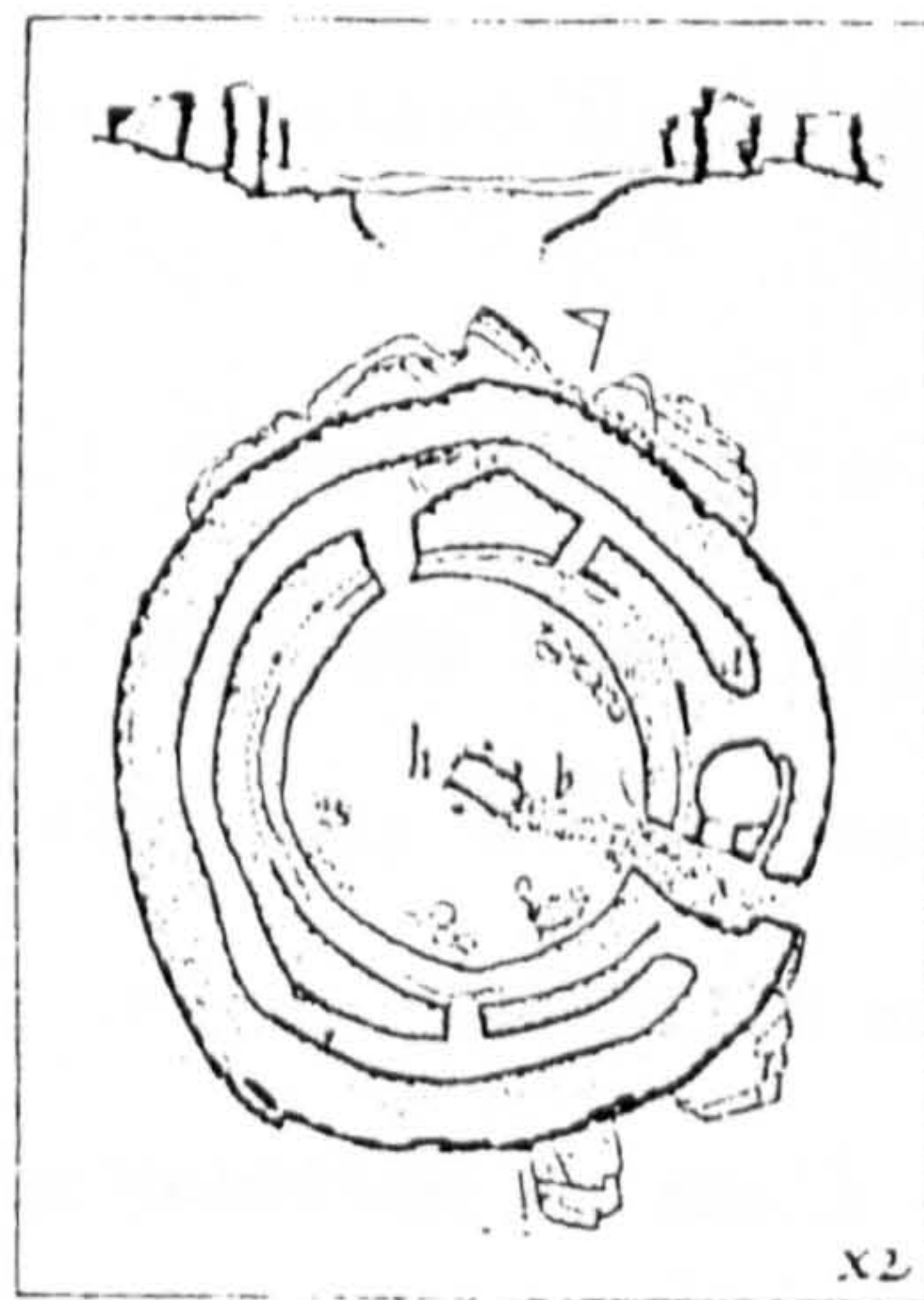
Fig. 35 Plans of the brochs of Argyll.
(from R.C.A.H.M.S. 1974)



Broch, Dùn nan Gall, Mull

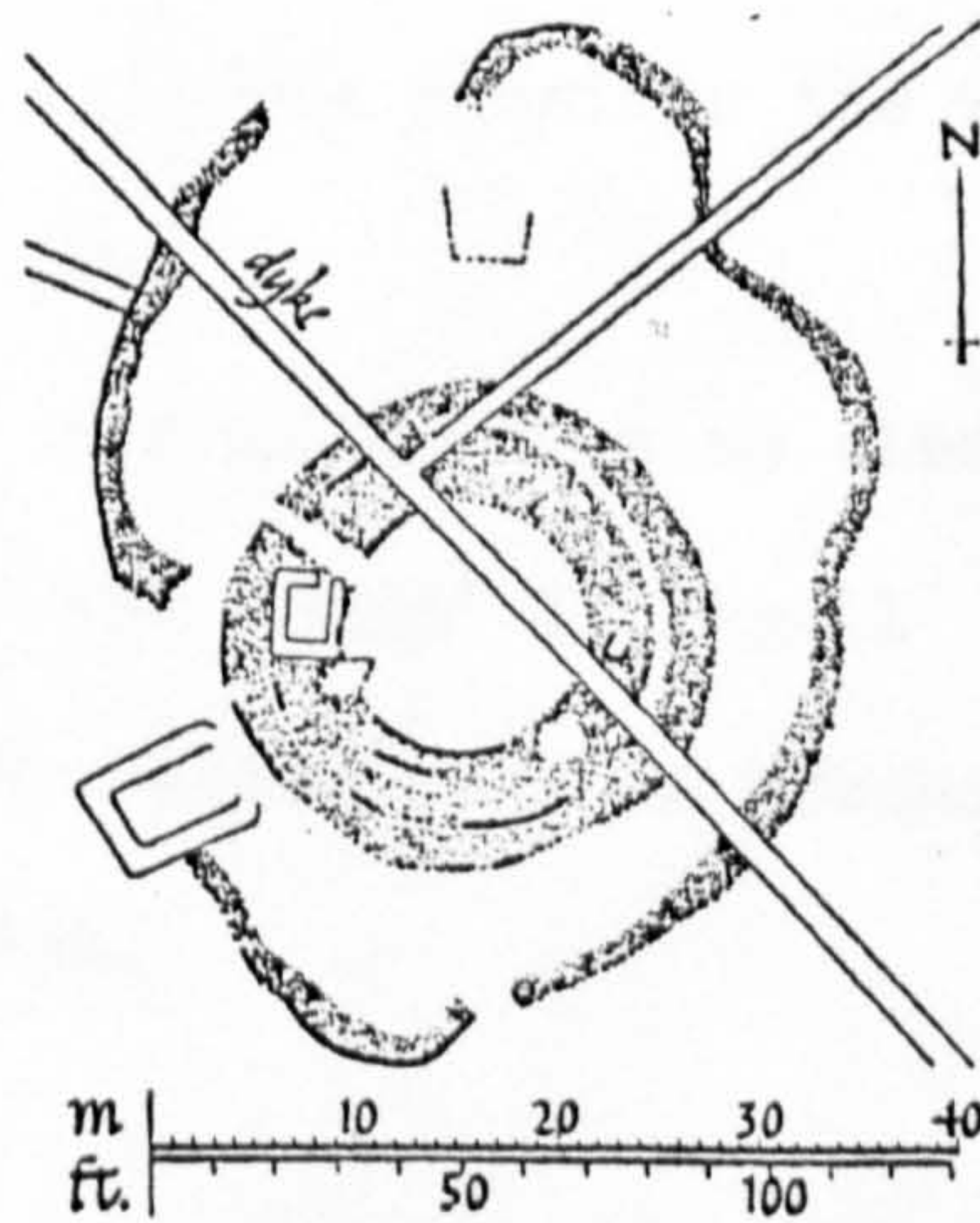


Broch, Ardnacross, Mull



Broch, Dùn Mór, Vul, Tiree
E W MacKie

after



Broch, Dùn Mór a' Chaolais, Tiree

Fig.37 Plans of brochs in Argyll.

(from R.C.A.H.M.S.1980)

noted, however, the R.C.A.H.M.S. argue in favour of the existence of at least 6 examples.

The major problem with all these approaches to the monuments is that they fail to recognize that the formulation of empirically derived classifications should only be used as one possible tool for analysis, and that they do not establish meaningful distinctions between monument types. In relation to small drystone fortifications it could be argued that it is much more important to attempt to define the principles which brought the various evident combinations of structural form into being. In so doing analysis takes a step closer to the people who actually constructed and used these types of site, and hence could be argued to be more useful. This type of approach would direct attention away from analyses of architectural characteristics and hence the apparent overlap between various monument types would become unimportant. Instead the wide variety of sites would be seen as variations drawn from a common architectural tradition.

An example of such an approach would be the analysis of many circular drystone fortifications as fully roofed houses. Discussion of the architectural features would then consider the way they were used within the domestic interior.

Discussion so far has illustrated that no clear dividing line can be drawn between 'brochs' and 'duns' in Argyll. Because of this it is of importance to summarize recent work on brochs, and problems which still need resolution.

Since there is then, a link between duns and brochs in Argyll it is of importance to summarize recent work on brochs, and problems which still need resolution.

Chronologies for broch usage were formerly based upon excavations of the sites of Jarlshof and Clickhimin, both in Shetland, and Dùn Mór Vaul on Tiree (Hamilton 1956; 1968; Mackie 1974). Evidence from Jarlshof and Clickhimin suggested that both structures had been built in the 1st century A.D. and were in use for around 200 years until they were both replaced by stone round-houses. At Dùn Mór Vaul the broch was constructed in the 1st century B.C., and occupied until the 3rd century A.D. when it too was replaced by a roundhouse.

Recent work on Orkney has illustrated that the origins of brochs may have been more ancient than previously thought. Radiocarbon dates for occupation of the broch of Bu Broch have recently been published. These are 490 ± 65 bc (Gu 1152) ^(780 BC - 400 BC) and 510 ± 80 bc (Gu 1154) ^(805 B.C. - 390 B.C.) which indicate dates ^{between} the 4th or early 9th centuries B.C. (Hedges and Bell 1980).

One of the many problems associated with the study of brochs is whether a chronological framework for their development and use in one area can readily be used in discussion of sites in other areas; this is very much the case for the brochs of Argyll which lie very much on the periphery of the main broch concentrations. It could be argued that the only reliable chronology for brochs in Argyll is that produced by

Dùn Mór Vaul. The preceding chapter discussed the possibility that drystone fortification building may have had its origins in earlier periods, but the evidence for this is as yet inconclusive.

Since Dùn Mór Vaul is one of the few recently totally excavated broch sites in Northern Britain and is continually cited as a type-site it is of some importance to consider it further here.

Mackie's identification of the site as a broch was based upon the structural characteristics of the site, which are closely comparable with other brochs. In particular he believed that Dùn Mór Vaul had been a tower structure. The latter is a common assertion made about brochs. It is an interpretation which may be supported by the massive basal proportions and pronounced batter of the outer wall-face noted at some sites (cf. Fojut 1980:5). Some well preserved examples, such as Mousa in Shetland, and Dun Telve in Glenelg, the former of which stands to a height of 14 m, suggest that the concept of such tower-structures may be appropriate in some instances. Mackie interpreted Dùn Mór Vaul as a tower structure because of evidence for an upper mural gallery, and the suggestion of demolition of a high wall around the site noted in excavation (1974:12). Adherents of the view that brochs were originally tower structures cite as evidence for this the existence of high galleried walls which rise above the scarcement levels, and the openings leading from the intramural gallery into the interior of the site at levels above the scarcement. In such an interpretation scarcement levels were interpreted as supports for raised floors, an idea

first postulated in print by Thomas (1890).

The view of the broch as a tower structure was further developed by Hamilton as a result of his excavations at Clickhimin. Here he discussed evidence for the existence of timber ranges built against the stone ramparts, which provided domestic accommodation (1968; 63-71). He believed that similar ranges had been built around the inner wall face of the broch (1968:111).

In contrast to this view of brochs as tower forts, other scholars believed that the evidence suggested that these sites had always been low-walled. This idea was first put forward by Scott in 1947. His view was based in part upon an analysis of the quantity of rubble preserved at sites. He argued that the location of many sites was such that stone robbing from them would never have been an economic proposition. The amount of rubble visible at most sites, he argued, would have been insufficient to raise a tower structure. Scott, therefore, believed that the majority of brochs may never have risen more than 6-8 ft. in height. In his view they were originally totally roofed structures, with roofing timbers resting upon the scarcement level.

It is important to outline these conflicting views on the nature of broch architecture, since they have in turn influenced discussion on the function of such sites.

Because of their massive construction and lack of external openings other than the narrow entrance, brochs have been interpreted as defensive structures. Fojut illustrates how this was first suggested in print by Wilson in 1851, when it was suggested that they were towers of refuge (Fojut 1980; 11).

In 1935 Childe grouped brochs together with duns in his Atlantic Province 'Castle Complex' seeing them as the domiciles of a warlike chief and his retainers (1935; 197 ff). This marked a change in attitude, as such sites were then seen as permanent residences, the equivalent of stone castles in medieval England and Wales. This assumed that their inhabitants lived off exacted tribute from the surrounding population, though the exact nature of the latter and the settlement sites related to it were never discussed.

The possibility that brochs were tower structures with raised internal floors led to the suggestion that they were inhabited by large communities. Hamilton suggested that the broch of Clickhimin in Shetland could have been home for 80 people, but if allowance for storage of fodder, fuel and the stalling of livestock were also taken into account a more reasonable figure would be 40 (1968; 102 f). Hamilton apparently envisages permanent occupation of the site, during a long period during which the danger of attack necessitated such a defended structure. An alternative suggestion put forward by Mackie was that brochs may have been constructed for use as refuges for large numbers of people whenever the necessity arose. It is worth discussing the evidence for such usage in more detail, since it could be postulated that the factors governing the location of such refuge sites could vary from those influencing the location of a permanent settlement site. Also if a case for the use of such a site as a refuge, used only intermittently can be made, then it would seem that a similar suggestion could be made for other drystone fortifications in Argyll.

Mackie's suggestion was based upon evidence provided by his excavations at the site of Dùn Mór Vaul on Tiree. In the published report he lists the evidence which he believes favours the interpretation of the first phase of the site as a period during which it was used primarily as a refuge. This evidence can be summarized briefly in a series of points,

- a) no hearths were found in the primary broch occupation deposits, yet these produced large quantities of occupational debris and many traces of peat floors.
- b) in the second phase of occupation a large central hearth was built in the interior of the site. Mackie argues that this represents a permanence of occupation in this phase, which must have been absent from the first phase (1974; 85).
- c) the cleanliness of the floor deposit in Phase I, and the presence of a cess pit in one end of the mural gallery is consistent with the idea that large numbers of people were staying in the tower under firm discipline as far as hygiene at least was concerned.
- d) the presence of a wooden floor on the scarcement level 1.4 m above the primary floor level suggested to the excavator the need to provide accommodation for women, children and stores out of the way of any activity on the floor and inside the upper wall galleries.
- e) the presence of a water tank inside the entrance way to the fort suggests the need for a secure water supply.
- f) the small capacity of the above tank was taken to suggest it could only have been used to supply the needs of a large community for a short period of time, implying short-lived usage of the site.

g) the presence of a beacon fire on the western side of the site suggested the need for signalling across the island to call people to the fort in times of danger.

A review of the available evidence raises several problems and criticisms associated with the above suggestions which must question the validity of his hypothesis.

The first problem Mackie himself points out; (1974; 86) is that such a suggestion assumes that the local community lived elsewhere most of the time, and no sites which could have fitted such a role have been found on the island. In actual fact this is not as great a problem as Mackie would make out, since it is clear that a major element of the settlement pattern of Argyll in the first Millennium A.D. is missing, a point which will be discussed later in the present work. Other of Mackie's assertions, however, can more validly be called into question.

The idea that the absence of a hearth in the interior of the broch in Phase I is indicative of an impermanence of occupation could be questioned. The broch had an outer court enclosed by a rampart wall, part of which was excavated. This revealed little in the way of structural remains, but occupation layers which included strata of ash were encountered (1974; 59). In the north-east area of the enclosure a paved rectangular hearth was found (1974; 60). Unfortunately the stratigraphy of the broch interior could not be tied to that of this outer court, but it could be suggested that in its first phase of occupation external cooking places in the outer court may have been in use. If this were the case then it may reflect a

permanence of occupation. The subsequent construction of a central hearth within the broch then marks a reorganization of activity space within both the broch and the outer court. This could be associated with changing attitudes towards food preparation and the processes and individuals involved in it.

It would also appear that there was some uncertainty about the nature of the Phase I deposits within the broch interior. Mackie describes this primary deposit as a layer between 6 inches and 2 inches thick which lay across the floor of the broch. He argues that the most likely explanation of it is that the lower part of it represents a large quantity of material deliberately brought into the broch immediately after it was built to even off the interior, and form a more or less level floor (1974, 42). He also states that as it covered peripheral paving, it was probably added to several times during the primary use of the site (1974, 42). Subsequently, however, the excavator appears to contradict the above suggestions by noting that few clear intermediate surfaces were visible in the sections (1974, 42).

The description of these deposits calls into question whether they can really be seen as representing an occupation deposit. Mackie states they consisted of;

'a substantial layer of light-coloured sand, gravel earth and stones with frequent isolated patches of reddish peat ash, large quantities of sherds of pottery and other artefacts, and many well preserved broken animal bone'

(1974, 42)

Even if the site had only been used intermittently, as the excavator suggested, more trampled, greasy occupation deposits might be anticipated however strict discipline and cleanliness were.

Mackie's suggestion that the site was used intermittently as a refuge is also difficult to accept in view of the chronology of the site. The excavator argues that the period of use of the site in this manner could have extended over 100 years, possibly longer. The site was constructed in the 1st century B.C., and was used as a communal fort until between 160 and 250 A.D. The latter date was provided by a fragment of Roman glass for which a date could be suggested. Given this apparently lengthy period of intermittent use it seems all the more difficult to explain the apparent lack of stratigraphy in the deposits associated with it. It must be pointed out, however, that the chronological framework upon which Mackie's inferences is made are somewhat frail. Mackie suggests that construction of the site can be dated by a single radiocarbon date of ^(155 BC - 255 A.D.) 60 \pm 90 ad (Ga K 1097). The end of its use as a communal fort was dated by the single sherd of Roman glass, of which Mackie says.

"paradoxically the latest dateable piece of Roman material from Vault came from the earliest stratigraphical context".

(1974, 94)

The sherd itself is extremely small (c. 0.6 cm x 0.3 cm) (1974, 148-9; Fig. 16). This being the case it must be questionable to what extent such a small sherd can be accurately dated, and whether it could not have been moved through archaeological deposits with great ease (by for example worm action).

A more feasible explanation of the whole of this Phase I deposit would be that it represents a constructional layer designed to level the uneven ground surface within the broch

prior to the insertion of the hearth which marks the main occupational level. As noted earlier, the excavator himself had suggested that such a process may have been partially responsible for the material anyway.

The suggestion made by Mackie that a feature of this refuge tower was a water tank within entrance to the site could also be questioned. In the published report Mackie suggests that the lintelled drain and tank when first exposed were covered by the same thin layer of mud which was deposited after the end of the hearth occupation (1974, 45) over this was an ash spread. As no ash lay on the lintels under the mud it was inferred that the drain was in use during the hearth phase. Some of the lintels were out of position and set at odd angles when they were covered by the thin mud deposit, and there was a quantity of earth, pottery sherds and animal bone within the tank. Mackie took this to indicate the use of the water tank as a rubbish dump. It would seem, however, an oversimplification to assign its use as a water store to the refuge phase, and its use as a rubbish pit to the occupation phase as he does. If it had been used as a rubbish dump during the main phase of broch occupation as Mackie suggests, it could be questioned why there was no ash recognized in it. Since it lies adjacent to the hearth and evidently had loose lintels over it, ash would have been likely to accumulate in it, had it been used as a rubbish dump during the occupation phase. The mud deposit which covered the lintels of the drain and tank was the same as that covering the ash layer, the latter being taken to indicate the occupation phase of the broch's history (Mackie 1974, 45). This would suggest that the tank and drain had gone

out of use at the end of the main phase of broch occupation.

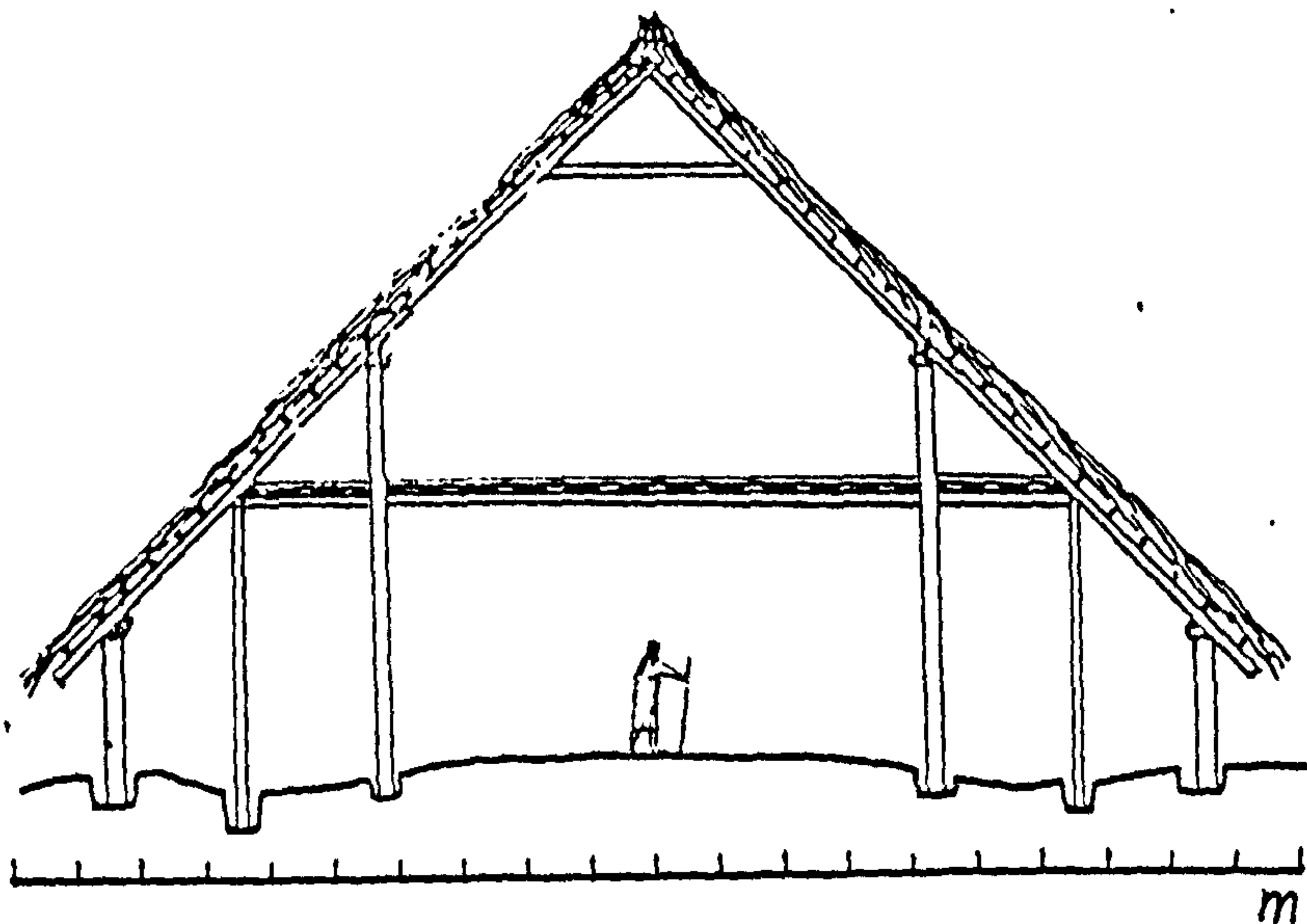
The above discussion must be seen as a much compacted reinterpretation of some of the early deposits within Dùn Mór Vaul. Its importance for the present discussion is that it questions the interpretation of the first phase of use of the broch primarily as a refuge. A more reasonable suggestion would be that other deposits encountered represent construction levels within the interior, as Barrett has pointed out (1981). In this case early artefactual material may have been brought into the site in the material used to provide a level internal floor.

At a more general level, Mackie's assertion that the site was originally a tower structure could also be questioned. A recent development in broch studies has been the revitalisation of Scott's 1947 theory that brochs were low-walled, fully roofed defended farmhouses. Such a view is taken in recent discussion of brochs in Orkney (Hedges and Bell 1980) and also in a recent paper discussing the problems of the Atlantic Iron Age by Barrett (1981). While on this point it is important to note that brochs would compare favourably in size with the large timber round-houses characteristic of settlement sites of the Iron-Age in Southern England and Eastern Scotland. One of the roundhouses from Little Woodbury had an internal diameter of 14 m; (Bersu 1940) at Pimperne in Dorset a house with a diameter of 15 m was excavated (Harding and Blake 1963). Further north, the site of West Brandon in Co. Durham had a timber round-house with a diameter of approximately 17 m (Jobey 1962). These sites do exhibit marked variations in the enclosed area (153 sq. m; 177 sq. m; and 227 sq. m. respectively). A similar variation

can be seen within the enclosed areas of brochs. Figure 38 presents a possible reconstruction of a typical ring-ditch house from South-eastern Scotland. (Reynolds 1982) Alongside this is a possible reconstruction of the broch house of Ardnacross in Mull.

Recent excavation on the brochs of Bu and Howe in Orkney (Hedges and Bell 1980; Carter 1980) has revealed much information about the organization of space and the activities taking place within brochs. The realisation that surviving deposits within the broch interior may be contemporary with the main phases of activity related to the broch must mark an important step forward in the understanding of the nature of broch settlement. As Hedges and Bell point out the deposits and structures recorded within these sites are very like those recorded in other Orkney brochs and formerly interpreted as of 'secondary nature' (1980). Thus, when fully published, excavation reports of sites like Bu and Howe should be able to portray a much more detailed picture of the nature of settlement associated with brochs, which in turn should help redress the balance away from analysis of the structural form of such sites.

Another line of research related to brochs which has recently been pursued is that of locational analysis. In 1947 Scott had based his suggestion that brochs were defended farm-houses partially upon their location near to good agricultural land. Recent work by Fojut on the brochs of Shetland has indicated that one of the major determining factors in their location was the availability of land suited to agriculture (Fojut 1980; 1982). This is of importance since it related such sites to their local setting in a manner which had not been presented before. While it does make an advance in



Reconstruction of a ring-ditch house from South -east Scotland.

(from Reynolds 1982)



possible reconstruction of broch of Ardnacross, Mull.

scale as above.

discussion, it would be wrong to reduce broch studies to a simple analysis of their role within an agricultural economy. While this was of importance, other factors such as the social status of the inhabitants of the sites and the resources they had access to and could control must have been equally, if not more important. This is an area to which more work must be directed.

If the view of brochs as low-walled defended homesteads has become more popular recently, there are still many problems associated with such a viewpoint which deserve further detailed analysis. A particular problem relates to the interpretation of scarcement levels as supports for roofing timbers. A major problem associated with this suggestion remains unresolved. If it were the case, then it might be presumed that the wall head of the main enclosing wall was not significantly higher than the scarcement level. This would allow the structural timbers of the roof to rest on the scarcement level, with a large mass of the roofing material (turf, thatch, heather or whatever) to rest partially at least upon the main wall. This would allow rain water from the roof to drain away through the core of the wall, as is the case in later Blackhouses (cf. Fenton and Walker 1981). Alternatively, if the layer of roofing material were thick enough, with eaves overhanging the broch wall, then rainwater could be directly drained away from the broch wall. If this were the case, however, it would seem justifiable to question whether there was any real need for the scarcement level, since there seems no reason why roofing timbers could not equally well be supported by the main structural wall. Resolution of this problem would require the

collection and analysis of data about the position of scarcement levels in relation to the surviving wall height. This, of course, assumes that the internal arrangements of all brochs were the same, and hence the scarcement ledge always fulfilled the same function. This may be somewhat naïve, and the possibility of variation in internal organization must remain.

The supposed broch sites of Argyll are probably best described as defended homesteads. As such they would be closely comparable to the so-called duns of the area. Like many of the duns, the suggestion could be made that they were originally totally roofed structures. Like duns, the brochs were presumably the settlements of persons of some social status, who could exact labour service to construct them.

Like the duns of Argyll most of the brochs appear to have been single homesteads, with settlement concentrated within the enclosing wall. Some of the sites do have external outworks, and these probably served the same sorts of function as those of the duns. There is evidence at two sites for possible settlement and activity outside the main broch. At Dùn Mór Vaul Mackie found what he described as habitation sites in the courtyard outside the broch (1975: 64). Unfortunately it was impossible to relate these clearly to the broch occupation since at no point could the stratigraphy of the two areas be tied together. The structures found were associated with pottery and other finds. Apart from slight curving wall lines no ^{other} structural evidence was found, and their interpretation as habitation sites cannot really be proven.

At Dùn Mór a' Chaolais, also in Tiree (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980: 91) a case can be made for the existence of external buildings, possibly of contemporary date with the broch, on the basis of the morphology of the unexcavated site. The broch is surrounded by an external wall which may have had some defensive function since the broch is situated on a low hill. The course of this external wall is not dictated by any geomorphological feature of this hill. This being the case it proves difficult to explain two semi-circular sweeps of the wall to the North-east of the site (Fig. 37) Analysis of the site in the field, however, indicates that within the rampart at each of these points is an oval platform, each of which would appear to provide a suitable stance for an oval building. This would suggest that the reason for the change in course of the rampart at this point was to take into account these two building platforms. Such a hypothesis, however, would need to be tested by excavation. Thus the broch may have been inhabited by a larger community than other sites. Even so, the scale of this additional external settlement is not extensive, and would not be inconsistent with a view of the site as a small homestead settlement, like other brochs of Argyll.

This view of brochs as small settlement units is supported by evidence elsewhere in western Scotland, for example the brochs of Skye do not appear to have subsidiary structures built around them (Martlew pers. comm.). This situation contrasts markedly with that found in Northern Scotland, in particular Orkney. Around many brochs ^{there} are found many structural remains. These were normally considered to be of secondary nature (cf. Ritchie 1974, 27). Recent evidence, however, has suggested

that similarities exist between these structures and the internal subdivisions of brochs which are now being recognized (cf. Hedges and Bell 1980). Thus sites such as Gurness may represent sizeable communities. This distinction in the nature of settlement unit associated with brochs must make it more questionable whether direct comparisons between the sites of various areas can be made.

In conclusion it is clear that there are many problems associated with the sites in Argyll which have been classified as brochs. Debate about the structural characteristics of such sites is far from resolved, and indeed it is questionable whether certain aspects will ever be conclusively resolved. Previous discussion of brochs has been largely concerned with the establishment of chronologies for their usage, and the resolution of structural problems. Inherent in all this work has been the assumption that sites recorded in areas as distant as Orkney, Shetland and Argyll are readily comparable. Closer analysis of this problem raises questions about this assumption. Distinctions in the settlement forms associated with such sites suggest the differing positions of such sites within the settlement patterns of different areas. Within Argyll the existence of numerous other drystone fortifications, some of which are in many ways similar to duns provides an added complexity to broch studies. Within this area it is more tempting to see a relationship between the latter groups of sites, than it is between brochs in Argyll and Orkney. This being the case the recognition of brochs in Argyll as a distinct group of monuments may well be anachronistic. Instead it is probably better to see them as architecturally complex versions of the more numerous drystone duns of the area.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CRANNOGS OF ARGYLL

Crannogs are the artificial islands constructed of timber, earth, brushwood and stone, which are a common feature of many Scottish lochs. Within Argyll around 80 examples of crannogs have been recorded (Fig. 39, Appendix 0, Volume 3). Any detailed analysis of crannogs within Argyll must rely initially, at least, upon inferences about such structures drawn from North Britain as a whole and Ireland since very few sites within Argyll have been examined in any detail. For this reason the following account will begin with a general account of North British crannogs.

Like duns, crannogs cannot be related to a narrow chronological horizon. Recent work by Morrison in Scotland has suggested that crannog building was an established practice in the 1st Millennium B.C. (1981a). Radiocarbon dates for a crannog situated off Loch Ederline in the South-west end of Loch Awe, Mid-Argyll produced a date of 370 ± 45 b.c. (UB-2415).^(585 B.C. - 195 B.C.) This sample was taken from a section of wood approximately 100 tree rings into a large timber, and hence probably represents a felling date, and presumably a date of construction in the early 3rd century B.C. (Morrison 1981b). Similarly a date of 595 ± 55 b.c. (GU 1323)^(810 B.C. - 430 B.C.) from a crannog in Loch Tay is taken to indicate a date of construction for this site (Dixon 1981). At Milton Loch in Kirkcudbright radiocarbon dates obtained for a crannog which was formerly believed to date at earliest to the 1st or 2nd century A.D., now suggest a Bronze Age origin for the site. A structural oak pile from the site provided a date of 490 ± 100 b.c. (K - 2027)^(800 B.C. - 385 B.C.) while an oak ard-head re-used

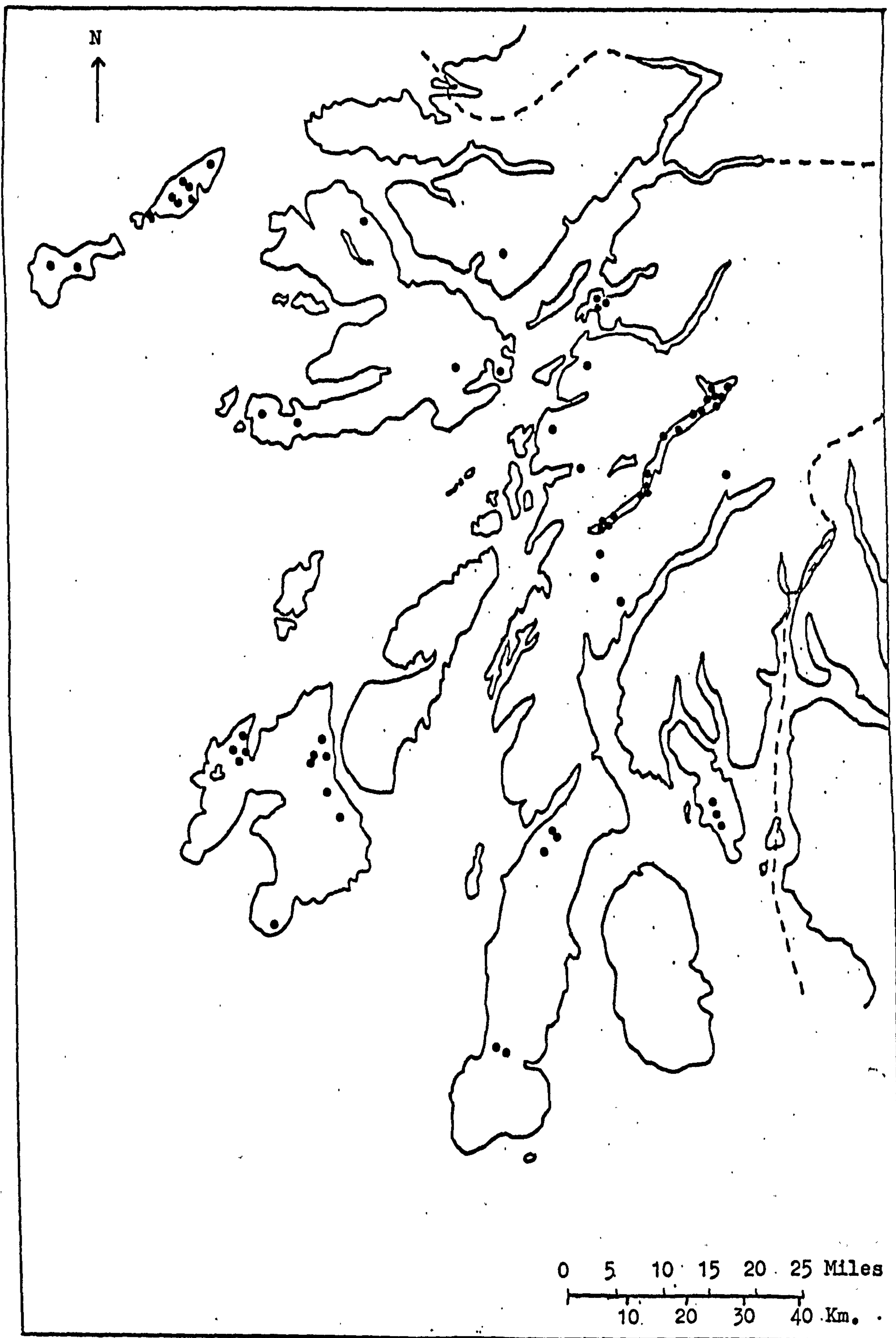


Fig. 39 The location of Crannogs in Argyll.

(from R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 1974, 1980 ; Campbell and Sandeman 1962, McArdle C.M. and T.D. 1973 and O.S. records.)

in the structure of the crannog also provided a date of 400 ± 100 b.
(770 B.C. - 180 B.C.)
(K - 1394) (Guido 1974) although this may, of course, have been
incorporated in the crannog structure at a much later date.

While the radio-carbon dates for this site imply a Bronze-age
foundation, artefactual material recovered when the site was
excavated is of 1st and 2nd century A.D. date (Piggott 1953).

Many crannogs have revealed artefacts of Romano-British
date, possibly suggesting a date of construction and use during
this period. Hyndford crannog in Lanarkshire, for example,
produced many artefacts of Roman origin, suggesting its use in
the 2nd century A.D. (Munro 1899). This site was re-occupied
in the middle ages (Laing 1975, 37). At Lochlee crannog in
Ayrshire, a site excavated by Munro, Roman and Celtic metalwork
suggests occupation in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. (Munro
1882, 68-115; Stevenson 1966).

Within Argyll structural similarities between the crannog
of Lochan Duighaill in Kintyre, discovered and excavated in 1890
(Munro 1893) and Lochlee has led the R.C.A.H.M.S. to suggest
a 2nd century A.D. date for its construction (1971; 95).

Other sites may date entirely to the Early Historic period.
Buiston in Ayrshire appears to be wholly of 6th and 7th century
A.D. date (Alcock 1971, 227). The Annals of Ulster record the
construction of a site called 'Ailean Daingen' in 703 A.D.
Anderson translates this name to mean 'island dwelling' and as
such suggests it may have been a crannog (1922, 208). Bannerman
has shown that the source of this entry lies ultimately in a
Scottish annal compiled at Iona, and as such the entry may refer
to a Scottish site. The location of this has, however, not been
found (Bannerman 1974, 14-16).

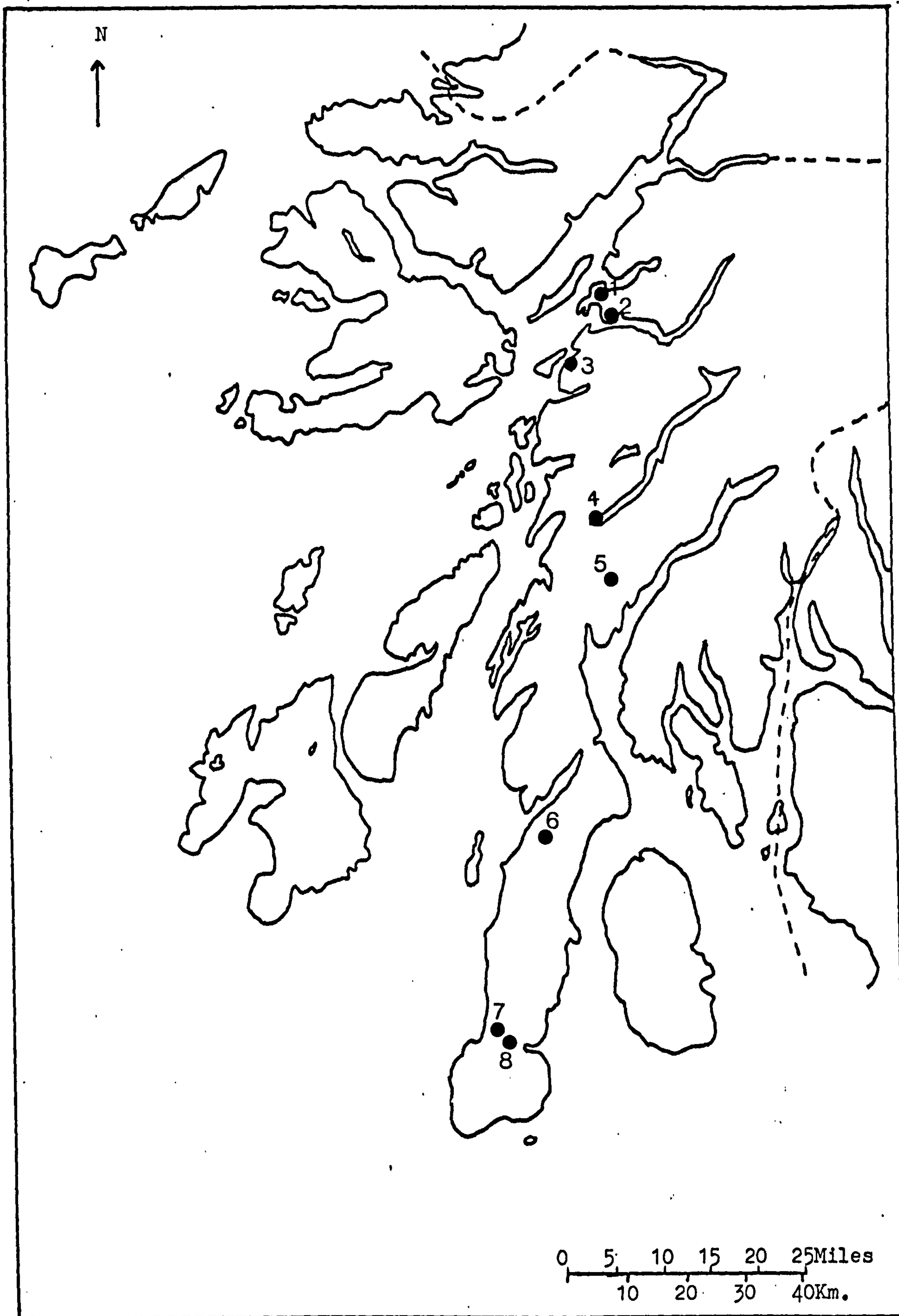


Fig. 40 The location of excavated and dated crannog sites in Argyll.

1. An Doirlinn, Eriska.
2. Moss of Achnacree.
3. Loch a' Mhuillin.
4. Ederline.
5. Loch Glashan.
6. Lochan Dughail.
7. Clochkeil.
8. Durry Loch.

Morrison records evidence which suggests that crannogs were also being constructed after the Early Historic period. He records the building of one in Loch Lochy in 1580 A.D. (1981a).

This lengthy chronology for crannog construction and usage in Northern Britain can be contrasted with the situation in Ireland where crannogs are common also. The most recent survey of the dating evidence for crannogs there suggests that while lake-side settlements can be demonstrated during the Late Bronze Age, there is no evidence that the better known massively constructed crannogs pre-date the Early Historic period (Lynn 1983).

The purpose of such constructed platforms was to provide a stance for a building. At Milton Loch the crannog was approximately 12 m in diameter, (Piggott 1953) on this a timber round house of 9 m diameter had been constructed. This had an external walkway approximately 1.5 m wide around the exterior of the house. At Buiston Crannog a large oval timber house with a diameter of approximately 18.6 by 17 m had been built upon the crannog (Munro 1882, 199-204; Duncan 1982, I, 89). In Argyll the larger of the crannogs at Lochan Duighaill in Kintyre appears to have had a house of approximately 14 m. diameter constructed upon it (Munro 1893).

The presence of central hearths upon excavated sites (cf. Milton Loch, Piggott 1953; Buiston, Munro 1882, 200) and a range of artefacts including pottery, quernstones, metalwork and in many instances a range of organic-rich deposits indicate a domestic occupation of these sites.

Some sites were connected to the mainland by wooden causeways (cf. Milton Loch) or stone walkways (cf. Loch na Buaile; Tiree; R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980; 122). They may also have been provided with small harbours created by the construction of small jetties out from the main crannog structure as was the case at Milton Loch. (Piggott 1953).

It is normally assumed that crannogs represent a form of defended homestead (cf. Ritchie and Ritchie 1981, 110) and hence these sites may represent similar units to the duns and brochs already discussed.

Artefactual evidence from various sites does suggest an involvement in agricultural production. At Milton Loch, as has been noted, an ard-head and stilt were used in the construction of the crannog. This may, however, merely represent re-use of a discarded timber. A plough coulter was found stratified in deposits on the crannog of Ballinderry I in Ireland (Hencken 1936). Quernstones indicating the processing of agricultural products have been found on several sites including Ederline, Loch Awe (Morrison 1981) and Loch Glashan (Scott 1960 and 1961) both in Mid-Argyll. Animal bones of sheep, cattle and pig were found on the crannog at Buiston (Munro 1882, 236 ff). Involvement in the maintenance of animals may also be indicated by leather fragments from the crannog of Loch Glashan Mid-Argyll (Scott 1960 and 1961) and Buiston (Munro 1882, 233). The crannogs of Lochspouts in Ayrshire (Munro 1882, 165) and Tolsta on Lewis (Munro 1882, 60) each produced large quantities of shells, indicating the exploitation of sea or fresh-water resources.

In 1973 Morrison suggested of the crannogs of Loch Awe in Mid-Argyll;

'they were spread over more than 30 km down the length of the loch. They appear to have been constructed wherever there was reasonable agricultural land'.

While many crannogs may appear to be located offshore from land suited to arable cultivation it is questionable to what extent crannog settlements should be directly related to such agricultural production. This must relate in some manner to the social status of the crannog inhabitants, and the manner in which agricultural production was organised and controlled.

It could be argued that crannogs, like duns, were the homesteads of persons of high social status. Crannogs are elaborate constructions of timber, brushwood and stone and, while no estimates of workers hours have been made, it is obvious that they are the product of major building campaigns. The gathering together of building materials must have been time consuming, especially the selection of timbers suitable for the main piles around which the site would be constructed. The central construction needed the transport of the material to the site, and the careful organization of its positioning to create a stable, level platform. It would seem reasonable to suggest that their construction was achieved through the exaction of labour services from the surrounding population; the ability to exact such service indicating that the inhabitant of the crannog was of some social standing.

The concept that crannogs may be associated with persons of high social status could be reflected in the artefactual evidence from excavated sites. The inhabitants of the crannog of Loch Glashan, for instance, had access to imported E-ware pottery (Scott 1960 and 1961; Thomas 1981) and also had access

to the fine craftsmen who produced a bronze penannular brooch found on the site. The manner in which such artefacts may have circulated within Dalriada will be considered in greater depth subsequently. (Chapter Fifteen).

From Ireland it is clear that evidence exists for the high status of crannog dwellers. The site of Lagore, for instance, was a residence of the Brega royal house in the mid 7th century at least (Hencken 1950; Ó'Riordáin 1979, 94).

The size of the crannog-house has also been taken to indicate that these were the residences of persons of high social status. The crannog of Buiston, Ayrshire, as was noted earlier, had an oval house with dimensions of 18.5 m by 17 m constructed upon it. This provided a floor area of approximately 235 m^2 (2450 sq. ft.) (Alcock, forthcoming). Alcock had previously compared the size of this site with other supposedly aristocratic timber halls such as Doon Hill, East Lothian and Cadbury Camelot, Somerset which had areas of 330 m^2 and 190 m^2 respectively (Alcock 1979). This led him to suggest that Buiston was the home of a person of some importance. Unfortunately it is difficult to comment upon the size of the crannogs of Argyll and the size of structures which may have been built upon them. Measurements of such sites are difficult to produce since frequently rising water levels may have submerged significant areas of the crannog, while erosion may also have diminished the size of the site. Evidence exists for the size of building constructed upon three crannogs in Argyll. One of the sites, in Lochan Dughail, Kintyre, had a circular timber house with a diameter of 14 m built upon it (Munro 1893). A site in the Moss of Achnacree, Lorn had a structure 15.2 m by 8.5 m

built upon it (Smith 1870-2; 1872-4). Loch Glashan in Mid-Argyll had a rectangular structure 25 ft. by 15 ft. (7.7 m by 4.6 m) built upon it (Scott 1960 and 1961). All of these structures are admittedly much smaller than that recorded at Buiston, having areas of 154 sq. m, 120 sq. m and 35 sq. m respectively. It is worth noting, however, that they do compare favourably with the size of the duns of Argyll. 65% of the ^{dun} sites of Mull, Coll, Tiree and Northern Argyll have an area of 150 m² or less; 54% of the sites of Kintyre, and 43% of the sites of Lorn (cf. Chapter Seven).

Recently Crawford has illustrated that island dwellings such as crannogs were important settlement sites during the medieval period (1983). He cites examples of the association between local lineages and such sites. This may reflect the continuance of a pattern of settlement established at a much earlier period, and may again indicate that crannogs were associated with persons of high social status from an early date.

In discussing the crannog of Buiston in Ayrshire Alcock has suggested that clearance of the nearby Bloak Moss, which has been dated by radiocarbon means to the 5th century A.D. or later, may have been organized by the crannog-dwellers (1979). He is careful to suggest only that this work was organized from Buiston. In view of the discussion on the suggested status of crannog-dwellers it would seem likely that agricultural work was undertaken by clients of theirs who did not live in the crannog itself, but had settlements of their own in the neighbourhood.

Preceding discussion has provided a general view of crannogs in Northern Britain and Ireland. It is against such a background that the crannogs of Argyll should be seen. As elsewhere in Northern Britain crannogs were being constructed in Argyll in the late Bronze Age. Crannogs at Lochan Dughail, Kintyre and An Doirlinn, Eriska were both excavated at the end of the 19th century (Munro 1893, 1885) (Fig. 40). At both evidence of careful construction and the use of much dressed timber was recovered. Artefacts from the former site were largely undiagnostic, apart from some sherds of 15th or 16th century green-glazed pottery. On the basis of structural details, however, the site has been compared to that of Milton Loch, and the suggestion made that it may date as early as the 2nd century A.D. (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971; 95). While this may have been the case, the examples of sites like Buiston clearly indicate the continued use of well-dressed timber and skillful carpentry in crannog construction in the Early Historic period. Hence their occurrence does not really allow close dating of the sort suggested by the R.C.A.H.M.S.

The site most fully examined within Argyll is that of Loch Glashan which was excavated in the early 1960's as a result of the partial drainage of the loch. A final report on the site has yet to be published, but it is possible to provide some discussion of it based upon interim statements upon the work, and examination of artefactual material preserved in the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow.⁽¹⁾

The crannog was constructed of stone, brushwood and timber, with recorded dimensions of 55 ft. by 35 ft. The date of construction of the site is uncertain since it was not totally

excavated. Traces of 'primary occupation' are recorded (Scott 1960 and 1961) but it is not specified what these were, and they were not examined since they lay below the new water-level. The main feature of the excavated layers was a rectangular building 25 ft. by 15 ft. which had stood on the crannog. The floor area of this building was made up of a series of horizontally laid oak timbers. On the floor of this structure several sherds of pottery were found. Thomas recognized two of these sherds as E-ware (1981; 22). Recent examination of the pottery from the site suggests that there may actually be a total of seven sherds of E-ware from the site (E. Campbell, pers. comm.). This is of importance, since the site would thus have one of the largest collections of E-ware from a single site in North Britain. The material is also well preserved and the sherds large. The vessel forms represented are mainly cooking jars, one of which could be almost totally restored and one flagon.⁽²⁾ If the association of the pottery and the rectangular building is correct (which seems a reasonable assertion as there is no indication of later activity in the site) then the structure would be of Early Historic date. This is of particular interest in view of the rectangular plan of this building. Pre-Viking rectangular buildings are far from common in Northern Britain, and this is the only example to have been recorded within Argyll. It is not clear how this building was constructed since all that survived were the flooring timbers. It can be shown, however, that one end of the building was paved with slabs of stone, and a hearth was located upon these.

The only artefactual material directly associated with the building is the pottery, but other material which may be of similar date was recovered from around it. The waterlogged conditions had preserved many fragments of worked wood and leather. The leather-work includes fragments of shoes, a jerkin and knife-sheaths. Most of the pieces were worn, and there is no waste material indicating leather working from the site. The worked wood represented, similarly takes the form of finished products, albeit some of them re-used, and there is no evidence for wood-working on the site. Among the worked wood are numerous domestic items including spoons and spatulae, one large, and several small trough-like bowls, and a small rim fragment of a turned bowl. Long narrow flexible wooden bands may originally have been hoops for barrels. In addition several fragments of wood could be interpreted as architectural fittings, possibly framing for doorways or window openings.

The use of timber represented at the site illustrates well the existence of competent wood-working traditions in Argyll which could produce a range of products ranging from small domestic items to large structures. This is also indicated by the structural timbers recorded at the sites of Lochan Duighaill, Kintyre and An Dòrlinn, Eriska.

Two other artefacts of note were also recorded from Loch Glashan, firstly an iron bearded socketed axe, and a bronze penannular brooch with amber settings. The latter is likely to be of late 8th or early 9th century date (Scott 1960, 1961; H.B. Duncan pers. comm.). Thus the inhabitants of Loch Glashan

appear to have had access to the products of a variety of craftsmen, ranging from leather-workers to fine metal-workers. They also had access to the products of external trade. The significance of this in the Early Historic period will be discussed subsequently. (Chapter Fifteen).

In attempting any detailed analysis of the extent of crannog settlement in Argyll and the relationship of crannogs to other forms of settlement within the area the positive identification of all crannog sites poses problems. This is particularly well illustrated by recent underwater surveys of Loch Tay in Eastern Scotland, and Loch Awe in Argyll, which have greatly increased the number of crannogs known in each loch (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1975, 20 f; McArdle and McArdle 1973; Dixon 1982; Morrison, pers. comm.). With the possibility that many other lochs also contain crannogs presently unidentified, any attempt to present an analysis of the totality of crannog settlement in Argyll must remain tentative. This is a major problem in settlement studies of most of Northern Britain, since a very different picture of settlement patterns would be presented by the discovery of large numbers of "new" crannog sites.

Another major problem associated with settlement studies in Argyll is the relationship between crannogs and other forms of defended site. Preceding discussion has suggested that the social unit associated with crannogs may be comparable to that associated with duns. Both would be seen as the product of organized labour exaction, and artefactual evidence suggests that certain, at least, were in contemporary occupation. While both types of sites may be similar, however, a direct

equivalence between these types of site cannot be assumed. The two types of site are located within the landscape in very different manners, and draw on very different constructional skills. Hence it would seem highly unlikely that the choice of whether to construct a dun or a crannog was related purely to the available location. It may be that these two types of site were being constructed by different members of society. On the basis of present knowledge, however, it is impossible to elucidate this point further.

The crannogs of Argyll, as noted earlier, are located throughout the area, scattered throughout the denser concentrations of dun settlements. Generally speaking it could be presumed that duns and crannogs represent elements of a wide network of settlement sites. Three apparent concentrations of crannog settlements do, however, exist and are worthy of further comment. The first lies along Loch Awe in Mid-Argyll. Here there exists only a limited amount of land suited to settlement along the loch sides, and this may in some way have influenced the decision to build crannogs here. In the Ardnave peninsula of Islay there are numerous lochs in which several crannogs have been constructed. Within the area, which is one of flat terrain, there is a lack of the type of characteristic hilltop or clifftop locations upon which duns are normally found. This might be taken to indicate that the concentration of crannogs in this area might relate to the nature of the landscape here, and the concentration of a group of crannog-dwellers there. A similar situation may be indicated also on the island of Coll where seven crannogs have been identified in its lake-strewn surface, while only four duns have been

identified. (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980).

In conclusion it would seem that crannogs were defended homesteads, inhabited by small social groupings who were of similar social standing to the inhabitants of the duns, although it is questionable whether this equivalence was exactly similar. Like duns they do not belong to a narrow chronological period, some may date to the Bronze Age, while others may be of medieval date. It is impossible on the basis of fieldwork alone to distinguish the date of such sites, and the evidence from excavated sites, being limited, is not much additional help. For the purposes of the present study, while it may admittedly be somewhat inaccurate, it was decided to include all sites in any analysis of settlement patterns to be presented.

Chapter Nine: Footnotes.

1. I am grateful to the Keeper of Archaeology, Helen Adamson for allowing access to this collection of material, and Diana Fox for discussing the material in detail with me.
2. I am grateful to Euan Campbell. Department of Archaeology. University College Cardiff, for examining this material with me.

CHAPTER TEN

EARLY HISTORIC FORTIFICATIONS

Within Argyll it has been possible to locate several defended sites which are recorded in historical annals (Alcock 1981). In the present work the term Early Historic Fortification is used to denote such a site. The historical references tell of the burning, besieging, destruction and taking of captives at these sites. These references have been taken to indicate their importance, since only such would merit note within the sources. A case can be made for such sites having had 'royal' associations. In 736 A.D. the Annals of Tigernach record raids by the King of Picts into Dalriada in which two sites are mentioned. Dún Ait was seized, and Creic burned. In the same campaign we are told of the taking captive of two sons of the King of Dalriada, Dungal and Feradach (Anderson 1922; 233). This may have occurred near or at one of the sites mentioned. Another site, that of Dún Ollaigh, we are told was built by Selbach, of Dalriada in 714 A.D. (Anderson 1922; 215).

Four sites mentioned in annalistic sources have been identified in Argyll (Bannerman 1974; 15-16; Alcock 1981) (Fig. 41). Of these probably the best known is Dún Ait which was suggested to have been ^{the} a defended site ^{of Dunadd} in Mid-Argyll on the banks of the river Add by Skene in 1886. This suggestion is generally accepted (cf. Bannerman 1974; 16; Alcock 1981) but, as Alcock points out, there is no continuous oral tradition to support such an attribution.

Dun Ollaigh was probably the site of Dunollie at the

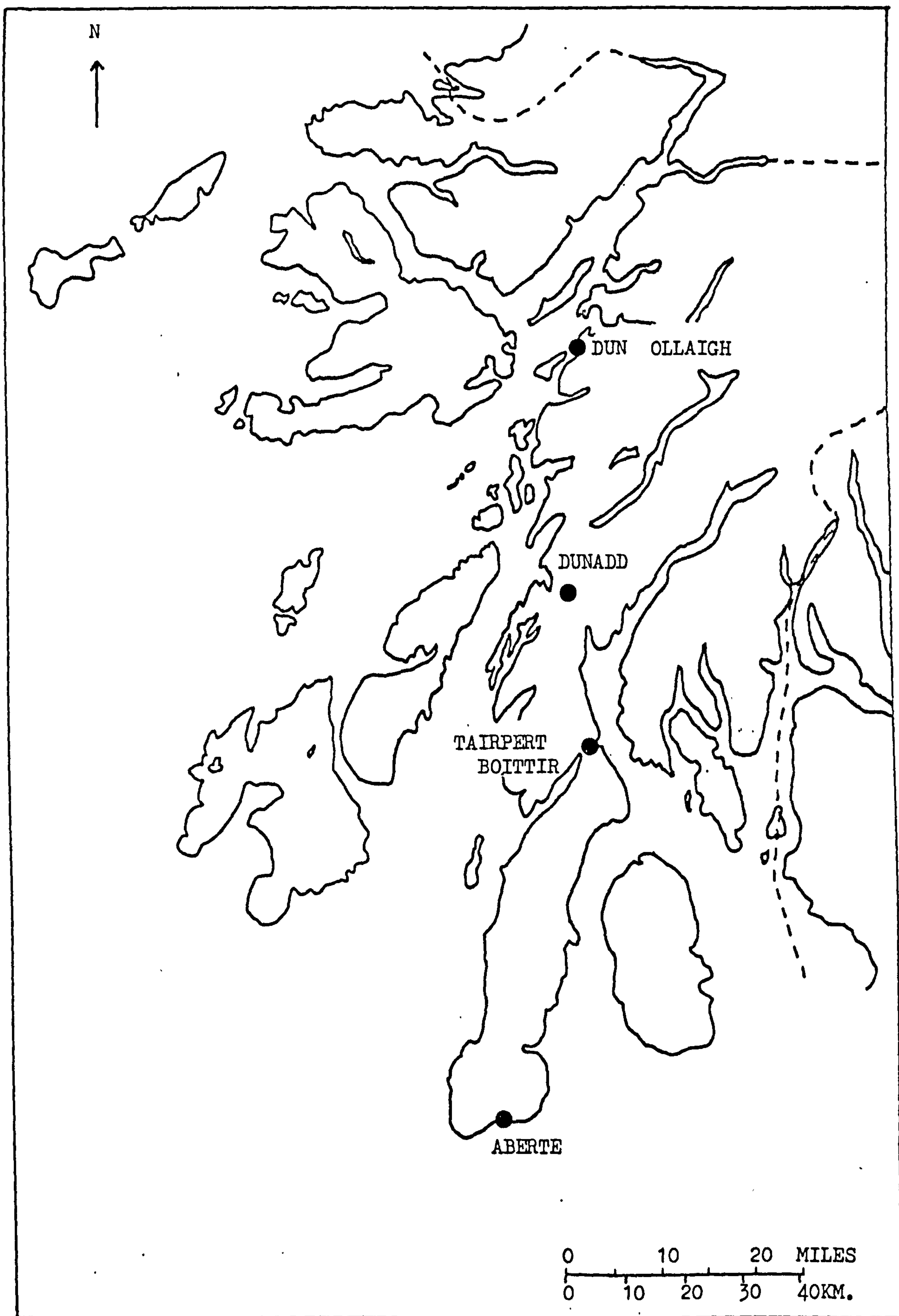


Fig.41 THE LOCATION OF EARLY HISTORIC FORTIFICATIONS IN DALRIADA.

(after Alcock 1981)

North end of Oban bay where continuous tradition has maintained the name of the site (Bannerman 1974, 16; Alcock 1981).

Aberte is normally associated with the headland of Dunaverty in Southern Kintyre (cf. R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971. 157; Bannerman 1974, 16; Alcock 1981). It must be noted that such an attribution may be in some doubt (Jackson, pers. comm.).

Watson indicates that the original form of the name Aberte may have been Dùn Ábartaig, meaning Abartach's Fort. If this is correct an alternative location with a name derived from the same source also exists near Fraserburgh (1926: 236-7).

Tairpert Boittir has been identified as Tarbert, Loch Fyne (Alcock 1981). In Chapter Two this site was noted in relation to portage points, since Tairpert derives from the gaelic 'tairm-bert' or 'overbringing'. Alcock argues that the site of Tarbert, Loch Fyne is of strategic importance, controlling such a portage point, an idea endorsed by the location of a medieval castle here.

The location of Tairpert Boittir illustrates that strategic position may have been important in the choice of location for such sites. A similar strategically located site is Dun Ollaigh which, as Alcock notes, controls what is now Oban Bay (1981). This provides a secure coastal location from which to control the coastlands and islands of Dalriada.

In addition to the sites mentioned above it would seem highly likely that other sites named within the annals may have been located in Argyll, but have not as yet been identified on the ground. An example of this may be the site of Creic destroyed in the campaign of 736 A.D.

Dunadd was suggested by Stevenson to be an example of a nuclear fort (1949). This was a term used to define any site which exhibited a central enclosure from which a series of outer terraces looped. Stevenson identified several other 'nuclear' sites, including Dalmahoy in West Lothian, Dundurn in Perthshire, Ruberslaw in Roxburghshire, and Dumbarton Rock in Strathclyde. At Dundurn, Dunadd, Ruberslaw and possibly Dalmahoy evidence existed which suggested that there was activity on the site in the Early Historic Period. Hence the possibility existed that these forms of fortification dated to this period. Subsequently Feachem and the R.C.A.H.M.S. were to extend the list of examples of such sites (Hogg 1975, 45).

It is now clear that a variety of types of site were in use in the Early Historic Period. Work by Alcock has illustrated that the form of the sites of Alt Clut (Castle Rock, Dumbarton) and the Scottish fort of Dun Ollaigh were not examples of 'nuclear' form (1976; 1978). In contrast Dunadd and Dundurn would appear to be.

On the question of the dating of 'nuclear' forts, Feachem in 1966 suggested that they were not new creations, but were early iron-age sites the defences of which had been repaired or improved. This now appears a questionable assertion, since excavations at Dundurn in Perthshire indicate that this was not the case at this site (Alcock 1978). At Dunadd recent excavations on the defences have revealed that while more complex than previously believed, there is no evidence to suggest that they were of Iron-Age date in origin. (Lane 1980; 1981; forthcoming). Lane maintains that none of the artefactual

material from previous excavations indicates Iron-age activity. Thus it is possible that 'nuclear' forts may represent a distinct form of site being constructed in the Early Historic Period, although more evidence would be needed to affirm this.

A point which must be raised is whether it is possible to distinguish between forts of Iron-Age date, and those being used in the Early Historic Period. Alcock has recently suggested that Early Historic Forts are commonly found on low craggy situations. Constructional techniques including timber palisades, drystone walls, timber-laced and timber nailed structures were used to produce a variety of layouts. These were normally small in overall extent, and commonly had a central dominating feature.

This can be supported by an analysis of those sites which have been identified in Argyll. Dunadd, Dun Ollaigh and, if correctly located, Aberte, are located on low craggy hills at heights of 46 m O.D., 56 m O.D. and 28 m O.D. respectively. While it has already been noted that the majority of other 'forts' in Argyll are also located on low altitudes, the prevalence of small, distinctive craggy rocks is a particular feature of the Early Historic sites. As Alcock has illustrated, the choice of a site with a central dominating feature was of importance. Dunadd is dominated by a central citadel area. Dun Ollaigh may also have been similar, but the construction of a later tower-house on the site has obliterated trace of this. Aberte may be another example, again the summit area here has been obscured by the construction of a medieval castle.

Archaeological excavations have taken place at the site of Dun Ollaigh and Dunadd, and have provided additional information about the nature of chronology and use of these sites; their structural form and the types of activity which were occurring within them.

Small scale excavations were undertaken at Dun Ollaigh to establish the date of the defences. To achieve this two trenches were opened, one to investigate the supposed northern defences, and the other the eastern (Alcock 1979; Fig. 42). Excavation of the northern defences revealed three phases. The first was represented by a large hearth sitting on bedrock. This was associated with a few clay mould fragments, and a crucible fragment, indicating fine metalworking at the site. Three dates were obtained from bone samples from this phase; 740 ± 60 a.d. (Gu 1395) ^(630 A.D - 905 A.D) 590 ± 60 a.d. (Gu 1396) ^(580 A.D - 780 A.D) and 680 ± 60 a.d. ^(610 A.D - 880 A.D) (Gu 1397). These indicate activity between the late 6th Century and the early 10th century. From the position of the hearth it would appear there were no defences at the head of the northern slope during Phase A. It remains uncertain, however, if the citadel area of the site was then occupied by a dun-like structure. In Phase B a stone rampart had been built around the area. This was argued on the basis of artefactual material to also date to the Early Historic Period. Subsequently the site had fallen into dereliction until the 13th century or later when a new rampart was constructed.

Three phases of activity were also identified on the Eastern defences, the first one being marked by a stone rampart,

DUN OLLAIGH

NM 8531

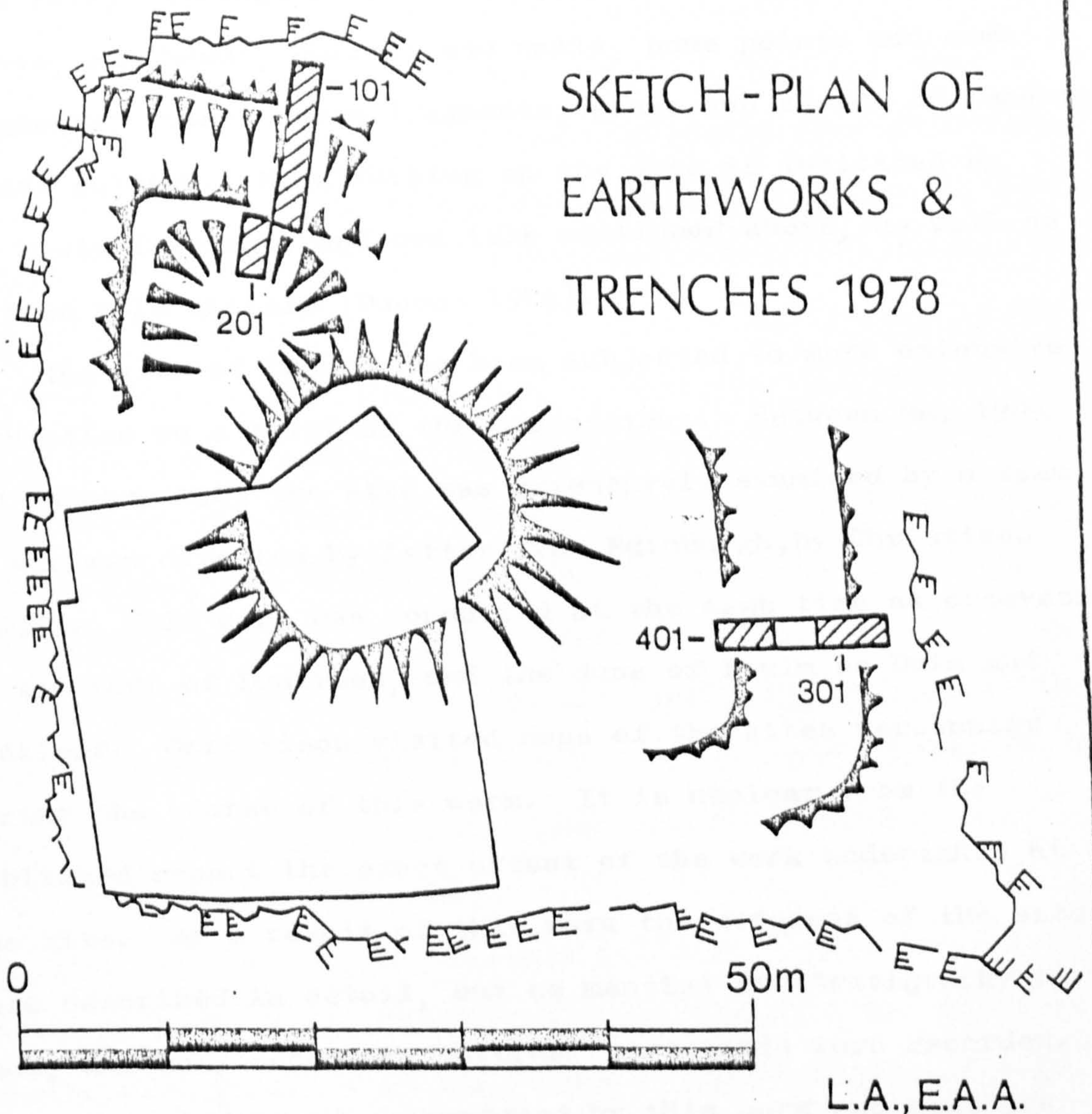


Fig. 42 Dun Ollaigh Early Historic Fortification.

(from Alcock 1979)

this was in turn overlain by a medieval rampart; finally in the 17th century the terrace had been levelled.

Thus Dun Ollaigh was a defended site in the Early Historic Period. Artefactual material recovered in excavations has been fully catalogued by Duncan (1982). This includes iron knives, axe heads, chisels and nails, bone points and comb fragments, rotary quern fragments, glass and sherds of imported E-wave pottery. Metalworking on the site is indicated by the mould fragments and crucible mentioned above, as well as by iron cold chisels (Duncan 1982).

The site of Dunadd has been subjected to more extensive excavation on a total of three occasions. Between May 1904 and January 1905 the site was extensively examined by a team of workmen directed, by letter from Edinburgh, by Christison (1905). This work was conducted at the same time as excavations at the fort of Duntroon, and the duns of Druim on Duin and Ardifar. Christison visited none of the sites personally during the course of this work. It is unclear from the published report the exact extent of the work undertaken at the site. As a result of this work the defences of the site were described in detail, but no mention of stratigraphy is made, and only secondary internal structures were recorded. Numerous artefacts were produced by this work and most are presently preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Edinburgh. Unfortunately the precise provenance of the artefacts on the site was not recorded.

In 1929 Craw undertook further work on the site with the aim of locating intact stratigraphy and internal structures

(1930). Craw's trenches X, Y and Z, are located on Fig. 43. No signs of internal structures were recovered in this work. Excavation of a midden deposit produced more artefacts. Finally in 1980 and 1981 Lane undertook further work on the site to attempt to date the rampart construction.

All the artefactual material from the 1904 and 1929 excavations has been catalogued and discussed (Duncan 1982). Duncan has also catalogued all the material produced by Lane's excavations on the site for future publication. This material indicates that the inhabitants of the site had access to the products of foreign trade, and also that the site was an important craft production centre. External contact is indicated by fragments of wheel-thrown E-ware pottery (Thomas 1981; Duncan 1982) a minimum number of 20 to 30 vessels is represented. Current dating places use of this pottery between the mid 6th century and the 9th century (Duncan 1982, II: 43). Duncan has discussed the origins of such pottery (1982, II; 42) with the source area currently most favoured being Western France (Duncan 1982, II: 42).

One sherd of D-ware imported pottery is also known from Dunadd (Alcock 1971, 204; Thomas 1981; Duncan 1982, II; 40). This comes probably from the Bordeaux region of France. It has recently been suggested that it was being imported as an adjunct to a 'trade' in wine, the latter being imported in wooden casks, tied with withies, which would normally decay and leave no trace in the archaeological record (Alcock 1982, 361).

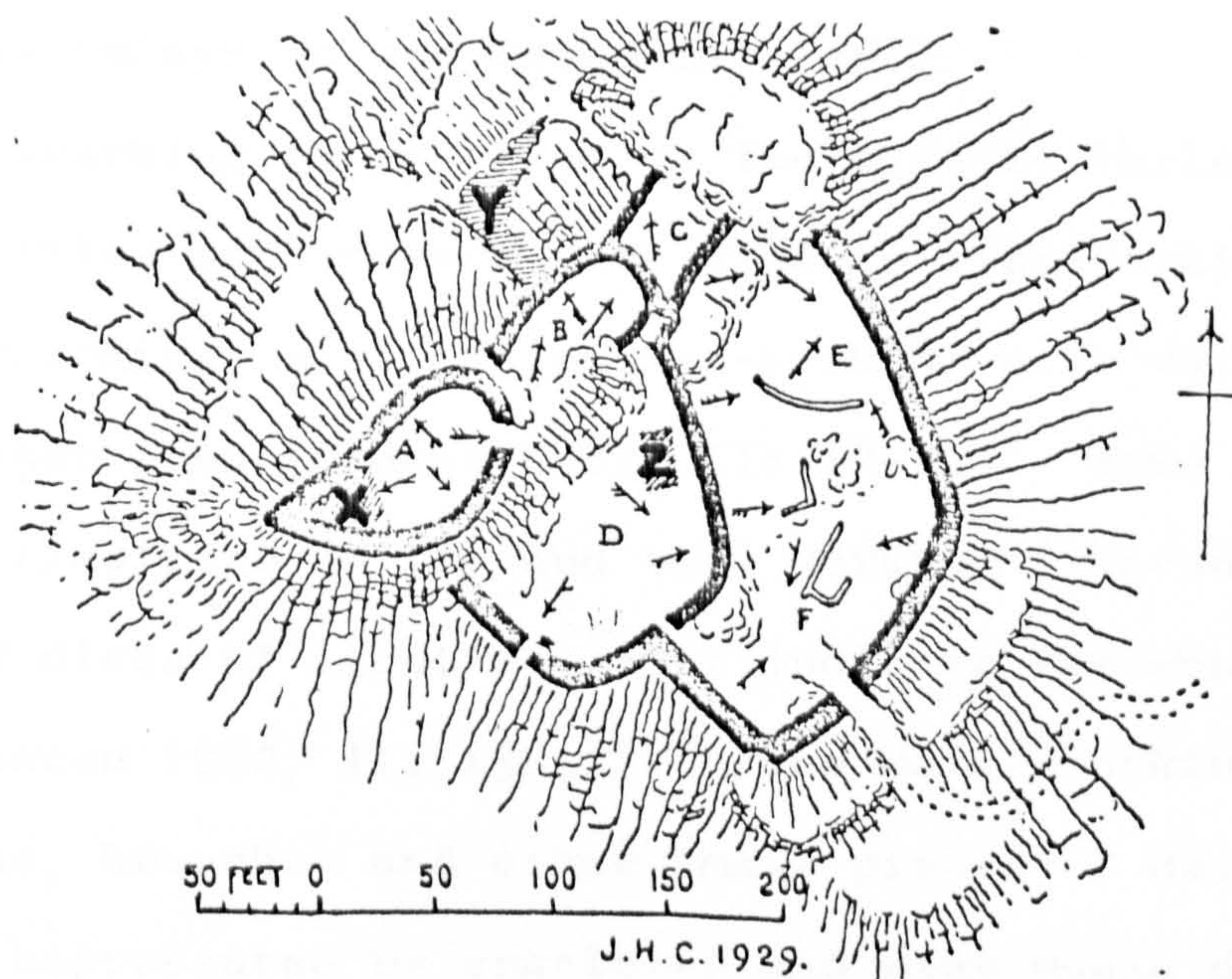


Fig. 43 Dunadd Early Historic Fortification.

(from Craw 1930)

Fragments of Merovingian glass have also been found at Dunadd (Duncan 1982, II: 86-7). The limited number of sherds and the variety of colour and thickness exhibited by these have been taken to indicate that they do not represent actual vessels on the site. Instead they were brought to the site in a broken form as cullet which could then be melted down for use as inlays in decorated metalwork.

The craft-working represented on the site is varied. Iron chisels, files and hammers were used in iron-working, augurs in woodworking, awls in leather-working with which shears may also be associated (Duncan 1982, II: 12-14). Sawn off antler tines illustrate antler and bone working (Duncan 1982, II: 100-1) and discs of lignite or jet indicate the manufacture of armlets (Duncan 1982, II: 130-2). Fine metal-working.- the casting of pins, brooches and other small pieces of decorative metalwork, is represented by crucibles and clay mould debris (Duncan 1982, II: 55-68; 69-82) and also slag and waste metal fragments (Duncan, pers. comm.).

The concentration of craft-production on a site in this manner can be paralleled at other Early Historic sites in the British Isles; notably Dinas Powys in Wales (Alcock 1963). Reasons for this concentration of craft activity will be suggested in a subsequent chapter of the present work (Chapter Fifteen).

Domestic occupation of the site is indicated by a range of artefacts including iron knives and rotary quern-stones (Duncan 1982, II; 4-6; 106-7). The latter indicate the processing of the products of agricultural production. A

drystone cell dug into the ground on the site, which is reminiscent of a souterrain, and may have been for the storage of foodstuffs.

Of particular importance are several weapons from the site, which include a sword fragment, an arrowhead and several spearheads (Duncan 1982; II, 6; 11). Finds of weaponry are rare in the Early Historic Period, particularly ^{on} settlement sites. They are not necessarily indicative of conflict at the site, but infer that the site can be associated with persons of considerable social status. In this period the ability to carry weapons was, as Alcock has pointed out, an indication of social status (1981). In particular Alcock illustrates that swords may reflect great wealth, because of the time and cost involved in their manufacture. Perhaps at Dunadd the weaponry reflects a band of military retainers associated with the King, forming his bodyguard. The weapons recovered could have been used in conflict, and also hunting. The latter was also an important part of the lifestyle of aristocratic persons at this time.

The importance of the site at Dunadd may also be indicated by the discovery there of a stone with the impression of a footprint carved into it. This is located in enclosure B, just below the citadel. It has been taken as evidence that the site may have been where the Kings of Dalriada were inaugurated (cf. Christison 1905; Anderson 1980, 132). It is clear that early inauguration rituals may have involved a ritual symbolising the union of the King with the land of his Kingdom. This may have been achieved by the placing of the

royal foot in such an impression during an inauguration ceremony. Hayes McCoy has described the inauguration ritual associated with the O'Neills of Ireland which involved the use of a sacred stone, and the placing of a shoe upon the foot of the King (1970). Within Scotland we have evidence for the use of an inauguration stone at Scone in the medieval period (Duncan 1975; 115-6). Closer to Dalriada, the inauguration of the lords of the Isles in the middle ages also involved the use of an inauguration stone which had a human footprint carved into it (Hamilton 1968, 151-2).

This may represent a continuation of a practice established in the Early Historic Period. A footprint stone is also associated with St. Columba's Chapel, Southend in Kintyre (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 147-51). In view of the close proximity of this to Aberte (if the latter site is correctly identified) this may be associated with the inauguration of the Kings of the Cenél ΛGabráin. (cf. Chapter Twelve).

To summarize Dunadd may have been an inauguration centre for the Kings of Dalriada. There may have been a permanent settlement there, in addition to which various craft activities were being undertaken there. In view of the size and location of the citadel enclosure, which is very reminiscent of the many duns of the area, it could be suggested that this area may have been a domestic settlement, with craft-working and other activities being confined to the lower walled terraces.

Recent excavation of the site, as well as producing much more artefactual material similar to that produced earlier, has also indicated that the massive stone rampart construction did indeed continue into the Early Historic Period. Work on

the citadel of the site produced a sherd of E-ware sealed under the demolition layer of the primary rampart here (Lane 1981). A secondary rampart was soon built over this area. While not precisely dateable between the 6th and 9th centuries A.D.; the sherd is important in illustrating the continuity of building traditions.

Discussion so far in this chapter has been of fortified sites mentioned in documentary sources. It is clear, however, that these were not the only defended sites in use in the Early Historic Period. Previous discussion has noted that certain, at least, of the duns and crannogs of the area were in use. (cf. Chapters Seven and Nine). While many of the forts of Argyll may be of earlier date, it is possible to cite examples which are somewhat dissimilar to the mass, and for which an Early Historic date may be possible.

One example of such a site in the promontory site of Dùn na Muirgheidh on Mull (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980; 80-2) (Fig. 44). The small size of this site (internal area 455 m²) and its location on a low rocky promontory (9.5 m O.D.) would make it comparable with other Early Historic Fortifications. It is of interest that the interior of the site is occupied by two subrectangular buildings. These do not impinge upon the walls of the fort, and are located so as to make maximum usage of the enclosed area. The R.C.A.H.M.S. suggest that these structures are related to those adjacent to outworks of the site, and that all are similar to buildings found around several medieval castles on the island dating to the 13th century. It would be of importance to attempt to date both these structures, and the defences of the site and discover their inter-relationship.

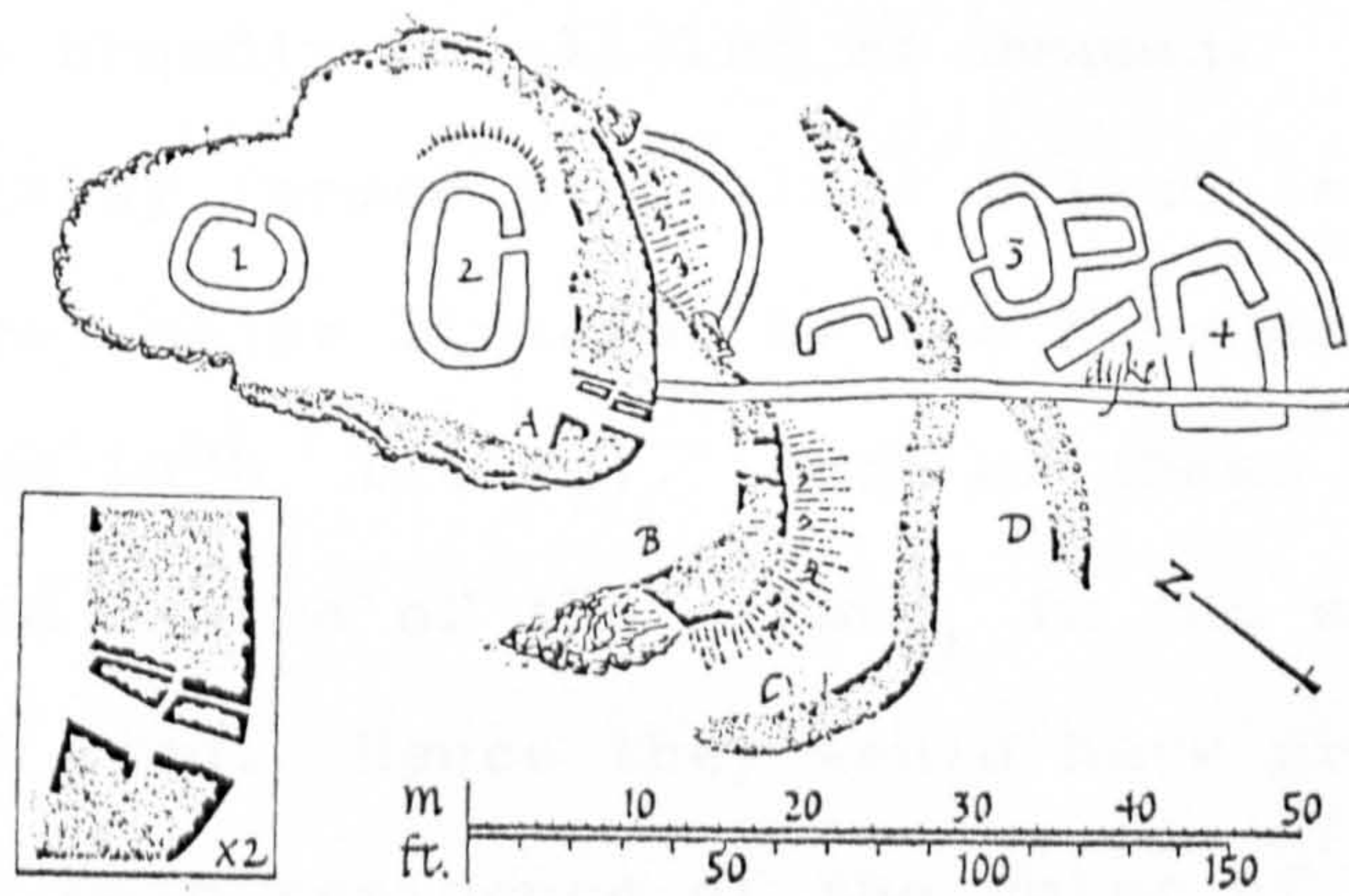


Fig. 44 Fort, Dùn na Muirgheidh, Mull.

(from R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980)

On the island of Islay two multivallate forts of earthen construction exist, Dun Guaidhre and Dun Nosbridge. These contrast with the more usual stone construction exhibited by the island's forts. At both of these sites, particularly Dun Nosbridge, the steepness of the rampart profile, indicating little erosion, may be suggestive of a relatively recent construction. At Dun Nosbridge the enclosure of a series of terraces could be broadly paralleled at Dunadd. In the Early Historic Period Islay formed a distinct island territory held by one of the three major lineages of the Kingdom, the Cenél n Oengusa (Bannerman 1974, 114 ff). Both of these hillforts are located in the centre of the island, in the area of the best agricultural land. Hence they would have provided ideal locations for the main residence of the ruler of the island. The island of Islay is one of the areas studied in the case studies presented in Volume 2 of the present work. The importance of these two sites is discussed further there.

In conclusion then it would seem that a small group of larger defended sites were in use in Argyll in the Early Historic Period. These were associated with the Kings of Dalriada, and were occasionally recorded within annallistic sources. Such sites were not only a feature of Dalriada, but appear throughout Scotland (Alcock 1981). These sites may be distinguished from the mass of other large hillforts by their location on distinctive low craggy rock outcrops.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

OTHER SETTLEMENT SITES IN ARGYLL

Preceding chapters have discussed the various defended settlements of Argyll in detail. It is unlikely, however, that these were the only settlement sites in use in the 1st millennium A.D.; hence this chapter will draw together evidence which suggests^{the} existence of a range of open settlements during this period. Throughout discussion an attempt will be made to consider the relationship of the inhabitants of these sites to those of the defended settlements.

The best areas to begin looking for other settlements are in areas of machair where drifting sand has preserved the remains of former settlement sites. A good examples of this is the site of Machrins on Colonsay which was excavated in 1977 and 1978 (Ritchie 1981) (Fig. 45). Here four single-roomed 'houses' were discovered set into hollows in the sand. These had suffered badly from erosion, but the best preserved illustrated buildings with a square plan and rounded corners with a diameter of about 4.2 m. The walls were constructed of upright stones set into a shallow groove in the sand. There was no outer wall face; and excavation did not uncover traces of any outer timbers with which a roof might have been supported. Some of the houses appear to have been interconnected in a manner reminiscent of some 'Pictish' roundhouses (Alcock 1980). Hearths were a central feature of the internal arrangements of these buildings. Animal bone found in a stone 'cupboard' in one of the houses produced a radio-carbon date of 800 a.d. \pm 70 (665 A.D - 1015 A.D) (Gu 1115). The buildings did not produce

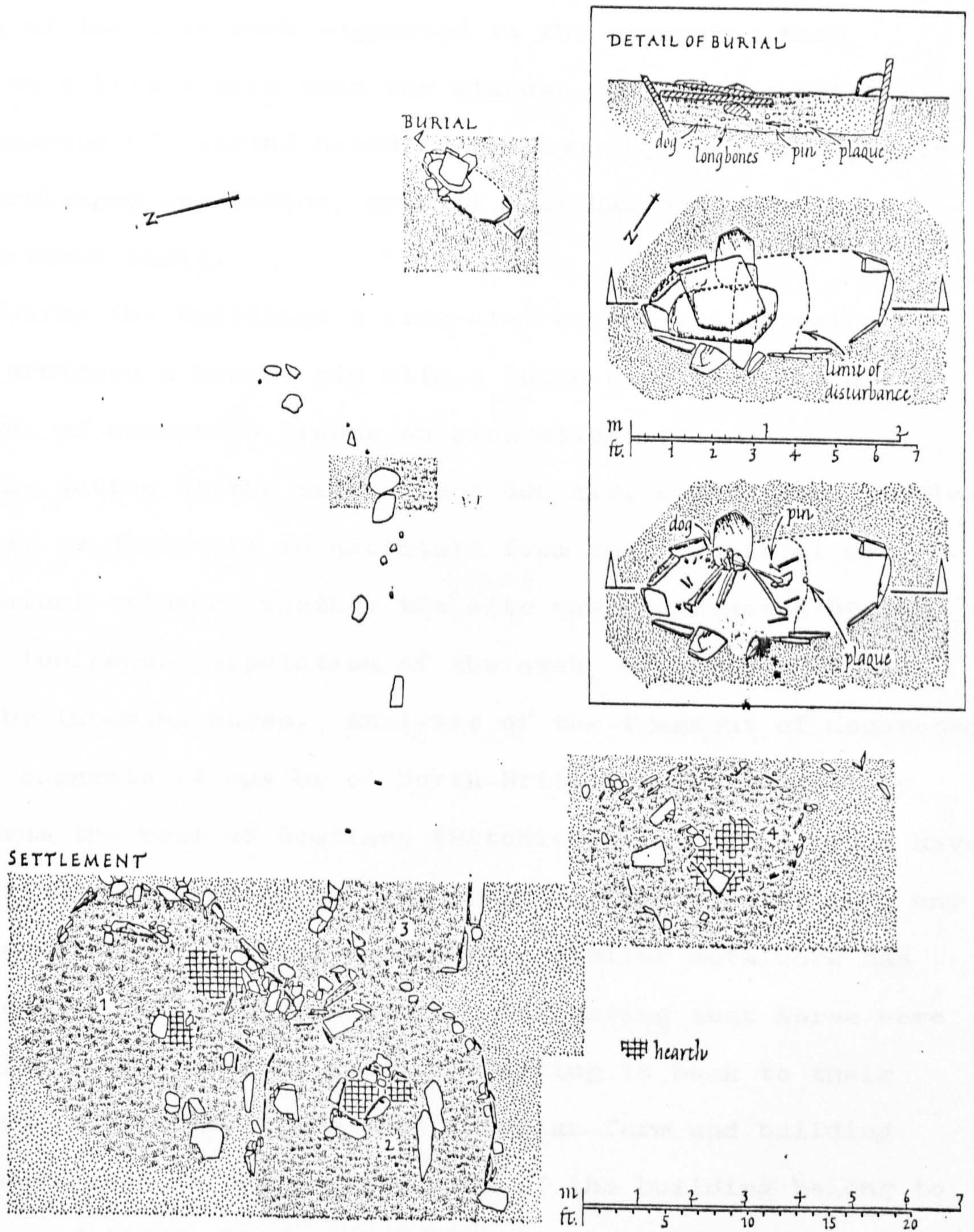


Fig. 45 Site plan of Machrins, Colonsay. (from Ritchie 1977)

many artefacts, though objects of iron, bone, stone and burnt clay were well preserved. Fragments of several knives were reminiscent of those from Dunadd (Duncan 1982) and Dun Ollaigh (Alcock 1978) but are not intrinsically dateable. The flimsy nature of the stonework suggested to the excavator that, 'they were little more than the stances for impermanent structures'. The sequence of hearths noted in two houses, however suggests some prolonged occupation, even if that had occurred on an intermittent basis.

Nearby the buildings a long-cist burial was revealed, which produced a bronze pin with a loose ring head and a fragment of decorated bronze on excavation.

The dating of the site around 800 A.D. causes some problems since it is difficult to ascertain from the structural and artefactual evidence whether the site was constructed by one of the indigenous population of the area, or whether it was built by incoming Norse. Analysis of the fragment of decorated bronze suggests it may be of North British origin, possibly even from the west of Scotland (Ritchie 1981). This might have been in the possession of a local native, but equally well may have been looted by Norse somewhere. Similar metalwork has been noted in Scandinavian graves, indicating that Norse were collecting such material and transporting it back to their homelands. Ritchie argues that the plan-form and building techniques used in the construction of the building belong to native traditions, but were possibly erected under duress by slave labour for Viking masters. The limited amount of information recovered from the site, must however restrict the amount of speculation about its origins. One of the few comments

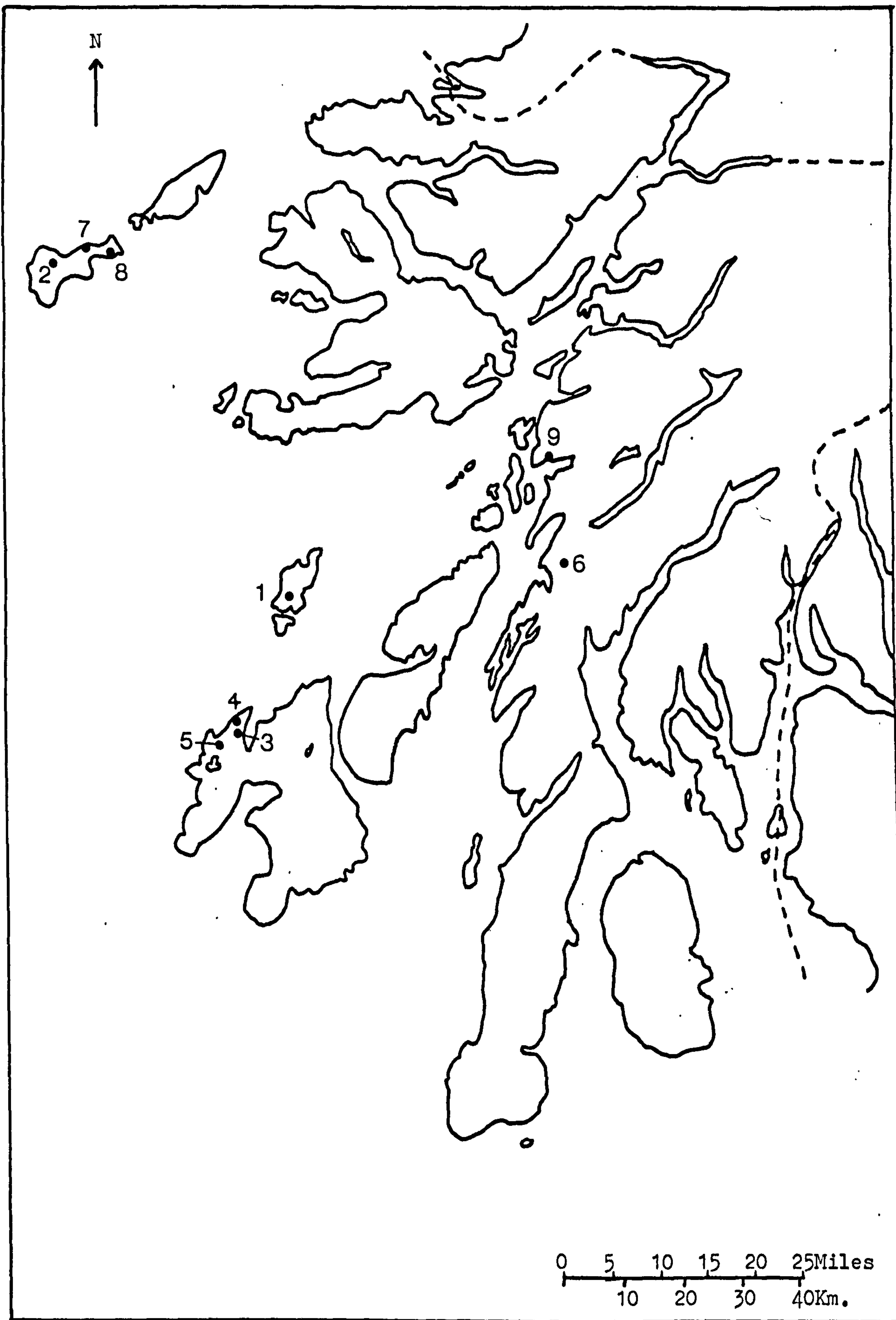


Fig.46 The location of settlement sites discussed in Chapter 11.

1. Machrins, Colonsay.
2. Balevullin, Tiree.
3. Kilellan, Islay.
4. Ardnave, Islay.
5. Sanaigmore, Islay.
6. Brouch an Drummin, Mid Argyll.
7. Dun Mor Vaul, Tiree.
8. Dun Mor a'Chaolais, Tiree.
9. Ardanstur, Lorn.

which could validly be made about the nature of the social group associated with it, is that their possession of bronze-work would seem to indicate wealth of some form.

On the Island of Tiree records suggest the erosion of sand dunes there revealed several settlement sites. In 1903 Beveridge recorded several of what he termed 'sand-hill' sites (1903; 123-9). From these he collected artefacts, mainly of flint and pottery. His subsequent analysis of most of this material suggested that it was of Neolithic or Bronze age date. It is clear, however, that some eroding sand dunes were producing evidence of later occupation.

In 1963 Mackie published discussion and analysis of a sand-hill settlement excavated by A. Henderson Bishop in 1912. Bishop had discovered a settlement eroding out of a sand-dune at Balevullin in the North of Tiree. On excavation this revealed what Bishop took to be two small huts each of about 7-8 ft. in diameter. Each was of wattle construction, and had been destroyed by fire, hence it was possible to identify, and indeed lift areas of the wattle. These two structures appeared to be located in a black occupation layer approximately 37 ft. by 34 ft. (Fig. 47). In his reanalysis of the site, Mackie suggested that the two huts were too small to have been individual dwellings, and that a better interpretation would be to see the entire spread as the floor of a large circular round-house with a diameter of around 34 ft. This would seem a more feasible explanation of the site, since the occupation layer encountered is circular, and of a size which could have been roofed easily. This would also place the main feature of

the site, a central hearth within the building , with Bishop's 'huts' actually forming internal partitions of the domestic space.

Artefactual material from the site appeared to be of Iron-age date. This included straight edged bone combs, difficult to parallel, ^{which} but (seemed to be decorated in a manner similar to bone combs from the wheelhouse of Foshigarry, North Uist (Beveridge and Callander 1931) and Kilpheder Wheelhouse on South Uist (Lethbridge 1952). Such wheelhouses are not closely dateable, but it is clear that they belonged to the post-broch era of the 3rd to 5th centuries A.D. (Ritchie and Ritchie 1981, 117). Pottery from the site included large quantities of coarse gritty sherds presumably from large barrel-shaped and bucket-shaped pots, some of which had been sparsely decorated with incised lines and finger-tip marks. A small number of what Mackie terms "beaker-like" vessels with fine decoration and applied cordons were also found (Mackie 1963). It is clear that some of the decorative styles in use have their origins in the Bronze Age or earlier. Some of the sherds were paralleled by material from the Kilpheder wheelhouse.

A third example of a settlement site revealed by eroding sand dunes is that of Kilellan in the North of Islay. In 1976 excavation of this site revealed possible traces of an Early Historic settlement overlying a Bronze Age one (Burgess 1976). Two successive circular structures survived as two arcs of inner facing stones. As only short lengths of these lay within the excavated areas knowledge of them is imprecise, but each appeared to have an internal diameter of around 9 m. Much of

the wall had been robbed away, and all trace of outer facing stones had gone. No specific dating evidence could be associated with these structures. It was clear that they had been largely demolished to provide material for the construction of a souterrain. The latter was a drystone construction with walls up to 1 metre high, and 2 metres wide. The full extent of this souterrain was not traced since it lay outside the excavated area. The souterrain had been covered with layers of midden deposit which is reported to have contained some bone, including worked fragments, shells and horn. A bronze pin with an amethyst head may indicate a date in the Early Historic Period for the midden deposit at least, since it can be paralleled by one from the crannog of Lagore in Ireland. The shaft of a loose ringed-pin found in disturbed levels above the bronze age settlement was also suggested to be of Early Historic date.

Other traces of settlements have also been noted eroding out of sand-dunes on Islay. At Ardnave, slightly north of Kilellan, a hearth was noted within sand-dunes. On excavation no further structural evidence was recovered, but some artefacts were revealed (Ritchie, Stevenson and Welfare 1980). A rosette pin of tinned bronze, and a tinned-bronze 'P'-shaped brooch were regarded as dating to the 3rd century A.D. because of parallels with metal-work from Traprain Law. Charcoal from the hearth produced a radio-carbon date of 195 ± 60 a.d.
 (60 A.D. - 420 A.D.) incompatible
 (Gu 1443) and hence were not \angle with the dating suggested by the artefactual evidence.

Similarly at Sanaigmore on Islay, a small stone structure

with iron-slag was recorded eroding out of the sand-dunes, and was also examined by the R.C.A.H.M.S. (DES 1979). This revealed a stone rivetted artificial mound of sand 7.2 m in diameter, 0.6 m high with a stone-built flue inserted into its summit. Pottery of 'iron-age' type was recovered from the site.

Thus eroding sand-dune sites have provided evidence for a variety of settlement sites occupied during the 1st millennium A.D. Elsewhere in Argyll evidence for such settlement sites has not been as forthcoming. Most of the sites noted above were of relatively flimsy construction, and it is possible that similar sites built elsewhere in Argyll did not survive abandonment, not being encapsulated in sand as these earlier examples had been. It is important, however, not to overstretch the suggestion that sites elsewhere in Argyll were not preserved for long, since recent fieldwork may suggest that traces of such settlement do actually exist, but have never been adequately investigated.

The only site which has been excavated is that of Brouch on Drummin in Mid-Argyll, (Cregeen 1960; 1961; 1962) a site located on the Kilmartin gravel terraces, which had to be examined in advance of gravel extraction. The site is a complex one, which was not fully investigated, and not fully understood at the time.⁽¹⁾ The site may have been a defended one, since a natural promontory of the gravel terrace had been cut off by a bank and two ditches, the enclosed area being in the order of one to two acres. Excavations were conducted within the interior of the site, and also on the ditch system. Within the site post-holes revealed the existence of two timber round-houses.

The larger one, which had a diameter of around 35 ft. appeared to be the earlier. It was subsequently replaced by a smaller structure with a diameter of 25 ft., this site being eventually destroyed by fire.

The ditches cutting off the promontory had been allowed to silt up over a long period, before low stone walls were inserted into them. At one point this walling was associated with iron slag, charcoal and burnt barley. Later the upper levels of the ditches were thought to have been artificially filled in, and a standing stone and cobbled pavement area erected over it. What were described as "later medieval" buildings represented by stone foundations and glazed and unglazed pottery also overlaid the earlier settlement. Unfortunately the latter was not recorded in much detail.

Despite the limited nature of the evidence recovered from the site, some comment about the chronology of its usage can be made. The origins of the settlement were attributed to the later centuries B.C. on the basis of a La Tène 1c fibula brooch recovered (Cregeen pers. comm.). Earlier discussion in the present work related to the dun of Rahoy, noted the problems inherent in dating a site on the basis of such "exotic" imported artefacts (Chapter Seven) and Cregeen's assertion must now be treated with some caution. This does not totally dismiss the possibility that the site had early origins. It is clear that this area of Mid-Argyll was important from the Neolithic and Bronze ages, a point dramatically illustrated by the concentration of burial monuments, standing stones and cup-marked rocks in the area. The gravel terraces

upon which the site was located provide a large extent of light, well-drained soils which must have been well suited to human settlement from early times. The agricultural potential of the area is reflected by the discovery of two pits full of carbonized barley at Brouch an Drummin, the larger of which held 12 cubic feet of grain (Cregeen, pers. comm.). It must be said that no other Neolithic or Bronze Age settlement has been recorded though.

While the site may have had more ancient origins some artefactual evidence may suggest activity in the Early Historic Period. This includes whetstones paralleled at Dunadd and Loch Glashan Crannog; iron knife blades paralleled at Dunadd. A fragment of a fine glass bead with herringbone decoration may indicate an 8th or 9th century settlement with some form of contact with Ireland, since these beads appear distinctly Irish (Guido, pers. comm.). Similar beads have also been found at Dunadd. A crucible probably indicates fine metal-working, and a fragment of decorated slate may be a fragment of a trial piece. Such evidence for metal-working could also be paralleled at Dunadd.

Elsewhere in Argyll other settlements dating to the first millennium A.D. may be indicated by recorded Souterrain sites. These walled, underground tunnel-like structures are far from common in Argyll, but examples from Kintyre, Islay and Tiree are known (Fig. 48). At the site of Dunadd a drystone cell may also be comparable. By analogy with Pictland and Ireland souterrains are normally associated with settlement sites (O'Riordain 1979; 65; Wainwright 1963; Warner 1982; Watkins 1980). At Newmills in Perthshire, for example, a settlement consisting of timber-framed circular houses was found adjacent to a souterrain (Watkins 1978).

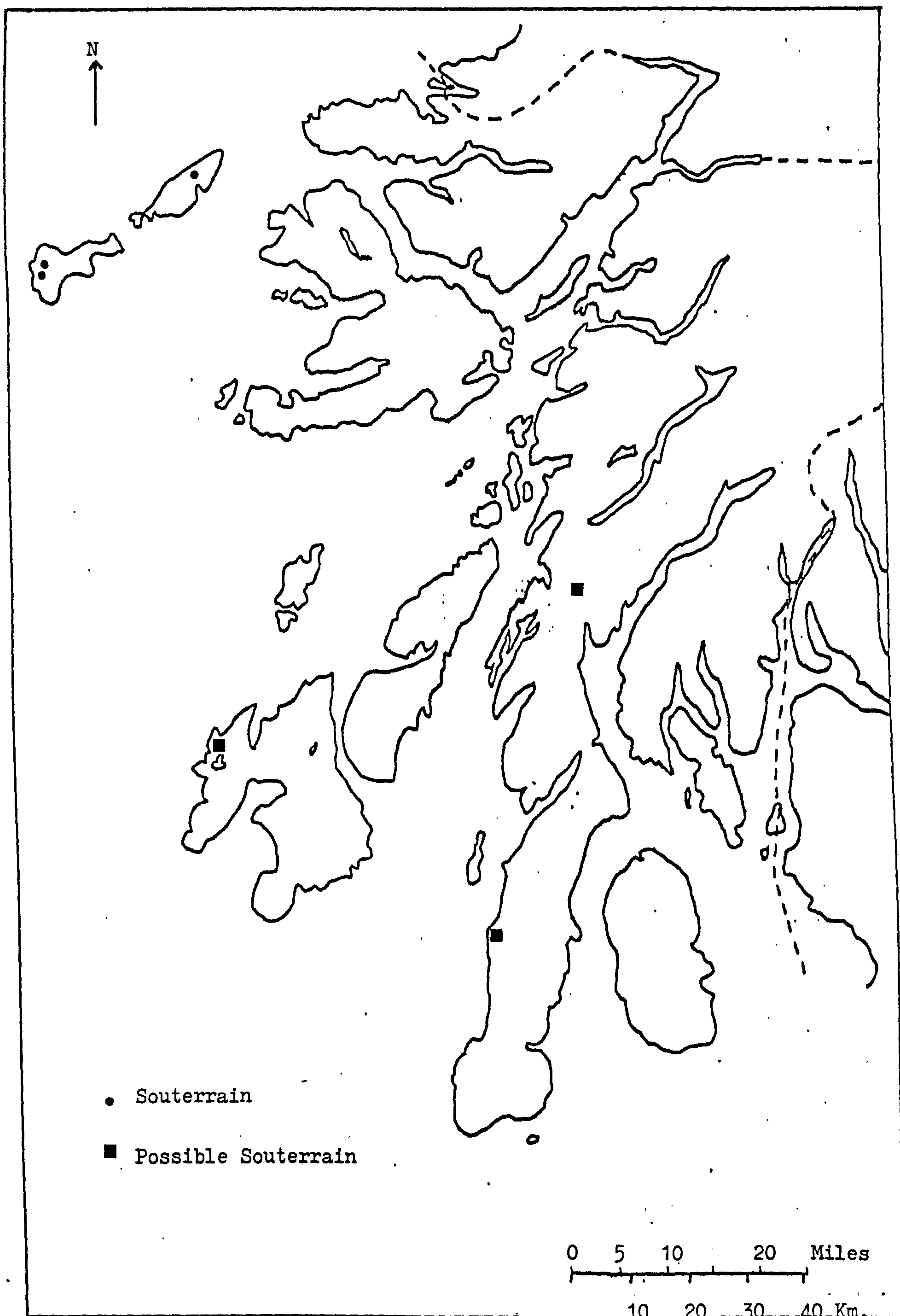


Fig. 48 The Location of Souterrains in Argyll.

The limited distribution of such sites is presumably primarily a reflection on the intractable nature of the sub-soil over most of the area. Since bedrock lies very close to the surface over much of Argyll, the construction of souterrains would have been a ridiculously time-consuming occupation. In the sandy soils of areas of Tiree and Islay, however, they were relatively easy to construct.

In considering the souterrains of Argyll it is perhaps worth noting that they, along with others along the West coast of Scotland appear to be long, narrow tunnel-like structures, often with side passages. This contrasts with the Pictish examples which are generally much roomier (Wainwright 1963) but, as Warner has noted, is generally reminiscent of Irish examples (1982). This must be borne in mind in any consideration of the function of these structures. It is generally considered that the Pictish examples were stores for dry foodstuffs (cf. Watkins 1980), in contrast however, the Irish ones have been suggested as underground refuges (Warner 1980).

The chronology of use for such sites is as yet far from clear. It has been argued that Pictish examples were in use from about the beginning of the 1st millennium A.D. (Wainwright 1963; 112 f). The site of Newmill, Perthshire produced a radiocarbon date for destruction of 195 ± 55 a.d. (Gu - 1019) ^(60AD-420 A.D.) (Watkins 1978). This is the only site, however, for which such a date of destruction has been obtained. At Carlungie II the souterrain was demolished after 200 A.D., although exactly when after this date is unclear (Wainwright 1963; 115). In contrast in Ireland it has been argued that no souterrains can

be dated prior to the 5th century A.D. (Warner 1980). If the latter suggestion is correct, and some at least of the souterrains of Western Scotland are similar to Irish examples, they may have been in use in the Early Historic Period.

The question of the function of souterrains is important for any analysis of the settlement unit with which they are associated. If they were primarily for refuge periods of conflict are suggested during which the sites inhabitants could not seek defence in other forms of strongly defended settlements, but took refuge at their own site. If they were for storage purposes, wealthy associated settlements must have existed. The inhabitants of the latter settlements must have had the ability to control large quantities of produce, some of which may have been their own, and some exacted as tribute from others. If these settlements were those of persons of high social standing who could command such resources, they must in some way, have been compatible with the inhabitants of the defended sites, if indeed both were in contemporary occupation.

It was suggested earlier in this chapter that the remains of other settlement sites which could date to the first millennium A.D. could remain preserved within the landscape of Argyll. Recent fieldwork by the R.C.A.H.M.S. on Islay has indicated the existence there of many hut-circle sites, in some cases associated with adjacent field-systems (R.C.A.H.M.S. forthcoming). This is the first area of Argyll in which the R.C.A.H.M.S. have really accepted the potential archaeological importance of such sites. It would seem likely that originally they had a widespread distribution throughout Argyll, and indeed examples have been noted elsewhere by field officers of the Ordnance

Survey (O.S. records). It is normally assumed, by analogy with other areas of Northern Britain, that groups of open hut circles are of Bronze-age date. None of the examples from Argyll have been excavated. The possibility must exist, however, that some at least could date to the first millennium A.D. The settlements previously discussed at Balevullin on Tiree, and Kilellan on Islay are possible examples of round-houses occupied in the first millennium A.D. By analogy Davies has recently summarized evidence for the occupation of such hut groups in Wales in the Post-Roman Period (1982, 27).

The evidence from the crannog of Loch Glashan in Mid-Argyll which suggests the occupation of a rectangular building in the Early Historic Period also indicates that rectangular platforms and structural remains should also not all be dismissed as of relatively recent date.

In discussion of the defended sites several references were made to the possibility of external settlements having existed outside the main enclosing wall of the site. In particular it was suggested that external buildings had been identified at the duns of Ardenstur in Lorn which could be contemporary with the dun occupation. External buildings may also exist outside the broch of Dùn Mór a'Chaolais on Tiree. Excavations at Dùn Mór Vaul on Tiree also suggested activity within the outer courtyard of the broch which might indicate the existence of settlements there. It would seem reasonable to expect other settlement sites to be closely related to such defended sites. Discussion on the nature of society in Chapter Six indicated the importance of clientage in the Early Historic

Period. If it is correct to suggest that the defended settlements were inhabited by persons of high social status then it becomes of importance to attempt to locate the settlements of their clients. Since the economy of the period was based largely on agricultural production, and was hence dependent on suitable areas of land, it might be anticipated that client settlements would cluster around those of their patrons, since the latter controlled much of the land.

It is possible that many of the other settlement sites discussed in this chapter represent settlement inhabited by clients of those living in the defended sites. Many of these settlements are of markedly slighter construction in contrast to the massive defended sites. In contrast to the defended sites these may have been constructed by the inhabitants themselves and were probably not the production of a system of labour exaction. This would imply the inhabitants of these sites were of much lower social status than those of the defended sites. It would be wrong, however, to identify all of these other settlements as those of persons of lowly social standing. The suggestion that those with souterrains may have been inhabited by persons able to control large quantities of agricultural produce was made.

Polarization of discussion of sites in Argyll towards the massively constructed stone-built sites also forgets that similar highly developed architectural traditions based upon timber construction were also present within the area. This is well illustrated by the skill which went into crannog construction. In the case of crannogs, waterlogging has

preserved the evidence for use. Elsewhere the processes of decay probably soon caused the decay of timber structures, leaving little but the stances upon which they were built. It should be remembered that elsewhere in Northern Britain at sites like Yeaverling (Hope Taylor 1977) Doon Hill and Balbridie (Reynolds 1980) large, elaborately built timber halls were being constructed in the Early Historic Period. Of these Yeaverling at least was associated with a Royal household.

Thus it would seem likely that in addition to the defended sites already discussed, a range of other settlement sites existed in Argyll in the first millennium A.D. The failure to identify and excavate such sites creates major problems for any analysis of patterns of settlement in the area in the 1st millennium A.D. Examination of the defended sites deflects discussion towards sites which may have been occupied by persons of high social status. If many of the other settlements were inhabited by persons of lower social standing who were clients of the above the problem becomes more acute, since the number and activities of such clients were a major factor in defining the position of the nobility.

Chapter Eleven: Footnotes.

(1) I was grateful to the late Mr Eric Cregeen of the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh, for discussing his excavations on the site with me, and providing free access to site notebooks and artefactual evidence.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Any analysis of the Kingdom of Dalriada must take into account the development of Christianity within the area, since it is during the period after 500 A.D. that its widespread acceptance occurred. The rapid and firm establishment of the Christian religion owes much to the direction of Columba, the founder of the community on Iona. Like many other early ecclesiastics he realised that the conversion of the ruling house of the Kingdom must occur before it would gain widespread acceptance throughout the rest of the Kingdom. This seems to have been achieved fairly rapidly, and Adomnan's Life of Columba illustrates that the saint was soon able to persuade King Aedan of the need for a Christian inauguration (III; 5). Columba was able to go on to establish a position for himself as a royal adviser, and hence was able to attend the Convention of Druim Cett in Ireland with King Aedán (Bannerman 1974, 154 f).

An understanding of the establishment of Christianity is important not only to a study of the political history of the Kingdom, but also for a study of its social history. The acceptance of this new religion led to important changes in social organization, in particular being partially responsible for the decline in the importance of the wider kin group, and the growing importance of the nuclear family group (Goody 1983). The widespread transference of land to the Church was also to radically alter patterns of land-holding throughout Europe.

It is unclear exactly when and how Christianity was

established within Argyll. Columba founded the monastery of Iona in the mid-6th century. The new religion may, however, have been known in the area prior to this date. Thomas has outlined the evidence which indicates the existence of a church organized from diocesan centres in Northern Britain in the immediately post-Roman period (1971, 13 f). He suggests that this arrangement may have had its origins in the late Roman period. Most relevant to the present work is the suggestion of a diocese which centred upon Strathclyde, with the bishop's seat possibly being located in Glasgow. Had such a diocese existed its authority or influence may have extended over at least part of Dalriada. Some question is placed upon the existence of this diocese at an early date though, since, as Thomas points out, the primary Christian figure associated with Strathclyde, St. Kentigern or St. Mungo, appears not to have died until 612 A.D. (Thomas 1971: 15).

Analysis of the impact of Christianity on such an area involves two major stages. The first is the identification of possible Early Christian sites, the second is a detailed and critical analysis of the position of the Church within society. The following discussion will focus upon the identification of Early Christian sites, which is a major problem in its own right.

With the introduction of Christianity, we begin to see the construction of monasteries and chapels, the erection of incised and decorative memorial stones as well as the introduction of Christian burial rites. Unfortunately it is often difficult to distinguish the date of such sites because once

established, building traditions and sculptural traditions may have been popular for long periods of time.

For present purposes it is important to locate the earliest Christian Centres because in so doing additional information about the Kingdom of Dalriada may be provided. Christian burials, for example, might indicate the extent of acceptance of Christianity, and also the location of settlements of the period. Sculptured stones and chapels may indicate centres where the converted could gather to have the faith expounded to them, hence their location also might relate to surrounding settlement networks.

Of these various types of site, monasteries were the most important, since the ecclesiastical organization of the area was based upon them. This makes a change from the earlier situation in Northern Britain when, as already noted, the organization of the church was based on dioceses ruled by bishops from urban seats (Thomas 1971, 13; 1981). One of the distinctions between the two types of organization is seen in the size of territory which could be controlled by the leading ecclesiastics. The paruchia of an early bishop was a small compact territory, whereas that of a monastic house often consisted of scattered houses and lands (Hughes 1966; 63).

Several monasteries existed in Dalriada in the Early Historic Period. In Adomnan's Life of Columba the existence of three subject houses of Iona is noted. One was located on Hinba (I; 21; I; 45: II; 23). The latter island may have been Jura (Watson 1926, 84) or Colonsay (Anderson and Anderson 1961; 154; Mag Lunge (I; 30; I; 41: II; 39: III; 8) was on Tiree

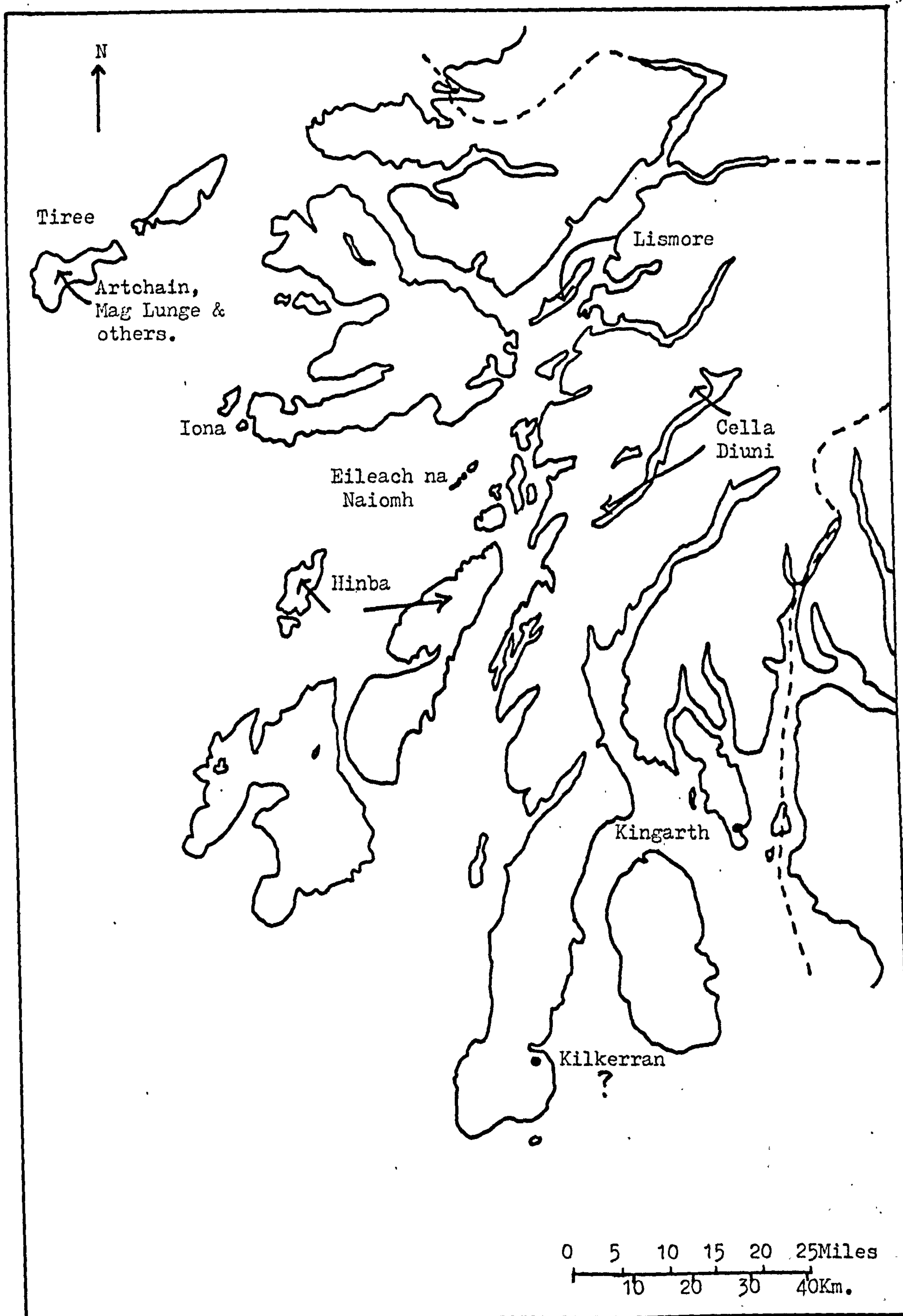


Fig.49 The location of monasteries noted in documentary sources.

(Watson 1926; 92; Cella Dioni (I: 31) Adomnan tells us was located near Loch Awe.

Another monastery in Dalriada mentioned in Adomnan's work is Artchain on Tiree, founded by Findchan (I: 36). Tiree appears to have been well provided with monastic sites, since other saints lives tell of the foundation of further sites there by Brendan Moccu Alti, and Comgell of Banger (Plummer 1910, I: 143; II: 11).

Traditionally a monastery also existed on Lismore, founded by Moluac, a contemporary of Columba. Evidence for this is drawn mainly from Irish annals which record the death of the founder, and several subsequent members of the community (Anderson 1922; 95; 126; 160).

Anderson and Anderson suggest that Aedan, King of Dalriada may have died in a monastery in Kintyre (1961, 45). Documentary evidence suggests he may have been buried at Kilkerran in Kintyre (Anderson 1980, 149) thus suggesting that a monastery may have existed there. The monasteries whose existence is inferred by these documentary sources are located on Fig. 49.

Traces of several of these sites have been found (Fig. 50.). On Iona several features of the original monastic site have been identified (Fig. 50) and have recently been summarized by the R.C.A.H.M.S. (1982). This site will be discussed in greater detail subsequently in the present text. Other sites which have been identified are Eileach on Naomh in the Garvelloch Islands, which may have been founded by Brendan Moccu Alti, (Watson 1926; 81) (Bryson and Knight 1926) Ceann a' Mhara, Tiree (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980, 165) and Kingarth, Bute (Thomas 1971, 41). On Lismore the outline of the monastic enclosure may have been

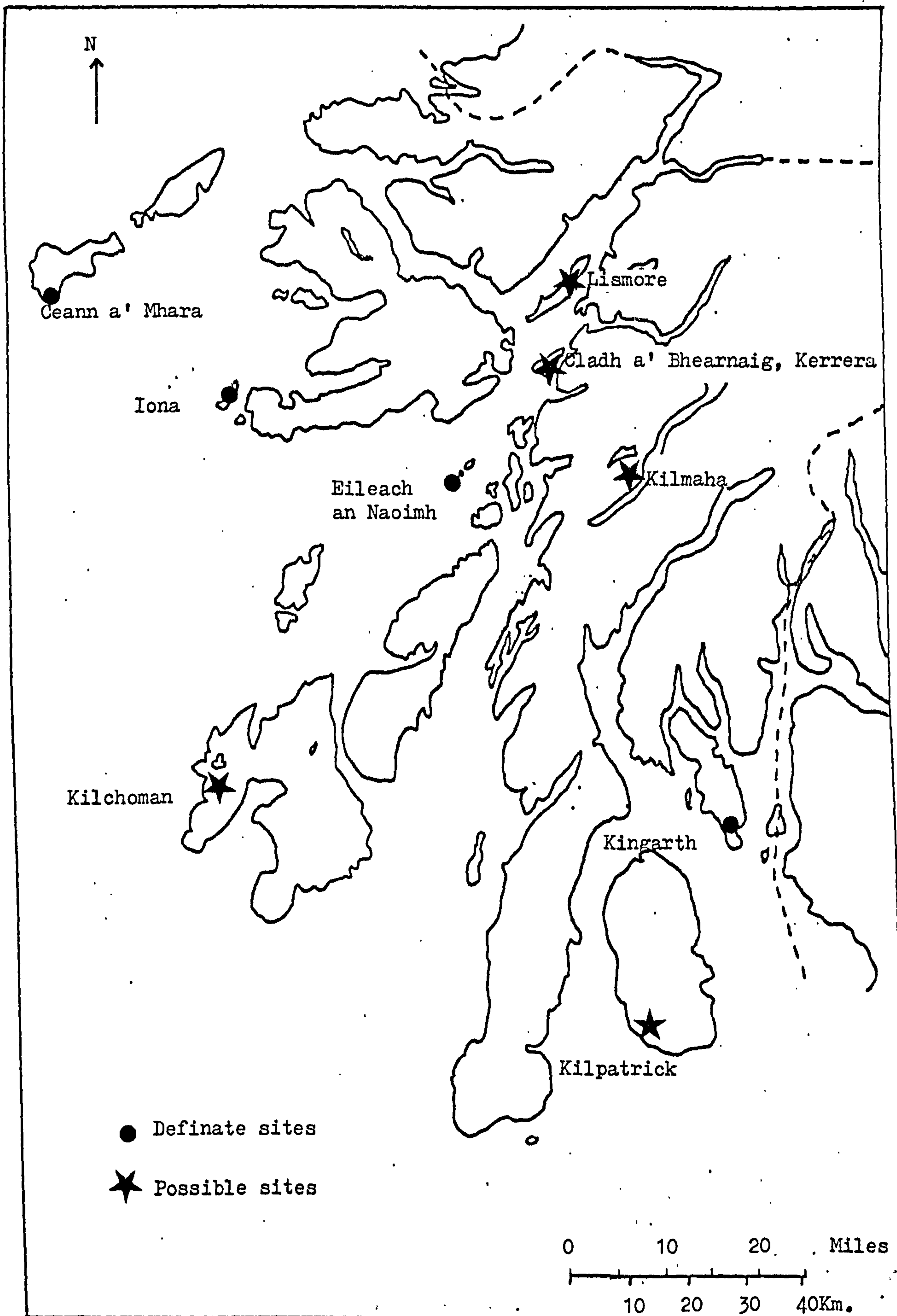


Fig.50 Sites in Argyll at which traces of Early Christian monasteries may survive.

perpetuated in the boundary of the medieval churchyard (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1975; 156 f). On Kerrera a group of drystone buildings enclosed by a drystone wall have been suggested as a cashel or small monastic enclosure (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1975; 119-20).

On Loch Awe side a small group of drystone buildings on a promontory on the north-west side of the loch associated with a chapel, burial ground and possible Early Christian stones may also be monastic in origin (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1975, 21; 149-50). Unfortunately the site is heavily wooded, and hence has not been thoroughly investigated. In view of the location of this site adjacent to Loch Awe it might be speculated that it is the monastic site of Cella Diuni, mentioned in Adomnan's Life of Columba. There is, however, no confirmatory evidence for such suggestion. The site was dedicated to an early saint, but it is unclear whether this was St. Mochoe of Nendrum, St. Tua, or St. Kentigern (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1975; 150; Watson 1926; 297-8).

At Kilchoman on Islay part of an enclosing vallum, possibly associated with an early monastic site has been located (E. Talbot, pers. comm.).

On Arran a stone-walled enclosure at Kilpatrick containing a circular stone-building was interpreted by Balfour as an Early Christian monastic settlement (1909). There is, however, no clear evidence that this was the case. The place-name, which may suggest ^{an} Early Christian date is associated with a nearby chapel. The stone-building within the enclosing wall would not appear dissimilar to the circular duns of Argyll, and is probably best interpreted as a further example of one of these sites.

Many of these sites are in isolated locations, for example on small islands, which distances them from the secular populations of the area. The use of such locations is fairly common in Northern Britain at this time (Thomas 1971, 35-47).

This does not imply, however, that the Church chose a totally hermitic contemplative role. The involvement of the church in the internal politics of the Kingdom illustrates clearly that this was not the case.

Analysis of many Early Christian monasteries in Northern Britain by Thomas allows us to present a relatively clear picture of the range of structural elements which constituted such an establishment (1971). Basically a range of buildings, the most important of which was the chapel lay within a restricted area of land which, in the majority of cases, was demarcated by a vallum or boundary line. The latter usually takes the form, in Britain, of an earthen bank and outer quarry ditch (Thomas 1971, 29). In Adomnan's Life of Columba the vallum is noted as dividing the monastery of Iona from its cow-pasture (Anderson and Anderson 1961, 109). Excavation of ditches which have been interpreted as those of the vallum system have been undertaken (Barber 1979). Radiocarbon dates from primary peat in Ditch 1 provided a date of 585 ± 55 a.d. (Gu 1243) (580 A.D. - 780 A.D)⁽³⁾

The enclosed area at Iona is of the order of 20 acres (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1982, 12) which makes comparable in size to Irish examples such as Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, but it is larger than other Scottish Dalriadic monasteries. For comparison, a small site on Tiree has an enclosed area of 0.3 acre (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980, 165).

(Appendix R, Volume 3). Within the enclosure a range of buildings existed. In Adomnan's Life of Columba several buildings are mentioned within the monastic compound. These include a number of sleeping huts for the monks, including one used by Columba himself; a hut used by the latter to write in; at least one building used by guests, as well as a large communal building, possibly used for cooking and eating (Anderson and Anderson 1961, 109-116).

Several excavations have been undertaken at Iona, which have revealed traces of early monastic structures. Unpublished excavations by Thomas, recently re-opened by Barbour, in the southern end of the enclosure revealed traces of circular structures with a diameter of 9.8 m (Barber 1981). A radio-carbon date from charcoal found in a pit near the post-holes of these circular buildings provided a date of 595 ± 55 a.d. (585 A.D - 785 A.D.) (Gu 1262) and has been used to set a terminus post quem for them.

Reece also records circular timber-buildings in his excavations, and also possibly, rectangular ones (1975; 1981, 29 f). The buildings associated with the early monastic phase appear timber built. These were later replaced by rectangular buildings with stone footings and a gravel floor in the 8th century.

Some of the artefactual evidence from the site indicative of activity in the Early Historic Period is worth further comment here. Thomas records one sherd of imported pottery of Class A from the site (1981). This was found in humus overlying a line clamp (Reece 1975; 1981, 15 f). This is a form of fine wheel

thrown pottery, similar to Roman samian ware, which originated in the Mediterranean area. A date between 550-650 A.D. was suggested by Hayes for this sherd (Reece 1981; 15). Its occurrence was formerly considered to be restricted to Early Christian sites, and it was seen as an adjunct to a trade in wine from the Mediterranean, the latter being necessary for Christian services. This limited distribution can now be questioned, since it has recently been argued that the site of Tintagel in Cornwall, where many sherds are recorded, is a secular rather than ecclesiastical site (Thomas 1982).

Excavations by Reece also produced one sherd of E-ware imported pottery, a class which is also represented at Dun Ollaigh, Dunadd, Dun Kildalloig and Loch Glashan Crannog. Again this is seen as indicative of access to the products of foreign trade (1981, 22).

A range of artefacts have been taken to indicate craft production within the monastic confines. Reece's work produced a clay mould for a small domed glass stud (1981, 24) probably used to embellish metalwork. A glass bead and twisted glass cylinder have also been taken as evidence of glass working. Metalworking is also indicated by slag, and clay mould fragments, one of which appears to be for a simple pin or bar. The slag was not analysed for its metal content, but the find of a small length of bronze rod indicates bronze working.

Barbour's excavations produced evidence for leather working, represented by fragments of shoes, purses, as well as numerous off-cuts (1981). Of particular interest is the range of skins that were being used, including those of calves, cows, goats, sheep, horse, deer and seal (Groenman Von Waatenge in Barber

1981). There was also evidence for wood-working indicated by a range of artefacts including turned wooden bowls, and large constructional timbers. The range of timber being used includes alder, ash, oak and pine. It is interesting to speculate as to where this timber was obtained from. Today there is relatively little timber on the island, but this may not always have been the case. Pollen evidence suggests that initially oak, ash, birch, willow and hazel grew on the island. 100 years after the Columban colonization, however, it seems that all five species declined noticeably, presumably as a result of clearance by the monastic community (Barbour 1981). It may be that a shortage of timber was being felt from Columban times, since we are told of the collection of timber from Ardnamurchan by the monks (A: II: 45). Given the complex pattern of settlement outlined in preceding chapters, it seems likely that the timber could be taken freely without arrangement. This point will be discussed in further detail subsequently.

Cereal pollens indicate cultivation occurring increasingly as the trees declined. Analysis of the soils on the site suggested that a substantial depth of it had been deliberately introduced, presumably specifically for cultivation. The maintenance of animals, in particular cattle was discussed in Chapter Three of the present work.

Hence the community of Iona were engaged in agricultural production, although it is unlikely that the limited size of Iona allowed it to be self-sufficient. Craft working producing a range of items including wooden bowls and leather shoes, and fine metalwork was also occurring.

Excavations at the site have not revealed any trace of the early chapel, which may well lie beneath the present abbey church. The grouping of the three large carved crosses, St. Oran's, St. John's and St. Martin's, adjacent to the medieval Abbey Church suggests that this may have been the case. On the basis of parallels with Northumbrian and Pictish art motifs it has been argued that these may all be 8th century A.D. in date.⁽¹⁾ (cf. R.C.A.H.M.S. 1982, 18). Were excavations undertaken to identify an early chapel it would be difficult without the aid of artefactual material, and radio-carbon dates to identify it clearly, since the general simplicity of the plan of such buildings makes it impossible to date them on the basis of structural form alone. This is a problem inherent in the analysis of 'early' chapels everywhere, and is a problem to which discussion must now turn.

Thomas suggests that in Northern Britain, chapels were being constructed from the late 6th or 7th centuries A.D. (1971, 67). These took the form of simple rectangular structures, the earliest of which were of mainly timber construction, later being replaced by stone (1971, 67). Although Thomas cites several examples of this transition from timber to stone, there is no inherent reason why this should have occurred, and it must be possible that in areas where stone was readily available, the earliest chapels were of stone construction.

The simple nature of these chapels, and the lack of inscriptions or documentary evidence makes their dating extremely difficult. In Ireland this problem is well illustrated by the

diverging dates ranging from the 7th century A.D. to the 12th century A.D. which have been argued for the Gallarus oratory, the best known 'early' Irish Church (Harbison 1970, 17). On Iona it has been suggested that the small chapel known as St. Columba's shrine, which stands within the monastic enclosure next to St. John's Cross, resembles the earliest Irish stone churches, the dating of these, however, is unlikely to be earlier than the 9th or 10th century A.D. (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1982, 41-2).

Attempts have been made to locate other early chapel sites on the basis of the name and dedication of the site. Place-names beginning with the element Kil - (Gaelic cill) have been used to point to a background of Christianity, and the presence of churches, churchyards or hermits cells (Nicholaisen 1979, 128-30). One of the first problems which must be overcome here is that it is difficult to isolate the cill names proper from anglicised forms which may initially look similar, but which, when analysed, do not have the same root (Nicholaisen 1979, 129). Despite these problems, Nicholaisen argues that these names represent a fairly early phase of Gaelic settlement, not earlier than the 7th century A.D., but not later than the middle of the 9th century. Generally the evidence seems to suggest an initial date for their introduction of around 800 A.D. The apparent lack of such names in Pictland in sizeable numbers has been taken to indicate that they soon declined in popularity.

The location of all kil- place names recorded on 1:50,000 O.S. map sheets in Argyll is presented on Fig. 51, and within

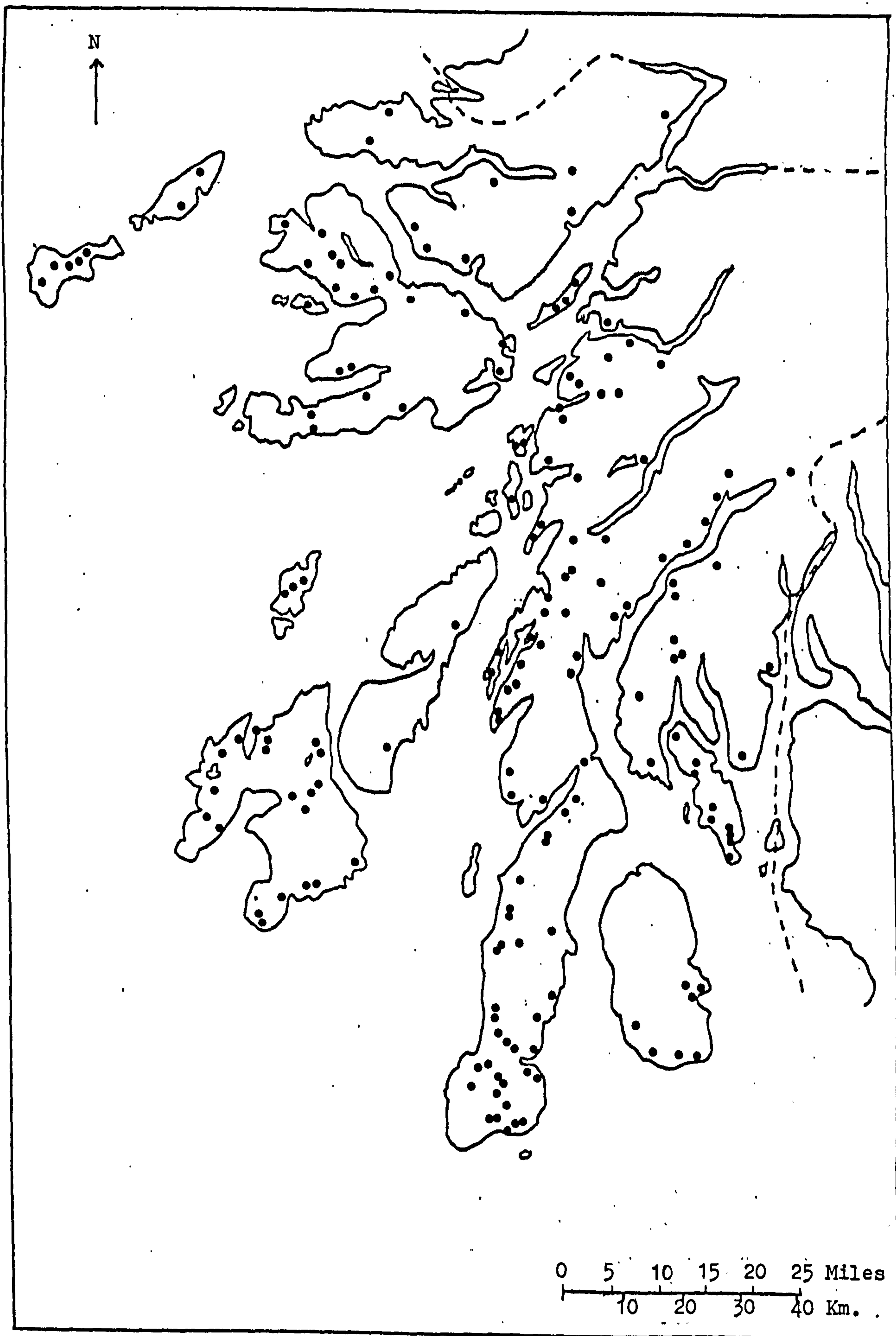


Fig. 51 The Location of Kil — Place Names in Argyll.

(from 1;50,000 O.S.map series)

Appendix P⁽²⁾. Analysis of such names must, however, be treated with some caution, since once established as a typical name-form for a Christian site in the west, it seems reasonable, if not highly likely, that this popularity would be maintained. Thus, in the same way that early saint's names are often associated with much later sites, certain kil- place names may have a relatively recent origin. This is a point which Nicholaisen does not make, and is one which will be encountered again in relation to an analysis of Scandinavian place-names in Argyll. In the absence of detailed documentation through which place-names could be traced back to their earliest record, this remains a major hurdle to any such analysis.

Many of these kil- place names were named after Early Christian saints such as Columba and Molvag. These dedications are also noted within Appendix Q, Volume 3. While these must post-date the death of the saint involved, there is no way of deciding how late the dedication may be. Once established as an important figure, it is likely that dedications to a particular saint would have extended over a considerable period of time. An example of this would be the dedication of a modern church to 'early' saints such as Aedan. Several church sites in Argyll not associated with Kil- place names are also dedicated to Early Christian saints, and hence may have early origins. The incidence of this has been recorded on Fig. 52 and within Appendix Q, Volume 3.

In some instances if a chapel site associated with such, possibly early name elements, lies within a known cluster of early settlement then, a real antiquity may be the case.

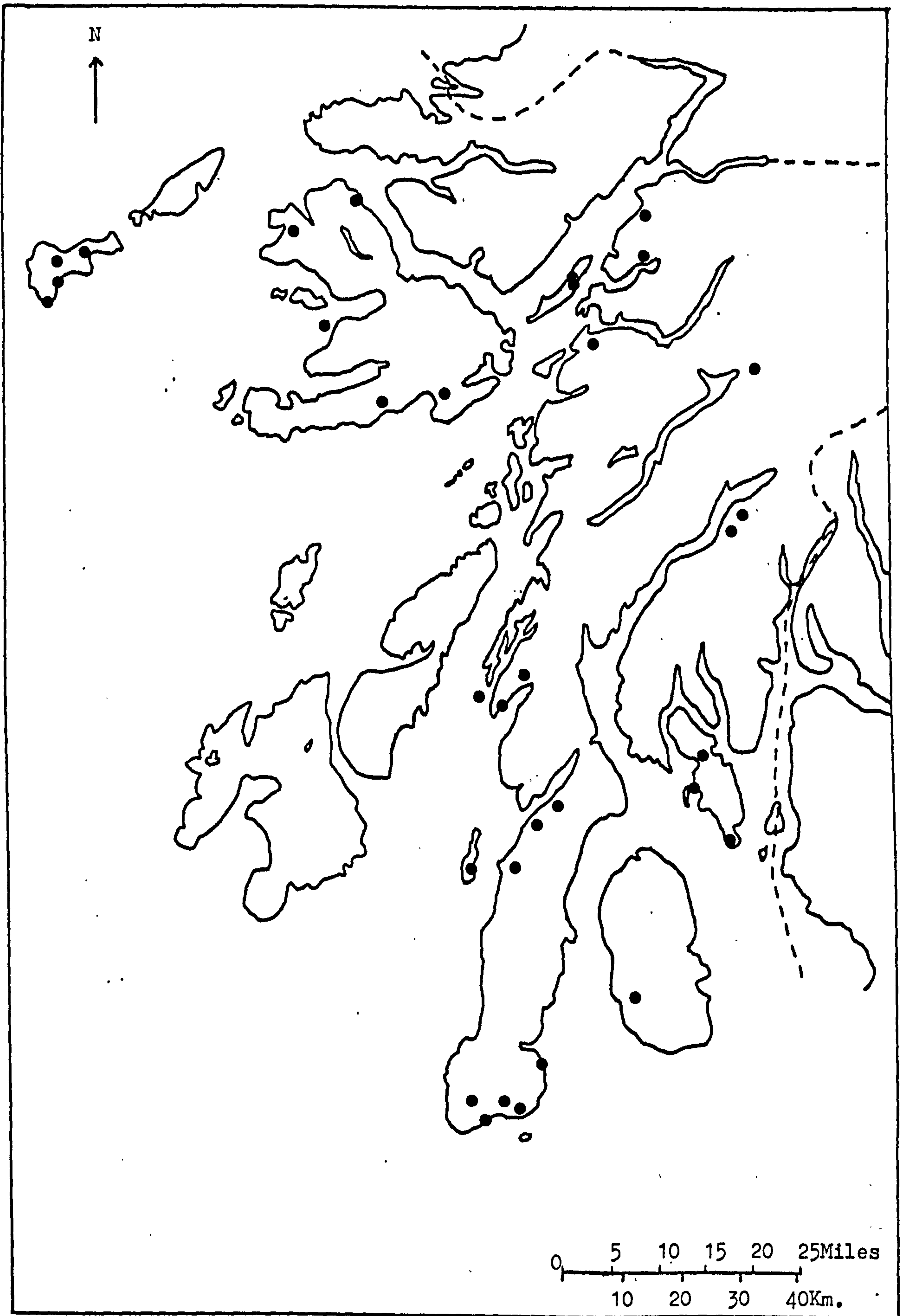


Fig.52 Additional sites possibly dedicated to Early Christian saints
in Argyll.

As one of the major functions of chapel sites was to provide a focus from which an early ecclesiastic could minister to the spiritual needs of the lay community it would seem natural to suggest they would be situated so as to have easy access to that community. In actual fact, however, this seems not to have been the case. In recent discussion on the importance of boundary locations, Flatrès found that in Celtic Britain and Ireland, parochial churches were often situated in a distant and practically inaccessible corner of the territories upon which they depended (1957).

In the west of Scotland the Parochial system was not established until around 1200 A.D. (Cowan 1961) as is also the case in Ireland (Hughes and Hamlin 1977, 103). The Parochial units in Ireland were probably based upon pre-existing units, whether these be the lands of feudal lords, or areas of older population groups (Hughes and Hamlin 1977, 103). The same would also seem to be true of Anglo-Saxon England (Bonney 1966; 1972; 1976). On Islay evidence discussed in the relevant case study suggests that the existing parish boundaries may have been based upon territorial divisions of the Early Historic Period and earlier. Within these units the Parish churches of Kildalton, Kilmeny, Kilchoman and Kilchiaran, at least, are located near the parish boundaries, and hence fit the pattern suggested by Flatrès.

One of the initial problems related to the erection of chapels must have been the acquisition of land upon which to build. It is unclear whether it was only the Kings of Dalriada who were able to grant land for the erection of such chapels.

Davies indicates that in Wales instances of non-royal laity granting land to the church exist (1978, 161). This would also appear to have been the case in Ireland as well (Hughes 1966, 75). Also in Ireland, Mytum has recently argued that many churches located on the boundaries of Northern County Clare may indicate that each was founded by a separate kin-group (1982). In the introductory chapter on the history of Dalriada, it was indicated that the Kingdom appears to have been divided initially into three main areas, each held by a separate lineage. It may be that within each of these areas the lineage leaders may have been in a position to grant land to the Church.

As Christianity was established in the Kingdom, and the rulers were converted, the ability to grant land to the Church may have provided an important new means of expressing social status.

In Ireland the location of numerous churches in boundary areas between Kingdoms has been explained as the use of poorer and marginal land for such establishments (Warner, pers. comm.). Contrary to this, however, Ó'Riain and Ó'Corráin have commented upon the importance of the boundary zone for inter-group meeting points, hence the location of churches in such areas may be indicative of the important place within society held by the Church. Ó'Riain makes the point that the boundary zones between tribal areas had a sacred quality, and hence may have been ideally suited to members of society considered not completely of this world (1974). He also suggests that the Church may have taken over land formerly held by their pagan counterparts in

the area, the Fili. A major flaw with the latter suggestion, however, is that no explanation is offered as to why the Fili might have held land, or what they did with it.

The problems of interpretation of the location of chapel sites in this manner becomes all the more complex when it is considered that the boundaries of Kingdoms were probably not static, but may have expanded or contracted as a result of the conquest of new territories by Kings.

In some instances it would seem that a close link between important, possibly 'royal' sites and chapel sites can be postulated. After the ordination of King Aedan as King of Dalriada by Columba subsequent Kings would appear to have been Christians. This being the case it would not seem unreasonable to seek Early Christian chapels adjacent to 'royal' centres. In Ireland the proximity of many early chapels to royal settlements has been taken to indicate that they were often under royal patronage (Hughes 1966, 76). Unfortunately there is no clear association of early Christian sites with the Early Historic Forts discussed in an earlier chapter, although some possibilities do exist.

In the south of Kintyre, approximately 1 m. to the west of the possible site of Aberte, is a chapel known traditionally as St. Columba's Chapel (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 147-51) (Fig. 53). Records for the site do not pre-date the 14th century, but an earlier origin may be suggested. Outside the chapel lies a stone with a footprint carved into it, traditionally said to be the imprint of the Saint's foot. A similar footprint, found at Dunadd Early Historic fortification, which may have been used in inauguration ceremonies for the Kings of Dalriada has

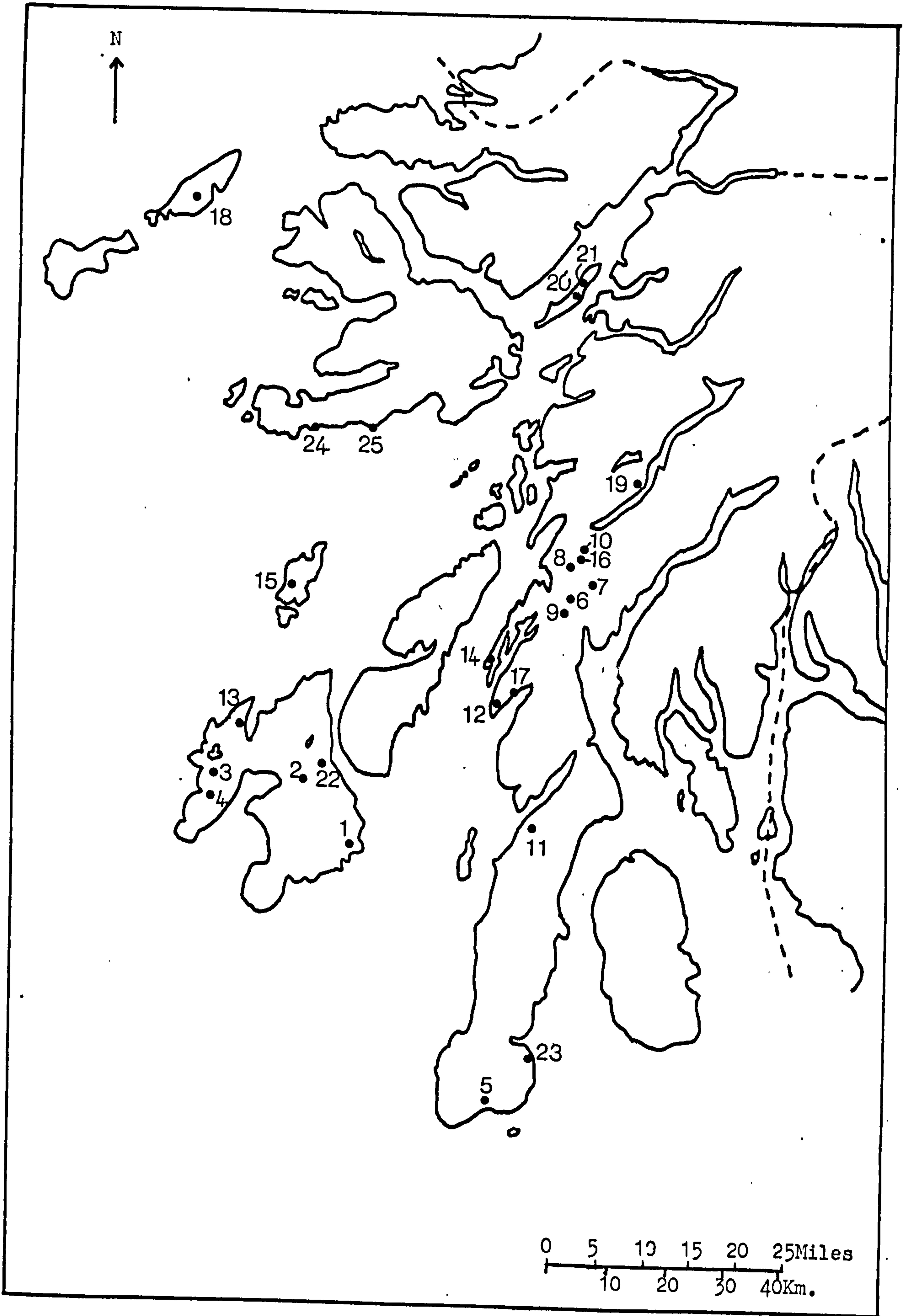


Fig. 53 The location of sites mentioned in Chapter 12.

1. Kildalton, Islay.
2. Kilmeny, Islay.
3. Kilchoman, Islay.
4. Kilchiaran, Islay.
5. St. Columba's Chapel, Kintyre.
6. Dunadd, Mid Argyll.
7. Kilmichael Glassary, Mid Argyll.
8. Poltalloch Chapel, Mid Argyll.
9. Barnakil, Mid Argyll.
10. Kilmartin, Mid Argyll.
11. Clachan, Kintyre.
12. Kilmory, Knapdale.
13. Kilellan, Islay.
14. Keills, Knapdale.
15. Machrins, Colonsay.
16. Brouch an Drummin, Mid Argyll.
17. St. Columba's Cave, Knapdale.
18. Kilbride, Coll.
19. Lochavich, Lorn.
20. Cill an Suidhe, Lismore.
21. Clachan, Lismore.
22. Kilslevan, Islay.
23. St. Ciaran's Cave, Kintyre.
24. Scoor Cave, Mull.
25. Nun's Cave, Carsaig, Mull.

already been discussed (Chapter Ten). If the footprint is of ancient origin, some comment upon its use must be made. Its association with a site dedicated to Columba, the major early ecclesiastic in Dalriada, and its location close to a 'royal' site may suggest it had an important role. As early Kings of Dalriada were members of the Cené1 n Gabráin, a lineage who held Kintyre as the main portion of their territory, Aberte may have been one of the most important early royal sites within the Kingdom. It might be anticipated that initially the Kings may have been inaugurated within their own territories. It has been generally accepted that Dunadd lay within the territory of the Cené1 n Gabráin (cf. Bannerman 1974, 112) and hence it might be expected that early Kings would have been inaugurated there. There is, however, some question about which Cené1 really held Dunadd, since Bannerman also points out that the main annalistic reference to the site suggests it was a Cené1 Loairn stronghold (1974, 113). If this were the case, then an alternative inauguration centre for the Cené1 n Gabráin Kings might be expected. In this right the location of the Columba's Chapel stone can be reappraised. It is conceivable that the location of such a site might have been influenced by the newly established church which was, as we have noted, involved in the ordination of the Kings. Hence the site may have been one of the earliest and most important ecclesiastical sites in Dalriada. (cf. Kintyre Case Study)

At Dunadd in Mid-Argyll, there is indication of Christian influence at the site itself. Among the many artefacts from the site are a rotary quern-stone with a cross incised upon it,

and a small stone disc with 'NOMINE' inscribed upon it (Duncan 1982, II, 107, 122). In the area around the site there are three possible Early Christian sites which may have had some connection with Dunadd. The Chapel of Kilmichael Glassary, 2 km. to the east may be of Early Christian origin. Later medieval sculptured stones from the site which are of 14th century or later date, illustrate a link between the chapel, and people described as 'of Dunadd' at this late date (Steer and Bannerman 1977; 141-2). These may reflect an early association between the two sites.

A second Early Christian site near Dunadd is that of BarnaKil , 3 km to the south-west. A stone bearing a carved cross, and inscription in minuscule from the site is presently preserved in the churchyard of the Estate Church at Poltalloch (Campbell and Sandeman 1962; 74-5). Thomas suggests this stone is of 7th century A.D. date (1971, 112). It is one of a very small group of stones with such inscriptions, other examples being restricted to Iona (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1982). It is of importance for several reasons. The use of a written name form indicates an acquaintance with literacy. The latter was probably not widely developed within Argyll outside the major ecclesiastical houses, and possibly the Royal household (cf. Chapter Thirteen). Its use on this stone may indicate the importance of the burial it was presumably associated with. This may have been that of a leading ecclesiastic, or a member of the leading family of the Kingdom. In turn this would indicate the importance of the site chosen for the burial. Campbell and Sandeman record that the only structural element visible at the site is a circular enclosure, traditionally said

to be a burial enclosure (1962, 64). Recent investigation of the site, however, revealed nothing that could be firmly identified.

The final site which must be considered in relation to Dunadd is that of Kilmartin, 5 km. to the north, where the kil- place name may indicate an Early Christian site. Associated with the church which now stands here are two sculptured stones which may be of early date (Appendices S and T, Volume 3). One exhibits a simple incised cross, the other panels of interlace.

On Islay the Parish Church of Kilmeny lies at the foot of the fort of Dun Guaidhre. In the Chapter on Early Historic forts, and the Islay case study it is argued that this site may have been associated with the lineage who controlled the island. Although there is no pre-medieval evidence for the site of Kilmeny (Lamont 1968) it is possible to speculate that the reason for its location there is due to the close proximity of Dun Guaidhre. Its importance may also be indicated by its later choice as a parish centre.

In relation to the location of churches, an analysis of present-day settlement patterns often seems to indicate a nucleation around a church. Examples of this are numerous, but include Kilmartin in Mid-Argyll, Kilchoman on Islay, Clachan in Kintyre and Kilmory in Knapdale. Any analysis of former settlement patterns must question the origins of such nucleation. With the growing acceptance of Christianity, the Church would provide a central focus for the religious activities of a group of people. Once a regular meeting point had been established it might be expected that it would provide a

central point at which other activities, be they legal, administrative or economic could also occur, and associated with such, an important settlement site may develop. In fact this appears not to have been the case. Flatrès suggestion that churches were often located away from the settlement they served has already been noted. In Wales this problem was tackled in the 1950's by Bowen who reached the conclusion that the siting of Celtic churches had little effect upon the nucleation of settlement there (1956, 140-60). A recent re-survey of the evidence implies that this is still accepted, and that the major nucleation of settlement in Wales dates to the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. (Davies 1982, 21).

It is difficult to assess whether this was also the case in Dalriada. It is clear settlements did grow up at some stage around many Christian sites in Argyll, but we have no records of this process of development, which is hence impossible to date. This problem may be resolved by excavation of the area around chapel sites which may be early. At Kilellan on Islay, the settlement located in the sand-dunes (Chapter Eleven) which may be of Early Historic Date lies less than half a kilometre from the church of Kilnave. The presence of one of the two early sculptured crosses on the island adjacent to the churchyard suggests this may have been one of the most important Early Christian sites on the island. It would hence be of interest to excavate a larger area around the church with the aim of tracing the full extent of this settlement, and its possible relationship to the Early Christian site.

Another site which is of interest in the present context is that of Keills in Northern Knapdale. Here the chapel was

formerly known as Kilvicko-Charmaig, and is thus an example of a Kil- place name, dedicated to an early saint, Charmaig. The importance of the site in Early Christian Times may be reflected by a finely sculptured high cross presently located within the restored chapel, along with other possibly early stones. Outside the chapel on adjacent terraces structural remains are evident, some of which may be of buildings. These have never been surveyed, and their date is uncertain. In the 14th and 15th century a small group of sculptors producing grave slabs may have been based at Keills (Steer and Bannerman 1977, 7; 58). At a later date Keills developed as a port to which cattle were shipped from Jura (Haldane 1952, 95). It is not clear when this practice began, but it did continue into the 19th century. In these later periods settlements may have been found at Keills, none of which presently survive. The structural remains evident around the chapel may be related to this later activity, or they may be much earlier. Clearly only detailed survey and excavation could resolve this problem.

In discussing Early Christian sites, we must also be aware that many important sites may be less easy to trace than the ones already discussed. Literary accounts indicate that saints, when travelling around, would carry portable altars for use in services (Thomas 1971, 190-1). Fragments of St. Cuthbert's is preserved in Durham Cathedral. Adomnan's Life of Columba is full of stories relating the journeys made by the saint, and the people he met on these. While much of his activity was directed towards the conversion of the Kings, it would seem likely that while journeying he frequently stopped to talk to lay communities, and conduct simple services with them.

It is also known that in England ecclesiastics erected crosses around the countryside at the foot of which they preached the Gospel (De Paor 1958, 125) and it would seem likely that this was the case in Dalriada also. The identification of such sites is difficult now. Many may have been unmarked, others marked by wooden crosses which have decayed without trace. On Iona it has been argued that free-standing stone crosses were not erected until the end of the 8th century A.D. (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1982, 18). The reason suggested for this, is that local craftsmen were more skilled in working with timber, and hence stone sculptors had to be introduced from Pictland and Northumbria (R.C.A.H.M.S. *ibid*). Hence the suggestion was that the earliest crosses may have been timber. If this is the case, St. John's Cross on Iona may be an example of a hybrid type. The main body of this cross is stone, but it has short arms which end in slots. Timber extensions could have been added to these arms (cf. Stevenson 1956).

At Iona the high crosses were erected adjacent to a pre-existent christian establishment. It is not clear exactly why they were erected, they may mark important burials, or they may commemorate important events.

In Adomnan's Life of Columba we are told of the erection of a cross to commemorate the dead (I: 45). This is of interest, not only because it suggests a reason for the erection of such a monument, but also because it implies a date around 700 A.D. or earlier, which is earlier than that suggested for the Iona crosses. Hughes and Hamlin argue that in Ireland crosses could be used to mark boundaries, notable events, or indicate routeways (1977, 80-1).

Apart from the Iona examples, several other high crosses are found around Argyll. (Fig. 54). The best-preserved example is that from Kildalton on Islay (Appendix T, Volume 3) which has been dated to around 800 A.D. (Lamont 1968; 16-19). This site apparently had a long history of christian usage. Two simple incised cross slabs, which may be of earlier date were found in its foundations (Lamont 1968, 8-9). The subsequent choice of this site for the parochial centre reflects its continued importance after this period.

Also on Islay, a less well preserved sculptured cross already mentioned at Kilnave has been dated to around 750 A.D. (Lamont 1968, 16-19).

From Kiells in Mid-Argyll a sculptured high cross exhibits sculptured panels similar to those on the Kilnare example, and hence may have a similar date. Another stone from Mid-Argyll is that from Kilmartin, which formerly stood in the churchyard, but is now preserved within the church. The stone is carved on both faces, each with patterns of interlace. Each would seem to be the work of a different craftsman, the sculpture on one side being very crude. The decorative elements used on this stone are much simpler than those exhibited by other high crosses in Argyll, and hence it is difficult to offer a firm suggestion as to its dating.

A final example from Mid-Argyll is the cross from the island of Eilean Mòr, on Knapdale, of which only the shaft survives. The decoration on this stone includes panels of interlace which could be paralleled on a stone from Archatten in Lorn. An unusual feature of the Eilean Mòr cross shaft are the carvings of animals, an Elephantine beast, and two

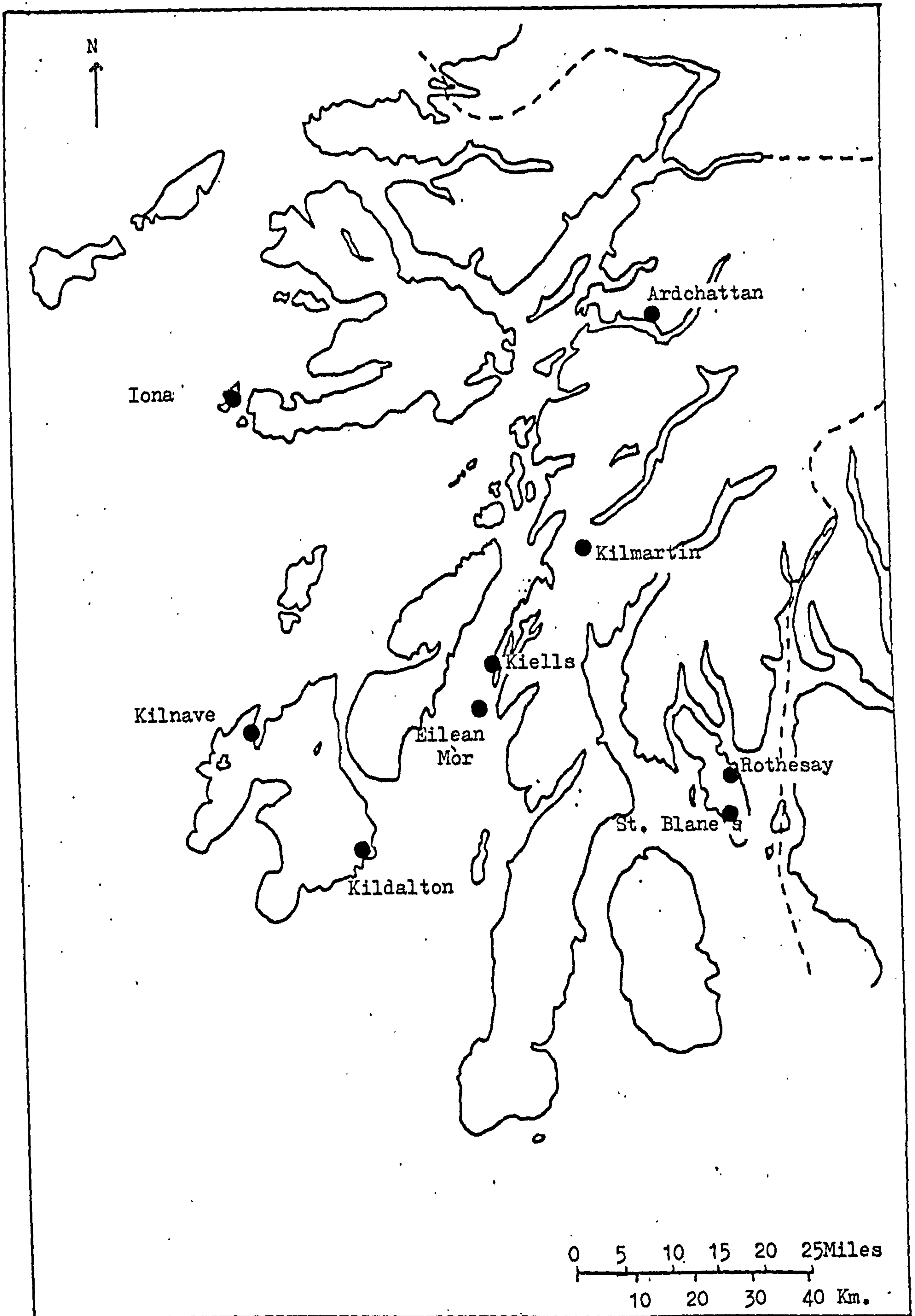


Fig. 54. The location of Sculptured crosses in Argyll.

interlocked battling animals. The hooded mounted rider figures could be broadly paralleled on Pictish stones of Class II, but the link is by no means close.

The monastic site of St. Blane's on Bute has produced three poorly preserved fragments of sculptured high crosses (Romilly Allen 1903; III: 407-111). It is of interest to note that one of these also depicts a mounted warrior bearing a spear. At Rothesay, also on Bute, another cross slab has panels of interlace, as well as depictions of animals, and another hooded, mounted warrior figure.

With the introduction of Christianity, new modes of burial and the commemoration of the dead were introduced, hence discussion must now turn to consider these in greater detail. Normal Christian burial practice involved the inhumation of an extended corpse unaccompanied by grave goods (Thomas 1971, 48). The most characteristic grave types were dug graves and long cist cemeteries. In Dalriada the only excavated burials which seem to fit this pattern are those associated with the settlement at Machrins on Colonsay (cf. Chapter Eleven). Here a cist measuring 1.6 m x 0.7 m. and 0.3 m deep contained the remains of a flexed inhumation (Ritchie 1981). A radio-carbon date for the bones of the inhumation centred on 780 ± 70 a.d. (Gu-1114) ^(650 A.D to 920 A.D). A problem with the acceptance of this as a Christian burial is the fact that the inhumation was accompanied by grave goods including a pin with a loose ring-head, a fragment of decorated bronze, an iron nail and a dog.

It cannot be wholly dismissed as Christian, however, since the placing of grave goods in Christian graves could be paralleled in Viking contexts (cf. Graham Campbell & Kidd

1980, 179). A good example of this is provided by the Viking burial at Kiloran Bay, Colonsay (Anderson 1907) in which a cross inscribed stone accompanied a variety of grave goods. This does not allow us to resolve the question, discussed in the preceding chapter, of whether the Machrins site is a native or Norse burial. If it is the former it may suggest that Christianity was not fully accepted in Dalriada 200 years after the arrival of Columba.

The only other possible examples of actual grave structures dating to this period are four long graves "apparently of Early Christian date" recorded by Craw on the gravel terrace of Brouch on Drummin, Mid-Argyll (1932). A stone with a fragmentary Ogam inscription is recorded associated with one of these graves. Craw suggests that the ogam can be translated to give the name CRON(A)N. Jackson, however, would reject this and suggests a reading of A(?)CRON (pers. comm.). Discussion in Chapter Eleven noted the existence of a settlement site near here which may have been occupied in the Early Historic Period.

At Columba's Cave in Mid-Argyll excavations revealed extended burials with the heads to the east just outside the cave mouth (Campbell & Young 1973). While evidently Christian it is impossible to date these with any accuracy. Activity at the cave in the Norse period is indicated by an incomplete bronze balance, but this continued into the medieval period as is indicated by sherds of glazed pottery.

The presence of incised crosses, unusually with some form of cruciform design upon them, has been taken to indicate Early Christian burial sites (cf. Thomas 1971, 91-131; R.C.A.H.M.S.).

1971; 1975; 1980; 1982). The erection of such a memorial stone to a dead person is indicative of a social action by surviving relatives or friends. The distribution of this could be taken to indicate the spread of Christianity, and the importance of stressing this upon death.

The repertoire of designs used on these stones is very limited, consisting mainly of simple incised crosses, sometimes with the addition of barred terminals, more elaborate crosses might have hollowed angles or expanded terminals. Some of these crosses have ringed heads. The latter must be linked to examples of ringed high crosses such as Kildalton, Islay and St. John's Cross Iona, as well as the Ardchatten stone. It has been argued that the addition of a ring to such stones is a late feature, possibly dating to the 8th or 9th centuries A.D. (Stevenson 1956). It is unclear why it was added, and whether it derives from Ireland or Pictland.

Generally the stones of Dalriada are simpler than other examples from Northern Britain (cf. Thomas 1971, 91-131) or Ireland (Hughes and Hamlin 1977, 80-101). Appendix T in Volume 3 of the present work provides all the illustrations known of possible 'early' stones from Argyll. Only two have inscriptions in minuscule, these being the Barnakil stone mentioned earlier, and another example now in Inverary which originally came from Iona (Campbell and Sandeman 1962, 67). Several stones from Iona have inscriptions in half uncial Old Irish (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1982, 182-6) but none have been found elsewhere in Argyll.

A major problem with such stones is the imprecision of dating. Hughes and Hamlin point out that in Ireland they could

have a long life, and are rarely closely dateable (1977, 82). Recently the R.C.A.H.M.S. have illustrated a 13th century example of a recumbent slab with a simple equal armed cross with barred terminals from Kirkcudbright (1982, 163) indicating that the form might be long-lived in Northern Britain also. In relation to Argyll it is worth noting that these simple stones are the only form of incised burial markers (excluding the sculptured high crosses discussed earlier) found until the major West Highland Schools begin producing stones in the 14th century (Steer and Bannerman 1977). Once the tradition of erecting of such memorial stones was established there appears no reason why it should not continue, and hence it may well be that simple stones had a long period of use in the area, until they were replaced by the more elaborate medieval examples. Countering this, however, the medieval schools use highly developed pictorial and decorative motifs (Steer and Bannerman 1977) the origins of which have never been satisfactorily explained (Fig. 55). Some of these later stones do seem to include in their design simple crosses reminiscent of earlier ones (cf. Drummond 1881, PL. XV; XXII; LII; LVII) which may harken back to earlier traditions. Without detailed analysis of the illustrative elements used on these stones, this suggestion must remain somewhat tenuous. Hence a 6th to 9th century date could be speculated for some of the simple incised stones of Argyll. It is clear, however, that such simple stones may have a long history of use within the area, and hence their occurrence cannot be taken immediately to indicate the site was of religious importance during the Early Christian Period.

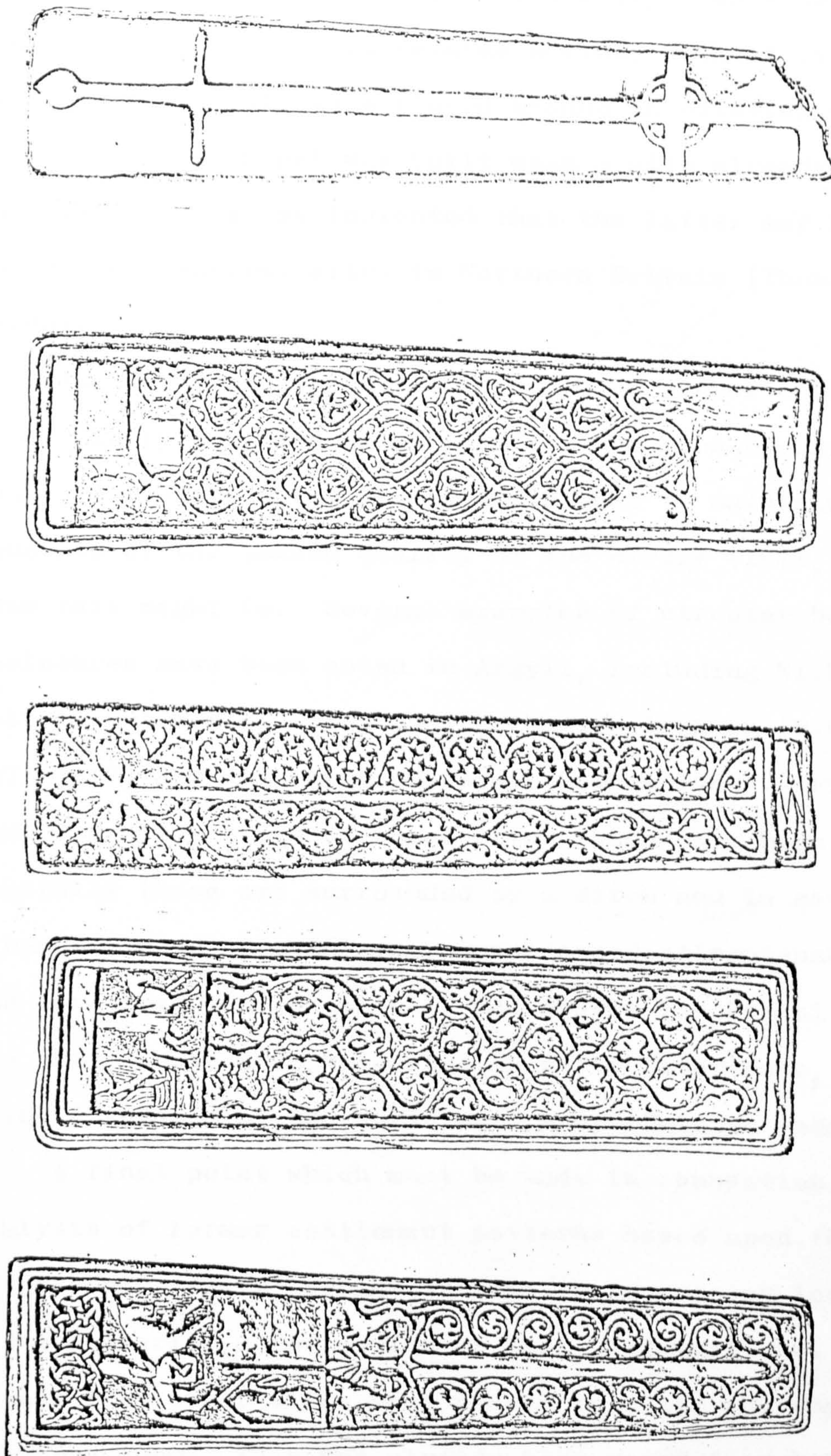
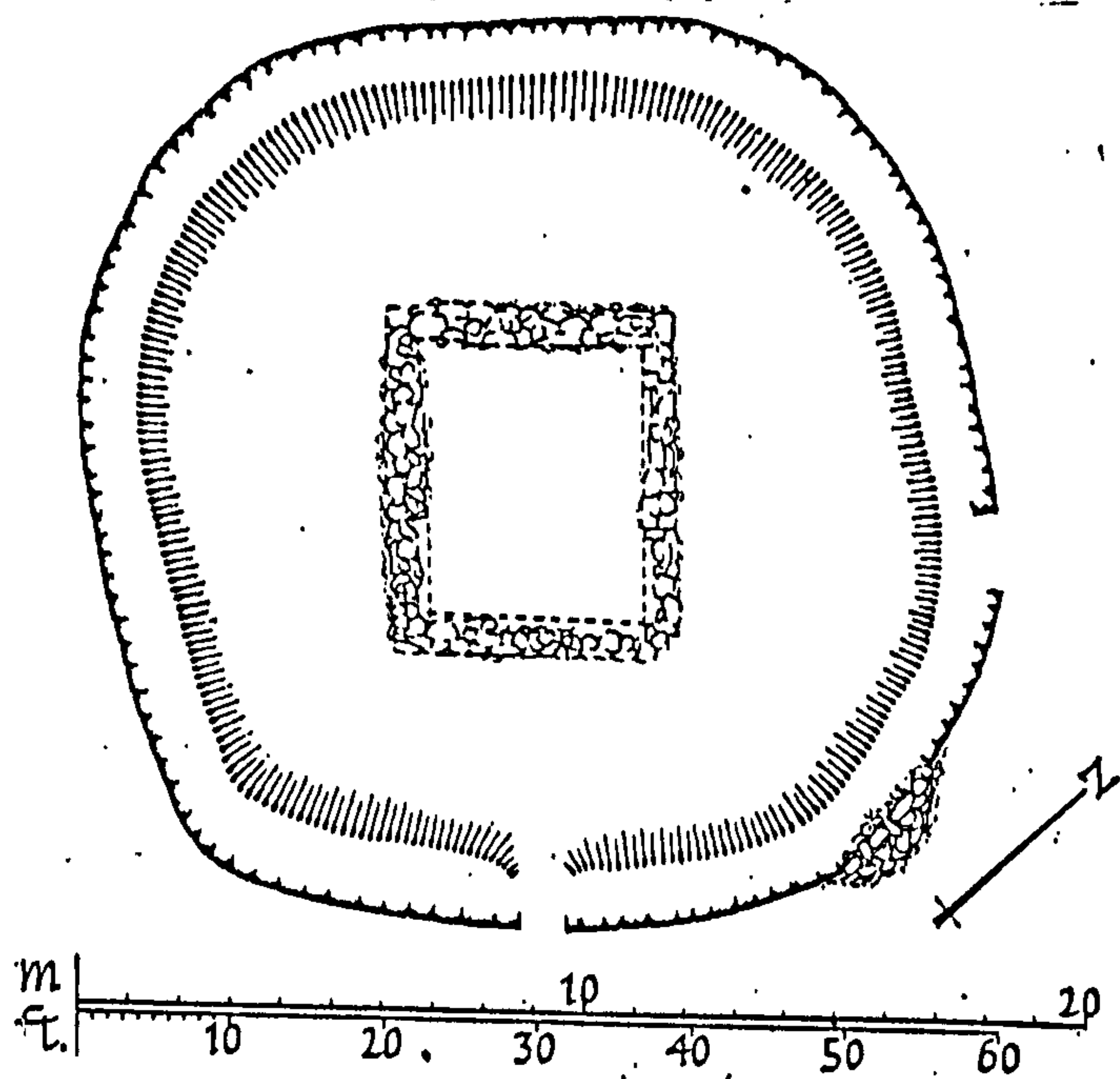


Fig. 55 Examples of Medieval West Highland grave slabs.
(from Drummond 1881)

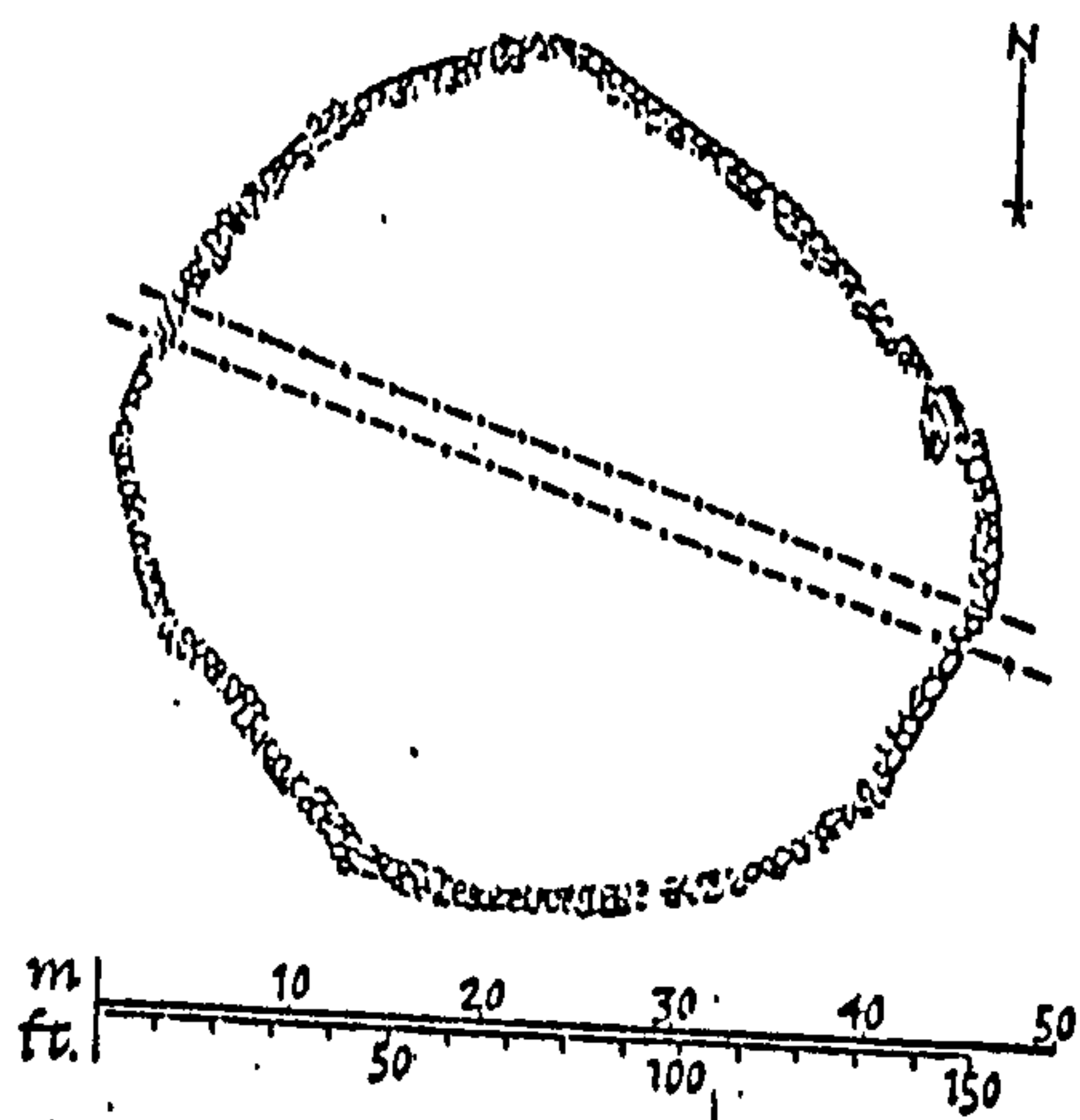
Some of these early burials appear to be located around chapel sites, but this is not necessarily always the case (Thomas 1971, 50-1). It remains unclear without excavation whether the burials were placed around an existing chapel, or whether the chapel was built upon a site already used for burials. Thomas has indicated that the latter may have been the case at several sites in Northern Britain (Thomas 1971, 48-90).

The cemeteries established could be either enclosed or open. Early enclosed sites seem to have been of circular shape, a feature which Thomas would take to maintain the pagan concepts of the sacred quality of the circle (1971, 52-3) whatever this might be. Several examples of circular burial enclosures have been noted in Argyll, including Kilbride on Coll (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980, 143) Lochavich in Lorn (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1975, 117) and Kilsleven on Islay (Lamont 1968). Figures 56 and 57 provide plans of those sites which have been identified. Generally these are surrounded by a ditch and in some instances a bank. These circular enclosures are distinguishable from the more frequent rectangular enclosures for burial grounds. The latter have been suggested to be of later date, possibly being developed by the Norse on Orkney (Raleigh Radford 1962).

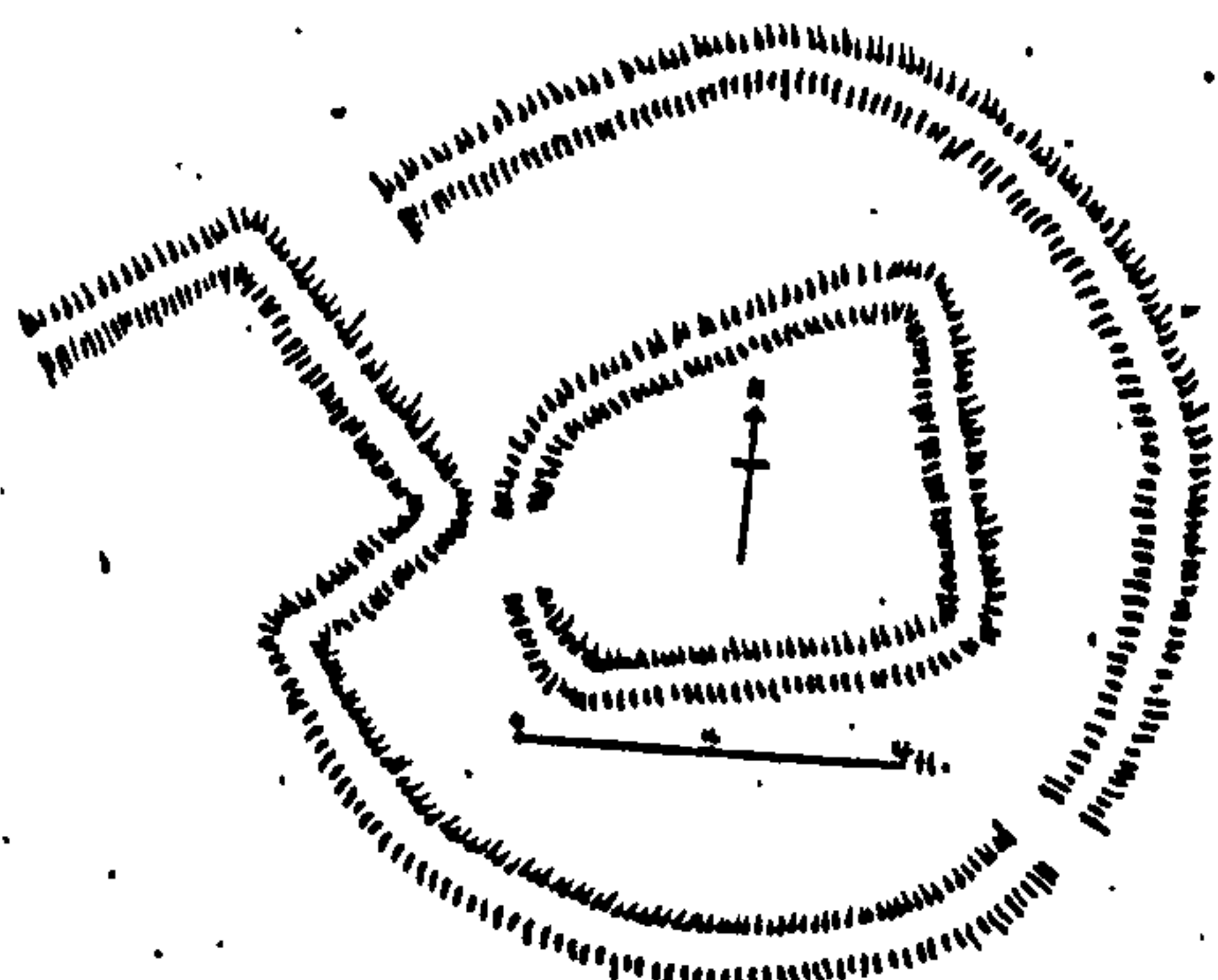
A final point which must be made in connection with any analysis of former settlement patterns based upon the location of possibly 'early' stones is that their present location is not necessarily a reflection of their original one. Often stones from other sites were placed in later churchyards to preserve them. This has already been noted in relation to the Barnakil stone from Mid-Argyll, which is now located at Poltalloch.



Caibéal, Lochavich
Lorn. (R.C.A.H.M.S 1974)



Burial-ground (possible), Kilbride, Coll
(R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980)



Kilsleven, Islay. (Lamont 1968)

Fig. 56 Possible Early Christian burial grounds in Argyll.

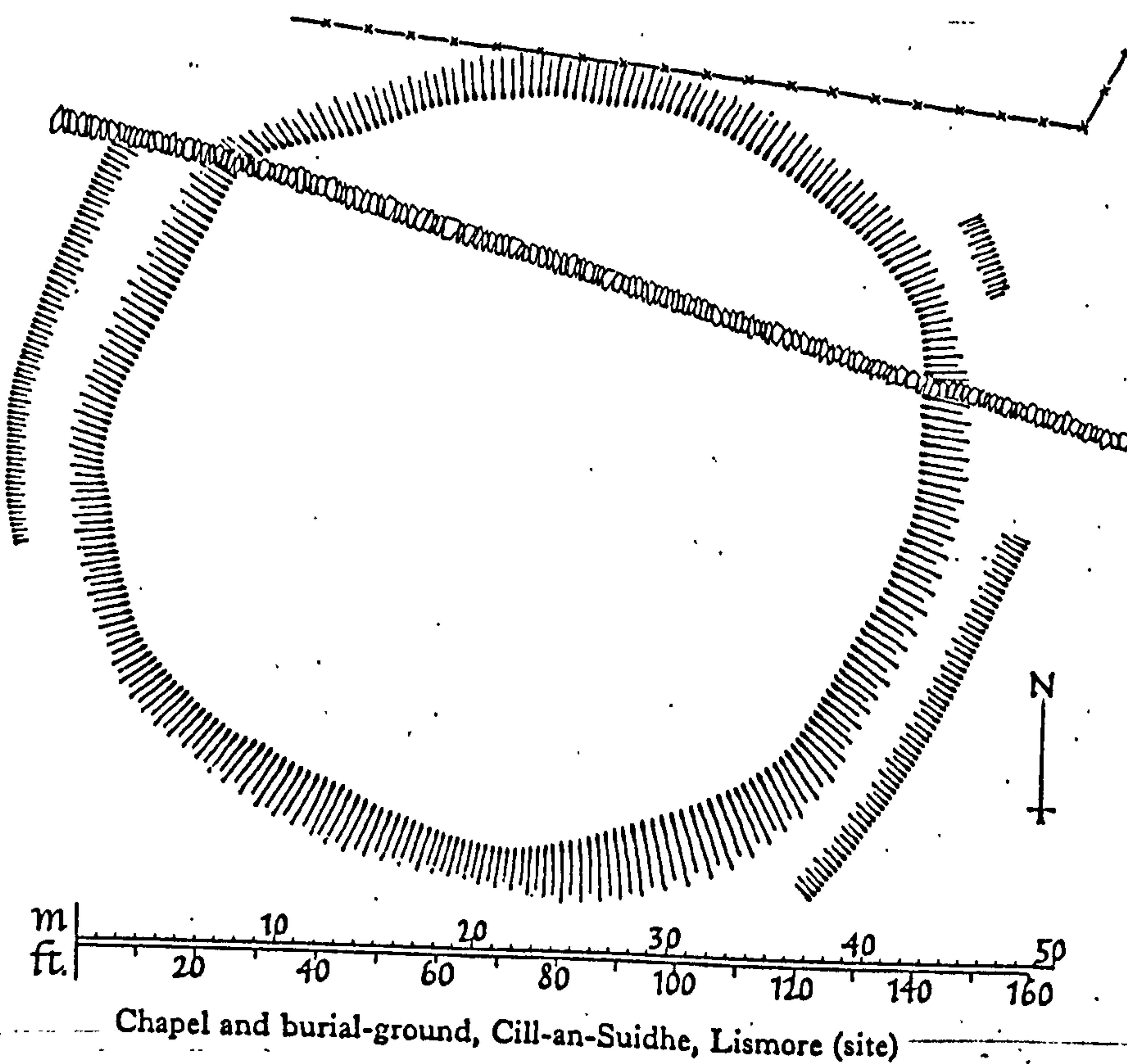
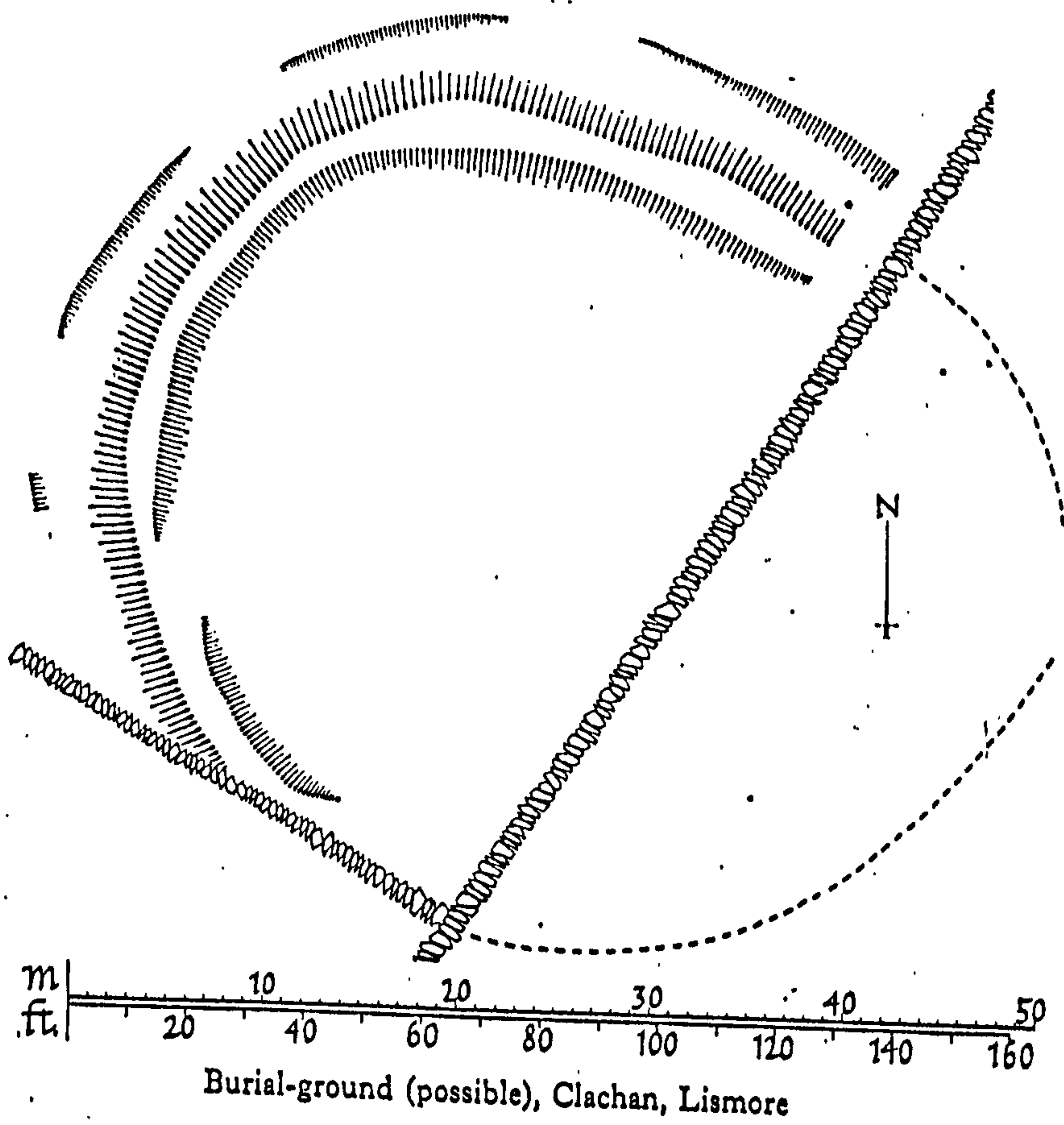


Fig. 57 Possible Early Christian burial grounds in Lorn.
(from R.C.A.H.M.S. 1974)

The same may also be the case with the Ardchatten stone. Presumably stones from unenclosed cemeteries would be more subject to later destruction and removal, since they lacked the boundary enclosure defining the extent of the cemetery.

Finally mention must be made of the Christian use of caves in Argyll. At St. Ciaran's Cave in Kintyre (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 145-7) the mouth of the cave had been sealed off by the construction of a mortared wall. Within the cave is a boulder decorated with an incised marigold pattern which has Early Christian parallels. In Mid-Argyll, ^{at} St. Columba's cave (Campbell and Young 1973) an altar had been built on an internal shelf, and incised crosses were found on the cave wall. The cave had a long period of use from the prehistoric period well into the medieval period. On Mull within the Nun's Cave, Carsaig, (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980, 159) and Scoor Cave (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980, 166-7) walls of the caves have numerous cruciform carvings upon them, some of which may date to the Early Christian Period. Such caves may have been used by hermits. Martin of Tours is said to have lived for a long time in a cave, and a later tradition held that St. Ninian was also associated with a cave (Thomas 1971, 85).

To conclude, this chapter has discussed the various types of site and forms of information which must be considered in any analysis of the impact of Christianity in the area in the 1st millennium A.D. The main problem associated with this evidence is the impossibility of dating most of it with any degree of accuracy. It is difficult to distinguish between sites which may have been established during the Early Historic Period, and those which date to the 9th century or later, some of which may have been associated with Norse settlers.

Chapter Twelve: Footnotes.

1. In relation to these crosses, it should be stated that such precise dating is far from agreed upon, and dates ranging from the 8th century A.D. to the 12th century A.D. have been suggested for St. John's and St. Martin's Crosses. This debate has been summarized by the R.C.A.H.M.S. (1982, 18).

2. Unless otherwise specified the 1:50,000 maps referred to are the most recent issues produced by the Ordnance Survey: the 1976 First Series.

(3) Barber argues that this ditch is unlikely to have been the primary Columban vallum. This suggestion is based upon several arguments. The size of the ditch indicates that its construction was a major civil engineering project. He argued that this was unlikely to be feasible for a new monastic community. His calibration of the radiocarbon date (after Mckerrell 1975) provided an age range of at least 40 years after the original Columban establishment. Also the ditch cut an earlier one (ditch 2) the latter apparently being the first major feature on the site. Indeed Barber argues that the latter may have been the primary vallum.

This interpretation could, however, be questioned. Calibration of the date after Klein et al. 1982, provides an age range of between 580A.D. and 780A.D. for the primary ditch fill. This would not seem incompatible with the date for the Columban establishment.

Excavation of ditch 2 indicated that it had been open for only a short period, before being deliberately backfilled. Two dates were obtained for the ditch fill, these being:

570 ± 60a.d. (GU 1282) (575-765A.D.) for second lowest silt layer.

470 ± 55a.d. (GU 1281) (425-625A.D.) for top silt layer.

These, though, are not helpful in dating it, since they probably reflect occupation debris washed in from elsewhere on site. This could explain their reverse stratigraphic order. Hence dating of this ditch must really rely upon that for ditch 1. The fact that ditch 2 apparently had a short life implies it was a temporary feature, possibly of early Columban, or even pre-Columban date. Hence it would seem unwise to interpret it as an early vallum.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION AND ITS PROBLEMS

The following chapter will consider the various documentary sources which have been used to recreate a history of the Kingdom of Dalriada. The main aims of this work will be to discuss the context in which each of the forms of documentary source was produced, and to illustrate the problems inherent in their use in the construction of such history.

To begin with it would be of use to consider the origins of usage of written forms of communication within Dalriada, to examine where the various documents were being produced, and how widespread literacy was.

The use of written forms of communication in Dalriada was probably introduced by the Early Christian Church. Certainly it gained its major impetus as a result of this establishment. Prior to this written forms of communication had been introduced to Northern Britain by the Romans, as is well illustrated by inscriptions from the Antonine Wall sites. There is little evidence to show, however, that it was anything other than a bureaucratic means of communication, used for formal purposes within the Roman military system. The placing of building inscriptions and altars in public places does not necessarily reflect a widespread knowledge of literacy, but instead may have been a deliberate means of displaying the power of the Romans. The Romanitas demonstrated to the North Britons included not only military efficiency, architectural complexity and elegance, but also the control of new methods of communication. Whatever the impact of this on the native communities, there is no evidence for their adoption of literacy.

The Christian religion, being one 'of the book' was obviously related to the development of literate communication, and ecclesiastical scriptorium probably spread from the east with the new religion. Within the monastic community of Iona it is clear that a scriptorium existed possibly as early as 550 A.D. (Duncan 1981). Monks here were probably engaged in the copying of Early Christian manuscripts, as well as the composition of new ones. We know, for example, of the composition of two lives of St. Columba in the Iona Scriptorium, the second written by Abbot Adomnan, who also produced a book of the holy lands. The construction of records, such as the tables used to calculate the date of Easter were also important.

Outside the religious houses there is little indication of widespread literacy. The preceding chapter noted the scarcity of inscribed stones of Early Christian date in the area, suggesting the use of the written form was not widespread. It would seem, however, that the royal houses of the Kingdom of Dalriada were aware of its existence, and on occasion used it. The best example of this are genealogies, and the Senchus Fer nAlban. There is no evidence to suggest the existence of a separate scriptorium used by the Kings, but this is hardly surprising since it would appear that few Early Historic Kings in the British Isles developed such a writing office. Hence it would seem logical to assume that the Kings looked to the ecclesiastical scriptorium for the production of their documentation. This may have been an important factor influencing the development of a close relationship between the Church and the Kings.

Exactly why the Kings of Dalriada began to see a need to record information in a documentary form is difficult to explain. Its development must relate to the use of it by the Church, presumably the Kings saw it necessary to become accustomed to this new means of communication and information storage, if only because this allowed them a clearer insight into the activities of the early Church. This is perhaps not a development which originated specifically in Dalriada. Throughout Europe at this time, we see the developing use of recorded documentation. Since the Kings of Dalriada were not insular, but had widespread external contacts, they perhaps saw other rulers using such systems of communication.

The pre-literate societies of Dalriada probably had highly developed oral traditions of communication, with specialist poets and remembrancers whose task it was to recount past deeds and events. This is not the place to analyse these oral traditions in detail, but some comment upon the impact of developing literacy on them must be made. Several works have recently been produced which discuss the development of written forms of communication and the impact on society that their development could have (cf. Goody 1977; Clanchy 1979). It is clear that 'history' as we know it today is a product of societies using written forms of communication. In particular it has been argued that an illiterate's knowledge of the past was much more limited than that of a literate individual (Clanchy 1970, 165). Clanchy goes on to illustrate that the distinction between fact and fiction, history and myth is less clear to an illiterate, since all knowledge of the past is conveyed to that individual by the speech of contemporaries,

hence there is no external means of testing the veracity of the information being passed on.

The above point is important, since it illustrates how the development of written forms of communication could begin to allow the construction of "verifiable" histories, and also the construction of more detailed alternative histories. In an oral tradition the job of transmitting history fell to the professional bards and remembrancers. Their job, however, was not to study the past objectively, but to recollect it for contemporaries whenever the need arose. Usually the "good old law", "heroic ancestors" or "victorious battles" recalled would be adapted to the requirements of the audience, hence they were unlikely to be historically objective (Clanchy 1970, 165). The manner in which information is remembered could also militate against objectivity, since epic poems and the like would not be remembered in 'toto', but instead the story would be woven around a framework of key words and phrases which were remembered.

In contrast to this situation the creation of a written archive of material, and the critical assessment, and re-assessment of such, allows the advent of history as we perceive it (Goody 1977, 149).

Thus it would seem that the introduction of literacy, and the establishment of documentary archives could lead to the development of more complex views of the past within society, views which would be less subjective than those presented by professional poets and remembrancers. It is also clear, however, that by careful control of the production and content of documentary records views of the past could, in a sense, be

simplified. This is crucial in the Early Historic Period when succession to offices of power such as Kingship were not clearly defined, and individual claims were established on the basis of ancestry and past 'history'. The ability to produce documentary claims to office could simplify issues by giving permanence to particular claims.

These, then are the sort of factors which must be considered in relation to any analysis of Early Historic documentation. As Clanchy points out it can be difficult for modern scholars, whose own skills are shaped by literacy, to reconstruct the mental changes which its introduction brings about (1979, 149) - just as it is difficult for modern scholars to fully appreciate the complexities of oral traditions. In the Early Historic Period it is important to remember that we are only seeing the beginnings of use of written forms of communication. During the initial phases the full potentials of this new means of communication are unlikely to have been fully realised, since initially the information recorded is likely to be transcriptions of material formerly transmitted orally. This being the case we are dealing with a form of protoliterate society, the products of which are likely to be simple in comparison with later documentation.

The various documentary sources which have been used in studies of the history and nature of society in Dalriada can be listed briefly as:

- annals
- King lists and genealogies
- the Senchus Fer nAlbàn

- Adomnan's Life of Columba
- Bede's History of the English Church and People
- Irish legal tracts
- secular literature, including Irish sagas and poetry.

Before the earliest versions of any of these texts can be studied various stages of research have to be undertaken upon them. Printed texts are the product of detailed textual criticism and analysis. Once translations and texts have been produced, analyses of the source or sources of the document must be undertaken. Finally historical synthesis may be required to set the work in some form of context. Most of these stages of research require specific skills, for example in palaeography. Generally speaking archaeologists are not trained in such skills, and hence this work is usually left to other scholars. They then refer to the texts only when many of the problems associated with them have been ironed out. There may, however, be differences in opinion about when this state of affairs has been reached. Recently Dumville has criticised Alcock and Morris for assigning great importance to written sources deriving from the Early Historic Period (1977a). Dumville argues that critical assessment of these sources is still in its infancy, and hence they should not be widely used until they have been studied in further depth. This is a somewhat extreme viewpoint which it is difficult to accept fully. Acceptance of Dumville's suggestions would mean the abandonment of any attempt to use the available documentary evidence (probably for a considerable period of time, since the number of scholars engaged in such study is

limited). There seems no reason why cautious use of documentary evidence should not proceed. The following discussion will assume that this is permissible, and will consider each of the documentary sources noted previously.

ANNALS

Annal-writing in Europe began with the practice of entering notes in the blank spaces of the Easter tables which every monastery or church of consequence had (Anderson 1980, 1). After their initiation they came to be regarded increasingly as a secular history or narrative, hence on occasions the practice of recording events retrospectively was developed. Alcock illustrates that this was the case, for example, with the birth-dates of saints, since these could not be contemporary, as no-one could anticipate the future sainthood of new-born children (1971, 49).

As these were drawn up in ecclesiastical centres, it could be questioned how relevant a reflection of wider society and events they portray. Within Dalriada a close link developed between Early Christian communities and the early Kings. This is seen in Columba's ordination of King Aedan, and Columba's attendance at the Convention of Druim Cett in Ireland with Aedan. Because of this link, the events recorded within annalistic sources may provide an accurate reflection of the events considered of importance within the Kingdom as a whole. This could be taken to be the case for most of the Early Historic Period until the advent of the Norse in the late 8th century. Monastic wealth was a target of early Viking activity in the area. This being the case, the view of events within the area recorded throughout Argyll are likely to be highly coloured.

The two major sources for Scottish events in this early period are the Irish Annals of Tigernach and the Annals of Ulster. The surviving manuscripts of these date to the 14th and 15th centuries respectively, but they seem to share a common source of earlier date (Anderson 1980, 1f). This common source has been referred to as the Ulster Chronicle (O' Rahilly 1946, 258) which it is presumed was in existence in the 10th century (Anderson 1980, 40) and which grew from a compilation made at Bangor, County Down around 740 A.D. (Anderson 1980, 40).

It has long been recognized that all these major collections of Irish annals contain within them elements of what was originally a Scottish Chronicle, which was probably compiled on Iona (Bannerman 1974, 9-26). Duncan has recently suggested that the earliest of these Iona annals were written down at some date between 550 and 650 A.D. (1981). It would not appear possible to date them more precisely within this period. Bannerman had previously suggested that these annals were a collection of contemporary entries compiled between 640 A.D. and 740 A.D. (i.e. later than Duncan would argue) with retro-active entries back to the first half of the 6th century (1974, 9-20).

It has also been known for a while that all the annalistic sources derived ultimately from one common one (cf. Bannerman 1974, 9). Smyth illustrated that the earliest of these was, in fact, the Iona Chronicle (1972). This means then that a body of annalistic references exist which were compiled on Iona, and hence are of direct relevance to any study of Dalriada. There are, however, questions which must be raised about the accuracy of any detailed history of the Kingdom based upon such

entries. The date when compilation of these annalistic sources began is not fully agreed upon. Smyth has argued that the collection was begun at an early date. He suggests a link between certain Annals and Adomnan's Life of Columba. This not only supports his view of a distinct set of annals which were compiled on Iona, but also implies the existence of much earlier annals which Adomnan was drawing upon (1972). Ó'Corráin, however, questions these arguments, and himself believes that some of the earlier annalistic references were actually later fabrications (1980). Obviously if some of the early entries are actually later insertions it becomes very difficult, if not impossible to produce detailed histories based upon them, since they present later rationalisations of important events.

KINGLISTS AND GENEALOGIES

Several Kinglists or Genealogies exist which name the various Kings of Dalriada. The earliest of these is the genealogy contained within the Senchus Fer nAlban. This is a 10th century version of what was originally a 7th century compilation (Bannerman 1974, 118-121). The first half of this document consists of a genealogy which defines the descendents of Fergus Mór mac Erc, who allegedly founded the Kingdom, down to the 6th generation. Other early genealogies are contained within the Synchronisms of Fland Manistrech which is an 11th century document in origin (Anderson 1922, 1V) and the Duan Albanach which is of similar date (Anderson 1922, Iiii)

To understand these genealogies it is necessary to consider closely the reason for their original compilation. They were not composed for the purpose of modern historical analysis to

provide useful lists of early Kings. Instead they were deliberately produced, political documents the aim of which was to provide a legal or political claim to position and office (cf. Dumville 1977b, 178).

The creation of genealogies designed to validate people's origins or property rights has an ancient origin. Clanchy, for example, has discussed their use within oral traditions (1970, 166). Because they were so significant they were subject to change and manipulation to meet whatever the present needs were. Dumville has said of such collections, that they may be historically accurate, but only when they have not been corrupted in transmission, and (more importantly) where historical accuracy does not conflict with the claims made by the owner or author of the genealogy (1977b; 178).

It is clear that in the Early Historic Period legal title to office and position was important, unless one was a warrior leader able to maintain position by force. Thus to be eligible for Kingship a person had to have a suitable ancestry. Hence the compilations of genealogies was important. Often, however, the main aim of these was to provide that individual or family with a past suitable to their present aspirations. In turn this led to deliberate manipulation of the evidence to provide such a suitable genealogy. Dumville has been able to provide many illustrations of the occurrence of this within the British Isles (1977b). Within oral traditions such manipulation of genealogies was an extremely easy affair, since there was little means of externally validating whatever claims were made. This situation changed with the developing use of written forms of communication. Once recorded in this

form a genealogy took on a much more permanent air, since it fossilised certain claims within a record which would be preserved. This must have been an important change within Early Historic society, since it must have had the effect of establishing certain families and individuals as office holders much more firmly than had ever been the case before. The fabrication of claims to challenge the power of these individuals would have necessitated access to those lists which did exist, as well as access to a scriptorium which could produce alternative versions.

The developing use of recorded genealogies may again reflect the influence of the church on society. Dumville indicates that an analysis of germanic law-codes illustrates that early churchmen felt king-lists and royal genealogies were important mirrors of a King's right to rule (1977, 75). Support of rulers in this manner was probably a deliberate move on the part of leading ecclesiastics since it was likely to maintain the royal support necessary for their existence.

Within the Kingdom of Dalriada the most obvious example of a manipulated genealogy is that contained within the Senchus Fer nAlban. This purports to illustrate the descent of the three main lineages of the Kingdom. These, the document alleges, were all descended from either Fergus Mór himself, or his brothers Oergus and Loairn (Bannerman 1974, 70). The naming of kindreds after their founder, as is the case here, was quite normal in Ireland. Closer analysis of this supposedly genealogy, however, illustrates that it was largely fabrication drawn together with the express purpose of justifying the rule of a single King over the whole Kingdom. Bannerman has illustrated

that the suggestion that Oergus and Loairn were brothers of Fergus Mór may actually be a latter addition to the original Senchus document (1974, 124). The date of this cannot be clearly identified. Anderson dates the pedigrees to the first half of the 8th century; Bannerman suggests the document may have been altered as late as the 10th century. This must raise the question of how early the three Cenéla formed a unified Kingdom. If Bannerman's location of the extent of the Kingdom is correct, however, it must illustrate the existence of a large territorial unit by 690 A.D., when Adomnan's Life of Columba was written, since this was the main source used by him.

SENCUS FER nALBAN

The Senchus Fer nAlban, or 'History of the men of Scotland' has been seen as a major documentary source for the Kingdom of Dalriada. The first part of the document, the genealogical section has been discussed above, the document also contains a civil and military survey of the Kingdom to which discussion will now turn.

(p. Tighe)

The civil survey provides a listing of the 'tech' of the Kingdom of Dalriada. Bannerman translates this term as house, (1974, 47-9) hence it would seem the document provides a detailed list of the number of dwellings within the Kingdom. At first glance this would appear of immense importance for any archaeological analysis of the settlement pattern of the area in the Early Historic Period. Closer examination of the document, however, illustrates that there are many problems associated with it.

Ó'Corráin has discussed the meaning of 'tech' in greater detail than Bannerman (1980). He understands it to mean the

household and by implication the land of a normal freeman. This is important since it implies a 'social' definition of the term, rather than one purely associated with a structure. Of course this makes archaeological identification of such a unit more difficult, since it is unclear exactly what the homestead of such a freeman might consist of, both in terms of the size of social unit and the structural form of such a settlement.

Detailed analysis of the listing of these 'tige' is further complicated by the confused manner in which the information is presented within the document. For each of the major Cenéla of the Kingdom, the Cenél nGabráin, Cenél Loairn, and the Cenél nOengusa the total number of 'tige' units is stated as follows;

<u>Cené</u> l nGabráin	-	560 ' <u>tige</u> '
<u>Cené</u> l Loairn	-	420 ' <u>tige</u> '
<u>Cené</u> l nOengusa	-	430 ' <u>tige</u> '

In the case of the Cenél nOengusa and the Cenél Loairn these total figures are subdivided as follows:-

Cenél n Oengusa

Oideach	20 ' <u>tige</u> '
Freg	120 ' <u>tige</u> '
Calad Rois	60 ' <u>tige</u> '
Ros Deorand	30 ' <u>tige</u> '
Ard hEs	30 ' <u>tige</u> '
Loch Rois	30 ' <u>tige</u> '
Ath Cassil	30 ' <u>tige</u> '
<u>Cené</u> l n Oengusa	30 ' <u>tige</u> '

Total: 350

<u>Cené1</u> Loairn			
<u>Cené1</u> Fergusa Shalaig		<u>Cené1</u> Muredaig	
Coil Dub	30 ' <u>tige</u> '	Ferdálach	20 ' <u>tige</u> '
Eogan Garb	30 ' <u>tige</u> '	Báotán	20 ' <u>tige</u> '
Fergna	15 ' <u>tige</u> '	Cormac	20 ' <u>tige</u> '
Eogan	5 ' <u>tige</u> '	Bledán	10 ' <u>tige</u> '
Báitán	5 ' <u>tige</u> '	Crónán	10 ' <u>tige</u> '
Total: 85		Total: 80	

In the case of the Cené1 n Oengusa it is suggested that the subdivisions were townships or districts of the territory held by this lineage (Bannerman 1974, 56). Obviously in subdividing the total number of 'tige' related to this group, an error is apparent, since the above total of 350 is 80 short of the number of 430 quoted later in the text.

In the case of the Cené1 Loairn more discrepancies are apparent. In this instance the total number of 'tige' associated with the Cené1 are subdivided amongst its leading groups, the Cené1 Shalaig and the Cené1 Muredaig. A third group the Cené1 Cathbath are also accredited with 60 'tige' although no further subdivision is provided. The subdivisions of the Cenéla Shalaig and Muredaig are taken to represent the leaders of each group.

Initially the Senchus Fer nAlban accredits each of these three Cenéla with 60 'tige'; the breakdown of these figures presented above, however, provides differing total figures, hence again discrepancies are encountered. In total the Cené1 Loairn are accredited with only 225 'tige' (i.e. 85 Cené1 Shalaig 'tige', 80 Cené1 Muredaig 'tige', and 60 Cené1 Cathbath 'tige'). This is 195 short of the total of 420 provided elsewhere in the document.

In contrast the 'tige.' of the Cenél nGabraín are not subdivided at all, and the only figure provided is that of 560 presented above.

Thus, then, the civil survey of the Kingdom appears to contain various discrepancies within it. Various explanations of these could be suggested. The first might be that the variations may reflect scribal error in the transcription of the document. If this were the case, obviously the errors involved are of great magnitude, and must undermine any confidence in the document as a whole. An alternative suggestion, in contrast, is less damning. This is that the discrepancies were the result of the combination of two assessments within the document (Anderson 1980, 160). In this case the first assessments, - the lower figures - included the various subdivisions among the various districts or leaders of the Cenéla. The second assessment merely provided total numbers of 'tige' for each Cenéla. Anderson argues that the increase in numbers of the second assessment suggests an interval of at least a generation, and hence dates it not earlier than 700 A.D.

Bannerman suggests that the reason for the compilation of these lists was for the purposes of taxation. Because of this they must include all households bound up in client relationships with others from whom such tribute could duly be levied. As such they may present a fairly accurate view of the actual number of such households which existed - it would be unlikely that these would be inflated because of the burden of dues this would provide.

The production of a document specifically listing such tribute is of particular interest. It illustrates that the Kings of Dalriada were beginning to compile and use such documentary records, although it must be said that this is the only such document surviving. The reason for its compilation in a written form may have been to specifically legalize claims to tribute due to the early Kings. As is also the case with genealogies, claims of this nature, once established could bolster the position of particular individuals, making it less easy for rival claims and challenges to gain authority.

The military survey of the Kingdom also contained within the Senchus Fer nAlban indicates the size of army or navy the King of Dalriada could expect from the three major Cenéla. Accordingly the Cenél nGabráin could muster 300 men, the Cenél n Oengusa 500, and the Cenél Loairn 600 of their own men and 100 of the Airgialla. Like the listings of the various 'tige' discussed above, these figures also do not stand close scrutiny well. Bannerman suggests that there may be an error in these figures, since the Cenél n Gabráin was the most important of the lineages at this time, and hence might be expected to provide the largest army (1974, 147). Bannerman argues that a more reasonable estimate of the size of armed forces could be achieved by an analysis of the size of the naval array which could be levied. The latter levy was based on the number of 'tige' in each area, with each group of 20 'tige' having to provide 'two seven-benchers'. Bannerman interpreted this as meaning that each group of houses had to produce 28 men for a ship-crew (cf. Chapter Two). Bannerman argues that each member

of the crew must also have been able to fight, and hence by calculating the size of naval force, an alternative view of the size of armed force might be derived. Following from this he suggests the following naval recruitments:-

<u>Cené1</u> n Gabráin	560 ' <u>tige</u> '	providing 800 men
<u>Cené1</u> Loairn	420 ' <u>tige</u> .'	providing 600 men
<u>Cené1</u> n Oengusa	430 ' <u>tige</u> '	providing 600 men

According to Bannerman an additional reason for accepting the latter figure is that these correspond much better with the figure of 700 men which the Irish law tract the Uraicecht Becc suggests the average Irish Kingdom furnished its King on hosting (1974, 147).

The first problem associated with this argument is that this takes account only of the second assessment existent within the Senchus. The following table illustrates the size of navy which analysis of the first assessment would provide;

<u>Cené1</u> n Gabráin	560 ' <u>tige</u> '	providing 800 men
<u>Cené1</u> Loairn	225 ' <u>tige</u> '	providing 308 men
<u>Cené1</u> n Oengusa	350 ' <u>tige</u> '	providing 478 men

While this still supports Bannerman in providing the Cené1 n Gabráin with the largest fighting force, the other forces become by comparison meagre. Presentation of this information causes other problems since it must question Anderson's suggestion of the time interval between the two assessments contained within the document; it may even question whether the two assessments are included. A single generation is unlikely to have doubled the number of fighting men available in the Cené1 Loairn.

The second problem related to Bannerman's arguments is that the figure of 28 for a boat-crew (or 29 if a steersman was

included) may represent a minimum figure for the crew, and these may actually have been larger (cf. Chapter Two).

In view of these complications perhaps an alternative suggestion would hold more weight. The small size of army attributed to the Cenél n Gabráin may be a reflection of a simple scribal error which wrongly transcribed the initial number in this listing.

The listing in documentary form of these dues was again probably an attempt to validate specific claims being made by one of the early Kings. Whether in actual fact these levies were ever raised is impossible to tell.

The naval array is worthy of more comment since it is very unusual, if not unique, in the Early Historic Period. It must reflect the importance of sea-borne communication within the Kingdom, a point discussed in Chapter Two. It was also noted there that the Senchus Fer nAlban fails to state who provided the vessels which were to be manned.

Bannerman has attempted to identify specific political events which could have culminated in the production of the Senchus Fer nAlban (1974, 154 f). He argues that it may be related to the Convention of Druim Cett, a meeting held in Ireland in 575 A.D. between the King of the Irish Uí Néill Dynasty and Aedan, King of Dalriada. One of the major purposes of this meeting was to decide the fate of Irish Dalriada in relation to Scottish Dalriada. The main points at issue raised were who should have the rights to the taxes, and military and naval services of Irish Dalriada. The result of the Convention was that Aedan yielded the right to "expedition" and "hosting" but kept their tribute and ship service (Duncan 1975, 43).

Bannerman assumes that because the three issues at the Convention, those of taxes, army and navy are those also in the Senchus then some correspondence between the Convention and the document must exist (1974, 155). His maintenance that the Convention was held 50 years before the probably compilation of the Senchus, however, causes problems. He realises this and argues that perhaps the document relates to a similar political crisis at some period between 600 and 660 A.D. Analysis of documentary evidence, unfortunately fails to provide any clues as to what this may have been. A point which Bannerman fails to make is that the similarity between the major issues at Druim Cett and those in the Senchus illustrates the importance to Early Kings of tribute, and the ability to raise armed and naval forces. It is then of particular interest that claims to these are justified in a documentary form by the Kings of Scottish Dalriada.

While it is difficult to find a specific event for which the Senchus Fer nAlban was produced, it is possible to comment upon who the document was produced for. The evidence would seem to indicate that it was produced for the Cenél nGabráin. This lineage produced the Kings of Dalriada throughout the 7th century when it was compiled. Hence it may have been designed to justify their rule over the whole of Argyll. The absence of details about the ownership or location of the 'tige' of the Cenél nGabráin would support this, since they may not have needed to go to such lengths to justify claims for tribute from their own people.

The paucity of information on the Cenél n Oengusa and the division of their 'tige' among the 'townships' or 'districts'

of Islay may imply that they were not wholly accepted by the Cené1 n Gabráin. In Celtic society land was normally seen as belonging to kin groups, hence the impersonal manner in which the Cené1 n Oengusa holdings are described could indicate a reticence to actually name the holders specifically. In turn this might indicate a reticence by the Cené1 n Gabráin to accept them. This may be related to the independent nature of the Cené1 n Oengusa, and their ability to maintain control on Islay in defiance of Cené1 n Gabráin claims (cf. Islay Case Study).

ADOMNAN'S LIFE OF COLUMBA

Adomnan's Life of Columba was probably written around 690 A.D., and survives in a manuscript written in or before 713 A.D. (Hughes 1972, 224). Adomnan was abbot of Iona, an able and versatile man who was engaged as an ecclesiastical diplomat, was actively concerned with the Easter controversy as well as being engaged in Irish affairs, and in contact with Northumbria. The reasons for his compilation of this saint's life have recently been discussed by Picard (1982). He argues that this was a response to a desire by the Iona community for a life of its founder. The period between 650 A.D. and 700 A.D. had seen the publication of lives of St. Bridgit and St. Patrick in Ireland. An earlier Life of Columba^{was} written by the 7th abbot of Iona, Cumméne (d. 669) but this must have been unsuitable by the time of Adomnan.

One of the reasons for this may relate to Iona's involvement in the Easter controversy. Conflict over the correct method of calculation of the date of Easter came to a head in the early 7th century when a Scottish mission led by Aidan of Iona

was present in Northumbria. The outcome of this was a synod held in Whitby in 664 A.D. to discuss the issue. At this the Northumbrian Church decided to accept the Roman method of calculation of Easter, and Aidan withdrew to Iona (Hunter Blair 1970, 129-31; Duncan 1975, 68-9). Bede tells us that the old Easter was still celebrated at Iona in 715 A.D., and that it was not until 716 A.D. that the community was persuaded by the Northumbrian bishop Ecgberht to accept the new Easter (H.E. III 4; V 22). During this period the isolation of Iona must have lowered the morale of the monastic community. In order to raise this, a master work was needed which would demonstrate to their rivals the greatness of the paruchia, and in particular, the greatness of their founder.

Picard suggests the work was directed particularly towards Northumbria for a variety of reasons. The Northumbrians had been at the forefront of the attack on Iona over the Easter controversy, during which period even the sanctity of Columba himself had been called into question. This being the case, Adomnan's Life of Columba places emphasis on illustrations of why Columba was a major saint. This even goes so far as reminding the Northumbrians that they were only able to defeat the British King Cadwalla in 634 A.D. because of the intercession of Columba. Adomnan points out that before the battle the whole people promised to receive baptism after it, hence the conversion of Northumbria occurred as a result of Columba's actions.

Picard also argues that Adomnan's Life was also directed towards continental audiences. Lives of other British saints

such as St. Patrick were well known on the continent. St. Columba, however, was not as widely known. The Franks, for example, confused him with Columbanus. Thus a new life of the saint may have aimed to spread knowledge of him on the continent.

Thus, then, Adomnan's Life may have been written with three different audiences in mind, the first being the monastery and monks themselves, the second Northumbria, and the third the continent. Its primary aim was to clearly illustrate the sanctity of Columba, and the importance of the Iona community.

Within the work are numerous references to historical events, mostly related to the period of Columba's lifetime. As mentioned earlier, the source of this detail may have been the Iona annals. Analysis of this information allows the identification of references which cannot post-date Adomnan's Life. As well as providing some historical detail, the life contains much incidental material about the nature of society, the activities the monks were engaged in, and in some instances the nature of artefacts which were being used. Many of these references have been used within Chapter Two of the present work to illustrate the range of resources of Argyll, and the manner in which they were being exploited in the 1st Millennium A.D.

BEDE: HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH AND PEOPLE

Bede was a monk in the Northumbrian monastery of Jarrow who completed his history around 731 A.D. (Gransden 1974, 14). Jarrow was one of the leading Northumbrian monasteries at this time, having been founded in 681 or 682 A.D., only a few years after its twin establishment, Monkwearmouth. It has been argued that the cultural atmosphere of this monastery was markedly 'Mediterranean' (Wormald 1982). It possessed an

extensive library, and well developed scriptorium, and it is within this scholarly background that Bede set about the composition of his history. Of his work he said;

"I have assembled these facts about the history of the Church in Britain, and of the Church of England in particular, so far as I have been able to ascertain them from ancient writings, from the traditions of our forebears, and from my own personal knowledge".

(HE: V: 24)

Much of this material was drawn from other sources and must be treated with some caution, it is generally thought, however, that his contemporary history is accurate (cf. Gransden 1974. 24-6). In particular he provides much useful detail about contemporary Northumbria. Within the work Bede also makes several references to Dalriada. This information was probably gained from a northern source. During the Early Christian period established links existed between the Northumbrian Church and Iona, these probably resulted from the conversion of Oswald^{and} Oswiu of Northumbria while in exile in Dalriada in the early 7th century. Leading ecclesiastics from Iona often travelled to Northumbria, and hence a direct line of communication existed between the two areas. Bannerman suggested that Bede may have heard about Dalriada from Abbot Adomnan of Iona, who visited Monkwearmouth and Jarrow (1974, 123). Bede himself tells us of this visit (HE: V: 21) suggesting that he actually spoke with Adomnan. This is unlikely to have been the case since, as Picard has pointed out, Bede was probably only a child when Adomnan's visit occurred (1982). Duncan has argued that Bede acquired his information about Dalriada from messengers sent by King Nechtan of the Picts to Jarrow between 709 and 716 A.D. (1981). This is an idea first discussed by Anderson and

Anderson (1961, 77) and Hughes (1980, 9-10). Nechton had requested help in ecclesiastical matters from Northumbria, and Duncan has put forward a reconstruction of the information conveyed to Northumbria by his messengers. Within the text of this letter is various information about Dalriada which appears to have originated from Iona. Duncan argues that this information was transmitted to Pictland by the early ecclesiastic Egbert who lived with the Iona community and was involved in persuading them to accept the Roman date for Easter. The information provided to Bede, because of its Pictish origins, provides Pictish viewpoints, - one example of this is the Pictish view that Columba came to convert the Picts, and that they gave him Iona; Duncan illustrates other examples. If Bede realised this bias existed he did not attempt to gain more first hand information directly from Iona. This may be because the Easter controversy was still not finally resolved. Obviously this was an issue of importance for Bede since it recurs frequently throughout the text. Because of this he was unlikely to seek information directly from such an aberrant house as Iona.

Thus Bede had a source of information about Dalriada which derived ultimately from Iona. It was, however, mediated via the Pictish royal house, and during this process of transmission it became biased towards Pictish outlook. This being the case it must be treated with some caution.

IRISH LEGAL TRACTS

Several legal tracts of Irish secular law exist which can be traced back to origins in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. (Hughes 1972, 43). These record customary practices in Ireland

which had been transmitted originally in an oral form by professional jurists. Because they are of Celtic origin they are often taken to be of value for studies of Northern Britain. Although they contain a wealth of information about social organization and economic activity in early Ireland they are difficult sources to use. In 1943 Binchy discussed many of the problems inherent in the use of these documents, many of these related to the poor texts then available for detailed study. It is clear that the surviving early manuscripts only survive within much later ones, and have had numerous later glosses and commentaries added to them. The surviving manuscripts were copied from earlier ones, often by scribes who did not fully understand what they were copying, and hence were more likely to introduce mistakes. This process was not aided by the fact that the language of the tracts is often very technical, and often deliberately obscure. Binchy also argues that many errors may have been present within the texts from the beginning despite the fact that many of the early translations were undertaken by learned men.

The law tracts were accounts of customary law and were wholly the work of Jurists. They were not drawn up at the instigation of ruling Kings, and hence were less likely to become biased towards political ends. In recording the laws the Jurists were unconsciously holding up a mirror to the life and habits of the Irish people of their own time. This might lead to the idea that they could provide a mine of information for social historians and other scholars. Their accounts, however, are likely to be schematizations of the actual state of affairs. Binchy argues that there must have been discrepancies,

for example between the many independent sovereignties of which Ireland consisted. This being the case the uniformity postulated by the law tracts is likely to be fictitious. Thus they would appear to provide an idealised and highly conventional picture of Irish society and law, which while broadly accurate, may be untrustworthy in its details.

While it is clear, then, that such legal tracts must be used with caution, it is still generally accepted that these tracts can usefully provide a broad outline of the nature of society during the Early Historic Period (cf. Hughes 1972, 46-64; Bannerman 1974, 133 f). As new reliable translations of the laws become available (cf. Binchy 1978) it is likely that they may be used more widely. Scott has recently argued that recent papers by Binchy (1981) MacNiocaill (1981) and Mac Eoin (1981) on brewing, livestock husbandry and mills and milling have provided useful bodies of information of use for archaeologists (1983). Further study could provide additional information of value.

SECULAR LITERATURE

Several examples of secular literature of early date survive from Ireland. The most famous piece being the prose saga Táin Bo Cualnge 'The Cattle Raid of Cooley' which is contained within the Ulster Cycle. The earliest recension of it appears to be a conflation of two 9th century versions, but it may have been recorded originally in the early 8th century (Dillon and Chadwick 1967, 35). Thurneyson suggested it may even be as early as the mid 7th century (1921).

The Táin is a saga based upon a great cattle raid. It tells of the invasion of Ulster by the armies of Medb and Ailill, Queen and King of Connacht, and their allies. This force sought to carry off the great brown bull of Cuailnge (Kinsella 1969). In the course of recounting the tale, much description about the institutions and ways of life of the main participants is provided. Jackson argued that preserved within the work is a picture of late Iron Age Irish society (1964). This view has not been fully accepted, and recently Warner suggested that what is actually being described is the culture of the 8th to 11th centuries (1979). This idea was based upon the work of Mallory who has analysed the descriptions of weaponry, particularly swords, contained within the Ulster cycle. This led him to suggest that the types being described were no older than the Early Christian Period, the descriptions fitting best with knowledge of Viking period swords (1982).

It has been accepted that such prose literature can provide a useful insight into early Ireland (cf. Hughes 1972, 174-190) conveying information ranging from the places or sites various characters were associated with, the range of pagan deities worshipped, to descriptions of established institutions such as clientage and fosterage. It must be said, however, that some of the content of these sagas is mythological. O'Rahilly, for example, saw the main characters as deities (1946).

Certainly the hero of the Táin. Cuchúlainn is portrayed as the possessor of supernatural, superhuman qualities. The sagas were originally told by bards, and were designed to recount past heroes, heroines and their deeds. With such an oral means

of transmission the exploits of these characters could easily be exaggerated in this manner to heighten the effect of the storytelling. The mythological quality of many of the main characters and their inter-relationships must make it extremely questionable to what extent they are accurate descriptions of actual Irish society. While much of the detail provided must have had origins within actual Irish society and history it probably became distorted to fit current oral or literary conventions. This being the case it is arguable that any attempt to draw on such secular literature to portray early Irish society and political relationships is likely to be misguided.

MISSING DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

It is extremely unlikely that the documentation relevant to Dalriada surviving today is all that was originally produced there. Indeed evidence can be cited which clearly indicates that some has been lost. In Adomnan's Life of Columba, for example, we are told of a book written by Cumméne, Abbot of Iona, on St. Columba (III: 5) This is now only known through Adomnan's latter work. It may well be that other products of the Iona scriptorium were lost. Outside Iona and other monastic communities it does not appear that literacy was very widespread. Documents were produced for the royal household of the Kingdom, but these are few and mainly genealogies.

Recently Davies has indicated the existence of a charter tradition in the Celtic West, (1982) which had not been fully appreciated before. In Ireland she illustrates the existence around 700 A.D. of 'godly old writings' as a type of proof of ownership. Irish canons record that attempts to introduce

land contracts were being made as early as the end of the 6th century. Some Scottish examples exist but they are not as early. The Book of Deer preserves examples of the mid 12th century (Davies 1982; Jackson 1972). These record grants of land to the monastery of Deer in Buchan, Aberdeenshire (Jackson 1972) and are the earliest known recorded land transfers in Scotland. The existence of such written land contracts illustrates another example of written documents being used to justify claims, in this case to particular areas of land. While we do not have any extent examples of such documents from Dalriada it is clear that the use of written material to justify claims in this manner was known, hence it may be summarized that examples did originally exist.

As no evidence for secular scriptoria exists such documents were presumably produced in ecclesiastical centres such as Iona. It is of importance to note that the church may have been particularly interested in the confirmation of particular patterns of land-holding in this manner. It has been well illustrated that a major concern of the early Church was the acquisition of land upon which to establish its chapels, and with which it could support its other activities (cf. Goody 1983). With the growing acceptance of documentary forms, and the development of patterns of land-holding justified by such documents, it must have been easier for secular persons to alienate land to the Church. Many of the early land charters, indeed, record such transfers.

In conclusion it can be seen that various documentary sources exist from which information about the history and

nature of society in Dalriada have been traditionally drawn. Specific problems exist in relation to each of these sources, and it is important that these various limitations are realised. In particular the various problems associated with the Senchus Fer nAlban must be borne in mind, since this has been used widely in analysis of the early Kingdom.

It is clear that literacy was not widespread in Dalriada, and that the Early Historic Period was only seeing the beginnings of the use of documentary forms. Because of this it is imperative that detailed analysis of why particular documents were being produced, and the biases inherent in them, is undertaken.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE KINGDOM OF DALRIADA:

PROBLEMS AND REASSESSMENTS

Preceding chapters in the present work have presented an outline of the history of Dalriada, as well as detailed discussion of the nature and limitations of the available documentation. In this chapter the specific historical problems raised by the available documentation are reappraised. This is necessary since many of these problems have not been discussed elsewhere in print to any great depth. It is also of importance to provide a framework for subsequent analysis and reappraisal of the archaeological evidence.

The first problems which must be considered are related to the date and nature of the initial Irish migration to Northern Britain. It is normally held by historians that the establishment of Dalriada came about as the result of a migration from Irish Dalriada (cf. Duncan 1975, 41). The exact nature of this "migration" has, however never been fully discussed, hence the present work must begin by a consideration of this problem.

The Dalriada in Ireland inhabited the north-east of Antrim. They were members of the federation of Ulaídh, a federation which had as its other members the Dál Fiatach and the Dál nAraide. The Ulaídh were said to have dominated all of Northern Ireland prior to the mid 5th century A.D. (Ó'Corráin 1972, 14). The situation changed after this date as a result of the expansion of the Uí Néill dynasty of central Ireland. In 563 A.D. the Annals of Ulster record a battle, the outcome of which was that the Ulaídh lost control of territory they had held west of the River Bann (Anderson 1980, 134). It

seems that this eastward expansion of the Uí Néill and the consequent contraction of the territorial extent of the Ulaide federation precipitated the movement of the Dalriada from Ireland to Scotland (cf. Duncan 1982, I: 19).

The Senchus Fer nAlban is the only documentary source which actually records a migration from Ireland to Scotland. It tells of one hundred and fifty men, 'the ship expedition' which went forth with the sons of Erc (Bannerman 1974, 49).

Scottish Dalriada was thought to have been established by Fergus Mór, son of Erc, and later genealogies trace the descent of subsequent rulers of the Kingdom back to this individual. None of the available documentary sources imply a major folk migration led by Fergus Mór, and instead we may just be dealing with the transference of a ruling dynasty from Ireland to Scotland; this dynasty may have found its political ambitions in Ireland threatened by the growing power there of the Uí Néill. Such dynastic transfer is not unusual, and Byrne notes several similar occurrences in Early Historic Ireland (1971; 1973). In suggesting a migration of 150 men to Northern Britain, the Senchus Fer nAlban could support the idea of a small-scale dynastic transfer. Rulers in Ireland were normally male, and the reference may be interpreted as referring to a ruler and his retinue of armed, male, followers.

While it is clear that a scenario can be created to explain the migration of the Dalriada from Ireland, their ability to establish themselves in Northern Britain is not so easy to explain

The area of Argyll was not unpopulated prior to the Dalriadic arrival there, as is well illustrated by the likelihood that some of the many defended sites pre-date 500 A.D. (cf. Chapters Six to Nine). Unfortunately there is no useful

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recorded history of these people's prior to the establishment of the Iona Scriptorium, but this should not deter an attempt to analyse the relationship of the incoming Dalriadans to the native communities of the area.

The close proximity of Argyll and Northern Ireland must have led to the establishment of close contact between the two areas from early times. Both Irish and Scottish Dalriada had naval fleets, which implies the importance of the sea for communication. With the existence of good boats the sea between Argyll and Ireland provided no real divide. Some documentary references exist which have been taken to refer to Irish settlement in Northern Britain prior to 500 A.D., and which are worthy of closer consideration here. The establishment of Fergus Mór and his followers in Northern Britain may have been made easier if there was already within the area a population with Irish connections or descent.

Of these references, probably the best known is contained within Bede's History of the English Church and People. In this work Bede states that the Scots,

"....migrated from Ireland under their Chieftain, Reuda, and by a combination of force and treaty, obtained from the Picts the settlements that they still hold. From the name of this Chieftain they are still known as Dalreudians".

(HE: I: 1)

In this work Bede implies that the story referred to a period considerably before his own lifetime. This work, as we have noted, dates to around 731 A.D., and hence is probably later than the original compilation of the Senchus Fer nAlban. There is no evidence to suggest that Bede knew of the latter document, and hence the work must be seen as a separate source.

The Reuda Bede refers to has been identified by genealogists as the Cairpre Riata recorded as an ancestor of Fergus Mór some 10 generations removed (cf. Bannerman 1974, 123). This being the case at first glance the Bedan reference could be taken to refer to a pre-Dalriadic Irish presence in Northern Britain. This suggestion, however, does not hold up to close scrutiny for a variety of reasons. To begin with Cairpre Riata is not a historical figure since he must pre-date the earliest records and genealogies from Ireland. Because of this his precise antiquity cannot be securely dated, and questions must anyhow, arise as to whether he did actually ever exist. Ancestor legends were a genre in Early Historic Society and often supposed lineage founders were more legendary than real. The second problem with the Reuda reference is that Bede obtained this information via the Pictish King Nechton (cf. Chapter Thirteen). The information Bede received had a perceptible Pictish gloss to it, and seen in this light the Reuda reference could refer to conflict between the Picts and Scots. By producing a documentary reference suggesting differing and more ancient Irish origins in Northern Britain the Pictish Kings may have been attempting to challenge and undermine the power and position of the established Dalriadic Kings. It is clear that other of the information provided to Bede similarly hints at conflict between the Picts and Scots, a good example being related to whether the Picts or Scots gave Columba the island of Iona. By suggesting this was a Pictish act, Nechton may have been intent upon territorial gain in this northern area of Dalriada. Thus, then, when seen in relation to the source of information Bede drew on, the Reuda reference must

be treated with extreme caution. An unresolved question which must prevent it from being totally ignored, however, is that the name of the Kingdom, Dalriata, can be translated as the 'portion of Riata'. This would seem to conflict with the argument that Fergus Mór mac Erc established the Kingdom, and if Riata can be equated with Reuda, then there may be some truth in the Beden reference.

Other references to the presence of Irish in Northern Britain prior to 500 A.D. are contained within a series of well known references to raids on the northern frontiers of Roman Britain in the 4th century A.D. These have been drawn together by Mann (1971). Of these the best known one by Ammianus Marcellinus, a classical author alive in the latter half of the 4th century A.D. The first of these references states,

'...but in Britain in the tenth consulship of Constantius and the third of Julian, raids of savage tribes of the Scots and Picts, who had broken the peace that had been agreed upon, were laying waste the regions near the frontiers'

(Lxxl:1)

This can be dated to 360 A.D. (Mann 1971). Four years later Ammianus states that,

"the Picts, Scots and Saxons and Attacotti were harrassing the Britons ..."

(XXVI:4:5)

Finally in 367-8 A.D. we are told that,

"at that time the Picts, divided into two tribes called Dicalydones and Verturianes, as well as the Attacotti, a warlike race of men, and the Scots were ranging widely causing much devastation"

(XXVII:8)

Discussion of these references has been limited mainly to scholars of the Roman period, particularly those working on the development of the northern frontier systems. They may, however, have wider implications for the archaeology and history of the area, with particular reference to a study of the establishment of the Kingdom of Dalriada. The assumption has generally been made that the Scotti were at this time still based in Ireland (cf. Richmond 1955, 61; Frere 1974, 390; Breeze and Dobson 1976, 220). There may be some truth in this suggestion, since in another classical work, Claudian's panegyric on Stilicho's defence of Britain in 399 A.D. we are told of events that occurred,

"when the Scot mobilised all Ireland and the ocean
was churned to foam by his hostile oars"

(Claudian: de primo consilatu
Stilichonis; II 247-55)

Taken as a whole these references tend to bracket the Picts and the Scots together in alliance against the Romans of Northern Britain. This must raise the question of whether at least some Irish were already settled in the area.

Bannerman has argued that these references should be seen in relation to:

"....traditional material, supported by place-name study which tells of early settlements of Scotti, apparently from Munster, in the Pictish provinces of Circinn, now Angus and the Mearns, in the Lennox district of the British Kingdom of Strathclyde, and elsewhere".

(1971, 66)

While this is an interesting suggestion it must be treated with caution since it summarizes very briefly a variety of

strands of evidence. The 'traditional' material' he mentions has been discussed in greater depth by Watson (1926, 206-19) and relates to several documentary references. Those to Scottic settlement in the Pictish provinces are based upon an account contained within the Book of Ballymote (1926, 207). Watson argued that elements of this may be ancient, and could date back to the 4th century and earlier. The Book of Ballymote, however, is a 15th century compilation of prose (Anderson 1922, xxxvii) and while some elements contained within it may have early origins, the account mentioned above could be no more than a fictitious origin legend designed to justify Dalriadic expansion into the province of Fortriu. A date in the 8th or 9th centuries could be suggested for this, but it may be earlier, (although not pre-500 A.D.).

Watson also records the story of the movement of Cairpre Riata to Northern Britain (1926, 214-5). This, however, is also contained within the Book of Ballymote, and the historical accuracy of this story has, anyhow, already been challenged. The final group of references upon which Watson drew included several pieces of secular prose literature, including the sagas of Deidre and the Sons of Uisliu and Labhraidh Loingseach (1926, 213-22). In addition to these, other references in secular literature could be quoted. In the Táin for example we are told how the legendary Cúchulain crossed to Alba to learn the warriors art from Scathach the shadowy one (Kinsella 1969, 28). Preceding discussion (Chapter Thirteen) suggested that the mythological quality of much of this secular literature places grave doubt on whether it can readily be used to construct such historical inference. The surviving manuscripts of these

are anyway of much later date, and information within them can only be used to indicate knowledge or activity in Britain as a whole because the term 'Alba' which occurs in them initially meant the whole of Britain, and not specifically Scotland (Kinsella 1969, 257).

Thus none of the surviving documentary evidence reliably refers to Irish presence in Northern Britain prior to 500 A.D. References contained within classical works may hint at this, although both the sources were the product of scholars located at some geographical distance from the events they were describing and hence their accuracy must be questioned.

The Irish references obviously relate to the realms of myth-history. While this may have had an important role in providing specific groups with origin legends and justification for territorial claims, or claims to office, its historical accuracy must be extremely questionable.

The place-name evidence which Bannerman suggests supports this "traditional material" also seems equally suspect. Recent work by Nicholaisen indicates the immense problems related to any attempted analysis of early Gaelic names in Scotland (1979, 121-48). He argues that the Gaelic stratum in Scottish place-name evidence is a layer 1400 years 'deep' in places. Because of this it is exceedingly difficult to isolate individual strata. He does make a case for the Gaelic - sliabh (a mountain) being an early element, based upon its common occurrence in Ireland, but relative rarity in Scotland (1976, 122-3; 39-46). When isolated in Scotland most examples of this are restricted to the area of Dalriada, and the south-west (Fig. 58). This could be used to suggest the invalidity of Bannerman's suggestion.

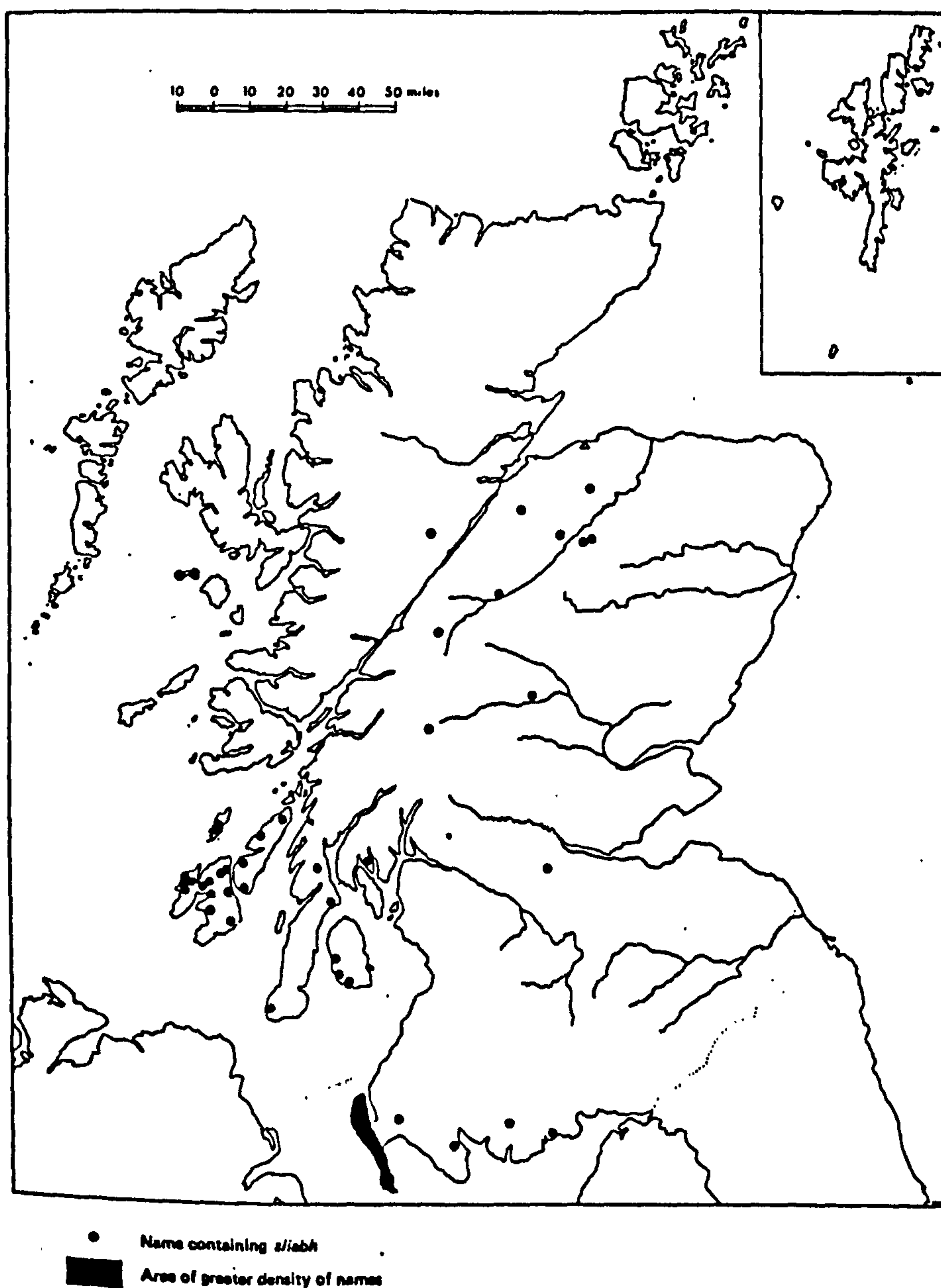


Fig.58 Place Names containing the Gaelic element --sliabh.

(from Nicolaisen 1976)

Other name-forms which Nicholaisen examines those containing the elements - baile (a village/hamlet/town/home/farm) and - achadh (a field). No clear chronology of usage can be established for these, however, and their introduction to eastern Scotland could well have occurred after the union of the crowns in the mid ninth century.

A specific place-name from eastern Scotland which must be taken into consideration in any analysis of possible early Irish settlement is that of Atholl. This derives from "Athfotla" a name meaning 'new Ireland' (Watson 1926, 229). It is first recorded in the Annals of Tigernach in 739 A.D. (Anderson 1922, 236). There is no way of knowing, however, if this annal was actually recorded in 739 A.D.

The use of this place-name to indicate Irish settlement in the area prior to 500 A.D. would be extremely unwise. A more plausible explanation of this record is that it was a later deliberate manipulation of the documentary evidence designed to strengthen claims by Scottic settlers to the area. The latter is most likely to have occurred in the later 8th and 9th century as Dalriada and Pictland merged to form a single unit.

Thus critical analysis of documentary evidence and place-name evidence, then, fails to provide any clear evidence for the presence of Scotti in Northern Britain prior to 500 A.D. This, however, should not allow the possibility to be totally dismissed. It could be summarized that the establishment of Fergus Mor would have been greatly aided by the prior existence within the area of a population with Irish connections, and

which may have seen itself to have Irish origins.

A re-appraisal of genealogical evidence contained within the Senchus Fer nAlban suggests that the Dalriadic establishment in Northern Britain was a protracted affair which could well have had its origins prior to 500 A.D. It is clear that the genealogy contained within this document is a later manipulation designed specifically to justify the rule of a single King over the whole Kingdom (cf. Chapter Thirteen). Close analysis of this genealogy, though, does reveal what may be early elements preserved within it. Bannerman points out Patrician tradition which suggests that the Cené1 nOengusa were already established in Ireland by the time of Patrick (1974, 122). Patrick is normally thought to have died in the mid 5th century (Thomas 1981, 307 f; MacNiocaill 1972, 22).

This leads Bannerman to suggest that the Cené1 Loairn and the Cené1 nOengusa may have been present in North Britain prior to the arrival of Fergus Mór (1974, 122). This argument, however, would seem wrong. Nothing about the Cené1 Loairn is known prior to 500 A.D., while re-appraisal of the genealogical information indicates that it was the great-grandsons of Oengus Mór, supposed brother of Fergus Mór, who 'divided lands in Islay' (cf. Bannerman 1974, 48). It is normally understood that this refers to the Dalriadic settlement of Islay. If this was the case it implies that this settlement occurred three generations after the settlement of the rest of the Kingdom. Thus acquisition of Argyll by the Kings of Dalriada may have been a protracted affair. This would agree with Byrne's analysis of dynastic transfers which^{he} states could,

"span several generations, during which the successful dynasty outbred their rivals and infiltrated their lands"

(1971)

Thus the scenario which could be presented of the Dalriadic establishment in Northern Britain would involve the initial establishment of marriage alliances between the area and Argyll. Eventually these allowed the take-over of the British lineage by the Irish Dalriadans, the person who effected this being Fergus Mór. With this in mind it is worth considering another point made by Byrne in relation to such dynastic transfers. He notes that while such a process was occurring,

"....the basic population remained undisturbed merely exchanging one set of overlords for another, and even the noble families of the displaced dynasty usually left some branches clinging to remnants of property in the area of their earlier supremacy ..."

(1971)

These conditions, then, help explain why the Dalriadic dynasty were apparently able to establish themselves in Argyll without recorded conflict.

Earlier in the present work the suggestion was made that the idea conveyed in the Senchus Fer nAlban of each of the three main lineages having descended from Fergus Mór or his brothers is likely to be a later fabrication. If this is correct, it points to the prior existence of at least three distinct political groups within Argyll. It is hence perhaps not surprising that the Cenél nGabrain, the descendents of Fergus Mór are associated with Kintyre; the peninsula of Argyll closest to Northern Ireland. This group may have descended from the Epidii noted in classical sources. Other early political groups within Argyll may have existed in Loairn and on Islay. These two groups may have been infiltrated via

marriage alliances in the same manner as the original Dalriadic establishment occurred.

However the Dalriadic Kings established themselves in Argyll, it would appear that eventually they controlled a vast territorial extent. Maintenance of power over this area must have necessitated the development of efficient and rapid means of sea-borne communication (cf. Chapter Three). This illustrates well the need for the sea-muster noted in the Senchus Fer nAlban. While considering the extent of the early Kingdom, it is of importance to consider recent attempts to identify the size of early administrative units (Renfrew 1975; Hodges 1978, 1982). The aim of these studies was to produce a model of the size of territory which might be administered from a single centre. This, it was hoped, could then be used in discussion of the development of other political groups.

Renfrew put forward a model of what he termed an Early State Model (E.S.M.) which had an area of approximately 1500 sq. km. (1975). Within such a territory the central place established is around 40 km. away from the central place of neighbouring territories. Hodges subsequently argued that such a unit would match well with the smallest unit contained within the Anglo-Saxon document, the Tribal Hidage (1978; 1982).

It is not easy to see Dalriada fitting such a model for a variety of reasons. The first one is that the territorial extent of Dalriada is well in excess of the 1500 sq. km. Renfrew would argue that this does not pose a major problem since, "special environmental or social factors, or areas of uncultivable land" could influence the size of the E.S.M., and in certain situations the distance between central places

could range between 20 and 106 km. On this basis, the size of E.S.M's could range between 400 sq. km, and 10,000 sq. km. This latter point illustrates well that Renfrew's thesis on E.S.M.'s is largely untenable, since it is very difficult if not impossible, to envisage a similar political unit being able to administer both units. In the case of Argyll it might be anticipated that difficulties in communication between areas caused by the nature of the terrain, might lead to the existence of very small localised administrative units, rather than the extended Kingdom for which we have evidence.

The other main criticism which can be levelled against Renfrew's thesis is that it is somewhat naïve to anticipate an early political unit to be administered from a single centre. Much historical evidence can be cited which indicates that Kings were peripatetic, and ruled over their Kingdoms from a number of sites, around which they progressed. (cf. Alcock 1982). This will provide a major subject for discussion in Chapter Fifteen. Another means of controlling such a Kingdom was to have a hierarchy of Kings throughout the area. Thus there was probably one over-king of Dalriada, below which were the Kings of the various Cenéla. Such a hierarchy of authority would be the same as that which existed within Ireland (Ó'Corráin 1972: 28 f; 1979).

The institution of the office of Tánaise or heir designate, was probably also of major importance for the maintenance of political control over the Kingdom. This involved the naming of the successor within the King's lifetime, the major aim of which was to create a system of succession without strife. Whitaker has illustrated the existence of tanistry within

Dalriada, indicating that at least 10 of the Kings were succeeded in their own lifetime, while another 5 had co-Kings (1976). Goody had previously discussed this institution within the Kingdom, illustrating how it reduced the likelihood of strife among the many heirs of the lineage to which the ruler belonged, and also reduced the likelihood of inter-lineage conflict.

While considering how the early Kings of Dalriada controlled the whole of their Kingdom it is of importance to consider the role the early Church may have played. Discussion in Chapter Thirteen indicated that the early church may have encouraged rulers to record genealogies tracing their descent, these could provide lengthy detailed claims to office, and were useful in reducing conflict between various claimants to office. This could all be related to the Christian view of the sanctity of the office of Kingship. With the growing acceptance of Christianity, the backing of the church must have been an important factor for early Kings.

On a more practical level we must question whether the monastic establishments of Dalriada were deliberately located by the Kings of the Kingdom to strengthen their control of the Kingdom. Discussion in Chapter Twelve noted the various monasteries that existed within Dalriada no comment was made, however, about how the land was acquired upon which they were built. It is generally accepted that lands were granted to early ecclesiastics for the construction of monasteries by local rulers (cf. Thomas 1971, 33). Thus within Dalriada lands may have been given to the early church by the Kings. With this in mind it is of particular interest that so many of the

monasteries of Argyll lie on the fringes of the Kingdom, for example on Iona and Tiree. Granting of lands in such areas to the Church may have helped the Kings control such peripheral areas, since the ecclesiastics would then be sympathetic to them. Thus a form of "buffer zone" controlled by the early church for the Kings of Dalriada may have been deliberately created by the early Kings. The conflicting reference contained within Bede which suggests that Iona was given to Columba by the Picts rather than to Dalriadic Kings (cf. Chapter Thirteen) may reflect the fact that the Picts were disputing the location of the northern frontiers of Dalriada, rather than the fact that Iona was granted to Columba by them. This illustrates well the insecurity of frontier areas, and the difficulty the Dalriadic Kings must have had in controlling them.

The preceding discussion should not be taken to indicate that the internal political history of Dalriada was always peaceful. On the contrary there is much evidence to suggest various periods of internal conflict, some of which probably related to crises over succession. In 701 A.D., for example, the Annals of Ulster record the destruction of Dun Ollaigh by Selbach (Anderson 1922, 207). As Selbach was a King of the Cené1 Loairn, and Dun Ollaigh probably lay within Loairn territory, this must reflect conflict within this lineage. Similarly in 719 A.D. the Annals of Tigernach record the battle of Findglend which was fought between the two sons of Ferchar Fota (Anderson 1922, 218). The latter had been King of Dalriada between 685 and 696 A.D. (Anderson 1980, 228-9).

The individual divisions of the Kingdom were obviously not totally subsumed by the creation of the Kingdom of Dalriada.

The Cené1 nGabráin were the dominant group until the end of the 7th century when the Cené1 Loairn rose into ascendancy. In the late 8th and 9th centuries, however, the Cené1 nGabráin rose to power again. The period of the Cené1 nGabráin's dominance seems to have been peaceful within the Kingdom as a whole. In contrast the period of dominance of the Cené1 Loairn was marked by conflict within the Cené1 itself, but also by continued conflict with the Cené1 nGabráin. In 712 A.D., for example, the Annals of Ulster record the seige of Aberte by Selbach (Anderson 1922, 215). If Aberte has been correctly identified as Dunaverty in Kintyre, this indicates conflict between the Cenéla of Loairn and nGabráin. Similarly in 719 A.D. the Annals of Tigernach tell of the sea battle of Arrde-anesbi which took place between the tribe of Gabráin and Selbach with the tribe of Loarn (Anderson 1922, 219). Conflict between these two Cenéla occurred again in 727 A.D. (Anderson 1922, 223).

It is possible that some of this conflict was related to descendents of the original inhabitants of Argyll over whom the Dalriadic Kings established power. While these people seem initially not to have resisted the Dalriadic establishment it is possible that conflict occurred later when they have been subsumed into the new Kingdom. The view of themselves as a subject people may have provided a strong focus for any discontent.

It is clear, then, that internal conflict within and between the various Cenéla of Dalriada was a common occurrence. This made the task of Kingship at times onerous. The strength of the Kingship owed much to the personal strength of the individual King, those most effective being warrior-leaders. One of the most notable of the early Kings was Aedán, grandson

of Fergus Mór who was King from 574 A.D. to 608 A.D. He seems to have achieved the Kingship by force of arms, for in 574 A.D. the Annals of Tigernach tell of a battle in Kintyre in which many of the claimants of the Cené1 nGabraín were killed, including Duncan, the son of the last King Conall (Anderson 1922, 574-5). By removing his enemies in this manner Aedán was able to impose his authority upon the Kingdom, and during his reign no internal conflict is recorded. On this secure basis Aedán was able to engage in a variety of campaigns outside Dalriada, in each of which he appears as the aggressor. These campaigns ranged from the Isle of Man, the Orkneys, Ireland and Pictland. A major battle against the Northumbrians also occurred at the unidentified location of Degsastán in 603 A.D. (Bannerman 1971, 68; Duncan 1975, 43-4). Aedán's successors, by comparison, were weak and unable to prevent internal conflict within the Kingdom.

The unification of Pictland and Dalriada in the mid 9th century also came about as a result of the activities of a warrior King, Cinaed MacAlpin. He not only reasserted the position of the King of Dalriada after a lengthy period of Pictish involvement in the Kingdom, but also initiated the rise to power of the Cené1 nGabraín again.

In relation to the establishment of Dalriada, one major problem which has so far not been considered is that of language. It is frequently assumed that the introduction of Gaelic to Northern Britain came about as the result of the establishment of Dalriada (cf. Bannerman 1971, 66; Duncan 1975, 102). The question of what language was spoken in northern Britain prior to the Dalriadic establishment, or was spoken in Early Historic Pictland is still a matter of controversy (cf. Jackson 1955)

but it does appear to differ from Gaelic. Bede speaks of Pictish as a language distinct from Gaelic, Brittonic and English (H.E. I:I; III:6). Adomnan suggests in his Life of Columba that the saint needed the aid of an interpreter before he could converse with the Picts. (A:I:33; II:32). Columba appears only to have needed an interpreter when speaking to the Picts, which implies the inhabitants of Dalriada by and large spoke Gaelic. If this is a true reflection of the situation it implies that less than 100 years after the supposed establishment of the Kingdom many of its inhabitants spoke Gaelic. This, however, seems difficult to accept, since it allows a very short time in which for such a linguistic change to have occurred.

If the establishment of Dalriada did occur as the result of a dynastic transfer rather than military conquest the question of how such a new language was introduced becomes more complex. The use of a different language would have marked the infiltrating dynasty clearly as a distinct group, a situation which they may have wanted to avoid while they were initially establishing their position within the area.

Language provides an important means of defining status, and in a situation in which only a small Dalriadic dynasty moved to Northern Britain, they may have found it difficult to impose a new language upon the various groups who were subsumed within the Kingdom. The use of Gaelic as an official language of government may have aided its development, but even so its widespread adoption might be anticipated to have taken a considerable period of time.

The various problems inherent in the view that Gaelic was introduced by the Dalriadic settlers would be alleviated if the language was known and used within the area prior to 500 A.D. The latter may not be an unreasonable suggestion in view of the possibility that Irish were settled in northern Britain prior to this date.

On a general level, on the theme of new linguistic introductions, it is clear that little literature exists which critically assesses the mechanisms which allowed this to occur (here introduction as opposed to change within a pre-existing language is the key point). This being the case any analysis of the introduction of Gaelic to Dalriada becomes more difficult. The attribution of this simply to a migration of people from Ireland, however, seems over simplistic.

With the establishment of Fergus Mór in Scottish Dalriada we do not see the severing of links with Ireland. Instead contact was maintained throughout the Early Historic Period, and indeed throughout the Middle Ages and later as well. For a short while after the arrival of Fergus Mór the Kings of Scottish Dalriada also maintained rights over Irish Dalriada. During the reign of Aedán, however, the Convention of Druim Cett was called in Ireland. One result of this was to resolve differences between Scottish Dalriada and the Uí Néill dynasty about who could claim tribute and military service from Irish Dalriada (cf. Chapter Thirteen). As a result of this Scottish Dalriada was able to maintain the rights to tribute and ship service from Irish Dalriada. These rights were probably lost later under the reign of Donnall Brecc who was defeated by the Irish at Mag Rath in 639 A.D. (Bannerman 1974, 102). Even

after this though, contact with Ireland did not end. On the expulsion of Ainfcellach son of Ferchar from the Kingship of Scottish Dalriada in 698 A.D., for example, he was taken bound to Ireland (Anderson 1922, 206).

The Senchus Fer nAlban suggests that the Cenél Loairn may have been able to levy 100 men from the 'Airgialla' for their military musters (Bannerman 1974, 49). These may have been members of the 'Airgialla' of Ireland who were a number of vassal states occupying central and south Ulster which had been set up in the 5th century.⁽¹⁾ Despite the loss of other claims to military dues from Ireland, this link with the 'Airgialla' would seem to have been maintained throughout the Kingdom's history. When Cinaed Mac Ailpin decided to obtain aid to strengthen the Kingdom of Dalriada in 836 A.D., he offered an invitation to Gofraith son of Fergus, who was a Lord of the Irish Airgialla. It is of particular interest that in this instance a member of the Cenél nGabraín could request such assistance, indicating that this was no longer a claim associated specifically with the Cenél Loairn.

To summarize this chapter has summarized the main historical problems associated with the Kingdom of Dalriada and on occasion offered reassessments and new perspectives on the available evidence. It is argued that the Dalriadic establishment may have been the result of a genealogical transfer to Northern Britain. The process of establishment may have been a protracted affair which involved intermarriage with the local lineages which allowed them eventually to establish a position of power within the area. The tripartite division of the Kingdom may reflect the former existence of three political

groupings within the area, over which the Dalriadic Kings established control. The Dalriadic establishment would have been aided by the prior existence within the area of a population of Irish descent, or sympathetic to such establishment. In view of the close proximity of Northern Ireland and Argyll it would seem that close links had been established between the two areas from an early date. Once established within the area the Kings of Dalriada may have taken various deliberate actions in an attempt to control their sizeable new Kingdom. Despite these measures, however, conflict was a frequent occurrence within the area, this well illustrates the need for defended settlements.

Chapter Fourteen: Footnotes.

(1) Airgialla has been suggested to be related to the Irish for 'hostage-givers' (O'Rahilly 1946, 224). As such, as Bannerman points out (1974,115) the name might have also been given to a group of indigenous people in Scotland over whom the Cenél Loairn established power. Bannerman, however, believes it is more likely that it is the Irish Airgialla who are being referred to here.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND TO THE KINGDOM OF DALRIADA: PROBLEMS AND REASSESSMENTS

Preceding discussion in the present work has considered the historical background of Argyll in the first millennium A.D., and the problems inherent in our understanding and interpretation of this. The various archaeological evidence for settlement and activity in the area in the period up until the arrival of the Norse has also been considered in detail. The aim of this chapter is to consider the archaeological evidence in greater detail in order to consider how it might broaden our understanding of the Kingdom of Dalriada.

The first question it is of importance to examine from an archaeological viewpoint is that of when the first Irish settlers moved to Northern Britain. The preceding chapter suggested that the Dalriadic establishment in Argyll may have been the product of a dynastic transfer from Irish Dalriada. As such it may have been a protracted affair. It was also argued that this establishment would have been much easier if an Irish group were already settled in Argyll.

Warner has recently presented archaeological evidence which he believes may indicate the movement of peoples between Ireland and northern Britain prior to 500 A.D. (1983). The main evidence for this argument is drawn from an analysis of various pieces of decorative metalwork for which Irish origins are suggested. He divides this material into two main groups. The first he terms 'Early Iron Age 1' (hereafter E.I.A.1). This can be related to La Tène metalwork, which begins to appear in Ireland in the 3rd century B.C. A

A characteristic feature of this is three dimensional art, both cast and repoussé. Around the 1st century A.D. a new style is introduced whose characteristic features include thin 'trumpets', 'lenticoid' bosses, raised septa and ribs, and the contouring and lapping of ribs and trumpet tails. This group of material Warner terms 'Early Iron Age 2' (E.I.A.2). This may have been current until the 4th century A.D.

The products of 'E.I.A.1' appear in two North British 'streams'. The first is northwards along the western coast of Scotland to the Orkneys, the second is in the region between the Tyne and Forth (Fig. 59). Examples of products include the spear-butt from Harray, Orkney and ring-headed pins from Coll and Skye (Fig. 60). In all eight examples of this group of metalwork have been identified.

The products of 'E.I.A.2' are found further south (Fig. 59). Examples of this group include bone combs from East Lothian, and Renfrewshire, a bronze ball from Lanarkshire, a bronze collar from Peebleshire and a silver bar from Traprain. (Figs. 61, 62, 63, 64). Again the number of artefacts belonging to this group is less than 10.

Warner argues that many of these pieces of metalwork (and presumably also the bone-work) were the product of Irish craftsmen, although some of the products of the second group show signs of local North British manufacture. This, he states, may be indicative of the presence of Irish craftsmen in North Britain working alongside, or copying local craftsmen.

The first question which Warner's arguments raise is to what extent his belief that the artefacts he considers

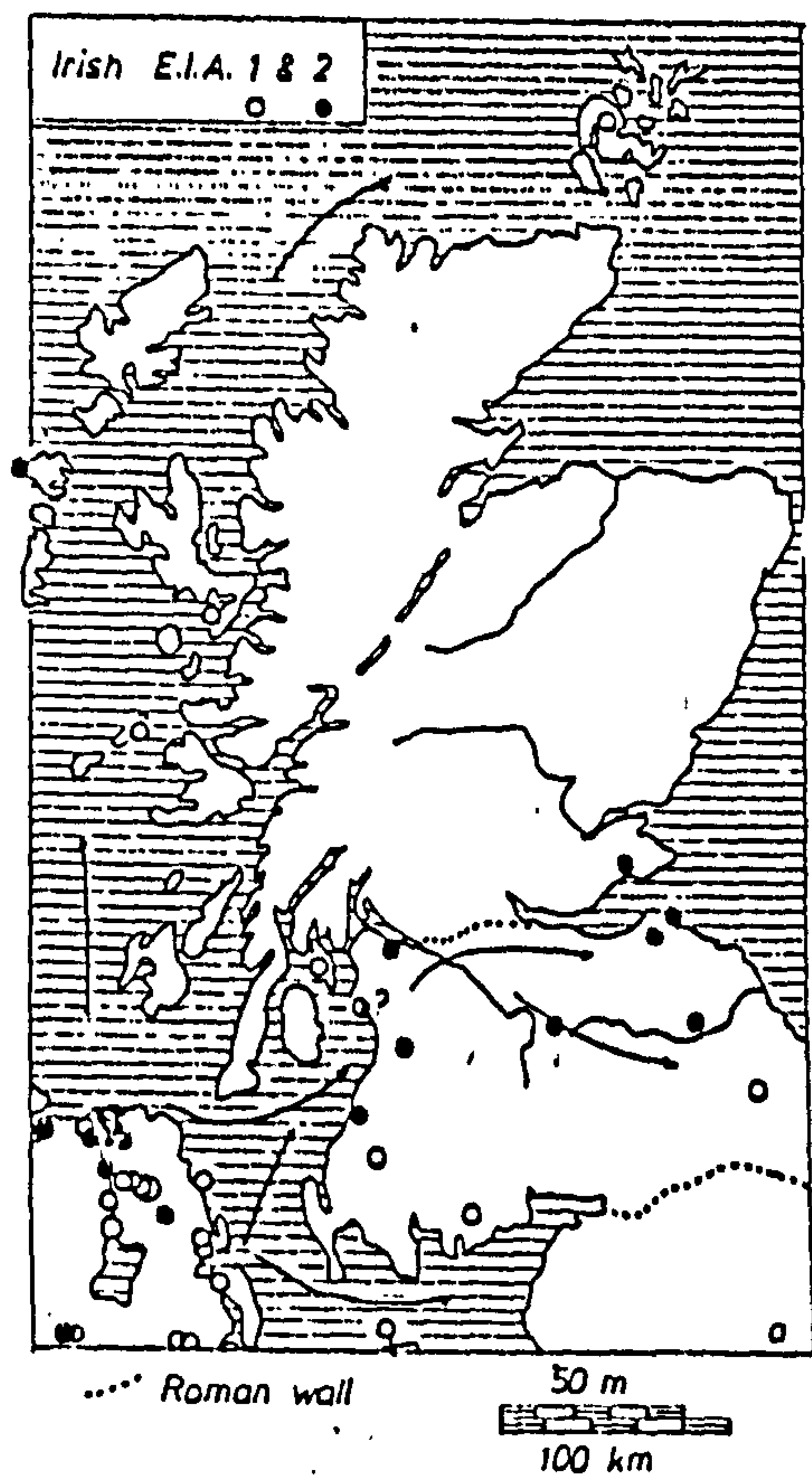
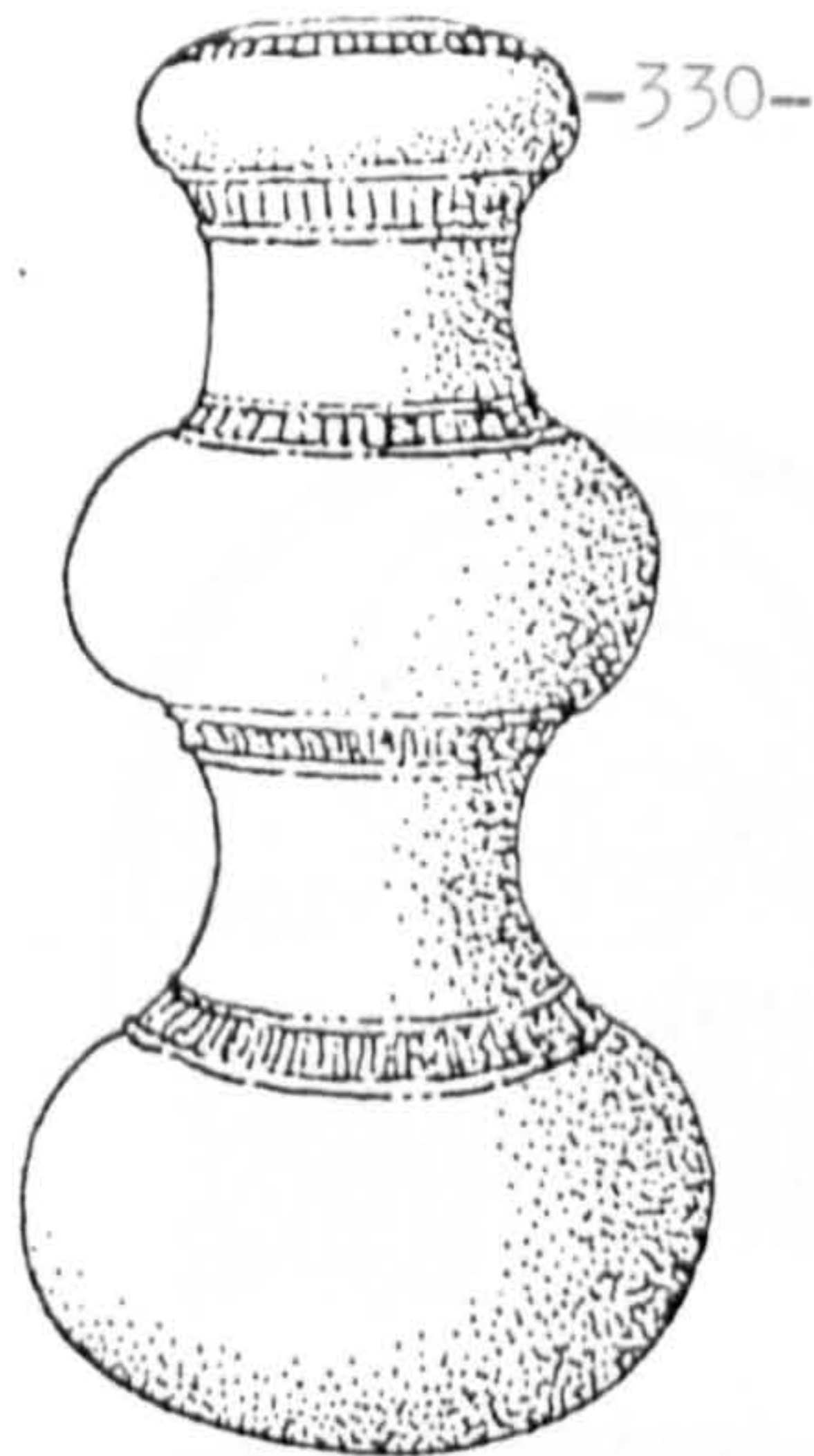


Fig.59 The distribution of artefacts belonging to or influenced
by EIA 1 and EIA 2 in Northern Britain.

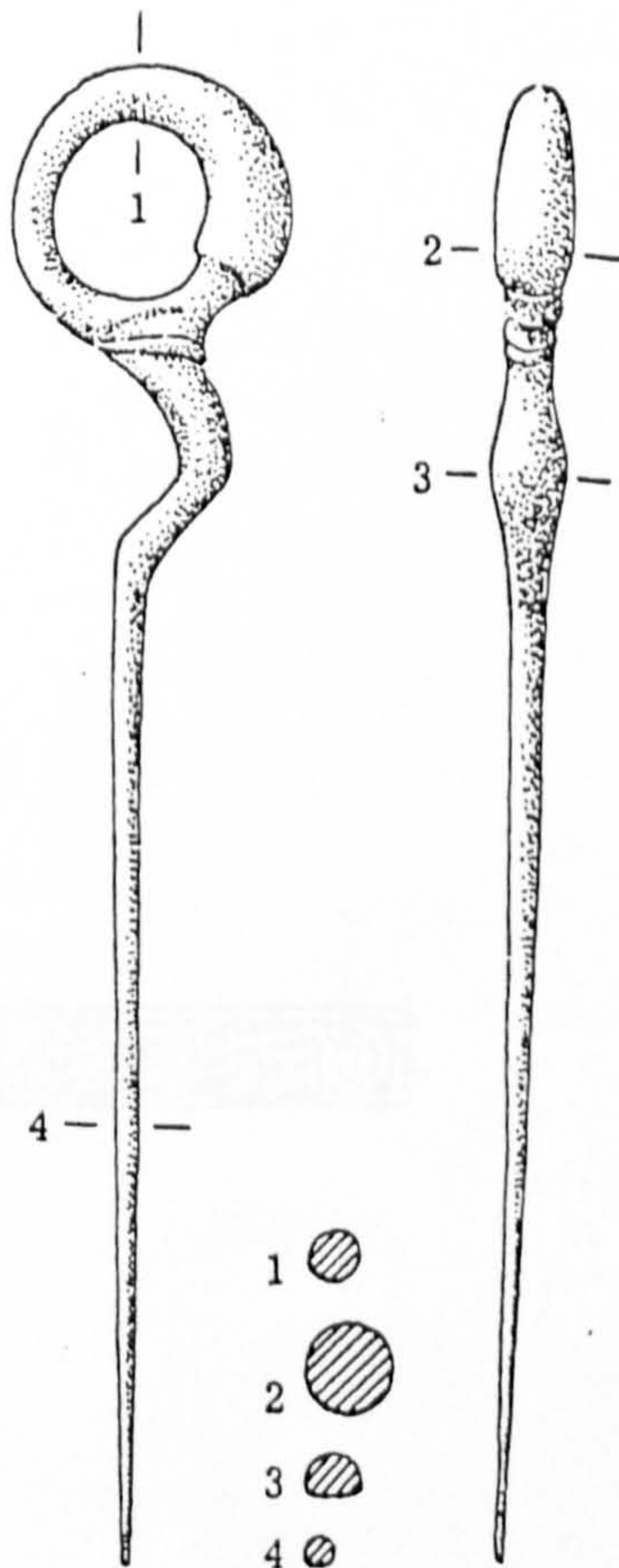
(from Warner 1983)



Bronze spear butt, Harray, Orkney.

measurements 4.3 x 8.5 cm.

(Macgregor 1976 : 179)

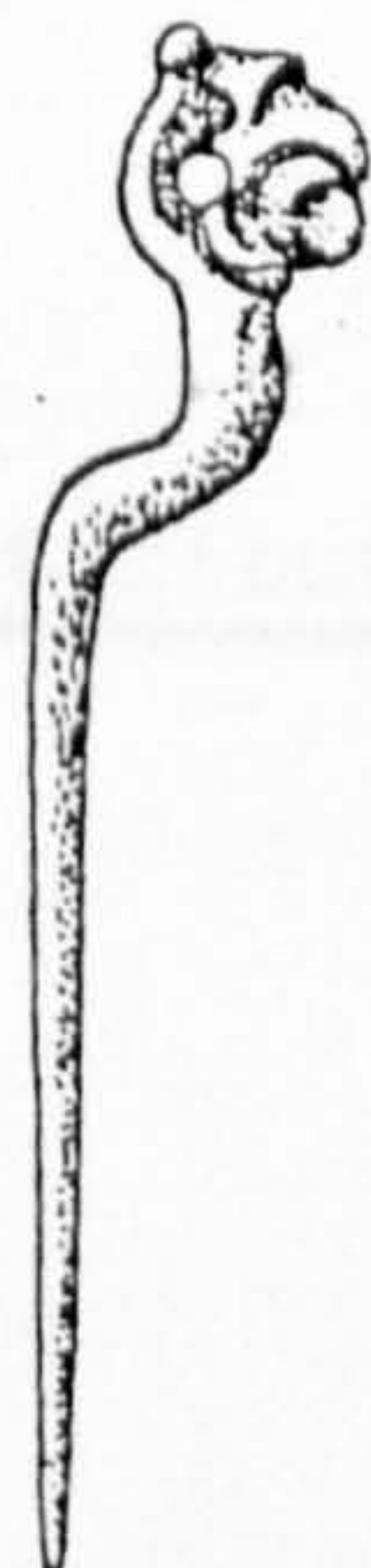


Bronze ring-headed pin,

Sasaig, Skye.

measurments : length 14cm.

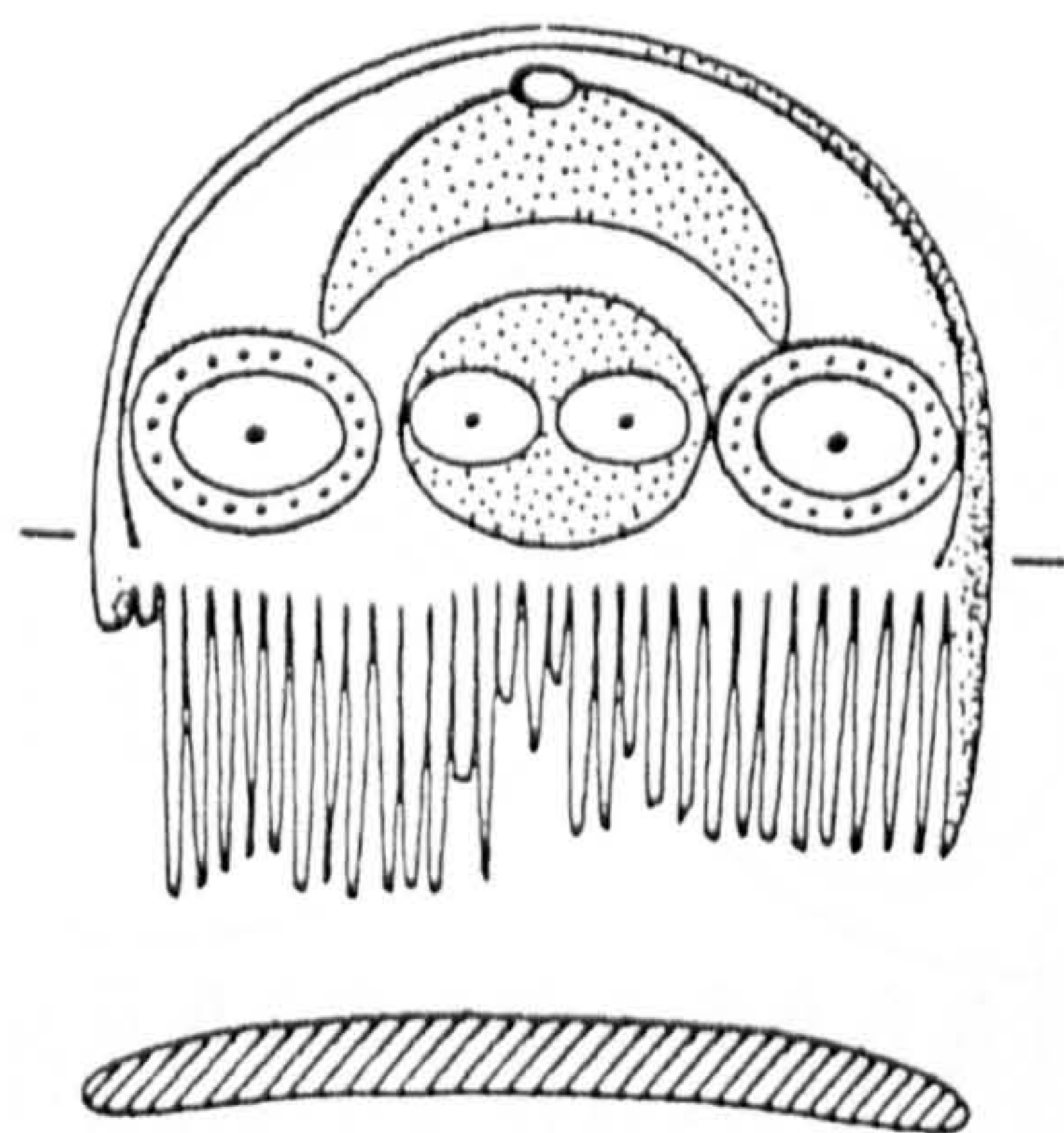
(Macgregor 1976; 266)



Bronze ring-headed pin, Island
of Coll, Argyll.

measurments, length 7.1cm.

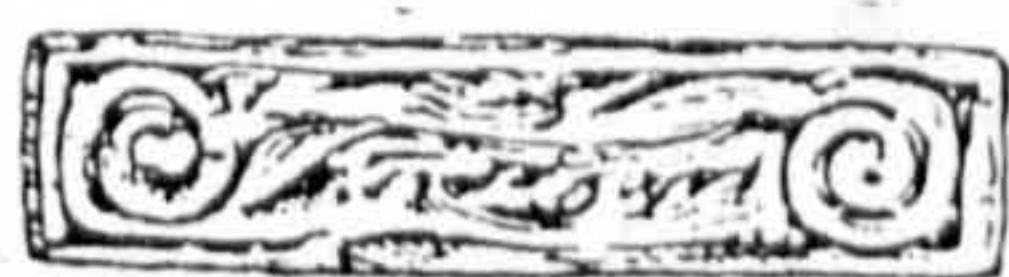
(Macgregor 1976 :265)



Bone Comb, Seacliff,
East Lothian.

measurements 5.5.x 5.2.cm.

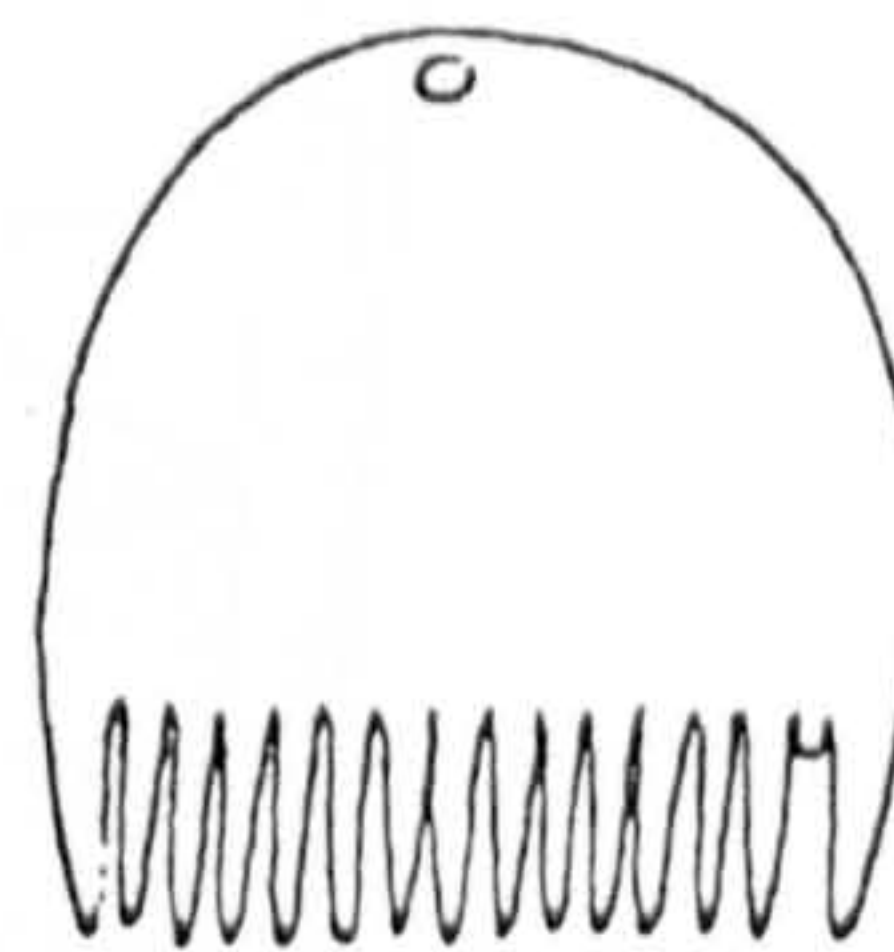
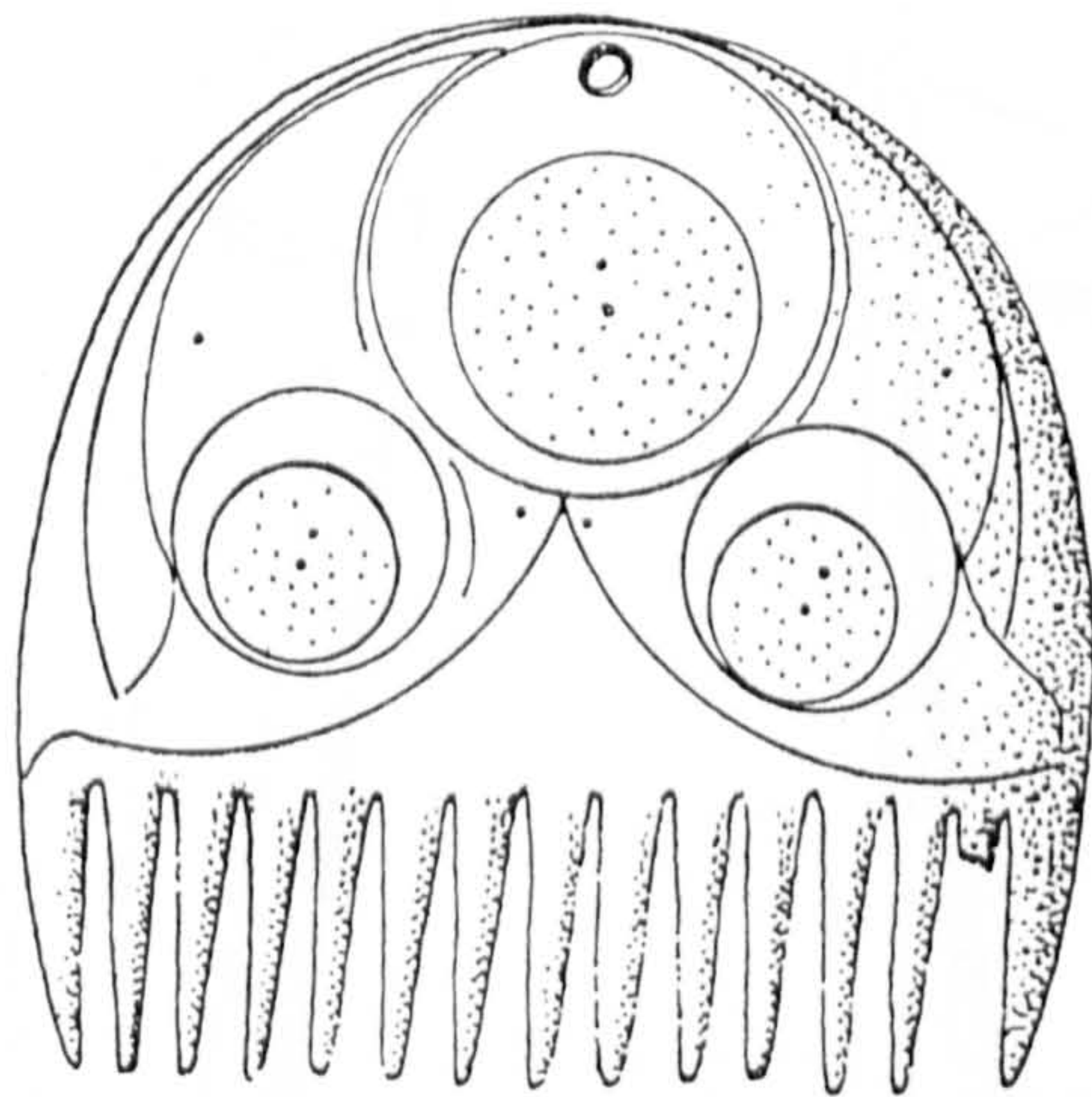
(Macgregor 1976 :274)



Silver Bar, Traprain, East
Lothian.

Scale 1:1

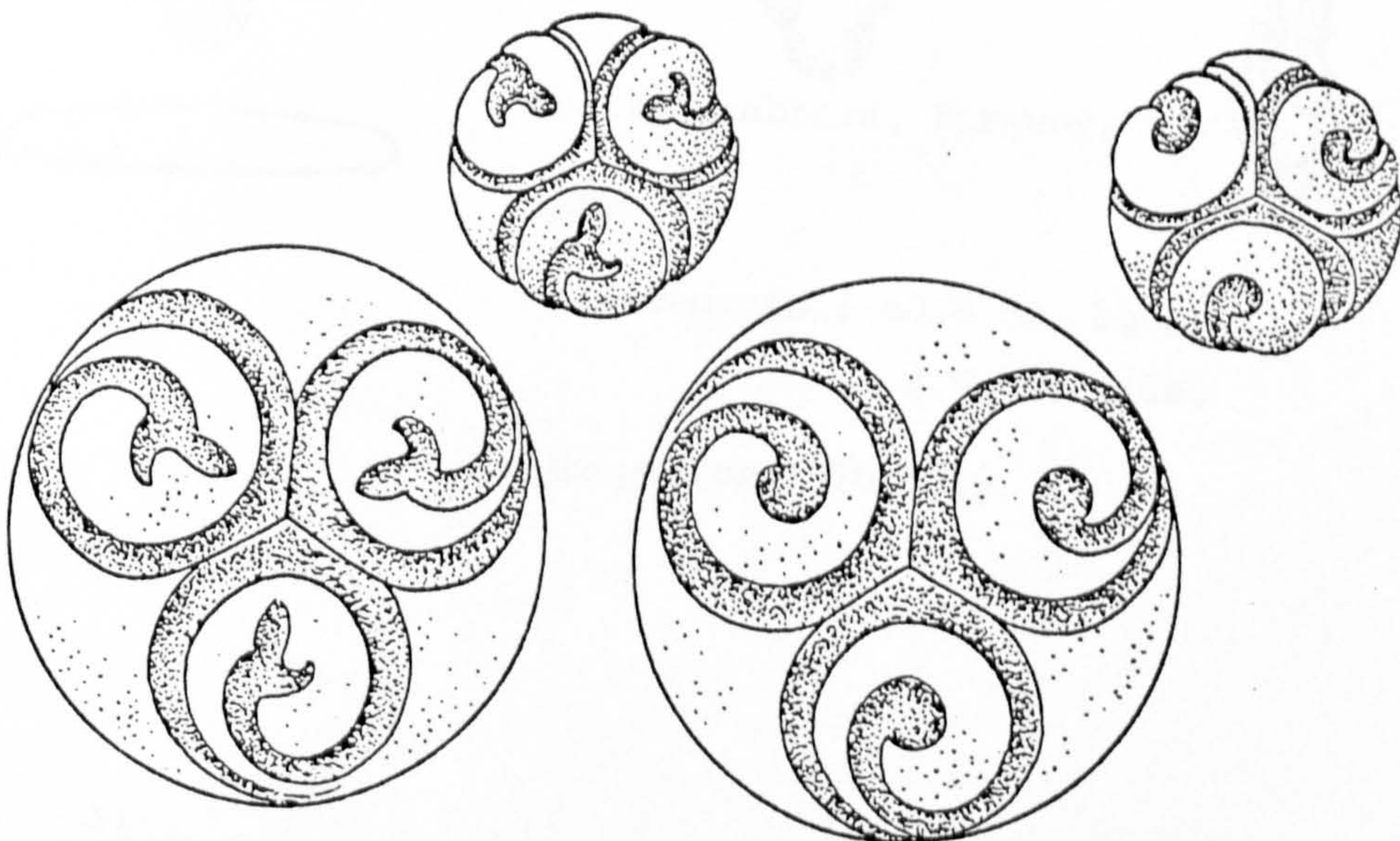
(Curle 1920)



Bone Comb, Langbank,
Renfrewshire.

measurements 3.6 x 3.8cm.

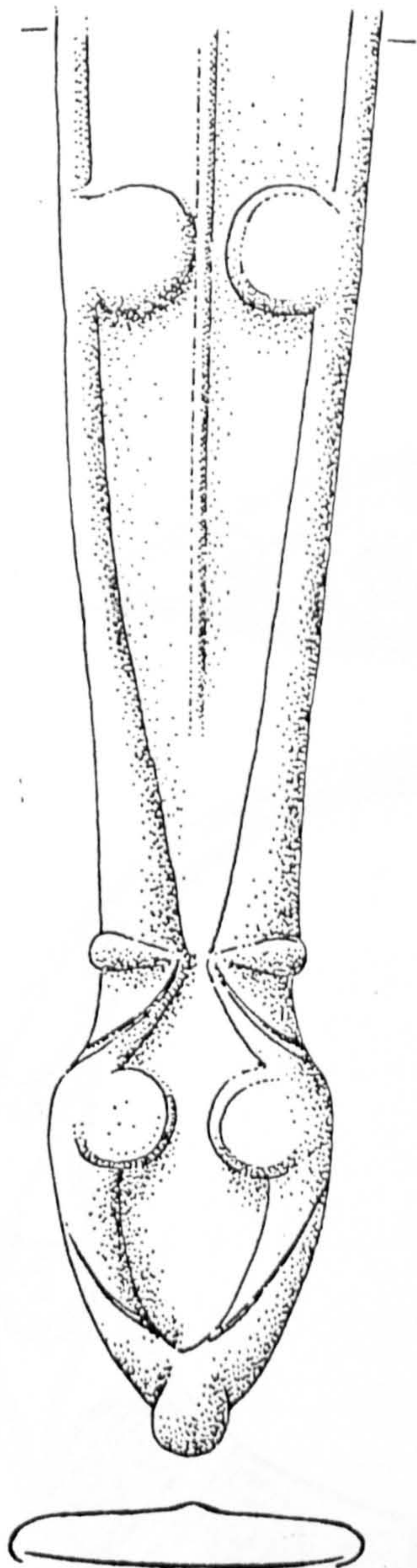
(Macgregor 1976 :275)



Cast Bronze Ball, Walston, Lanarkshire.

diameter 3.7 cm.

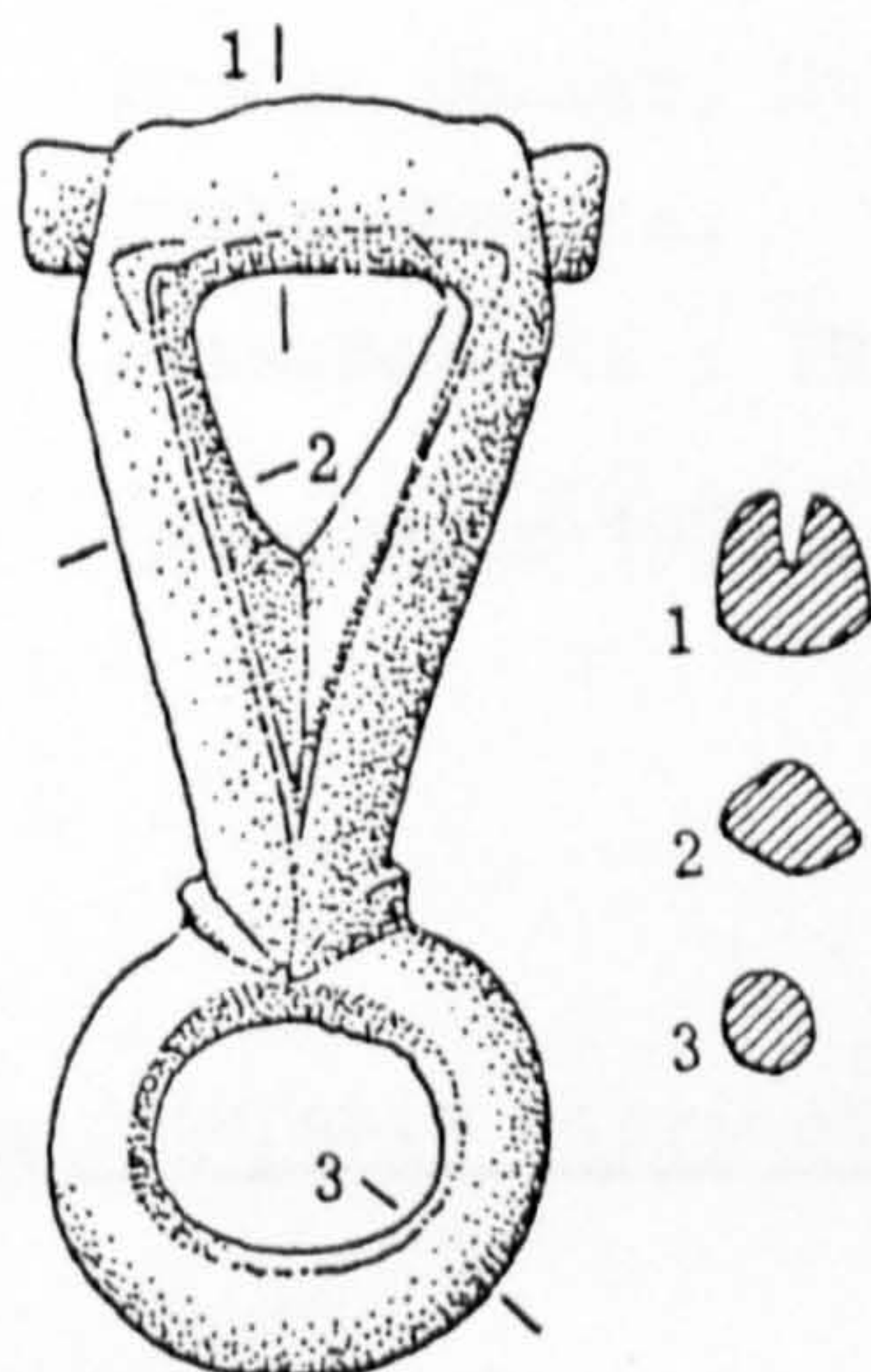
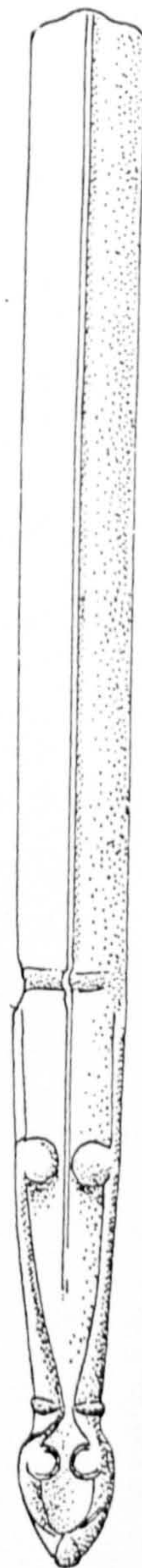
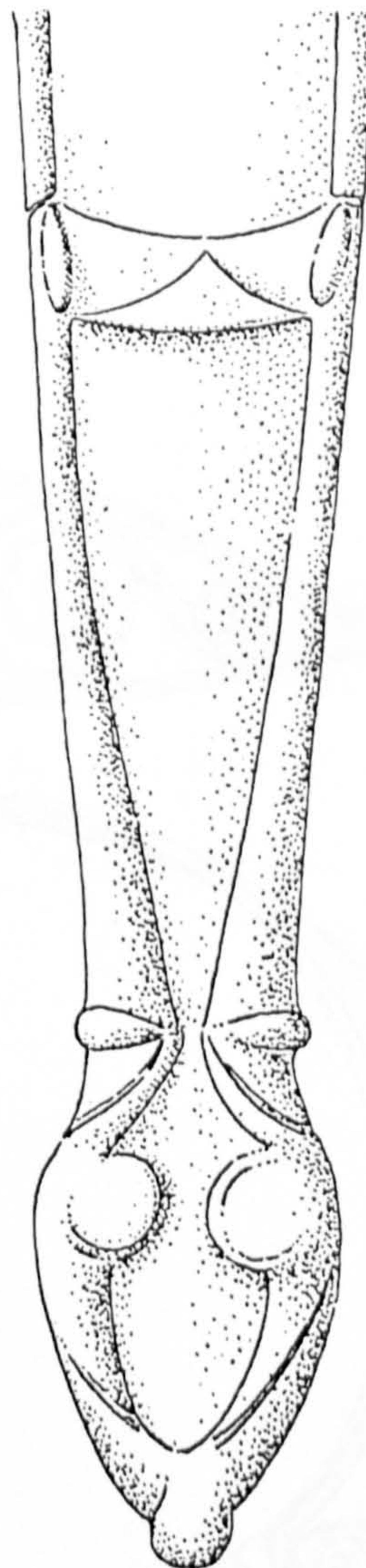
(Macgregor 1976 :350)



Bronze Scabbard, Bargany,
Ayrshire.

measurements : 60.8 cm. long,
4.5.cm. wide.

(Macgregor 1976:140)



Whale Bone -Mirror Handle?
Bac Mhic Connain, Vallay,
North Uist.

measurments : 3.6 x 7.8 cm.

(Macgregor 1976 :271)



Bronze Collar, Stichill,
Roxburghshire.
measurements : 19.4 x 18 cm.
(Macgregor 1976 :210)

are Irish is correct. While it is true that many of the decorative elements and forms of these artefacts can be paralleled in Ireland, this need not imply that they were produced there. It is clear that in other periods such as the Bronze Age and Early Historic Periods interchange of art styles between Ireland and the British Isles was common. It would seem reasonable to see the artefacts Warner discusses as a reflection of such an exchange of artistic styles in the Iron-Age. This obviously requires some form of contact between the areas for ideas to be transmitted, but there is no reason why this should actually mean large movements of people.

If the view that these are products of Ireland is maintained, alternative explanations for their presence in Northern Britain can be put forward. Most of the examples Warner cites are heavily decorated, and obviously the product of skilled craftsmen. As such it may be that they were goods produced in limited quantities and for specific purposes. Their presence in North Britain may reflect trade or gift-exchange between areas. This could be supported by the fact that many of the artefacts were obviously designed for display, good examples being the Stichill Collar, and the Bargany scabbard. This explanation would again require contact between the areas, but again need not be indicative of settlement of Irish in North Britain.

Thus it would seem that although archaeological evidence might indicate contact between Ireland and Northern Britain between the 1st century B.C. and the 4th century A.D. this cannot be taken necessarily to indicate settlement by Irish.

The suggestion that it may be possible to identify migratory groups on the basis of associated groups of material culture has also come into question recently. It is becoming increasingly clear that the equation of a distinct material culture with a distinct people, in the manner postulated, for example, by Childe (1956, 16) is untenable since it presents an over simplistic view of the relationship between societies and material culture. This has been discussed recently by Duncan (1982; Forthcoming). Recent work by Hodder has indicated the complexities which may exist in the patterns of usage of material culture (1982). Often archaeologists have considered that material culture is a passive reflection of the people using it. Hodder's work indicates that instead it should be seen to have an active role, and it can be used to structure relationships and interaction between individuals and societies.

A recent analysis of the material culture of Scottish Dalriada and that of her British neighbours in Strathclyde and Rheged demonstrated that there was no significant difference in the material cultures of these areas (Duncan 1982). This suggested that the Dalriadic Scots had not brought a distinct material culture with them, but instead had adopted the pre-existing material culture of the area to which they moved.⁽¹⁾ The latter may not have been different from that of their homeland anyway, since the similarity of artefactual material inferred the existence of a common cultural tradition extending over Ireland, Scottish Dalriada, Strathclyde and Rheged. It may well also extend over Pictland as well, although Duncan's examination of the material culture did not extend that far.

In the present context further detailed discussion of possible archaeologically identifiable links with Ireland (or indeed their absence) will not aid our understanding of the internal workings of the Kingdom of Dalriada. Instead the archaeological evidence for settlement hierarchies and political control within the Kingdom will be considered in more detail.

Preceding chapters outlined the types of sites which were being used during the Early Historic Period. These included large defended sites such as Dunadd and Dun Ollaigh, various of the other defended sites, including crannogs and duns. In addition to these a range of much less substantially constructed settlements of round and rectangular houses may also have been in use.

To begin with it seems of importance to consider the possible relationship of these types of settlement to the civil survey of 'tige' contained within the Senchus Fer nAlban. If we are correct in assuming that a 'tige.' represents the household and land of a single freeman (cf. Chapter Thirteen) then some equation might be anticipated between this listing, and the number of duns and crannogs in Argyll since the latter have been interpreted as defended homesteads occupied by single family units. (cf. Chapters Seven and Nine).

The following table presents a comparison of the number of 'tige' belonging to each of the three major Cenéla, and the number of small defended sites within the extent of territory accorded to each of these groups by Bannerman. (2)

	Brochs	Duns	Crannogs	' <u>Tige</u> ' listed in <u>Senchus Fer nAlban</u>
<u>Cené1</u> nOengusa	2	51	11	350 or 430
	$\xi 64$			
<u>Cené1</u> Loarn	2	124	31	225 or 420
	$\xi 157$			
<u>Cené1</u> nGabraín	-	86	5	560
	$\xi 91$			

Obviously there are many problems inherent in the presentation of such a comparison. The major one would be that the precise territorial extents of the three groups are not well defined, also the various types of site are not clearly defined, (cf. Chapters Six to Eight) and we cannot be sure that all such sites were occupied at the same time. The presentation does, however, make a useful general point in illustrating clearly that there is no obvious relationship between the number of defended sites and the Senchus Fer nAlban listings. In the case of the Cené1 nGabraín, for example, the number of 'tige' listed is six times greater than the number of defended sites. It is difficult to envisage a situation in which six times as many defended sites as those presently identified may have existed in Cené1 nGabraín territory. The majority of these sites were massively constructed, and would only disappear without trace if extensively robbed.⁽³⁾ Even in the latter instance their former existence may well be revealed by robber trenches, and discarded debris. Hence the pattern of settlement represented by those sites presently identified, may be a reasonably accurate reflection of the original state of affairs. Even if the various larger forts of these areas;

which may actually have been declining in usage, were included in the above table, a major discrepancy would still exist. In the case of the Cenél nOengusa, for example, their inclusion would raise the total number of defended sites to only 90. This must lead to a closer examination of to what the listing of 'tige' in the Senchus Fer nAlban actually refers.

It is generally accepted that the Senchus Fer nAlban listing provides details of the tribute which a King of Dalriada could expect to levy from the Kingdom. Clientage was a basic underpinning of Early Historic Society, and it is likely that the majority of inhabitants of Dalriada were engaged in such a relationship. Clientage permeated all levels of society, nobles had dependents drawn from the ranks of commoners, while they may themselves be clients of more powerful nobility. Kings also were allied to one another, and their nobility via such ties. The Senchus Fer nAlban listing presumably reflects all the settlement units upon which tribute could be levied. If this is indeed the case it becomes hardly surprising that the number of defended houses and the listing do not correspond, since these sites may well have been occupied by persons of significant social status, who had clients of their own from whom they could levy tribute (cf. Chapters Seven and Nine). The number of persons of such social status would have been small compared to the total population figures. Thus then, the Senchus Fer nAlban list supports previous arguments that the inhabitants of such defended sites were of high social status. It is also clear from this that a large proportion of settlements occupied in Dalriada have not been located. This makes it all the more

imperative that the types of settlement discussed in Chapter Eleven, which may well form part of this missing element, should be sought and examined in more detail.

Further comparison of the two listings illustrates well that the proportions of defended sites to the 'tige' varies from area to area. This is best portrayed in tabular form:-

	Defended Sites*		<u>'tige'</u> listed in <u>Senchus Fer nAlban</u>
<u>CENÉL</u> nOengusa	1	:	5.4 or 6.7
<u>CENÉL</u> Loairn	1	:	1.4 or 2.6
<u>CENÉL</u> nGabráin	1	:	6

(*duns, crannogs and brochs)

It is clear from the above that there is a closer correspondence between the number of defended settlements, and the number of 'tige' in the territory of the Cenél Loairn. Various reasons for this state of affairs could be offered. It may be related to the internal history of the Cenél Loairn. Discussion in Chapter Fourteen indicated that much of the history of the Cenél Loairn was marked by internal conflict. It is possible that within the territories of the Cenél the hierarchy of authority was less rigid than elsewhere. This being the case, it may be that more of the upper classes here could define their position by the construction of defended homesteads of some kind. The continued strife between the various constituent groups of the area, indeed, may have made defended settlements particularly desirable.

An alternative explanation might be that the Senchus Fer nAlban listing is an incomplete record of the number of 'tige'

existent in the area. Several lineages existed in relation to the Cenél Loairn, and it is possible that the 'tige' associated with one or more of these was not included in the document for some reason.

The third major issue which must be examined in this chapter, is what the archaeological evidence can tell us about the nature of royal control and administration over Dalriada.

During the Early Historic Period, Kings were probably peripatetic and rather than being based in one centre, they and their households progressed around their territories. Alcock has recently discussed the evidence for this in northern Britain (1982) while Hill has mapped the evidence for royal itineraries in middle and late Saxon England (1981, 82-91). The reasons for such royal progresses are various. The major one must have been to maintain control throughout a large territorial extent. By physically presenting themselves to as many of the inhabitants of their Kingdom as possible, their claims to Kingship could be widely displayed. This may have been an important key in their maintenance of power and position. Within Dalriada this must have necessitated royal possession of a fleet of ships suitable for the transportation of the Kings and their entourage around the area. The other major reason for such progresses (which is closely linked to the former suggestion) relates to royal collection of tribute owed to him. As King of Dalriada, a leader could expect to exact tribute from the inhabitants of the Kingdom. The ability to exact such tribute was a further mark of the power and position of the ruler. For this system to operate

fully, however, this tribute had to be seen to be collected. Perhaps consumed would be a better phrase to use here, since it is most likely that the tribute levied took the form of agricultural produce. Within Dalriada the development of a royal progress around the Kingdom to collect and consume such tribute was probably imperative. It would have been unreasonable to expect distant clients to happily transport their tribute long distances to a single royal centre. This would have greatly increased the sense of burden placed by such exaction. Thus maintenance of power may have necessitated the movement of the royal party. To ensure this system worked effectively it is probable that a number of fixed centres were established around the Kingdom for such tribute collection and consumption. Royal progresses around these centres would then, presumably, be spaced out over the course of the year.

It would seem likely that the supposed royal defended sites were used as centres for such peripatetic Kingship. Indeed evidence from excavations could be used to support such argument. The animal bones from Dun Ollaigh, for example, included only cattle, sheep, goat and pig. The absence of wild species - fish, fowl and deer - could lead to the interpretation of this material as the product of renders of domesticated animals. (L. Alcock, pers. comm.).

It is difficult to assess how many centres like this may have existed around the Kingdom, but certainly the four sites identified from documentary sources would seem insufficient to serve the needs of the whole Kingdom. Under

such circumstance no provision would have been made for the islands which formed part of the Kingdom. With this in mind it would seem all the more likely that sites such as Dùn na Murgheidh on Mull, and Dun Nosbridge and Dun Guaidhre on Islay (cf. Chapter Ten) should be considered as similar to identified Early Historic Forts. In addition to these sites might also be anticipated on Coll and Tiree, and in Ardnamurchan and Cowal.

Once established such royal centres probably also served other important functions. The Kings may have used them as centres for vital activities such as feasting - an important means whereby they could demonstrate their largesse, and hence impress their status upon surrounding communities. They also provided centres at which other administrative and legal functions could be performed. In the case of Dunadd it has also been noted that it provided a centre at which the Kings of Dalriada may have been inaugurated.

The site of Dunadd has been extensively excavated, and artefactual evidence can be used to illustrate the type of activities which were occurring at this site (cf. Chapter Ten). It is of importance to consider the role of the site in more detail here.

Some of the activities which were occurring at Dunadd may have been based upon the role of the site as a tribute collection centre. Hence leather and bone working may, for example, have developed as a result of the animals being brought to the site as tribute. The working of antler suggests the animals themselves were brought to the site, rather than just meat (assuming that if the latter were the

case the heads may have been previously discarded since they are not related to prime joints). The numerous quern-stones from the site may also reflect the processing of cereal grains taken there.

The presence of some weaponry on the site may also reflect the involvement of people in hunting. The latter pastime may have been associated with feasting activities.

Some of the antler being worked on the site may also reflect these hunting activities if it originated from Wild animals.

The leather-working on the site may also reflect the military importance of the site. Leather could be used to provide a range of pieces of military equipment ranging from shields and light armour to knife sheaths. While the King was present at the site he would probably be surrounded by his personal retinue of warriors to whom he might grant weaponry and armour. The site may also have served a function as a gathering point for the larger exacted military units which the Kings could raise from the Kingdom (cf. Chapter Thirteen).

Other types of craft-work which were being undertaken at Dunadd are not so easily explained since they are not primarily related to rendered tribute. The key to understanding the concentration of highly skilled craftsmen producing fine metalwork, in particular jewellery, may be the site's royal associations. The ability to control the production of such specialised and presumably, highly valued artefacts such as fine jewellery could have been important in enhancing the power of the ruler. By controlling the production of such artefacts the King would also be able to control their

distribution through society. This again was probably important for the maintenance of royal power.

The gathering together of craftsmen in this manner was not isolated to Dalriada. In 1963 Alcock discussed the concentration of craftsmen at the fortified site of Dinas Powys in Wales at a similar time (1963, 30-55).

Hodges, notes other examples from throughout Europe; Charlemagne, for example, collected his Rhineland potters into craft villages (1982, 163). The gathering together of craft-workers in this way also may have been beneficial for them. Some of the skills were inter-dependent; glass was being worked into inlays, but also fine beads. More specialists may have developed within such a centre, since individual craftsmen were not having to go through all the stages of production themselves, instead each stage may have been the preserve of an individual.⁽⁵⁾

Artefacts such as fine jewellery would have been of use to the Kings for gift-exchange and gift-giving. In Early Historic Society the ability to provide valuable gifts to one's followers and allies was important. This is well illustrated in the Anglo-Saxon poem, Beowulf, in which King Scyld was specifically described as the distributor of rings (Swanton 1978, 37).

At Dunadd the main artefacts being made were penannular brooches. This is clearly indicated by the vast quantities of clay mould debris found on the site in the various excavations. The specific production of this type of brooch is also of interest, since there is evidence to suggest that such brooches may have had an important role in the display of status within society. It is surely no

coincidence that in a depiction of Christ's arrest at Gethsemane on an Irish high cross at Monasterboice, Christ wears a penannular brooch. The cross is thought to date to the late 9th or early 10th centuries (Macalister 1949) (Fig. 65). In such a case it is argued that the brooches were being worn to display a social position which was defined by other means - possession of them would not establish such status.

If the production and distribution of this type of fine jewellery was being controlled by the royal house of Dalriada, then the occurrence of such artefacts on other sites is of particular interest since it would seem to suggest links with the royal sites. Recent work indicates that the penannular brooch from Kildonan Bay Dun, Kintyre is of importance to the present argument since it was probably a product of the Dunadd craftsmen. A mould for a similar, if not the same brooch has been produced by Lane's recent work at Dunadd (Fig. 66).⁽⁴⁾ (H.B. Duncan, pers. comm.) This may reflect the importance of the site of Kildonan, since its inhabitants were able to obtain such artefacts.

The penannular brooch from the crannog of Loch Glashan may also indicate the importance of the crannog-dwellers. There is no evidence to suggest that it was a product of the Dunadd craftsmen, but it would appear to date to the same period as the Dunadd brooches (Scott 1960, 1961).

While it may have been an aim of the Kings of Dalriada to control all specialised craft production to enhance their own position, there is evidence that some craftsmen may have been working elsewhere. Small clay crucibles like those from Dunadd, which are normally seen as being associated with the



Fig.65 Christ's Arrest at Gethsemane. A depiction from Muiredach's
Cross, Monasterboice, Ireland. (from De Paor 1958)

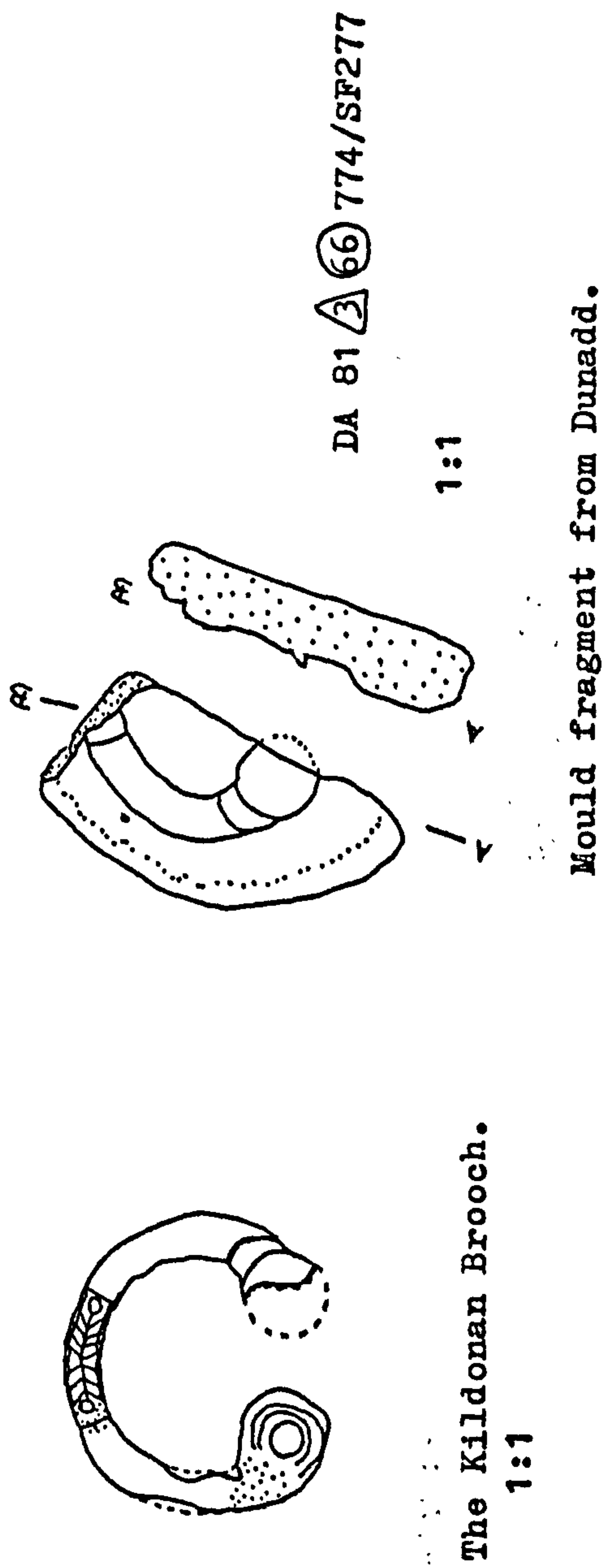


Fig. 66 The comparison between the Kildonan brooch and mould fragment from Dunadd.
(illustration courtesy of H.B.Duncan)

melting of small quantities of precious metals (cf. Duncan 1982, II: 55-58; Alcock 1963, 140 f) have been found at other sites in Dalriada. These sites include Kildonan Dun, Kintyre (Fairhurst 1939) Ardifuir Dun, Mid-Argyll (Christison 1904) Dun Ollaigh (Alcock 1979) Brouch an Drummin (Cregeen, pers. comm.) and St. Columba's cave (Campbell and Young 1975). At none of these sites, however, is such production on anything like the scale of that represented at Dunadd.

The importance of Dunadd may also have been reflected by the occurrence of various imported artefacts. Fragments of Merovingian glass occur, and probably reached the site in a broken form as cullet for use as inlays in the fine metal-work being produced, as well as in the manufacture of glass beads. There is also evidence for the importation of fine wheel-thrown pottery. Sherds of a minimum of 20-30 vessels of E-ware have been produced. (H.B. Duncan, pers. comm.). This probably originated in Northern or Western France. A single sherd of D-ware is also recorded. This may have originated in the Bordeaux region of France (cf. Chapter Ten).

The control occurrence of this imported material at Dunadd may indicate that the Early Historic Kings were also specifically controlling the importation of such objects. Again to be seen controlling such external contact may have been of importance in illustrating the power of the Kings. With this in mind it is of interest to note a reference in Adomnan's Life of Columba to the presence of Gallic sailors at the chief place of the district. (A:I:28). This has been taken to be Dunadd, (cf. Doherty 1980; Thomas 1982) although

the site is not specifically named. Alcock has put forward an alternative suggestion that it might equally well have been Dun Ollaigh (1981). It may have been relatively easy for rulers to control such external contact, since the foreign sailors who arrived with these cargoes could be seen as kinless men who were in a potentially vulnerable position. It was then possible for a King to extend royal protection over such persons, in effect taking on the role of their absent kindred.

Imported pottery occurs on other defended settlements in Argyll. (cf. Chapters Seven and Nine). It is unlikely that the inhabitants of these sites had direct access to the foreign contacts which introduced the pottery. Instead the distribution of this pottery may be a further example of royal control. Hence its occurrence on other defended sites may again illustrate the status of the inhabitants of these sites.

In the present context it would also be of value to consider the distribution of sherds of E-ware in northern Britain. Throughout the British Isles, the majority of this pottery is found on the west coast, indicating that its importation was associated with the Celtic communities which existed in these areas. In north Britain in contrast, several examples of E-ware have been identified in the east in Pictland (Thomas 1981)(Fig. 67). Since these are the only sherds to have been found in the east of the British Isles it is unlikely that they are representative of "trade" along the east coast. (contra Duncan 1982, II: 2.4). A more satisfactory explanation of its occurrence may be that it represents trade or gift exchange between Dálriada and Pictland.

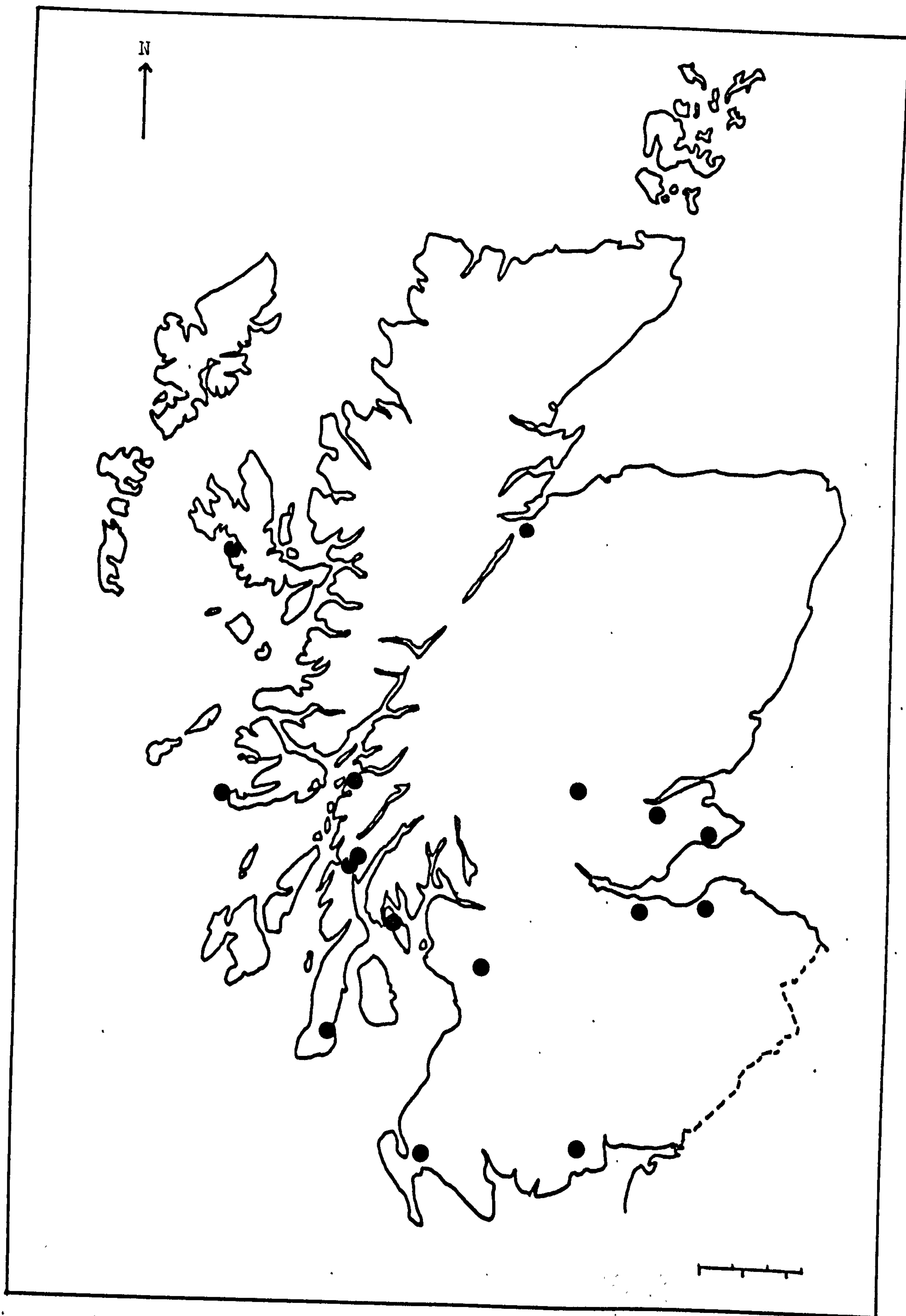


Fig. 67 Find Spots of E Ware pottery in Northern Britain.
(after Thomas 1981)

We have seen (Chapter Twelve) that specialised craft working also took place at the monastery on Iona. It is significant that in Ireland monasteries developed as major centres of craft working in exchange. The making of fine jewellery at Dunadd can be paralleled at Nendrum (Lawler 1923; O'Meadhru 1979, 25). Doherty also argues that from the 8th century some Irish monasteries adopted the tribal fairs as a response to the need for local exchange (1982). Thus in Ireland monastic sites developed as the hub of a redistribution system. In this case they would be filling the same role as Dunadd. While some craft-working was occurring at Iona there is no evidence that this developed to the extent seen in Ireland. Adomnan's Life of Columba does not make reference to such activities at the monastery. Also the position of the community on a small island which is not central within the Kingdom may well have been a prohibiting factor in its development as this sort of centre. If Iona did not develop such activities, it would seem unlikely that any of the other monastic communities in Argyll did either. This is an important point to bear in mind since it reveals a distinct contrast with Ireland at this period. Thus whereas in Ireland monasteries were at the heart of the distribution networks, in Dalriada the Kings were controlling these via sites like Dunadd.

The preceding discussion of royal control of specialised craft production, and the importation of foreign products has been based primarily on evidence from Dunadd. The other Early Historic Forts of Dalriada may also have had similar

activities occurring within them. Excavations at Dun Ollaigh, for example, produced fragments of clay moulds and crucibles (Cf. Chapter Ten).

There is some evidence, however, to suggest that Dunadd may have been more important than other sites in Dalriada. The basis for this suggestion is the location of the site near the boundary between the Cenéla of nGabráin and Loairn. It is difficult to locate this precisely as Bannerman has pointed out, but it may have lain between Dunadd and West Loch Tabert (1974, 112). Bannerman compromises by placing it in the middle of Knapdale. Work in Ireland has illustrated the importance of boundary areas for contact between groups of people. Ó'Riain, for example, has argued that such areas could provide important locations for fairs and assemblies; Royal residences and religious settlements might also be found in boundary areas (1972). Dunadd could have held an important role as a meeting point between the Cenél nGabráin and the Cenél Loairn. This may have been of particular importance in Dalriada since these were the two major Cenéla of the Kingdom, who maintained distinct identities throughout its history. The use of the site as an inauguration centre may relate to this important position.

The penannular brooches being manufactured at Dunadd are worthy of further consideration because they allow one of the main phases of industrial activity at the site to be dated. Also they provide an important basis for comment upon previous discussion of these brooches in Northern Britain.

The Dunadd brooches can be dated by analogy with brooches found elsewhere in northern Britain, mainly the St. Ninian's Isle hoard from Shetland (Wilson 1973).

On the basis of this a reasoned case can be made for the dating of these moulds to the early 9th century (cf. Lane forthcoming). Hence one of the major periods of craft-working at Dunadd was also dated to this period. (Since the associations of other artefactual material are not clear, and close chronologies do not exist for the use of these, it is impossible to suggest how long Dunadd had been such a craft-working centre.)

The production of penannular brooches at the site in the 9th century does pose some problems when considered in relation to the historical background of the period. While little documentation survives for the 8th and 9th centuries (cf. Chapter Four) it has been argued that the Picts may have held overlordship over Dalriada for at least some of this period. If this were the case it might be questioned whether the Dalriadic Kings at this time would have had the power and ability to instigate and control such craft production. On the other hand the presence of this craft-working activity may support the suggestion of the resurgence of Dalriadic power, which may have begun in the mid 8th century, and culminated in the 9th century with Cinaed Mac Alpin's union of Dalriada with Pictland (cf. Chapter Four). The evidence from Dunadd could be taken to support this view, indicating that the Kings had control over craftsmen, the raw materials they used and their finished products. (6)

Turning to consider the style of the Dunadd brooches, previous discussion of similar examples in Northern Britain had led to the suggestion that they were distinctly "Pictish" (Wilson 1973). If this were the case the reason why 'Pictish' brooches were being made within Dalriada must be questioned. An initial thought might be that this could be related in some way to the Pictish capture of Dunadd inferred in annalistic sources in 736 A.D.

We have little surviving record of this period of Dalriadic history, but the following years may have been a period of Pictish overlordship over Dalriada. By the time many of the brooches were being made, however, there may have been a revival in the power of the Dalriadic Kings. If the brooches were 'Pictish' it is then difficult to explain why they were being manufactured at Dunadd. This is especially the case if these brooches were distinctively 'Pictish' and were symbolic of Pictish power and social status in the manner previously suggested.

The more likely resolution of this problem is that Wilson's arguments as to the 'Pictish' nature of these brooches was incorrect. Lane has recently stated that while the majority of these brooches have been found in Pictland other examples are found elsewhere in Dalriada and Ireland (forthcoming). Dunadd is the only site in Dalriada for which we have evidence for brooch production, and hence we do not know if the production of these penannulars contrasted with a differing repertoire of 'Dalriadic' jewellery. In the present context, it is also worth recalling introductory comment upon the problems inherent in attempting to attribute distinct artefacts to distinct peoples. Thus, then, there appears no

good reason why such brooches should be seen as distinctly Pictish.⁽⁷⁾ Previous discussion has indicated that, at least in the 8th and 9th centuries, there may have been much contact and intermarriage between Picts and Dalriadans. It would seem likely that such links were displayed and strengthened via gift exchange, and these gifts may have included penannular brooches. The latter would have been particularly the case if these brooches were being used to indicate social status.

Considering Dalriada as a whole, discussion has illustrated the types of settlement site which may have been in occupation in the Early Historic Period, as well as the major Royal centres within the Kingdom. It seems of importance now to consider the possible pattern of land exploitation within the area in greater detail. Unfortunately the available documentation does not tell us precisely how land was held and exploited within Dalriada. To consider this problem in more detail it is useful to consider evidence from other areas of the British Isles.

In Wales it has been argued that in the Early Historic Period exploitation of land was organized through a framework of large estates (cf. Davies 1982, 42 ff; Jones 1971; 1976; 1981). These have been termed Multiple Estates by Jones, since each large unit consisted of a number of smaller land units, and a multiplicity of settlements. A model of such an estate can be drawn from law tracts of 12th century date and later. These seem to contain within them description of a system which dates back to the Early Historic Period. The largest unit was a contref which was subdivided into

commotes, maenols and vills, as well as several smaller divisions. The relationship of these units is best illustrated in a tabular form. (Fig. 68). The two supplementary trefi in every commote were reserved for the use of the King, who also received an annual food rent from each free maenol, of which there were eight per commote. The King was also due a summer and winter food gift from each servile maenol, as well as other services such as building and hospitality. This illustrates that the whole system was organized for the benefit of the King, providing a means whereby he was generated income throughout the year from all his lands. The nobility of Wales held the multiple estates, and hence each might expect to have around 1000 acres of land.

It would appear that the exploitation of land in this manner was not restricted to Wales alone, but can also be seen in early Northumbria and Yorkshire (Jones 1971). Although there is no evidence to support such an assertion, it seems likely that such a system existed in Dalriada also. Thus a situation would be envisaged in which most of the land was controlled by the nobility of Dalriada, probably from the various defended sites. Tribute from these lands would have been owed to the Kings, and probably taken to sites like Dunadd and Dun Ollaigh for collection and consumption.

It is impossible to make a direct comparison between the model of settlement outlined in the Book of Iorwerth and Dalriada, since it is a very schematized model and in actuality many variations existed. Jones, for example, cites evidence to illustrate that the number of trefi in a maenol could vary between 4 and 13 (1971). An immediate

The model for territorial organization in The Book of Iorwerth

4 acres	= 1 homestead (<i>tyddyn</i>)	
4 homesteads	= 1 shareland (<i>rhander</i>)	= 16 acres
4 sharelands	= 1 holding (<i>gafael</i>)	= 64 acres
4 holdings	= 1 vill (<i>tref</i>)	= 256 acres
4 vills	= 1 multiple estate (<i>maenol</i>)	= 1,024 acres
12 multiple estates + 2 vills		
(i.e. 50 vills)	= 1 commote (<i>cwmwd</i>)	= 12,800 acres
2 commotes (i.e. 100 vills)	= 1 hundred (<i>cantref</i>)	= 25,600 acres

Fig68 The Model for territorial organization in the Book
of Iorwerth. (from Jones 1981)

problem which would be encountered were such a system in use in Dalriada would be the territorial extent of a maenol or aristocratic settlement. The model outlined above suggests each noble would have had lands extending over 1000 acres, or approximately 1.6 sq. miles. This makes no allowance for the existence of a hierarchy of nobility of different grades, which Irish legal tracts suggest may have existed. In this case each grade of nobility may have held a differing extent of land. Such estates in Dalriada may have been much more varied in size, and in some instances much smaller, since many of the defended sites are too closely spaced to allow each to have been exploiting an estate of such size. This of course assumes that all the defended settlements were in contemporary occupation, which cannot be proven.

In any examination of the pattern and manner of land exploitation in Dalriada the position of the Church must be examined. In Chapter Twelve the existence of several monasteries in Dalriada was noted. The inhabitants of these communities must have been able to produce or obtain food resources in order to maintain themselves. On Iona the monastic community were apparently engaged in agricultural production (Barber 1981; Chapter Twelve). It is questionable, though, to what extent such a monastery would be self-sufficient. Of course the latter must relate to the size of community and the extent of lands they had available. The only indication of the size of the community of Iona is contained in an annalistic reference in 806 A.D. which tells of the killing of the community of Iona by gentiles. (Anderson 1922, 258) It

appears that the community consisted then of 68 monks.

Iona may be untypical of the other monastic settlements in Dalriada, since such a major house could expect to exact tribute from other monasteries within its paruchia (Hughes 1966, 81). Discussion in Chapter Twelve noted the existence of several subject houses of Iona which existed within Dalriada. In Adomnan's Life of Columba we are told in one instance how Columba was able to request that the prior of Mag Luinge, a subject house on Tiree, should send someone a fat beast and six measures of grain (A:I:41).

In addition to extracting such produce from subject houses, Iona was able to exploit resources other than those on Iona. In Chapter Twelve it was suggested that the community may have been exploiting herds of deer on mainland Mull, while Adomnan's Life of Columba also suggests that they had the right to exploit the seal community on islands somewhere near Iona. (I:41).

It would seem likely that the community was able to exploit these areas because it had either been granted lands here, or it had been granted the products of the land. Analysis of documentary sources indicate that the Church in the Early Historic Period was frequently granted lands or tribute from lands. (cf. Davies 1978, 132 f; Davies 1982; Doherty 1982). As Goody points out the acquisition of such land or dues was an important activity for the early Church since it provided the lands and wealth with which to maintain its religious activities (1983). Such grants would be made for a variety of reasons, including spiritual ones - for example for the good of the soul. These land grants may

have been made by the rulers of Dalriada, (cf. Chapter Fourteen) but also by lay communities, although the latter would have needed the consent of the kin group, and perhaps also the King. (cf. Doherty 1982; Davies 1978). It may have been particularly important to the early Church to obtain lands from the Kings of Dalriada since they would have been able to waive their rights to tribute from such land; this could then be collected by the Church.

Unfortunately we do not have any documentary evidence for grants of land to the Church in the Early Historic Period in Dalriada. By analogy with other areas, however, we might expect that the Church held lands, or rights to tribute from areas of land scattered throughout the Kingdom. On actual grants of land the Church would have been able to establish its chapels and burial grounds. In other instances this land may have been cultivated and managed for the Church by client settlers who were in a similar relation to their ecclesiastical lords as others were to their secular lords. Ecclesiastical clients were termed Manaig and are recorded frequently in law tracts (Hughes 1966; 136 f; Doherty 1982). The term can be translated as Monk, but these people were not monks in the religious sense. Instead they appear to have been church-tenants. On this point, Doherty illustrates that in Ireland grants to the Church could include grants of personal service, or grants of the service of the inhabitants of the land (1982). Irish legal tracts illustrate that the relationship between such Manaig and the Church was the same as that between a secular lord and his clients, (Hughes 1966). For example, both free and unfree Manach existed. Thus

ecclesiastical estates may have existed, which were very similar to those run by secular lords.

Finally in this chapter it is of importance to consider the effect of the union of Dalriada and Pictland on the area.

As a result of this union Cinaed MacAlpin moved to eastern Scotland, possibly accompanied by his personal retainers (cf. Chapter Four). It was argued earlier in the present work that the union of the crowns probably overstretched whatever mechanisms of control were used by the Dalriadic Kings, since the area now controlled by the Kings was greatly expanded. In turn this led to reorganizations of political control, particularly in peripheral areas of the Kingdom such as the islands. It is important to turn now to consider the archaeological evidence from the Kingdom in relation to these events of the ninth century.

To consider Dunadd first, archaeological evidence indicates that the last major phase of activity (represented by the brooch manufacture) may have occurred in the ninth century. The apparent abandonment of this site raises important questions about the nature of Royal control over Dalriada after this date, since it has been argued in this chapter that this site provided a key link between the King and his people. If the site was used as a collection point for tribute raised from the population, this may indicate a break-down in this system of exaction. In turn this would imply that the link between the King and Dalriada was weakening. Unfortunately the evidence from other similar sites does not shed light on this period, or the events

associated with it. At both Dun Ollaigh and Dunaverty later medieval castles were constructed on the sites, but this need not necessarily imply continuity of use of the sites from the Early Historic Period.

Throughout the rest of Argyll the abandonment of some of the defended sites might tentatively be related to this period. At the duns of Kildalloig, Kintyre; Dùn an Fheurain, Gallanach, and Loch Glashan Crannog, artefactual material may date to the 9th century, but no later. Precisely why these types of sites may have been abandoned then is unclear. It would seem unlikely that large numbers of people would leave Dalriada to seek uncertain futures in Pictland. Apart from anything else this would have removed them from the social conditions and inter-relationships which were maintaining their position.

In conclusion then this chapter has critically examined the archaeological evidence from Argyll which can be related to the Early Historic Period. To begin with possible evidence for Irish presence in Northern Britain prior to 500 A.D. was examined. Little of this evidence comes from Argyll, and it was also argued that which obviously is indicative of contact between the areas, it cannot necessarily be taken to indicate actual settlements of Irish in Northern Britain. A comparison of the number of defended sites in Argyll and the number of 'tìge' noted in the Senchus Fer nAlban supported previous suggestions that the defended sites were inhabited by persons of high social status. This

comparison also indicated that many settlements of Early
Historic Date may remain unidentified. The major sites
in Dalriada were the Early Historic Forts, in particular
Dunadd. By controlling the range of activities occurring
at such sites, the Kings strengthened their position within
the Kingdom. Finally the union of the crowns of Dalriada
and Pictland may have had major impact on Dalriada, leading
to the abandonment of Dunadd, and possibly also some of
the defended sites.

Chapter Fifteen: Footnotes.

(1) This work was based upon analysis of artefacts throughout Ireland. A specific examination of the relationship between artefacts in Irish and Scottish Dalriada is difficult since large collections from this area of Northern Ireland do not exist.

(2) These lists are based on the numbers of various sites located within the areas. They are listed within Appendices H, N and O, Volume 3.

(3) Crannogs would be excluded from this suggestion.

Chapter Nine noted underwater surveys in Loch Awe which located many crannog sites which had been submerged, and hence "lost".

(4) I am grateful to Dr A. Lane and H.B. Duncan for allowing access to material produced by recent work at Dunadd, and for willingly discussing it with me.

(5) It must be made clear here, that it is not solely the presence of such craftworking activity on a site which infers the high status of that site. In the case of Dunadd other evidence exists which argues in favour of high, probably royal status. The fact that the site was important enough for attacks upon it to be recorded in historical documentation suggests this. The possibility that the site was also used for the inauguration of kings also illustrates its importance. The form of the fortification, which is similar to other royal high-status fortifications in Northern Britain (Alcock 1981) may also favour such interpretation. These points were discussed earlier in Chapter 10.

(6) Of courses the basic tenet of the preceeding discussion is that the penannular brooches were being made at Dunadd under the patronage of Dalriadic kings. An alternative view would be that they were made under Pictish royal patronage during the phase of Pictish overlordship of Dalriada post 736A.D. The latter interpretation, though, could be deemed unlikely if the brooches do date to the early 9th century, since it is possible that the Cenél nGabráin were in control of Dalriada again by this period. (cf. Chapter 4) A tentative solution could, however, be offered. It could be argued that the dating of the brooches is not really secure, since it is based primarily upon stylistic arguments. Indeed Lane (forthcoming) illustrates that widely divergent dates can be obtained for them from different authorities. Hence it may not be altogether unreasonable to argue that the early 9th century date may be too late, and that their

production may really have been at its height at Dunadd in the mid 8th century.

(7) This inability to locate the ethnic origins of these brooches, of courses, makes it impossible to assess whether they were made under Dalriadic or Pictish patronage purely upon the basis of their style.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE NORSE IMPACT

During the 9th century the arrival of the Norse in the West of Scotland introduces another important cultural grouping into the area. In this chapter the linguistic and archaeological evidence for Norse activity along the Western Atlantic coast of Scotland will be discussed. The particular focus of discussion will be the area of Dalriada. The main aims are to illustrate the extent of activity and also the relationship of the in-comers to the pre-existing population of the area.

To begin with the linguistic evidence, a glance at any detailed map of Scotland indicates the large numbers of place-names, apparently of Scandinavian derivation, which are found in the North and West. The densest concentration of these name-forms is found in the Northern Isles where possibly 99% of the names are of Scandinavian form (Marwick 1952). A figure of 80% has been suggested for the Outer Hebrides (Ofstedal 1977). This may indicate less dense Norse settlement in these areas. Within Argyll, however, the occurrence of such names is much less common. It has been estimated, for example, that only 33% of the place-names of Islay are of Scandinavian form, while on Arran the figure may be in the order of 11% (Scott 1954).

These patterns of distribution are based largely upon an analysis of the present-day distribution of names of Scandinavian derivation. This raises the first problem associated with such studies. In the absence of documentation

it is impossible to trace the use of name-forms continuously from the Norse period. Thus it is difficult to assess whether the pattern of occurrence of such names is a true reflection of the original intensity of Norse settlement or whether it reflects subsequent Gaelicisation of areas (cf. Duncan 1975, 84-6). In analysing modern place-names, we cannot be sure that these are accurate reflections of the original Norse names. Place-names can alter over time, and hence it is important to attempt to locate the earliest record of any name under consideration. As Alcock and Alcock point out, however, this is a major problem in western Scotland because of the general paucity of early documentary material (1980). The earliest documents often date back only to the 15th century, and these are not numerous. This allows a considerable period of time to pass between their first use, and the first occasion on which they are recorded in a written form. During this period of time it would seem likely that changes in the name-form had already occurred.

It is also likely that the occurrence of a name containing Scandinavian elements could, in certain instances at least, be a reflection of the popularity of that form and hence not necessarily a reflection of the location of Scandinavian settlements. Obviously some explanation for the initial introduction of such a name-form must be offered, which probably does relate to Norse activity. Later, though, these name-forms may have gained popularity among native communities. In England Sawyer has illustrated that the Scandinavianisation of English place-names was common in

the 12th century, and continued to take place as late as the 16th century (1982; 102). In Northern Britain the same process is indicated by the adoption into Gaelic of the Scandinavian place-name element -dalr (a valley) (Alcock, L & E.; 1980). It would also seem likely that derivative forms of Scandinavian place-name elements such as -bolls or -bus (a form of -bolstaðir) may have become popular in their own right, long after the original Scandinavian form was forgotten.

The final problem associated with an analysis of Scandinavian settlement based on evidence from modern maps is that this makes no allowance for abandoned settlements whose names have been lost. Alcock and Alcock have presented a list of all the Scandinavian place-names on Islay which they were able to trace in documentary records (1980). This illustrated several examples which could not be traced on modern maps. (cf. Appendix V, Volume 3). The problem of loss of settlement names is possibly more acute in Scotland than in other areas of the British Isles because of the widespread abandonment of settlement sites which resulted from agricultural improvements. These were occurring widely from the 18th century, and frequently included clearance of settlements to make way for sheep walks. Once these settlements were abandoned, the names were often lost.

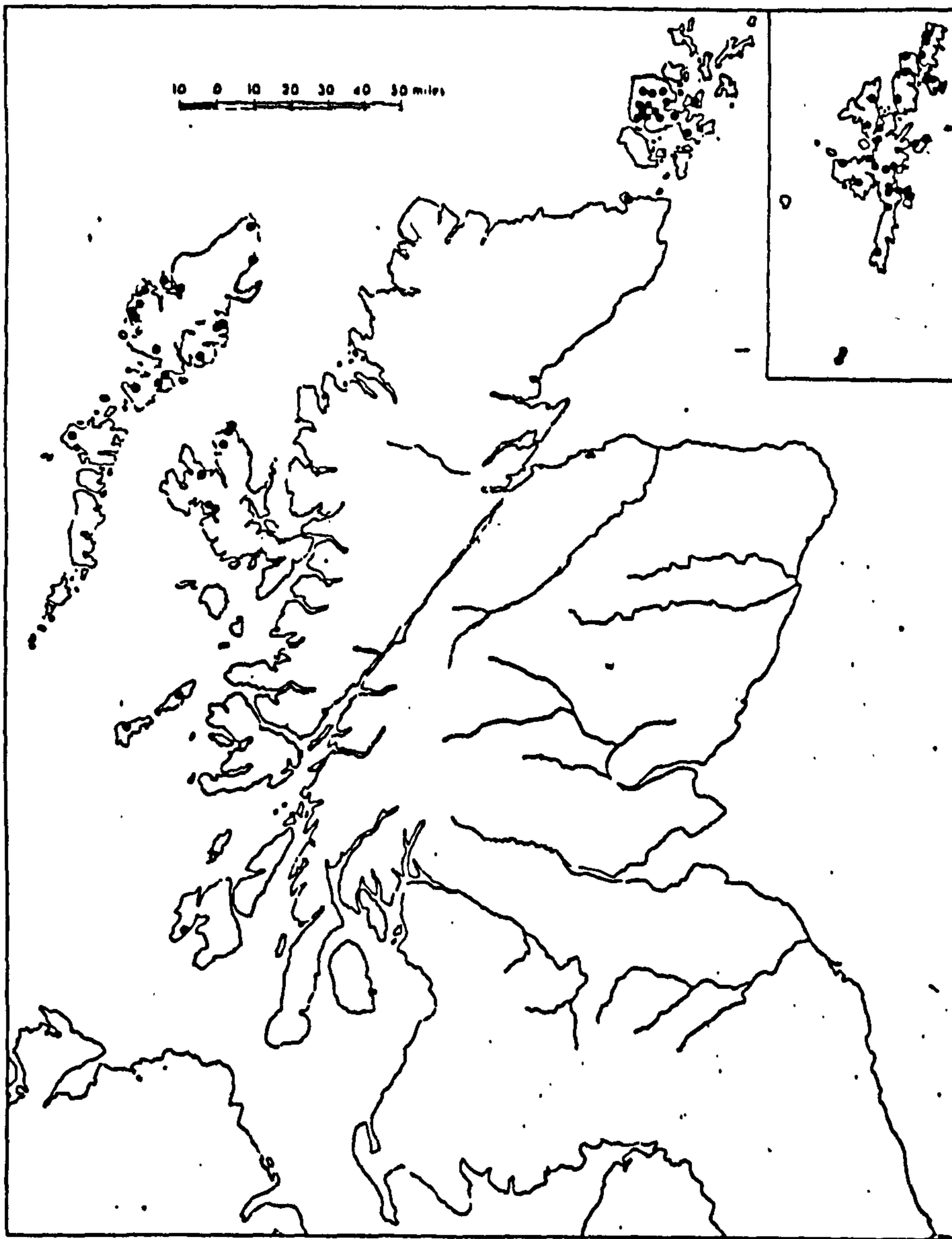
While it is clear that there are many problems inherent in the analysis of such place-name evidence this has generally not been seen to preclude analysis of them in studies of Scandinavian settlement. While it would be unwise to present an analysis based solely upon this type of evidence, a more

cautious use of it in conjunction with other types of evidence is justifiable. With the latter aim in mind, discussion must now turn to analyse these place-names in greater depth.

To begin this, a distinction must be drawn between those names which are indicative of actual settlements, and those merely reflecting a Norse presence. The latter group includes names given to natural features such as hills, rivers and coastal promontories which may have been given by travellers rather than actual settlers. These would seem to indicate the presence of Norse "on land" since the names became fixed to such features. They are not, however, indicative necessarily of permanent settlement.

By analysis of place-names throughout the Scandinavian world several distinct recurring forms have been identified, and a chronological sequence established for their usage (Nicholaisen 1979, 85). Nicholaisen argues that one of the earliest groups of these place-names are those containing the element -staðir (a dwelling place). This was a popular name form in Scandinavia in the period prior to the settlement in Scotland, and hence may indicate settlements founded by first or second generation settlers, possibly around 850 A.D. (1979, 87-90). Figure 69 presents the distribution map of occurrence of such name forms in Northern Britain; this reveals a concentration in the Northern Isles, the Outer Hebrides and Northern Skye. Figure 70 provides a more detailed map located examples which occur within Argyll. (These are all listed in Appendix V, Volume 3).

A similar concentration is indicated by an analysis of the occurrence of names containing the element -setr (a dwelling) which seems to indicate a slightly later phase of



● Name containing staðir

Fig.69 Scandinavian names in -staðir.
(from Nicolaisen 1976)

settlement (Figs. 70, 71) (Nicholaisen 1979, 91). The most widespread are names containing the element -bolstaðir (a farm) which appear to date to a period after 900 A.D. (Nicholaisen 1979, 92 f) (Figs. 72 & 73). Names containing this element, or variants of it, are found in the Northern Isles and the Outer Hebridean group, but penetrate more extensively into the Inner Hebrides and mainland Argyll, being particularly common on Coll, Tiree and Islay. While considering this group of place-names, it is clear that in the case of Islay at least, the location map of Scandinavian names in -bolstaðir produced by Nicholaisen is somewhat misleading since it does not illustrate all the place-names recorded on modern 1:50,000 O.S. map sheets which appear to contain such elements. The reasons for this are, unfortunately, unclear. The distribution maps produced for Argyll have been duly appended to make allowance for this factor.

Within Argyll it would appear from the place-name evidence that Norse settlement was confined largely to the islands, in particular Islay and Tiree. In the present context it is of importance to examine why this might be the case, and what it may tell us about the relationship of the Norse to the pre-existing population of the area.

On Islay, a case could be made for the infilling of Norse settlement in areas previously not densely settled. One of the two concentrations of settlement suggested by place-name analysis is located in the Oa peninsula in the south-west of the Island. In this area there are few of the defended settlements which earlier discussion has indicated may have been in occupation until this period.



Fig. 70 Scandinavian Place-names containing the elements---staðir and setr/saetr in Argyll. (after Nicholaisen 1976)

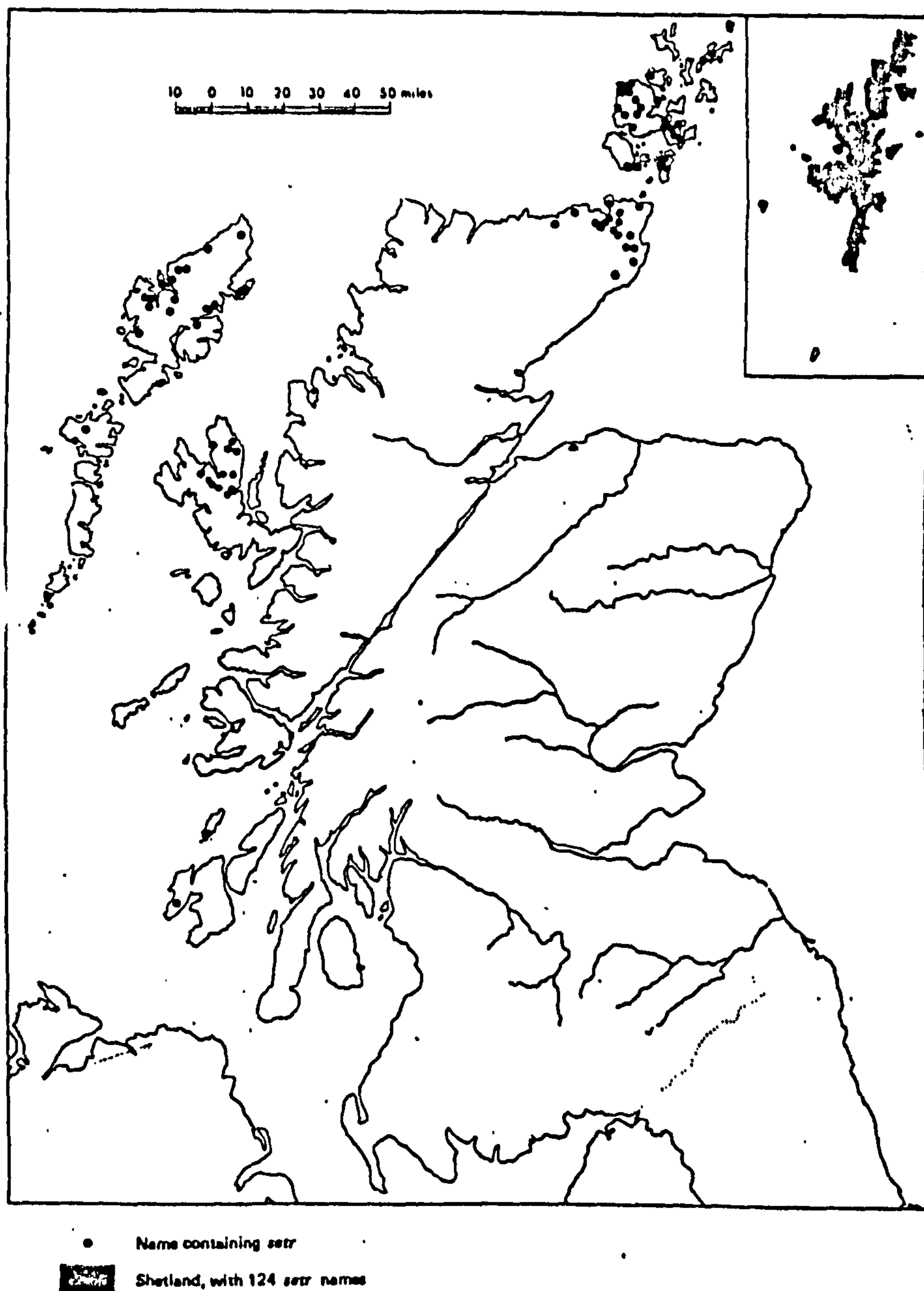
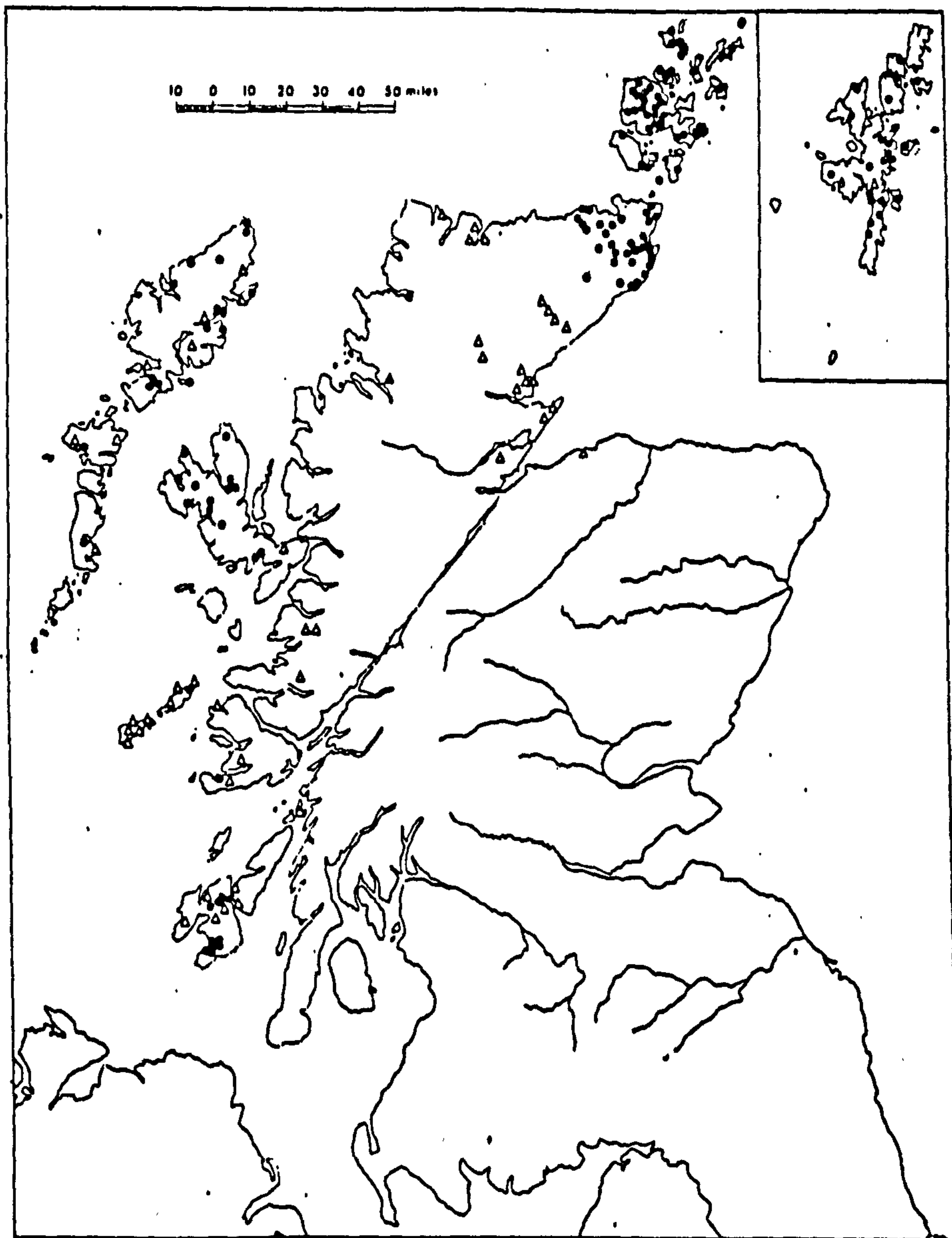


Fig. 71 Scandinavian names in - setr/saetr.

(from Nicolaisen 1976)



Name containing *bólstaðr*
● in form *blær, bær, bæst, bæ*
▲ in form *ball, pol* etc.

Fig. 72 Scandinavian names in -bolstaðr.

(from Nicolaisen 1976)

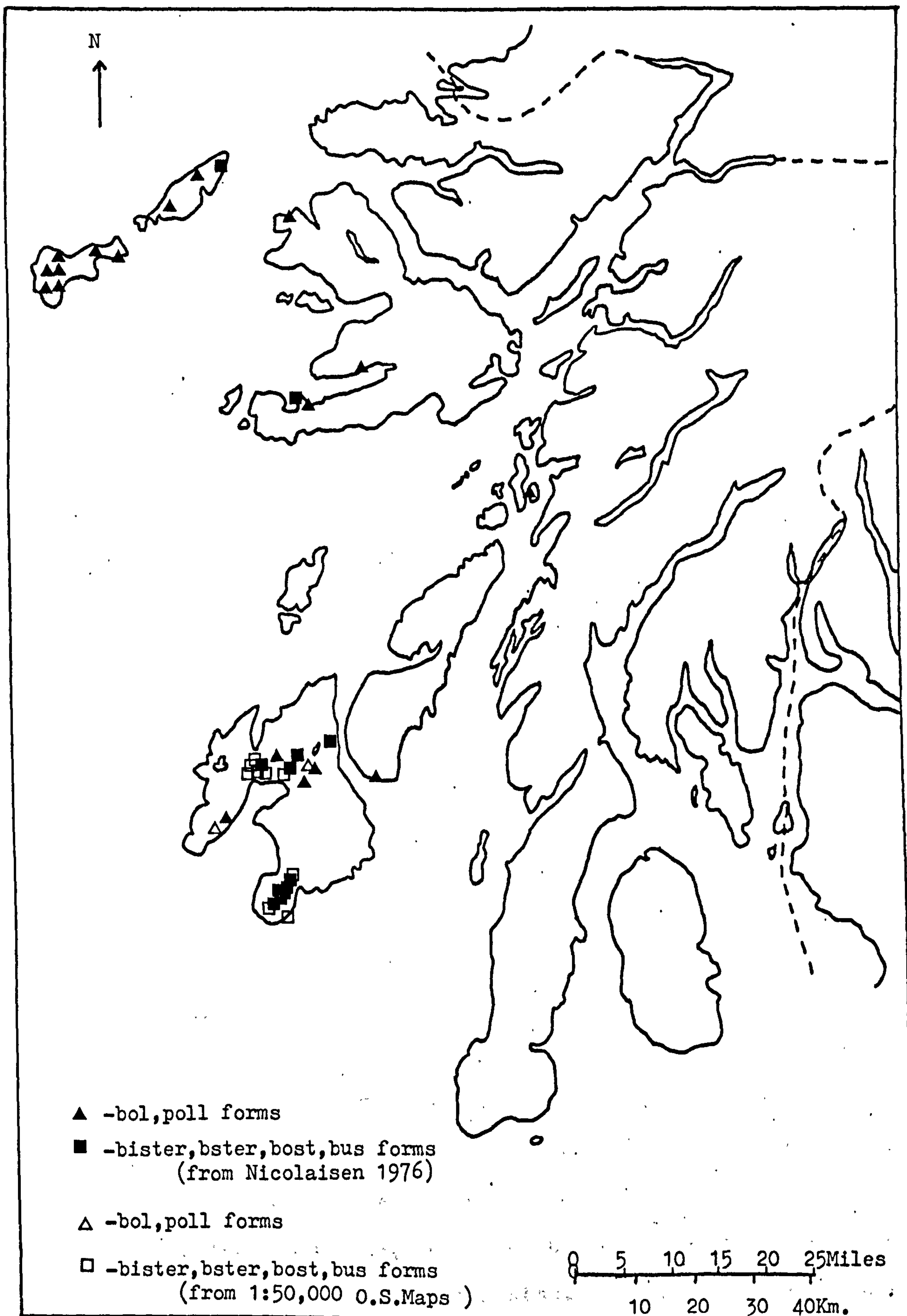


Fig.73 Scandinavian Place-names containing the element - bolstaðir in
Argyll.

This may indicate the Norse deliberately chose to locate a group of settlements in this area, which was not densely settled already. Such an argument, indeed, could be taken to support the suggestion of the continued importance of defended settlement sites throughout the Early Historic Period.

A similar pattern of infilling of Norse settlement around defended settlements has also been suggested to have been the case on Skye and in the Shetland Islands (Small 1976, 1982). In the Shetland Islands Small argues that many of the Norse settlements were established on poor land, the better land having been occupied already by the inhabitants of the defended sites. In neither instance, however, does Small make it clear whether there is archaeological confirmation from the defended sites for such longevity of occupation.

Returning to Islay, the second concentration of Scandinavian place-names lies in the central lowlands, particularly the area around the head of Loch Indaal. In the case study on Islay it is suggested that this is the area of the best agricultural land on the island, and because of this, and its central location within the island, local rulers may have resided here. The ability of the Norse to settle in this area raises questions about their relationship to the lineage which held political power on the island. One explanation may be that they forcibly took control of the island, and seized this rich and vital area. This may imply actual conflict, or that the local leaders were too weak to prevent such an incursion. Alternately more subtle explanations of the apparent Norse establishment could be offered. Discussion in Chapter Four noted the reorganisations

of political control which may have been occurring within the islands as a result of Kenneth MacAlpin's move to the east. If Islay was one of the areas involved in such reorganization (and we do not know for certain that this was the case) the ability of the Norse to penetrate the area may reflect the uncertainties of this period of reorganization. Perhaps it infers that, initially at least, the new political entity created was not particularly strong.

Islay may have been particularly attractive to Norse settlers because of her close proximity to Ireland. Archaeological evidence, which will be discussed in greater detail subsequently, implies that some of the Norse may have been traders. These men may have been attracted to the area by the wealth of Ireland. Because of their potential for bringing wealth to the island of Islay these settlers may have been encouraged to stay there. This is an important point to bear in mind in relation to Islay. Discussion of the historical background of Dalriada indicates that the lineage which held the island were not involved in the majority of political events in the Kingdom. The development of the island on a trading network stretching from Ireland to Scandinavia may have given the island community new wealth, and hence re-vitalised it somewhat.

In contrast the concentration of Norse settlement on Tiree may illustrate a different relationship between Norse and native. In the Early Historic Period there was a concentration of monastic establishments on Tiree (cf. Chapter Twelve and Tiree Case Study, Volume 2). In addition to the monastic settlements there were also several small defended

sites, some of which may have been occupied at the same time as the monasteries. Hence the island may have been quite densely settled prior to the Norse arrival. Because of this it would be difficult to envisage infilling of Norse settlement around the island. The presence of monasteries on the island probably encouraged Norse raiders there, in the same manner as at Iona. There are, unfortunately, no documentary records of attacks on monastic establishments on Tiree. The devastation of such monasteries would have provided the Norse not only with plunder, but also with land upon which to settle since each monastery probably held lands upon which to support itself, and in the case of subject houses of Iona, the parent house itself.

The introduction of Scandinavian place-names in the manner outlined above does indicate the introduction of a new language by the Norse. It is questionable how extensive this new linguistic introduction was, and what its uses were. In the Northern Isles it is clear that a form of Scandinavian language was widely accepted, since a related language - Norn - was spoken there until the 17th century (Wainwright, 1962). It has been argued that a similar extinction of the former language occurred in the Outer Hebrides (cf. Oftedal 1977; Crawford and Switsur, 1977). The available evidence from the west of Scotland is not, however, as convincing as that from the Northern Isles - the present work, for example, noted that place-names containing Scandinavian elements are less frequent in the West. There is also much evidence for Gaelic survival. Barrow's discussion of the existence of a hybrid

ruling class in the Hebrides in the early 11th century (1981, 107 f) was noted earlier (Chapter Four). It was argued there that such racial intermixing may have been occurring from the first appearance of the Norse in the area, and may explain the development of the 'Gall-Goidill' there.

Barrow also noted the maintenance of use of the title 'King' for the principal lords of the Hebrides (1981, 107). He suggests that this reflects not merely a usage by the Irish chroniclers who recorded situations in a manner which reflected the political arrangements of their own land, but the actual existence of Kings in the West Highlands accepted by the Norse.

Thus Barrow argues the Norse were happy to accept the existence of Kings of the Northern and Southern Hebrides. This would all suggest a fairly amicable relationship between Norse and Native in the west. If this were the case it becomes more difficult to explain the new linguistic introduction. With the claimed establishment of political control over many of the islands of Western Scotland it is possible that Norse became an official language of government. The use of a different and distinctive language in this manner may have been a useful tool to express the importance and superiority of the Norse, in the same manner in which French was introduced into England after the Norman Conquest, and more recently, English into India. On a day to day basis, however, the more usual language may have continued to be Gaelic.

To further consider the picture of Norse settlement in Argyll presented above we must turn to consider in greater

detail the archaeological evidence for Norse presence in the area. The most numerous sites indicative of a Scandinavian presence are burials, which are normally accompanied by a range of grave goods of distinctive Scandinavian form. The incidence of such burials is illustrated on Figure 74, whereas Appendix W (Volume 3) provides a summary list of the sites and their associated grave goods.

A variety of burial rites are indicated. Most are inhumation burials, usually extended, but sometimes crouched, (cf. Kiloran Bay, Colonsay) sometimes placed within stone cists (cf. Ballinaby, Islay). In contrast the burial at Kingscross, Arran, appears to have been cremated (Balfour 1909). From Colonsay are two examples of burials accompanied by horses (McNeil 1891; Anderson 1907). Also from Colonsay and Oronsay three examples of ship burials have been recorded (McNeil 1891; Anderson 1907). Another example of a boat-burial was found on Arran (Balfour 1909) and a further possible example from Ardnamurchan (Lethbridge 1925).

The earliest burial may have been that at Lamlash, Arran, which is accompanied by a sword and shield boss of mid-8th century date (Shetelig 1954; Part VI: 75). This is a surprisingly early date for Viking activity in Scotland. A more feasible explanation may be that these objects were already of some age when committed to the grave. Other burials date to the 9th century, for example, the boat burial at Kiloran Bay, Colonsay (Shetelig 1954; Part VI; 103) and examples from Ballinaby, Islay, and Oronsay (Shetelig 1954; Part VI; 74; 103).



Fig. 74 The Location of Scandinavian Burials in Argyll.

It is questionable whether such burials represent the first phase of Scandinavian activity in Western Scotland. Instead it is more likely that they represent the activities of established communities who had the time to perform such burial rituals, and more particularly, were in a position to place such potentially important artefacts as swords and axes into the graves. This suggests an ability to replace such articles.

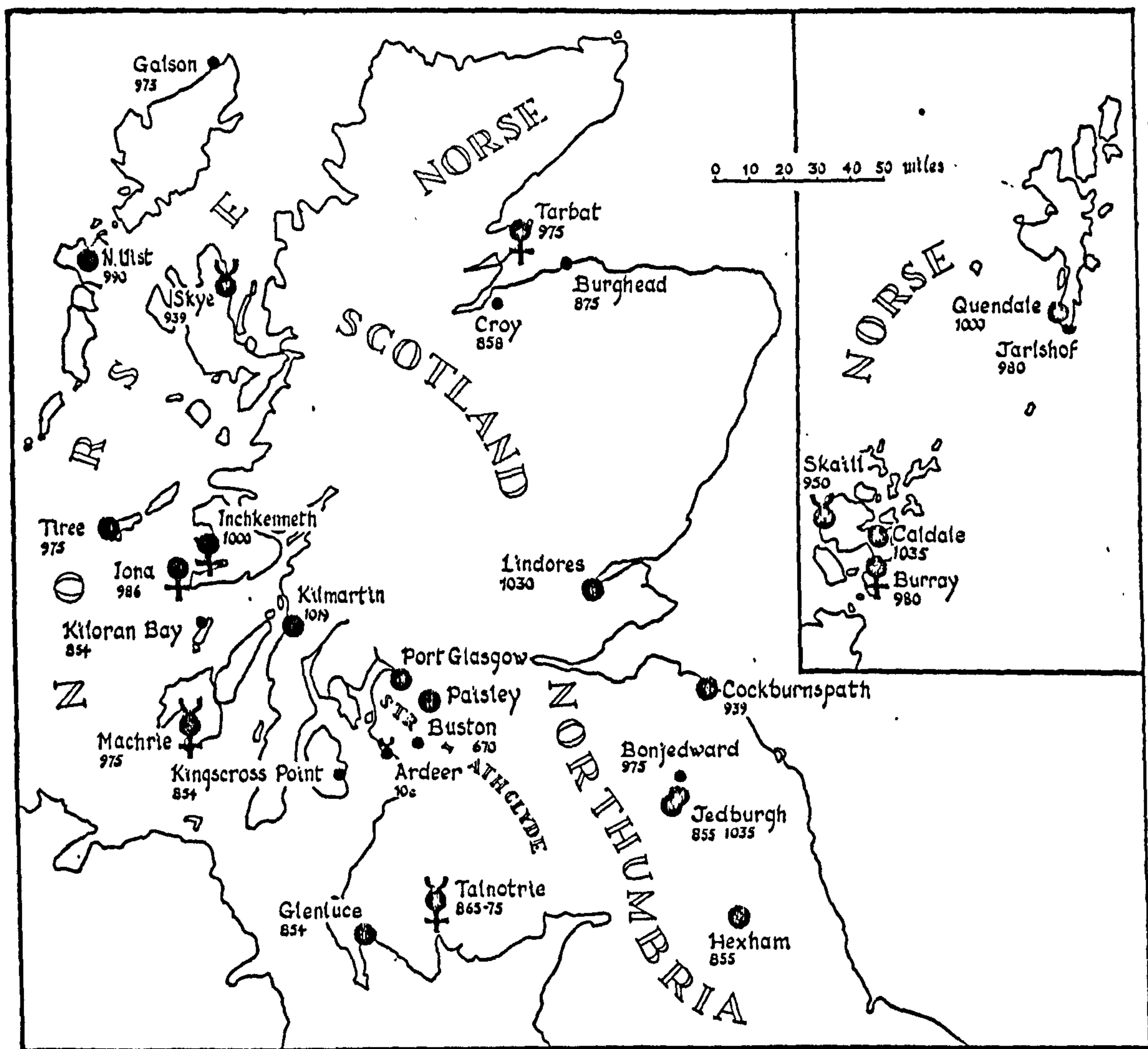
The burials recorded from Gigha (Anderson 1929) and Kiloran Bay, Colonsay (Anderson 1907) are of particular interest as they contained fragments of bronze balances. These were used particularly by traders, and may be indicative of the trading network which developed along the Atlantic coast of Scotland, discussed earlier.

The pattern of Norse activity suggested by the location of the Scandinavian burials in Argyll agrees with that noted in relation to Scandinavian place-names. Most of the burials occur on the western Islands, in particular Islay, Colonsay and Oronsay, and Tiree. There is little evidence for a Scandinavian presence on the mainland. This suggests that while the Norse were able to settle in the peripheral areas of Dalriada, they were not really able to penetrate the core area of the Kingdom on the mainland. This agrees with earlier suggestion that in the ninth century these peripheral areas may have been the weakest areas of the Kingdom. In particular many monastic establishments may have been located in these areas, and after Viking attacks on these, the way for settlement may have been opened up. The failure of the Norse to penetrate the mainland suggests that some continuity

of political control existed within these areas during the 9th century, which prevented Norse establishment there.

Another source of evidence for some form of activity during the later 1st Millennium A.D. is coin hoards, of which five large examples have been recorded from Dalriada. These are located on Figure 75 and have all been discussed by Stevenson (1966). The largest was found on Iona and consists of over 300 examples of coins. Analysis of these groups has allowed some estimation of their date of deposition to be made. Stevenson's work indicates that the hoards date to the late 10th and early 11th centuries. It is during this period, indeed, that the majority of such coin-hoards were deposited in Scotland (Graham-Campbell 1976). Most of the coins were of Anglo-Saxon origin, although examples of continental or oriental origin are also present.

These hoards were presumably deposited for safe-keeping and then never recovered. This failure to recover hoards may be related to violence of some kind, but this cannot be proven. They do, however, indicate that wealth was available for hoarding. It is of interest to note that of the 21 known examples of coin-hoards dated to between 850 and 1150 A.D. in Scotland, 5 or 24% of the total were found within the area of the Kingdom of Dalriada. It is also clear that hoards such as those from Iona and Inch Kenneth are among the largest hoards found in Scotland. This may indicate the wealth of the area at this time. These coin hoards do not seem to indicate a monetary currency in the west of Scotland at this time. Were this the case, a more widespread distribution of coin finds might be anticipated. It does, though, indicate



Map of find-spots of Anglo-Saxon coins in present-day Scotland (also Hexham), with associated continental (+) and oriental (U) coins. A large spot indicates upwards of three coins. The dates show the approximate *terminus post quem* or date of the latest coin.

Fig. 75 Find-spots of Anglo-Saxon coins in present-day Scotland.

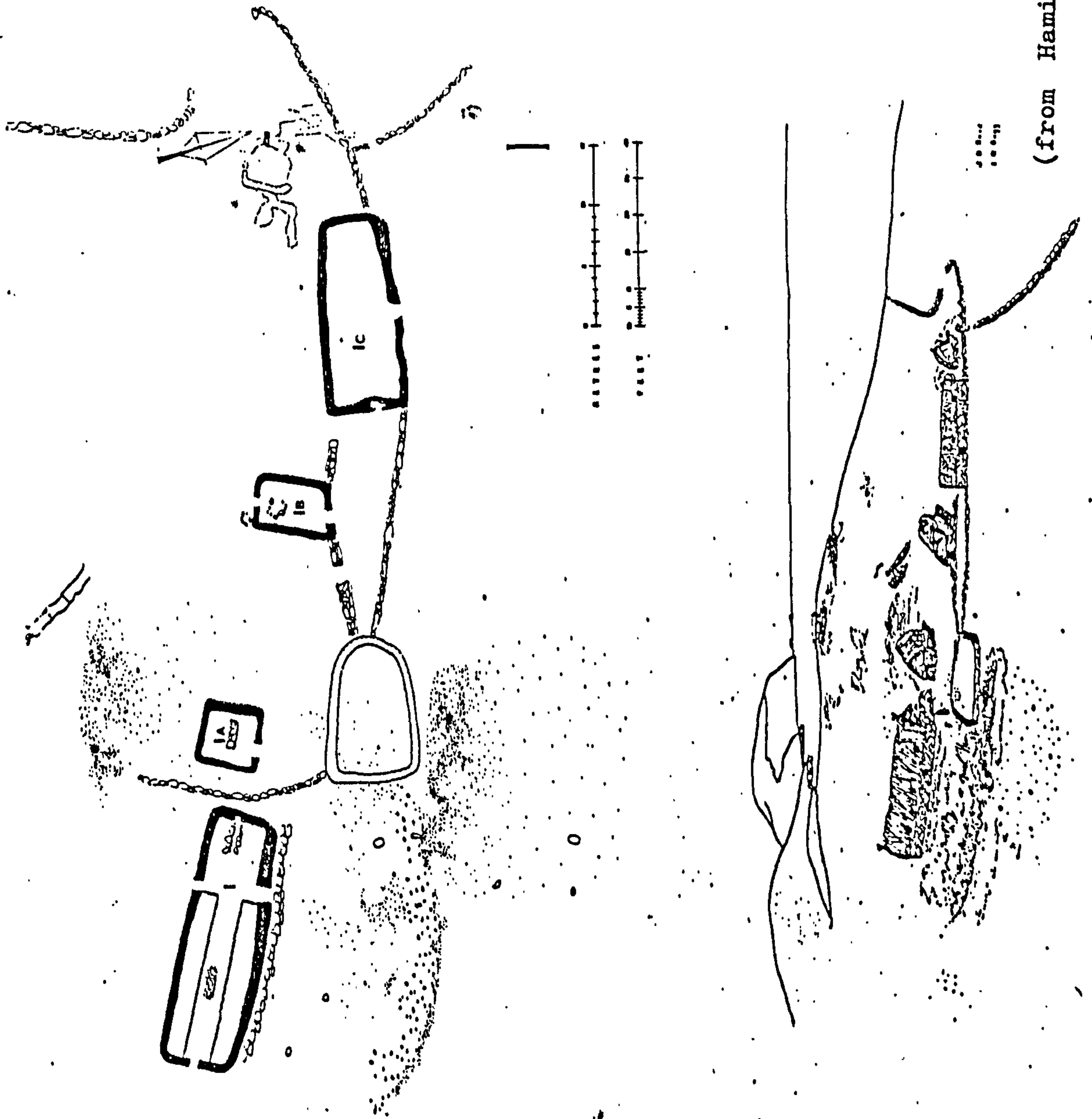
(from Stevenson 1966)

some form of contact with a coin-using economy.

No settlements of Norse date have been positively identified within Argyll; despite the evidence for settlement seemingly implied by the place-name evidence discussed earlier.⁽¹⁾

This situation can be compared with the Northern Isles and Outer Hebrides where many examples of settlement of Norse date have been identified and excavated. One of the best known of these is the site of Jarlshof in Shetland, excavated by Hamilton between 1949 and 1952, which has become a type-site for Norse settlement in Scotland. Here a broch settlement had been replaced by wheelhouses, which in turn were overlain by rectangular structures of Norse date. Seven phases of Norse settlement were recorded on the site (Hamilton 1956). Of these the main building of the earliest farmstead was a slightly bow-shaped structure some 70 feet in length (Hamilton 1956, 94) (Fig. 76). Over 600 artefacts were found in the early Norse contexts (1956, 113) but none were closely dateable. Hamilton, however, believed that the earliest phase on the site could be dated to the beginnings of Norse colonisation in the 1st half of the 9th century (1956, 94).

Other sites which have been excavated include Underhoull in Shetland (Small 1964), Skail, Westness and Gurness all in Orkney (all unpublished), Birsay, Orkney (Cruden 1965; Morris & Hunter 1976; Morris 1977; 1978; 1979; 1980; Hunter 1978; Curle 1982). Buckquoy, Orkney (Ritchie 1977), Freswick in Caithness, (Curle 1939; Morris et al. 1981), Drimore, South Uist, (Maclaren 1974) and the Udal, North Uist (Crawford 1963-1983) (Fig. 76). The continuing work at many of these sites, particularly those in Orkney, and the lack of fully



(from Hamilton 1956)

Fig.76 The Viking settlement at Jarlshof, Phase I Plan and reconstruction.

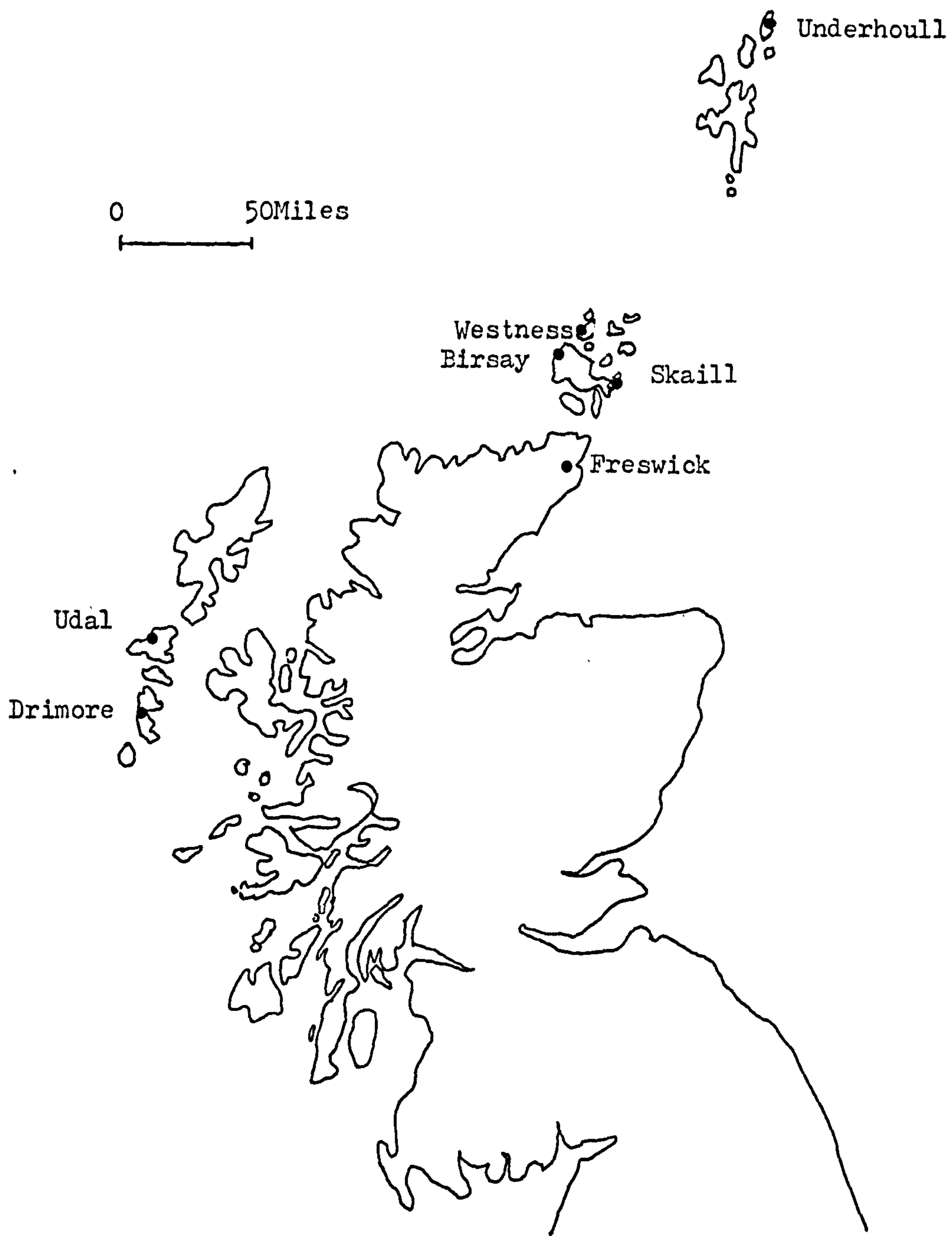


Fig. 77 The location of excavated Scandinavian settlements.

published details about them, makes any detailed assessment difficult. Also their location places them without the general remit of the present work.

In relation to the structural remains of excavated Norse sites, attempts have been made to identify distinct house-plans and building techniques which would allow the establishment of a set of criteria which could be used to identify unexcavated sites elsewhere. Several distinct features of Norse house-plans have been recognized. They are normally rectangular, or slightly bowed in shape. Recent analysis of excavated early Viking houses in the Atlantic Islands has indicated that the settlement unit was a dwelling house for humans alone (Stoklund 1980; Fenton 1982). This was normally entered through one of the longer walls. Internally two rows of posts, parallel to the longer walls of the site supported the roof. The dwelling house had a long rectangular central hearth, and raised sleeping benches on either side, built against the longer walls of the house. In such instances, internal divisions may have subdivided the interior into more than one room. This was the case at Jarlshof (Hamilton 1956, 107-9). The suggestion that the earliest Norse houses were built as human dwellings only is an important point to bear in mind, since it marks a contrast with later settlement units, which normally consist of long houses which include both animal byre and human dwelling under the same roof. Fenton has recently considered evidence for the introduction of the long-house (1982). At Jarlshof this appears to have occurred in the 11th century. Elsewhere the introduction may have

had a later date. In Ireland Fenton cites examples of houses dated between the 11th and 14th centuries which have dwelling units alone.

Certain of these supposedly characteristic features may be distinguishable prior to excavation, for example, a building used solely as a human residence is likely to be smaller (probably less long) than one which housed animals as well. Such a feature may be discernable in field-analysis of settlement sites. The internal benches, if constructed wholly or partially of stone may also be discernable. The latter was the case at the site of Gauber High Pasture, Ribbleshead, Yorkshire (King 1978) a possible Scandinavian settlement site.

It has proven impossible to define a building technique characteristic of Scandinavian settlements. Analysis of excavated sites has indicated the variety of structural forms and building materials used by the Scandinavians (Graham-Campbell & Kidd 1980, 60-63; Dahl 1970; Stenberger 1943). Building materials being used included timber, and (more usually) stone, turf and earth. Hamilton formerly suggested that a characteristic building technique may have involved the construction of stone walls with an inner core of turf (1956, 102). There is, however, no real evidence for the widespread adoption of this technique. The most reasonable suggestion would be that the Scandinavians were able to exploit the building resources of the areas they settled in, and built structures suited to the local environmental conditions. Thus it would appear impossible to date, or

establish the ethnicity of inhabitants of a settlement purely on the basis of an analysis of constructional techniques.

In assessing house-plans and constructional features which might be attributable to the Norse settlers of Scotland, it is of importance to consider a series of studies of Scottish vernacular architecture which have attempted to identify traits of Scandinavian origin.

One of the first scholars to engage in such an analysis was the Dane, Aage Roussell, who produced a volume entitled, "The Norse Building Customs in the Scottish Isles" (1934). The fieldwork he conducted, which initiated the book, had the aim of aiding him to reconstruct some Scandinavian house sites he had excavated in Greenland. In the introduction to this work he explains how officials at the National Museum at Edinburgh were, at that time, sceptical of his chances of finding remains of Norse building traditions since,

"...it turned out that in archaeological circles in Scotland it was the view that the Norsemen always used wood as a building material, and, as every relic in Scotland is of stone and earth, it cannot be of Norse origin".

(1934, 8)

Roussell spent much time studying the stone-built houses, known as Black Houses, of the Outer Hebrides some of which were still in occupation. This analysis led him to suggest that these did have parallels in Iron Age houses in Scandinavia, and that hence many structural elements were most likely derived from Scandinavia. In taking this line, Roussell refuted the idea postulated by Thomas (1870) that such houses actually pre-dated the Norse invasions and had no connection with Norse building traditions. Thomas had argued that the

incoming Norse found a fully developed house-style already existing, which they then adopted. Subsequently another Scandinavian scholar Åke Campbell published the results of a similar study he had undertaken. Campbell based his analysis on a much more solid knowledge of Scandinavian and Celtic, particularly Irish building customs. This had led him to indicate that the building customs of the Hebrides illustrated a mixture of Celtic and Norse elements. On this basis he suggested that,

"....it is very difficult as a rule to pronounce that a particular building type is predominantly Norse or predominantly Celtic".

(1943/4, 237)

The assumption of all these studies was that the "primitive" house-forms which existed, particularly in the Outer Hebrides, must have survived from the Middle Ages, the Scandinavian period, or earlier, and hence analysis of them could provide an insight into much earlier building traditions. It is now apparent that many of the structures examined by Roussell and others are not particularly ancient. Stoklund points out that many of them have been built in the past century, while few date back further than 1800 (1980). This is an important point since it illustrates the wide chronological gap between the sites examined and their suggested Norse or Celtic predecessors. Even in the short period since the surviving structures were built it would appear that structural changes may have occurred (Stoklund 1980).

While the validity of attempts to identify 'early' house-plans and constructional techniques can be questioned in the above manner such discussion does have value in

indicating the immense problems associated with any attempt to isolate from settlement sites elements which may be of considerable antiquity. The continued use of structural forms which may be similar to examples of Norse date or earlier means that without excavation to recover dating evidence it is difficult to isolate early sites.

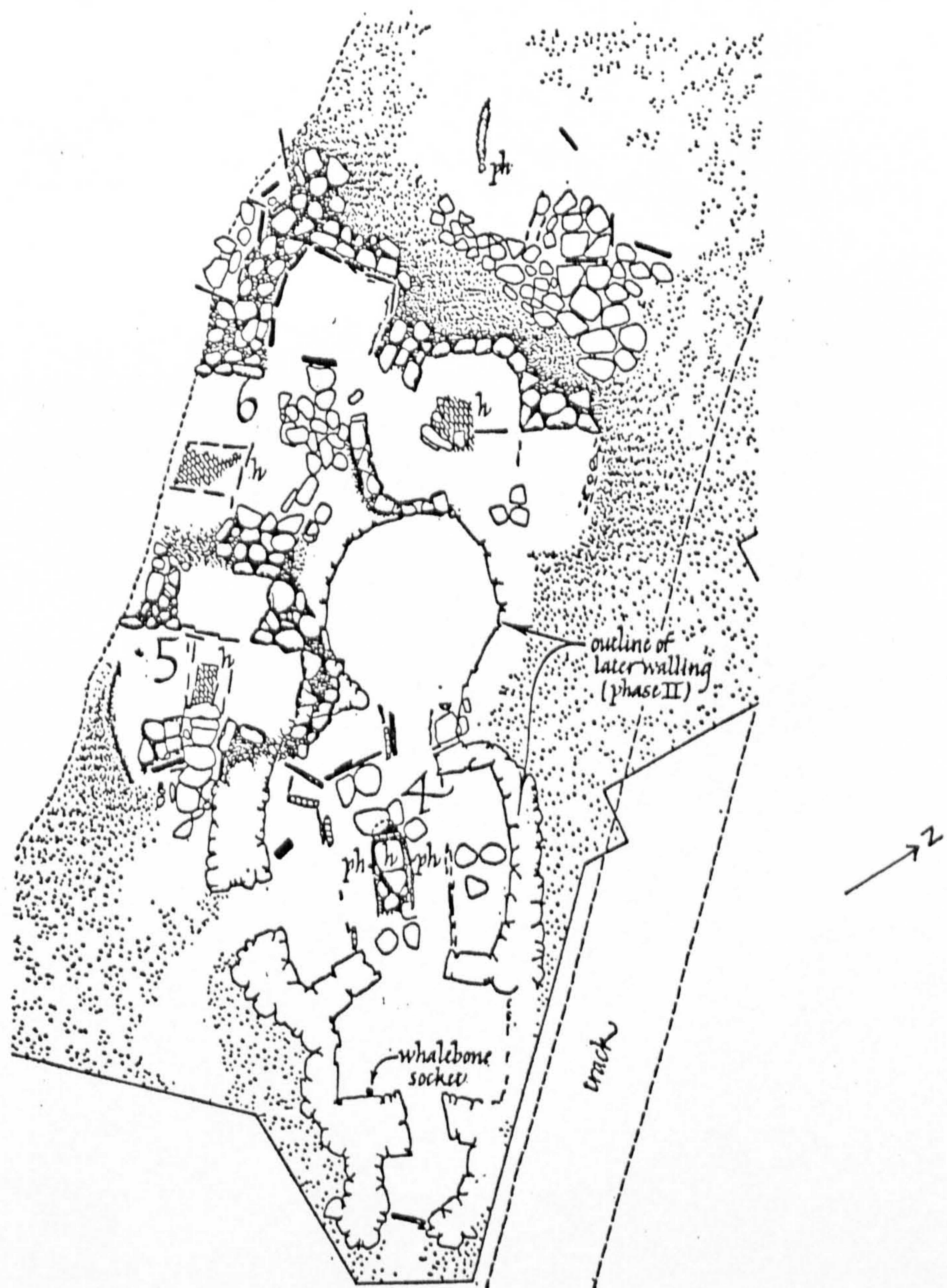
It is also likely that the identification of settlement sites which may have been inhabited by the Norse may also be made more difficult if rectangular buildings were also constructed and inhabited in the pre-Norse period. In many studies of Scottish vernacular architecture the introduction of the rectangular house is often attributed to the Norse. It would seem, however, that this view is now untenable. This point has been discussed by Ritchie who indicates the possible existence of earlier Pictish rectangular structures (1974). In her view it may have been the Early Christian Church which was partially responsible for the spread of rectangular structural forms. Elsewhere it has been suggested that the construction of rectangular churches led to growing competence in joinery techniques (Lynn 1978). These techniques could then be transferred to domestic architecture. Lynn does on to illustrate that a change from round to rectangular building plans does appear to have occurred in Ireland in the Early Historic Period, although when during this period is not specified. This type of argument, though, needs to be treated with caution since it raises a further series of problems. Lynn does not, for example, explain why joinery techniques developed for timber structures might be transferred

to, and aid the construction of turf and drystone structures, the latter being the most common building material apparently used by the Norse. Also it is difficult to explain why a rectangular structural form, developed for a religious function, should be accepted as suitable for a domestic function. This would seem to imply a reorganization of the activity spaces within the domestic interior. This, in turn, implies a changed perception of the domestic environment, and possibly a change in attitudes to activities such as food preparation (presuming these were occurring in the domestic interior). Such a change would need to be studied in detail in its own right.

Despite these problems, there appears no reason why rectangular buildings should not have been in use in the pre-Norse period. Certainly in Anglo-Saxon England rectangular buildings were in use (cf. Rahtz 1976, 66-79). Within Dalriada the evidence for the occupation of a rectangular building at Loch Glashan Crannog, Mid-Argyll in the Early Historic Period was discussed in Chapter Nine.

It is possible that the internal arrangements of domestic buildings of pre-Norse date may also have been similar to Norse examples. Fenton makes the point that the Pictish settlement of Buckquoy in Orkney consisted of a single dwelling house, with a combined barn and byre alongside (1982) (Fig. 77). Also at Buckquoy there is evidence for rectangular central hearths, and benches placed adjacent to the walls around this hearth (Ritchie 1977). The major difference between the Pictish and 'Norse' structures is the shape of the building. The former is of cellular form, with one main chamber and

Buckquoy,
ORKNEY
1970-71
phases I-II



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 metres.

Fig.78 The Pictish structure at Buckquoy, Orkney.
(from Ritchie 1977)

three smaller ones, all laid out along a central axis. The latter are rectangular. In relation to Buckquoy it is also worth noting that the 'Norse' settlement did not produce any diagnostically Scandinavian artefacts. Hence it would appear that some reorganization and reconstruction of the farmstead occurred, but it cannot be categorically stated that this was the result of Norse settlement.

The preceding discussion has indicated the many problems inherent in any detailed analysis of the location and extent of Norse settlement within Scotland. It is, however, possible to outline a research programme which might lead to the identification of Norse settlements. As Alcock and Alcock (1980) point out, this must be based upon an analysis of settlement sites bearing names containing Scandinavian elements. An important reason for this, which is not stated by them, is that other settlement sites may not have such an antiquity. Stoklund makes the important point (already noted) that many of the black-houses analysed by Roussell and others postdate the metamorphoses undergone in the Highlands and Islands as a result of the enclosure movement and agricultural improvements which were occurring from the 18th century (1980). Not only were a lot of former settlement sites abandoned then, but those which continued in occupation may have been related to differing patterns of land exploitation, since it is after these events that the vast mass of small holders and fisherfolk arose (the so-called crofters).

Within the Inner Hebrides, Alcock and Alcock examined many sites with Scandinavian names (1980). While it was not

possible to positively identify any remains of early Scandinavian settlement, it was clear that many settlement sites revealed buildings in varying states of decay, but also several phases of construction and reconstruction. These appeared to indicate a long chronology of use of settlement sites. As Alcock and Alcock point out a more detailed examination of these sites might allow the establishment of a chronology of typological development among stone-walled houses. This in turn may allow later elements of such a settlement site to be stripped away, so that a clear indication of its original form could be gained. This, then, is an important avenue along which further research should be directed. It is an approach which is not without its problems. Alcock and Alcock point out the problems inherent in any attempt to locate structural remains related to place-names containing Scandinavian elements, many of these were discussed earlier in the present chapter. Another specific problem they encountered was the disappearance of structural remains. Analysis of the site of Kirkapoll on Tiree, for example, indicated that all surface trace of settlement around the chapels here had disappeared. This had occurred despite the fact that an Argyll Estate map of 1768-9 indicated the existence of a small township of a dozen buildings on the site. This serves to remind us that it is possible for settlement sites to disappear without surface trace.

In attempting any analysis of the extent and location of Norse settlement the nature of the settlers and their relationship with the native inhabitants must be considered in detail. To begin by discussing the reasons for the initial

raids, and migrations from Scandinavia. One reason for Scandinavian activity abroad appears to have been due to over-population and the social and economic pressures related to this (cf. Loyn 1977, 19 f). This could have stimulated both raiding and migration. The raiding process would have provided wealth to the community as well as providing temporary employment for younger sons, thus possibly removing some pressure on the land. The acquisition of wealth in this manner presumably also was important within Scandinavia as a conferer of status.

The first raids were on a small scale (Sawyer 1982, 80) but were soon to be followed by larger, more organized ones. In 837 A.D. and later Irish Annals report larger attacks by 60 or more ships. It has been argued that it would be difficult for such a large fleet of ships to travel en masse from Scandinavia, and hence they may have come from bases established in the Hebrides (Sawyer 1982, 81). The war-like nature of the raiding parties suggests that their relationships with the native communities was hostile. Presumably if they did establish settlements, these may have been located on land wrested by force from natives.

There is some evidence to suggest that among the migrants who may have moved permanently to the Atlantic Islands there may have been members of the Norwegian nobility who saw their own positions in Norway threatened by the growing power of the Norwegian King. Documentary evidence suggests that it was King Harold Finehair of Norway (c.870-945 A.D.) who set about a major unification of the many petty Kingdoms which existed in the area to form the Kingdom of Norway (Jones 1968,

79). The Icelandic Saga, Laxdaela Saga, says of Harold,

"....he rose to such power that neither provincial Kings nor other men of stature could prosper in Norway or retain their rank and title without his sanction ..."

(Magnusson and Pálsson 1969, 48)

It would appear the saga was written down around 1245 A.D., and although recording much earlier events, the historical framework it suggests is thought to be reliable (Magnusson and Pálsson 1969, 1-28). One of the main characters portrayed in this work is one Ketil Flatnose who had been a powerful man in Norway, but had left because of King Harold. The saga suggests that Ketil Flatnose ...

"....went west across the sea to Scotland because, he said, he thought it was good living there. He knew the country well, for he had raided there extensively".

(Magnusson and Pálsson 1969, 49)

One of the reasons for the "migration" of men like Ketil was that they saw opportunities to develop their position in the Hebrides in a manner they now found impossible in Norway.

Another example of a Norwegian nobleman who established himself in Scotland has been suggested by Hamilton. He notes an Irish source which seems to indicate that a Chieftain from Norway, Ragnvald, was established in Orkney from about 860 A.D., after he had been driven from his home by trouble (1956, 93). The establishment of such powerful men in Scotland may not have occurred peaceably since their political ambitions may have led to conflict with locally established leaders and patterns of political control.

In contrast to the above, it may be that many other Scandinavians were of peaceable nature. Earlier it was argued

that some may have been traders or merchants engaged in trade between Ireland and the Scandinavian homelands. The activities of these must be seen as a second phase of Scandinavian activity, since such practices would have proven difficult in the initial periods of hostility and raiding. If these traders established settlements they may have done so peaceably, settling on available land, or establishing some form of relationship with the native inhabitants, since peaceful conditions would have been a pre-requisite of the establishment of a trading network. It was argued earlier that these settlers may actually have been encouraged by the native communities because of the wealth they may have brought with them.

Other Scandinavians may have migrated from their homelands primarily in search of new lands upon which to settle. They may also have been content to settle peaceably among the native communities.

A recent paper by Sawyer is of interest in the present context since it considers in detail the relationship between the Irish and the Vikings (1982). Icelandic documentary evidence such as the *Íslendigabók*, 'The Book of the Icelanders' was used to present a picture of Norse society on Iceland in the 9th century. It was argued that Iceland had to be considered rather than Norway itself, since the documentary evidence for Norway is of later date. Sawyer goes on to argue for various similarities between the social and political systems of the Norse in Iceland and the Irish. As there would appear to have been a similar social and political system in Ireland on the west of Scotland in the Early Historic

Period, Sawyer's conclusions may be extended to the area presently under study. Such similarities would have allowed the Norse to settle in more easily alongside native communities. The major differences between the groups were language and religion. The latter may, however, have soon been resolved since the Scandinavians appear to have been converted to Christianity rapidly. (cf. Chapter Twelve).

The discussion in this chapter, then, has argued that the relationship between Norse and Native could have varied from area to area, and was dependent on a variety of factors. This is an important point to bear in mind, since discussion of the nature of Norse establishment in Scotland has formerly been polarized towards two distinct viewpoints.

The first assumes violent intrusion by the Norse, which disrupted the pre-existent settlement pattern, and involved the seizure of lands. Its followers have included Shetelig (1954) and Wainwright (1962). Most recently Crawford has summarized discussion on the nature of the relationship between Norse and Native in which, in a rather unbalanced polemic, he takes this line of approach (1981).

The second group assumes that Norse establishment took place over a protracted time scale, and involved a peaceful co-existence of incomers and natives, with the Norse slowly taking over. Followers of this line of argument here included Marstrander (1915); Ritchie (1975) and Loyn (1977). Proponents of this theory tend to see the incomers as peaceful farmers without weapons or lords, who may have settled in islands which were either empty or underpopulated.

The present work would suggest that the search for a single explanation of the relationship between these two groups may be seen as somewhat naïve since this could vary according to local circumstance.

It is interesting, at this point, to consider the archaeological evidence for contact between Norse and Native in some detail, since this has been used to illustrate differing relationships. At four sites at least, settlement sites of Norse date have been found to overlies Iron-age or Pictish settlements, these being Jarlshof, Buckquoy, Birsay, and the Udal. Because work still continues at Birsay, and a full report has yet to be published, the present discussion will focus only on the other three sites.

At Jarlshof it appears that occupation of some of the wheelhouses and passage houses which had been constructed around the Iron-Age broch, continued until the arrival of the Norse (Hamilton 1956, 91). The Norse settlement was established north of the pre-existing settlement, and on the landward side of the site. Some very slight evidence for continuity of population from the pre-Norse to the Norse periods does exist. This is indicated by the construction of one of a small rectangular building adjacent, but above one of the native huts. This is located on the western periphery of the site. The rectangularity of the structure was argued to suggest a Norse origin, but the building traditions seem similar to those of the native settlement which underlaid it. Artefactual evidence from the underlying structures seemed to indicate possible occupation into the early Norse period (Hamilton 1956, 89). This merging of

traditions was argued by Hamilton to indicate that the native population may have remained at the site, but as serfs (1956, 111). Elsewhere he argues that the evidence suggests a peaceful takeover of the site (1956, 106).

At Buckquoy in Orkney, a series of cellular 'Pictish' structures were directly overlain by a series of rectangular structures. The latter were argued to be of Norse origin (Ritchie 1974; 1977). The latter produced a range of artefacts, the most common of which were small bone pins and composite antler and bone combs (Ritchie 1974). The combs are both double sided, which is suggestive of native rather than Norse origin, as Ritchie points out. Indeed it is only the rectangular house-plans which possibly suggested a Norse settlement site.

Ritchie argued that the inhabitants of the new settlement had close links with the native population. This was supported by the fact that there were no apparent signs of destruction to suggest that the abandonment of the last Pictish house had been anything other than peaceful. On re-examination of the evidence from this site, however, it is far from conclusive. Part of the site had disappeared into the sea at some stage making the relationship of the final Pictish house to the first Norse one somewhat uncertain (Ritchie 1974). Despite these limitations Ritchie used the site to indicate a peaceful relationship between Norse and Native.

At the Udal, North Uist in contrast, the evidence has been used to argue a hostile relationship between Norse and Native. Here a settlement of cellular houses of immediately

Pre-Norse date were directly overlain by a Norse settlement. The latter is indicated by rectangular buildings, and a range of artefacts which include some specifically Norse ones. (Graham Campbell 1974). The primary Norse level has a radio-carbon date of 859 ± 40 a.d. (Q-1136) (Crawford 1981). Crawford argues that the deposits excavated revealed that the Norse structures had been constructed directly above those of the earlier structures, without a time gap between them (1981). This, he goes on to suggest, indicates a forceful take-over of the settlement by the incoming Norse, which was sudden and totally obliterative in terms of the local material culture. This explains, to him, the construction of a structure he refers to as a fort at this period. This was a massive drystone enclosure 7 m. across, built in a new constructional technique (Crawford & Switsur 1977). Located at the interface of the pre-Norse and Norse levels on the South Tell, he suggests it represents the intruders' first positive action on take-over (1977). It must be said, in relation to this structure though, that on the basis of published evidence, it could equally well be a late dun-type structure built by the natives in defence against the Vikings.

Thus it would seem that excavated sites would seem to indicate differing relationships between the Norse and Natives. The three sites discussed represent too small a sample to be readily taken to indicate the nature of this relationship between two groups of people throughout Scotland. Preceding discussion in the present work argued that it may be unwise to expect a simple explanation of the relationship of Norse

and Native which can be applied to the west of Scotland.

In the majority of studies of Norse activity in Scotland, imprecise knowledge about the extent of settlement and activity in the Early Historic Period in the area under consideration has led to these Norse studies being conducted within somewhat of a vacuum. The present Chapter has attempted to draw together the various strands of evidence which can be used to discuss the Norse impact on Argyll, as well as the various problems inherent in its use. An attempt has been made to examine this evidence in relation to the extent of settlement and activity in the Early Historic Period. This has indicated that within this relatively small geographical area the Norse impact, and extent of settlement and activity may have varied from area to area. In general, however, the Norse appear to have been restricted mainly to the Western Islands, those areas of the Kingdom of Dalriada which may have been most weakened by the union of the crowns of Dalriada and Pictland in the 9th century.

Chapter Sixteen: Footnotes.

(1) A possible exception to this is the site of Machrins, Colonsay, discussed in Chapter Eleven.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

LATER PATTERNS OF SETTLEMENT AND LAND EXPLOITATION

The sites, artefacts and history discussed so far in this thesis date broadly speaking, to the 1st millennium A.D., although some of the defended sites may have had an earlier ancestry. Obviously this leaves a considerable period of time prior to the present day, a period in which settlement in the area continued, and new political, social and economic developments occurred to influence the inhabitants of the area. Detailed discussion of these later events falls outside the scope of the present work. It is clear, however, that later patterns of settlement and land-holding cannot be totally ignored since they may hold important keys to understanding earlier patterns. In certain instances settlement sites which now appear of recent date may have had considerable antiquity. Elsewhere continued exploitation of the land may have destroyed earlier settlement sites and patterns of land exploitation.

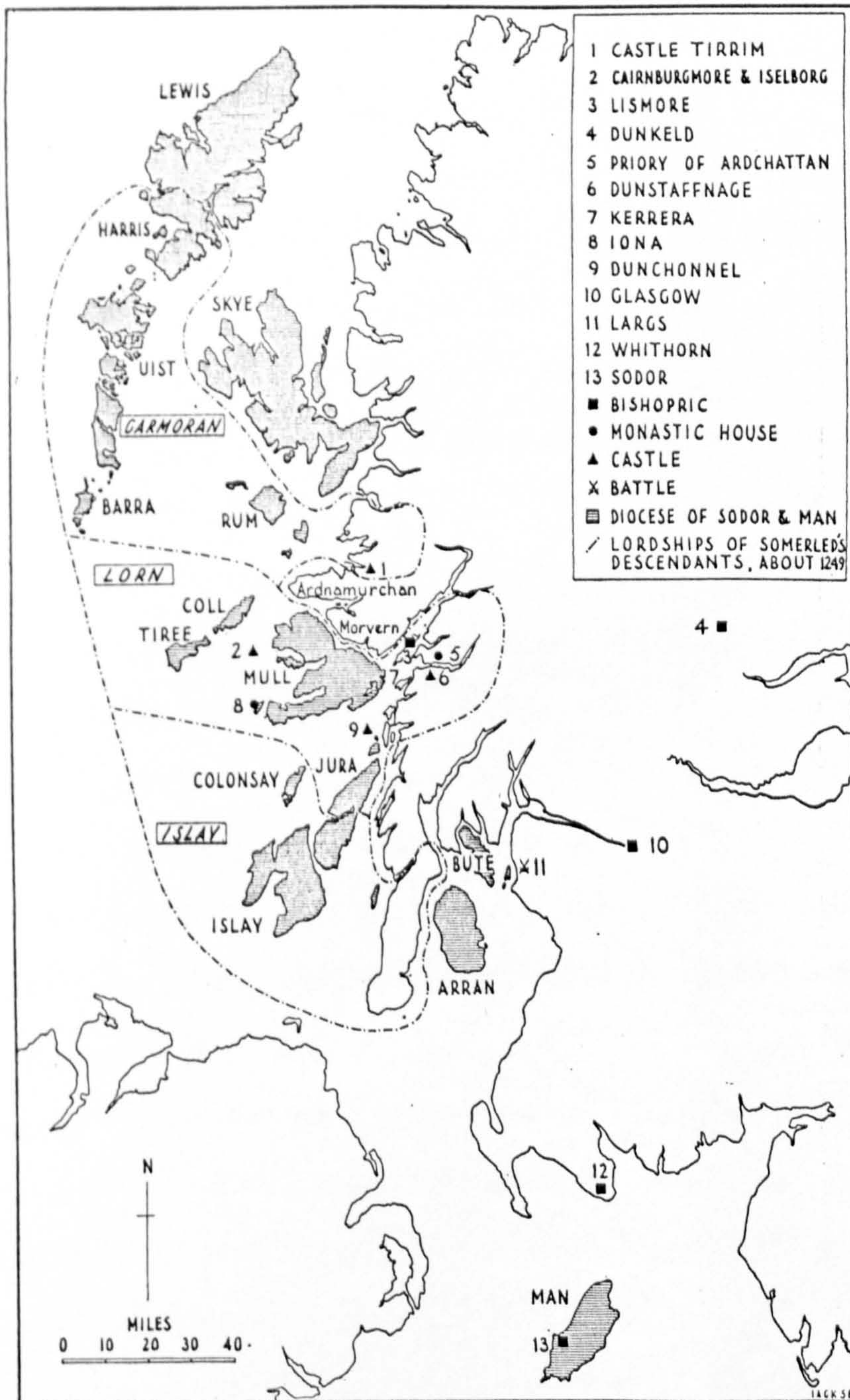
The history of the area between the 9th and 13th centuries is dominated by the development of the medieval lordship of the Isles. In Gaelic tradition the title King or Lord of the Isles goes back to Somerled who lived in the 12th century (Munro 1981) but Sellar has indicated that his descent may extend back to Gofraith, Chief of Airgiolla, Lord of the Hebrides who died in 853 A.D. Of course it can now be seen that the latter suggestion may be somewhat false. The genealogies upon which this suggestion was based may represent deliberate manipulations of the evidence designed to give Somerled's

claims to office some validity, by tracing his descent back to a recognized former leader of the area.

Somerled's name is Norse, meaning 'Summer Warrior'. An analysis of his genealogy indicates that he had a Scottish father, thus he may represent one of the hybrid group of people who developed in the area as a result of intermarriage between Norse and Native. While Somerled may have had some Norse ancestry, his relationship with the Norse Crown was far from friendly, and it was as a result of warfare against the Norse King of Man that Somerled acquired a large portion of the Kingdom of the Isles.

The creation of the Lordship of the Isles serves to illustrate the weakness of both the Norwegian crowns in Argyll in this early medieval period. Despite Norwegian claims to the islands developed towards the end of the 1st millennium A.D. and continued Scottish claims to at least the mainland areas, neither group were able to prevent the rise to power of Somerled.

On the death of Somerled the lordship was divided among his sons and grandsons, who formed three major branches, the Clan Dougall who were associated with Mull and Lorn, the Clan Donald who held Islay, Kintyre and Morvern, and the Clan Ruari who held the Uists and Garmoran (Munro 1981) (Fig. 79). The lordship was ruled by a peripatetic council, the main meeting place of which was the island of Eilean na Comhairle, Loch Finlaggan, Islay (cf. Crawford 1983). Throughout the lordship a series of massively constructed castles were located at strategic points. These included Aros Castle, Mull; Ardtornish Castle, also on Mull and Dunyvaig on Islay.



The western seaboard in the 13th century.

Fig 79 The territorial extent of the Lordship of the Isles in the 13th century. (from Duncan and Brown 1957)

None of these castles are recorded prior to the 14th century although it has been argued that on stylistic grounds the Castles of Aros and Ardtornish were constructed in the 13th century (R.C.A.H.M.S. 1980, 173; 177).

While much of Argyll may have been controlled during this period by the major lords of the Isles and their descendents, areas such as Knapdale and Glassary on the mainland were controlled by lesser lineages (Duncan and Brown 1957).

The Norwegian crown relinquished its claims to control in Argyll in 1266 under the terms of the Treaty of Perth, under which Argyll was sold to the Scottish Crown. As a result of this attempts were made to integrate the area into the Scottish Kingdom, and a system of sheriffdoms was established by the Scottish King to control the area (Duncan and Brown 1957). In actual fact, however, this had little effect on the power of the Lords of the Isles, who were to remain predominant in the area until the 15th century.

Many fortified castles constructed by the Lords of the Isles and their descendents have been identified in Argyll. The majority of these have been attributed, usually on architectural grounds to the 14th century or later. The earliest, however, is Castle Sween in Knapdale which has architectural characteristics of the late 11th century, and hence has a reasonable claim to be the earliest existing castle in Scotland (Cruden 1960, 22).

The location of such fortifications allows us to consider the extent and main centres of power of the leading nobility of the Lordship of the Isles and their mainland

counterparts during the medieval period. In the absence of detailed documentation, though, it is impossible to indicate clearly the relationship between such sites and the mass of population of the area. We do not, for example, know the size of estates which may have been held by such nobility, nor the manner of their exploitation, and the pattern of client settlements which may have been related to these settlements. Duncan and Brown suggested of the area that,

"we shall probably never be able to recover any general account of the social organisation of the area before the 16th century. The status of the peasantry and their relationship to the aristocracy are problems which may never be solved"

(1957)

The failure to identify and examine settlement sites which date to the 11th century and later is a major problem in its own right. In relation to the present work this failure means that it is impossible at times to distinguish sites which date to the 1st millennium A.D., and those which may date to between the 11th and 18th centuries. Taking one example, we do not know the origins of the small nucleated settlement groups, the ruins of which are frequently seen in the Scottish Landscape. Most of the deserted settlements seen within Argyll indicate the remnants of stone buildings (or at least stone-footed buildings). It is often suggested that these do not pre-date the agricultural improvements in Scotland which were occurring from about 1750 (cf. Fairhurst and Dunbar 1971). Prior to this it is suggested that many buildings were constructed largely of timber and turf, which

may have decayed without obvious trace since their abandonment.

Documentary sources surviving from the 18th century and later occasionally contain reference to the use of turf and timber for constructional purposes. Some have been summarized by Dunbar (1966, 223). Of direct relevance to Argyll several references in Argyll are worth citing. Gailey notes references contained in Mitchell's account of Tours in Scotland, of the construction of oval sod and wicker huts in Argyll in the 1790's (1961, 293). He also notes that the use of such impermanent building materials survived until the early 19th century in Southend, Kintyre for the O.S.A. records the existence of wattled partitions and mud walled houses in the area in the 1790's. Even buildings of stone could have been destroyed without much trace, because of the failure to use constructional trenches in their construction, as well as the common use of earth as the only flooring material.

The simple nature of houses in the West is also noted by Pennant, who in his account of tours in Scotland in the mid 18th century, records a description of a peasant house on Islay, which he describes as being,

"....made of loose stones, without chimnies, without doors, excepting the faggot opposed to the wind at one or other of the apertures, permitting the smoke to escape through the other...."

(Pennant 1774)

Descriptions of the period indicate the poverty of many of these peasants, a fact presumably also reflected in the type of houses and buildings they constructed and used. The use of such impermanent building materials may also be a

reflection of the fact that settlements were only occupied for a short period of time. It appears that often tenants did not hold leases to the land they occupied, or else had very short ones. This being the case they often moved from site to site as their leases ran out (Dunbar 1966, 223). In many instances it was customary for tenants and cotters to carry with them in such moves the more portable structural elements of their houses such as roof timbers, which would leave their former residences immediately open to the processes of erosion.

While the main structural components of such buildings may have decayed without trace or in the case of stone, been robbed from sites, it is possible that former settlement sites could be located by identifying the artificial platforms which may have been constructed to place the buildings upon. This has been discussed in relation to Dumfriesshire by Corser (1982). Alcock and Alcock noted the presence of house platforms with no obvious structural remains upon them at several sites in the Hebrides (1980). Examination of the settlement on land at Loch Glashan revealed that it had been constructed upon a revetted terrace (Fairhurst 1969).

The use of building materials which could decay without trace is unlikely just to be a feature of the 11th century and later. Earlier discussion in the present work indicated that this may be one reason for our apparent failure to identify many sites occupied within the Kingdom of Dalriada in the 1st millennium A.D.

While it is clear that the agricultural improvements did bring about rebuilding and architectural developments

within Scotland, it is by no means unequivocal that the remnants of all the deserted must post-date these advances. Alcock and Alcock noted many deserted settlements within the Inner Hebrides which seem to illustrate various phases of reconstruction and rebuilding, suggesting a lengthy chronology of usage (1980). It is often difficult to envisage the whole of the settlement history indicated by such sites fitting into the period post-dating the mid 18th century which structural improvements were first being introduced. As Alcock and Alcock point out in certain instances these sites have Norse names, and hence a much more ancient ancestry may be inferred.

It is worth noting here that the medieval site at Loch Glashan in Mid-Argyll, which lies adjacent to the crannog site discussed earlier in the present work, produced evidence for four rectangular stone buildings on excavation (Fairhurst 1969). These were associated with glazed pottery, much of which dates to the 13th and 14th century. This illustrates that buildings of medieval date were not necessarily always constructed of perishable materials. Also without excavation the site may well have been classed of much later date because of these stone buildings.

Thus it is clear that further work, particularly excavation, must be conducted on deserted settlement sites. As well as providing some idea of the post 11th century settlement of the area, this work may well indicate sites of Norse or earlier origin, and hence aid our study of the 1st millennium A.D. As such, this work must be seen as a major pre-requisite of future settlement studies in Argyll.

Another reason why later patterns of settlement and land-holding must be considered in the present work is because of the likelihood that these may have destroyed traces of earlier activity within the area. The nature of the landscape, soils and climate of the area have, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three, constrained human efforts at settlement and cultivation in Argyll. Continuity of use of settlement sites, and cultivation of available suitable land would lead to the destruction of earlier patterns. The varied state of preservation of many of the stone-built defended sites in the area, which range from sites where only the foundation course of walling may be visible, to sites where stretches of walling may stand up to two metres in height would seem to indicate stone-robbing since their abandonment. Often field-walls or structural remains clearly of secondary date, lie adjacent to the sites in question indicating the re-use of this stone. It was suggested earlier, however, that it would have taken much effort to remove all trace of a site such as a dun completely. In a situation where stone which could be utilised for building purposes is relatively common, as in Argyll, it is difficult to envisage stone from existing structures being transported great distances from deserted sites. The nature of the terrain, if nothing else, would make this a very time-consuming and laborious occupation.

While destruction of massively constructed stone-built settlement sites is unlikely to have been complete, traces of more ephemeral structures may have been lost. It was suggested earlier that a range of settlements other than

fortified sites may have been in use in the 1st millennium A.D. These may have been less massively constructed and utilised a range of less permanent constructional materials such as turf and timber. These sites may have been more easily destroyed by stone-robbing, and ploughing out of the platforms on which they were constructed.

Traces of former agricultural practices could also have easily been destroyed during later periods. Widespread cultivation of the land continued until the introduction of sheep, and the conversion of large areas into sheep-walks which was occurring from the 18th century. This being the case it is impossible to assess accurately the extent of patterns of cultivation which might date to the 1st millennium A.D.

One of the new introductions which characterises the agricultural improvements in Scotland was that of improved drainage technology. In such a wet environment the development of improved methods of removing excess water from the land may have led to the intensification and extension of areas of cultivation. Particularly relevant to the present study is the drainage of areas of land which had a long history of excessive waterlogging. Examples would include the Aros Moss in Southern Kintyre, and the Moss of Achnacree in Northern Lorn. The remnants of former crannog sites have been recorded in each area (cf. R.C.A.H.M.S. 1971, 94-5; 1974, 94-5). Drainage and cultivation of these areas would appear to have led to the destruction of such settlement sites.

On a general level, the absence of detailed documentation recording changing levels of population and patterns of land

exploitation in the area make it extremely difficult to assess with any accuracy the destruction of former settlement sites of interest. Any analysis of this must be based upon field-work. Detailed examination of all traces of former land-use within restricted areas may allow the identification of areas in which destruction of earlier sites is less noticeable. This may, however, also indicate areas less suited to settlement, and hence much poorer in comparison to other sites.

A final point which must be discussed in the present chapter is whether it is possible to identify systems of land-tenure and assessment in the area which may have had their origins in the 1st millennium A.D. On first consideration such a possibility might appear of value to the present work. It might be thought that the identification of land-holdings which may have originated during the Early Historic Period might then allow the identification of the settlement sites from which such land was exploited.⁽¹⁾

In relation to Argyll the work of Lamont on the Old Land Denominations on the Island of Islay (1957; 1958) must be noted. Lamont undertook a detailed analysis of available estate papers and valuations which indicated systems of land-tenure on the island. The earliest of these documents appears to date to 1494, but the rest are much later. Lamont suggested that an analysis of later systems of land tenure allowed the identification of much earlier units fossilised within later records. The latter he suggested could be paralleled in written descriptions of land-holding (or rather

the number of animals maintained) which were recorded in old Irish legal tracts. Unfortunately a major error exists within Lamont's work which is related to a mis-reading of these legal tracts. Much of Lamont's work is related to an analysis of the number of animals supported on land. He attempts to equate records from Islay with a unit of land termed a cumal which is recorded in the Crith Gablach legal text. Lamont makes the mistake of equating a cumal with the land for three cows and their followers. In fact the actual text states the figure to have been seven cows (MacNeill 1924) hence Lamont's further calculations are clearly misguided.⁽²⁾

A more general criticism which could be levelled against such work is that it is questionable how accurate a reflection of real conditions the law tracts are. It is clear that they often afford a highly schematized view of society and its organisation. It is questionable to what extent a uniform system of land tenure may have existed throughout Ireland and the West of Scotland. Land-tenure must relate to the nature of society and political control within the area. Land was normally held by the kin-group, and could not be alienated without the permission of the whole of the group (MacNiocaill 1972: 50 f). As lineage leader, ultimate control of the land may have been seen as the prerogative of the King of Dalriada. It is clear, however, that he could not have controlled the exploitation of the whole Kingdom directly, it being too vast. Hence some form of management may have existed, this may have varied from area to area.

In discussion of the granting of lands to the Church, it was argued that in Wales and Ireland at least, it may

have been possible for persons other than the King to alienate lands for this purpose. This may indicate a differing system of land tenure or ownership.

If the acquisition of the Kingdom of Dalriada came about in the piecemeal manner suggested in the present work, and various subgroups were recognized as existing within the area in genealogical accounts, it is possible that these subgroups controlled their own lands, and exploited them in differing manners.

It is clear that the study of the origins of systems of land-holding in Northern Britain are as a whole still in its infancy, and is still a matter of debate among scholars working within the field. This being the case detailed discussion of it cannot be presented in the present work.

In conclusion it can be seen that the present study must pay credence to possible patterns of settlement and land-tenure which may post-date the 1st millennium A.D., since in certain instances the latter may provide keys to an understanding of earlier patterns, from which indeed they may have evolved, or which they may have destroyed. It is clear, however, that there are major failings in our understanding of these later patterns which in turn make the present study more problematic.

Chapter Seventeen: Footnotes.

(1) I am grateful to Peter Hill for discussing the antiquity of patterns of land-holding with me.

(2) I am grateful to A. Easson, Department of Medieval History, University of Edinburgh, for commenting upon this.