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# **Rural Settlement in the Age of Reason**

**An archaeology of the southern Scottish Highlands from the  
sixteenth to nineteenth centuries A.D.**

**Christopher James Dalglish**

Submitted for the degree of PhD in the Department of Archaeology, University of  
Glasgow, September 2000

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## Abstract

From the eighteenth century, the material environment of the southern Scottish Highlands underwent radical change. This material change formed part of a wider process of social change known as Improvement. In this, a re-ordering of space within the house and throughout the wider landscape was intimately linked to change in the daily routines of the farming population and, thus, to change in the ways in which people related to each other.

Prior to Improvement, people routinely experienced their world as part of the community of the farming township or as part of the family. Houses, settlements, and fields were organised in such a way as to maintain these forms of experience. Against this background, an ideology of clanship, that is of a wider community, and concepts of hereditary tenure appeared as common sense. Improvement sought to re-order routine in such a way as to privilege experience of the world as an individual, apart from the community and the family. With this achieved, an ideology of the individual and concepts of private property would in turn be privileged. Improvement sought, in this way, to introduce capitalism to the countryside of the southern Highlands.

This thesis is in part an exploration of this process of Improvement through two case studies, in Kintyre and in Kilfinan parish. Changes to the material environment and to routine practice are traced for these areas; the intellectual context of Improvement, the Scottish Enlightenment, is discussed as the source of inspiration and justification for Improvement on the landowners part; and the specific motives of the various Improving landowners are explored as the process is restored to its specific social and historical contexts. However, to conceive of Improvement as imposed by a small group of landlords on a passive population is to misunderstand the dynamics of that process. As such, the penultimate chapter focuses on understanding how that population accepted, rejected or manipulated their landlord's initiatives in negotiating their position as occupants of the land. Improvement in practice took on specific local forms that were primarily defined in relation to the question of land rights.

The narratives of Improvement constructed in what is to follow are of more than parochial interest. They form part of the global story of the emergence of capitalism and capitalist society. A major aim of this thesis is to consider how we should go about writing



social histories and archaeologies of capitalism. There are two main conclusions that will be drawn. First, that capitalism (an ideology of the individual made knowable in routine practice) should be differentiated from capitalist society (where capitalism is widespread, but not necessarily universally or homogenously accepted). This distinction allows us to perceive alternative forms of social relationship within capitalist societies. In accepting the distinction, writing histories of capitalism involves considering how capitalism emerges and interacts with those alternative forms of social relationship in particular historical situations. The second main conclusion is that, in accepting the definition of capitalism given above, archaeology has a significant role in understanding capitalist societies as it has the material environment and routine practice as one of its basic concerns. It is in those environments and through that practice that the conditions allowing or denying acceptance of the ideology of the individual are created.



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past.

Responsibility for any mistakes or omissions is, of course, mine.



# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **Introduction to the material under study**

The specific concern of this thesis is with the changing spatial patterning of settlement, landscape, and domestic space in Highland Scotland through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was the period of agricultural Improvement, when such material change formed part of a wider process of economic change involving the commercialisation of agriculture, the rise to prominence of the lease system and of private property. In social terms, it saw the restructuring of daily routines along individual rather than communal lines, and much else. The process of Improvement will be explored through two case studies, focusing on Kintyre and on the parish of Kilfinan, Cowal, both of which are in the southwest Highlands (figure 1.1).

Kintyre is a peninsula projecting from the southwest mainland of Argyll into the Atlantic and toward Ireland, which is only 22km distant (see RCAHMS 1971: 1-3 for an introduction to the area; figure 1.2; plates 1.1 and 1.2). The peninsula is some 65km long and varies in breadth from 9 to 15km along most of its length. It is connected to the mainland by a 1.5km wide isthmus between East and West Loch Tarbert. A spine of peat-covered high ground (up to 455m in height) runs down the middle of the peninsula and is severed to the south by a Lowland plain, the Laggan, connecting the east and west coasts (plate 1.3). To the south of the Laggan the ground rises again, formed in part by the Mull of Kintyre. For most of the length of Kintyre, the high ground is bordered to the west by an interrupted coastal plain and the shelf of a raised beach. On the eastern side of the peninsula, the high ground descends more steeply to the shore, with only occasional patches of more gradually sloping ground. The interior of the high ground is penetrated by a number of glens (plate 1.4). For this thesis, I have concentrated on southern Kintyre as this is where the House of Argyll's holdings were concentrated. It is the social history of this estate that is my primary concern.





Figure 1.1: Location of the study areas, Kintyre and Kilfinan.



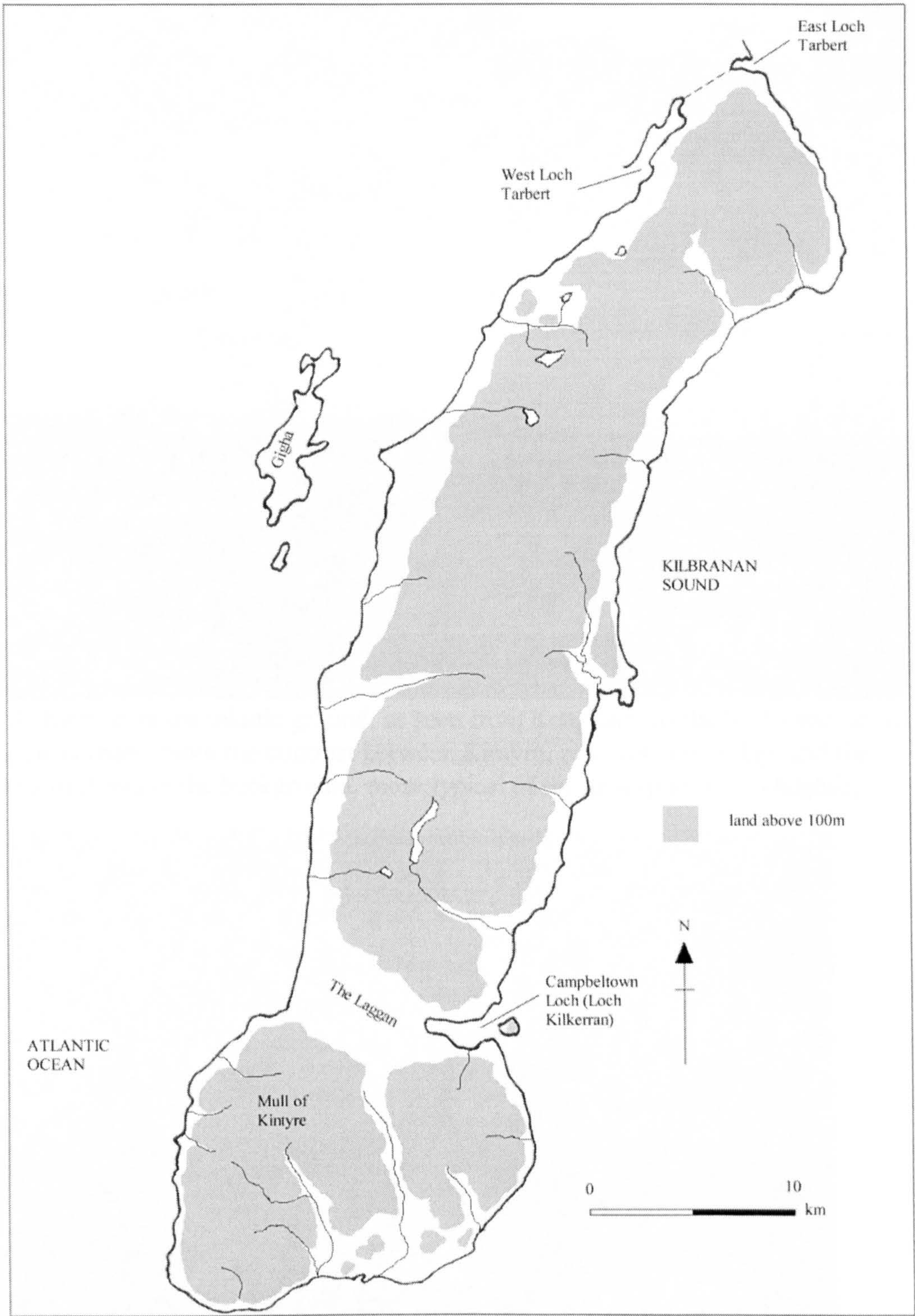


Figure 1.2: The peninsula of Kintyre.





Plate 1.1: Kintyre, in the middle ground, as seen from Knapdale (to the N/W) and across West Loch Tarbert. Note the contrast between Kintyre, relatively low-lying, and the mountains of Arran in the background, more typical of the area (photo: C. Dalglish).



Plate 1.2: The northern coast of Ireland, as seen from the southern tip of Kintyre (photo: C. Dalglish).





Plate 1.3: The Laggan, Kintyre. Draining in the period of Improvement has allowed this previously boggy land to be cultivated and to become the focus of rural settlement in southern Kintyre. The level nature of the Laggan also allowed the Improvers to reshape the landscape along strikingly geometric lines (photo: C. Dalglish).



Plate 1.4: Borgadale Glen, Kintyre. One of the many glens that penetrates the interior of the peninsula from the coast (photo: C. Dalglish)



Kilfinan parish is situated in the southwest corner of Cowal, which is an area projecting from the southern mainland of Argyll and lying to the east of Kintyre. The parish has a maximum length of some 23km and is 9.5km at widest (figure 1.3). It is bounded to the south and west by Loch Fyne, across which it faces Kintyre and Knapdale. To the east it is bounded in its southern half by the Kyles of Bute and in its northern half by Glendaruel. For the most part, the ground is rough and hilly, to a maximum height of 454m. However, there are pockets of low-lying and more gently undulating ground in coastal areas and, thus, confined to the western and southeastern parts of the parish (plates 1.5 and 1.6). The low ground of Glendaruel falls just outside of the parish boundary.

Kintyre was chosen for study for specific historical reasons. Firstly, it was one of the first areas in the Highlands where Improvement began. Secondly, its largest estate belonged to the Campbell Dukes of Argyll in the period of Improvement, but the peninsula had traditionally been Clan Donald territory and access to its resources and the loyalty of its population had been disputed for centuries prior to Improvement. The area was chosen in order to explore the idea that Improvement was a strategy of some landlords in settling such social and territorial disputes in their favour. This idea had been one focus of my undergraduate dissertation, on rural settlement in the region of Loch Lomond (Dalglish 1997).

Kilfinan was chosen for practical and historical reasons. Historically, Improvement came to Kilfinan much later than in Kintyre, perhaps a half century or more later. It was considered that this chronological difference would provide for an interesting comparative study, where the separation in time between Improvement in the two areas might situate the process in two quite different social contexts. The basic concern was to consider the possibility that Improvement was a process initiated in different cases and at different times to address specific local concerns, that it was not a monolithic process. Kilfinan parish was also practically inviting as an existing archaeological survey, covering settlement of the Improvement period, exists, providing a convenient entry to the material (Atkinson, Driscoll, and Watson 1993). As the survey was carried out by Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division, access to first hand knowledge of the area was readily available.



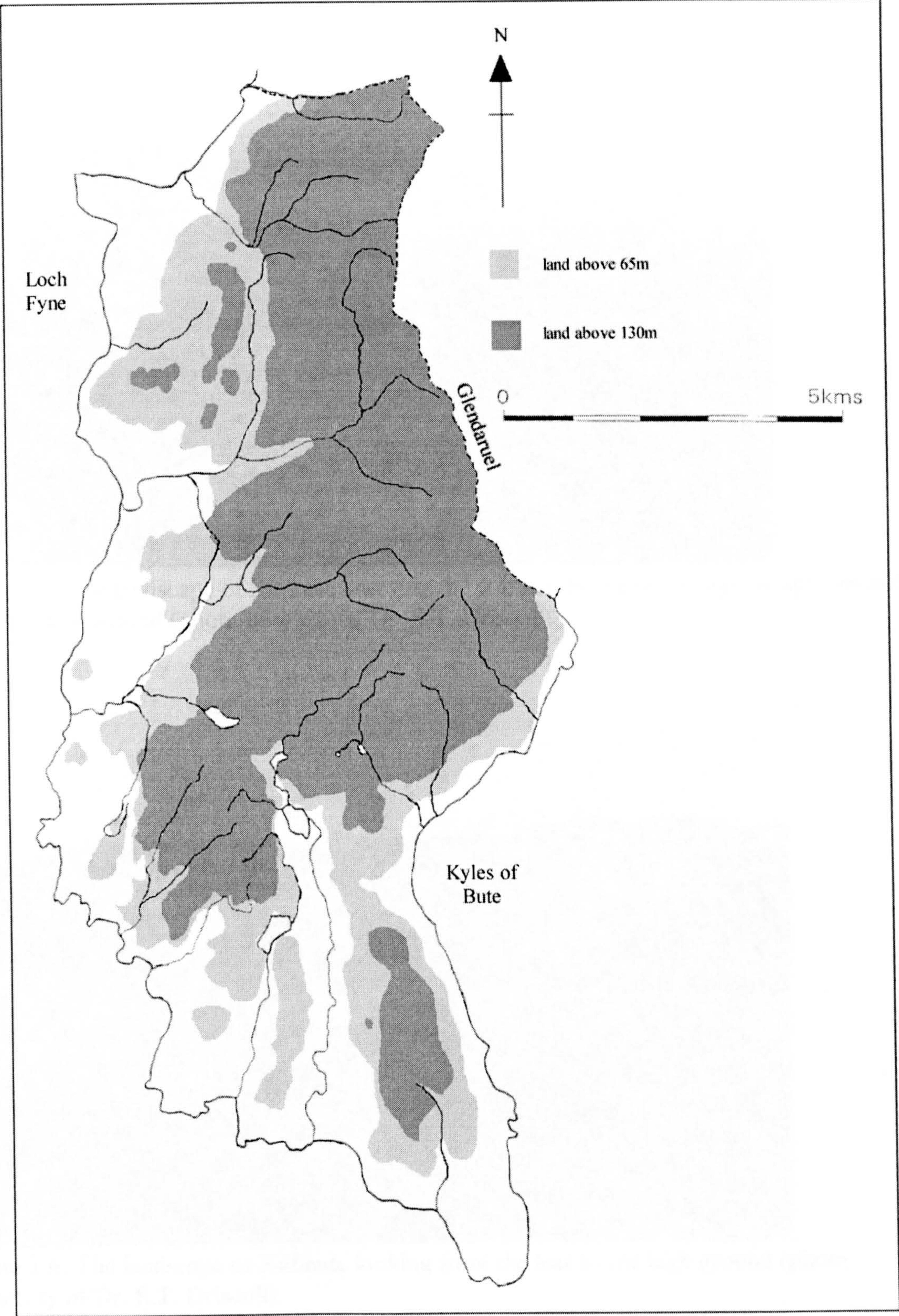


Figure 1.3: The parish of Kilfinan, Cowal.





Plate 1.5: The landscape of Kilfinan, showing the contrast between the high, rough ground and the low ground (photo courtesy of Dr. S.T. Driscoll).



Plate 1.6: The landscape of Kilfinan, looking from the low to the high ground (photo courtesy of Dr. S.T. Driscoll).



## General aims of the thesis

This thesis is situated within the tradition of *rural settlement studies* in Scotland. The term rural settlement studies is widely accepted as defining a sub-discipline within archaeology that focuses on Medieval and later settlement (e.g. note the subtitle of a recent edited volume *Townships to Farmsteads. Rural Settlement Studies in Scotland, England and Wales* (Atkinson, Banks, and MacGregor (eds) 2000)). In Scotland, the process of Improvement has long been the primary thematic concern of such studies, although the dearth of knowledge on Medieval settlement has increasingly been the focus of discussion. As such, this thesis has traditional disciplinary subject matter as its focus. The approach taken also has its roots in traditional rural settlement studies.

The rural settlement studies tradition will be explored in full in chapter two, but here I wish to highlight perhaps its greatest strength, which is its holistic and interdisciplinary character. Despite the name, rural settlement studies have traditionally had a culturally holistic outlook. Studies have not been confined to material aspects of settlement, but have considered as a matter of course other forms of material culture, customs, traditions, and superstitions, farming practice, social institutions, and much else. This has required an interdisciplinary approach drawing on archaeology, ethnology, folk life studies, and many branches of history.

I consider this holistic and interdisciplinary approach to be a strength and this thesis is concerned as much with what is traditionally considered history as it is with traditional archaeological concerns. In common with past rural settlement studies, there is a large amount of cultural and social history in what is to follow. However, in contrast to past studies, a major focus of this thesis is the connection to be drawn between Improvement and the Scottish Enlightenment, a relationship that has been previously largely unexplored. Further, the politics of Improvement are also a major concern, where they have not been in the past. The low level of interest in the politics is perhaps surprising considering the strength of feeling attached to different historical narratives of aspects of Improvement like Clearance (see chapter 8 below). When I say politics, I am not just concerned with the usual material of political history, as with relations between the Crown and the Lords of the Isles, for example (explored in chapter 7). All social relations are political and I am just as concerned with the negotiation of interests between tenant and landlord. Past rural



settlement studies have largely seen Highland society as culturally homogenous and where social change and structure are managed by a landowning elite and largely uncontested. In this thesis, I will argue that this was not necessarily the case and that through rural settlement studies we can explore social conflict and the relationships between different groups within Highland society of the recent past, as similarly interdisciplinary studies have begun to do elsewhere (e.g. Williamson 1995).

In the tradition of rural settlement studies, then, this thesis covers much of the traditional ground of documentary history. It is also concerned with the creation of a dynamic social history. However, it is above all an archaeological study. This is because the approach taken is to explore the construction and reconstruction of social relations in the Highlands through the construction and reconstruction of the material environment and routine practice. Enlightenment thought, for example, is significant in understanding Improvement from the perspective of the landowners because it justified and inspired that process. However, its roots in the Enlightenment do not explain Improvement. Improvement only makes sense when it is considered as the drastic changes to the material environment and routine practice of which it was composed. Improvement was not simply an intellectual exercise, but a massive project aiming to change the very character of the daily lives of the farming population. This project proceeded in no small part through material change and is, thus, an archaeological concern.

If, as an archaeological project, this thesis is to fulfil the need for a dynamic social history of Improvement, we must consider that material culture played a significant role in the structuring of society. All but the most recent of rural settlement studies have not done so, leaving the writing of social history to documentary historians, subscribing, often uncritically, to their narratives. Rural settlement studies have, thus, constrained themselves with empiricism. This is another area in which I wish to move beyond the established concerns of rural settlement studies, in using the archaeological resource to *write* social history of Improvement. The way this can be done, I will argue, is by combining the holistic/interdisciplinary approach of rural settlement studies with two recent developments in theoretical archaeology, *the archaeology of practice* and *archaeologies of capitalism*.

The archaeology of practice has largely grown within British prehistory (see Hodder 1999: 132-137 for a brief introduction), although some studies in historical geography have taken a similar approach (Pred 1986 is particularly relevant to studies of



Improvement). In one form, archaeologies of practice argue as a basic premise that material culture structures and is structured by routine practice, or the way in which people interact with each other and their environment on a day-to-day basis. Routine practice is fundamental to our understanding of society as people assess explicit ideological statements, used by some social groups to explain and justify asymmetrical social relationships, in relation to their routine experience of the social and material environment. Some statements appear as common sense, where others do not, because they accord with routine experience of the world. For example, it will be argued in chapters five and seven below that notions of the clan in the Highlands, as a community, made sense to the mass of the population because their daily routine was structured around communal activity. With the connection between routine practice, the material environment, and the structuring of society as a basic premise, it is clear that archaeology has an important role to play in understanding the mechanics of past societies.

Archaeologies of capitalism are most associated with American historical archaeology, although on the increase elsewhere (see chapter 4 below). There is no consensus as to what should constitute an archaeology of capitalism, but material expressions of the individual (over the community) have been one significant focus of study. Previous archaeologies of capitalism are discussed in chapter four in connection with current social theory on the nature of capitalist societies and with histories of the rise of capitalism in Scotland. It is argued there that an archaeology of capitalism should be a specific manifestation of the archaeology of practice, exploring how routine experience of the world as an individual (i.e., apart from the community and family) makes an ideology of the individual (manifest in notions of private property, for example) appear as common sense.

Archaeologies of practice and of capitalism therefore provide a general and particular theoretical framework for any analysis of Improvement, which, as shall be seen, is the process initiated by some landowners to privilege ideologies of the individual over those of the community and kin-group. The theoretical constructs explored in detail in chapters three and four, in explaining the connections between material culture and society, allow archaeology the desired active role in writing the social history of the Highlands.

However, the relationship between the theoretical arguments of this thesis and its particular case studies is not one way, with theory simply defining the approach to be taken



in the case studies. Rather, the relationship is reflexive and the detailed exploration of an archaeology of capitalism, in particular, through the case studies will allow comment on how archaeologies of capitalism should be pursued in general. The theoretical aspects of this thesis and its case studies grew together, both leading each other in new directions as work progressed.

## Structure of the thesis

The thesis can be broadly divided into two parts, the theoretical chapters (2 to 4) and the particular accounts of Improvement in the case study areas (5 to 8).

Chapter two, *Rural settlement studies: A critical history*, reviews past work in the subject with a particular emphasis on the theoretical and practical concerns that have shaped accounts of rural settlement, landscape, and society. The concern, therefore, is not simply to describe past work, but to understand why it took the form it did. Two main themes of the chapter are the rise of historicity and of the modern archaeological approach. In the mid-nineteenth century, rural settlement studies were concerned with ahistorical material and social forms as examples of the survival of the prehistoric past into the present. This view has gradually been amended to one where rural settlement studies are concerned with historically situated accounts of their material. Partly as a result of the rise of historicity, rural settlement studies have become a mainstream archaeological concern. Previously such studies had been the province of folk life scholars or carried out by prehistorians as ethnology. These two themes of the rise of historicity and of the modern archaeological approach describe the context of any current rural settlement study. Most such studies, however, are inadequate in that they are strictly empirical in nature. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the few theoretically informed works within the subject in beginning to suggest how we might move beyond rural settlement studies as description to rural settlement studies as the active creation of history.

Chapter three discusses the general theoretical constructs that inform the rest of the thesis and that allow the break from empiricism and the uncritical acceptance of traditional narratives of Improvement. In essence, the chapter argues that people's actions are structured by existing patterns of social relations. However, social structure is not



determining and people can influence those very conditions of their existence that act back to structure their actions. The relationship between structure and agency is reflexive. A major locus of social change is argued to be contradiction in the structuring of society, whereby social relations are organised according to potentially antagonistic principles. When such contradictory principles become exposed and become the site of conflict, people can act to resolve the conflict and contradiction in their favour. Importantly for the archaeologist, one of the significant ways in which social relations can be renegotiated is through the reconstruction of the routine conditions that structure people's experience of the world. This is achieved in no small part through the restructuring of the routine material environment. Certain ideological statements, naturalising asymmetrical social relations, appear as common sense, while others do not, because they accord with people's daily experience of the world. Change in the routine conditions of social interaction can render accepted ideologies unknowable and allow alternative ideologies to become knowable. The process of social negotiation is not simply one of domination by an elite. Changes to the routine environment can be accepted, resisted, or manipulated by various groups in relation to their own concerns and to contingent circumstance.

Chapter four begins by discussing the constitution of the social relations of capitalism in the terms of the previous chapter. With capitalism, social relations are routinely structured in absence. This is to say that many social relations are not mediated in face-to-face encounters, but at a distance. This routine practice in absence, where people experience their daily lives as an individual, apart from the community, makes an ideology of the individual knowable. In such a situation, private property becomes a natural concept and the dominant position of some, achieved through their ownership of private property, is justifiable. Capitalism, as an ideology of the individual made knowable in routine practice, is distinct from capitalist society, where capitalism is widespread, but not *necessarily* the sole form of social relations. Archaeologies and histories of capitalism, therefore, should not just be analyses of the emergence and spread of capitalism, but also of the configuration of capitalism with other forms of social relations within capitalist societies.

Chapter five begins the second section of the thesis and outlines change in the material environment and routine practice with Improvement in the study areas. Pre-Improvement routine practice was communal and familial, in that much daily experience



was as part of a farming community or a family. This produced a *sense of the community* and a *sense of the family*, where *sense* is understood as a form of practical, non-discursive knowledge. Routine practice with Improvement was individual, in that much experience was apart from the community or the family. This produced a *sense of the individual*.

Understanding the process of Improvement requires the restoration of its links with the Scottish Enlightenment, as discussed in chapter six. Scottish Enlightenment social theory argued that society naturally and inevitably progressed through stages, eventually reaching the end point of the commercial age. The commercial age was above all associated with England, and Lowland Scotland was considered to be in transition to that point. Improvement, as the process that brought the commercial age to the Highlands, was therefore considered desirable and even inevitable by Enlightened landowners. Exemplars for Improvement were suggested by the connection of the commercial age with England and Lowland Scotland. The capacity to conceive of large scale material and social change was provided by the Enlightenment disposition of independence, which stressed that people were free to alter the conditions of their existence.

Improvement cannot be explained by its intellectual context alone, however. In manipulating the routine environment to undermine the community and family and to privilege the individual, landowners in the study areas had concrete political and social motives and these are explored in chapter seven. The sense of community engendered in pre-Improvement routine practice made the clan as an ideological construct knowable. The sense of family made hereditary tenure appear as common sense. The House of Argyll in Kintyre sought to undermine the routine structuring that made these concepts knowable because their ownership of estates there as private property was threatened by the farming population's continued adherence to their clan, Clan Donald, and their claims to the land as hereditary right. Improvement, in this case, sought to resolve a centuries old contradiction in west Highland landholding and social structure, that between the communal and hereditary on the one hand and the individual on the other. In Kilfinan, a different social contradiction lay at the root of Improvement. This was the contradiction between the landowners' membership of an emergent Middle Class that had a distinct, Enlightenment based culture, and their ownership of traditionally organised Highland estates. In the terms of the Enlightenment, such traditional estates would have been considered backward, awaiting progress to the commercial age. For the landowners of Kilfinan, continued



membership of the Middle Class would have required adherence to the general tenets of Enlightenment thought and the Improvement of their estates.

Improvement was not a straightforward imposition of the landowner's will, however. As discussed in chapter eight, the farming population accepted or rejected different aspects of Improved practice. Their response was structured by a concern for continued occupancy of the land, meaning their continued residency upon a holding and use of its resources. Their response to Improvement was contingent on how it affected their occupancy. Where this was secure under the lease system and individual concepts of ownership and tenancy, Improvement seems to have been accepted. Where Improvement threatened continued occupancy, the routine conditions that made hereditary claims to the land knowable were maintained. Improvement and attendant claims to the primacy of individual tenancy were resisted through the maintenance of a sense of family.



## Chapter Two

### Rural settlement studies. A critical history

Rural settlement studies in Scotland have a long and varied history with substantive beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. At times, and especially in the late nineteenth century, such studies were prominent in mainstream archaeology and played a key role in theoretical discussion within the subject. Despite this, reviews of the subject have been few and limited (e.g., Morrison 2000). None have discussed the theoretical constructs governing past analysis. More often we are given a descriptive list of previously published works or field projects and the emphasis is firmly upon work of the last forty to fifty years. Fairhurst's (1960: 67) statement that only a small literature existed on deserted settlement in Scotland in 1960 is untrue. It is my aim here to consider the ways in which rural settlement studies have been carried out. That is, to consider the various and changing theoretical underpinnings of past work in the subject. It is also my aim to bring to light the extensive pre-1960 literature, which has previously been discussed only in a very cursory manner.

This chapter is organised in terms of three past phases of work. The first phase is referred to as *Rural Settlement Studies as Ethnology*. This refers to that work undertaken largely in the second half of the nineteenth century and characterised by the analysis of Highland rural settlement for the provision of ethnological analogy. Such studies were intended to be used as analogy in writing prehistory and to put the latter discipline on a more scientific footing. The nineteenth century Highlands and Islands were seen to be characterised by the direct survival of the past into the present in material and social terms. It was this perceived direct continuity between past and present that gave recent rural settlement its significance in analogy in prehistoric archaeology. This, naturally, characterised the material and social environment of the Highlands and Islands, and the Western Isles in particular, as static over millennia.

The second main phase is referred to below as *Rural Settlement Studies as Folk Life*. Such studies can be traced back to the early decades of the twentieth century and continue to the present. They are informed by the theoretical structure of the ethnological



approach, with the important injection of a degree of historicity. Since the 1920s, documentary sources have increasingly been employed in a consideration of rural settlement that accords some degree of change and plays down the direct links to prehistory. However, this transformation has not been complete and such studies often maintain a view of rural settlement and society as largely static.

The third main phase discussed is referred to as *Rural Settlement Studies as Historical Archaeology*. This encompasses a tradition prominent from the 1950s to the present. Historical here not only refers to the fact that the material in question is from a period also covered by documentary sources, but carries the added connotation that the previous view of settlement and society as static, or ahistorical, is rejected. Archaeology as a term is used not just to suggest the analysis of material culture, common to all phases, but the nature of that analysis. It is in this phase that the empirical aspect of rural settlement studies is brought in line with mainstream modern archaeological practice. This phase is characterised by scientific, that is methodologically coherent, survey and excavation, previously largely lacking.

As with any periodisation, the divisions drawn here are in no small part arbitrary. The first phase does sit apart from the other two chronologically to some extent. However, there are clear theoretical links between the ethnological and folk life approaches. The folk life and historical archaeology phases are temporally coincident over the last fifty or so years. Their mutual interest and, to some extent, compatibility, is underlined by the fact that papers relating to both schools occur in the same journals, *Folk Life* for example, and the works of one are referenced in those of the other. The collaboration of professional and amateur archaeologists and the staff of the Highland Folk Park in Newtonmore on a recent project further emphasises the fact that the divisions maintained below are not always divisions maintained in practice (see Lelong and Wood 2000).

However, from an analytical perspective these divisions *are* necessary. They are necessary in achieving clarity in tracing the history of the subject in general and the themes of the rise of historicity and the modern archaeological approach in particular. These themes largely set the agenda for any current archaeological consideration of Highland rural settlement and landscape.

This chapter concludes with a discussion of the relationship between history and archaeology within rural settlement studies and an account of the few recent theoretically



informed works. These are discussed in order to set the agenda for the subsequent theoretical chapters. Recent archaeological studies of rural settlement have largely been empirical studies, primarily excavation or survey reports or syntheses of these. Use of documentary sources by archaeologists has been limited to consideration of empirical questions. Where the social aspects of the period in question are considered, accounts of documentary historians are pasted into the archaeological report. As such, archaeologists have not played an active role in *constructing* the recent history of the Highlands.

As we shall see, this has begun to change and there are a minority of archaeological studies that attempt to write new histories of the Highlands. However, I will suggest in this chapter that these studies portray Highland society as normative, which is to say that belief and understanding of the world is portrayed as universal and uniform. The next chapter, in particular, will explore the explicit theoretical constructs that allow us to overcome this problem, and that inform the rest of this thesis.

### **Rural settlement studies as ethnology**

The first studies we have of Highland rural settlement and landscape of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are contemporary travellers' accounts and other eyewitness descriptions. The earliest substantial account of this type was Martin Martin's *A description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (Martin 1994 [1695]). This was followed in the eighteenth century by a series of similar accounts including, most famously, those of Captain Burt, Thomas Pennant, Dr. Johnson, and James Boswell (Levi (ed.) 1990; Simmons (ed.) 1998a, 1998b). This series continued into the nineteenth century, with the publication of the journals of Dorothy Wordsworth and Lord Teignmouth, for example (Teignmouth 1836; Thin (ed.) 1981).

Many of these works are the travel journals of individuals with varied backgrounds. Some were English (Johnson, Pennant, Wordsworth, and Teignmouth), but others were Scots (Boswell and Martin). Some of their accounts were the result of flying tours of the region, while others were written from the perspective of people who were native to the area (Martin). Not all were travel journals, however. Burt's contribution came as a series of *Letters from A Gentleman in the North of Scotland to his Friend in London*, as the



original title ran. He was stationed in Inverness in the period between the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745.

These accounts contain, amongst much else, descriptions of settlement and landscape in the Highlands and Islands (figure 2.1). The journals are not simply descriptive, however, but frequently pejorative. Thus Pennant's description of the houses of Islay:

A set of people worn down by poverty: their habitations scenes of misery, made of loose stones; without chimneys, without doors, excepting the faggot opposed to the wind at one or other of the appertures, permitting the smoke to escape through the other, in order to prevent the pains of suffocation. The furniture perfectly corresponds: a pothook hangs from the middle of the roof, with a pot pendant over a grateless fire, filled with fare that may rather be called a permission to exist, than a support of vigorous life . . . (Pennant, in Simmons (ed.) 1998b: 217)

Such morally loaded descriptions are also found in the works of the later, nineteenth century ethnological approach to rural settlement. However, earlier accounts like Pennant's are not analytical in the sense that the later work is. Further, the context of rural settlement as evidence of the survival of prehistoric social and material traits into the present, the major theoretical underpinning of that later work, is not manifest in the travellers' accounts. The conceptual and methodological backgrounds of the approaches of these two periods to rural settlement and landscape were quite distinct. As such, I do not intend to consider the travellers further, but to move on to the beginnings of academic discourse on the subject.

The flurry of work on Highland rural settlement from the mid- to late-nineteenth century can be understood not so much as reflecting an interest in the recent past of the Highlands for its own sake, but as being related to the study of prehistory. Then current theory stressed that an understanding of the distant past could better be achieved through ethnological analogy. For instance, J.Y. Simpson in his *Address on Archaeology* to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1860 stated:

In our archaeological inquiries into the probable uses and import of all doubtful





Figure 2.1: Engraving of a house on Islay produced to accompany Thomas Pennant’s *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides* of the 1770s (after Simmons 1998b: 205, figure XV).



articles in our museums or elsewhere . . . [l]et us, like the geologists, try always, when working with such problems, to understand the past by reasoning from the present. Let us study backwards from the known to the unknown. In this way we can easily come to understand, for example, how our ancestors made those single-tree canoes, which have been found so often in Scotland, by observing how the Red Indian, partly by fire and partly by hatchet, makes his analogous canoe at the present day; (Simpson 1862a: 31)

It was not just that the material culture of such societies as the Red Indian (*sic.*) showed superficial resemblances to that of past societies in Scotland. The connection was seen to run deeper than this:

. . . there are in reality two kinds of antiquity, both of which claim and challenge our attention. One of these kinds of antiquity consists in the study of the habits and works of our distant predecessors and forefathers, who lived on this earth, and perhaps in this segment of it, many ages ago. The other kind of antiquity consists of the study of those archaic human habits and works which may, in some corners of the world, be found still prevailing among our fellow-men - or even among our fellow-countrymen - down to the present hour, in despite of all the blessings of human advancement, and the progress of human knowledge. (Simpson 1862a: 32-33)

The material culture of some contemporary societies - and other aspects of those societies' culture, as Simpson goes on to explain - is not just superficially similar to that of some past societies. The two are intimately linked, as the former is the survival of the latter into the present. *It is the past, in the present.*

This close alignment between prehistoric archaeology and ethnography was something that was generally prevalent in western Europe and the United States in the 1860s and 1870s, and was promoted by the shared commitment of these two disciplines to an evolutionary approach (Trigger 1989: 110). In Europe, the ultimate basis of this alignment was the belief in unilinear cultural evolution evolved by Enlightenment philosophers; a belief that allowed the equation of past and contemporary societies seen to be in the same stage of cultural development in terms of a stadial evolutionary scheme



(Trigger 1989: 59, 110; see chapter 6 below).

Significant here is the fact that aspects of nineteenth century Scottish society and material culture - the archaic works of our fellow-countrymen - were considered as examples of the past in the present and, therefore, worthy of study towards a greater understanding of prehistory. Archaic habits and works were seen to persist to their greatest extent in the Western Isles. So it was that from the late-eighteen fifties until the turn of the century, a series of archaeological and ethnographic studies were carried out in the Outer Hebrides with a view to understanding and recording aspects of the archaic society then inhabiting the area. Such studies continued in cases in the early twentieth century (e.g., MacKenzie 1904; Curwen 1938), and sometimes explicitly ascribed to a theoretical approach like that outlined by Simpson, as seen above (e.g. Curwen 1938: 261).

The work of this period often focused on shieling (summer pasture) sites, especially the beehive structures of the Outer Hebrides, as most reminiscent of older, prehistoric forms. This focus included excavations, as on St. Kilda (Muir 1860). Particularly notable is the work of Captain (or Commander) F.W.L. Thomas (1860, 1868). As an example, I will discuss his paper *On the Primitive Dwellings and Hypogea of the Outer Hebrides* (1868).

Thomas' study of Hebridean dwellings explicitly follows Simpson's suggestion that prehistorians should work backwards from the known to the unknown. He makes this context clear:

Proceeding from the centres of civilisation on the east coast of Scotland towards the north and west, the cottages of the peasantry become still more simple in form and poor in comfort, until on the shores of the Atlantic there are dwellings so primitive, that we appear to reach backward to the Stone period almost at once. (Thomas 1868: 154)

To illustrate his point, Thomas goes on to describe a number of blackhouses (dwellings) in the Hebrides, providing annotated plans and drawings from photographs. These houses are seen as recent examples of "a very old style" (Thomas 1868: 156; figure 2.2) and specific features, such as the thickness of the walls, are drawn on as being of great archaic importance; as being evident in recent and ancient forms of dwelling alike (Thomas 1868:



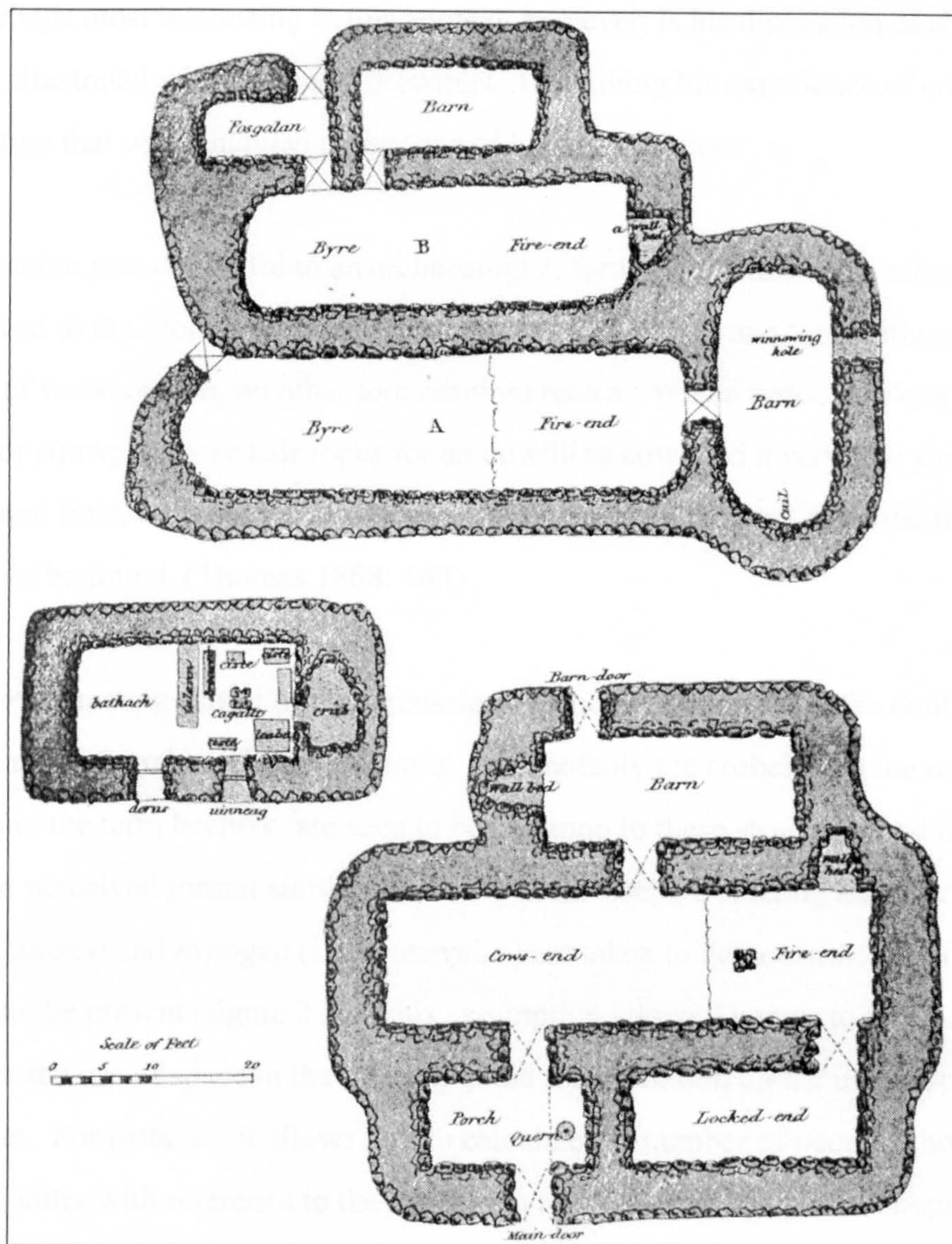


Figure 2.2: Blackhouses from Lewis and St. Kilda. Thomas chose these examples for their ‘archaic’ features, especially their thick walls (after Thomas 1867: figures 5-7).



157-158).

Perhaps most interesting in this context, however, is his discussion of shieling structures, illustrated with plans and drawings. Describing his experience of entering one such structure that was inhabited at the time of his visit, he says:

The situation was delightful to an archaeologist, for he found himself almost introduced to the Stone period: the dwelling of moor-stones and turf, without one morsel of wood or iron, no other tool required than a wooden spade; baskets of bent, docks, or straw; straw or hair ropes for an unwilling cow; and a very few years before the present time, both cooking and milk vessels made on the spot from the first clay that could be found. (Thomas 1868: 162)

The interesting aspect of his discussion of shieling structures is the context in which they are placed. Certain architectural traits, most notably the corbelled stone roofing giving rise to the term beehive, are seen to be common to these structures and other, older ones. Such perceived formal similarities between the beehive shieling and *Pict's houses* (i.e. wheelhouses) and *hypogea* (i.e. souterrains) are taken to demonstrate the survival of the past into the present (figure 2.3). This assumption allows Thomas to use information gathered on the use of space in the shieling to aid interpretation on the use of space in the Pict's house. For instance, it allows him to calculate the number of people who could have slept in the latter with reference to the number in the former, related to floor space. Also significant is the fact that Thomas notes that while hypogea existed in the Lowlands and in continental Europe, in the form of *eirdehouses*, beehive dwellings did not (Thomas 1868: 187-189). It is no surprise, then, that his interpretation of these hypogea is based on examples from the Hebrides. It is there that the principles governing their construction and use are seen to survive and, thus, to be accessible to the archaeologist.

An evolutionary interpretation of the archaeological record was not the only accepted theoretical framework at the time (Trigger 1989: 102-103). From the 1830s on, the doctrine of degenerationism became increasingly popular. In an extreme form, this held that humanity originally existed in a state far superior to modern savages. Generally, it questioned the unilinear evolutionary scheme considered above. The study of Scottish Highland/Island rural settlement still played a role within this different context.



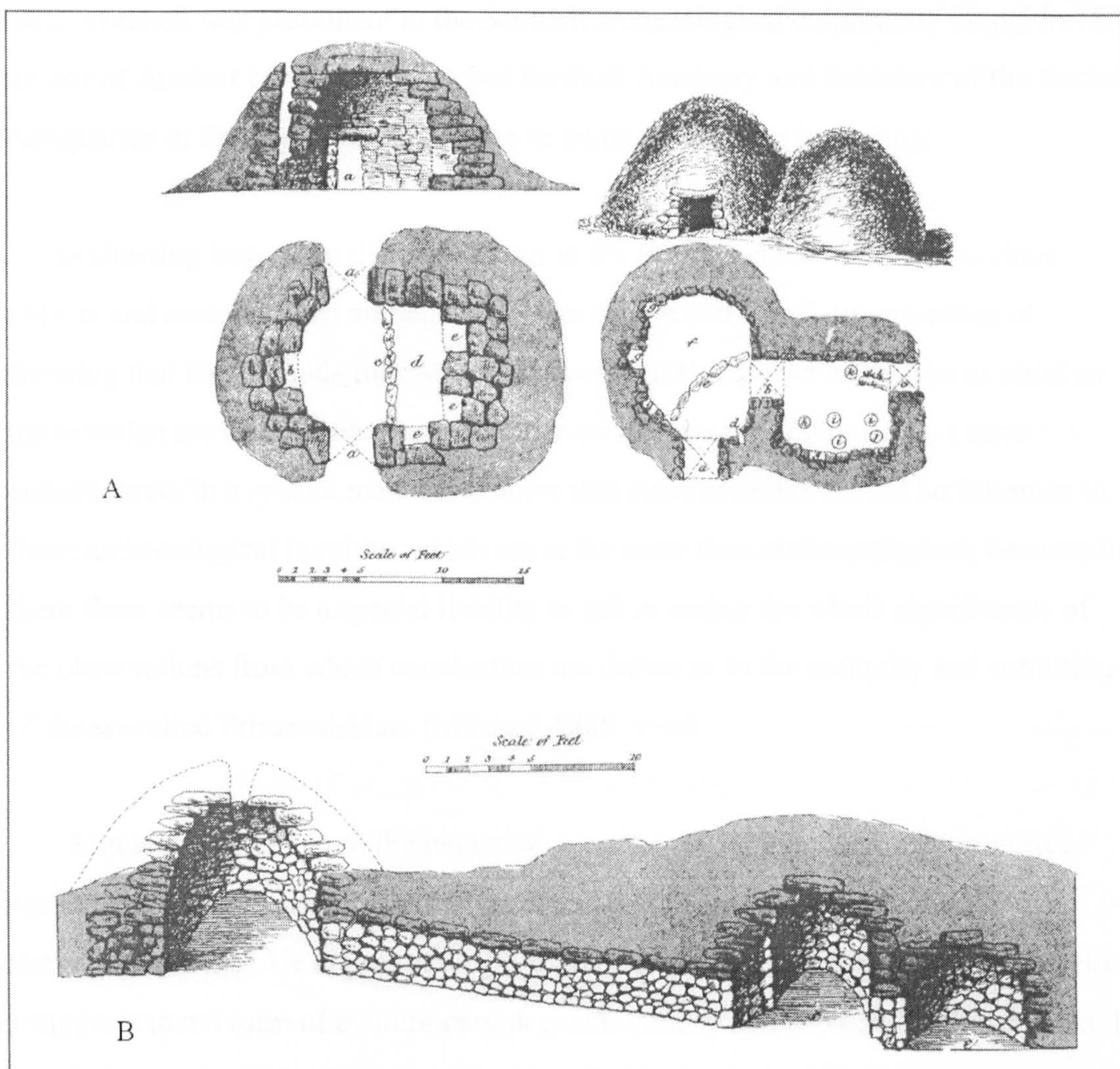


Figure 2.3: (A) Nineteenth century beehive shielings (after Thomas 1867: figures 8 and 9); (B) A section through an apparently similar “ancient both, with hypogea” (after Thomas 1867: figure 15). The main similarity between these two types of structure drawn on in the nineteenth century was that between their corbelled roof construction. This formal similarity was thought to demonstrate a similarity between the societies responsible for their construction.



Particularly significant is Arthur Mitchell's *The Past in the Present: What is Civilisation?* (1880). Mitchell was prominent in the Scottish archaeological community being, in 1880, Professor of Ancient History to the Royal Scottish Academy and Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. In the preface he sums up his aims in writing:

. . . in showing how often the Past is seen in the Present - how many neo-archaic objects and customs exist among us - I have sought and found opportunities of showing that the methods followed in archaeological inquiries should be as strict as those which are deemed necessary in other departments of science . . . . I have endeavoured, in a special manner, to show that strict methods should be followed in those archaeological inquiries which are at the same time anthropological, because in them there seems to be a special liability to fail in seeing the whole significance of the observations from which conclusions are drawn as to the antiquity and condition of the so-called Primeval Man. (Mitchell 1880: v-vi)

Mitchell is referring to the tendency, seen above, for contemporary primitive societies to be viewed as equivalent in most respects to past societies, within a linear evolutionary scheme. He argues at length that the study of those contemporary societies in fact suggests that a form of evolutionary degenerationism can be seen. In this context, he uses the term neo-archaic objects to separate primitive material culture of the present from that of the past. However, as the quotes below make clear, there was still seen to be a concrete link between past and present. Mitchell was not interested in severing that link, but in discussing how it might best be understood.

A second main thread in Mitchell's argument is that while contemporary societies produce material culture that is at first glance simple and uncivilised, it is in fact not a product of people of low intelligence. Further, it need not be less effective than modern equivalents in accomplishing those tasks necessary to procure a living. In one sense, then, he breaks the investigative link between ethnography and archaeology - contemporary primitive societies are not necessarily directly equivalent to those in the past. In another sense he re-affirms that link. Ethnological studies can warn against certain assumptions about past societies. Primitive material culture does not necessarily imply inferior intellect, neither need it be less effective in its role than modern, civilised equivalents. The



final point he argues is that rude and high forms of material culture can occur in the same period and in the same nation. The nation can be civilised while not all of its parts seem to be so. This again provides a warning to the prehistorian, in that uncivilised material culture may come from a civilised society.

Mitchell draws on several case studies to illustrate his points. Most of these concern the customs and material culture of the Scottish Highlands and Islands in the nineteenth century. He draws on personal experience and on many of the studies noted above. A whole chapter is devoted to the description of The Black Houses and the Beehive Houses of the Hebrides (Mitchell 1880: 48-72). The Hebridean blackhouse is discussed with reference to the fact that, although it is of rude construction, the intelligence and relative capacity of culture of its builders are not displayed in the primitive nature of the architecture:

I shall not dwell on the general wretchedness of these dwellings - the absence of privacy and separation of the sexes, the presence in the house of the cattle and their accumulated dung, the want of comforts, etc. For my present purpose it is sufficient if I draw attention to certain features of the building, which seem to me to be of special interest and importance. These are - (1) The thickness of the wall - often six or seven feet; (2) The way in which the wall is built - two facings of dry stone with turf between; (3) The very low door - often barely five feet high; (4) The absence of any light hole or window; and (5) The want of overlapping of the wall by the roof, so that such rain as does not simply wet the roof or fall through it, runs down into the body of the wall. To this last feature, more perhaps than to any of the others, I attach importance. If it were to be accepted as indicative of the intellectual state of the people, that state would certainly be of the very lowest . . . . To suppose, indeed, that the Lewis arrangement is really the outcome of ignorance and stupidity, is to suppose a degree of ignorance and stupidity which have scarcely been found among any people on the face of the earth . . . . In point of fact, however, this plan of roofing the Lewis houses is not an expression of want of mind or want of knowledge. The people who adopt it know perfectly well the effects and advantages of making the roof throw the rain over the wall. Why they do not act up to the measure of their knowledge may be a puzzle, but it is beyond all question that it does not arise either



from want of capacity or want of culture. (Mitchell 1880: 54-55)

Beehive houses of the Outer Hebrides are of interest to Mitchell in illustrating another of his points. His discussion draws on the perceived architectural link between them and the wheelhouse (Mitchell 1880: 58-72). The nineteenth century beehive dwelling is seen to be a degenerate form of the wheelhouse (to which Mitchell applies the term beehive house also). He describes the wheelhouse at Meall na Uamh, Huishinish, South Uist in these terms:

. . . [it] exhibits the same architectural style and knowledge as the simpler beehive houses which have been noticed. But it is vastly more pretentious - altogether a larger conception, and designed for a larger purpose. It is a handsome building and involves much clever planning. It may have been the palace or reception-hall of an ancient chief. (Mitchell 1880: 69)

This example is explicitly linked to then contemporary beehive houses in the following terms:

The handsome beehive building, which I have just described, is . . . believed to be older than any of which I have spoken. In other words, as this kind of dwelling passed out of use, it appears to have undergone a degradation or debasement . . . . If it is unlikely that we shall ever again have one of these simple beehive houses built in Scotland, it is infinitely more unlikely that we shall ever have one of the size and complicated design of that at Meall na Uamh. (Mitchell 1880: 70)

Whether the rural settlement of the nineteenth century Scottish Highlands was studied in terms of a linear evolutionary scheme or with reference to degenerationism and other agendas, this period of study is characterised by the fact that the material was not studied for itself. Throughout, the agenda was to place the study of prehistory on a more secure footing. In this light, such settlements were not historically situated and, as a result, their study in relation to cartographic or documentary material and to their proper historical context was hampered. That this was the dominant approach can be seen in its prevalence



in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, the major Scottish journal, where many of the papers mentioned above were published. Aspects of this line of thought are also evident in at least one major historical work of the period (Skene 1880: chapter 10, especially 393-394). However, empirical study of Highland and Island rural settlement was begun. The published accounts of this period of study provide us with a valuable record of these settlements in use and in this sense they are invaluable.

As we shall see below, the ahistorical nature of these studies formed a major part of their legacy to the twentieth century. There is, however, another defining characteristic of the nineteenth century work that is worth considering as a basic structuring theme of subsequent studies. This is its holistic approach. Studies of material culture other than settlement and of other, non-material, aspects of society accompanied the work discussed above (figure 2.4). The majority of these other studies took place within the theoretical frameworks already outlined.

J.Y. Simpson, who defined the agenda for studying the past in the present seen above, penned *Notes on some Scottish Magical Charm-Stones, or Curing-Stones* (1862b). In this, magical charms are related to their various functions in a timeless and cross-cultural manner. These charms exist in the present as they did in the past and their function in the present can be taken as a guide to their function in the past. Arthur Mitchell and others also wrote of Scottish superstitions (e.g., Mitchell 1862; Stewart 1888). These were of interest primarily as relics of antiquity (Mitchell 1862: 288).

There were also other studies relating to moveable material culture. In these, many forms of material were considered, including querns, pottery (*craggans*), lamps (*crusies*), and fishing weights (*impstones*) (e.g., Goudie 1888; MacAdam 1881; McGregor 1880). Perhaps the two key works here are Mitchell's *The Past in the Present* (discussed above) and G.L. Gomme's introductory address to the Glasgow Archaeological Society, *Archaic Types of Society in Scotland* (1890). Mitchell's book discusses a wide range of material and other characteristics of Highland/Island society in relation to the survival of archaic social and material forms into the late nineteenth century. This is also the agenda behind Gomme's paper. It is clear from these two works that it is not just settlement studies, but also related material culture and social analyses, that were carried out at the time within the past in the present framework. Gomme's paper deals with the survival of



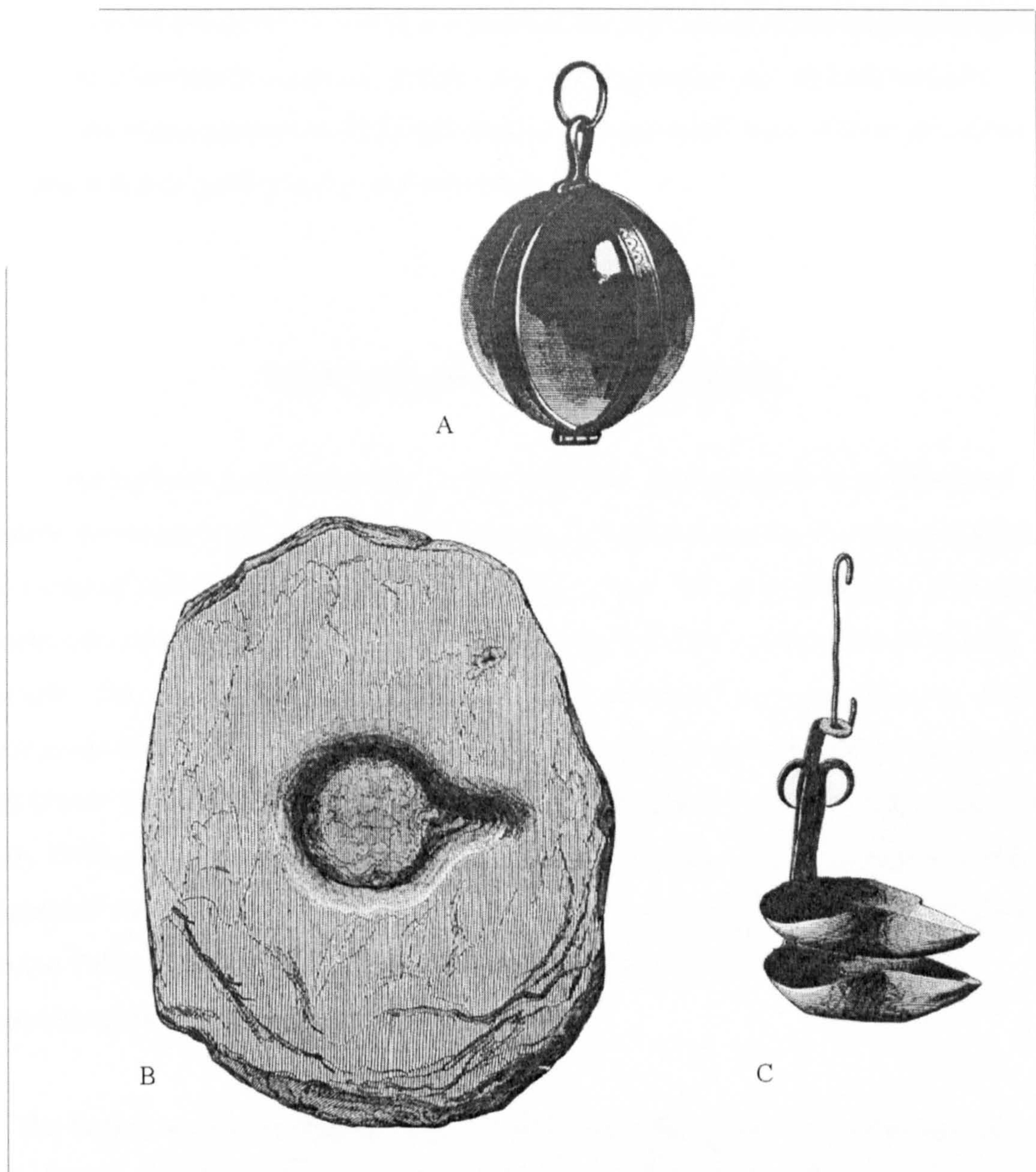


Figure 2.4: The holistic nature of Rural Settlement Studies as Ethnology. (A) The Stone of Ardvorlich, a ‘charmstone’ with healing powers (after Simpson 1862b: 22 figure 2); (B) A crusie, or oil lamp, mould, and (C) a crusie (after Goudie 1888: 7? figures 1 and 2). Rural Settlement Studies as Ethnology went beyond the study of architecture to consider other forms of material culture and aspects of culture, such as superstition.



archaic social organisation in both Highland and Lowland Scotland. In his analysis of the Highlands (Gomme 1890: 157-164), he considers that the archaic nature of society there is to be seen in kin-based, communal forms of social organisation as well as in material culture. He makes explicit the links between settlement, other forms of material culture, tradition and superstition, and social organisation.

### **Rural settlement studies as folk life**

As has been suggested, aspects of the ethnological approach to rural settlement studies, dominant in the late nineteenth century, formed the basis of the successive phase, the works of which can be referred to as folk life studies. The essential feature of the late nineteenth century approach that informed that of the folk life approach was its holistic outlook. There was also the partial legacy of a lack of historical contextualisation. Both themes can be seen in Iorwerth Peate's introduction to the first volume of the journal *Folk Life* (Peate 1963). This journal was established by the Society for Folk Life Studies in the early 1960s and is concerned with the British Isles as a whole. However, papers on the Highlands were published regularly in its early years (e.g., Cregeen 1965; Dunbar 1965; Fenton 1968, 1974; Storrie 1967) and the agenda of the Society and its journal are therefore relevant. Peate explained that:

The Society aims to further the study of *traditional* ways of life in Great Britain and Ireland and to provide a common meeting point for the many people and institutions engaged with the *varied aspects* of folk life. (Peate 1963: 4, my emphasis)

The subject of study is traditional ways of life. The use of the word traditional implies some lack of historicity: "Tradition is the factor which maintains the link between those habits [of living] in present and past times" (Peate 1938: 321). The holistic nature of intended study is captured in the reference to its varied aspects. Peate had outlined the pre-War fragmentation of published folk life studies throughout archaeological, anthropological, and other journals as a result of their wide ranging focus and lack of an appropriate, consolidated outlet (Peate 1963: 3).



Although the basis of Highland folk life studies lay in part in the preceding period, there were also major changes in theory and practice. Despite the focus on traditional ways of life, some degree of specific historicity was restored. This came from, and resulted in, the coupling of a consideration of this traditional material and cultural life with the study of relevant historical documents. The folk life approach grew from early works like Isabel Grant's *Every-Day Life on an old Highland Farm, 1769-1782* (1924). Grant based this on the account book of William Mackintosh of Balnespick, tacksman of a farm in Strathspey.

However, historic specificity and the consideration of change in many folk life studies are largely confined to the period of agricultural Improvement, when the traditional way of life began to disappear. Pre-Improvement society is static, whereas Improvement brings movement and change.

In terms of changing practice, folk life studies are not usually accompanied by a systematic programme of fieldwork, in contrast to the previous tradition. The reasons for this are unclear. However, the emphasis on a wide range of cultural topics and reliance on documentary and oral history no doubt contributed to the lack of field study.

The holistic nature of this approach is clear from the content pages of perhaps its two best-known works, Grant's *Highland Folk Ways* (1995 [1961]; figure 2.5) and Fenton's *Scottish Country Life* (1999 [1976]).

*Highland Folk Ways* contains much information on house architecture and settlement morphology (chapters 3 and 7). This analysis of the fabric of settlement is complemented by discussion on farmland and the wider landscape (chapters 3 and 5). Consideration of material culture does not end there. There is a chapter on the moveable objects within the house (chapter 8), as well as information on the material aspects of craft, economy, transport and much else throughout the book. This concern with the material is placed within the context of a consideration of other aspects of culture. For instance there are chapters on The People Who Lived on the Land (6), The People's Daily Round and Common Tasks (9), Food, Physic and Clothing (14), Sports and Festivals (15), and Seasons and Great Occasions (16).

*Scottish Country Life* likewise contains sections on house architecture and landscape organisation (chapters 1 and 11). The rest of this book is more concerned with the practicalities and economy of farming than is Grant's, which has a wider cultural



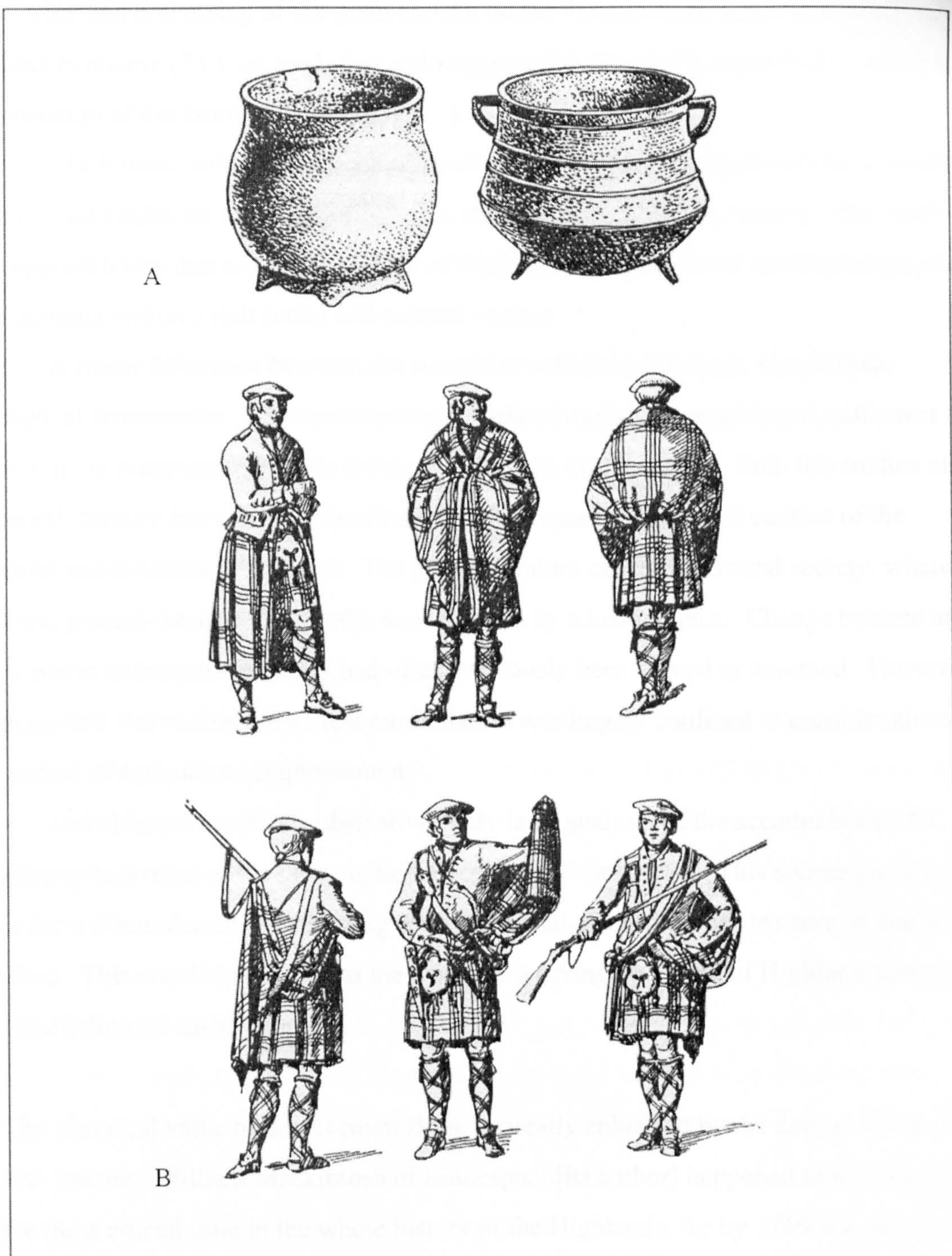


Figure 2.5: The holistic nature of Rural Settlement Studies as Folk Life. (A) Two different forms of cauldron (after Grant 1961: 191, figures 31a and 31b); (B) Method of adjusting the belted plaid (after Grant 1961: 320, figure 67). As with Rural Settlement Studies as Ethnology, Folk Life studies went beyond the study of rural architecture to consider other forms of material culture and other aspects of culture, shown here by a concern with forms of dress.



scope. So, *Scottish Country Life* contains chapters on Tilling the Soil (2); on the harvesting and processing of the grain (3,4,5); on the various crops cultivated (6,8); on the pastoral economy (7,9); on food, fuel and transport (10,12 and 13 respectively); and, on the organisation of the farming community (14).

The holistic cultural approach originated with the diverse studies of the nineteenth century and coalesced in the major folk life studies of the twentieth century. The result of this approach was that any consideration of Highland rural settlement and landscape placed that material within a rich social and cultural context.

A major difference between the two phases of study, however, was in their theoretical frameworks. Nineteenth century studies largely saw recent rural settlement and society in its many aspects as the survival of the past in the present. Folk life studies of the twentieth century introduced a consideration of the specific historical context of the material and societies in question. The timeless nature of Highland rural society, where the past and present merged seamlessly, was replaced by a historic past. Change became an issue where unbroken continuity had often previously been argued or assumed. However, as suggested above, this theoretical reorientation was largely confined to considerations of the period of agricultural Improvement.

Isabel Grant's earliest substantive study is an analysis of the account book of a Strathspey tacksman of the later eighteenth century (Grant 1924). This source provides the basis for a discussion of the changing material, social and economic structure of that area at the time. This stands in contrast to the assumed unchanging nature of Highland society that had informed earlier studies:

The historical value of the Account Book is greatly enhanced by the date at which it was written. William Mackintosh of Balnespick [its author] happened to live through the most crucial time in the whole history of the Highlands, for by 1769 not only had the new system of agriculture . . . which we speak of as the 'Agricultural Revolution', begun to permeate the wilder and more backward uplands of Badenoch, but the whole social, political and mental life of the people was being rapidly changed . . . (Grant 1924: 3)

The approach was historical and admitted the changes that had occurred in



Highland society in the recent past. This philosophy is evident elsewhere. For instance, Grant later gave an account of the stages of development of the interior of Highland houses, especially concerned with the placing of the hearth (Grant 1995: 160-163; figure 2.6). The use of space within Highland houses of the recent past was considered to have gone through changes. It was not simply a story of the unbroken continuity of the prehistoric past into the present. Fenton (1999: chapter 11) draws more explicit links between agricultural Improvement and the changing layout of the house, although his analysis is not limited to the Highlands alone. In fact, it is probably the restoration of a degree of historicity to the subject that allowed the widening of the geographic sphere of study. Nineteenth century writers largely concerned themselves with the far north and west of Scotland as the area in which past material and social organisation had survived most notably. The introduction of a more historical basis was accompanied by a consideration of other Highland areas (e.g., Grant 1995; Martin 1987) and of Scotland as a whole (Fenton 1999). However, some late nineteenth century studies had begun to consider archaic survivals outside of the north and west (e.g., Gomme 1890).

The difference between nineteenth century studies and folk life studies in theoretical terms is not actually that great. The nineteenth century students of rural society and its material culture saw the subject of their study as the unchanging continuity of aspects of the past into the present. However, the fact that they confined the geographical extent of their studies to the far northwest, where archaic survivals were at their greatest, suggests they recognised change as having taken place throughout the rest of the country. They did not look at other areas, on the whole, because they were of little use in providing information for analogy with prehistory. They perceived both traditional and modern society within Scotland, but both were largely mutually exclusive.

With folk life studies the split between traditional and modern is maintained. However, the relationship between the two is now more chronological than spatial. Modern, Improved society and material culture replaced its traditional counterpart in time. Folk life conceptions of the traditional and the modern have much in common with those of the nineteenth century. In folk life studies the explicit statement that the present under consideration can be related directly to that of prehistory is not made. However, the lack of consideration of change in material culture and society outside of the period of Improvement by implication suggests that traditional culture and society was unchanging.



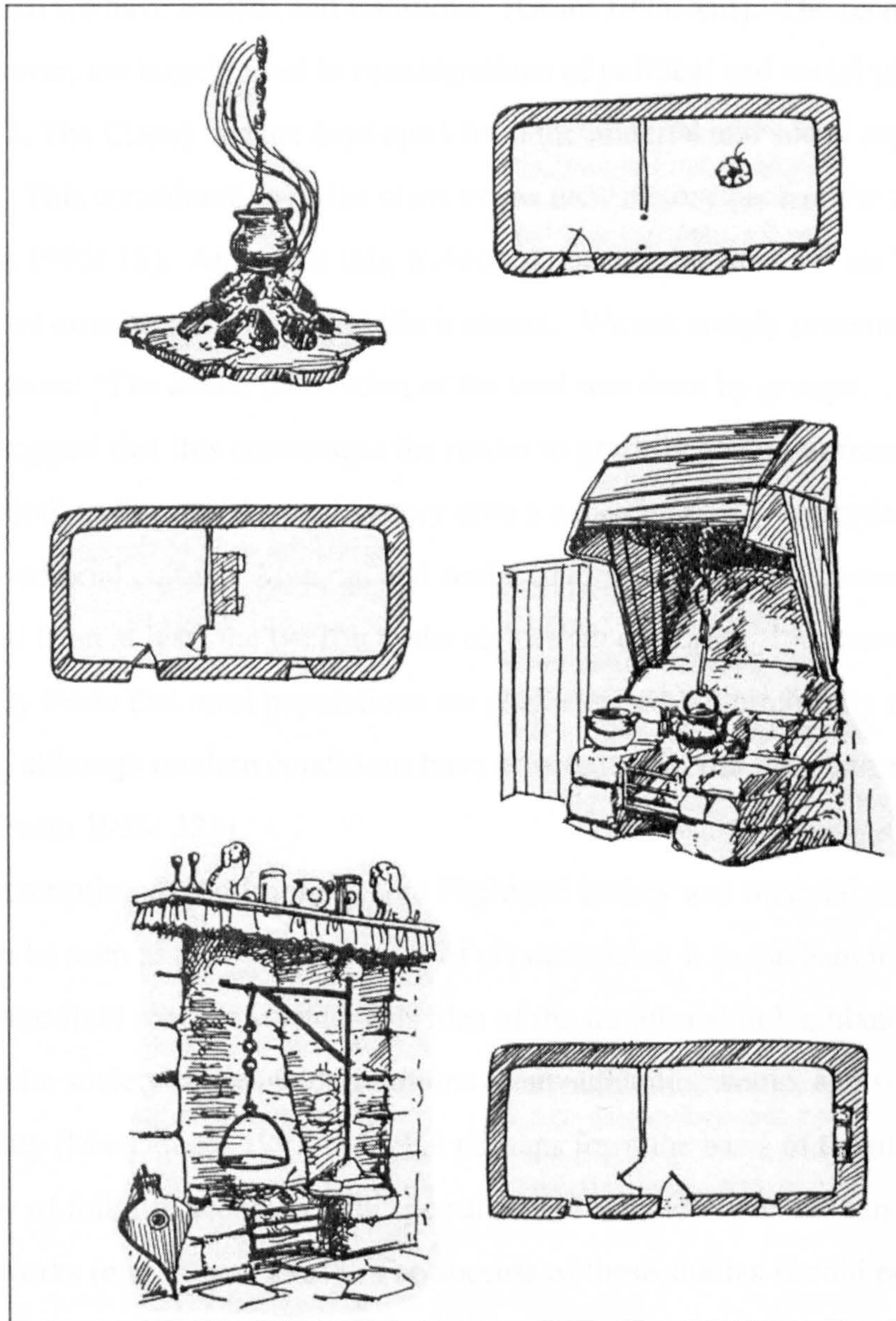


Figure 2.6: The history of the hearth, from the traditional central hearth (top) through Improved forms (middle and bottom) (after Grant 1961: 161, figure 18). This illustration, from Grant's *Highland Folk Ways* shows a concern with change in the use of space within the house through time.



Grant's *Highland Folk Ways* is "a picture of this [Highland folk] life, within the period for which we have records and traditions" (Grant 1995: xiii). The records in question, however, are largely used in considerations of political and social phenomena (e.g., chapter 2, The Clans) that are kept apart from the material and social aspects of everyday life. This consideration of the clans traces their history back to the twelfth century (Grant 1995: 15). Alongside this, a chronological framework for each of the various chapters on aspects of everyday life is absent. We are simply presented with statements such as: "The actual cultivation of the land was done by groups . . ." (Grant 1995: 44). I suggest that this encourages the reader to graft the temporal framework of a (much-simplified) political and social history onto a consideration of everyday practice and its associated material culture. Material and social life in the Highlands becomes static over the period from at least the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries. It is worth noting here the assertion by Peate that rural populations are characterised by immobility and primitiveness, although modern conditions have affected rapid transformations of the countryside (Peate 1938: 321).

The description of pre-Improvement Highland society and material culture as traditional can be seen as part of the process of characterising it as unchanging in opposition to the fluid modern world. This idea of the traditional in Highland and especially Gaelic society carries with it notions of an authentic, whole, and socially cohesive society (MacDonald 1997: 3-6) that perhaps form the basis of the attractiveness and popularity of folk life accounts. This popularity is despite academic condemnations of key folk life works (e.g., Evans 1961). The success of these studies should perhaps be understood within a wider context of the appropriation of stereotyped aspects of the Scottish (and especially Highland) rural past in the creation of modern identities, not least the national (see Creed and Ching 1997: 24-26 on this process in general):

. . . there is clearly a national consciousness about rural lifestyle in Scotland . . . derived more from a contaminated and romantic viewpoint of 'ye olde Scotland' than from any academic debate. (MacKay 1993: 50)

I believe this is generally true. However, the use of the word contaminated is unwarranted and is presumably intended to underline the *reality* of recent academic discourse on the



subject. It is to this academic discourse that we now turn.

## **Rural settlement studies as historical archaeology**

In 1960, Horace Fairhurst made some important observations regarding the antiquity of the main characteristics of eighteenth century rural settlement and landscape (Fairhurst 1960). There, he gives a general descriptive account of the *clachan* (his term for nucleated deserted settlement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) and its Lowland equivalent, the *fermtoun*. He notes some basic aspects of settlement morphology and house construction that are of regional or chronological importance. Of more significance, however, is the observation of a lacuna in Scottish settlement history between the Iron Age and the eighteenth century. Fairhurst recognised that this lacuna had previously been disguised:

In the absence of documentary proof . . . it must be admitted that we are largely projecting into a more distant past the conditions prevailing in the early eighteenth century. (Fairhurst 1960: 73)

Pre-Improvement settlement form had been viewed as static in time and the projection of eighteenth century material culture characteristics into earlier periods as unproblematic. Fairhurst problematised the history of rural settlement prior to the eighteenth century.

The four decades subsequent to Fairhurst's paper have seen a number of general studies on the problem, that is our lack of knowledge, of rural settlement prior to the eighteenth century (e.g., Dunbar 1971; Fairhurst 1967, 1971; Laing 1969; Morrison 1977; Yeoman 1991, 1995: chapter 8). The period in question has become known, in terms of settlement studies, as the Invisible Centuries or "a prolonged dark age" (Yeoman 1991; Fairhurst 1967: 158, respectively). Medieval settlement archaeology has become an established concern in Scotland, following from the growth of the subject elsewhere in Britain (Laing 1969: 69). Further, the acronym MoLaRS (Medieval or Later Rural Settlement) has become enshrined in the literature as a general term for post-Iron Age rural settlement, underlining the acceptance of the problem (e.g., Hingley (ed.) 1993)



Archaeological excavation and survey have long been argued to be potentially important techniques for dealing with this problem (e.g., Dixon 1993; Fairhurst 1960, 1968, 1969; Fairhurst and Petrie 1964). However, for the Highlands and Islands, survey and excavation have only recently begun to extend our knowledge of Medieval rural settlement (e.g., Barrett and Downes 1993, 1994; Branigan 1997; Caldwell and Ewart 1993; Caldwell, McWee and Ruckley 2000; Crawford 1983; James 1998; RCAHMS 1990: 12-13 and *passim*; Sharples and Parker Pearson 1999). The results of these various fieldwork projects have certainly added to our knowledge of the invisible centuries, but it is difficult at this stage to assess their relevance outside of the particular site, region, or chronological range of focus. Having said this, settlement characteristics that may be diagnostic of the period between the Iron Age and the eighteenth century are beginning to be better understood (see especially Barrett and Downes 1993, 1994; Sharples and Parker Pearson 1999). The work of some historical geographers and historians has also begun to explore aspects of the character of pre-eighteenth century settlement, largely through documentary and cartographic sources, with some success (e.g., Dodgshon 1977, 1993a; see Bangor-Jones 1993: 36-37 for a brief overview).

Perhaps one reason for the general lack of field projects that are successful in dealing with the problem of Medieval settlement is the fact that most of these projects have been characterised by a vague methodology. They concentrate on locating the missing settlement through excavation of a visible deserted site of perhaps relatively recent date, usually fairly randomly selected, in the hope that earlier material *may* be recovered below. Promisingly, discussion has recently begun to focus on the development of more rigorous methodologies for locating that settlement (Banks and Atkinson 2000; Banks 1996).

The specific results of all of these wide ranging projects and studies is not of real concern here. Rather, they are of interest in showing the increasing concern with the changing nature of Highland, and Lowland, rural settlement. They are concerned with restoring some kind of historicity to rural settlement and its study. In both the earlier, predominantly nineteenth century, studies and in folk life studies this historicity had been absent in different ways. The idea that settlement and landscapes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be taken as representative of the end point in an unbroken continuum is now challenged.

Recognition of this new past has had ramifications for the ways in which we



approach the subject of rural settlement. Some of these – the need to establish the nature of Medieval settlement and to construct methodologies in order to do so - we have just seen. There are also ramifications for the ways in which we view the relevant archaeological resource. Management and preservation issues in relation to Medieval or Later Rural Settlement sites and landscapes are increasingly under discussion as their significance in writing the history of the period is realised (e.g., see Bangor-Jones 1993; Hingley 1993, 2000; Hingley (ed.) 1993: 62-65; Mackay 1993; Swanson 1993; Turner 2000).

The other main characteristic of recent archaeological rural settlement studies is the renewed emphasis on fieldwork. As seen above, there was an amount of survey and excavation associated with rural settlement studies in the nineteenth century. That fieldwork was of its time, however, and was thus sporadic, unmethodological and frequently poorly recorded and published. There has been little original fieldwork associated with the major folk life studies of the twentieth century.

In 1993, Donnie MacKay noted that there had been few rural settlement excavations in Scotland and that most fieldwork had been survey orientated (MacKay 1993: 43). At the time, this was generally true. Apart from Fairhurst's well-known work at Lix and Rosal and that of the Stewarts at Lianach there had been little significant excavation (Fairhurst 1968, 1969; Stewart and Stewart 1988). This situation is beginning to change, however. Excavation of rural settlement sites of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and exploration for and excavation of pre-eighteenth century settlement have become common archaeological pursuits in a number of spheres.

These aims are now often included in the agendas of wider ranging landscape projects. There is the Dunbeath project, looking at the archaeology and history of a single estate in Caithness through time (Morrison 1996). SEARCH (Sheffield Environmental and Archaeological Research Campaign in the Hebrides) has conducted excavations on sites in the Western Isles dating from the Neolithic through to the nineteenth century (Branigan 1997; Branigan and Foster 1995; Gilbertson, Kent and Gratton (eds) 1996; Sharples and Parker Pearson 1999; Symonds 2000). The Ben Lawers Historic Landscape Project likewise has a wide chronological remit within a specific landscape, North Lochtayside (Atkinson 2000). Geographically adjacent to Lochtayside, the Rannoch Archaeological Project has a similar remit again (MacGregor 2000).

There is also at least one site-specific research project currently in progress. This



concerns the excavation of an immediately pre-Improvement settlement at Easter Raitts, near Kingussie, Strathspey (Lelong and Wood 2000). This project has a number of aims, including providing field training for students in the Certificate in Field Archaeology sponsored by the University of Aberdeen and Highland Council.

Excavation of rural settlement sites is now also a concern in a developer funded rescue context, where fieldwork is executed by commercial archaeological field units (e.g., MacGregor, Lelong, and Johnston-Smith 1999; McCullagh and Tipping (eds) 1998).

However, the majority of MoLaRS fieldwork continues to be survey orientated. All of the above projects involve or involved some form of survey, whether geophysical, standing building, topographic, landscape, settlement or other, alongside the excavation work. There have also been an increasing number of specifically survey-orientated projects.

Highland rural settlement entered the Inventories of the Royal Commission with the Argyll volumes (RCAHMS 1971, 1975, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1992). In these, descriptive text, sometimes with accompanying plan surveys or photographs, is provided for one or two well preserved examples (figure 2.7). The Commission volume for northeast Perth focused on understanding archaeological landscapes in that area (RCAHMS 1990). Surveys of multi-period landscapes included potential historic period settlement and field systems (figure 2.8). Amongst these were the new Pitcarmick type buildings, examples of which have since been excavated, and one found to be underlying a structure of the thirteenth century (Barrett and Downes 1993, 1994; RCAHMS 1990: 12-13 and *passim*; figure 2.9). The landscape orientated approach adopted in the north east Perth volume is part of a wider interest in landscape studies in archaeology in general, and that we have seen in relation to several projects above. Its potential for addressing the problems of pre-eighteenth century settlement is significant if the case of the Pitcarmick type building is anything to go by. The Afforestation Land Survey of RCAHMS has also provided several useful recent surveys including areas of rural settlement (see Dixon 1993).



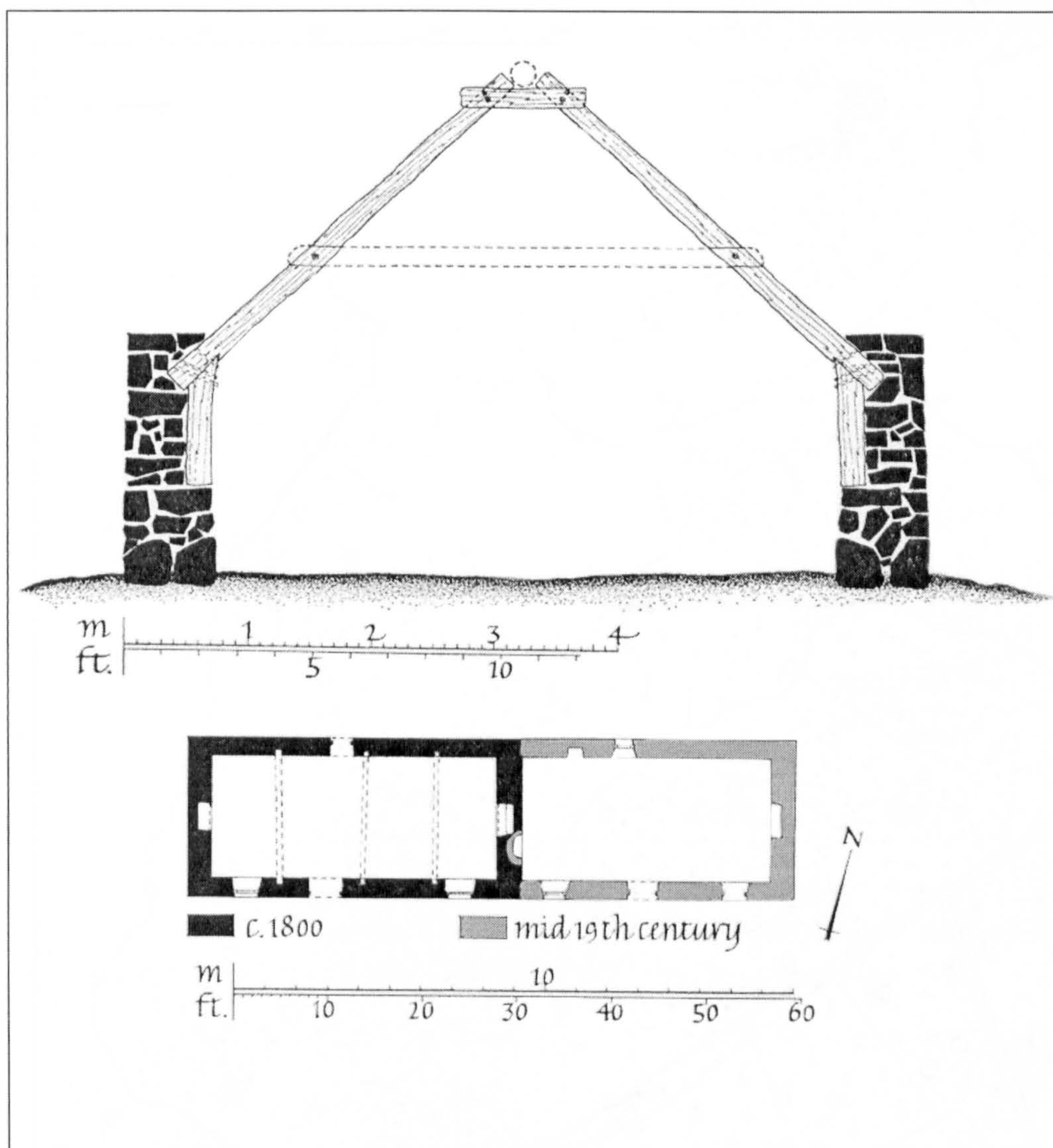


Figure 2.7: RCAHMS illustrations of rural dwellings. A cruck-framed building, Clachadow, Lorn (top) and a pair of cottages in Glencoe (bottom ) (after RCAHMS 1974: 270, figures 227 and 228). Surveys of such Highland buildings entered the Royal Commission inventories with the first of the Argyll volumes (RCAHMS 1971).





Figure 2.8: A recent landscape survey in Perthshire by the Royal Commission, (after RCAHMS 1990: 34, figure 108a). Such landscape surveys have provided invaluable data on rural settlement. A recent, abandoned farmstead is marked E and F, while a number of Pitcarmick-type buildings are marked D. These various structures sit amongst the remains of prehistoric settlement and field systems.



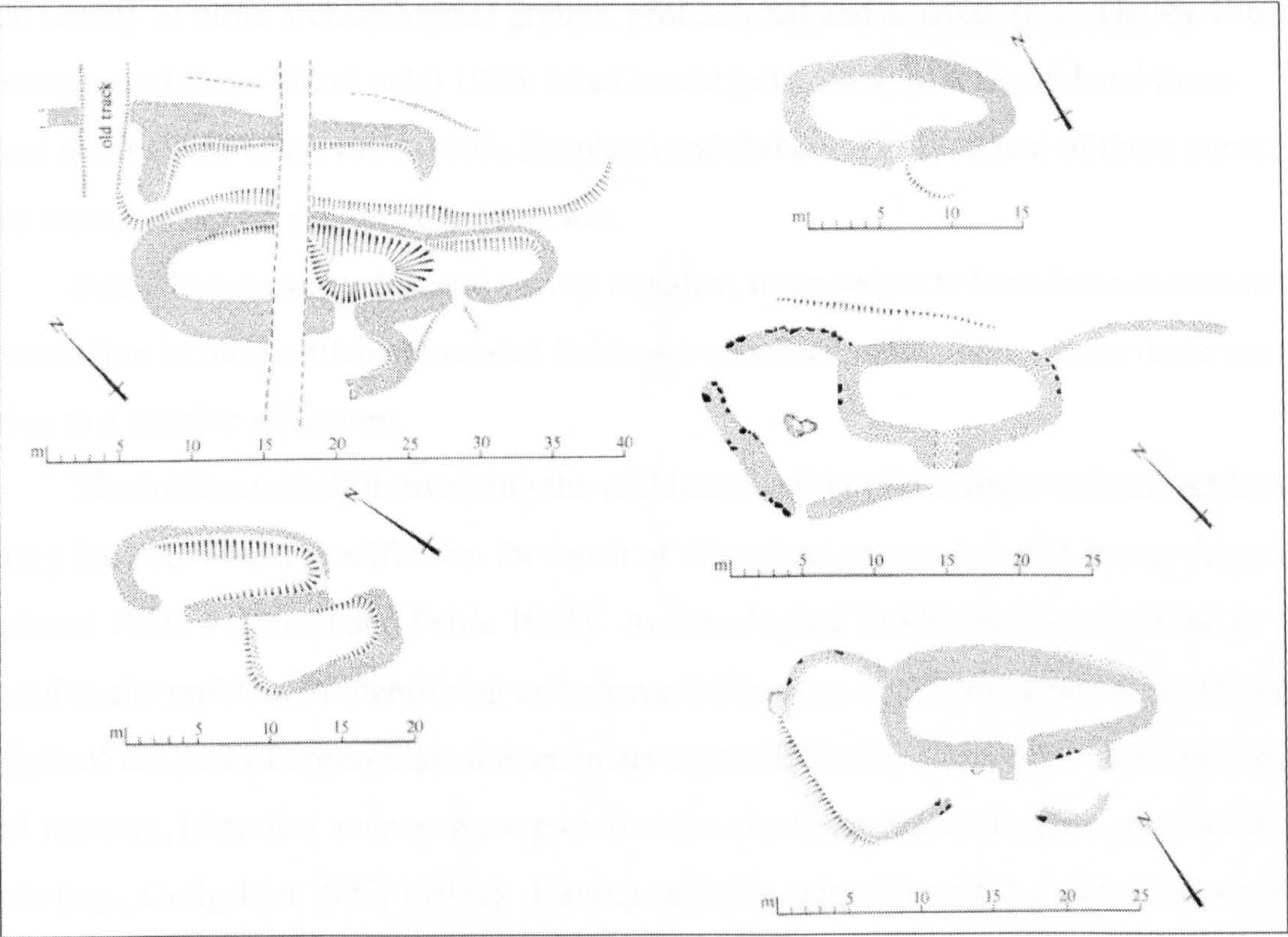


Figure 2.9: Some Pitcarmick buildings (after RCAHMS 1990: 99, figures 227.1 and 227.2). This type of structure was first identified through landscape surveys like that depicted in figure 2.8. Pitcarmicks may date to the first millennium A.D.



Outside of RCAHMS, surveys of MoLaRS sites have also been conducted by a wide variety of other archaeological groups, professional and amateur (e.g., Gailey 1962a; Johnstone and Scott Wood (eds) 1996; MacDonald (ed.) 1999; MacDonald and Scott Wood (eds) 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999; Shepherd and Ralston 1981). Most of these surveys have concentrated on single settlement sites.

Considering excavation and survey together, there seems to have been somewhat of an explosion in rural settlement related fieldwork in recent years. This can be understood as due to a number of factors.

The intellectual shift involving the problematisation of pre-Improvement settlement history has provided a specific aim for much of this recent excavation and survey (e.g., see Fairhurst 1960; Fairhurst and Petrie 1964). Archaeological fieldwork has been seen as central to the problem of identifying and characterising pre-eighteenth century settlement in light of the lack of appropriate documentary material (Laing 1969: 69). However, up until recently, historical sources have provided the most important advances in general terms (e.g., Dodgshon 1977, 1993a). Having said this, generally valid conclusions about Medieval settlement form and process are beginning to emerge from some of the most recent archaeological work (Barrett and Downes 1993, 1994; RCAHMS 1990; Sharples and Parker Pearson 1999).

More prosaic influences have also brought about the recent increase in fieldwork. Development threats to rural settlement sites have lead to archaeological survey and excavation. One example is GUARD's work at Tigh Vectican, Arrochar, a cottage of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century origin under threat from the proposed redevelopment of the Arrochar Residential Outdoor Centre (MacGregor, Lelong and Johnston-Smith 1999; figure 2.10). This impetus to fieldwork seems a straightforward consequence of increasing modern development. However, it is important to realise that the inclusion of rural settlement sites, especially those of the last few hundred years, within the remit of rescue archaeology itself requires the recognition of such sites *as* archaeology. The fact that RCAHMS only began to include such sites and landscapes in its inventories fairly recently (1971 for the Highlands) underlines the fact that their acceptance as archaeology is a recent phenomenon. In the tradition of the nineteenth century such material found its archaeological role in providing analogy for prehistoric studies. The study of rural settlement within folk life studies likewise separated the topic from traditional



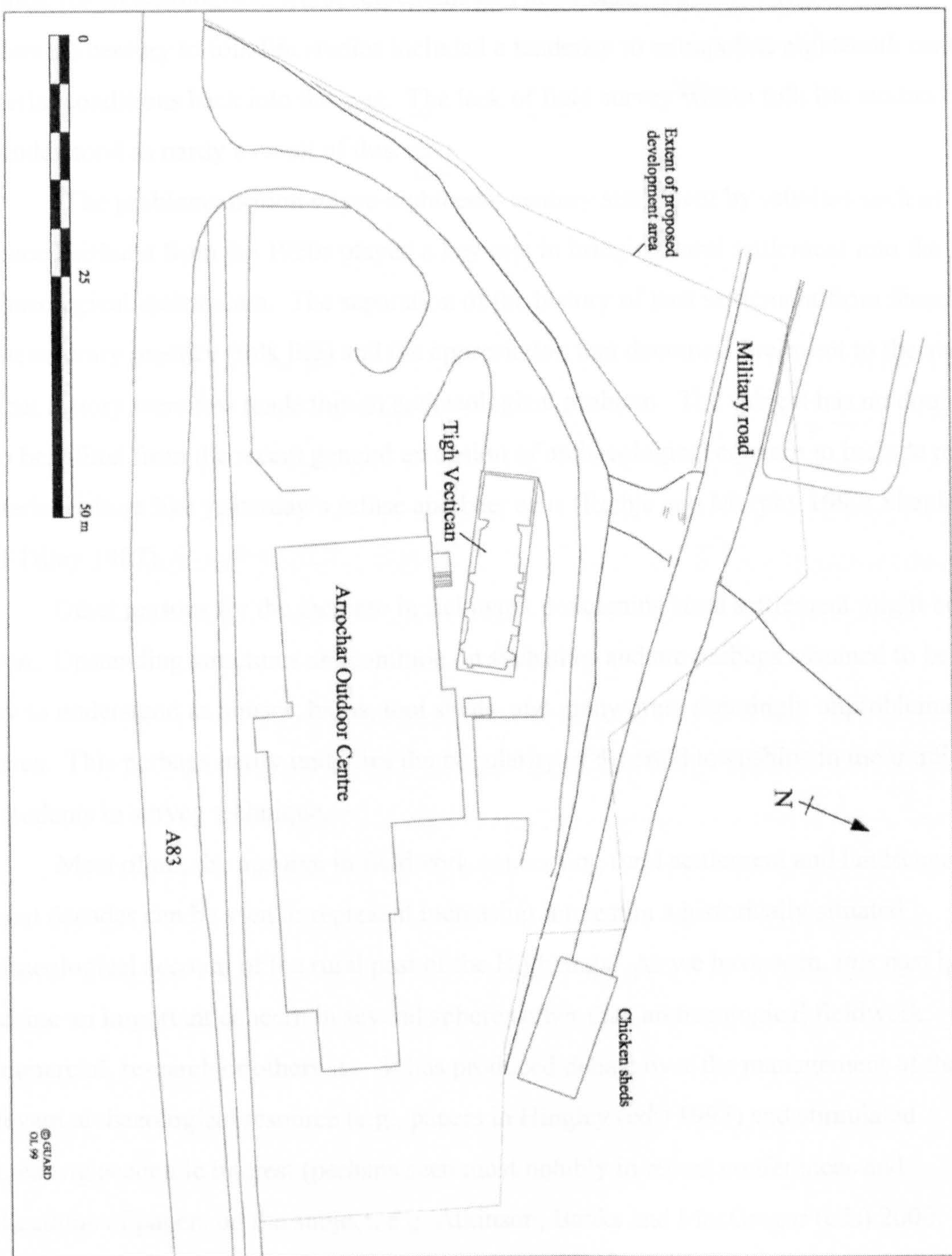


Figure 2.10: A survey produced to locate Tigh Vectican and other archaeological features in the context of the proposed development area (after MacGregor, Lelong, and Johnston Smith 1999: 15, figure 2). Developer-funded survey and excavation have increasingly included rural settlement sites within their remit.



archaeological concerns. Rural settlement was for folk life scholars and too recent and familiar for archaeologists. Rural settlement was not archaeology. The legacy of nineteenth century to folk life studies included a tendency to extrapolate eighteenth century material conditions back into the past. The lack of field survey within folk life studies can be understood as partly a result of this.

The problematisation of pre-eighteenth century settlement by scholars such as Horace Fairhurst from the 1950s played a key role in bringing rural settlement into the archaeological mainstream. The separation of the history of past settlement from recent or contemporary practice (folk life) and the appreciation that documents relevant to the study of that history were few made this an archaeological problem. The subject has no doubt also benefited from the recent general extension of archaeological concern to include recent material culture like yesterday's refuse and beer cans (Rathje and Murphy 1992; Shanks and Tilley, 1987).

Other reasons for the increase in fieldwork concerning rural settlement might be given. Upstanding structures are common on such sites and are perhaps assumed to be easy to understand as houses, barns, tool sheds, and many other seemingly unproblematic spaces. This perhaps partly underlies the popularity of deserted townships in the training of students in survey technique.

Most of all, the upsurge in fieldwork concerning rural settlement and landscape in recent decades can be seen to represent increasing interest in a historically situated archaeological account of the rural past of the Highlands. As we have seen, *this* past has become an important concern in several spheres other than archaeological fieldwork, commercial, research or otherwise. It has produced debate over the management of the relevant archaeological resource (e.g., papers in Hingley (ed.) 1993) and stimulated increasing academic interest (perhaps seen most notably in recent conferences and collections of papers on the subject, e.g. Atkinson, Banks and MacGregor (eds) 2000; Morrison (ed.) 1980).

Despite the restoration of forms of historicity with folk life and recent archaeological work on rural settlement, I would suggest that the material culture in question is yet to be used to anything near its full potential in writing the Medieval and later history of the Highlands. Certain essential factors, to be discussed immediately below, within recent approaches to the subject have limited the potential contribution of



archaeologists to discussion concerning recent Highland society. I believe that this potential contribution is at least as significant as that of the documentary historian, who has traditionally defined the research agenda for and history of the period in question.

### **Archaeology, documents, and the writing of social history**

Despite the restoration of historicity to the subject and the recent upsurge of interest in the history of rural settlement, there has been almost no attempt to construct the recent social history of the Highlands from an archaeological perspective. The archaeology of rural settlement is largely an empirical exercise. This can be understood through a consideration of the relationship of history and archaeology in studies of rural settlement and I will concentrate here on those studies relating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The majority of rural settlement study is empirical in nature. Even the most recent of RCAHMS inventories simply give a physical description as the entry for an individual site, although there is some synthesis of this material in the introductions to the volumes (e.g., RCAHMS 1990: 11-13, 95-171). A typical entry will categorise the structure or site, as a township or shieling for example. It will note the relationship of the archaeology to the local topography and the spatial inter-relationships of the archaeological elements of the site. It will give the dimensions of the various structures, give a description of construction techniques and fabric, and much more. Surveys carried out by organisations other than RCAHMS are usually equally empirically orientated (e.g., MacDonald and Scott Wood (eds) 1999), as are many excavation reports (e.g., Fairhurst 1968, 1969; MacGregor, Lelong and Johnston-Smith 1999: 17-44).

Admittedly, the empirical nature of these works is often the result of a strict remit that is not of the excavator or surveyor's design. For instance, the excavations and survey at Tigh Vectican were undertaken by a commercial archaeological field unit (GUARD) on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council (the developer) under terms of reference supplied by West of Scotland Archaeology Service (MacGregor, Lelong and Johnston-Smith 1999: 5). The main aim was to establish and define the nature of the archaeological resource on the



site in order to produce recommendations for mitigation during any subsequent development (MacGregor, Lelong and Johnston-Smith 1999: 6). In such circumstances, it is easy to understand why the report is largely confined to empirical statements. It is equally easy to understand why such an approach has been followed in a context where the prime objective is to teach students survey technique (see Johnstone and Scott Wood 1996 (eds); MacDonald (ed.) 1999; MacDonald and Scott Wood (eds) 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999).

Whatever the reason, archaeological rural settlement studies are largely empirical studies. This is not to say that there is no historical content, nor any historical contextualisation of archaeological material. Most empirical accounts do contain some historical component. This often takes the form of a brief chronological narrative detailing the main documentary and cartographic sources available that relate to the site (e.g., Johnstone and Scott Wood (eds) 1996: 27; MacGregor, Lelong and Johnston-Smith 1999: 8-17; RCAHMS 1990: 95 and *passim*). This account is nearly always physically separated within the written report from that of the archaeology itself. The role of historical narratives within such reports is largely to refine our empirical understanding of the material culture. Documents can be used to date changes in the character of settlement or landscape; to flesh out the archaeological bones by suggesting the potential functions of the various structures on a site or by giving information on past material culture (organic materials, for example) now largely invisible archaeologically; or to suggest the existence of other missing aspects of a site such as its Medieval antecedents (e.g., Gailey 1962a; Fairhurst 1968, 1969).

Here, archaeological and documentary research are being pursued together, but still largely apart, to further our empirical understanding. Most reference to the social aspects of a site or landscape is with this agenda in mind. The evidence given in the trial of Patrick Sellar, the notorious Sutherland factor, is used in the Rosal excavation report to suggest where the wood for the couples in the houses came from (Fairhurst 1968: 146).

It would be unfair to maintain that there has been absolutely no critical use of the archaeology of this period in discussing key social issues, such as Clearance (e.g., Fairhurst 1968: 142-143). However, such discussion is literally confined to half a dozen or so pages out of the hundreds of the combined reports. Further, where any account is given of the social history of a site or area it has largely been a case of uncritically lifting the traditional documentary historical narrative (of Improvement or Clearance, for example) and pasting it



onto the empirical archaeological account.

The result of this approach is that the role of archaeology in *producing* the history of the Highlands, in terms of rural society in the more recent centuries, has been an extremely limited one. Archaeological research largely becomes an exercise in the illustration of narratives defined by documentary historians, such as the traditional account of Improvement. The main active role of archaeology in this situation is to fill in the gaps where documentary evidence is lacking or to confirm document-based hypotheses (a role most easily seen in the case of Medieval rural settlement studies, see above). Such a role is clear from the manner in which material culture is used within largely documentary-based research (e.g., Bil 1990; Stewart 1990). Archaeology here primarily maps and illustrates. As such, archaeological rural settlement studies tend to maintain a traditional historical account that can be accused of uncritically accepting the views of the Improvers themselves (MacKay 1993: 46). This account has come under increasing scrutiny from documentary historians in recent years who have increasingly focused on the question of overt resistance to Improvement and Clearance (see Harvey 1990 for an overview).

Empirical archaeological research and the combination of documentary and material culture resources in the manner described have been useful. Such studies have laid the foundation of a basic understanding of settlement and landscape in physical and chronological terms that is essential to any social archaeology. Potentially important historical contexts for aspects of material culture have been defined (e.g., the link between geometric settlement morphology and Improvement, Gailey 1960: 104, 1962a: 162-163; see chapter 5 below). However, such work has remained very superficial in terms of writing social history (MacKay 1988: 111).

A small minority within the subject has recently addressed this significant problem of the passive nature of archaeology in the construction of recent Highland history. The two discussions relevant here are both concerned with assessing the cognitive aspects of past landscapes (see Knapp and Ashmore (eds) 1999 for a range of similar studies). Donnie MacKay (1988: 111-112) outlined this approach as a concern in rural settlement studies. He says:

Clearance settlement archaeology, for want of a better title, is about people, and the affect that the various social processes at work in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries have



had. Archaeology should not merely be restricted to classification . . . we should elaborate on our evidence to consider the implications of social and ideological factors in creating our historical landscapes . . . . Field survey . . . with the help of documentary and folklore sources and an awareness of the social processes at work throughout the period, give us the opportunity to relate archaeology to the ideological and cultural factors which were transforming the lifestyle of much of the Scottish Highlands . . . (MacKay 1988: 111)

The importance of the approach outlined by MacKay is its emphasis on considering how people perceived their material surroundings. He goes on to outline how we might see this perception as mediated through folklore and religious belief, for example.

However, this approach does have its problems. Material culture is separated from transformative ideological and social processes. There is a danger here of, again, uncritically lifting narratives constructed in the discipline of documentary history and applying them to the archaeology. Again, history and archaeology are separate.

In understanding the archaeological data by pasting separately constructed historical narratives on top of it, the potential of material culture as a resource in the construction and reconstruction of society is ignored. Material things are seen to change as a consequence of change in ideological and cultural factors. There is no scope for seeing change in material culture as intended to create social and cultural change.

This first criticism relates directly to a second. The construction of cognitive landscapes in the approach outlined by MacKay is the construction of normative and largely static perceptions of landscape. We are met with statements of how the association of fairies and dwarfs with landscape features and times of the day impinged on travel, for example (MacKay 1988: 112). The assumption is that everyone held the same ideas about their material surroundings and this caused everyone to act in the same way. There is no discussion of how such concepts might be mobilised, questioned, or refuted in different social contexts or by different people. Everyone is duped into believing the norm. For MacKay, ideology is apparently directly translatable as belief. There is no social component, in the sense of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships.

Olivia Lelong has recently forwarded a more concrete study of such cognitive landscapes (2000). In this, she discusses the Sutherland Clearances and the attendant



relocation of tenants of the Sutherland estates from the inland straths to the coastal strip. With this physical dislocation came a cognitive dislocation. Tenants, their families and others were uprooted from a landscape they knew intimately and which played a role in structuring their understanding of the world. This was a landscape of fields and agriculture, of mountains and rivers, that bore the physical marks of past human activity and within which their daily practices were embedded. Physical relocation to the coast confronted these people with a landscape that was dominated by a new element, the sea. This was fluid, bearing no physical trace of past activity that they could understand. It was strange. People did not have the necessary experience of interacting with this new landscape that was required in order to extract a decent living from it. Some learnt to adapt while others protested to this enforced physical and cognitive relocation through emigration.

Lelong's paper is different from MacKay's in that she considers how people interacted with their material environment and how this structured their perception of their world. She is less concerned with symbolism and more interested in daily practice and routine. Her account is to some degree still normative, however, in that different perspectives made possible by those daily routines are not considered.

In general, then, such studies have begun to question traditional interpretations of recent Highland history, or at least begun to elaborate new and complementary perspectives. In doing so they have begun to redefine the role of archaeology in writing that history. They have underlined the need to "adopt an approach to the past which recognizes the cultural unity of the various sorts of evidence – one which is attentive to the importance of material things" (Driscoll 1984: 109).

However, these studies are questionable on theoretical grounds, as expanded in the following chapter. Both Lelong and MacKays' studies are to different extents normative. Further, MacKay seems to envisage landscape as passive, although Lelong argues that it did play a role in structuring peoples understanding of their world.

I will argue in the next chapter that we must see material culture as active, in relation to both social structure and agency. People's material environment did structure the way in which they perceived their world. However, they were not simply determined by that environment, but could manipulate it as a strategy in maintaining or redefining social relations. I will argue throughout this thesis that the material aspects of



Improvement performed just this role. Landlords, tenants and other members of the Highland rural population constructed and reconstructed their houses, settlements and the surrounding landscape in maintaining or modifying their relationships with each other. In eschewing a normative archaeological account of Highland society in the era of Improvement, I will consider the ways in which social relationships were mediated through everyday routine. The particular manner of landscape organisation, settlement pattern and morphology, and the organisation of domestic space all played a role in structuring how people related to each other from day to day, and were manipulated in redefining these relationships. Central to this discussion are concepts of power and ideology, also discussed in the following chapter. Cognition is arguably constructed through several different processes, both in daily experience of the environment (producing practical, non-discursive consciousness) and through ritual and other explicit ideological statements, as in documents (producing discursive consciousness). This distinction will allow us to mediate between ideological symbolism and consciousness on the one hand and practical consciousness on the other. Different elements of MacKay and Lelong's theses, the symbolic and the practical elements of cognition, will therefore be adopted. However, the way in which these concepts are understood will be different. In the next chapter it will be argued that certain ideologies are made knowable by the structuring of routine practice, and from this perspective we can begin to assess how different groups understood those ideologies.

In adopting such a theoretical position, archaeology is given a role in constructing the history of Improvement. This is of more than parochial interest as Improvement formed an integral part of the wider cultural movement of the (Scottish) Enlightenment. Further, the process of Improvement was a local manifestation of the 'rise of capitalism'. Quite what an archaeology of capitalism should be will be considered in chapter four. What is relevant here is that material culture has previously been denied an active role in the process of Improvement. Restoring that active role and considering the manipulation of day-to-day experience of the social world will allow us to consider the people in the process.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Society and the material world**

This chapter discusses the theoretical relationship between material culture and society that has informed the rest of this thesis. I do not conceive of this theoretical framework as something apart, to be applied to the archaeology of Improvement. Rather, this chapter is an abstracted account of a thought process that has grown reflexively with the other chapters.

In concluding the last chapter, I argued an active role for archaeology in constructing recent Highland history. Social processes did not impact on a passive material world and people were not passively structured by that material world. Here I will begin by clarifying the relationship of social structure and agency, and the relationship between the material environment and society. The agency/structure relationship will be conceived as reflexive. People were structured by their material world, but not determined. They also structured that world, and could maintain or alter their conditions of existence. Here, structure is not an entity opposed to the individual or group, but a network of social relationships.

Following from this, I will consider how we might conceive of social change within such a reflexively structured world. The locus of social change is argued to be contradiction within the social structure. In the Highlands, for example, I will suggest here and argue in detail later that Improvement aimed to resolve two primary relational contradictions in Highland society: that between legalistic and kin-based systems of social organisation in Kintyre; and, that between the dual existence of landowners in Kilfinan as members of the emergent Middle Class and as traditional Highland landowners.

However, societies are not static and contradictions arise or become the site of conflict from a process of constant change. In this sense, we might distinguish heuristically between different rhythms of social change. Constant quantitative changes in social relationships can lead to larger scale qualitative social change by exposing existing contradictions. In Kintyre, quantitative change in landholding exposed the contradiction between legalistic and kin-based systems of landholding. Also, qualitative change in one



network of social relations can lead to change in another connected network. In Kilfinan, the contradiction between Middle Class status and traditional Highland estate ownership became conflictual with the emergence of a coherent Middle Class culture based in the Scottish Enlightenment.

The process of social change is seen here as a process of social negotiation, where change is not simply considered to be instigated and controlled by an elite. Concepts of power and ideology have been central to recent archaeological discussions of this process of social negotiation. Power and ideology are not to be thought of as the exclusive resources of such an elite. However, neither should we simply oppose two social groups in a dialogue of domination and resistance, as some recent archaeological work has. Rather, we should see social change as composed of a series of actions that are both structured by previous social experience and contingent on changing circumstance. We should consider social actions within the process of social negotiation as contingent.

The final section of this chapter assesses two recent approaches to the role of material culture in this process of social structuring and restructuring. The first sees material culture as text, encoding ideas. The key problem with this approach is that it gives us no methodology for assessing alternative views of that text. Despite claims to the contrary, it tends to result in the construction of dominant ideologies. This approach is rejected in favour of that which assesses ideology within the context of the everyday structuring of the social and material world, where ideology is embedded in day-to-day life. This approach, in line with the considerations of structure, agency, and material culture presented in the first section of this chapter, suggests we can assess the *possibilities* of acceptance or otherwise of a dominant ideology through assessing how well that ideology accords with people's everyday experience. That everyday experience makes some ideologies knowable and others unknowable; it allows some ideological statements to appear as common sense. The final section of this chapter revolves around a discussion of how cognition is structured, suggesting that we should distinguish between discursive consciousness and practical consciousness in the structuring of society.



## The constitution of society

One of the achievements of early postprocessual archaeology was an emphasis on agency and meaning in archaeological explanation, in reaction to the passive individual of processual analysis. Ian Hodder says:

Material culture does not exist. Someone makes it. It is produced to do something. Therefore it does not passively *reflect* society – rather, it creates society through the actions of individuals . . . . Material culture and its associated meanings are played out as parts of social strategies. Individuals do not simply fill predetermined roles, acting out their scripts. If they did, there would be little need for the active use of material culture in order to negotiate social position and create social change. We are not simply pawns in a game, determined by a system – rather, we use a myriad of means, including material culture symbolism, to create new roles, to redefine existing ones and to deny the existence of others. (Hodder 1991: 6 and 8; emphasis in original)

In this, continuity and change in social relations are not conceived as entirely determined by the free will of the individual. Rather, some importance is accorded to structure, which can act to define the purposes, meanings and intentions of that individual (Hodder 1991: 9). Meaning is not purely subjective as it is referent to the human situation and to consciousness, and consciousness is not idealised but practical (Kus 1984: 103).

However, the dialectic between agency and structure is not fully considered, and analyses carried out from this perspective tend to over-emphasise the individual as autonomous. So, bearing in mind the importance of such theory and studies in re-introducing the active agent to archaeological explanation, some later work has focused in more detail on the relationship between agency and structure (e.g., Barrett 1988, 1994; Johnson 1989):

In his own attempt to escape functionalist explanations Hodder has shifted the attention of archaeology towards considering the intentions and motivations of human agents. He seems to suggest that through a detailed analysis of the patterns



preserved in the material record it should be possible to recover something of the ideas in people's heads. Even if this were possible, and published examples of this kind of reasoning are far from convincing, we are simply moved from a position where social structures govern human behaviour to one which reasserts the primacy of the individual. (Barrett 1988: 7-8)

The starting point for Barrett's reassessment of the structure-agency dialectic is Giddens' conceptualisation of *Praxis* (Barrett 1988: 8). Giddens says:

I take *Praxis* to be an ontological term, expressing a fundamental trait of human social existence. To speak of human social activity as *Praxis* is to reject every conception of human beings as 'determined objects' or as unambiguously 'free subjects'. All human action is carried on by knowledgeable agents who both construct the social world through their action, but yet whose action is also conditioned or constrained by the very world of their creation. (Giddens 1995: 53-54; see also Giddens 1979)

The relationship of agency and structure is a reflexive one. The actions of the individual structures and restructures their social world, but that created world acts back to structure human action in an ongoing reflexive process. In this process, knowledge extends beyond a discursive understanding of the world to include practical knowledge, which is in turn distinguished from unconscious sources of cognition and motivation (Giddens 1984: 7). In this, practical consciousness, or "knowing how to go on" (Giddens 1995: 27), is rediscovered and reproduced by action and discourse.

So, practical action in the world serves partly to define human consciousness and the actions of agents, and in this way structure interacts with agency. Taking up this concern with the relation between structure and agency Randall McGuire suggests that Giddens' notion of structure and the individual is flawed in the separation of the two into distinct entities:

Human action should not be opposed to social structure because human action and social structure form a unity. The existence of one necessarily requires the prior



existence of the other. Humans make history as social beings, and they do so as members of social groups . . . . Just as the individual cannot exist in the absence of society, so to society cannot exist in the absence of individuals. Social structures have no existence independent of the people who form them. These structures are not things but instead are sets of relationships that link individuals. Because society is a relational network of differences, that is, a network of contradictions that define individuals in definite ways . . . conflict is built into these unities . . . . People take on certain social characteristics and consciousness as a result of their position *vis a vis* others in these sets of relationships and, for this reason, people make history as members of social groups. (McGuire 1992: 134 and 136)

McGuire seems to overstep the mark here. To say that Giddens suggests that social structures exist as independent is, I think, wrong. The whole idea of practical consciousness, of knowing how to go on, is that people produce a knowledge of how to act (structure) through their experience of social relationships. This does not suggest that structures are things.

### **Contradiction as the locus of social change**

Where we might look for the locus of social change is hinted at in the above quote from McGuire, where society is conceived of as a network of contradictions that necessarily embody conflict. The dialectical approach to studying history views society as structured by a network of internal relations that are made up of contradictions that bind together individuals and groups with opposing and conflicting interests (McGuire 1992: 12). For example:

This logic shows two opposed social categories, master and slave, to form a unity. That is, they are the observable manifestations of a single underlying relation of slavery. The existence of one necessarily entails the existence of the other, yet they are opposites and, as such, potentially in conflict. (McGuire 1992: 96)



It is in such contradictions that exist in all human relations, with each other and the natural world, that we find the dynamics of change (McGuire 1992: 15). This is as the societal whole is always in flux as small changes in any part thereof will alter the structure of relations (McGuire 1992: 12). So, a series of small quantitative changes in a relationship, such as between master and slave, can lead to a qualitative change involving the transformation of the relations that constitute the social structure (McGuire 1992: 97).

This position can be summed up with reference to the Laws of the Dialectic, which are not laws in the positivistic sense, not allowing simple prediction for example, but rather act as guides in studying social change. These are reducible to three main ideas (McGuire 1992: 97-99). The first is the transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa. This suggests that social change is never simply quantitative or qualitative, rather quantitative change can lead to a qualitative transformation and qualitative change necessarily implies a quantitative change:

The change in the quantity of one or more member relations in the totality of relations leads to the whole having characteristics that it did not have before.  
(McGuire 1992: 97)

The second idea is the unity of opposites, which refers to the idea of contradiction. In this, opposites that appear distinct and separate are in fact joined by a common relation that defines each pole of the opposition. The third idea is the negation of the negation, and this refers to the process of change that results from contradiction:

Not all conflicts within social forms result from contradictions. Conflict can result from the clash of wills or any one of a number of other sources beyond relational contradictions. But only those conflicts that result from relational contradictions, that are necessary for the existence of particular processes and entities, will lead to a transformation of the social form. Such relations hold within them their own negation, the contradiction that will make the relation into something else; likewise, these relations are themselves the negation of a prior relation or set of relations. The negation of the negation thus refers to the process whereby the negation inherent within a relational contradiction transforms the relation or set of relations into



another form – something different. (McGuire 1992: 97-98)

From the first law, conflict inherent in the web of social relations does not always result in change, rather quantitative changes in everyday life can heighten that conflict, resulting in qualitative change (McGuire 1992: 150). For example, increased hardship in the daily life of a slave can lead to the conflict inherent in their relationship with the master being highlighted and could thus lead to expressed discontent. As a result, the master might step up punitive measures for objection to the current form of the relation that, in turn, might lead to revolt and the negation of that relation.

Giddens' discussion of contradiction is particularly helpful here in introducing the idea of primary contradiction in society:

. . . societal totalities are *structured in contradiction*, involving the fusion and exclusion of opposites. In other words, the operation of one structural principle in the reproduction of a societal system presumes that of another which tends to undermine it. This view supposes that . . . there is one principal axis of contradiction, which I shall call the *primary contradiction* of that type of society. (Giddens 1995: 231-232, emphasis in original)

In class-divided societies, such as with European feudal societies for example, Giddens considers the primary contradiction to be located in the city-countryside relation: "Agrarian states involve an antagonistic fusion of two modes of social organisation, the rural community on the one hand, and the city based institutions on the other" (Giddens 1995: 237).

I will argue in detail in chapter seven that in Kintyre and Kilfinan there was a similar antagonistic fusion of two modes of social organisation.

However, the primary contradiction in Kintyre was not located in the fusion of rural and city based institutions, but in the fusion of kin-based and legalistic principles of territorial and social organisation. Kintyre society was structured according to the landlord-tenant relationship *and* that of clan gentry-clan at one and the same time. There were of course other dimensions to Highland social structure, but this was the *principle contradiction* that resulted in change and the instigation of Improvement and capitalism.



As will be seen in chapter seven it was quantitative change in the extent of the personal, legalistically defined estates of Kintyre landowners that resulted in qualitative change in the relationship of the farming population to their landlords. This quantitative change exposed the structuring contradiction of Highland society. In Kintyre, the Dukes of Argyll instigated Improvement as a strategy in addressing this principle contradiction and, thus, in maintaining their landed interest there.

For Kilfinan, I will argue that Improvement was a strategy in landowners' maintenance of their position within the urban-based Middle Class, emergent from the late eighteenth century. As such, Giddens' emphasis on the city-countryside relationship could be considered as significant in this case. The Kilfinan case study will also underline the importance of qualitative changes in external social spheres (the Lowland burghs) in understanding internal change (in the rural Highlands). The primary contradiction in Kilfinan was that between the landowners' simultaneous membership of the Middle Class and the traditional landowning classes. Outside qualitative social changes, like the growth of Enlightenment, are also significant in understanding Improvement in Kintyre.

### **The negotiation of social relations**

So, the locus of social change can be seen to lie in the contradictions present in the structuring of all social relations. The laws of the dialectic do not, however, allow us to predict from the nature of such contradiction what path change will take, they merely show us where to look in order to begin a study of change. In order to study why a particular change took the form it did we are returned to the discussion of structure and agency. We should not only look at previous relations in order to understand where the conflict leading to change could have come from, but also to understand how the characteristics of previous relations, the structure, enabled various courses of action, the agency. In chapters six and seven, it will be seen that the involvement of the relevant landlords in aspects of Lowland Scottish society and culture structured their approach in resolving the contradictions mentioned above. Significant here is the social theory of the Scottish Enlightenment.

However, to consider the social context of the landlords alone would be to render the rest of the rural population passive. According to the discussion of structure and



agency entered into above, we should accord all individuals or groups the ability to actively engage with and influence their social and material environment. Social change should not be conceived of as a one-way process dictated by an elite. Rather it is a process of social negotiation. Recent archaeological understandings of how agents actively negotiate their position in social relations, under the constraints of structure, have proceeded from a consideration of the concepts of power and ideology.

Traditionally, social scientists have equated power with a negative, repressive force; a quantity held by some, an elite (see McGuire 1992: 132; Miller and Tilley 1984: 5). Recently, however, this view has been criticised and a more complex notion of power has been formed. Miller and Tilley (1984) usefully distinguish between *power to* and *power over*. They say:

By *power to* we refer to power as an integral and recursive element in all aspects of social life. *Power over*, by contrast, can be specifically related to forms of social control. While *power to* can be logically disconnected from coercion and asymmetrical forms of social domination and does not, therefore, imply *power over*, the latter sense of the noun power must always involve *power to*. (Miller and Tilley 1984: 5)

Power, then, is present in all social relations, not just those between an elite (e.g., the state or the feudal lord) and a subject population. Power, as *power to*, is a universal ability of individuals or groups to act to change their conditions of existence. This is not to deny that power does not have a negative or repressive aspect. Rather it is to distinguish that aspect, *power over*, as one form of power and thus allow all people in the past the ability to actively participate in the creation of their social world. In this, power should not be conceived of as a distinct entity:

Power does not exist apart from society. It has no force as an abstract quantity. Power has force only when persons or groups of people exercise it. These people derive power from the network of social material, and ideological relations of which they are a part. Power, therefore, exists only in the social relations between people and/or groups of people, and just as “power over” comes from “power to”, so too



does “power to” give people the ability to resist force. (McGuire 1992: 132)

Power only exists in the web of relations between people, so that to possess wealth, for example, does not necessarily imply to possess *power over*. The power that wealth might give will depend on particular historical conditions.

So, to think of power is to think of an aspect of all social relations that is not just associated with repressive actions, but also with resistive actions. The compliance of B with A’s wishes is always at question, making power exercise the result of the interplay of domination and resistance (Paynter and McGuire 1991: 5). Basically, domination is the exercise of power through control of resources, but in this certain resources are given to the dominated (land and tools, for example). There is always the possibility that these resources will not be used as was intended and may even be used to actively resist the demands of the dominators (Paynter and McGuire 1991: 10-11).

The interplay of domination and resistance, or the negotiation of social conditions, can be carried out through a number of means, such as physical force, but perhaps most effectively ideology:

The ideal situation for the As in the dyadic relationship of power is for the Bs to be inclined to follow the As’ requests, nay, even anticipate the needs of A and provide without request. One way for this to happen is when the Bs consider the As’ requests as legitimate . . . . The optimal order, from the point of view of the As, is one in which the Bs participate in their own oppression. (Paynter and McGuire 1991: 8)

Ideology, then, can be an effective means of creating or maintaining dominance by legitimating the interests of the dominant. Ideology, for Miller and Tilley (1984: 13) is the representation of sectional interests in the creation of the cultural world. Such representations tend to exhibit certain properties that serve to legitimate those sectional interests: they tend to represent as universal that which may be partial; they tend to represent as coherent that which may be in conflict; they tend to represent as permanent that which may be in flux; and, they tend to represent as natural that which may be cultural (Miller and Tilley 1984: 14).

Ideology can serve to legitimate elite interests, but most recent writers would agree



that to consider ideology solely as the resource of an elite and to consider that the ideology of that elite will necessarily pervade all sections of society, in the same form - usually referred to as the dominant ideology thesis – is flawed (e.g. Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 1980):

. . . [the dominant ideology thesis] denies subordinate groups the ability to formulate their own ideologies and has been found to be subject to many exceptions when measured against historical situations . . . (Beaudry, Cook and Mrozowski 1991: 157)

All groups in society are capable of formulating ideologies counter to those put forward by so-called elites. In a given society, a whole range of ideologies can coexist alongside an apparent dominant ideology, serving to limit the assumed pervasive nature of that ideology, if not overthrowing it (Miller 1989: 73). As we shall see below, dominant ideologies can be exposed as false if they do not accord with routine conditions of existence.

We should be careful, however, not to see opposition to a dominant ideology, or the exercise of *power to*, in terms of simple bipolar opposition. As will be argued in chapter eight, the farming population of the case study areas did not simply accept or resist Improvement. Rather, response was contingent on circumstance and could be ambiguous. What I will define as external Improvement (to landscape organisation, settlement pattern and morphology) might be accepted, while internal Improvement (to domestic space) was shunned. The former was public and visible, while the latter was more private. Response also varied within the tenant and sub-tenant population. Response to Improvement will be understood as structured by a previous concern for continued occupancy of the land. It was contingent on the implications of Improvement for the various tenurially defined sub-groups, with reference to that occupancy; to the question of land rights.

Discussion in terms of domination and resistance encourages us to categorise society in terms of two opposed homogenous groups. Such has been the case with most recent historical discussion of responses to Improvement (see chapter 8 below). Theoretical archaeological approaches based in this opposition, as discussed briefly above, run the same risk of casting societies as homogenous groups of oppressors and oppressed. It is to circumvent this that I have chosen to refer to response to Improvement in terms of



the negotiation of social relations, and not to couch discussion in terms of simple resistance. The process of Improvement *in practice* was a dialogue between many different individuals and groups, whose actions were both structured and contingent. This conception of the process is in line with the thinking on structure and agency outlined at the top of this chapter. People are not determined by structure, but rather many possible actions are enabled by common dispositions.

So, according to the above, we should not see power and ideology as the reserves of an elite. Rather, most people exercise some form of *power to* and can refuse or manipulate dominant ideologies. The rest of this chapter is concerned with the question of the appropriateness of such a view of the constitution of society through competing ideologies. I will discuss the argument that material culture is like text, symbolically encoding ideology. With this approach, social negotiation is a process of the expression of ideology through material culture, where a dominant ideology is challenged through the reinterpretation of the material symbolism, or perhaps through the material expression of a counter ideology. This approach will be seen to be inadequate as it provides no basis for assessing just those alternative readings with which we are concerned. The proposed solution to this problem is to unite consideration of ideology and the negotiation of social relations with the concept that anthropologists and social theorists have variously referred to as *habitus*, practical consciousness or practical cognition. The conclusion that will be drawn is that we can assess the coherence of a given ideology for different groups of people with reference to their practical, routine experience of the world.

### **Material culture as text**

With the conception of material culture as text, a complicated connection between the record and the event it records is implied where human authors encode ideas in their material surroundings (Patrik 1985: 33-34). This form of record is perhaps more akin to an historical than a physical/ fossil record:

Although the physical actions of the authors . . . and the physical properties of the texts themselves are determined by causal laws . . . this is not true of all the



formation processes of historical records. Because the writing of historical records is also a matter of author's choice and cultural conventions of discourse, historical records vary from culture to culture, and from author to author. . . an historical record does not simply bear a physical imprint, but it comprises a body of signs that encode ideas and information about past events. In a certain sense, historical records are "active," because they actively communicate messages and information that may transform the reader's ideas or behaviour; (Patrik 1985: 33-34)

The best-known exponent of such a textual approach has been Ian Hodder (1991). He sees material culture as meaningfully constituted, and emphasises the active role of the individual in this constitution. The methodology he offers for the study of symbolic meaning in the past is referred to as contextual archaeology. Context, he notes, comes from the Latin *contexere*, meaning to weave, join together or connect and different uses of the term in archaeology have in common this notion of the connecting or interweaving of things in a particular situation or group of situations (Hodder 1991: 122-123).

In outlining a contextual archaeology (Hodder 1991: 124), a specific notion of context is defined and this begins with the suggestion that there are two main types of meaning studied by archaeologists, the structured system of functional inter-relationships, and the structured content of ideas and symbols. The first type is studied by seeing how an object functions in relation to the human and physical environment, depositional processes, organisation of labour, size of settlement, exchanges of matter, information and energy, for example, as well in relation to economic and social structures. The second type of meaning:

. . . involves more than saying, 'this fibula functions to symbolize women' or 'this sword symbolizes men'. Rather, the question becomes, 'what is the view of womanhood represented in the link between female skeletons and fibulae in graves?' . . . . Archaeologists need to make abstractions from the symbolic functions of the objects they excavate in order to identify the meaning content behind them, and this involves examining how the ideas denoted by material symbols themselves play a part in structuring society. (Hodder 1991: 124-125)



Here, an ideology of womanhood is asserted in burial ritual.

The concern of a contextual archaeology is the use of contextual relationships to get at past meaning (Hodder 1991: 125). In this, the archaeological record is considered as a text to be read, but with limits to the analogy as material culture is also practical, technological and functional and, so, symbolic meanings in material culture derive partly from pragmatic meanings rather than solely from structured, abstract systems of signs. Further, material culture symbols differ from written language in that they are often more ambiguous and durable, restricting flexibility, and what can be said with them is normally much simpler (Hodder 1991: 126-127). For these reasons material culture meanings are easier to decipher than those of a documentary text in an unknown language are.

The way in which we might go about interpreting such texts relies on a consideration of similarities and differences between material artefacts and categories (Hodder 1991: 128-138). These are then built up into various types of contextual associations, with abstractions being made from these contexts, associations and differences to arrive at meaning in terms of function and content. In doing this, we can distinguish several types of dimension of similarity/difference. The first is the temporal dimension, where two objects can be placed in the same context and given related meanings as they are close in time. However, similar temporal context may be made irrelevant by other dimensions, such as space. The concern is to isolate a period or phase in which inter-related events are occurring; to identify the historical context that has direct bearing on the question at hand. So, the definition of period/phase will depend on the questions being asked and is not arbitrary.

The second dimension of similarity/difference is spatial. Here the concern is with identifying functional and symbolic meanings and structures from the arrangements of objects and sites through space; to derive meanings from objects because they have similar or different spatial relationships. The spatial extent of an artefact type can be mapped, for instance. Again, the extent of the context will depend on the questions being asked.

A third type of similarity and difference is the depositional unit, which is a combination of the first two. Here meaning is studied in relation to similarities and differences in physical context of deposition – in a pit, grave or ditch, for example – with the relevant scale of context again contingent.

Lastly, there is the typological dimension of similarity and difference, which can



also be conceived of as a combination of the two primary dimensions, looking for similarity/difference of forms in space.

How are we to identify the relevant dimensions of variation? Hodder (1991: 139) suggests that these are identified heuristically in archaeology by establishing which show significant patterns of similarity and difference. Significance is largely defined by the number and quality of coincident similarities and differences in relation to a theory – a hypothesis about meaningful dimensions of variation should be supported in a variety of different aspects of the data. This returns us to the definition of context in contextual archaeology:

Each object exists in many relevant dimensions at once, and so, where the data exist, a rich network of associations and contrasts can be followed through in building up towards an interpretation of meaning. The totality of the relevant dimensions of variation around any one object can be identified as the context of that object. (Hodder 1991: 143)

The context of an object is all those aspects of the data which have significant relationships with that object; “the context of an archaeological attribute is *the totality of the relevant environment*, where relevant refers to a significant relationship to the object – that is, a relationship necessary for discerning the object’s meaning” (Hodder 1991: 143; emphasis in original). It no longer becomes possible to study one arbitrarily defined aspect of the data on its own (Hodder 1991: 144).

So, Hodder has outlined a methodology for studying symbolic meaning in the past. In this, the object from the past under consideration, as part of a text, is placed in its proper context through a consideration of its relationships, along significant dimensions of similarity and difference, with other aspects of the data. The textual model for the archaeological record, however, has some significant problems and has been the focus of much debate.

Bloch (1995) has suggested that the notion of material culture as text is misleading as it assumes that all artefacts must have a defined meaning. He presents a particular ethnographic case study in which carvings on wood posts in the houses of the Zafimaniry of Madagascar are considered. Asking the Zafimaniry what these carvings meant was met



with frustrating answers along the lines of ‘they are pictures of nothing’ or ‘they have no point’ other than to beautify the wood. Some of the carvings have some resemblance to natural phenomenon like the moon and rain, but it was very clear that these did not mean the moon or the rain, rather the natural phenomenon provided names only for the individual carvings (allowing clients to specify to a carver what they required).

Bloch argues that the carvings are important as they form part of a process that occurs to the house of a couple after marriage. When the couple are first married, the house is built but is not substantial. As time goes on, the house is improved and made more permanent as the marriage grows:

. . . marriage takes material form in the house . . . . The young man will put the central house-posts and a flimsy outer wall of reeds and mats, the young woman will bring the furniture of the hearth. This building is the flimsy beginning of marriage; but if the relation settles down (which may or may not happen) – above all, if the couple start to produce children – the house will harden. That is, the flimsy materials will, little by little over many years, begin to be replaced by massive vertical pieces of wood. (Bloch 1995: 214)

Members of the lineage continue this hardening process after the couple die, with the house becoming a location for the settling of disputes and for asking for the blessing of the original couple. The post carvings, as a continuation of this elaboration process, do not mean anything specific. Rather, they serve to honour the house and the original couple:

The carvings are not pointing outwards . . . they are an essential element of the material and the social principle on which they occur; they are referring or signifying. The beautifying is merely the extension of the making and being of the wood and the house and the growth of the original marriage. (Bloch 1995: 215)

Bloch suggests, then, that the analogy with text is not universally appropriate and this raises the problem of when to employ the analogy and when not to (Buchli 1995: 188). However, to say that certain material artefacts have meaning and others do not is misleading in itself. As Buchli (1995: 189) points out, the carvings discussed above may



not have denotative meaning (such as this carving is of the moon), but are connotative. They have connotations such as this house belongs to a stable, successful family or long-lived lineage. Further, it seems that certain named carvings are considered appropriate for this context, so just because the carver does not explicitly give them meaning, they clearly have some particular significance. As such, they can be said to have a certain kind of meaning. However, Bloch's article does illustrate a point theorised by Thomas (1995), that objects may participate in a greater associated context of shifting meanings, rather than having any specific designative sense (Buchli 1995: 189).

So, the notion of material culture as text is problematic in terms of how we conceive of meaning, whether it be designative, connotative, or whatever. However, there is a greater problem in that the textual analogy limits our ability as archaeologists to discuss social negotiation and the variability of readings of an ideology. I would suggest that textual analyses are prone to the construction of dominant ideologies. The point of the exercise is to discuss what an aspect of material culture means by situating it in relation to other aspects of its environment. To take Hodder's example, we should ask what *the* view of womanhood is the fibula in the grave represents that. The meaning of the fibula relates to its use in relation to other artefacts in the grave, and in other contexts in life. Hodder and others do argue that material culture texts are ambiguous and open to different readings, but how are we to assess the possibility of those different readings?

In a context like burial, those conducting the ritual may tightly control the meaning and use of an artefact. It is perhaps not wrong to see a material text being constructed here. The problem is that, because the context of the artefact is controlled, in discussing the meaning of the artefact we are discussing a dominant meaning. To assess the possibility of different readings we should not so much discuss the place of an artefact within a text as discuss how people approached ideologies from routine practice in a material environment.

### **Ideology, material culture, and routine practice**

The starting point taken here for establishing an approach that will allow us to consider the level of acceptance of a given ideology is anthropologist Maurice Bloch's consideration of cognition (1989: chapter 5). Bloch discusses how structure is learnt,



distinguishing two different processes of cognition. The first of these he refers to as non-ideological cognition, which derives from practical experience of the social and material environment. The second is ideology, which is, for Bloch, most notably learnt through ritual practice.

Bloch begins discussion of non-ideological cognition (similarly known as practical cognition, practical consciousness, or *habitus*) with reference to the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* has as its aim the study of practical apprehension of the familiar world and the construction of a theory of practice and of practical knowledge (Bourdieu 1977: 4). In this, social actions, such as gift exchange, are not subject to strict rules of behaviour, but rather should be conceived of as dialectical strategies where the response is not mechanistic (Bourdieu 1977: 3-9):

. . . practical knowledge, based on the continuous decoding of the perceived – but not consciously noticed – indices of the welcome given to actions already accomplished, continuously carries out the checks and corrections intended to ensure the adjustment of practices and expressions to the reactions and expectations of the other agents.  
(Bourdieu 1977: 10)

Action is regulated improvisation. Practical consciousness does not consist of rules, but of more general resources for action. In gift exchange, Bourdieu defines a *sense* of honour on which people draw to guide their actions (Bourdieu 1977: 10-15). I will draw on this concept of sense later, defining particular *senses of the community, of the family, and of the individual* in discussing the Highlands. These dispositions were central to the successful construction and destruction of the social relations of clanship, and significant in structuring changing concepts of occupancy of the land.

So, people's actions are generated with reference to learnt dispositions. Bourdieu refers to systems of such dispositions as *habitus*:

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment . . . produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively “regulated” and



“regular” without in any way being the product of obedience to rules . . . (Bourdieu 1977: 72, emphasis in original)

*Habitus* enables some forms of action and excludes others, but is not the sole principle of practice. Some areas of social practice are freely given over to the regulated improvisations of *habitus*, while others are more strictly regulated by cultural norms upheld by social sanctions (Bourdieu 1977: 21). This is something to which we will return below.

The dispositions to act that are *habitus* are, from the above discussion, the result of experience of past social encounters. They come from experiencing the many ways in which individuals relate in given circumstances. Importantly for the archaeologist:

In a social formulation in which the absence of the symbolic-product-conserving techniques associated with literacy retards the objectification of symbolic and particularly cultural capital, inhabited space – and above all the house – is the principal locus for the objectification of the generative schemes . . . (Bourdieu 1977: 89)

Bourdieu places an emphasis upon the particular material conditions in which social practices are situated, something extended by John Barrett:

The material world, permanent and decaying, constructed and demolished, exchanged and accumulated, is a potentially powerful system of signification. It is inhabited by actors whose practical understanding of their daily routines is constructed with reference to a material architecture and their temporal movement through those spaces and across their boundaries. (Barrett 1988: 9)

People’s experiences of social encounters and of their relationship to the physical world have a material component. Architecture, for example, facilitates some lines of movement and of site, but constricts others. How an individual in a given building will be positioned towards others, in a physical and social sense, is partly a function of the organisation of that building as a material space. Similarly, moveable objects might be



deployed in social practice, whether in ritual contexts such as gift exchange or in the mundane as an everyday meal. Practical knowledge that informs action comes in no small part from experiences of inhabited space. It is for this reason that the archaeologist can begin to understand the nature of past societies:

An archaeological engagement with the past now becomes an attempt to understand how, under given historical and material conditions, it may have been possible to speak and act in certain ways and not in others, and by so doing to have carried certain programmes of knowledge and expectation forward in time. (Barrett 1994: 5)

In this sense, the material world is active in structuring people's social practice. However, as we have seen, people are not constrained by rules or determined, they can act to change their world. As such, material culture can be manipulated in practice to alter the conditions of existence. The conditions for the generation of *habitus* can be altered.

According to the view formulated by Bourdieu, and adopted by some archaeologists, cognition is built from experience of an environment that is historically specific. Bloch has rightly suggested that Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* as a form of practical consciousness does not explain how experience of the environment leads to the elaborate and arbitrary schemes described by anthropologists, and referred to as ideology by Bourdieu (Bloch 1989: 118-119). Bourdieu was able to link elements of the material environment to elements of discursive ideology, but could not show how that link was constructed.

Bloch suggests that we can overcome this problem by conceiving of cognition as the result of more than one process, where practical cognition is differentiated from ideological cognition (Bloch 1989: 120-136). In this, ideology is not simply a discursive rendering of practical cognition. It is not the equivalent or distillation of non-ideological cognition. Neither should these types of cognition be seen as segments of a unitary cognitive system. We should not see knowledge as a whole, unitary or segmented, but as the momentary crystallisation of different processes that interact with each other. Analysis should focus on the processes of formation of cognition and their interaction, not on a finished product.

The formation of practical cognition, or *habitus*, has already been discussed. For



Bloch, the major process of the formation of ideology is ritual practice, although he does consider that there may be other formation processes. He does consider that cosmological speculation is not limited to ritual contexts. Discussion, and disagreement, over cosmological principles can and does take place in daily life. However, this should be distinguished from ideology, which is related to instituted hierarchy.

Different ritual practices have in common the fact that they move the participants from non-ideological to ideological cognition. The social structure of practical cognition is refuted and an alternative view of the cosmos is constructed. This ideological cognition is usually vague. It does not specify who should act in what way, when and where. Rather it constructs a general hierarchy in social relations. Ultimately, ideological cognition is related to the non-ideological. However, one is not the distillation of the other. Rather, ideology is the transformation of practical cognition, which in many ways negates it.

Bloch's emphasis on ritual practice as the major process of the formation of ideology has proved only to be of partial use in this thesis. The community of the clan, for example and as will be seen in chapter seven, *was* maintained and justified in part through ritual feasting and feuding. Ideological statements were not confined to such moments of ritual practice, however. Leases, for example, might be considered equally significant statements of an ideology, this time of the individual. I have found it more useful, therefore, to think of ideological cognition as involving *explicit*, often codified statements on the proper constitution of society. The expression of such statements need not be confined to ritual practice, especially in a society where they can be enshrined in documents like the lease.

This discussion of different forms of cognition is directly relevant to archaeological considerations of ideology and social negotiation. Meaning of whatever type is not simply encoded in material culture. Rather, there is a more complex relationship between the material environment and cognition. Thomas (1995) suggests that there is a need to reconcile symbolic significance with being-in-the-world:

. . . while material things form nodes within a signifying system structured by metaphor and metonymy, they are also conceptually ordered according to narrative temporal structures, appertaining to an individual or to groups. This sequential ordering may be at variance with any structural coherence and may be one source of



the restructuration of the symbolic system. (Thomas 1995: 211)

Individuals or groups *experience* material culture, and this with the background of an experienced past and a projected future. The ideological meaning of an artefact, space, or by extension a spoken or written statement, will have much to do with its context in a personal or group narrative. So, in order to understand meaning it is necessary to place a given piece of material culture or a given statement in the different narratives of those who might have experienced it. In other words, ideological cognition has to appear as grounded in everyday practical cognition or it will be revealed as false.

John Barrett's *Fragments From Antiquity* (1994) is such an exploration of the interplay of practical and ideological consciousness in relation to material culture, with reference to the southern British Neolithic and Bronze Age. In discussing ritual practice throughout the period in question he argues, in terms similar to Thomas:

. . . we must isolate the principles which structured the biographical relationship between the participant and the metaphysical values of the ritual itself. Each biography could be lived because it carried the agent forward in such a way that the various structuring principles were recognizably reproduced in other, diverse areas of social practice. (Barrett 1994: 136)

Barrett argues that we can trace a transformation between two concepts of temporality in the period in question (Barrett 1994: 136-153 and *passim*). With the first concept, human existence was a process of becoming where life might be seen as an ephemeral journey towards a future state. This future state may have been the community of the ancestors, reached on death. This belief belonged to the third millennium B.C., with a history stretching back into the fourth and fifth.

The ritual monuments of this period were typically chambered tombs, such as West Kennet, and the great enclosures like Avebury and Stonehenge. At mortuary monuments (the tombs) people were not buried as such. Rather, their bones joined those of others in the chambers of the tomb and could be accessed for use in ancestral rituals. The deceased joined the body of the ancestors. The great enclosures were arenas where certain members of the community could call upon the ancestors, or whatever spiritual authority, in the



presence of the rest of the community. These monuments were places, or nodes, on a network of paths. This is particularly evident at Stonehenge and Avebury where avenues defined by banks and standing stones define processional routes leading up to the enclosures themselves. These sites lie at the end of one path and beginning of others.

Movement along paths also structured daily life. The gatherer-hunter communities of the fifth millennium would have regularly moved to exploit locally and seasonally available resources, like flint sources, animals, and edible vegetation. This situation need not have changed with the introduction of farming at the end of the fifth millennium. Pastoralism and long-fallow systems of agriculture easily accord with patterns of seasonal migration. Access to land under these systems would have been claimed as generalised rights arising from alliances between the members of a wider community. The community held the land in trust and individuals had no claim to a particular portion of that land.

In this situation both everyday experience of the world and ritual practice emphasised place, path, and the identity of the community:

All the participants [in ritual] will . . . have understood something of the fundamental structure of the ritual code as being a recognizable transformation of their own diverse and routine experiences . . . . These monuments were the theatres of transitory experience, where the passage of an individual's life could touch upon the presence of the ancestors and gods. (Barrett 1994: 146)

Ritual practice ideologically naturalised the claims of an elite to authority as that ideological practice accorded with everyday experience. An ideology that portrayed human life as transitory movement towards the community of the ancestors was knowable because people's daily experience of life was of migration along paths to places of communal activity.

However, in the second millennium the organisation of agriculture was transformed. Short fallow systems emerged, where land was used more intensively. This is evidenced archaeologically by colluvial soil deposits that are the result of a process of erosion. The important point about this shift in agricultural practice is that a particular area of land came to be maintained by a particular portion of the community. The daily experience of a landscape of paths and places was replaced by that of a landscape viewed



from the centre of a domain and where that domain was distinct from similar neighbouring domains. The enclosure of fields and settlements became common at this time. With this change in daily life emerged a place-bound sense of being and the individual farming units “were the products of a lineal history in which their individual identities were fixed historically and also in relation to the land” (Barrett 1994: 147). With the fragmentation of the land came the fragmentation of the open and general community.

Now people experienced vertical social divisions in their daily routine, contrasting with the ideological propositions encountered in ancestral ritual. It comes as no surprise, then, that ritual practice also changed dramatically in the second millennium. The chambers of tombs were sealed, gradually in cases. Burial now took place under tumuli that blocked access to the interred remains:

. . . the early barrow cemeteries were instrumental in allowing a different history to be read, a reading which helped to make possible the gradual changes in control over the natural resources to be understood and given voice. The significance of these material conditions therefore lay in their interpretation. Agents could no longer recognize their identity in the more general community. The chains of metaphorical association by which the agent moved between routine and ritual practices and back, now fixed them in time and spoke to them as members of a differently constituted and more restricted community. The burial mounds, for example, were no longer constructed as a consequence of a burial ritual but had now become a focus of veneration . . . (Barrett 1994: 151)

Ritual and its material aspects now emphasised the history of a lineage with reference to a monument specific to the lineage.

Considering the time scale involved, we should not conceive of change in ideological and practical consciousness as related in a simple cause and effect relationship. We should not conceive of ideology as a superstructure adapting to changes in a material base. Rather, the relationship should be seen as reflexive. What is most important about Barrett’s work here is his exploration of the *possible* subjectivities created in the interaction of both realms of consciousness. Through a consideration of routine practice and experience of a daily environment we can construct generalised contexts from which to



assess possible readings of a given ideological statement.

### **Conclusion. Theoretical concerns of this thesis**

We can conceive of society as constituted by knowledgeable human agents who both construct the social world through their actions, but whose actions are themselves constructed with reference to that world. The relationships between these agents are constructed in contradiction and therefore hold the seeds of change within them. These relational contradictions can become the source of major social change when exposed by other, frequently more common changes, such as quantitative changes in landholding. Each given social formation can be said to have a primary relational contradiction, such as that between kin-based and legalistic forms of relationship in the Highlands.

The process of social change involves the interplay of structure and agency where people act to restructure their position in relation to others (agency), but do so with reference to past social experience (structure). In this, all agents have the *power to* act and to accept or refute a dominant ideology that acts to naturalise asymmetrical relationships. However, we should go beyond the simple bipolar opposition of domination and resistance to consider social change as a process of social negotiation, where people's actions are contingent.

We should not see social change as simply mediated through, or the result of, the symbolic expression of competing ideologies. The way in which people perceive their social environment is the result of several different processes of which practical consciousness (*habitus*, non-ideological cognition) and discursive consciousness (ideological cognition) are key. In this thesis, I intend to follow Bloch's suggestion that we should focus on the processes of formation of cognition and their interaction and, in particular, I will be concerned with the formation of practical consciousness. This approach gives us a powerful means of assessing different *possible* readings of a given ideology and, thus, of understanding the process of social negotiation.

This thesis will discuss the interplay of ideology and practical consciousness in the Highlands from the sixteenth century to the turn of the twentieth. In broad terms, we will see how communal and hereditary claims to the land were based in an ideology of



community and kinship, or the clan and family. Notions of the clan accorded with a *sense of community* based in communal practice in daily life. Hereditary tenure accorded with a routine structuring of domestic activity that stressed the position of the individual within a family, which produced a *sense of family*. Improvement sought to restructure daily routine, rendering the ideology of clanship and kinship unknowable. At the same time, Improvement, with the destruction of communal routine and daily activity as part of the family, made the individualistic ideology of capitalism knowable by producing a *sense of the individual*. Importantly, it will be argued that different groups within Highland society accepted Improved material culture and daily routine to different extents and in different ways. A consideration of the complexity of Improvement will form the basis of an assessment of the success of individualism as an ideology in the case study areas. The emergence of capitalism has not previously been discussed in these terms by archaeologists and historians. The next chapter will place the approach outlined here in the context of other archaeologies of capitalism and of histories of capitalist society in Scotland.



## Chapter Four

### **Studying capitalism. Archaeology, social theory, and the social, economic, and intellectual history of Scotland**

“Whether or not historical archaeology is to be an archaeology of the emergence and development of capitalism has been settled in the affirmative” (Leone and Potter 1988: 19). Speaking with reference to a minority of American historical archaeologists this is perhaps true. However, the notion of an archaeology of capitalism has only recently been raised in Britain (Johnson 1996) and, here as elsewhere, discussion of what this project might entail is still in a preliminary stage.

In this chapter, I do not attempt to cover all those aspects of archaeologies of capitalism that have been discussed by others. To give one example, I will not consider here the global aspects of capitalism (see, e.g., Orser 1996). It is not that this subject is of no concern, directly or indirectly, for an analysis of the archaeology of the Scottish Highlands in the recent past. Rather, I am more concerned here with assessing the viability of archaeologies of capitalism in general and with discussing the issues concerning an archaeology of capitalism in relation to the case studies of this thesis. In a large part, this chapter discusses three basic themes: how has capitalism been defined; how has it been held to originate; and, how has it been approached archaeologically?

Discussion will begin with the structuring of social relations with capitalism and how this differs from what went before. Capitalism will be understood as a specific structuring of social relations where society is integrated through time and space in absence. That is, where face-to-face encounters had been the predominant means of integration, with capitalism the dominant mode of social interaction is economic, distanced across time and space through the process of commodification. With capitalism, people routinely experience their world as an individual, apart from others. A particular ideology of individualism has been associated with early capitalism (i.e. up until the late nineteenth century). In the terms of the last chapter, this ideology and the structuring of social relations in absence are of course intimately linked. One makes sense in light of the other.



This chapter moves on to critically review previous archaeologies of capitalism. Discussion here will concentrate on studies of the Georgian Order. This system of ordering the material world is significant here because it has been associated with the rise of individualism. Through landscape, architecture, and other, moveable material culture people were distanced from each other physically and conceptually. Of course, interpretations of this process vary and it is my purpose here to discuss some of the main trends in order to situate this thesis in relation to other archaeologies of capitalism. These other archaeologies have tended, with exceptions, to see the emergence of the Georgian Order and of capitalism as an eventually universal process, that is capitalism is thought to have been universally accepted. Considering the discussion of the last chapter, this is unacceptable.

In the final section, previous histories of the emergence of capitalist society in Scotland are reviewed. I have chosen to explore three main approaches, the Marxist, Weberian, and economic. These significant categories do not encompass all the relevant histories and do simplify those included. However, they serve to situate discussions of capitalism in Scotland within prominent wider academic traditions. Further, outlining some significant trends opens discussion of the role of the archaeological approach outlined here in understanding capitalist society in Scotland, and elsewhere.

I take the view that archaeology has a potentially significant role in constructing such an understanding. This follows from the theoretical arguments of the previous chapter. Archaeology is important to discussions of capitalist society because it has as one of its major concerns the everyday structuring and restructuring of social life. By considering the potential variety of experience in routine life we can move beyond abstract and monolithic histories of capitalist society to histories that explore the constant dynamic nature of society. It will be a major conclusion of this thesis that an archaeology of capitalist society should not be considered a viable project if that project seeks to trace the inevitable, homogenous, and universal rise of capitalism in different historical contexts. The histories of Scottish capitalist society to be considered below, despite their differences from each other, have considered that society to be just such a monolithic social entity.

Archaeologies of capitalism are viable if we consider capitalism in terms of a particular ideology of the individual made knowable, and unknowable, by changing routine practice. In this sense, capitalism consists of an ideology of the individual, where the



individual's rights (to property, for example) are considered paramount, made knowable by the restructuring of social relations in absence. The ideology of the individual becomes knowable because communal, face-to-face routine experience of the world is increasingly undermined and routine experience of the world is increasingly apart from the community, however defined. This is what is meant in saying that social relations are increasingly structured in absence.

However, as we shall see in this chapter and in the case studies to follow, routine experience for many continued to be structured in presence and in such a way that the ideology of the individual might make no sense. We might, therefore, distinguish between capitalism, as defined above, and capitalist society. A capitalist society might be defined as a society where the ideology of the individual is widely accepted, facilitated by routine practice in absence. The problem with many histories of capitalist societies is that they assume that capitalism (that is, acceptance of the ideology of the individual and the conditions of existence that make this possible) is universal in such societies. Such histories often do not consider rejection or manipulation of the ideology of the individual.

## What is capitalism?

### Capitalism and the constitution of society

My aim in this section is to discuss the specific constitution of the social relations of capitalism in a broadly British and European context. Here I will largely follow the account given in Giddens' *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (1995). This synthesises and extends significant previous contributions by others, not least that of Marx.

At the outset, it will be helpful to define time-space distancing, a theoretical construct that Giddens uses in explicating the constitution of social relations. He says:

The structuration of all social systems occurs in time-space, but also 'brackets' time space relations; every social system in some way 'stretches' across time and space. Time-space distancing refers to the modes in which such 'stretching' takes place



or, to shift the metaphor slightly, how social systems are ‘embedded’ in time and space. (Giddens 1995: 4-5)

Time and space are not to be seen as a mere backdrop to social interaction, the settings of social discourse. Rather, social relations are mediated *through* or as time and space, which are conceived differently in specific historical situations. Time-space distancing refers to the methods in a given society for mediating social relations through both space and time. In these terms, an understanding of what is distinctive about the constitution of social relations under capitalism will come from an analysis of how these relations are mediated through space and time.

With capitalism, the economic sphere of life becomes peculiarly significant as a medium of power in social relations (Giddens 1995: 111-112). For Giddens, the threat or use of force normally backs surplus extraction in class-divided societies, such as European feudal societies. Whether this dictum is universally applicable is questionable. However, the significant point is that in class-divided societies the economic power involved in class relations is rarely achieved or sustained by solely economic means. This is above all the case with class relations involving agrarian production. With capitalism, the dominant class acquires its position by virtue of the economic power yielded by the ownership of private property. Giddens relates this to the capitalist labour contract, where the extraction of surplus value is founded upon the economic constraint deriving from the dependence of the propertyless wage-labourer upon those who have access to capital (Giddens 1995: 112). However, in a somewhat different situation, we can also see the economic as fundamental to landlord-tenant relations in agricultural spheres, where the farmer becomes dependent upon the landowner who controls the capital (land). In class-divided societies, by contrast, the economic dependence of the agrarian producer upon the dominant class was slight or attenuated (Giddens 1995: 112). The dominant class in capitalism exercises much more control over the processes of production. In class-divided societies, the dominant class extracts a surplus, but they exercise little direct control over the manner in which that surplus is produced.

The restructuring of power in social relations along economic lines is achieved through and results in changes in the manner in which society is integrated (Giddens 1995: 114-116). In class-divided society the most prevalent modes of social association occur in



communities of high presence-availability. Examples of societies that are involved in wide-ranging trade and commerce are no exception as trading relations there are carried on between communities that sustain a high degree of local autonomy. In capitalism, money expresses and makes possible the disembedding of social relationships from communities of high presence-availability. The economic foundation of social relations in capitalism allows the extension and integration of these social relations across wide reaches of space and time without the need for physical presence.

Important here is the relation of money to commodity production (Giddens 1995: 116-117). Commodity production involves the commensurate exchange of incommensurables (Giddens 1995: 116). The goods that compose commodities have use-values, but what defines them as a commodity is their exchange-values, which differ from one another only quantitatively, money expressing this quantification. The detachment of exchange-values from, and their existence as money alongside, products allows commodities to circulate at an advanced level. The circulation of commodities in capitalism involves extension in space and time. Money permits the acquisition or disposal of goods between people widely separated in time and space.

The convertibility of capital in the capitalist economy relates to the convertibility of labour (Giddens 1995: 118-120). Labour power in capitalism itself becomes a commodity and enters into the transformation-mediation relations presupposed by exchange-value. The common existence of both goods and labour as interchangeable commodities is permitted by an underlying constitutive component, time. Every commodity, including labour-power, is the objectification of a given amount of labour time and the socially necessary labour time governs the values of commodities. Units of time make the values of commodities divisible and quantifiable. Marx's example of this process was the exchange of an amount of bread for a yard of linen. Both the bread and the linen must be equated with a particular quotient of labour-time to allow their exchange. Both commodities must be equated with something other than themselves. In capitalism, a specific temporally bounded working day is introduced, subdivided into units of time.

Pulling together this discussion of how social relations in capitalism are constituted Giddens suggests that:

The interlocking of capital and wage-labour in a relation of dependence and interest



conflict is the *chief basis of the dialectic of control* in the productive order of the capitalist economy. This is a matter of fundamental importance in separating capitalism from class-divided societies. In the latter it is the resistance of the local community, tradition and kinship circles to the penetration by relations of absence that sustains a definite measure of control of the exploited over their conditions of day-to-day existence. The vast extension of time-space mediations made structurally possible by the prevalence of money capital, by the commodification of labour and by the transformability of one into the other, undercuts the segregated and autonomous character of the local community of producers. (Giddens 1995: 120-121; emphasis in original)

In capitalism, the primacy accorded to the economic and the intrusion of exploitation and class domination into the heart of the labour process undermines the effectiveness of local community, tradition, and kinship as the bases of resistance to outside (absent) exploitation. Face-to-face encounters are generally no longer the basis of effective social control and social relations operating in absence become more significant than those amongst the local, face-to-face community and kin-group. In the terms of the last chapter, routine experience of social relations with capitalism is an experience of physical and social separation from others. People experience significant social relationships, in this situation, apart from others and as a socially distinct individual. As will be seen in chapter five in particular, routine practice experienced as an individual is not confined to the traditional workplace, operated on the basis of commodified labour, but extends into other routine relationships, even into the home.

### Capitalism and the individual

The structuring of social relations in absence relates to a particular ideology of individualism. In discussing the dominant ideology thesis and, specifically, the role of ideology in English society in the feudal, early, and late capitalist periods, Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner state:

. . . the ideological structure is relatively more coherent in feudalism and early capitalism than in contemporary society. In feudal society the dominant ideology



was religious, or at least deeply informed by religious considerations. In early capitalism it was united by a set of beliefs describable as individualism. In late capitalism the limited ideological unity of previous periods has collapsed. (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1980: 156)

The early capitalist ideology of individualism is what concerns us here. By early capitalism they refer to the period 1780 to 1880. As such, the concern is with the period when a particular network of social relations was dominant and less with the transition from feudalism to capitalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1980: 4). Individualism, as we shall see below, is a concept that has been used by archaeologists in explaining aspects of material culture change associated with capitalism.

Early capitalism is accompanied by the growth of a coherent bourgeois ideology that was an integrated and clearly definable culture permeating political, economic, and social life with a total system of beliefs (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1980: 96-105). Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner argue that this new approach to political and social authority came in light of the fact that the rapid growth of industrial and landed capitalism in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain came up against ideological barriers that stood in the way of the development of a mature capitalist economy. These barriers can be referred to as the established ideological consciousness of traditionalism that sanctioned the continuation of a web of regulatory and protective controls preventing the rebuilding of the economy so as to incorporate capitalist rationality.

In the nineteenth century, this revision of the dominant ideology of traditionalism was provided by philosophical radicalism, which was an amalgam of Malthusian population theories, utilitarian jurisprudence and political philosophy, and the economic doctrines of classical political economy. Malthusianism gave the denial of responsibility a scientific basis, establishing as a law of nature the fact that poverty in a world of finite resources could only be reduced by reducing pressure on those resources, by lowering the birth rate and thereby reducing the size of the population. This could only be achieved by the sexual abstinence or moral restraint of the poor. Social responsibility in relation to poverty was thus placed on an individual footing. The living conditions of the poor could only change through the action (or inaction) of the poor themselves and were only



aggravated by the old Poor Laws. With utilitarianism and its related political economy the logically and scientifically derived conclusion was that individual utility should replace obligation as the guiding principal of social organisation. Following from this, the government had the right to infringe individual liberty only if it promoted relative utility, that is the general interest, social utility, or the happiness of the greatest number of individuals. A distinction between private and public spheres (where government could and could not act) in economy and society emerged from this. The private sphere of economy was based on natural utility, the natural harmony and identity of interests, and was not amenable to human legislation and governmental intervention.

Philosophic radicalism was therefore clearly founded on an individualistic hedonism that was manifest in the rejection of obligation for utility, maximisation of individual utilities and the glorification of continuous accumulation. (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1980: 99)

A religious component to this dominant ideology came from the religious revival of early capitalism and the growth of evangelism, starting in the late eighteenth century and spreading to the established church by 1880. The significant religious unity of the evangelical revival in *all* Protestant churches lay in two characteristic values: the emphasis on conversion, embodied in the moral transformation of the individual, and a new concern for the progressive sanctification of the individual by means of moral improvement. Together these created a moral climate of individualistic religiosity and self-improvement that was congruent with the secular values of philosophic radicalism. Added to this was the moral approbation with which Puritanism greeted material success, as evidence of a godly character, to which Weber drew attention (see below).

In the mid-Victorian period (from about 1850 on) this ideology assumed a “less abrasive and more mellow” form (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1980: 102). However, the generalised dominant culture retained a firm basis in the philosophic radicalism and nonconformist, evangelical religiosity of the earlier period. Philosophic radicalism became mid-Victorian liberalism, while the nonconformist faiths became routinised and lost some of their evangelising and missionary zeal. At this time there was a change towards a more complete ideological system. There emerged a culture that regulated a wider range of



activities and beliefs, most notably seen in concerns with domesticity and family, respectability, improvement, and conventional Christian morality. It is not necessary to expand the details of these beliefs much here, except to point out that the latter three especially are concerned with the individual. Respectability was a value embracing a cluster of attitudes and behaviour, including thrift, self-help, and independence. Improvement was closely linked to respectability, and was the notion of the progressive intellectual and moral development of the individual. Christian morality significantly included a cluster of beliefs that elevated the discipline of individual character by self-denial and industry into moral virtue.

An important aspect to Abercrombie, Hill, and Turners' analysis is that they consider the questions of who adhered to this dominant ideology, and what functions it performed (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1980: 105-127). The ideological components outlined were initially the beliefs of an ascendant rather than a dominant class, and were primarily orientated towards the traditional aristocratic dominant class. The ascendant ideology justified the material interests of industrial capitalism, and the social and political aspirations of a bourgeoisie that meant to become a part of the dominant class. It was intended, sometimes explicitly, to destroy the traditional assumptions of the landed aristocracy about the appropriate nature of society and economy. This did not entail the destruction of the aristocratic landed class. Rather it ended in a complex process whereby the bourgeoisie became gentrified and there was a reciprocal embourgeoisment of the aristocracy. This was not, however, a complete and homogenous process.

At the same time, the nineteenth century bourgeoisie was concerned to indoctrinate the working class with beliefs that would render it more docile, encourage it to accept the new economic and social order, and provide effective work motivation. However, direct indoctrination into the dominant ideology and the less direct absorption of dominant values via cultural hegemony were never particularly successful. The working class of the mid-Victorian period seems to have had a distinct, autonomous culture that was corporate (i.e. non-assertive and inward-looking, but scarcely penetrated by bourgeois culture). Working-class consciousness in that period was collectivist and impervious to individualism. The dominant ideology of early capitalism, based in concepts of individualism, served rather to integrate the capitalist class, as well as being largely accepted by the landed aristocracy.

This discussion, drawn from Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner (1980), is based largely



on material related to English early capitalism. However, in chapter seven we will see various landlords trying to impose material changes in order to place social relations on an individual footing and remove the existing form of communal social organisation. This can be thought of in terms of the destruction of a practical consciousness antagonistic to the ideology of individualism and private property. This is essentially what capitalism is, an ideology of the individual made knowable in routine practice privileging relations in absence, as can be seen by combining Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner's discussion with that of Giddens. Improvement and capitalism are, therefore, commensurate.

The above discussion of capitalism is important for archaeologies of capitalism in other areas, to which we shall now turn. An ideology of individualism has been considered an important factor in determining material culture form and use with the rise of capitalism in all areas that have been studied. However, questions of the pervasiveness and role of this ideology have not been considered by all. Further, there has been little attempt to separate ideology from practical consciousness.

### **Archaeologies of capitalism. The Georgian Order and beyond**

Archaeologies of capitalism have above all been concerned with the Georgian Order, a package of material culture changes related to the origins of capitalism. Archaeological considerations of the Georgian Order and the relationship of individualism and material culture can be traced to Henry Glassie's *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia* (1975). In this, he related a wide variety of changes in building tradition to what he saw as the underlying structural context. He saw a variety of binary oppositions that, from the eighteenth century, increasingly characterised the thinking behind buildings and mediated between the builder/occupier and both nature and society. For example, there was increasing emphasis on intellect over emotion, on the private over the public, and on artificial substance over natural substance. Such binary oppositions seemingly relate to more general structures, principally internal over external and artificial over natural. Glassie suggested that there are degrees of internalness and artificiality in both man-to-man (*sic.*) and man-to-nature relations. However, he primarily conceives of these general concepts in terms of different structures of intellect/emotion and private/public in social



relations and artificial substance/natural substance in ecological relations.

In relation to intellect and emotion he says:

. . . the house is an expression of a cultural ideal that valued the intellectual model over emotional need. It is not that the spaces provided by the house for human action were dysfunctional, but that the people were willing to endure chilly corners or rooms that may have felt a bit spacious or cramped in order to live in a house that was a perfect representation of an idea. (Glassie 1975: 119)

Giving substance to an idea takes precedence over behavioural need. This was increasingly seen to be the case in Middle Virginian house building from around 1760.

A second mediator of the structure of content (Glassie 1975: 120) underwent significant change at the same time:

This is the relation between inhabitants and visitors - the opposition of internal and external humanity . . . . Between the older and the newer houses there was a near volumetric identity . . . [b]ut the arrangement of these volumes was dissimilar, and that dissimilarity signals a great change in the desire for privacy. In the new house the most public room was only as accessible as the most private room was in the earlier buildings. (Glassie 1975: 120-121)

The increasing need for privacy is to be seen, to give one example, in the fact that the visitor first enters a hallway in the later house. In the older form, they would enter the main room directly, where the family might be eating or chatting by the fire (Glassie 1975: 121).

The history of the opposition between artificial substance and natural substance from the first European colonisation of the area through to the nineteenth century is seen as diverging from the above trends. Rather than natural substances increasingly being replaced by artificial ones from the mid-eighteenth century, there was from the start a strong transformation of nature in the Middle Virginian house: "The inferences drawn from old houses . . . indicate that artificiality and internalness were less aggressively mediated in man-to-man relations than in man-to-nature relations" (Glassie 1975: 135).



Artificiality is seen here in the transformation of natural substances through such processes as making planks from trees, making bricks from clay or earth and emphasising geometrical forms (e.g., uniform and straight timber-framing) over forms derived from the properties of the material (e.g., naturally curving crucks). However, despite this long-standing opposition of the man-made and artificial to the natural, from the early nineteenth century on the buildings erected were less and less suited to the local environment (Glassie 1975: 136-137), perhaps displaying an increased opposition of artificial to natural in decreased reference to nature?

Glassie sees the increasing lack-of-fit with the local environment as related to the opposition of extensiveness to intensiveness (Glassie 1975: 138-140, 146-151; figure 4.1). Extensive architecture is that which fits best in a hot and wet climate, with the house extended outwards and upwards. The house is lifted from the earth, the ceilings are high and the space contained within the house is expanded by way of extensions to the main fabric. Windows and doors are relatively large and chimneys are exterior to the house. Extensive architecture is complex in comparison to the relative simplicity of intensive architecture. Through time, windows and doors become smaller, chimneys are incorporated into the main fabric and extensions no longer push out from the sides of the house but are tucked round the back.

A shift from extensiveness to intensiveness can also be seen at the landscape level (Glassie 1975: 140-141, 143-144). Farms had been dispersed as were their constituent houses and outbuildings. Stores, schools, post offices and churches were located at crossroads (but not usually the same ones). Cemeteries were likewise dispersed. Through the nineteenth century, people moved closer to the roads and to one another. Farm outbuildings were increasingly pulled towards the house and linearly arranged. Other oppositions, however, constrict the move to intensiveness at this level, most notably the increased need for privacy.

For Glassie, these varied oppositions - private/public; intellect/emotion; artificial/natural; internal/external; intensive/extensive - are ordered by one fundamental opposition (Glassie 1975: 160). This is the opposition of chaos and control, with increasing emphasis on the latter through time. There is increasing effort to exercise control over natural substances, over spaces, and over human will and ability (Glassie 1975: 162). The bilaterally symmetrical, tripartite design of Georgian architectural design



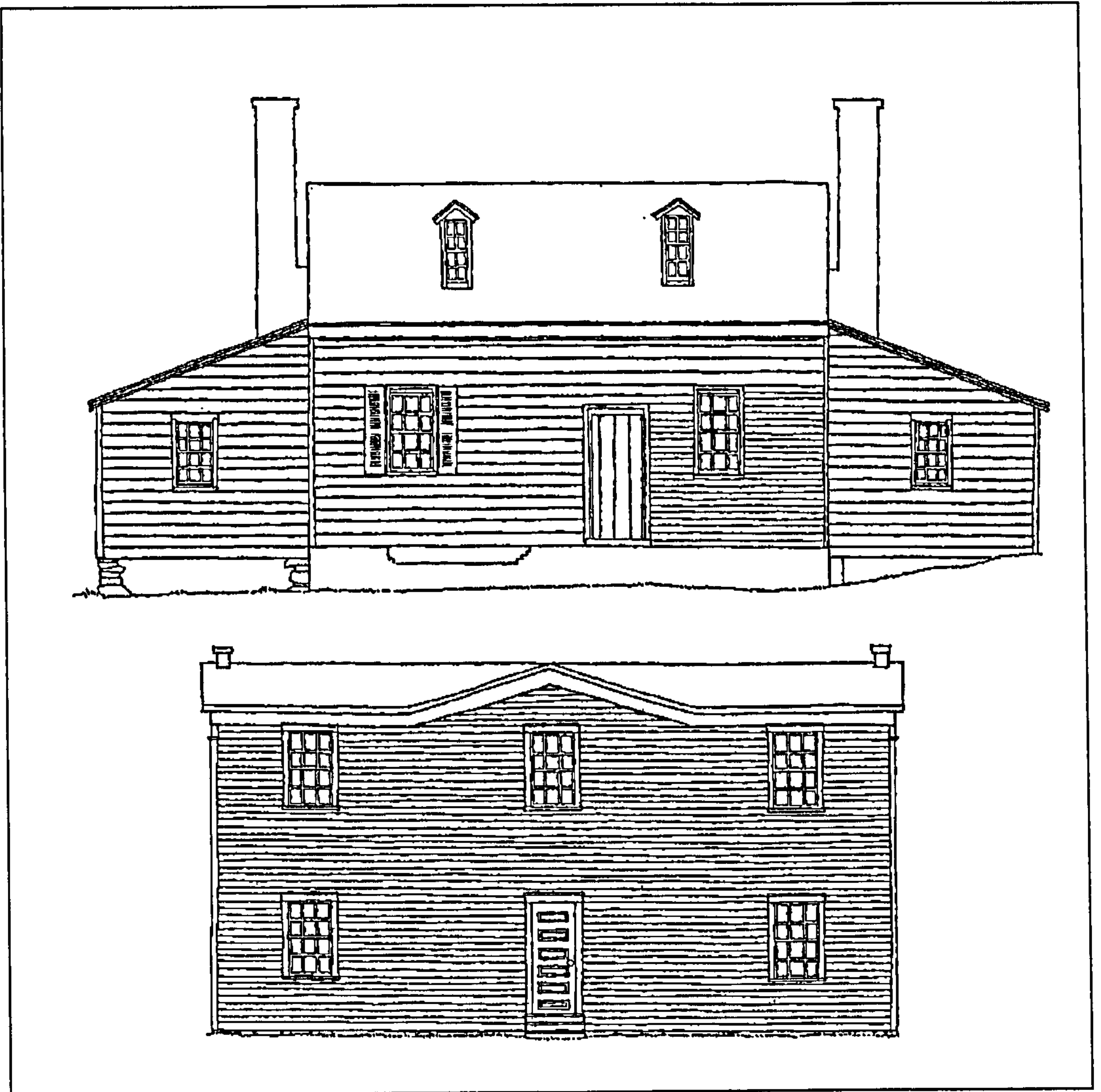


Figure 4.1: An extensive, asymmetrical house (top) and an intensive, symmetrical Georgian house (bottom), both from Virginia (after Glassie 1975: 186, figure 84).



“was the perfect end to the builder’s search for architectural order” (Glassie 1975: 170).

The concept of the Georgian Order and its defining role in Anglo-American society from the eighteenth century on was picked up in James Deetz’ *In Small Things Forgotten* (1996). He contrasts the Georgian worldview to the medieval and concludes:

Order and control: the eighteenth century is called the age of reason, and it saw the rise of scientific thought in the Western world and the development of Renaissance-derived form, balanced and ordered, in the Anglo-American world. By 1760 significant numbers of American colonists partook of this new worldview. Mechanical where the older was organic, balanced where the older had been asymmetrical, individualised where the older had been corporate, this new way of perceiving the world is the hallmark of . . . [the period] which lasts to the present and accounts for much of the way in which we ourselves look upon reality. (Deetz 1996: 63-64)

Deetz goes on to reference Glassie’s work in defining the shift from the mediievally-derived, organic house form to the tripartite, bilaterally symmetrical Georgian house form (Deetz 1996: 66) and his book contains a whole chapter on changing house forms (Deetz 1996: chapter 5; figure 4.2). However, his major contribution is in extending the analysis of the impact of this structured worldview beyond architectural forms. For him, the extent to which the Georgian worldview structures a vast array of the material aspects of life in this period “demonstrates the power with which cognition reshaped the Anglo-American material world” (Deetz 1996: 67). His focus is on the stronger emphasis on the individual with the Georgian worldview.

In discussing ceramics, Deetz (1996: chapter 3) emphasises their role in the foodways of early America. Foodways are the particular system of food conceptualisation, procurement, distribution, preservation, preparation, and consumption. As ceramics play an important role in foodways, changing ceramic form can be tied to changing foodways. Deetz defines three main phases in the changing ceramic assemblages from sites in New England. First come the plain, utility earthenwares, with small quantities of Delft, Rhenish stoneware and slipware. These come from sites predating the mid seventeenth century. Second come a broad variety of imported wares alongside vast quantities of American-



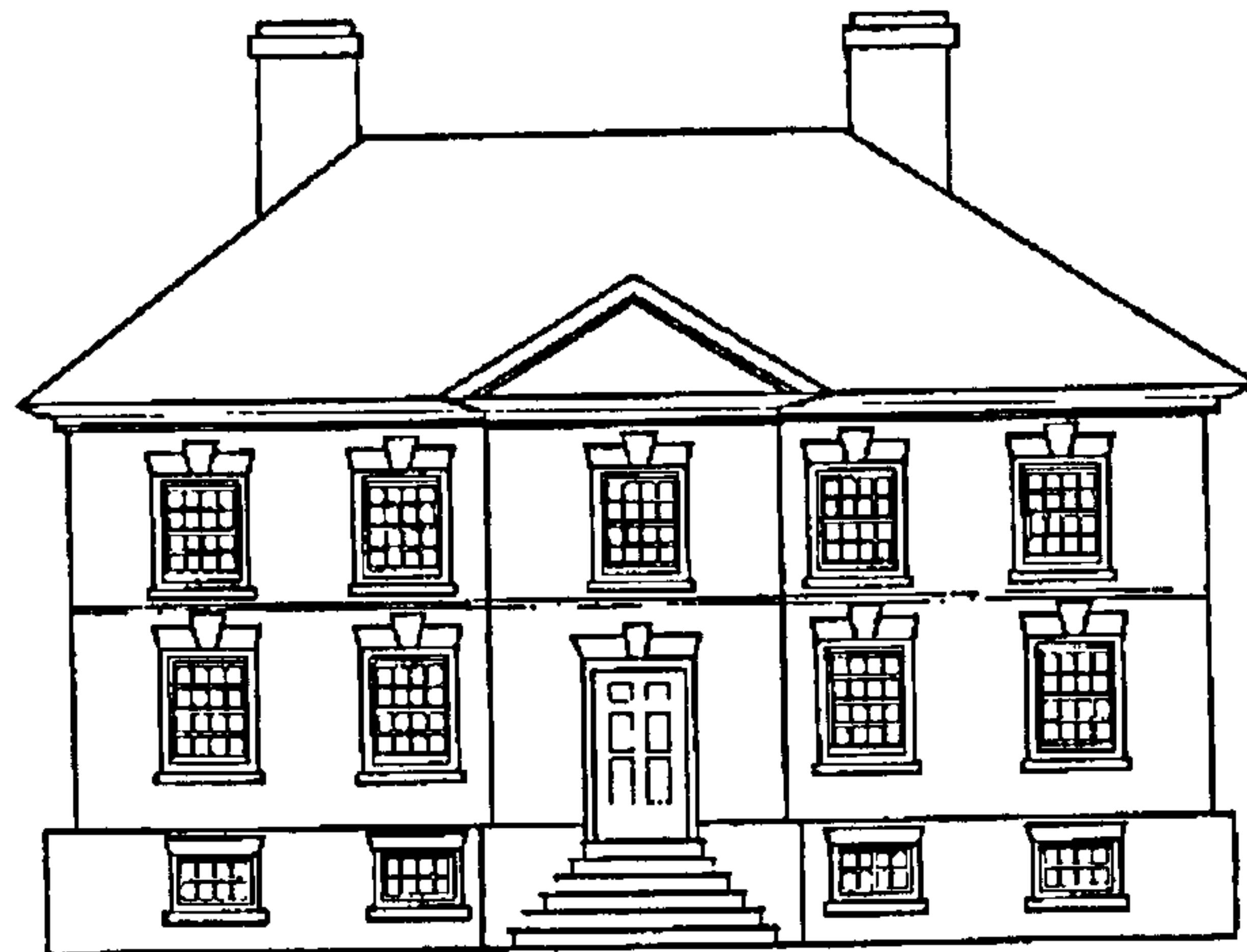
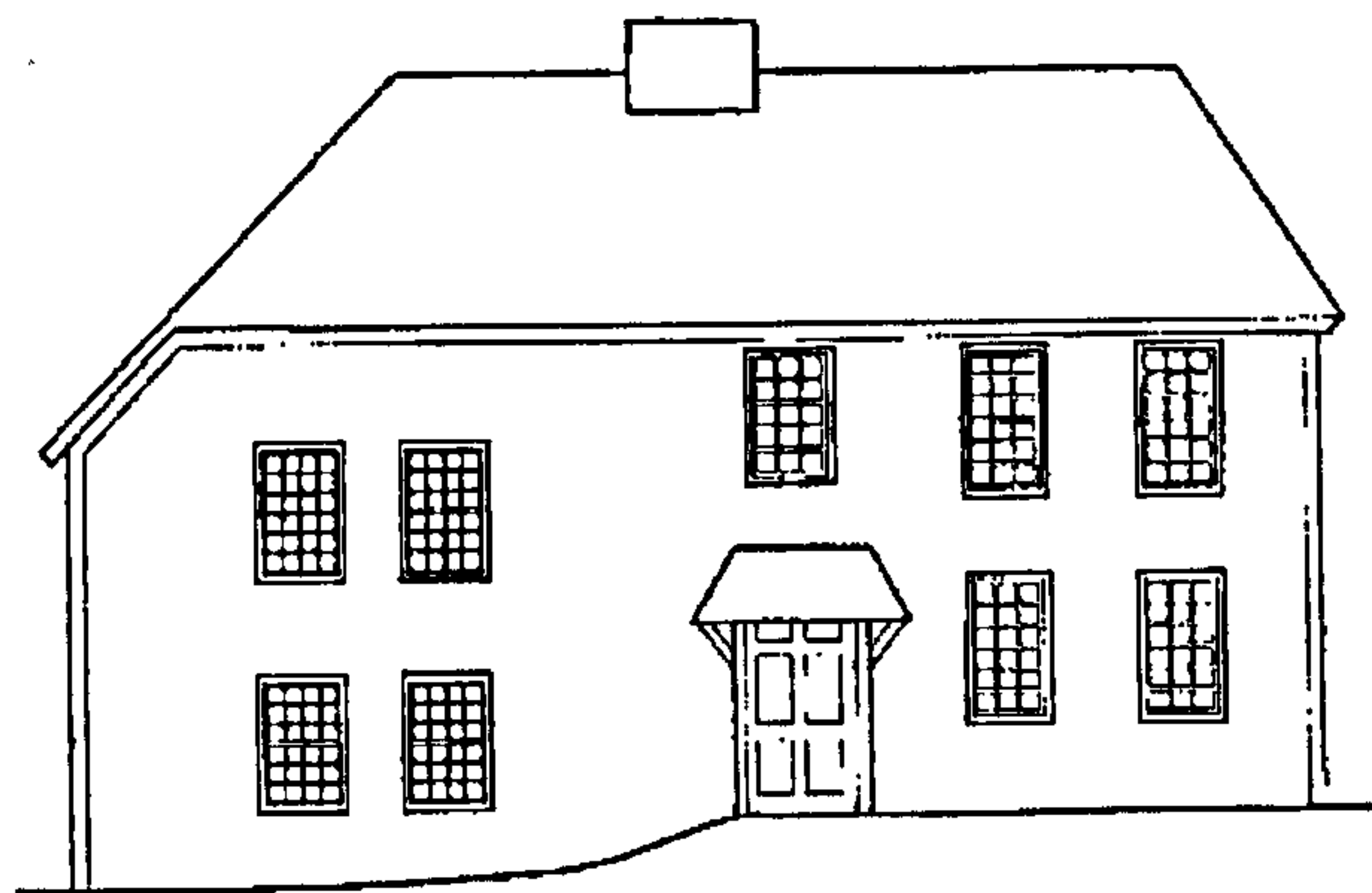


Figure 4.2: An asymmetrical “medievally derived” house facade (top), in contrast to that of a rigorously symmetrical Georgian house (after Deetz 1996: 66-67, figures 2a and 2b).



made utility wares dating from the mid seventeenth to the late eighteenth centuries. The third phase is characterised by popular creamwares and pearlwares, dating from the time of the Revolution through the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

The first period is seen to relate to the foodways of the English yeomen, as many early American colonists are held to derive from this group. Under this system of foodways, ceramics played a minor role, with food served directly from metal cooking pots and eaten from trenchers (wooden trays). These trenchers were communally used, by two or more trencher mates, as were drinking vessels. Most of the ceramics from these early sites relate to dairying activity.

In the second period, dairying ceramics are joined by a diversity of other forms. In contrast to contemporary England, there is a scarcity of plates and, in America, those that are found were probably used as display items rather than in food consumption. Ceramic cups and mugs do become common after 1660, however, and were probably being integrated into food-consumption alongside the trencher. In this period, there is a steady increase in the use of individualised utensils seen in the increasing numbers of ceramic drinking vessels.

After 1760, there is dramatic change with the preponderance of plates and other items, such as chamber pots. The plates match each other and the ceramic cups and saucers found. Through ceramics, Deetz argues, we see a shift from a corporate to an individual emphasis in foodways. People come to have their own plate and cup. This individualism is also to be seen in the increase in personal chamber pots. The one person/one dish relationship is symmetrical in contrast to the corporate way of eating. Foodways and ceramics after 1760 display an increased emphasis on order, control, and balance.

Moving to the gravestones of New England, Deetz (1996: chapter 4) outlines three basic designs used between about 1680 and 1820 (figure 4.3). The earliest is the death's-head with blank eyes and a grinning visage. Sometime in the eighteenth century, according to location, the winged cherub replaced this design. In turn, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the cherub was replaced by a third basic design of a willow tree overhanging a pedestaled urn. The shift from death's-head to cherub is related to a change from Puritan religious views, where the death's-head as reminder of mortality was appropriate, to the views of the mid eighteenth century religious revival movements known



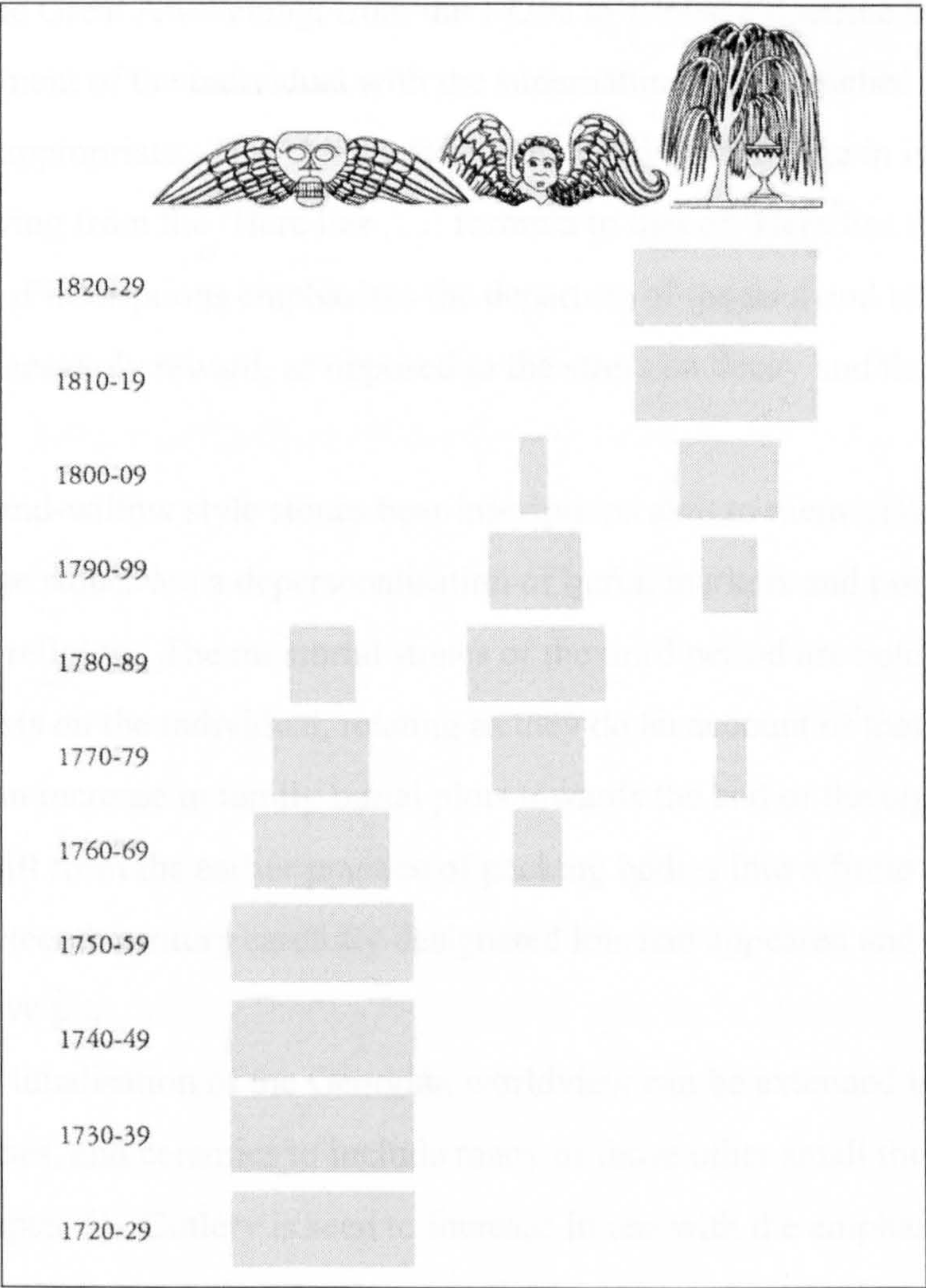


Figure 4.3: Succession of gravestone designs from a cemetery in Massachusetts (after Deetz 1996: 97, figure 4).



as the Great Awakening.

During the Great Awakening, from the 1720s to 1760s, a doctrine espousing personal involvement of the individual with the supernatural was preached. In this context, cherubs became appropriate. This change is accompanied by a change in inscriptions on gravestones, moving from the 'Here lies . . .' formula to that of 'Here lies the Body. . .'. The latter group of inscriptions emphasises the departure of the soul and talk of resurrection and heavenly reward, as opposed to the stress on decay and the brevity of life in the first.

The urn-and-willow style stones bear inscriptions akin to memorials. Deetz suggests that these stones are a depersonalisation of burial markers and point to the secularisation of religion. The memorial stones of the third period are held to display an increased emphasis on the individual, relating as they do an account of that person's life. This came with an increase in family burial plots towards the end of the eighteenth century, representing a shift from the earlier practice of packing bodies into a finite burial ground. By the early nineteenth century carefully designated lots had appeared and there was only one body per grave pit.

The individualisation of the Georgian worldview can be extended beyond gravestones, houses, and ceramics to include many of those other small things forgotten (Deetz 1996: chapter 6). Cutlery is seen to increase in use with the emphasis on individualised foodways and place settings. Individual chairs become important. Meals are decreasingly of the composite stew-type and increasingly composed of individual portions, ending in the mechanical and tripartite meat, potato and vegetable dish. Deetz sees these changes, and others, as relating to change at a very deep level of the Anglo-American mind, so abstract that it manifests itself in a bewildering variety of ways (Deetz 1996: 174).

These two influential works have been critically appraised by Leone (1982). He defines the two basic assumptions of structuralist archaeology as: first, that all objects in a particular culture are equal with respect to the overall organisation and coherence of the total structure of that culture; and, second, that while the details or particulars of a past culture may be lost, the principles of that organisation, or structure, may be suggested through what remains (Leone 1982: 743). The first assumption can certainly be seen in both Deetz and Glassies' work and Leone considers the linking of a large variety of artefact



types under the concept of the Georgian order a strength in these analyses. While agreeing in part that this is a strength, I would suggest that it can also constitute a weakness. The reduction of all artefact forms and uses to one set of guiding structures does not allow us to consider other possible uses and meanings. As Leone does note in passing, there is an assumption that the underlying order - in this case the Georgian Order, emphasising the individual - can be extended to explain all archaeological assemblages and if material is uncovered that does not seem to conform to Georgian principles of organisation then what this means is that the original analysis by Glassie and Deetz is void (Leone 1982: 744, 746). In this case, the characteristics of the Georgian Order must be modified or another all-encompassing order has to be discovered. This does not consider the possibility that aspects of material culture primarily associated with the Georgian Order could have been deliberately mis-used as a strategy in negotiating social relations. This is a theme that we will return to below.

The second assumption of structuralist archaeology, that the structures or organising principles of past culture can be explicated separately from and despite the absence of the details or particulars of a past society, is Leone's main focus in discussing the weaknesses of the structuralist approach. The problem is that such thinking forsakes context (Leone 1982: 745). In relation to Deetz' work he says:

. . . when one finishes *In Small Things Forgotten*, colonial New England is shown to have had a cultural coherence which makes a kind of sense not available before. But one still has no firm idea of why bilateral symmetry existed, why it was different from what went before, or how it varied from what was happening simultaneously in Virginia, or in England. Further, one cannot determine these things because the analysis is not tied to the history of the region . . . (Leone 1982: 745)

This is not strictly true. Deetz does offer an explanation as to why the Georgian Order arose, emphasising the secularisation of religion and the consequent collapse of the structure that had given comfort and support to society (Deetz 1996: 182-186). This explanation is, however, unsatisfying in that it takes these changes as given and sees the Georgian Order and its material correlates as an adaptation to an almost inevitable force.

Glassie's explanation of the rise of the Georgian Order is similar. He ties its



inception to the conflict between the American colonies and England (*sic.*) in the late eighteenth century, the tobacco industry, which went into sharp decline in mid century, recent religious dissent, and unrest amongst Virginia's growing slave population (Glassie 1975: 176-193). In the middle of the eighteenth century the Middle Virginian's political and religious traditions were unsteady. The need for order and control were met culturally by the Georgian Order and its varied manifestations. Glassie extends this role of the Georgian order in providing increased control in times of social stress to Northern Ireland in his analysis of changing house forms there (Glassie 1995: chapter 13). In this case, the rise of privacy and other concepts associated with the Georgian order are connected to the political turmoil of the first half of the twentieth century. The Georgian Order is picked up late in relation to other areas as the conflictual conditions Glassie sees as underlying the desire for control do not occur until that time.

Glassie, then, does begin to tackle the problem of a lack of particular historical context that Leone notes as a recurrent failing of structuralist analysis in archaeology. However, we are left wondering just how generalised social chaos and the Georgian Order are related, specifically. Why were the Georgian mindset and Georgian forms of material culture appropriate means of dealing with perceived social instability at *this* time and in *that* place? How did they act in this social context to maintain social order? In Leone's (1988: 235-236) terms, why do changes in material culture appear in one place before others? How are changes in material culture, taken by Glassie and Deetz to reflect changes in ways of thinking, tied to material conditions? What is it that requires more control?

Leone built on his criticisms of structuralist archaeology in his analysis of the William Paca garden in Annapolis, Maryland (Leone 1996; figure 4.4). The garden in question was that constructed in the 1760s by William Paca, a signatory of the Declaration of Independence, to complement his large Georgian mansion, built at the same time (Leone 1996: 378-380). The house and garden were designed and laid out professionally after Paca married into wealth. The garden is of a type found elsewhere in the area. In form such gardens are largely ornamental, although probably also containing kitchen gardens. Layout was symmetrical and the garden walled in with built or planted materials. There were often exotic and imported plants and built terraces descended in an even series to a natural or constructed focal point, controlling the view.

In interpreting this garden form Leone stresses the importance of ideology (Leone



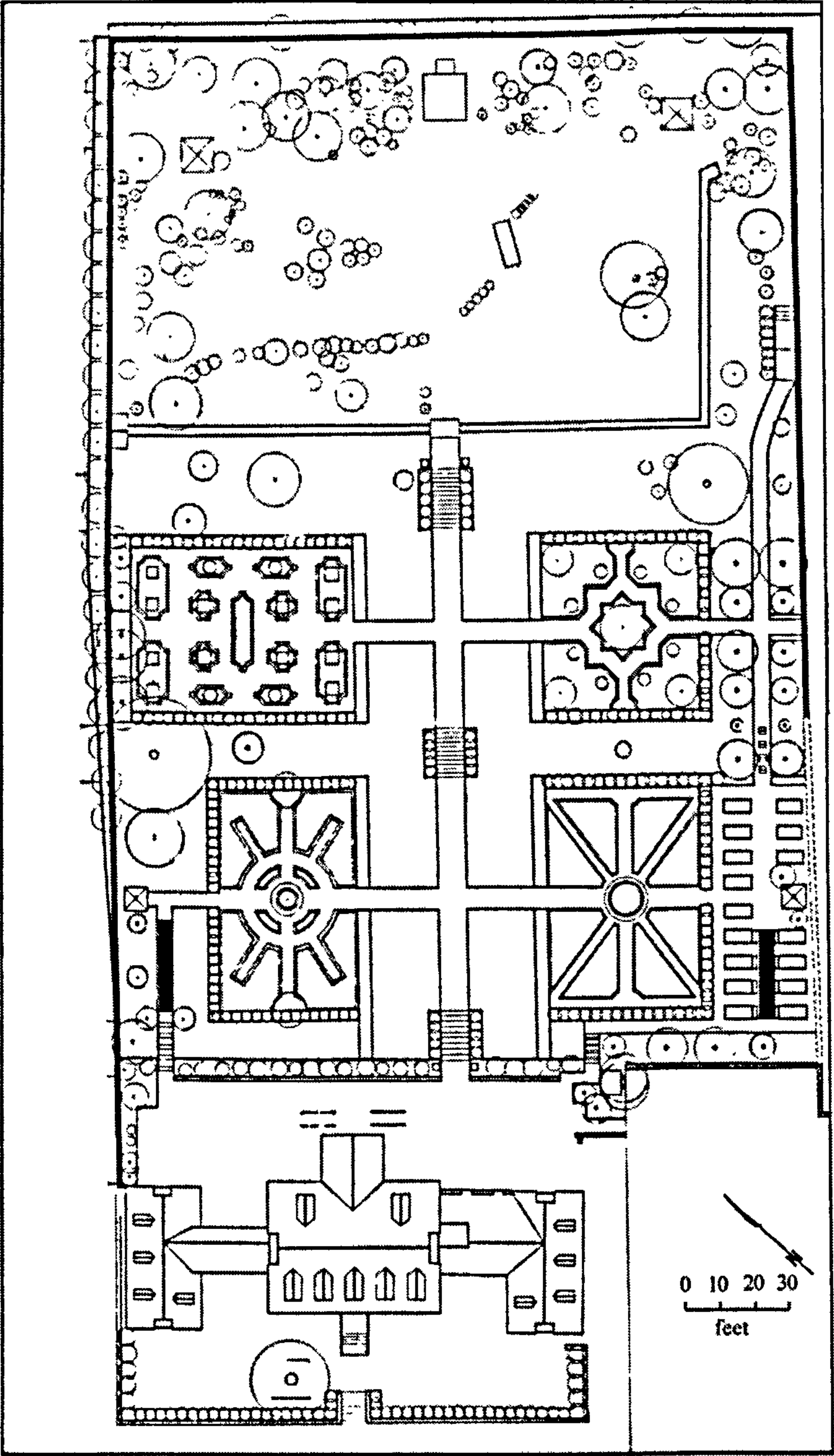


Figure 4.4: William Paca's house and garden in Annapolis, Maryland (after Leone 1996: 379, figure 15.1).



1996: 372-373). For him, ideology is neither worldview nor belief, but ideas about nature, cause, time, and person, or a society's givens. Further, these ideas serve to naturalise and, thus, mask inequalities in the social order, making these inequalities appear resident in nature or history, rather than arbitrary.

This concept of ideology is combined with the analysis of eighteenth century Virginian society given by Rhys Isaac in *The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790* (Isaac 1982; see Leone 1996: 372-375). In this, Isaac argues that between 1740 and 1790 in Tidewater Virginia, the social hierarchy became more and more rigid with the planter-gentry increasingly isolating itself "on the top of a pyramid which was becoming ever more shaky" (Leone 1996: 373). This came as an attempt by that gentry to construct, with an undetermined degree of consciousness, a local order which acted to allow them to maintain control over what they possessed, in the face of constrictions on wealth and the sources of its prosperity as a result of English control over the colonial economy and the continued long-term decline of tobacco prices. The result was a tight hierarchy with little access to the premier places from below or outside. As the existing hierarchy became more and more threatened, the gentry sought greater and greater control in maintaining their position, expressed as the Georgian Order. The material aspects of the Georgian Order all created the inhibitions, withdrawal, and isolation needed to prevent any attack on the established order. The Georgian Order grew more and more definite as the challenges to established hierarchy grew in strength. It came to its fullest expression as the American Revolution approached. When the Revolution was over, and its effects on the mobility and growth of American society were fully felt in the early nineteenth century, and when those planters who had controlled the Revolution died, the Georgian world died also.

Taking this analysis of eighteenth century Virginian society, together with a concept of ideology, Leone understands the William Paca garden as one of those arenas in which the Georgian Order and the values this expressed were naturalised and, thus, legitimised (Leone 1996: 380-389). The garden is divided by a central path, which allows descent through five similar terraces that fall away from the house. The principals of bilaterally balanced symmetry govern its layout. Furthermore, the garden was laid out as an exercise in optics. The terraces carry the axis downward to a distant focal point and create a three-dimensional volume out of the flat plan. Parallel lines of vegetation along the line of sight enhance the illusion of distance.



This garden would probably, as garden building manuals of the time and contemporary parallels suggest, have functioned in one role as a scientific observatory on nature. Experiments with nature would have involved the grouping, segmenting, grafting, breeding, and transplanting of flora, linked to observations on sunlight, fire, soil, weather, and water. Paca demonstrated that he understood nature and could control it, through the use of geometry and optics in garden layout and experimentation with plants. Paca can be seen to be placing his position in society (as a wealthy, slave-owning planter) in nature. More generally:

Perspective allows one to view space and time in measurable interchangeable segments; and this is how universal space and time link Mr. Paca's garden to his law, Annapolis's workers to their hours, capital to interest, ships at sea to weeks travelled and thus to profit and loss. (Leone 1996: 387)

Material culture and, specifically, the Georgian Order are linked to the social relations of capitalism as ideology naturalising those social relations and as aspects of active attempts to impose those relations:

The formal garden was not an adornment, the product of spare time; it was not for food and still less for idle fashion. It was a place for thinking and for making the observations, which were essential to economic and social life. It was not passive; it was very active, for by walking in it, building it, looking at it, admiring and discussing it, and using it in any way, its contemporaries could take themselves and their position as granted and convince others that the way things are is the way they always had been and should remain. For the order was natural and always had been so. (Leone 1996: 389)

The key contribution of Leone's analysis of the Paca garden and his criticism of structuralist analyses of the Georgian Order is in providing a link between material culture and the social relations of capitalism. There are, however, specific problems with Leone's analysis (Hodder 1991: 67-72). The ideology outlined by Leone appears to be shared by all society, with no indication that the same material culture may have held different



meanings for different social groups. Further, the separation of ideology and reality takes no account of the fact that reality is perceived and created by the observer. The ideology in question needs to be situated within routine practices. If the concept of ideology is going to be of use in discussing the creation and perpetuation of capitalist social relations, it should not be uncritically accepted as the dominant worldview masking real social relations to the benefit of an elite. We should historically situate the Georgian Order (Where did it come from? Who adopted, imposed or rejected it, and why?).

Leone has since extended his analysis of the Georgian Order in Annapolis, through study of archaeologically recovered material culture and of probate inventories (Leone 1988). In this, he asks how capitalism operated in people's daily lives in order to subordinate the working population, thus attempting to counter some of the criticisms put forward by Hodder and others in relation to his analysis of the Paca garden. Against the background of increasing control of wealth by a small minority in Annapolis from the late seventeenth century on, aspects of moveable material culture can be seen as acting to legitimise this minority's position and create capitalist work attitudes necessary in the furtherance of their interests. Between 1710 and 1730, clocks, scientific instruments, and musical instruments were introduced and used to show that newly aggregated wealth was legitimate because its possessors understood natural law through direct observation, justifying both hierarchy and individualism. From about 1730 on, sets of cups, plates, knives, forks, and many other forms of material culture helped to create work discipline. They helped to create and maintain the internalised set of rules that structured the self-maintaining individual essential in capitalist society. The legitimisation of a hierarchy with the planter-gentry at its top was played out in landscape architecture and architecture itself from around 1760.

These trends in material culture were aspects of the beginnings of restructured work habits and society, with almost all the wealthy and between a fifth and a third of the poorest property owners influenced by the Georgian Order by 1770 (Leone 1988: 245-247). The population was largely absorbed by 1830 and completely by 1860 (Leone 1988: 247). As Leone suggests, this opens the way for seeing a long period of resistance to capitalist social relations through material culture, though this remains to be demonstrated (Leone 1988: 247).

In light of the criticisms considered above, this analysis takes some significant



steps, particularly in relating social relations under capitalism to everyday practice and in allowing consideration of the negotiation of those relations by different individuals and groups. However, problems remain in that resistance is only allowed for, not demonstrated, and those accepting the Georgian Order into their everyday existence come across as doing so passively and completely. Adopting aspects of so-called Georgian material culture need not constitute the acceptance of a particular ideology of the individual, and related social relations and hierarchy, as that material culture is open to different interpretations and manipulation. Further, if non-acceptance is to be conceived of as resistance then we have to consider the specific contexts in which this occurs.

How we might go about studying resistance to or manipulation of the Georgian Order is shown by some discussions of the archaeology of slave life in the southern United States. In discussing slave foodways, and associated ceramics, Ferguson suggests that African-American slave populations built and lived their own subculture different in kind as well as material quality from that of the white plantation owners (Ferguson 1996: 260; figure 4.5). In doing so, they unconsciously distanced themselves from the rationalisations that would have helped make slavery work. "They resisted slavery by being themselves" (Ferguson 1996: 260). Acceptance of the Georgian Order, the basis for the associated legitimisation of hierarchy, by the slave population would have made their role in life - to serve the planter-gentry without resistance - obvious and natural (Ferguson 1996: 261-262).

Eighteenth century slave foodways were significantly different from those of Georgianised European-Americans, utilising locally made ceramics and displaying little evidence of individualism, group segmentation or hierarchy (Ferguson 1996: 262-269). Significant in slave foodways were so-called Colono Ware ceramics, which were plain, undecorated and handmade. The character of this pottery emphasised the similarities of slaves and their differences from their owners. The way in which food was prepared and consumed also differed. Colono vessels were often in the form of bowls, large and small, that often show evidence of use in an open fire. This suggests a use consistent with cooking practices in West Africa, where food is prepared in bowls set on an open hearth.

The lack of utensil marks on the interior of Colono vessels points to another divergence from the practices of plantation owners. In contrast to Georgian foodways, slave populations seem to have been eating one-dish (unsegmented) meals with their hands



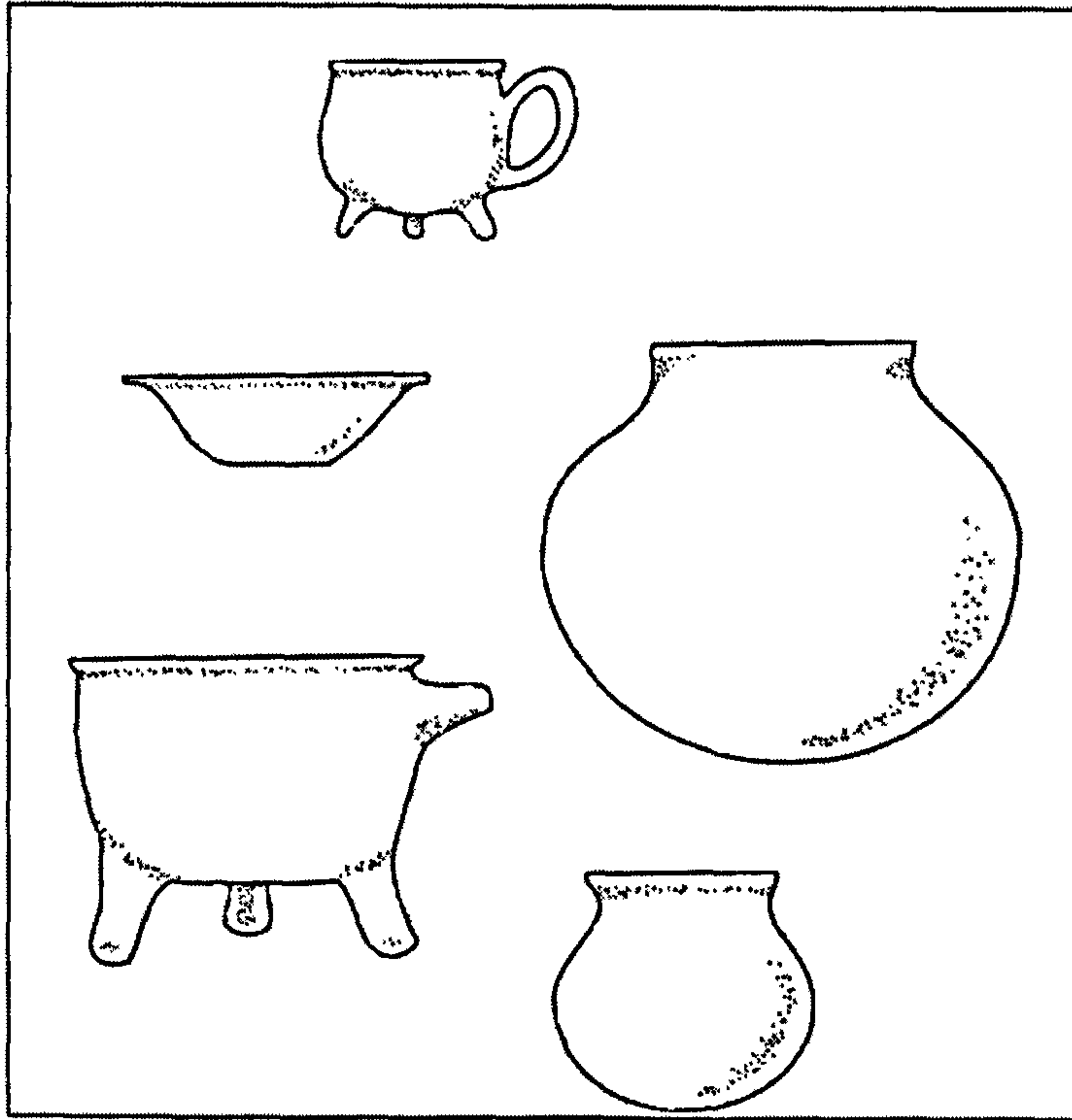


Figure 4.5: Colono Ware vessels (after Deetz 1996: 237, figure 15).



from domestically manufactured vessels. Significantly, in the nineteenth century, imported British manufactured bowls seemed to have been used in the same way as earlier Colonial wares. Here, material culture forms most readily associated with mass production and Georgian foodways were adopted only so far as they played a role in divergent African-American practices. The material culture of the Georgianised elite entered slave life, but only through manipulation.

While such a bipolar opposition of domination and resistance may be appropriate to such plantation contexts, and the above situation need not be universal, it is unhelpful in understanding material responses to Improvement in the case studies of this thesis (see chapter 8). It is important to remember that there could have been far more than two simple responses to capitalism, acceptance and rejection.

In the studies just discussed the Georgian Order is seen as a sort of cultural package, standardising the material world and stressing the individual, to be adopted, resisted, or manipulated. In considering similar cultural phenomena in England, however, Matthew Johnson has explored possible genealogies of the Georgian Order (Johnson 1996). He considers that groupings of social practices stretching back from the eighteenth century into the late Medieval period can be seen as genealogies of capitalism. As such, capitalism had no simple origin, but was the result of diverse and long-lived material and social changes. This genealogical perspective is useful because it allows us to extend the general political and social contexts of the growth of the Georgian Order to consider the specific historical situations in which its individual aspects played a role in social negotiation.

Johnson traces several main genealogies. The first, looks at changes in landscape, architecture and other aspects of material culture as a process termed closure (see Johnson 1996: chapter 4, in particular; figures 4.6 and 4.7). In this the material world is re-ordered in that people's relationship with their material environment becomes abstracted, or objectified, through the enclosure of fields, the individualisation of space within the house, the writing of documents, and the creation of maps and plans. Material culture in all these domains increasingly emphasises the polite over the vernacular as knowledge is disembedded from the local context.

The second main genealogy traces the increasing imposition of authority at a series of levels (Johnson 1996: chapter 5). State, church, and even the heads of households are



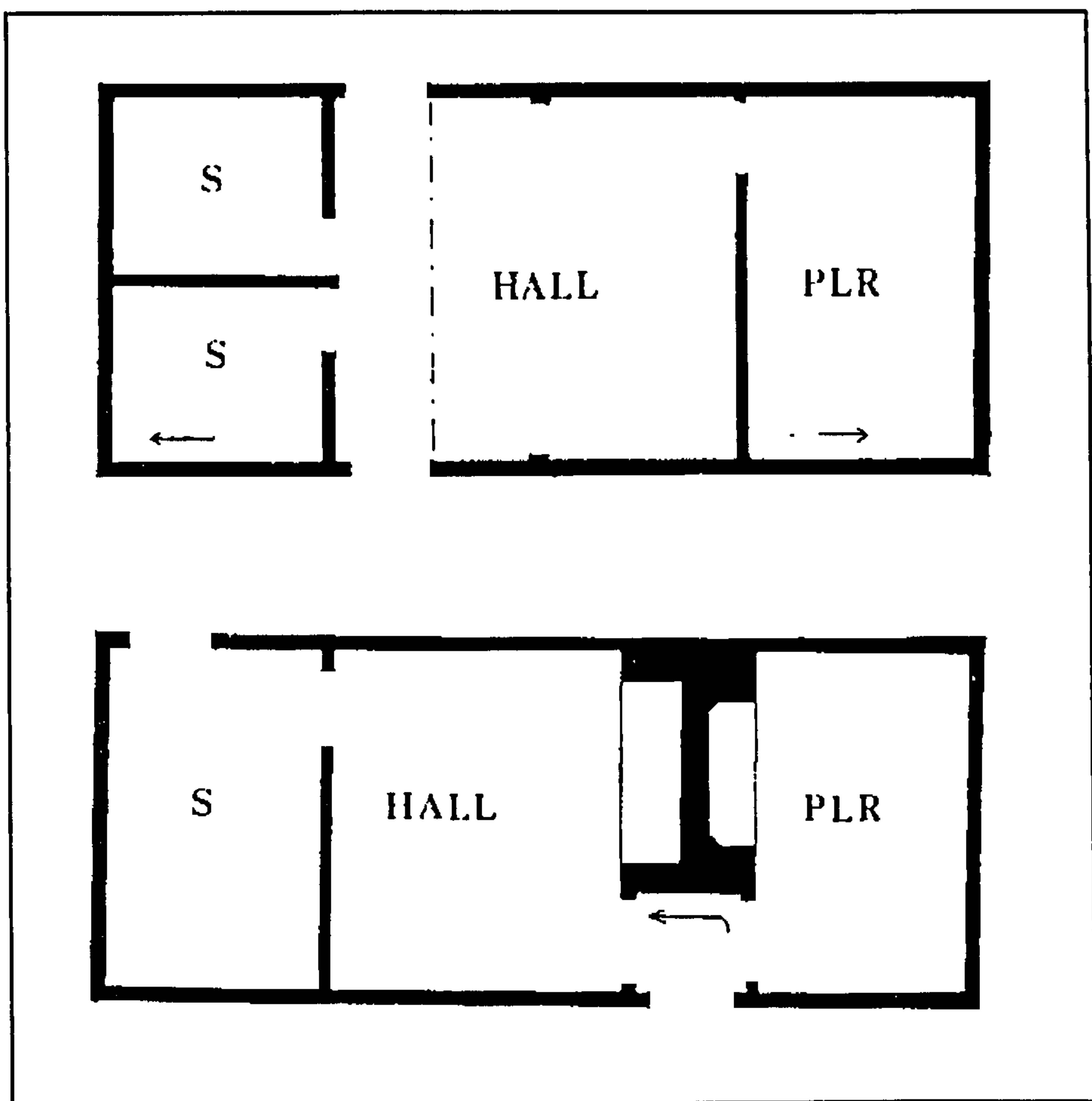


Figure 4.6: 'Closure' within the house (after Johnson 1996: 80, figure 4.1). In the open-hall house (top) the key spatial and social divisions are between the upper and lower ends of the hall. In the later three-cell lobby-house (below), key social divisions are between rooms rather than within. Private chambers now have their own access routes.



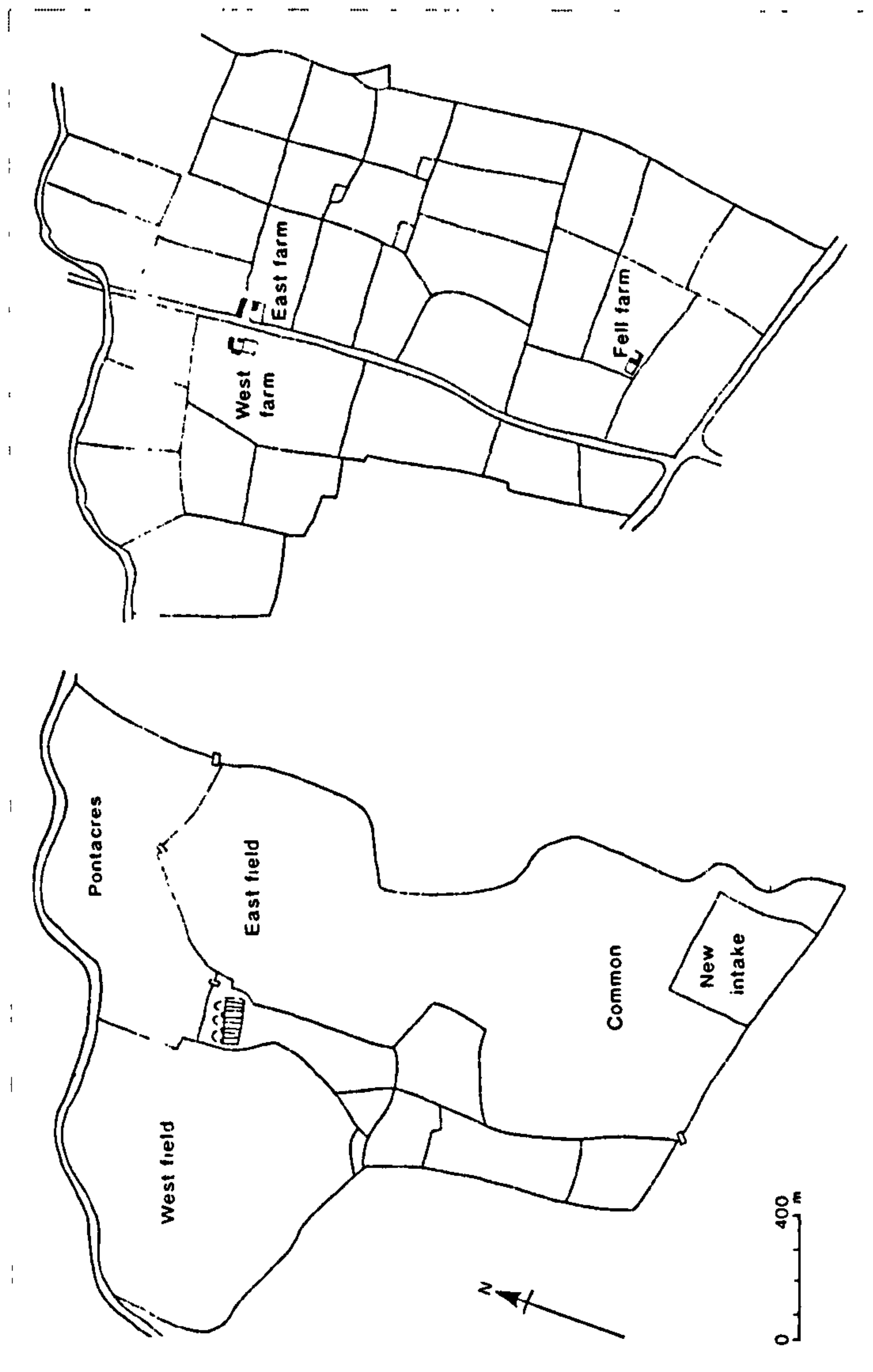


Figure 4.7: Closure in the landscape. Enclosure of a champion landscape in Northumberland (after Johnson 1996: 51, figure 3.3). Bottom = before enclosure (1677). Top = after (1760).



seen to cultivate increasingly elaborate forms of spatial and temporal discipline. The world and the people within it are ordered through documents, maps, and through space, most explicitly in the bridewell (see Markus (ed.) 1982; 1989 on this process in Scotland).

Thirdly, a commodified mentality and worldview is seen to restructure architectural authority, the homes of the middling class and the world of objects (Johnson 1996: 202; figure 4.8). Added to this is the genealogy of the individual, in particular seen through attitudes to death and burial (1996: 204-206).

As Johnson states, *An Archaeology of Capitalism* argues:

. . . that the apparent unity of this set of eighteenth-century architecture and material culture [the Georgian Order] is partly due to the perceived nature of its arrival as a ‘complete package’ in the context of the American colonies. Each element in fact has a genealogy several centuries old, and can be placed in disparate contexts, often within the patriarchal structure of early modern England. (Johnson 1996: 206)

A similar case could be argued for Scotland. Enclosure had a pre-eighteenth century history, for example (see chapter 5 below). The privatisation or increasing subdivision of space has a long genealogy in the Scottish castle (e.g., Rutherford 1998), just as it does in some English domestic contexts. However, in the context of agricultural Improvement in the Highlands, the reorganisation of the landscape, settlement pattern and morphology and domestic space along lines similar to those traced in North America and in England did occur rapidly over a large area (see chapter 5 below). In this sense, we *can* see Improvement as the introduction of a material package. The genealogies of this process were largely confined to other spheres, most notably elite residences for the Highlands. It is only with the spread of the reordering of space, that is Improvement, across the landscape at large that we can associate it with capitalism. While that reordering remained confined to a few limited contexts it did not play a significant role in restructuring social relations along capitalist lines amongst the population as a whole.

Johnson’s emphasis on the genealogies of the capitalist material environment is significant, however. Understanding where the inspiration and exemplars for Highland Improvement came from, for example, is fundamental in understanding the process of Improvement itself (see chapters 6 and 7 below). The major problem with Johnson’s



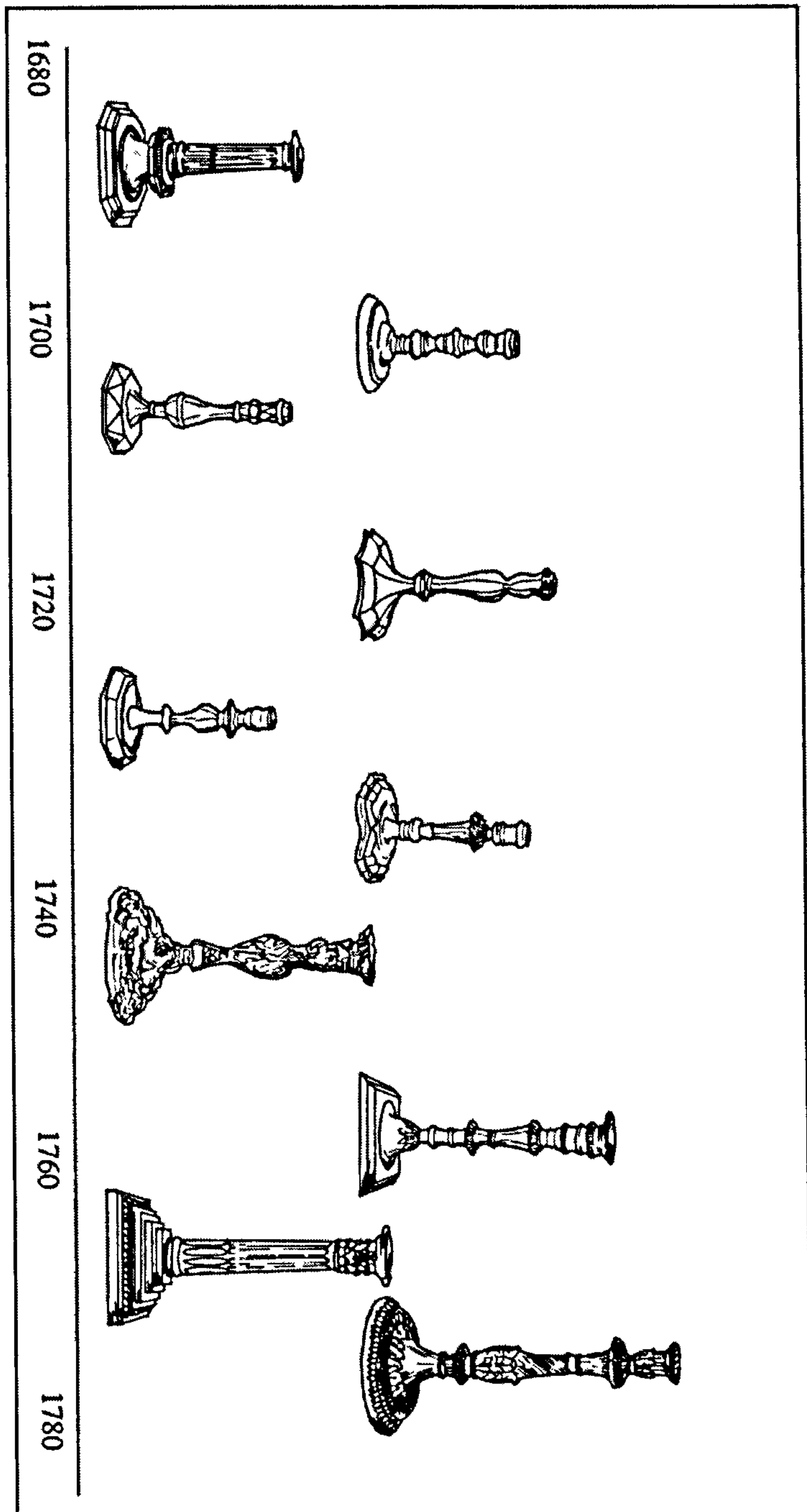


Figure 4.8: A key aspect of commodification is the rise of fashion, seen here in the rapidly changing style of candlesticks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (after Johnson 1996: 194, figure 8.3).



attempt to trace such genealogies in England is that it causes him to emphasise them at the cost of all other material and social changes. The material structuring of capitalism thus appears as inevitable and almost universal. Johnson pays little attention to social resistance to or manipulation of the material environments he describes. Describing capitalism as the coalescence of diverse material and social genealogies removes its inception from its political and social context and draws a picture of capitalist society as that where capitalism is universal.

## **The origins of capitalism in Scotland**

Histories of capitalist society in Scotland have also generally described the universal and homogenous rise of capitalism. The aim in this section is to discuss previous interpretations of the origins of capitalist society in Scotland with reference to three significant explanatory models. Marxist histories place class relations at the centre of historical explanation. Those histories following the work of Max Weber emphasise the creation of a spirit of capitalism, with reference to Protestant belief. Finally, histories relying on forms of economic determinism are discussed, specifically those which have dealt with Improvement. The review of explanations offered is not comprehensive. Rather I have chosen three significant trends in discussions of the origins of capitalist society in Scotland that relate to wider themes in the explanation of this process.

### **Marxist histories**

Karl Marx's approach to history can be referred to as historical materialism. Basically, this sees the study of human development as best achieved through empirical analysis of the concrete processes of social life, that is, the creative and dynamic interaction between human and nature (Giddens 1971: 22). The path of history can be characterised with reference to different modes of production. That is, with reference to different technologies of production and the manner in which these are organised through social relations. It is in the relations of production that we find the dynamic of history. Famously: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"



(Marx and Engels 1967: 79). This concern with the dynamic of class relations can be seen in the Marxist approach to the feudal-capitalist transition in Scotland.

Marx himself had little to say on capitalism and Scotland. Interestingly, the Highland Clearances were of interest to him (Marx in Bottomore and Rubel (eds) 1963: 131-132; Marx 1990: 889-895). The reason was that he considered the Clearances to be a particularly clear example of the “last great process of expropriation from the soil . . the so-called ‘clearing of estates’” (Marx 1990: 889). However, his analysis of the Clearances was cursory and there are several more substantial analyses of the genesis of capitalist society in Scotland that have a Marxist historical perspective.

From an explicitly Marxist-Leninist perspective, Foster places an analysis of class forces and nationalism at the centre of an understanding of the origins of capitalist society in Scotland (Foster 1980; see also Davidson 1999; Hobsbawm 1980). Foster poses two related questions here. Firstly, how, despite the fact that Scotland was inhabited by a diverse collection of peoples for most of the first millennium A.D., with neither cultural nor linguistic unity, did the Scots succeed in establishing their own independent feudal state? Second, how did they eventually, but historically very early, manage to lay the foundations for a distinct form of capitalistic production?

These questions draw Foster back to consider the creation of the Scottish kingdom in the ninth and tenth centuries (Foster 1980: 22-25). This is seen to occur during the period of the Viking incursions, which brought serious disruption to existing political structures. Military and marriage alliance with the Vikings allowed the Scots of Dalriada to embark on a programme of military conquest against those in the east of the country and to gain control over a large part of what is today Scotland. It is the social transformation that followed these events that is of importance here. The Scots ruling dynasty turned from its clan-based organisational principles and from succession by a system of tanistry to a system organised through feudal dependants of the crown and where succession was through the immediate male line. A centralised monarchy, feudally administering a territorially consolidated Scottish kingdom, thus came into being.

The crucial point here, for Foster, is the reason why Viking invasion was so vehemently resisted (Foster 1980: 25-38). The answer is seen to lie in the transition from slave society during the end of the Roman period. Scotland was only partially and temporarily included within the Roman Empire. However, Rome profoundly influenced



the structure of Scottish society (or societies) in that frontier areas were subordinated to the acquisition of slaves for Rome. The Roman policy of divide-and-rule client relationships with Lowland Scottish tribes promoted inter-tribal warfare and produced slaves for the Roman market. When the demand for slaves declined in the second and third centuries, internecine warfare ceased and the slave producing economy was replaced by one geared to the commercial production of corn and wool. These new agrarian forms were imitated from the Romanised populations south of Hadrian's Wall, with whom a much closer relationship was emerging. In this context rudimentary feudal societies emerged in the south of Scotland (Foster 1980: 34). The need for landlords to maintain their position in the decline of reliance on the slave trade and related warfare led to a restructuring of relationships along proto-feudal lines. It was in defence of the gains in freedom made in this transformation that the semi-feudalised societies of Lowland Scotland accepted Scottish rule (the institutions of which themselves became feudalised) in preference to subordination to Viking slave-based society:

[The semi-feudalised societies'] religion, institutions and common customs incorporated not just the obligation of feudal subordination but a basic assertion of freedom from slave or tribal subjection that was real, direct and ultimately posed in desperate struggle against the encircling terrorism of Viking power. (Foster 1980: 36)

The Vikings threatened social retrogression and in resisting this threat Scotland not only emerged as a consolidated kingdom, but one in which the aristocracy and settled peasantry combined to fight to preserve distinctive principles of social organisation. This was the basis of a Scottish national identity that was founded in the defence, against the Vikings, of a pattern of social organisation that incorporated collective peasant freedoms that had been sustained over the past four centuries and formed the basis of national resistance during the Wars of Independence of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

The Wars of Independence involved the assertion of a Scots national identity that had a mass popular content (Foster 1980: 38-48). The Wars came after a second stage of feudalisation in the twelfth century. In that period, a commercialisation of the feudal system of landownership and exploitation created opportunities for labour mobility and



began to open up perspectives for working people, craftsmen, and peasant farmers, which went beyond simple subordination to feudal superiors. In reaction to this, the feudal nobility did all they could throughout the course of the thirteenth century to enforce legally uniform serfdom. Mass popular involvement in the Wars of Independence can be seen in this light as resistance to the final consolidation of the oppressive form of feudalism that would have come with English rule. So, while the feudal order survived in Scotland after the Wars, it did so under special circumstances. The Bruces and Stewarts were able to establish a separate Scottish kingdom only in so far as they drew on a concept of Scots nationality. This drew its strengths from elements of progressive class struggle within that society, and most importantly from peasant resistance to new forms of feudal exploitation. Serfdom disappeared soon after the Wars, there was a drastic weakening of the institutions of advanced feudalism, a strong assertion of peasant rights, and the development of a vernacular culture that delighted in taking familiarity with the nobility to the point of insult and sacrilege.

The manner in which the Wars of Independence had been fought and won profoundly altered the balance of class forces within Scots society. This opened the way for the emergence of capitalist property by destroying the new structures of advanced feudalism and by further opening up what remained a feudally organised state to international market forces (Foster 1980: 48-53). The principal international market was that for wool. By the end of the fourteenth century, continental demand for wool was on the increase and that of England was expensive or increasingly reserved for home consumption. Consequently, the clearance of land for sheep and cattle in Scotland progressed. That this indicates the growth of agricultural capitalism can be seen in the fact that much of fifteenth century Scots politics revolved around the struggle to develop the institutions on which wage labour and contractual property rights were based. Whether or not cattle or sheep raising was to take a capitalist form or be carried on by the great abbeys and feudal estates exacting labour services depended on prior relations internal to the origins of the feudal mode and, in particular, the political strength of the richer peasantry.

So, for Foster, capitalism had emerged in the agricultural sector in Scotland by the fifteenth century. The origins of this capitalism are found in the nature of the development of Scottish national identity and the connection of this to class relations. Nationality had developed in reaction to the Viking threat to freedoms won in the transition from a slave-



based mode of production. The Wars of Independence were fought and won by drawing on this national identity. They were fought in a way that led to the demise of commercial feudalism and the strengthening of the political position of the peasantry. This situation led the richer peasants to favour the introduction of capitalism to the countryside over the continuation of feudal production, in relation to the international wool trade. The origins of capitalist society in Scotland lie in the history of class relations and conflict and the peculiar role these played in developing and maintaining the Scottish kingdom and Scots national identity.

Thompson (1980) has discussed the pre-eminent role of class relations in the subsequent development of capitalist society in Scotland. Significantly, his discussion forms a chapter subsequent to Foster's in a volume clearly intended to represent a consensus of the authors involved (see introduction to Dickson (ed) 1980).

Through the fifteenth and into the sixteenth century the Scottish aristocracy played a major role in retarding the advance of capitalist relations (Thompson 1980: 63-64). Their parasitism constituted the main institutional impediment to any advance in the country's productive forces. Their rapacious pursuit of income, internal armed conflicts over an economic surplus unable to satisfy their needs, and the pressure they constantly exerted on a weak central state all hampered the consolidation of a civil society in which accumulation within an acceptable framework of law and order could occur.

The breakthrough for the bourgeoisie came with the Reformation (Thompson 1980: 64-66). The aristocracy initiated the Reformation in reaction to self-reform by the established church (which posed a threat to aristocratic parasitism on church property). However, to accomplish the revolution in the church, the aristocracy had to draw on the support of Calvinist preachers who had the public ear - the public here being the bourgeoisie (i.e. the burgesses, guildsmen, minor landowners and their dependants). Their involvement in this process gained the bourgeoisie institutional expression for their interests and demands. However, the Presbyterian church failed to penetrate far beyond its original base in the Lowlands and burghs and the imposition of episcopacy and the institution of lay patronage to clerical appointments evidence the retention of control over the church by the nobility. Despite this, the aristocracy did not maintain complete control, and conflict between Kirk and Crown was endemic in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.



In the economic sphere, capitalist advance continued to be hampered by the persistence of feudal institutions and largely traditionalist practices until 1603 (Thompson 1980: 66-71). The Union of Crowns allowed James VI to finally subdue the aristocracy and capitalist potential existing in the country could finally be released. Three major growth areas ensued. Linen manufacture expanded, but experienced a limited degree of capitalist penetration. Much remained organised along domestic handworking lines. Coal mining and salt manufacture became organised along more capitalist lines. However, their labour force was constituted not by free wage-labour, but constructed through a process of legal enslavement. Coal and salt resources were developed by landowners and it is therefore they who were most dynamic in the development of capitalist economy at the time. However, the majority of landowners remained traditionalist in outlook.

The revolutionary upheaval of the 1640s constituted a political rupture that gave the ascending classes the opportunity to revolutionise the existing social order and began the growth to pre-eminence of capitalism over traditionalism (Thompson 1980: 73-87). Charles I attempted to advance his pretensions to absolutist rule through administrative control via a subordinated church. Further, he compelled the lay proprietors of tithes to accept money payment from heritors in place of payment in kind. These efforts provoked an aristocratic reaction and the Scottish revolution, beginning in 1638, left the country politically disrupted and economically impoverished. However, the introduction of money payment of tithes and certain effects of the revolution implanted institutional structures favourable to capitalist development with the removal of a drag on agricultural development and the reduction of the arbitrary power of the nobles over the subordinate gentry. It was not until the removal of the Cromwellian regime two decades later that growth began in earnest and remaining institutional opposition began to be removed. The final removal of Stuart pretensions to absolutist rule and with it the removal of remaining feudal hangovers came with the 1689 revolution settlement under which a partly agrarian, partly commercial bourgeoisie captured power in church and state. This enabled the emergence of fully capitalist relations to proceed unimpeded. The same bourgeoisie embarked on the Union of 1707 and it was this that allowed capitalist expansion to proceed to previously unknown levels with the removal of English opposition in the international market. The bourgeoisie had voluntarily renounced state independence in order to survive as a class.



## Weberian histories

Max Weber's essays on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1992), first published in 1904-5, suggested the analysis of religion as a key element in understanding the origins of capitalism. Specifically, he demonstrated a close relationship between key aspects of Calvinist thought and what he dubbed the spirit of capitalism. This spirit is only provisionally outlined in *The Protestant Ethic*, but can be defined as "the ideal of the honest man of recognised credit, and above all the idea of a duty of the individual toward the increase of his capital, which is assumed as an end in itself" (Weber 1992: 51). The pursuit of profit for profit's sake is seen under this ethic as diligence in one's calling. It is a duty and should only be carried out by honest means. This is not plain greed or avarice, but an ethos for everyday life. This ethos is peculiar to modern capitalism, which grows in the West, and is not to be seen in the commercial practices of other times or places (Weber 1992: 52). It can be contrasted with traditionalism, in which work is only entered into in order to supply traditional needs (Weber 1992: 58-65). Here, if the money earned per item is raised, a person engaged in piecework will not see an opportunity to earn more. Rather they will work less and be content with the amount previously earned as this will be adequate in supplying their traditional needs.

Within Calvinist doctrine we can see key aspects to the development of the spirit of capitalism (see Weber 1992: 98-128). There is the notion of predestination - the idea that only an elect few were those predestined unto everlasting life. The emphasis was firmly placed on the individual as the word of God could only be understood by the chosen in their own heart, not through a priest or the sacraments. Added to this is the idea that the elect are only in the world to increase the glory of God by fulfilling His commandments to the best of their ability. This entails entering into everyday life as a means of glorifying God. For Calvin himself the question of whether he was one of the chosen was easily answered in the affirmative. He, therefore, did not discuss in any detail the means for others to assess their own position in this respect. However, others soon provided ways in which to deal with this fundamental problem. It was soon considered a duty to regard oneself chosen as lack of self-confidence betrayed a lack of faith and the lack of a state of grace. In order to obtain this self-confidence intense worldly activity was recommended. Diligence in one's calling was the hallmark and duty of the elect. The unelected could act in this fashion and in no way change their destiny, but those who did not act so were



confirmed to everlasting death. A psychological sanction was thus provided for honest and conscientious everyday activity. It was a duty and it was to be a constant process, not just a series of isolated good works. This combined with the notion of asceticism has clear resonance with the spirit of capitalism.

Weber himself only referred to Scotland in passing within this discussion, but others have recently considered his thesis in relation to the Scottish situation. Smout noted as late as 1969 that the relationship of religion and the rise of capitalism had not to that point been adequately discussed for Scotland (Smout 1969: 491). In beginning to address this problem, he offered a brief analysis of the relevance of Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis to the Scottish situation (Smout 1969: 88-93). He outlines Weber's thesis as the suggestion that the Calvinist ethic that stressed an individual's calling, saw virtue in hard work and frugality, destroyed Medieval restrictions on money-lending, and considered the successful acquisition of wealth as a sign of God's blessing, was to be connected to economic individualism. However, despite the fact that few countries were more completely Calvinist than Scotland, there is seen to be little support for the connection Weber draws if we consider the Scottish situation in the second half of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth centuries (Smout 1969: 88). To support this statement Smout notes the persistence for at least a century after the Reformation of Medieval restrictions on free competition, such as the privileges of the Royal Burghs, the regulations controlling Scottish trade to the Netherlands and the rights of the merchant and craft guilds. Further, the kirk-session and the guilds are seen to have similar concerns and even to have been structured by similar ethics. The public teachings of divines and the private letters of merchants are both read to show no evidence that God rewards virtue with riches. Rather, both emphasise that God punishes sin through economic calamity.

Smout does, however, concede some role to Calvinism in encouraging economic activity in Scotland. The role of the Calvinist church was to provide the general conditions for economic advancement through the promotion of learning and by inducing "the serious-minded strain in the Scottish character" (Smout 1969: 90). By the latter he is referring to a change in focus from the after-life to this life. In suggesting this, Smout echoes Weber's position but sees his own as distinguished by the fact that he draws no direct link between Calvinism and economic individualism. With the general disillusionment with religious controversies that followed the seventeenth century



squabbles between Episcopalians and Presbyterians, personal piety as an ultimate goal no longer sufficed and could even be treated with derision (Smout 1969: 91). In this context Calvinist qualities were handed down through the generations of the eighteenth century, and could now be applied to purely materialistic ends. To sum up he says:

We are not claiming that Calvinism 'caused' economic growth: all it did was to ensure that when the opportunity came for growth, after many other preconditions had been fulfilled, the Scots would be a nation psychologically well equipped to exploit the situation to the full. (Smout 1969: 93)

More recently, Gordon Marshall has looked at the Scottish evidence for Weber's thesis, in the light of a closer reading of Weber's work and more detailed empirical research (Marshall 1980a; 1980b). Discussions such as Smout's (Marshall does not refer to this example explicitly) that claim to refute Weber's thesis, by demonstrating a separation in time between the Reformation in Scotland and the rise of capitalism and underscoring other factors, such as apposite economic conditions, do not actually serve to refute that thesis at all (Marshall 1980b: 27-33). Weber always maintained that his original essays on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* were intended to investigate the origins of a particular orientation to life, referred to as the modern capitalistic spirit. This was only one factor among many that played a role in the development of the capitalism (Marshall 1980b: 33). With this in mind, it is possible to see Smout's analysis largely as confirming the significance of Weber's thesis for Scotland.

With sixteenth century Scottish Calvinism, the aspects of religious teaching that fostered the spirit of capitalism are poorly defined (Marshall 1980b: chapter 3). However, in the seventeenth century, both official doctrine and pastoral teachings emphasised certain theological aspects that can be taken to have created the modern capitalist mentality (Marshall 1980b: 107, chapter 4). These aspects are an orientation towards everyday conduct that emphasised diligence in one's particular calling as a duty, combined with a strict asceticism in the use of worldly goods, and the doctrine of predestination. The latter aspect acted as a psychological sanction, suggesting that strict conformity with the Calvinist code of ethics for everyday conduct was the only means by which an individual might prove and be assured of their membership of the elect who were to receive salvation.



Marshall goes on to show, convincingly, that this ethic can be seen, both explicitly and implicitly, behind the organisational structure of several later seventeenth century Scottish industrial ventures, with particular reference to the cloth manufactory at Newmills and the Loanhead colliery (Marshall 1980b: 235-247, chapter 7; 1980a: 16-27). In these cases, the Protestant ethic defined can be shown to have related directly to business practice and the spirit of capitalism.

Weber's original thesis was concerned with the relationship between certain aspects of Protestant teaching and the origins of a life-style that was *important* for the development of modern capitalism, not the single determinant (Marshall 1980b: 264). This relationship can be shown for Scotland. However, Weber did later concern himself with the wider problem of the origins of modern capitalism and Marshall takes up this concern in relation to Scotland (Marshall 1980b: 272-283).

Scotland's economy in 1707, according to Marshall, was no closer to achieving take-off into modern capitalist society than it had been in 1560. The question, then, is why the economy remained backward and displayed few tangible developments towards modern capitalism, despite the fact that Scots entrepreneurs subscribed to the ethos of modern capitalism? Marshall's answer is that there were circumscriptive conditions to capitalist development in existence in 1707 that were essentially the same to those in place in 1560. Scots possessed the appropriate attitude, but lacked the structural preconditions. Factors to the detriment of Scottish economic development into modern capitalism range from geography (affecting transport, communication, and agricultural production), the persistence of Medieval restrictions on trade (the guilds, the prerogatives of the royal burghs, and other factors), shortage of appropriate skilled labour and lack of capital for investment, and the semi-anarchic state of the country (promoting a reliance on traditional methods of agriculture, for example, to maintain numbers on an estate for defence). External factors are also seen as important, such as the upset of the Cromwellian period and English exclusions on Scottish trade. He concludes:

. . . Scots capitalists did not lack appropriate motivation to 'capitalist accumulation' but their designs were, for more than a century, frustrated by the backwardness of the economic structure of the country . . . . Under these circumstances, the modern capitalist economy was relatively slow to develop in Scotland . . . (Marshall 1980b:



The analyses of Smout and Marshall do not seem to differ substantially. Their differing support for Weber's thesis seems to stem from different understandings of the conclusions to be drawn from that thesis. Both Smout and Marshall offer surprisingly similar accounts of the close relationship between Calvinism and the spirit of capitalism in Scotland and the subsequent retardation of the development of modern capitalism by established institutional and other factors. Capitalism here exists in spirit prior to its realisation as social relations. The Marxist histories discussed above also consider capitalism to have existed in potentiality long before it was released by the removal of restrictive factors. This is a common form of explanation:

Since historians first began explaining the emergence of capitalism, there has scarcely existed an explanation that did not begin by assuming the very thing that needed to be explained. Almost without exception, accounts of the origin of capitalism have been fundamentally circular: they have assumed the prior existence of capitalism in order to explain it's coming into being. (Wood 1997: 5)

### Economic histories

In recent academic history, economic forms of explanation have been prevalent in discussions of the motivation behind Improvement/the rise of agrarian capitalism in Scotland (Carter 1971). Here there are two main explanatory variables, population pressure and impersonal economic forces (Carter 1971: 101-105). With the former, population increase in the Highlands between 1750 and 1850 put increasing pressure on economic resources in the area. With the latter, commercial sheep and cattle farming and rural industries such as kelp burning increasingly dominate the Highland economy with increasing demand in markets to the south and east. There is a simplistic equation of increasing supply with increasing demand. A dual sector economy, with a subsistence and a commercial sector operating simultaneously, may be argued to have existed for a time (Carter 1971: 105-106). However, in the end the commercial forces overpower the autonomy of the subsistence sector. Not all histories of Improvement place sole emphasis on impersonal economic and demographic forces, of course. For instance, Eric



Hobsbawm's *Scottish Reformers of the Eighteenth Century and Capitalist Agriculture* (1980) should be placed with the Marxist histories seen above. Further, several substantial recent histories of this period in the Highlands concentrate more fully on social factors, and are at times anthropological in approach (Dodgshon 1998; Macinnes 1996). However, the economic tradition predominates in academic discourse.

While impersonal economics play a significant role in the studies in question here, Carter does ignore the partially active role assigned to the landlords. Smout, who has been described as committed to efficient, rational farming (Carter 1971: 105), is fairly typical in mentioning a variety of motivational factors, but in the end placing the emphasis firmly on a need for more money (Smout 1969: 321-337). He does argue briefly that, in the Highlands, Culloden ushered in a period of the triumph of Lowland ethics and that Lowland influence, Hanoverian sympathies, and general philanthropy had a lot to do with the concept of Improvement. However, prime motivation is related to rises in cattle prices and increased conspicuous consumption after the '45. The former encouraged landlords to increase the output of their estates in order to fuel the latter. There is no mention here of the role of Calvinism in the rise of capitalism, that we saw him discuss above. This is in line with his views that Calvinism served to provide the basis of a capitalist mindset, without actually playing a direct role in the emergence of capitalist practice itself. However, it is also perhaps symptomatic of the analytical separation of discussions of capitalism and Improvement in Scotland

In specific relation to the House of Argyll, Cregeen (1968) offers a similar argument. In the pre-1745 era, he sees Improvement as being largely politically motivated, with industry serving as an antidote to Jacobitism and disaffection. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, there is seen to be a decline of political stimuli in favour of the economic. The fifth Duke is argued to be the first of his line to be free of a political role and from his time Improvement is seen to be motivated by fashion and money, that is by conspicuous consumption. From the late-eighteenth century, money alone is argued to be behind Improvement, although an element of humanity is also mentioned. Here again we see the prominent role given to economic motivators, coupled with the less significant political and philanthropic aspects of Improvement. Notably, the economic is underscored in relation to the late eighteenth century, when Improvement becomes particularly sustained and widespread.



## **Conclusion. Archaeology, capitalism, and capitalist society**

In line with the last chapter, we should view the prior history of any given area as significant in accounting for the constitution of capitalism. It is in that prior history that we should look for the locus of change. The path of change was not simply determined, however. Rather, the structuring of social relations along capitalist lines was a process of social negotiation involving many individuals and groups. The role of these agents was in part structured by their social and material environment, but not determined. The histories just considered do situate capitalism in relation to prior history. However, capitalism is seen to exist as a spirit or economic force that eventually becomes universal in capitalist societies with the removal of institutional restrictions on its development.

The concentration of Weberian histories on the spirit of capitalism, which should perhaps be seen as part of a genealogy in Matthew Johnson's terms, is helpful in moving us away from strictly economic concerns. However, the separation of economic, social, and ideological spheres that can be seen to run through most of the above histories will be seen throughout the rest of the thesis to be inappropriate. The economy of the Highlands was inseparable from the constitution of social relations, for example. Rather, a distinction will be drawn between the domains in which ideological and practical forms of consciousness were negotiated. This is an analytical distinction and the two should not be seen as entirely separate and bounded. In fact, it is the interaction between the two that is of interest.

In the chapters to follow, the constitution of capitalism will be considered through two case studies. These will allow a detailed consideration of the dynamics of Improvement as the constitution of capitalism in those particular areas. The general context for any archaeological approach to capitalism has been outlined above. In essence, this will involve looking at how material culture played a role in integrating society across time and space. Highland landscapes, settlement and domestic architecture were restructured in order to privilege absence over presence as primary in social relations. Everyday experience of the local environment increasingly undermined the communities that formed the basis of the clan system and privileged the individual. Likewise, the reordering of the house played a significant role in undermining hereditary, kin-based notions of tenure and likewise privileged the individual. All of this occurred with the increasing control of the landlord over the productive process and construction of the



material environment. Economic relationships became primary in the structuring of society, where those of community and kin had predominated before. All of this made concepts of private property and individualism knowable.

This thesis relates to analyses of the Georgian Order, but it does so in a specific way. I do not intend to trace the progress of a universal process, but to discuss the active creation of capitalism through material culture and routine practice in several localised contexts. The significance of archaeology in considering capitalism is that it allows us to consider specific everyday material and social environments. It was largely through these environments that social relationships were renegotiated along capitalist lines. An archaeological perspective also allows a detailed consideration of the possibilities of differing acceptance of, resistance to, or manipulation of the routine conditions from which the ideology of individualism was approached. This process of negotiation is what makes local studies important in understanding a process involving increasing material standardisation. In chapter eight in particular, we will see that Highland society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not become capitalist society. Rather, capitalism should be reserved as a term to describe certain social relationships or aspects of those relationships that existed alongside other relationships and other understandings of the social world.



## Chapter Five

### The changing material and routine environment

The last two chapters have stressed the importance of considering routine practice and the material environments that structure and are structured by that practice. An archaeological consideration of routine is fundamental in assessing the potential penetration of the ideology of the individual and the concept of private property, into different historical contexts. This is because routine practice is the basis of an understanding of the conditions that made the ideology of capitalism knowable. This chapter aims to outline changes in the material environment and in routine practice with Improvement in the case study areas of Kintyre and Kilfinan (figures 5.1 and 5.2).

It will be seen that through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in those areas, the material environment and routine practice did change in such a way as to inculcate a *sense of the individual*. That is, experience of the world was increasingly understood from the position of the individual. This understanding came in place of one where experience of the world was as part of a community or a family, with a related *sense of community* and *sense of the family*. It will also be seen, however, that this restructuring of routine practice and of the material environment was not universal or uniform. This suggests that the ideology of capitalism would have been understood, and evaluated, in fundamentally differing ways by different groups of people, something explored in detail in chapter eight.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first considers the material environment of the pre-Improvement period, which lies roughly between the late Middle Ages and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The second considers changes to the material environment with Improvement, which begins substantively in Kintyre in the late eighteenth century, and in Kilfinan in the first half of the nineteenth century. The third section relates these different environments to changing routine practice. Discussion has been arranged to focus on the material environment at three scales. The first scale considers settlement pattern and morphology; the second considers the wider landscape in which such settlement was situated; and the third, the organisation of domestic space. Changes at these scales will be seen to relate to the reconstruction of routine practice to



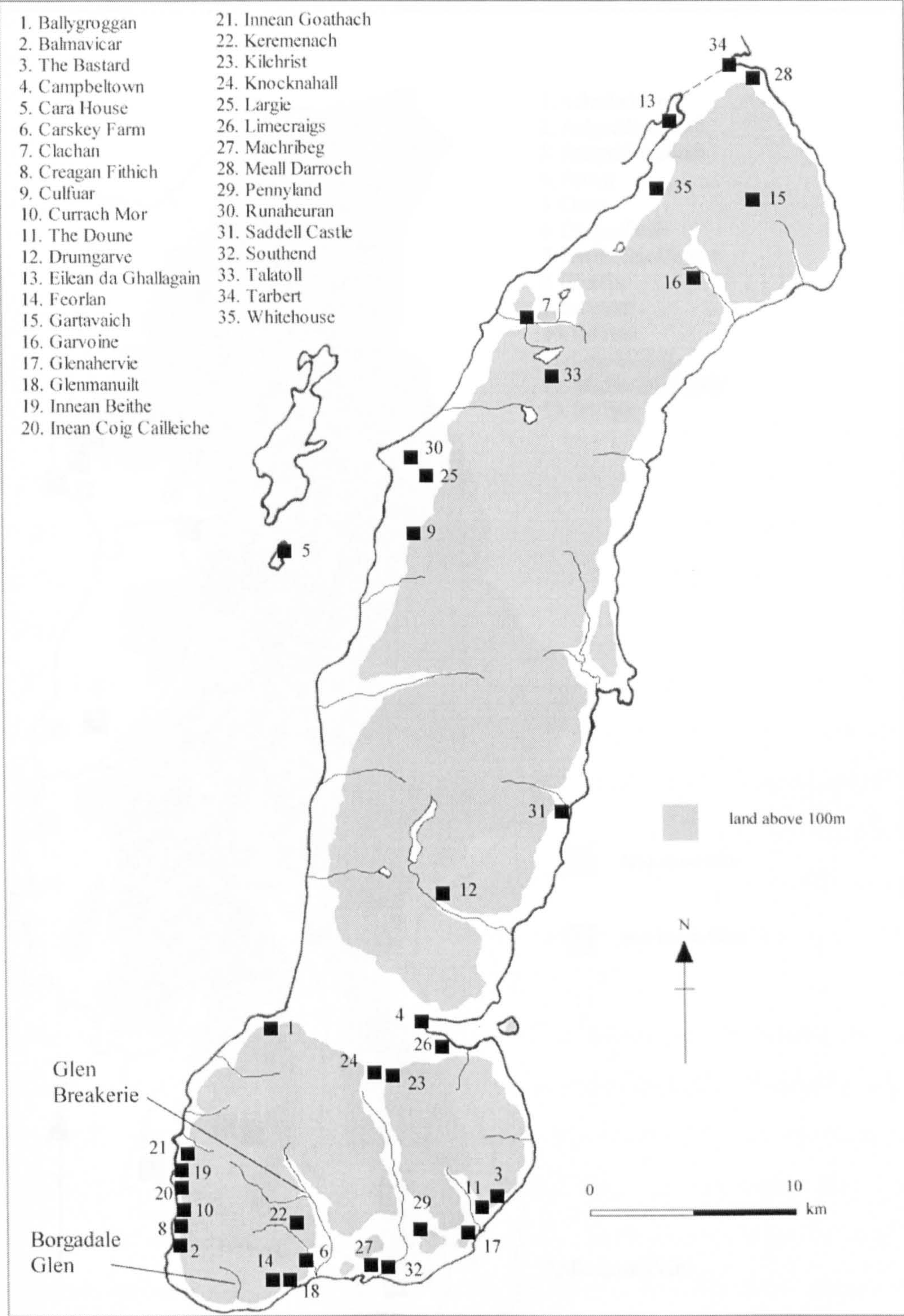


Figure 5.1: Location map of sites in Kintyre discussed in chapter five.



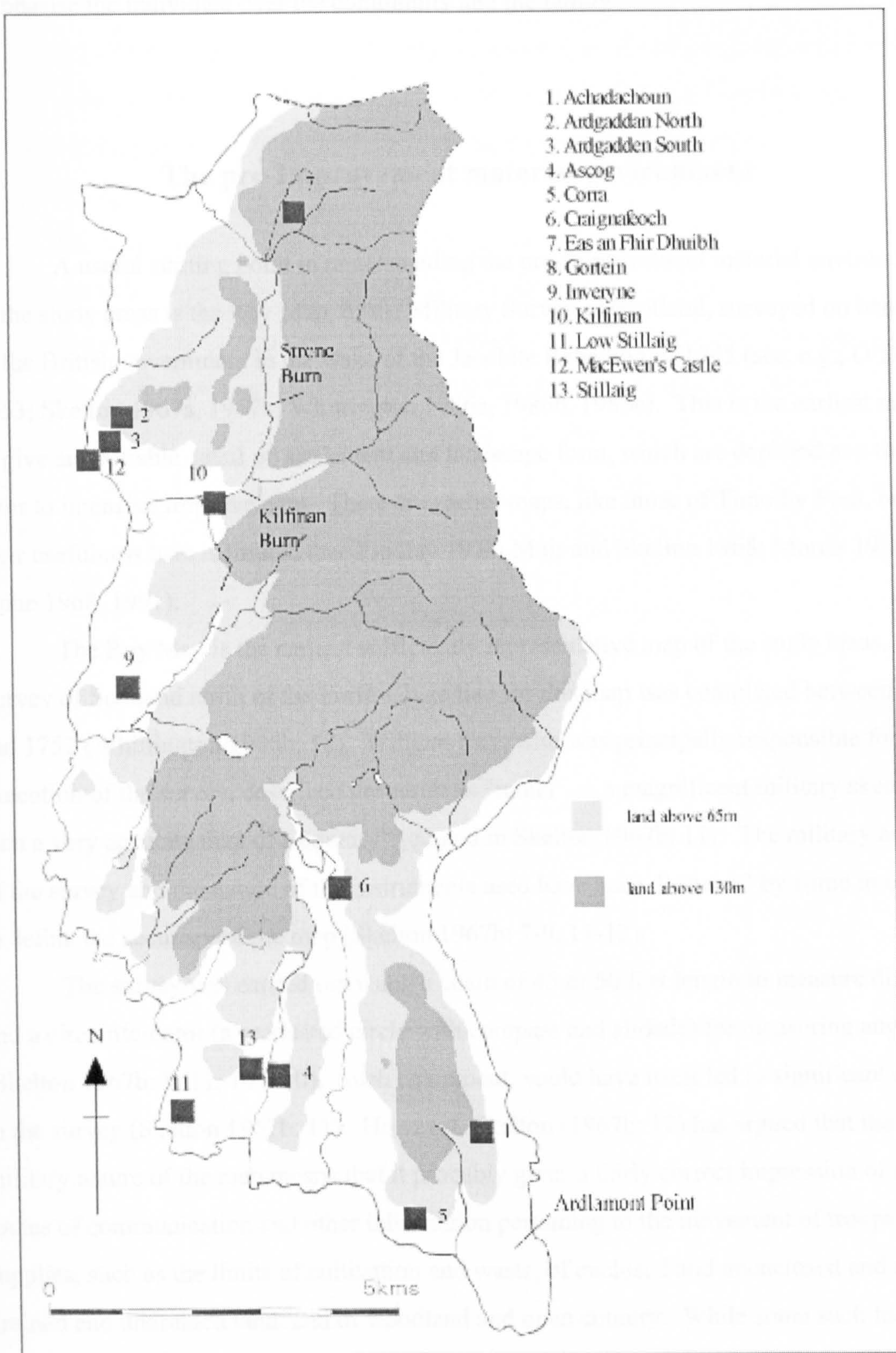


Figure 5.2: Location map of sites in Kilfinan discussed in chapter five.



emphasise the individual over the community and the family.

### **The pre-Improvement material environment**

A useful starting point in understanding the pre-Improvement material environment in the study areas is the Roy Map, or the Military Survey of Scotland, surveyed on behalf of the British government in the wake of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 (see, e.g., O'Dell 1953; Skelton 1967a, 1967b; Whittington 1986a, 1986b, 1986c). This is the earliest map to give any reliable detail on settlement and landscape form, which are depicted at a time prior to intensive Improvement. There are earlier maps, like those of Timothy Pont, but their usefulness here is limited (see Findlay 1978; Moir and Skelton 1968; Morris 1986; Stone 1968, 1991).

The Roy Map is the earliest sufficiently representative map of the study areas. Survey of Scotland north of the Forth-Clyde line for this map was completed between 1747 and 1752 (Whittington 1986b: 18). William Roy, who was principally responsible for the execution of the survey, described the result as “rather . . . a magnificent military sketch, than a very accurate map of a country” (quoted in Skelton 1967b: 11). The military agenda of the survey and the nature of the instruments used have been discussed by some in order to define the accuracy of the map (Skelton 1967b: 7-9, 11-12).

The survey was carried out using a chain of 45 or 50 feet length to measure distance and a circumferentor (a graduated circle with compass and alidade) for measuring angle (Skelton 1967b: 8, 11, 16 n.10). Such equipment would have itself led to significant errors in the survey (Skelton 1967b: 11). However, Skelton (1967b: 12) has argued that the military nature of the map means that it probably gives a fairly correct impression of relief, routes of communication and other information pertaining to the movement of troops and supplies, such as the limits of cultivation and waste, of enclosed and unenclosed and of drained and undrained land, and of woodland and open country. While some such features may have been accurately surveyed, others were filled in by eye (Skelton 1967b: 8).

On the other hand, some have suggested that the accuracy of the Roy Map should not be overstated. In contrast to the above, Graeme Whittington has argued for areas of Fife that the limits of cultivation and other areas of land use are not accurately depicted and



that the appearance of cultivated land is symbolic, with lines of rig drawn at random (Whittington 1986b: 25-27; figure 5.3). The representation of settlement has also been seen as symbolic and, thus, unreliable for detailed study of settlement morphology, although the depiction of the larger towns may be representative (Whittington 1986b: 20-25; 1986c: 71).

The sections of the Roy Map for Kintyre and Kilfinan, as will be seen, carry both representative and symbolic depiction. On the whole, settlement form, land use and what little enclosure is shown do appear to be stylised in form. However, in some areas enclosure in particular seems to be representatively recorded, as is the layout of Campbeltown. Further, the nature of the stylised depiction of settlement and landscape does vary and seems to do so in a meaningful and locally sensitive fashion. The Map therefore gives a good and varied general picture of settlement and landscape form with some limited information on specific areas of enclosure.

## Settlement

Settlement form on the Roy Map appears very similar for Kintyre and Kilfinan. Settlements are generally shown as small amorphous clusters of three to six structures in Kintyre and three to five in Kilfinan. Settlement is amorphous in Alan Gailey's terms in that there is:

. . . no clear indication of logical layout; the group of dwellings and associated out-buildings are amorphous, although individual structures within the group may show a preferred orientation in one of two directions at right-angles to each other. This latter feature appears to be related to slope. (Gailey 1960: 104)

The important defining elements of this form are conformity as best can to the immediate topography of a specific site, taking into account such factors as slope and drainage, and the gradual growth of the settlement over time, to no consciously predetermined plan.

The structures are shown as solid and largely undifferentiated rectangles. The settlements themselves are unenclosed, but are frequently associated with small rectilinear enclosures. These are probably kailyards (garden plots), small livestock pens, or stackyards for the harvested corn stacks (Fairhurst 1960: 68; Dixon 1994: 34). While some



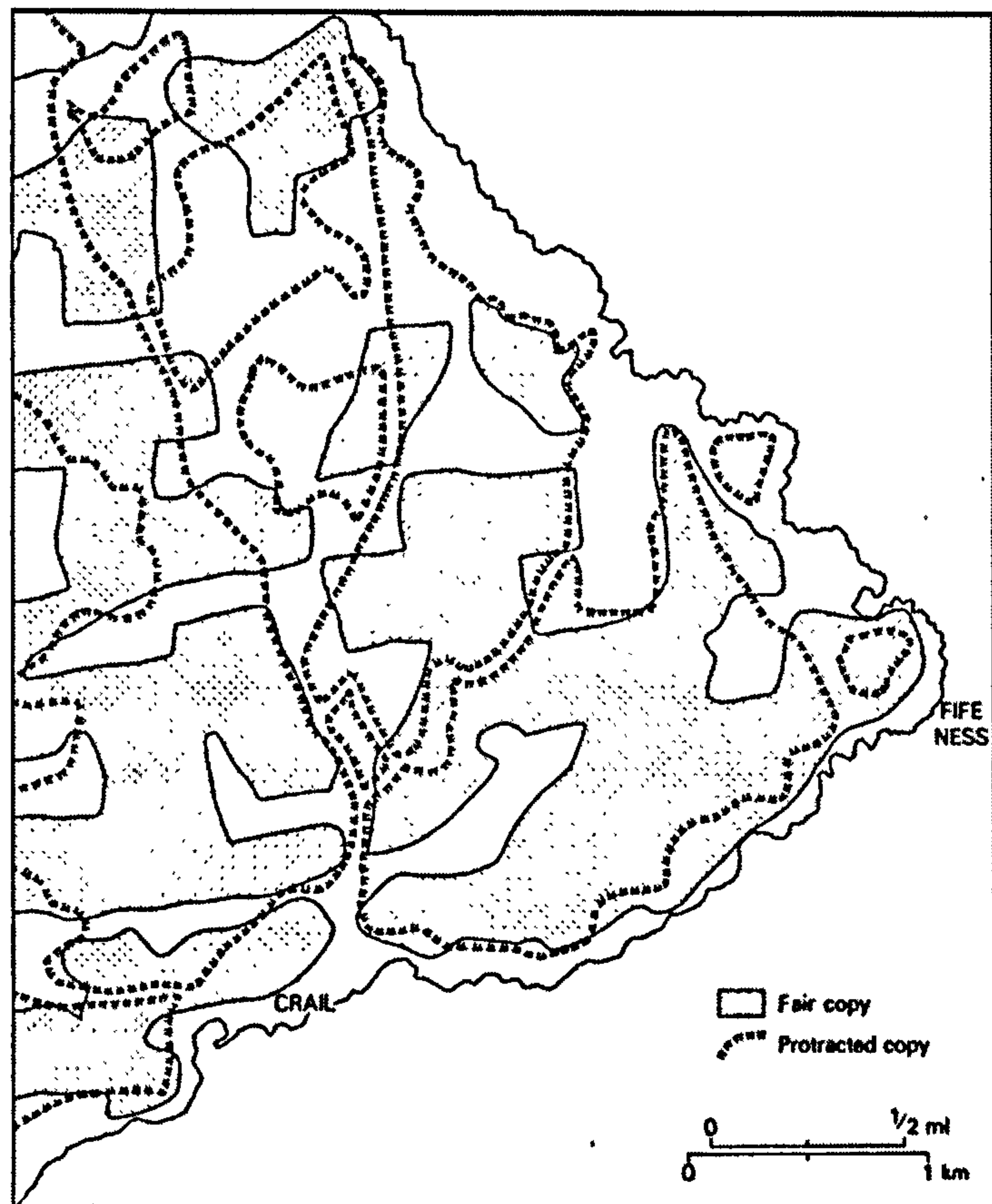


Figure 5.3: Comparison of agricultural land shown on the Fair and Protracted copies of the Roy Map for the East Neuk of Fife demonstrating a major discrepancy between the two versions (after Whittington 1986c: 69, figure 10).



have referred to this form of settlement as the *clachan* (e.g., Fairhurst 1960; Gailey 1962a), I agree with others that this term refers specifically to settlement associated with a church (Laing 1969: 73). In this thesis I will use the more general term for a farming township, *baile* (Gaelic, pl. *bailtean*), which is a more widespread element of place names in the study areas than *clachan*. The term *baile* carries the connotation that the settlement in question was organised as a joint-tenancy farm.

The uniform size of the *bailtean* depicted, together with the conclusions of the detailed studies of the Roy Map discussed above, suggest that these amorphous clusters are symbolic representations. Work on the Argyll sections of the Roy Map has suggested, however, that the survey was at least sensitive to regional variation in settlement size (Gailey 1961: 258; 1962a: 159-160). There is a general increase in settlement size from southern to northern Argyll related to the spread of Improvement from south to north, allowing a greater increase of population in the north before Improvement (Gailey 1962a: 158-159).

The morphology of settlement on the Roy Map, and the few distinctive features depicted, like kailyards, are probably reliable in giving a general impression of the nature of the *bailtean*. Such settlements that survive, all of which are deserted, are few in the study areas, but compare well with the map. The oldest of these archaeological examples probably dates to the mid-eighteenth century at earliest. However, comparison with the archaeology of the surrounding area and with other cartographic data suggests that these surviving *bailtean* are of a type that was common in the region, probably from the late Medieval period.

Archaeological remains of the *bailtean* depicted on the Roy Map are almost non-existent in Kintyre. This is probably largely the result of later intensive farming practices, the re-use of stone from the settlements in dyke construction, and forestry plantation. The first two of these factors will be discussed in more detail below. There is only one site that can be assigned to this group with any degree of confidence, and one other probable, both of which are to be found on the Mull of Kintyre in the far south west of the peninsula. The latter of the two sites is Feorlan, where a series of structures survive as low turf and stone banks. These structures form an amorphous cluster. The other site, Balmavicar (see RCAHMS 1971: 192-196), is better preserved and, as such, I will focus on it here (figure 5.4; plate 5.1).



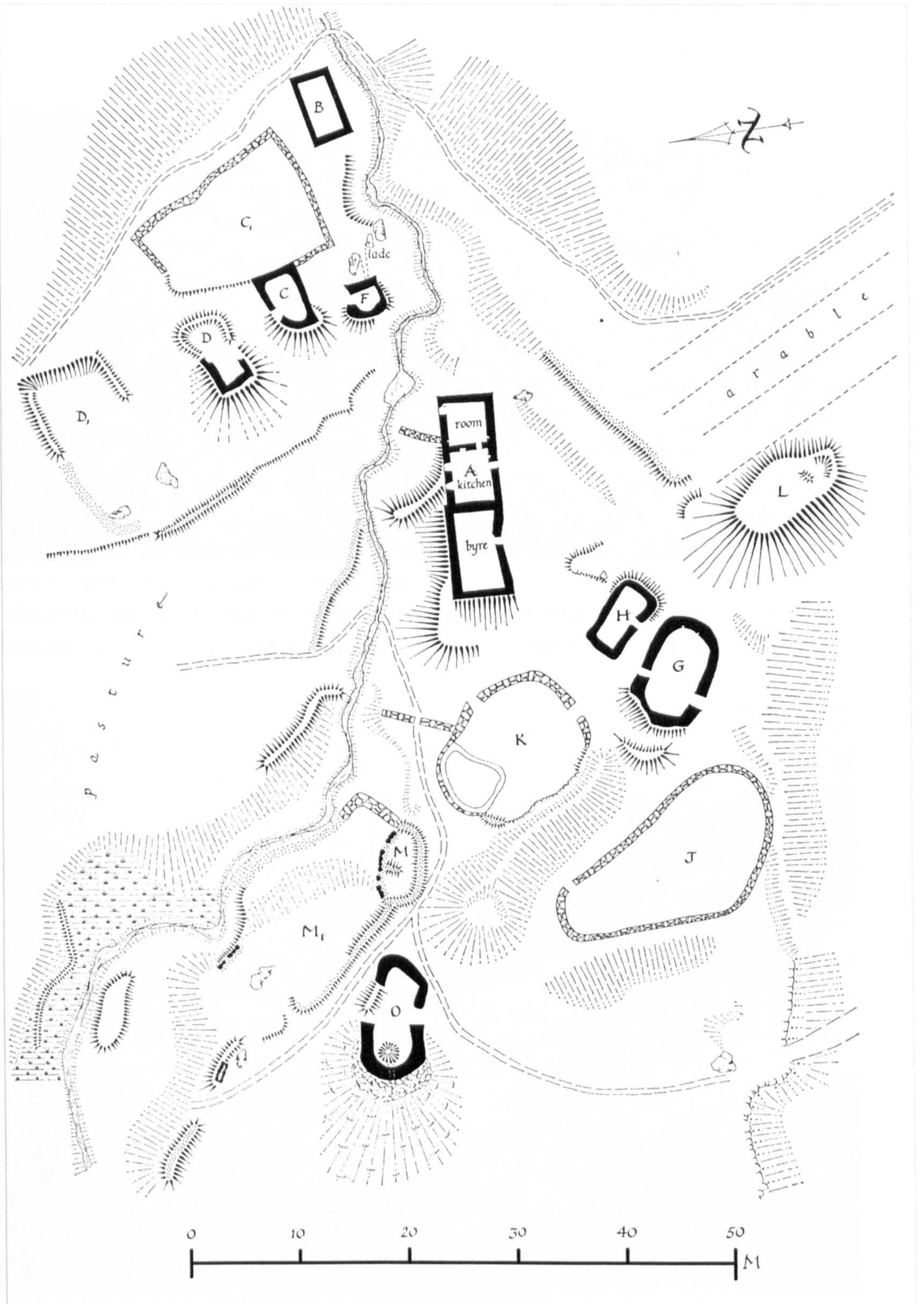


Figure 5.4: The *baile* and later range farmstead at Balmavicar on the Mull of Kintyre (after RCAHMS 1971: 193, figure 182).





Plate 5.1: Settlement remains at Balmavicar, Kintyre, looking southwest towards the Atlantic. Structure A is in the left foreground, structures G and H sit above it and structure M is in the centre right of the picture (photo: C. Dalglish)



Plate 5.2: Head dyke at Balmavicar, Kintyre, looking north. The dyke can be seen winding its way from the bottom of the picture, just left of centre. The settlement sits downslope of the dyke, just off the left of the picture (photo: C. Dalglish).



Balmavicar is one of a group referred to by Gailey as the Innean settlements (Gailey 1961: 85). His term derives from a Gaelic place name element common to many of the group and meaning cleft, as in *Innean Còig Cailleiche* ('Cleft of the five old women', Gailey 1960: 102). These deserted settlements are to be found along the west coast of the Mull of Kintyre, situated in the occasional large hollows that cut into the high moor ground along that coast and overlooking the Atlantic cliffs of the Mull. The settlements and their immediate environs are thus in the few sheltered locations within an exposed landscape.

At Balmavicar, discounting structures A and B, which are almost certainly of later construction than the rest or at least heavily modified, there are eight surviving structures that probably belong to the pre-Improvement *baile*. The largest buildings, G and O, are 10.7m by 6.7m and 12m by 5.5m respectively, sub-oval, and have opposed entrances (RCAHMS 1971: 194). The opposed doors, allowing a through draft, suggest that these were threshing barns. That O was a barn is suggested by the presence of a corn-drying kiln in its western end. It is possible that G was a dwelling, with a byre outshot to the west (RCAHMS 1971: 194). Structure F is the remains of a horizontal mill (RCAHMS 1971: 194). Traces of the lade can still be seen leading up to the structure. The uses of structures C, D, H, L, and M are less clear, with no diagnostic features. Some at least must have been dwellings and others were possibly outhouses. The Royal Commission have suggested that C, D, and H were outbuildings, although their reasons are not given (RCAHMS 1971: 194).

Associated with the buildings are several small enclosures, C<sub>1</sub>, D<sub>1</sub>, J, K, and M<sub>1</sub>, whose use is unclear. Presumably they were kailyards, stock enclosures, or stack yards, as suggested for those depicted on the Roy Map.

The arrangement of the buildings and small enclosures at Balmavicar is random in terms of the plan view. They are placed in accordance with the topography of the site, on some of the few level or near level areas in the restricted space of the steep-sided cleft. The area over which the buildings are spread is some 95m by 50m. They are closely, but not restrictively situated.

The structures and enclosures at Balmavicar, and those of the other Innean settlements that were presumably similar, probably date to the late pre-Improvement period in this particular area of Kintyre. Their abandonment in the late-eighteenth and early-



nineteenth centuries is fairly certain. Some of these settlements appear as occupied on the Roy Map, but are omitted from censuses of the Argyll Estates (on which they stood) in 1779 and 1792 (Gailey 1960: 104). Others that survived into the nineteenth century were abandoned as permanent sites in 1816, and had disappeared by 1818, with the conversion of the Mull into a permanent, large sheep-walk (Gailey 1961:85). Balmavicar itself is listed as uninhabited on the 1779 census, and so was presumably out of use as a township by that time (Cregeen 1963: 115). This means that the pre-Improvement structures at Balmavicar are probably contemporary with the Roy Map.

The excavated sites of Easter Raitts, in Badenoch (Lelong and Wood 2000) and Rosal, Strathnaver (Fairhurst 1968) have a similar morphology, suggesting that the form is to be found throughout the Highlands in the pre-Improvement period (figure 5.5). Both of these sites date to the immediate pre-Clearance period.

Archaeological examples of this type of settlement in Kintyre may be few, but the widespread distribution of *bailtean* suggested by the Roy Map is confirmed by a series of estate plans. Most useful of the available estate surveys for the area are a series of plans by George and Alex Langlands surveyed between 1777 and 1806. These plans depict settlement and landscape on several of the small Kintyre estates that bordered the Duke of Argyll's lands. Undoubtedly, suitable plans of the Argyll Estates exist within their archives, but access to those archives was not permitted for this study.

George Langlands surveyed Knocknahall, adjacent to the house and policies of Charles McNeill of Kilchrist, its proprietor, in 1777 (ABDA DR3/21; ownership information from Timperley (ed.) 1976: 30). The plan shows eleven separate structures in an amorphous cluster (figure 5.6). One of these is indicated as a mill, the uses of the others are unknown. The structures are associated with a series of small enclosures, and are situated amongst a system of much larger enclosed fields forming the estate policies. Other similar settlements are shown on the plans of the Largie estate surveyed by George Langlands in 1790 (ABDA DR4/9/109). The Largie estate of 1790 must represent a new property based on the older MacDonald of Largie estate, or the expansion of that estate, as the lands surveyed by Langlands had various different owners forty years previously (compare ABDA DR4/9/109 with Timperley (ed.) 1976: 37-38). The *bailtean* depicted vary in size from three to six structures and are almost without exception associated with the type of small enclosure depicted on the Roy Map and seen at Balmavicar.



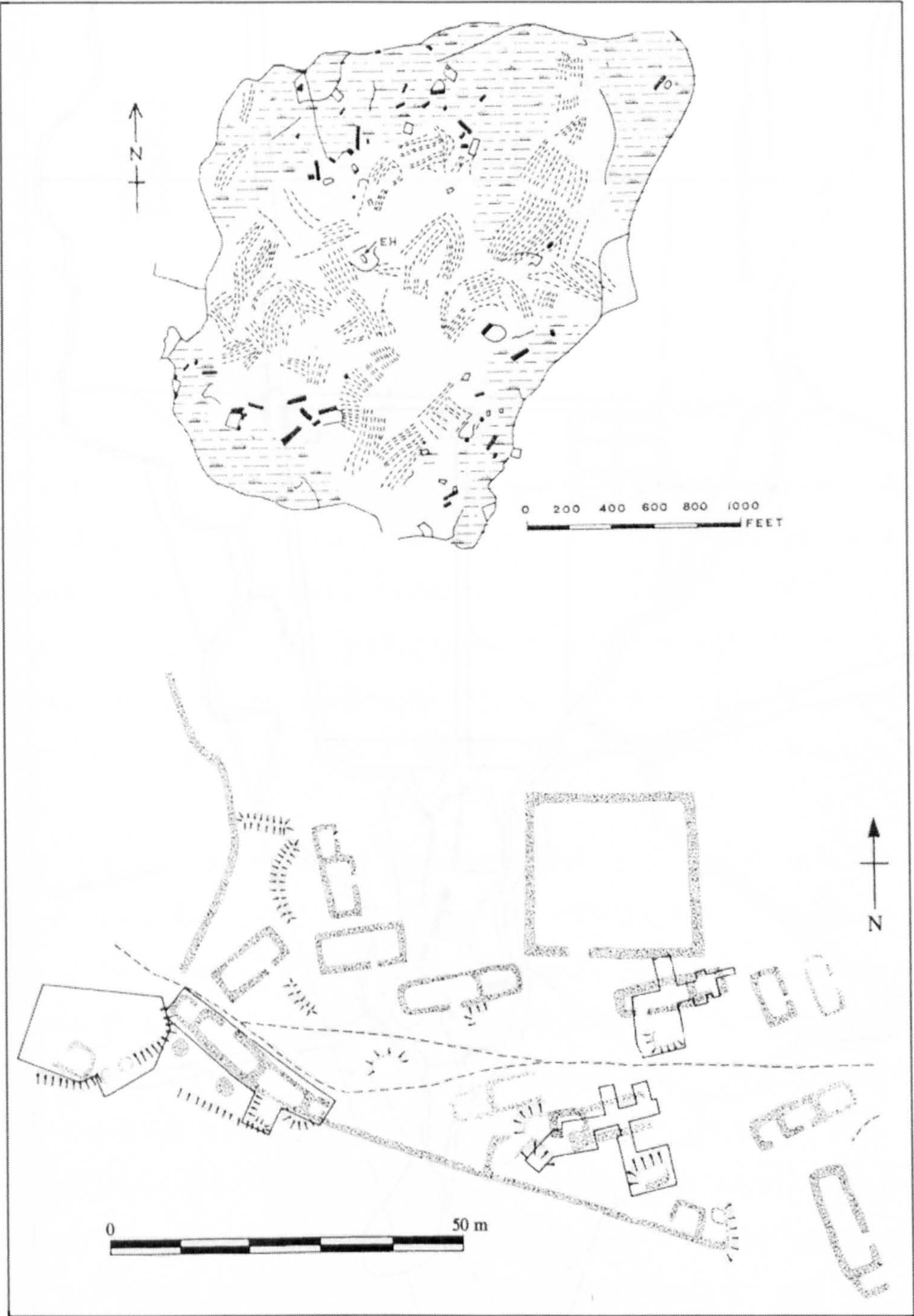


Figure 5.5: The *bailtean* at Rosal, Strathnaver (top) and Easter Raitts, Badenoch (after Fairhurst 1968: 138, figure 3; Lelong and Wood 2000: 44, figure 2, respectively). Both of these pre-Improvement settlements from further north in the Highlands are similar to those of Kintyre and Kilfinan in having amorphous and nucleated layouts.



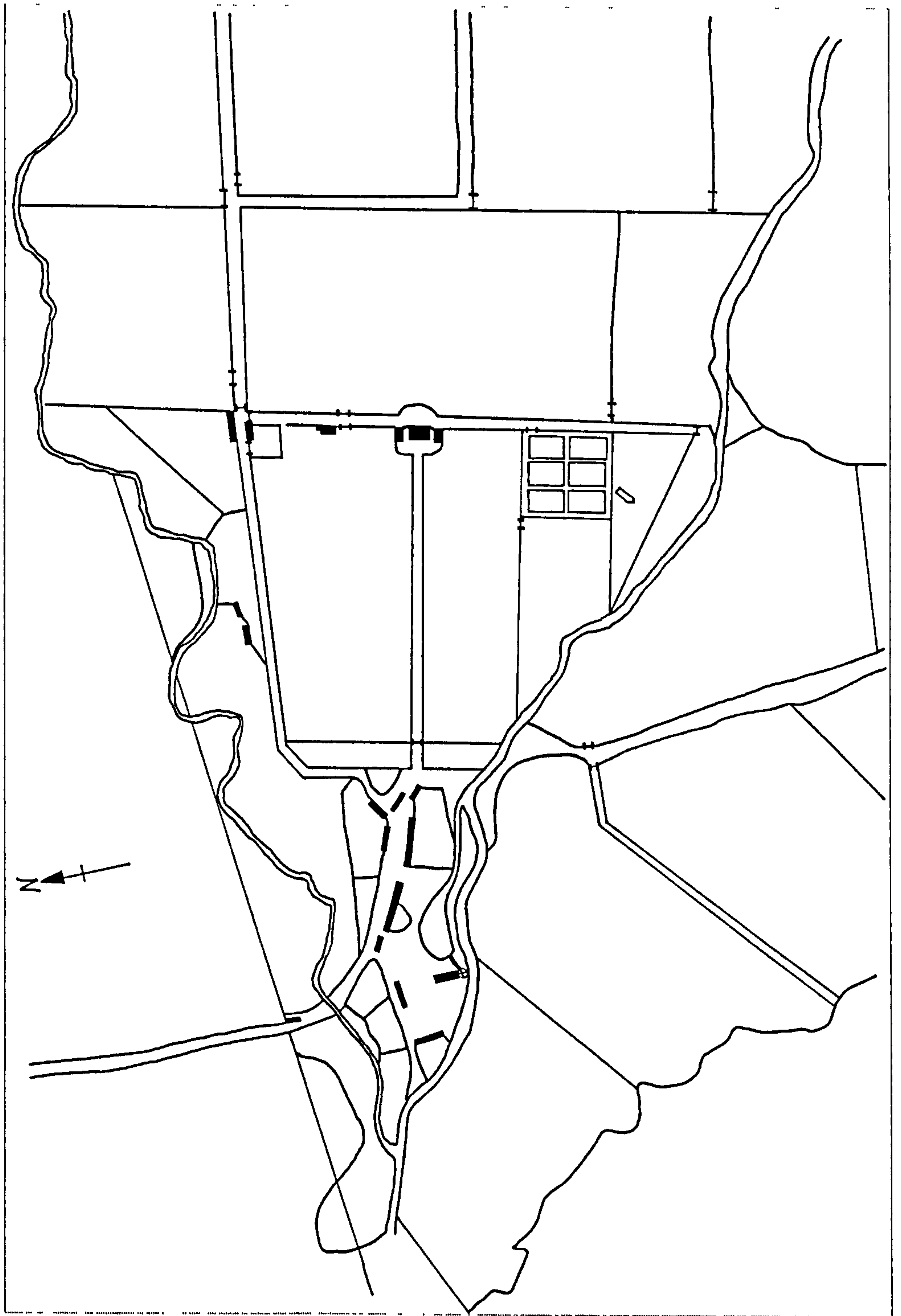


Figure 5.6: The house and policies of Kilchrist with the township of Knocknahall as surveyed by George Langlands in 1777 (redrawn from ABDA DR3/21). The amorphous, nucleated settlement of Knocknahall, towards the Bottom of the picture, sits on the edge of the enclosed policies of Kilchrist.



On these plans, we are seeing settlement at a time when Improvement was already substantially underway. Nearly all the settlements shown are situated within systems of enclosed fields and appear to exist alongside Improved forms of settlement (see below). However, it is reasonable to suggest that the settlements shown represent a pre-Improvement form, which with hindsight was on its way out at the time of the surveys. Some of these *bailtean* seem already to have been deserted by the time of survey, depicted as they are in outline and not as solid rectangles (e.g., Culfuair and Laigh Runaheuran on the Largie Estate, ABDA DR4/4/8).

In Kilfinan, surviving amorphous settlement sites are more numerous than in Kintyre, with examples at Ardgaddan South, Ardgaddan North, Ascog and Craignafeoch (figure 5.7). The greater survival of this settlement form in Kilfinan is related to their later date of use, with structures in all the examples named above shown as roofed (that is, as solid rectangles) on the first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of the mid-nineteenth century. These sites are not strictly pre-Improvement as they formed part of an Improved landscape and farming regime, as will be seen in detail in chapter eight. In terms of routine farming practice they should be distinguished from the *bailtean*, but this distinction is a blurred one.

The settlements shown on the Kintyre estate plans, as discussed above, also belong to a landscape in part Improved. However, it is clear from the plans that intensive Improvement was a recent phenomenon. Whether the amorphous settlements discussed were joint-tenancy farms is unclear. However, this is possible for the Kintyre plans, where it was certainly not the case for the surviving Kilfinan settlements (see chapter 8 below).

The distinction to be drawn here is one between the different routine practices associated with these settlements, and, as such, I will reserve detailed discussion of the Kilfinan amorphous settlements to chapter eight. It is enough to suggest here that the existence of amorphous settlement in this later context makes it likely, taken with the diagrammatic depictions of settlement on the Roy map, that this was the usual pre-Improvement settlement form in Kilfinan.

The antiquity of the *baile* in the Highlands is uncertain, which is unsurprising considering the dearth of knowledge on Medieval settlement as a whole (see chapter 2 above). However, some recent work allows a late Medieval date of origin to be suggested.



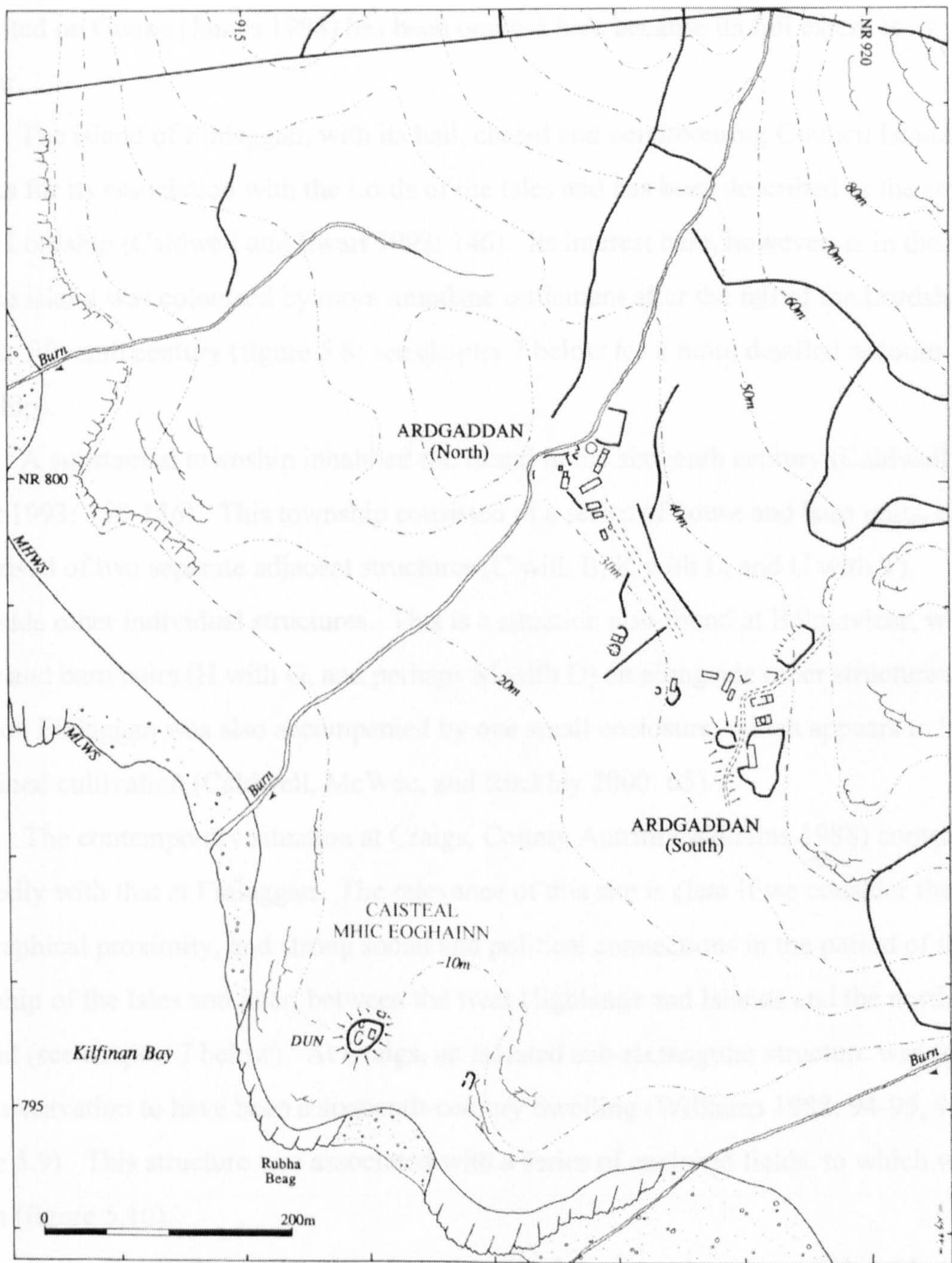


Figure 5.7: Settlement remains at Ardgadden North and South (illustration courtesy of Dr. S.T. Driscoll, Dept. of Archeaology, University of Glasgow). North to top of page. This settlement has two closely spaced foci.



Several contrasting and recently surveyed and excavated sites are relevant here, primarily those of Finlaggan on Islay and Craigs in County Antrim (Caldwell and Ewart 1993; Caldwell, McWee, and Ruckley 2000; Williams 1988). The late Medieval settlement excavated on Gunna (James 1998) has been omitted here because its full extent is as yet unclear.

The island of Finlaggan, with its hall, chapel and neighbouring Council Island, is famous for its association with the Lords of the Isles and has been described as the centre of the Lordship (Caldwell and Ewart 1993: 146). Its interest here, however, is in the fact that the island was colonised by more mundane settlement after the fall of the Lordship in the late fifteenth century (figure 5.8; see chapter 7 below for a more detailed account of the Lordship).

A substantial township inhabited the island in the sixteenth century (Caldwell and Ewart 1993: 155-156). This township consisted of a series of house and barn units, each comprised of two separate adjacent structures (C with B, K with L, and U with T), alongside other individual structures. This is a situation also found at Balmavicar, where house and barn pairs (H with G, and perhaps M with O) sit alongside other structures. The *baile* on Finlaggan was also accompanied by one small enclosure, which appears to have contained cultivation (Caldwell, McWee, and Ruckley 2000: 65).

The contemporary situation at Craigs, County Antrim (Williams 1988) contrasts markedly with that at Finlaggan. The relevance of this site is clear if we consider the geographical proximity, and strong social and political connections in the period of the Lordship of the Isles and later, between the west Highlands and Islands and the north of Ireland (see chapter 7 below). At Craigs, an isolated sub-rectangular structure was found upon excavation to have been a sixteenth-century dwelling (Williams 1988: 94-95, 97-99; figure 5.9). This structure was associated with a series of enclosed fields, to which we will return (figure 5.10).

In the sixteenth century, then, in two areas close not only in geographical but also in political and social terms we have two significantly contrasting forms of rural settlement. What is of interest is the possibility that the type of isolated settlement found at Craigs was once widespread in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and that the *baile* form of settlement found at Finlaggan was relatively new at the time.

Robert Dodgshon has recently questioned the assumption that the origins of the





Figure 5.8: The sixteenth century *baile* at Finlaggan (after Caldwell, McWee, and Ruckley 2000: 66, figure 3). This early example of a *Baile* succeeded the administrative centre of the Lordship of the Isles on the island.



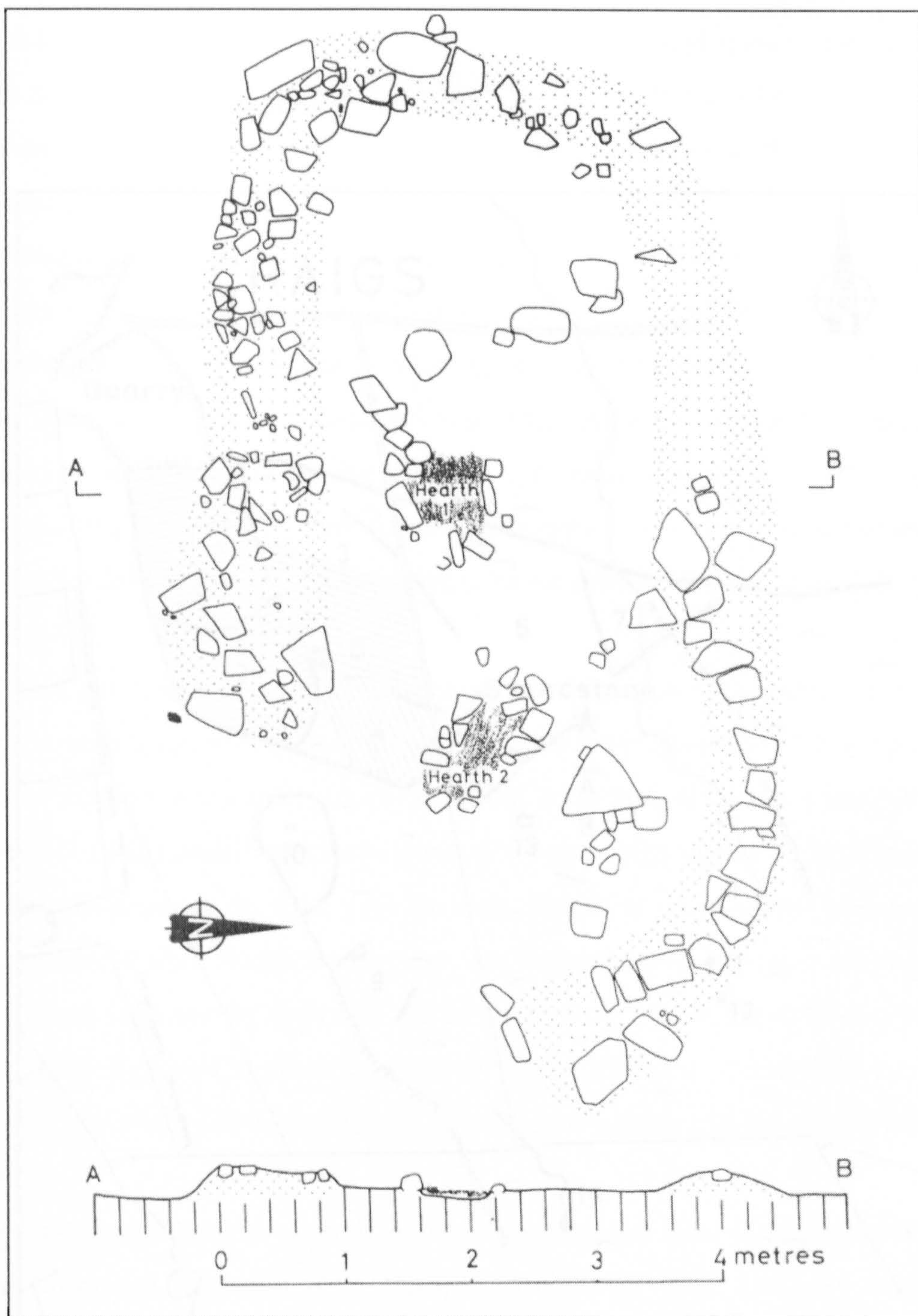


Figure 5.9: The isolated sixteenth century structure at Craigs, County Antrim (after Williams 1988: 98, figure 5).



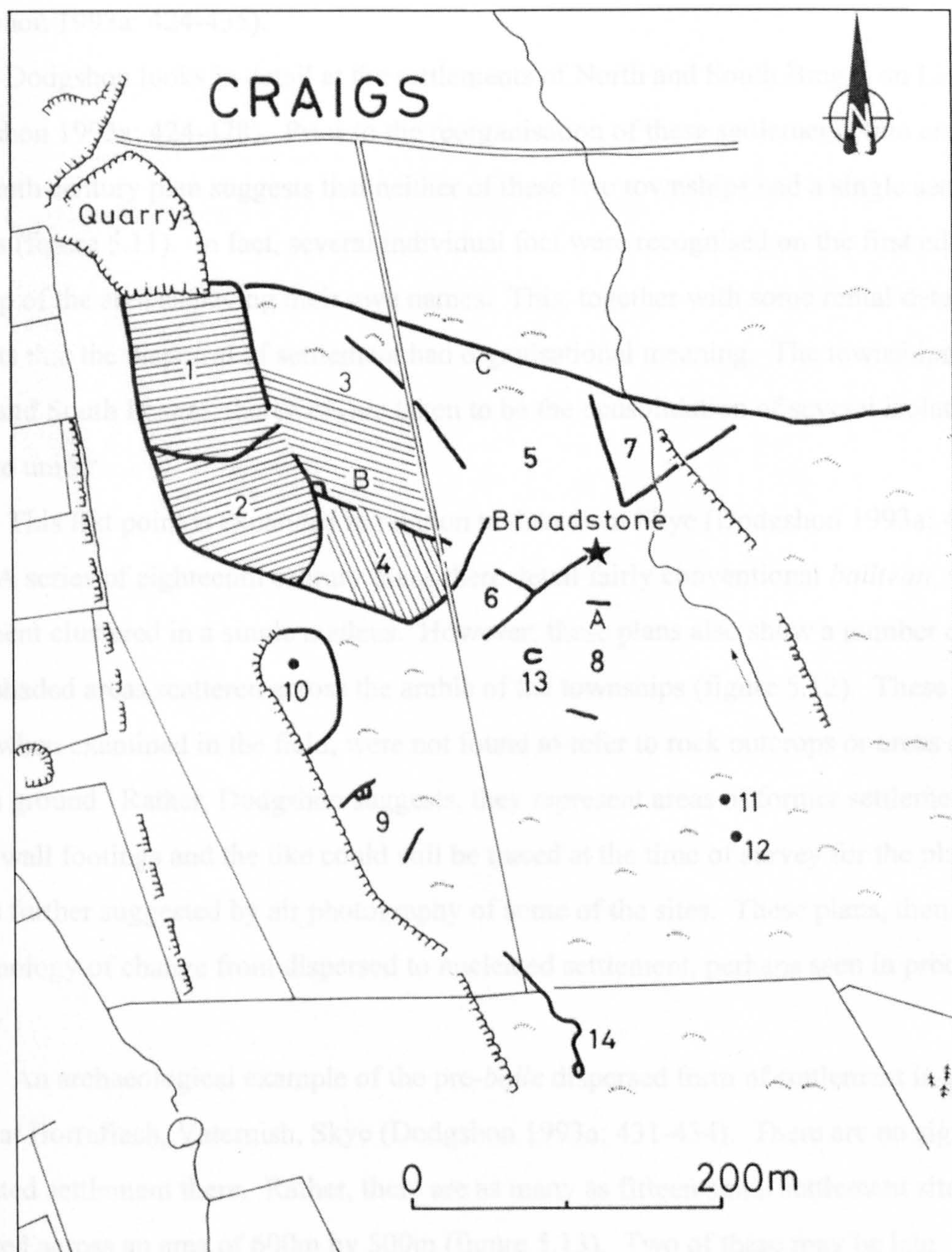


Figure 5.10: Dispersed settlement and enclosed field system at Craigs, County Antrim (after Williams 1988: 92, figure 1). 1-9 = enclosed fields; 10 = (?) Early Christian period roundhouse and enclosure; 11-12 = cairns; 13 = late Medieval dwelling (excavated); 14 = enclosure and (?) house footing.



*baile* lay beyond the Medieval period, in late prehistory (Dodgshon 1993a). Focusing on Lewis and Skye in particular, Dodgshon argues that the nucleated *bailtean* were preceded by more dispersed forms of settlement, the shift between the two probably taking place from some time in the late Medieval period, between the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries (Dodgshon 1993a: 424-435).

Dodgshon looks in detail at the settlements of North and South Bragar on Lewis (Dodgshon 1993a: 424-428). Prior to the reorganisation of these settlements into crofts, a nineteenth century plan suggests that neither of these two townships had a single settlement nucleus (figure 5.11). In fact, several individual foci were recognised on the first edition OS map of the area as having their own names. This, together with some rental data, suggests that the dispersal of settlement had organisational meaning. The townships of North and South Bragar, therefore, are taken to be the consolidation of several isolated and separate units.

This last point is expanded in relation to data from Skye (Dodgshon 1993a: 428-434). A series of eighteenth century plans there detail fairly conventional *bailtean*, with settlement clustered in a single nucleus. However, these plans also show a number of small shaded areas scattered across the arable of the townships (figure 5.12). These shaded areas, when examined in the field, were not found to refer to rock outcrops or areas of broken ground. Rather, Dodgshon suggests, they represent areas of former settlement where wall footings and the like could still be traced at the time of survey for the plans. This is further suggested by air photography of some of the sites. These plans, then, hint at a chronology of change from dispersed to nucleated settlement, perhaps seen in process at Bragar.

An archaeological example of the pre-*baile* dispersed form of settlement is to be found at Borrafiach, Vaternish, Skye (Dodgshon 1993a: 431-434). There are no signs of nucleated settlement there. Rather, there are as many as fifteen small settlement sites scattered across an area of 600m by 500m (figure 5.13). Two of these may be late eighteenth or nineteenth century in date, but the rest appear to be of early eighteenth century or earlier date. When it is added that these dispersed settlement foci occur in association with an enclosed field system, the similarity to Craigs is obvious.

The *baile*, then, may have its origins in the late medieval period in the west Highlands and Islands (and the north of Ireland) and may have replaced a pattern of



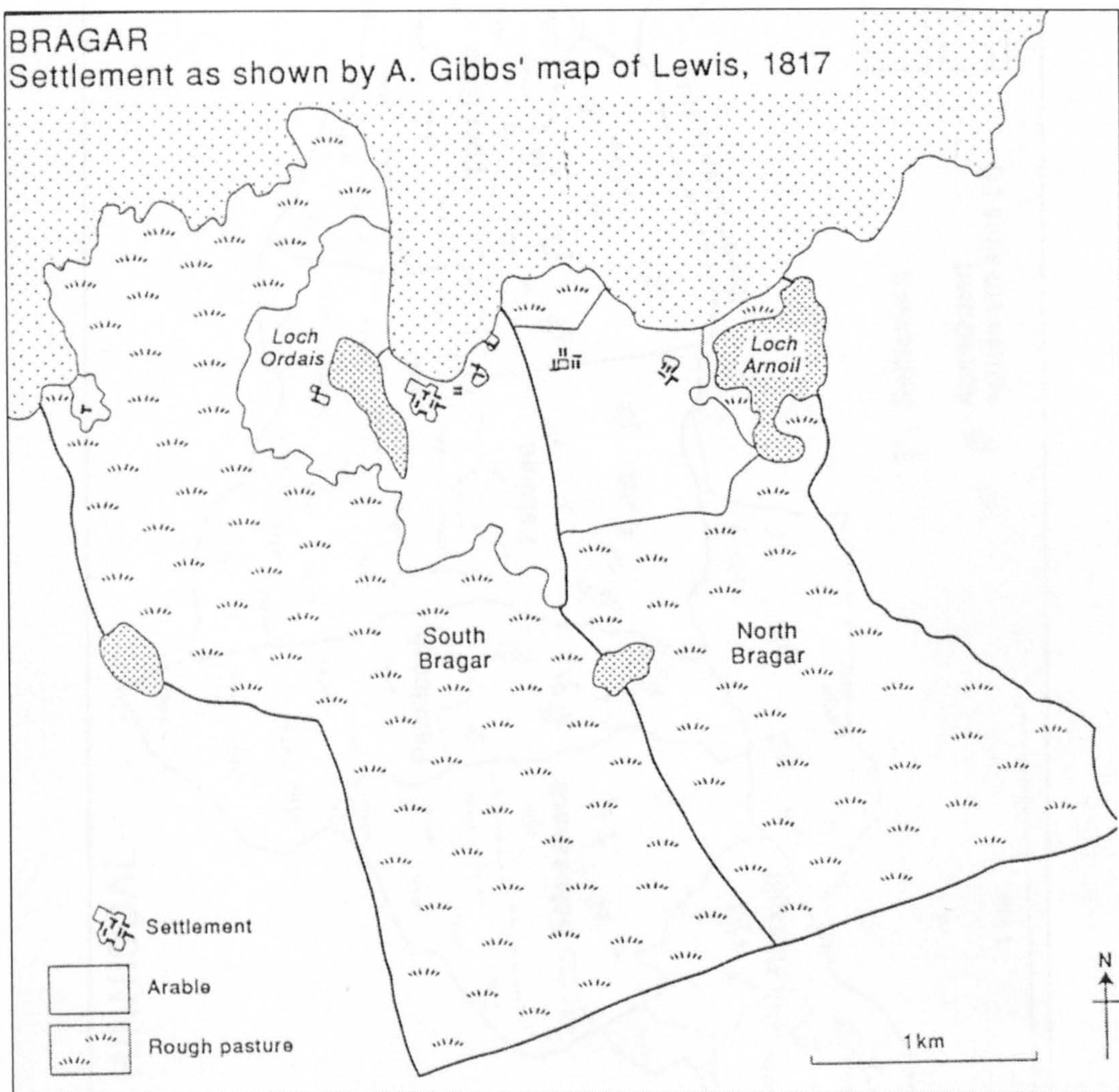


Figure 5.11: Settlement at Bragar, Lewis in the early nineteenth century (after Dodgshon 1993: 425, Illus.1). Note that both North and South Bragar have several settlement foci.



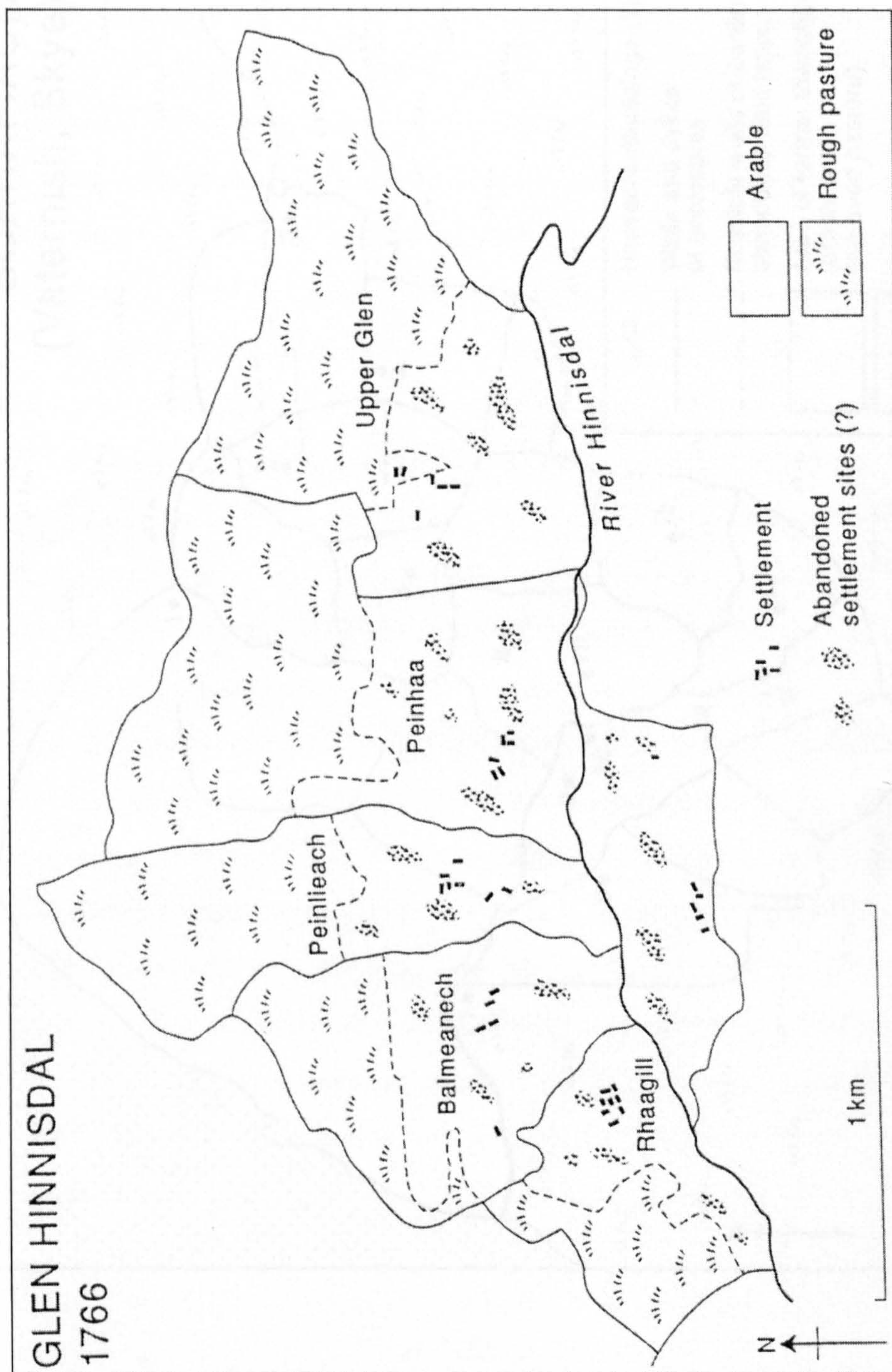


Figure 5.12: Evidence of abandoned dispersed settlement on an eighteenth century estate plan of Glen Hinnisdal, Skye (after Dodgshon 1993: 432, illustration 5). The shaded areas surrounding the settlement clusters are possible former settlement sites.



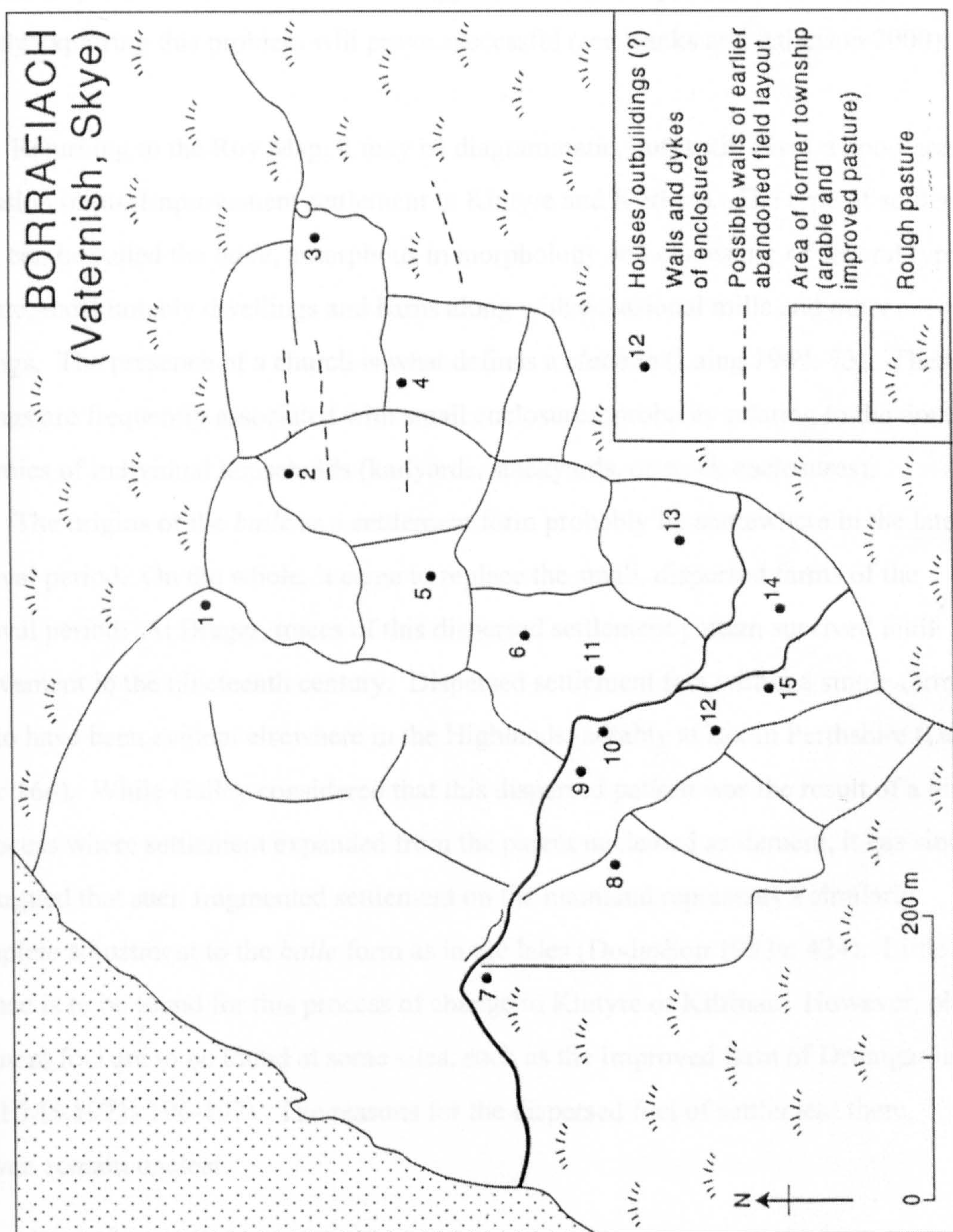


Figure 5.13: Dispersed settlement and enclosed field system at Borrafiach, Vaternish, Skye (after Dodghson 1993: 433, Illus.6).



dispersed settlement as the dominant settlement form. Admittedly the evidence for this process is as yet limited, but it is at least suggestive. Hopefully, detailed fieldwork currently exploring this problem will prove successful (see Banks and Atkinson 2000).

Returning to the Roy Map, it may be diagrammatic, but it still gives a good general impression of pre-Improvement settlement in Kintyre and Kilfinan. The type of settlement shown can be called the *baile*, amorphous in morphology and consisting of several types of structure, most notably dwellings and barns along with occasional mills and other buildings. The presence of a church is what defines a *clachan* (Laing 1969: 73). These buildings are frequently associated with small enclosures, probably relating to the domestic economies of individual households (kailyards, stackyards, or stock enclosures).

The origins of the *baile* as a settlement form probably lie somewhere in the late Medieval period. On the whole, it came to replace the small, dispersed farms of the Medieval period. At Bragar, traces of this dispersed settlement pattern survived until Improvement in the nineteenth century. Dispersed settlement foci within a single farm also seem to have been evident elsewhere in the Highlands, notably at Lix in Perthshire (Gailey 1962a: 164). While Gailey considered that this dispersed pattern was the result of a hiving off process where settlement expanded from the parent nucleated settlement, it has since been argued that such fragmented settlement on the mainland represents a similarly incomplete adjustment to the *baile* form as in the Isles (Dodgshon 1993a: 424). Little evidence is to be found for this process of change in Kintyre or Kilfinan. However, plural settlement foci are to be found at some sites, such as the Improved farm of Drumgarve (RCAHMS 1971: 196-197). The reasons for the dispersed foci of settlement there, however, remain unclear.

## Landscape

As we have seen, the depiction of landscape on the Roy Map is similarly diagrammatic to the depiction of settlement. The direction of rig and the precise extent of cultivated land may be questioned, for example. As with settlement, however, the Map does give a good general impression of some aspects of the pre-Improvement landscape that conforms to surviving archaeological data from the study areas, and with the situation in neighbouring regions. More than this, the Roy Map seems to depict a pattern of



incipient enclosure in Kintyre that may be taken as representative, conforming as it does to the pattern of landownership associated with early Improvement. The Roy Map may, in this instance, be a valuable source in understanding the *specific* dynamics of Improvement in one of the case study areas. By contrast, though, the Map seems to completely ignore the pattern of transhumance settlement (shieling) that we know from other sources to have existed in the areas in question. Its usefulness, therefore, seems to be confined to low-lying areas of settlement and agriculture.

On the Roy Map, the landscape immediate to the *bailtean* in both Kintyre and Kilfinan is characterised by a pattern of unenclosed cultivated fields. These are indicated with parallel hatching running in different directions, with adjacent patches often running at right angles. This hatching is presumably a diagrammatic depiction of rig and furrow cultivation. These areas of cultivation focus on the *bailtean*, although they are often interrupted by what appear to be boggy areas. As with Aros Moss, in the west of the Laggan in Kintyre, the boggy zone can be extensive. Above the boggy and cultivated zones the hillsides appear as completely open.

Archaeological indications of the openfield system suggested on the Roy Map are limited in the study areas. Again widespread forestry and more recent and intensive farming practices are probably the major factors. Most of the relevant archaeological landscapes are, as for settlement, confined to the Mull of Kintyre.

On the Mull, stretches of earthen dyke run above known or probable settlement sites, notably at Balmavicar (plate 5.2), Creagan Fithich, Innean Coig Cailleiche, Ballygroggan, and along either side of Borgadale Glen. I will argue below that some later enclosed field systems in both Kilfinan and Kintyre reused these earlier dykes, one further significant reason why pre-Improvement landscapes are not readily archaeologically visible in the area.

Such earthen boundaries are usually referred to as head dykes (e.g., Dixon 1994: 34-35). The contemporary use of this term and the widespread existence of the boundary form is confirmed for Kintyre by an Act of Bailierie of 1672 where the “eating of moor grass without the head dyiks” was not to be covered by a penalty extracted for one township’s livestock eating the grass of another township (Act reproduced in Stewart 1992: 220). Although these head-dykes are generally not indicated on the relevant portions of the Roy Map, they do demonstrate the existence of the basic two-fold division of the landscape



suggested there. The head dyke separates a zone immediate to the *baile* from the wider expanse of the hillside. The head dyke divided the bulk of the arable from the pasture land (Gailey 1963: 107), a division suggested in broad terms by the zoning of arable around the *bailtean* on the Roy Map. In the southern and central Highlands in this period, most farms also practised less intensive cultivation on the outfield (Dodgshon 1993b: 685-688). Outfield arable may have been contained below the head dyke, or spread above it (Gailey 1963: 107-108). In cases, multiple parallel head dykes can be found where arable has at some time extended uphill (Gailey 1963: 107-108; an example of this is to be found on the Mull of Kintyre at NGR NR597115).

Occasionally, patches of unenclosed rig and furrow cultivation provide further indication of arable farming, as on the steep-sided southwest slopes of The Doune (plate 5.3).

There was one other form of linear boundary, the march dyke, common to the pre-Improvement landscape of the area. For the Argyll Estates in Kintyre at least, such physical boundaries between the lands of different townships seem to have been in place in the seventeenth century (Stewart 1992: 216, 220). However, march dykes between neighbouring farms were not universal until about 1800, when enclosure was well underway anyway (Gailey 1963: 107). Certainly, the marches of a farm might be defined in a variety of ways. In seventeenth century Kintyre for example, it was ordained that “march dykes be digged in all touns quhair it may be done and that march stones sheuchs and ditches be made and sett doun be the tenants” (Act of Bailierie 1672, reproduced in Stewart 1992: 220).

Head and march dykes, while forming significant boundaries within the pre-Improvement landscape and enclosing the arable of the farm, were associated with quite different routine practices from the enclosures proper of Improvement. These practices are something to which we will return below. The limited beginnings of enclosure, however, were established in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The Roy Map shows enclosure to be of limited extent and concentrated in the policies of the houses of landowners. Later estate plans also show enclosed policies as developed, sometimes forming a grid pattern of fields, as with the grounds of Kilchrist, seen above (ABDA DR3/21; figure 5.6). Interestingly, the Roy Map shows a concentration of estate policies in Cowal, not least in Kilfinan (Gailey 1963: 110-112). This may be





Plate 5.3: Rig and furrow on the Doune, Kintyre, looking northeast. Cultivation furrows can be seen running from left to right, above the modern fence (photo: C. DalGLISH).



Plate 5.4: Sheepfold at Balmavicar, Kintyre, looking northwest. This simple rectangular, drystone enclosure sits downslope (W) of the settlement, from where this picture was taken (photo: C. DalGLISH).



related to the strong commercial links between that area and the Clyde burghs (Gailey 1963: 110-112), something that will be explored in greater detail in chapter seven.

The early development of the Cowal policies, and something of their character, can be seen from a near contemporary account of Campbell-Lamont conflict during the Civil Wars of the mid-seventeenth century. At that time, Campbell of Achavoulin and Campbell of Evanachan “did cut doune and destroy the wholl planting in and about the . . . hous of Towart, orchzairds, parkis, and walkis thereof” (quoted in McKechnie 1938: 195). To a large extent, then, these policies consisted of ornamental enclosure (Gailey 1963: 112). As such, they can be distinguished to some extent from enclosure in the wider farming landscape.

The Roy Map does also suggest, however, that limited enclosure was evident in some areas of that wider landscape. Examples are confined to Kintyre and take two forms. First, on some farms there seems to be a greater elaboration of the small yard type of enclosure already discussed. Second, in one small area in the north of Kintyre we can see the extension of enclosure into the fields of the farm in a pattern that has lasted into the present.

Concentrated along the west coast of Kintyre and inland in the area from the Laggan south, the Roy Map depicts what appear to be small tree-lined enclosures associated with many settlements (figure 5.14). These are rectangular in form, number one per settlement where shown and appear to be not much bigger in size than the usual yards. The distribution of these tree-lined enclosures stops in the north in the vicinity of Largie and, concentrating as it does on the west coast and in the south they probably equate with the extent of the Duke of Argyll’s lands in Kintyre (see Timperley (ed.) 1976: 29-30, 35, 37-38, 42-43 for data on landholding in Kintyre contemporary with the Roy Map). This is interesting considering the coincidence of other early Improvements and the Argyll Estates (see below).

These tree-lined enclosures perhaps date as early as the seventeenth century. Certainly, an Act of Neighbourhood of 1653 suggests so (reproduced in Stewart 1992: 216-219). The purpose of the Act is laid out as a preamble. It was drawn up at Lochheid (later Campbeltown) on the tenth of June, 1653:

The quhilk day the Right honorable My lord Marqueis of Argyll, Earle of Kintyre



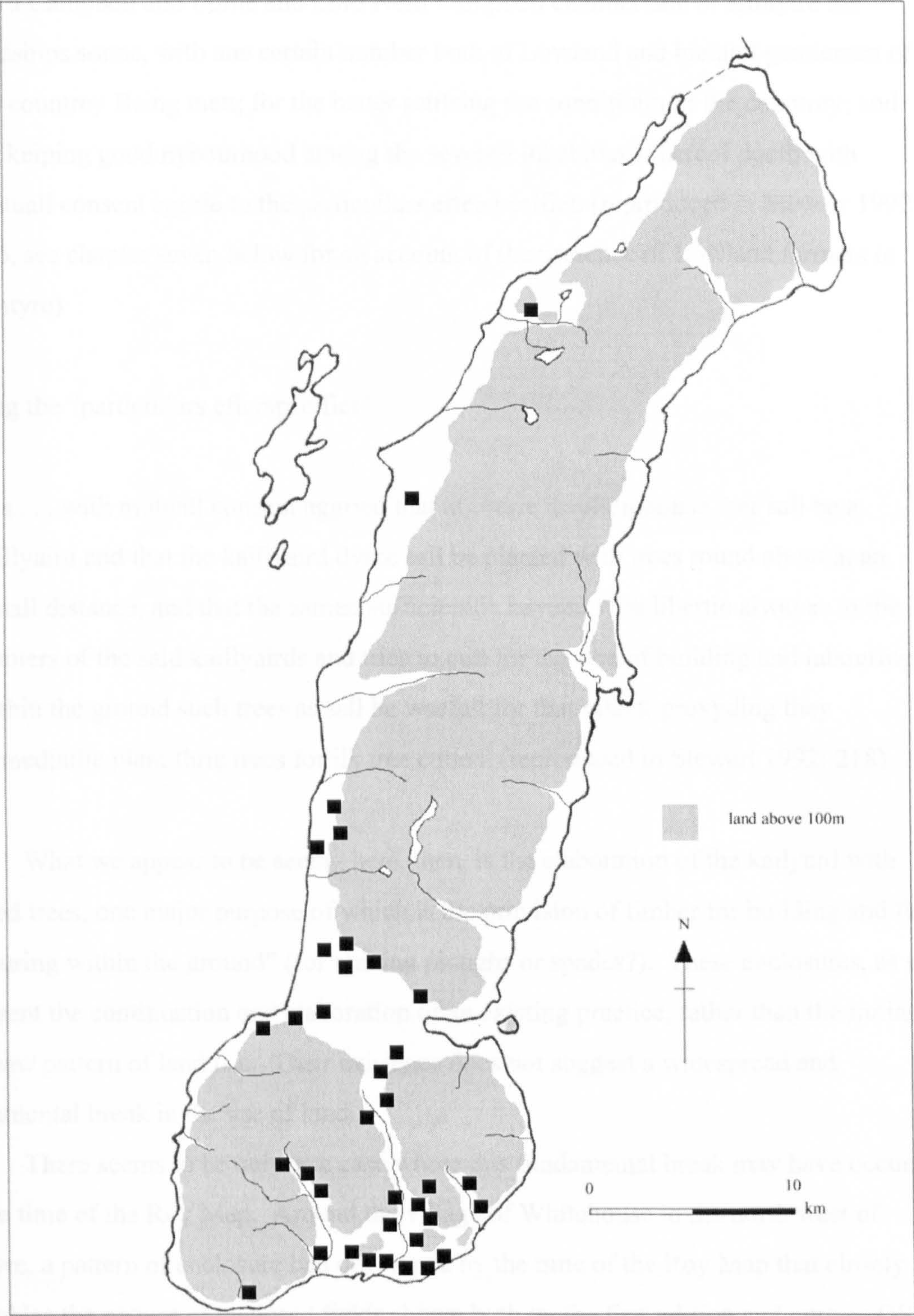


Figure 5.14: Distribution of tree-lined enclosures in Kintyre, as shown on the Roy Map of the mid eighteenth century (compare with the distribution of lands owned by the House of Argyll, figure 7.4).



Lord Campbell and Lorne and Lord Neill Campbell chalmerlane of Kintyre his lordships sonne, with ane certain number both of Lowland and hieland gentlemen of the countrey Being mett; for the better settleing the conditioun of the countrey; and for keiping good nybourhood among the severall inhabitants thereof doeth with mutuall consent aggrie to the particullars efterspecifiet. (reproduced in Stewart 1992: 216, see chapter seven below for an account of the presence of Lowland farmers in Kintyre)

Among the “particullars efterspecifiet”:

It is . . . with mutuall consent aggried that at everie dwellinghouse ther sall be a kaillyaird and that the kaillyaird dyke sall be planted with trees round about at an equall distance, and that the samen sufficientlie hayned with libertie alwayes to the planters of the said kaillyairds and tries to cutt for the wse of building and labouring within the ground such trees as sall be wsefull for that effect; provyding they immediatlíe plant thrie trees for ilk tree cutted. (reproduced in Stewart 1992: 218)

What we appear to be seeing here, then, is the elaboration of the kaillyard with planted trees, one major purpose of which is the provision of timber for building and for “labouring within the ground” (for making ploughs or spades?). These enclosures, as such, represent the continuation and elaboration of an existing practice, rather than the initiation of a new pattern of land use. Their existence does not suggest a widespread and fundamental break in the use of land.

There seems to be only one case where this fundamental break may have occurred by the time of the Roy Map. Around the village of Whitehouse in the north west of Kintyre, a pattern of enclosure had developed by the time of the Roy Map that closely resembles the pattern of enclosed fields shown both on the first edition and current OS maps of the locality (figure 5.15). This pattern of fields is grid-like, but the nature of construction of the eighteenth century boundaries is unknown. The farms bordering this enclosed land at the time of the Roy Map were on the estate of Archibald Campbell of Stonefield (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 35). Again, along with the Dukes of Argyll, the Campbells of Stonefield were known early Improvers (Gailey 1962a: 162-163).



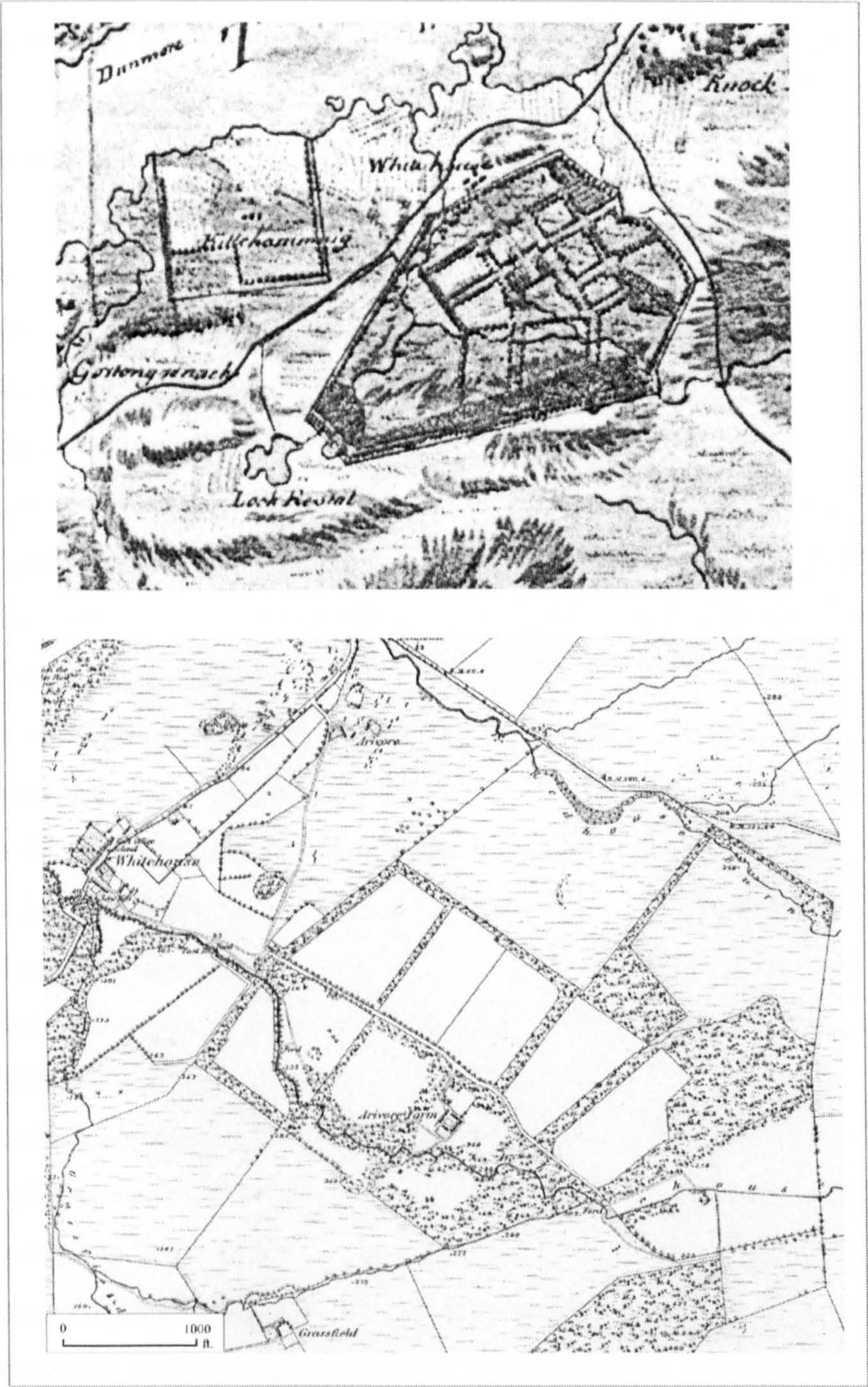


Figure 5.15: Enclosure at Whitehouse, Kintyre, as redrawn from the Roy Map of the mid eighteenth century (top) and the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey of the mid nineteenth century (bottom). North to top of page. The enclosure pattern current in the nineteenth century was in place by the mid eighteenth century.



The depiction of the pre-Improvement landscape immediately adjacent to areas of settlement on the Roy Map is, as for settlement, useful in gaining a general impression. Existing major physical boundaries do seem to have been omitted, however. Further, despite its usefulness in discussing the landscape immediate to areas of settlement, the Roy Map's worth as a source is questionable when we move to consider the landscape beyond the head dyke. The Map shows the hills as devoid of contemporary anthropogenic features, when there is much evidence to suggest that this was not in fact the case.

The most significant anthropogenic aspect of the landscape here were the shielings. These were the summer hill pastures of the *bailtean* (see, Gailey 1963: 106-107; and, most notably, Bil 1990). These pastures are indicated today by their associated settlement remains and greener surrounding vegetation, presumably a result of the concentration of livestock there over the years. They are found associated with watercourses in upland locations, which in Kintyre and Kilfinan means inland from the coast. Many of the extant shieling sites are within 1.5km of the nearest probable contemporary settlement locations, while some may have been 3km or more distant. In Kintyre in particular the distance from settlement to shieling is limited by the fact that the area is a narrow peninsula, reducing the distance into the upland that can be travelled. The survival of shieling settlements in Kilfinan is limited, being confined to Eas an Fhir-dhuibh. In Kintyre, they are more widespread and can be on a larger scale (e.g., Cressey 1996; Graham 1919: 82-98, 1920; Hood 1996; RCAHMS 1971: 197-200; SRC SMR 1993: 72).

Typically, shieling settlements are amorphous clusters echoing the morphology of the *bailtean* (Gailey 1963: 107). These clusters can be small, with nine structures at Gartavaich in Kintyre for example, or much larger, as at Talatoll, Kintyre, where there are some forty-three huts (RCAHMS 1971: 197, 200, respectively; figure 5.16). The shape, size and construction of the different huts can vary widely. Many are single-celled and constructed of stone and turf, while some might be of stone entirely or have more than one room (e.g., RCAHMS 1971: 197, 200). The differing form and construction of the individual huts may relate to functional and chronological difference (Atkinson 2000: 155). The dates of most of the structures at sites like Gartavaich and Talatoll are uncertain. One oval turf and stone structure excavated at Gartavaich was found to be associated with pottery of red fabric and green glaze (Graham 1920: 201). This pottery is reminiscent of East Coast Redwares, currently thought to date from the thirteenth to late



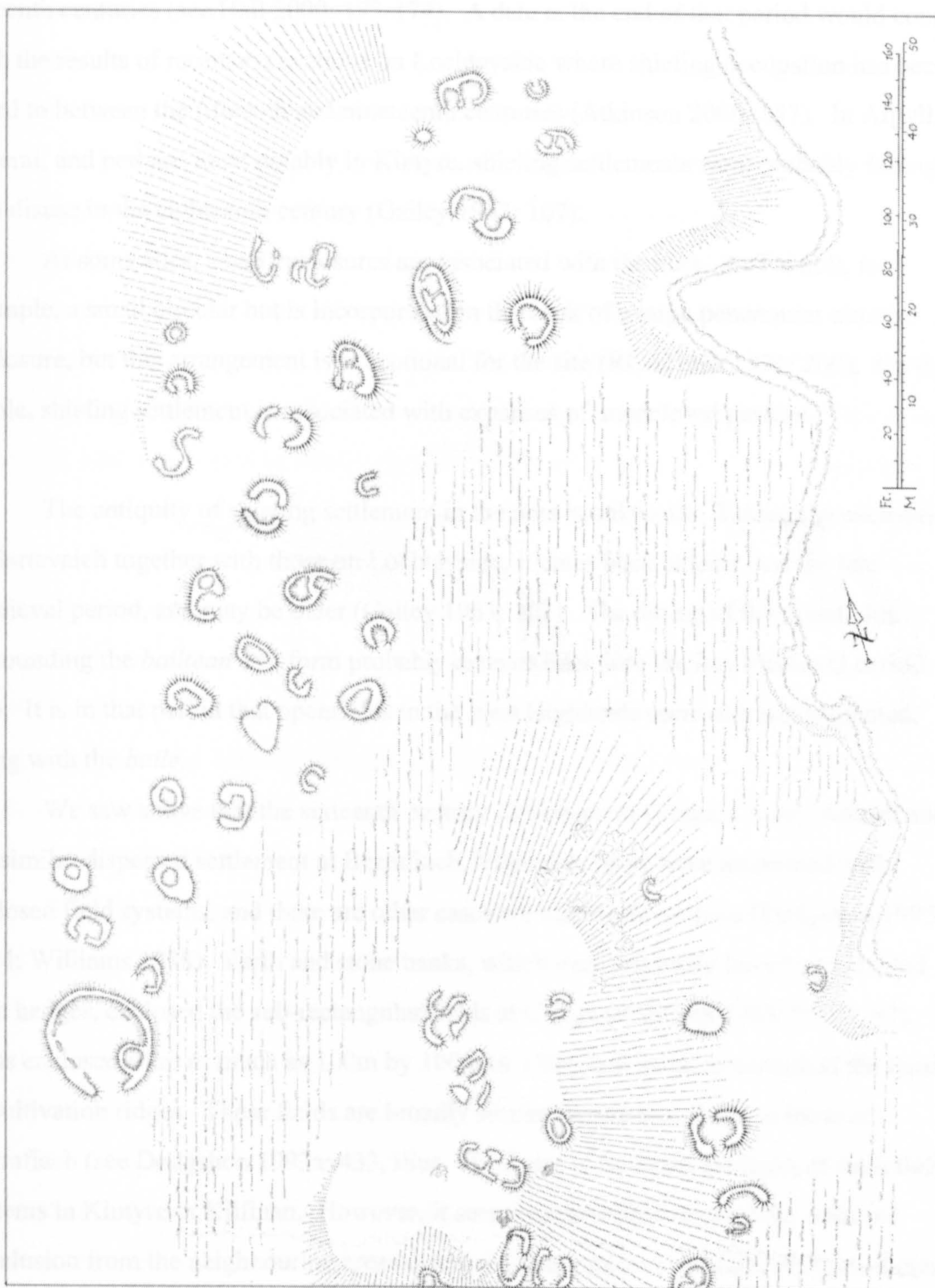


Figure 5.16: Part of the shieling group at Talatoll, Kintyre (after RCAHMS 1971: figure 190).



fifteenth centuries (see Hall 2000: 173-174). A date at the end of that period would concur with the results of recent excavations on Lochtayside where shieling occupation has been dated to between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries (Atkinson 2000: 157). In Argyll in general, and perhaps most notably in Kintyre, shieling settlements were probably falling into disuse in the eighteenth century (Gailey 1963: 107).

At some sites, small enclosures are associated with the huts. At Talatoll, for example, a small circular hut is incorporated in the bank of a large penannular circular enclosure, but this arrangement is exceptional for the site (RCAHMS 1971: 200). On the whole, shieling settlement is associated with expanses of unenclosed pasture.

The antiquity of shieling settlement in the area is unknown. Taking the excavations at Gartavaich together with those on Lochtayside, it dates back at least into the late Medieval period, and may be older (Gailey 1963: 107). The dating of the openfields surrounding the *bailtean* as a form probably extends back into the late Medieval period also. It is in that period that openfields in the west Highlands seem to have originated, along with the *baile*.

We saw above that the sixteenth century settlement at Craigs, County Antrim and the similar dispersed settlement at Borrafiach, Vaternish, Skye were associated with enclosed field systems, and there are other cases we might add to these (Dodgshon 1993a, 1994; Williams 1988). Earth and stone banks, which may originally have been planted with hedges, enclosed the sub-rectangular fields at Craigs (Williams 1988: 91-94, 97). The areas enclosed were as much as 100m by 100m or 150m and in cases contained the remains of cultivation ridges. These fields are broadly similar in size and shape to those at Borrafiach (see Dodgshon 1993a: 433, illus. 6). There is no direct evidence of such field systems in Kintyre or Kilfinan. However, it seems reasonable to extend the tentative conclusion from the neighbouring areas discussed that a pattern of small, enclosed fields may have existed prior to that of the openfields.

### Domestic space

The Roy Map may be of use as a source in considering some aspects of pre-Improvement landscape and settlement, but it has little or nothing to say about building construction or the use of domestic space. This is also true of the majority of estate plans.



These cartographic sources are simply at too small a scale to give much detail on individual structures. However, I will argue here that the structures at Balmavicar, the best-preserved pre-Improvement settlement, are probably generally representative.

At Balmavicar, as discussed, there are some eight pre-Improvement structures, discounting A and B as later. All are of drystone or stone-and-clay construction, with walls in the region of 1m thick (RCAHMS 1971: 194). These structures are of varying types. G and O are the largest, although L may also be of similar size (figure 5.4). They are both 10 to 12m long and 6 to 7m wide and have opposing entrances in their long walls. Both are sub-oval, with markedly rounded corners suggesting a hipped roof. The opposed doorways, and the internal kiln in O, suggest that these structures were threshing barns.

Structures C, D, H, and M also seem to be similar to each other. All seem to have a single entrance in one of their long sides, although this is less clear for M. C and D have one rounded and one straight gable. H has two straight gables, but with slightly rounded corners. M is more properly oval. All are of similar size, being roughly 6 or 7m by 4 or 5m. Some of these structures must have been dwellings, most likely H and M. It is possible they all were, although there are no diagnostic internal features visible. The Royal Commission has suggested that C and D were outbuildings, despite their similarity to H and M (RCAHMS 1971: 194). The eighth structure, F, was a horizontal mill.

H and G and M and O seem to be arranged as pairs, being closely situated. Yards K and J may be associated with structures H and G, and M<sub>1</sub> with M and O. Structure L is perhaps earlier, being more denuded. C and D, with C<sub>1</sub> and D<sub>1</sub>, may form a further grouping. It is also possible that C and D, with their respective enclosures, formed two separate units, as the Royal Commission's labelling suggests.

Alan Gailey (1962b) has argued that the rounded end, and thus hip-roofed, house was typical of the southwest Highlands prior to Improvement, and perhaps was the common form of the Medieval period. Despite this probable long continuity in the basic form of the house, construction methods seem to have changed significantly about the middle of the eighteenth century (Gailey 1962b: 234-239). Relying largely on documentary data, Gailey suggests that prior to that time organic construction materials like turf and wattle were preferred to stone. This is perhaps one reason why Medieval settlement sites remain elusive, structures of materials like turf being less visible archaeologically (see, e.g., Dodgshon 1993a: 421-424). The use of organic materials need



not have been ubiquitous prior to the eighteenth century, however (see below).

Despite this major change in building construction, which remains to be understood, the basic form taken by the Balmavicar structures seems on comparison with those at Finlaggan and on Gunna, already introduced, and at Macewen's Castle and on Eilean da Ghallagain, West Loch Tarbert (MacGregor and Dalglish 1999: 54, site 070; Marshall 1983), to have been current from at least the late Medieval period. These excavated sites of Finlaggan, Gunna, and Macewen's Castle also allow us to shed some light on the possible organisation of space within the pre-Improvement house.

The most substantial building of the sixteenth century *baile* at Finlaggan (structure C) was a rectangular, lime-mortared, two-storey dwelling, probably once inhabited by a tacksman (Caldwell and Ewart 1993: 155-156). This dwelling is exceptional amongst the surviving sixteenth century structures. The typical structure, Type A, is oval or sub-rectangular in form, of drystone or turf construction, and perhaps occasionally lime-mortared (Caldwell, McWee and Ruckley 2000: 62-64; figure 5.17). These buildings rarely exceed 10m by 7m and in most cases have opposed entrances. The walls of the lime-mortared structures may have been load bearing and there is no evidence for crucks, although the walls often do not survive to a height that would make this certain. The Type A structure has also been found elsewhere on Islay, and beyond.

This form of structure served many purposes (Caldwell, McWee and Ruckley 2000: 62). Structure H at Finlaggan has been interpreted as a byre, and others may have been barns with the opposed entrances allowing a through draft for winnowing (figure 5.8). However, most appear on excavation to have been dwellings, on the basis of open hearths placed centrally, as with Finlaggan structures L and B. The latter was interpreted prior to excavation as a barn (Caldwell and Ewart 1993: 156). Interestingly, some structures at Finlaggan, like K and L, appear to be house and barn units (Caldwell and Ewart 1993: 156). It will be remembered that this was an arrangement suggested above for some of the structures at Balmavicar.

On Gunna, similar late Medieval structures have been found underlying later settlement (figure 5.18). Structure D there consists of the footings for an oval building whose walls have a double stone skin filled with a core of sand (James 1998: 23). One entrance survives, though the structural remains are fragmentary, and there is evidence of a hearth sitting centrally in the floor. Structures F and H, and possibly E, though more



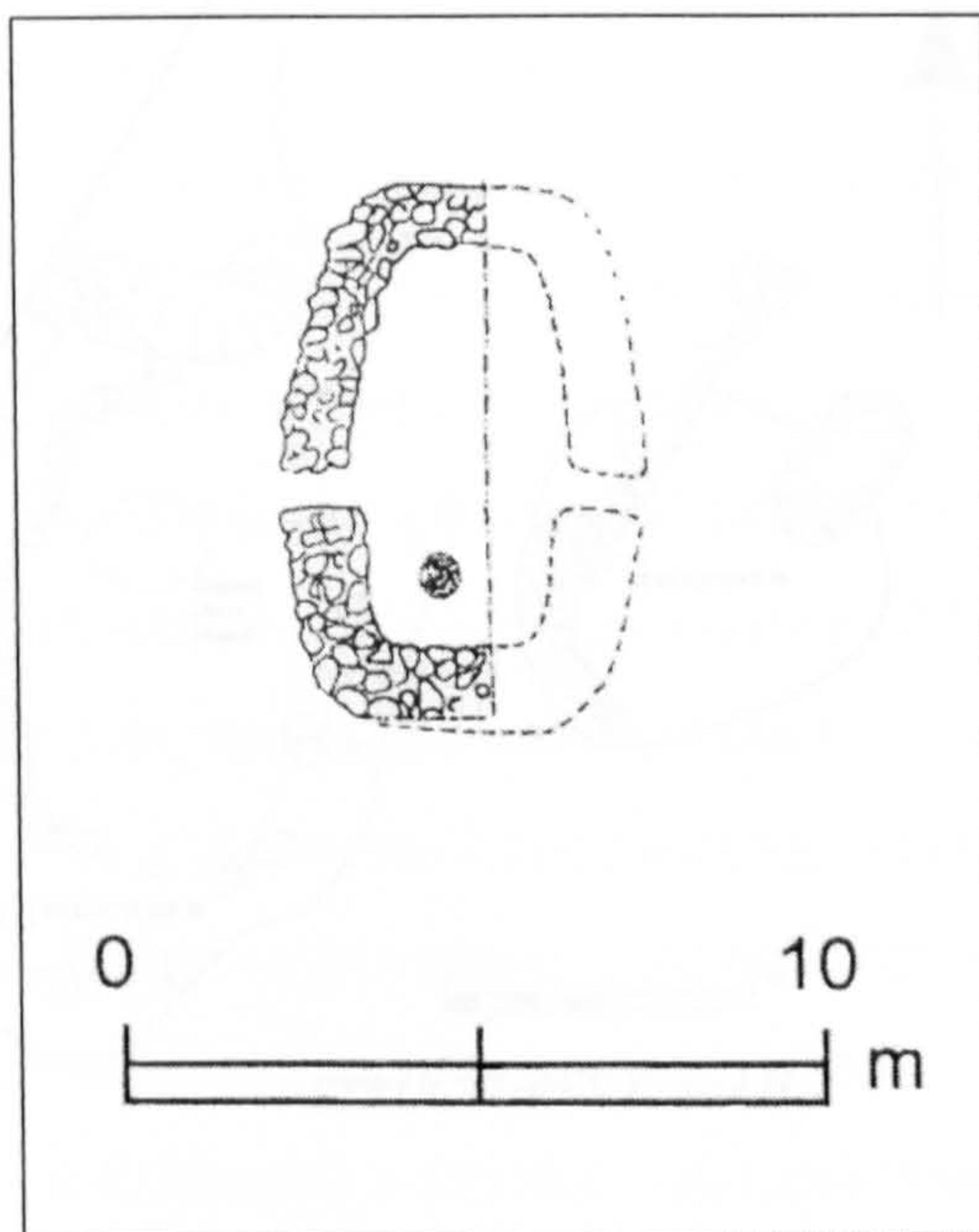


Figure 5.17: A Type A house, structure B at Finlaggan (after Caldwell, McWee, and Ruckley 2000: 63, figure 2). Note the Opposed doors, sub-rectangular shape and central hearth.



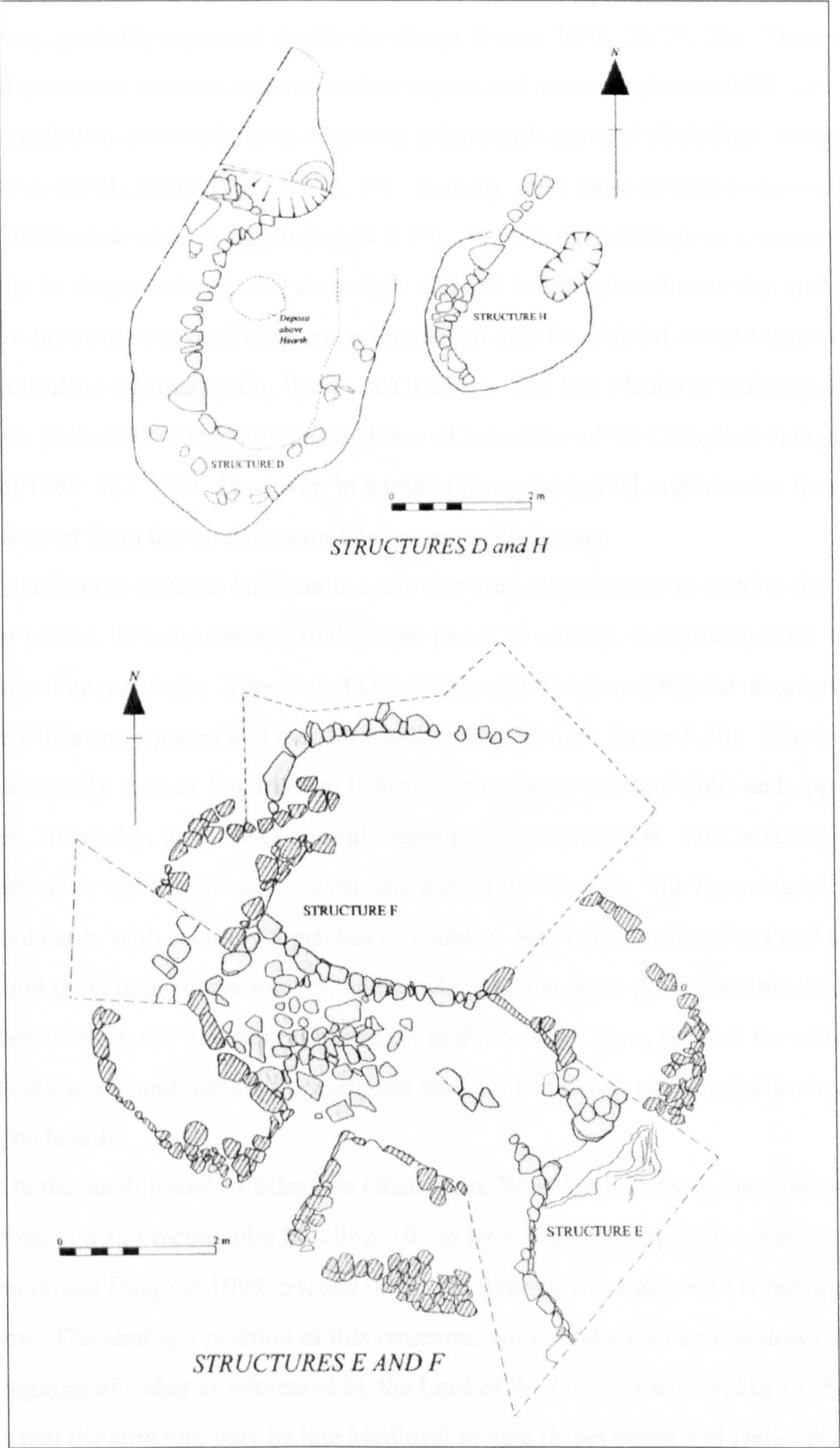


Figure 5.18: Gunna. Structures D and H, and E and F, which are overlain by Structure B (after James 1998: 22 and 24, figures 7 and 8).



fragmentary, probably represent similar dwellings (James 1998: 25-26, 28). These late Medieval structures in cases replaced earlier timber and turf ones (James 1998: 15). They were succeeded by substantial post-Medieval (eighteenth century?) buildings, notably structures A and B (James 1998: 16-19, 29). In many ways these structures are similar to those at Balmavicar and Finlaggan (figure 5.19). These later buildings on Gunna were sub-rectangular in shape with opposed doorways, and had hearths placed centrally in the floor.

To the structures on Gunna and at Finlaggan may be added those at MacEwen's Castle and Eilean da Ghallagain, West Loch Tarbert. The late Medieval buildings at the former site probably belonged to the residence of a member of the Campbell clan gentry (Marshall 1983: 132-133). However, in terms of form and spatial organisation they should not be set apart from the dwellings on Gunna and at Finlaggan.

MacEwen's castle in Kilfinan is a dun that was subsequently re-used in the Medieval period. It is the remains of this later phase of activity, comprising Sites A, B and D, that are of interest here. Sites A and D are both oval or sub-rectangular structures, although D has one squared end (see Marshall 1983: 137-139; figure 5.20). Site A measures roughly 10m by 8m and Site D 6m by 4m. Site A had turf walls and opposed entrances. Internally, there was a central hearth placed on the floor. Turf benches seem to have abutted the walls in the north, west, and east of the interior. The floor was of compacted earth, with occasional patches of cobbles. Site D has walls of turf and stone and two not quite opposing entrances, one of which had at some point been blocked. Again there is evidence of a central hearth set in the cobbled floor, the fuel for which came from a peat stack found outside the northeast wall. A turf bench possibly sat to the north west of the hearth.

On the small island of Eilean da Ghallagain, West Loch Tarbert, there are the stone foundations of a sub-rectangular building, 10.5m by 4.6m, with opposed entrances (MacGregor and Dalglish 1999: 54, site 070). No internal features were visible upon inspection. The strategic position of this structure, with good views up and down the loch, and the signing of a charter witnessed by the Lord of the Isles at the island in 1455, suggests that the structure may be late Medieval in date (MacGregor and Dalglish 1999: 9).

One further site is worth brief mention here. What may be a dwelling associated with iron working has been excavated at Ardnadam in Cowal, and is probably of Medieval



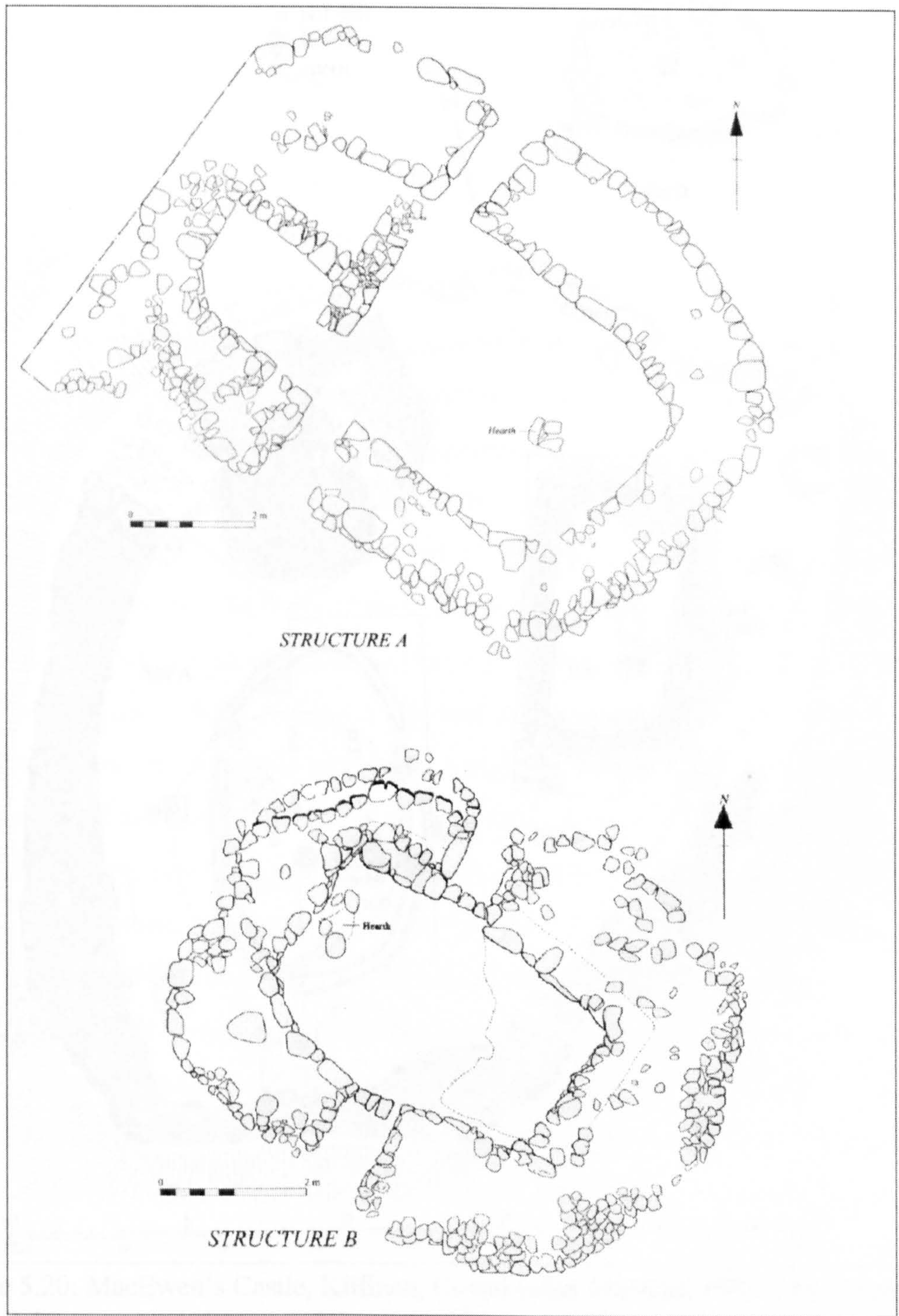


Figure 5.19: Structures A and B on Gunna (after James 1998: 16 and 18, figures 5 and 6). Both structures have central hearths, are sub-rectangular and have opposed entrances.



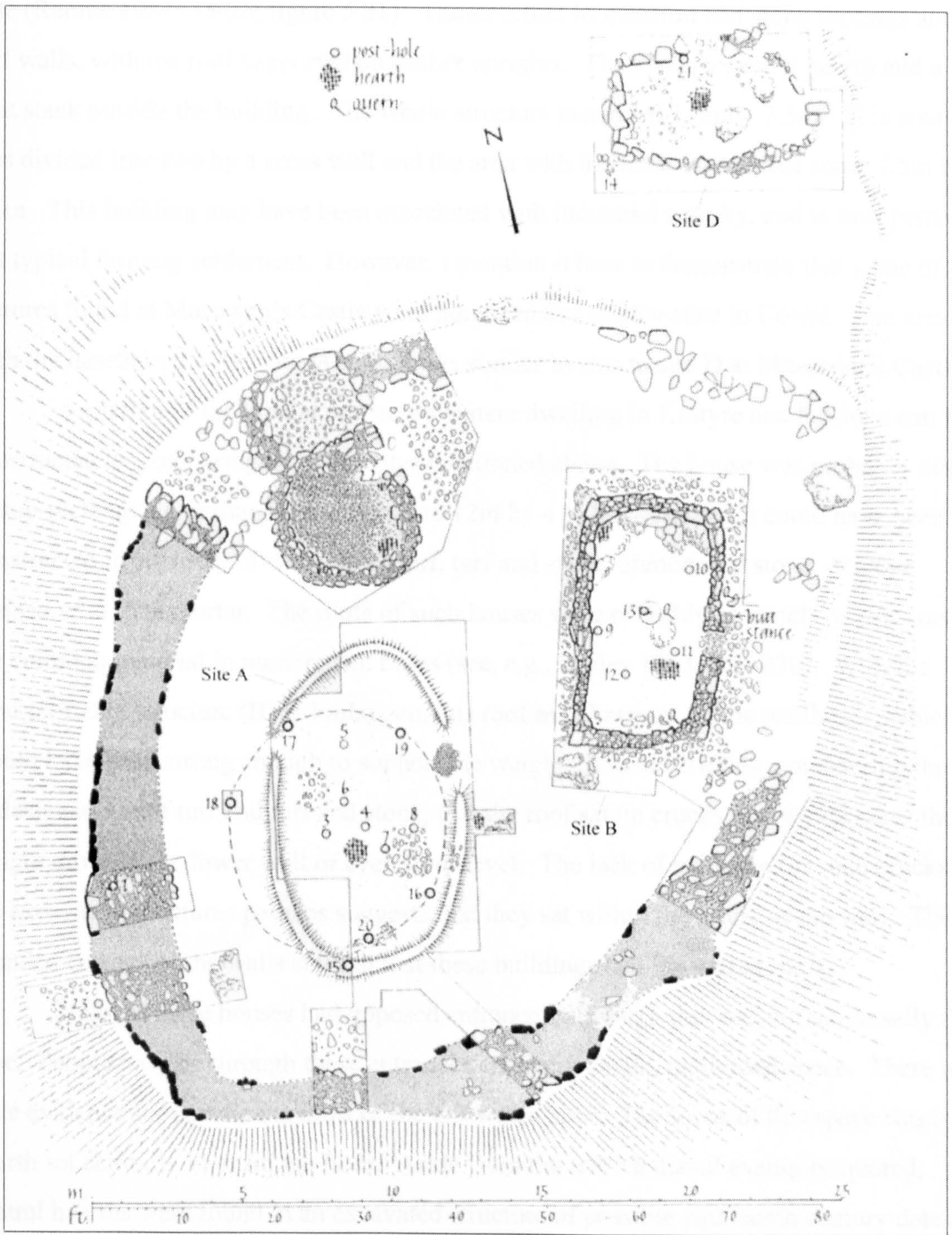


Figure 5.20: MacEwen's Castle, Kilfinan, Cowal (after Marshall 1983: 134, figure 2). All the excavated structures have central hearths, and Site A has opposed entrances.



date (Rennie 1984: 35-36; figure 5.21). The structure in question had stone footings and turf walls, with the roof supported on timber uprights. There was a central hearth and a peat stack outside the building. The whole structure measured 11m by 7.5m. This area was divided into two by a cross wall and the area with the hearth measured some 7.5m by 5.5m. This building may have been associated with industrial activity, and is thus perhaps not typical farming settlement. However, I mention it here to demonstrate that some of the features found at Macewen's Castle were not exclusive to elite sites in Cowal. The area with the hearth in the Ardnadam structure is similar in size to site D at Macewen's Castle.

A picture of the typical pre-Improvement dwelling in Kintyre and Kilfinan can be constructed by comparing all of the sites mentioned above. The house was probably oval or sub-rectangular, perhaps measuring 6 to 12m by 4 to 8m. The walls could have been constructed in a variety of ways, from turf, turf and stone, unmortared stone, or stone bonded with lime mortar. The roofs of such houses were probably of thatch, as this was the common material in more recent times (see, e.g., Gailey 1963: 229-230). With the lime-mortared structure (B) at Finlaggan, this roof may have sat on the wallheads, which would have been strong enough to support the weight. It is more likely, considering the widespread use of turf and turf and stone, that the roof sat on crucks that would carry the weight down to the lower wall or even floor level. The lack of evidence for such crucks in the excavated structures perhaps suggests that they sat within the fabric of the wall. The rounded corners of the walls suggest that these buildings had hip-ended roofs.

Many of these houses had opposed entrances, although this was not universally the case. People passing through these entrances entered a single, undivided space. There is little evidence for partition at most of the excavated sites. The focus of this space was a hearth set centrally in or on the floor. Aside from the late Medieval examples quoted, central hearths were found in an excavated structure of possible eighteenth century date at Macewen's Castle (Site B) and in a similar structure of uncertain date at nearby Auchategan, Glendaruel (Marshall 1983: 138-139; Marshall 1978: 66-68, respectively; figure 5.22). The central hearth might be accompanied by one or more turf benches, which could have served a multitude of purposes including sleeping, working, or sitting. Little evidence of other forms of fixed furniture has been found in these structures.

Barns, sometimes with their own kiln for drying the crop, accompanied these dwellings in some cases. The presence of byres is more problematic. It is traditionally



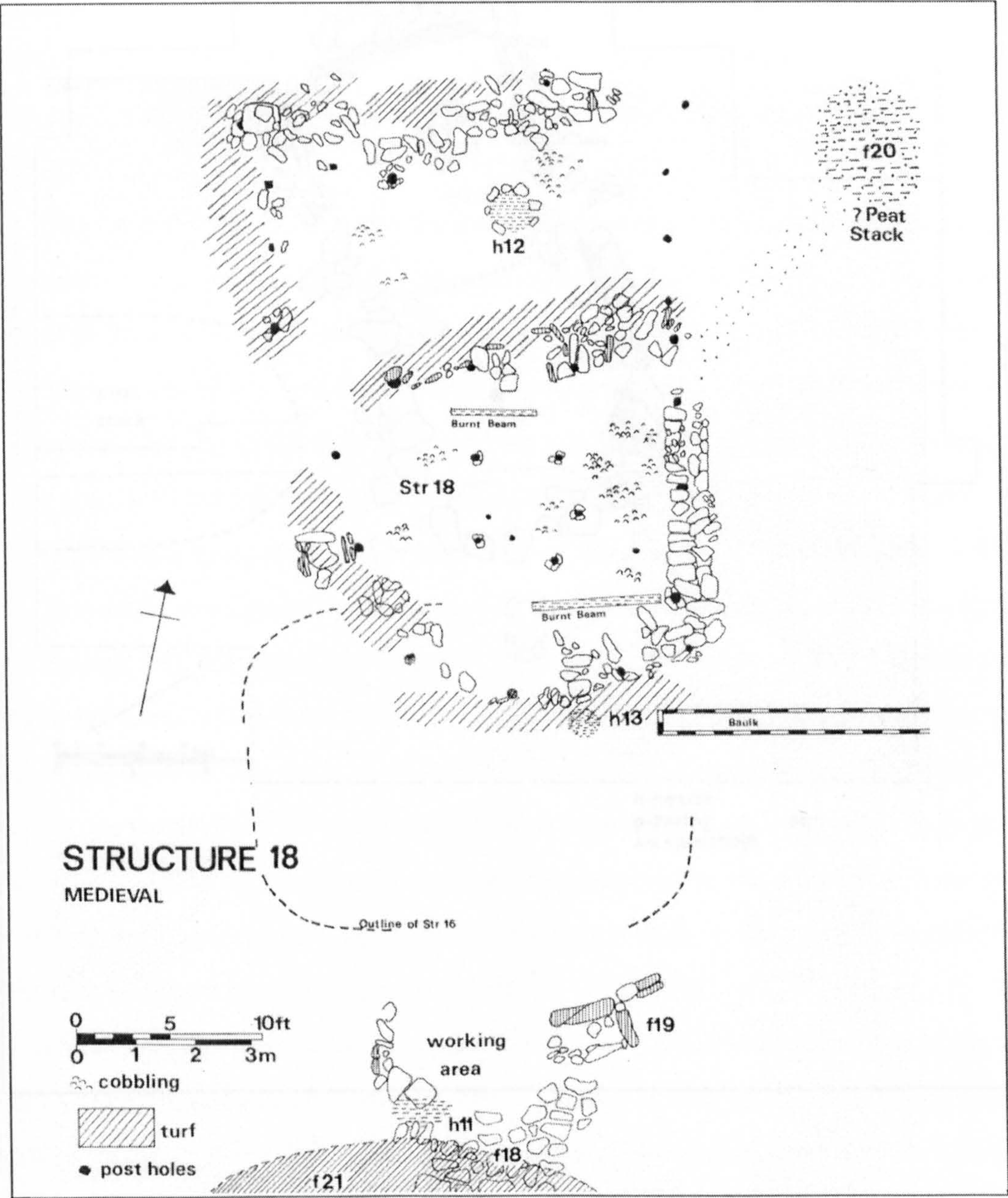


Figure 5.21: Structure 18 at Ardnadam, Cowal (after Rennie 1984: 36, figure 18).



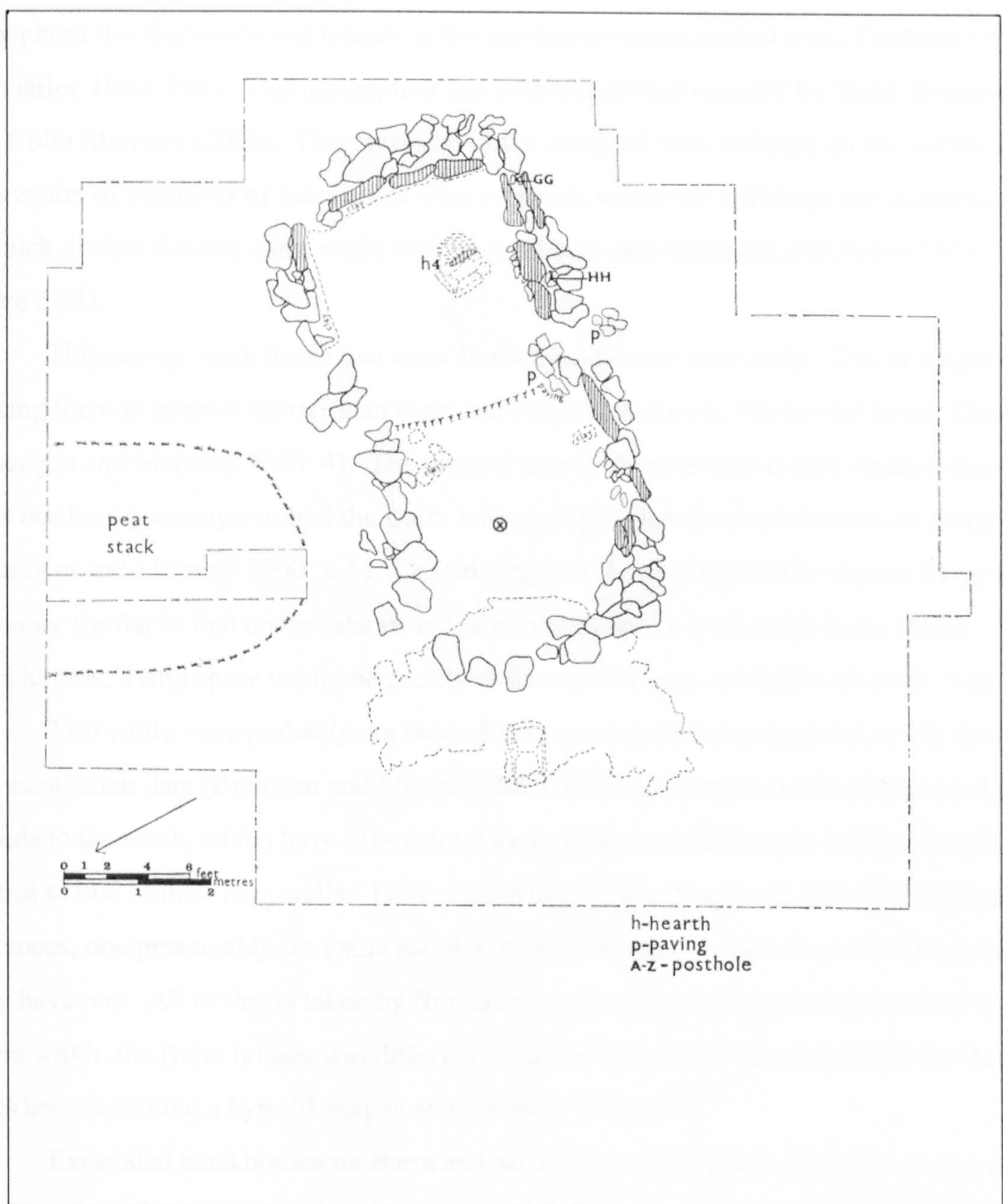


Figure 5.22: Structure of uncertain date at Auchategan, Glendaruel, Cowal (after Marshall 1978: 67, figure 16). Note the central hearth and subdivision of the Structure into two compartments.



assumed that the longhouse, with dwelling and byre under the same roof, was common throughout the Highlands and Islands in the pre-Improvement period (e.g., Fairhurst 1960: 68; Gailey 1963: 235). This assumption has been questioned recently by Keith Branigan and Colin Merrony (2000). Their revision of the accepted view is based on the survey and excavation of a number of blackhouse sites on Barra, where the buildings are characterised by thick double skinned stone walls with an earth core (see Branigan and Foster 1995; figure 5.23).

This survey work found that most Barra blackhouses were under 12m in length, making them in general shorter than their counterparts on Lewis, Harris and South Uist (Branigan and Merrony 2000: 4). The internal area of these houses is also smaller than their northern counterparts, and the Barra houses display less internal division of space (Branigan and Merrony 2000: 4-5). Considering that the average family size on Barra was probably similar to that on the islands to the north, if cattle were housed in the Barra blackhouses, living space would be greatly reduced (Branigan and Merrony 2000: 5-6).

That cattle were probably not housed in these structures is suggested by the survey and excavation data (Branigan and Merrony 2000: 6-8). In contrast to the houses on the islands to the north, which have off-centre doorways, Barra blackhouses have entrances central to one of their long walls. The northern houses also frequently have two opposed entrances, one presumably for cattle and the other for humans, while those on Barra usually only have one. All of this is taken by Branigan and Merrony to suggest that the use of space within the Barra houses was different from that in those to the north, with the Barra blackhouses lacking a byre (Branigan and Merrony 2000: 8-9).

Excavated blackhouses on Barra and South Uist confirm this difference in the use of space (Branigan and Merrony 2000: 9-13). The lack of cobbling and lack of disturbance of the floor deposits in the Barra houses suggest that cattle were absent. Indeed, in one such house the hearth and dresser stand were placed in such a way as to preclude the presence of cattle within the house. On Barra, the cattle seem to have been housed in separate structures, either tacked onto the end of the dwelling, but not intercommunicating with it, or entirely freestanding (Branigan and Merrony 2000: 8).

Turning to the south west Highland mainland, Alan Gailey has claimed that “[o]lder houses were always byre-dwellings, even well into the nineteenth century, and in as progressive an area as Kintyre, where, in 1843, they were being reported as common in



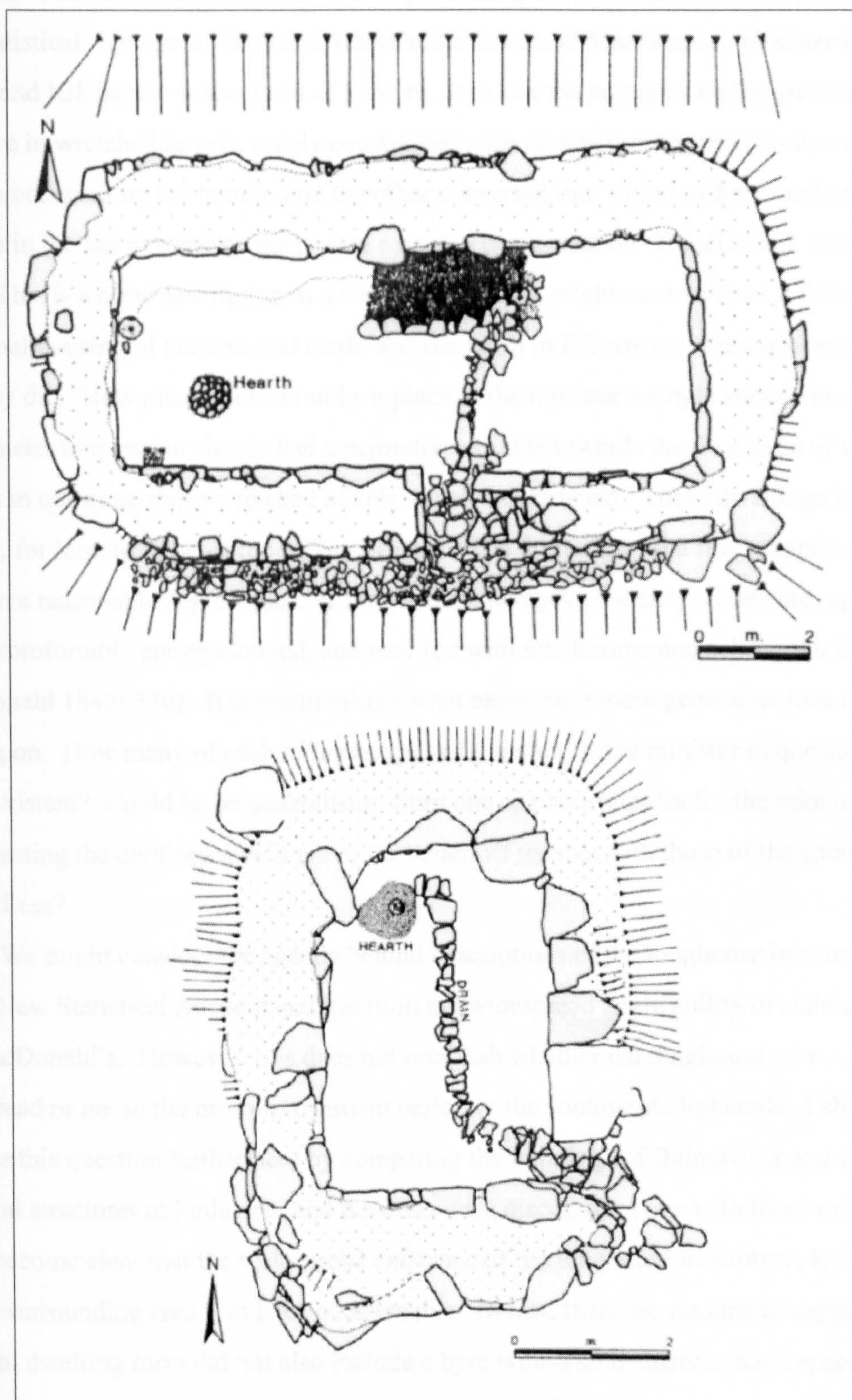


Figure 5.23: A separate house (top) and byre (bottom) from Barra (after Branigan and Merrony 2000: figures 4 and 5).



the parish of Killean and Kilchenzie” (Gailey 1962b: 235). Gailey’s source here is *The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, wherein the Reverend MacDonald, minister for Killean and Kilchenzie in the north of Kintyre, says that the cottagers and labourers of the area “live in wretched hovels, rudely constructed without any mortar, one division of which is occupied by the family, and the other converted into a kind of byre, and often no partition in the hut to separate the human from the brute creation” (MacDonald 1845: 387).

This is a clear description of a longhouse and we might assume from it that the communal housing of humans and cattle was the norm in Kintyre and the surrounding area, as Gailey did. How much faith should we place in the minister’s single statement, though? The minister in question clearly had a pejorative attitude towards the dwellings of the poor families in question, those wretched hovels, rudely constructed. These dwellings stood in contrast, for him, to those of the tenant farmers: “The farmers, with a few exceptions, enjoy, in a reasonable degree, the comforts and advantages of society. They are, upon the whole, comfortably enough lodged, and well fed with wholesome and substantial food” (MacDonald 1845: 386). It is worth asking what experience these generalisations are based upon. How many of each of these types of dwelling is the minister in question likely to have visited? Could he be generalising from one or two examples for the sake of effect in contrasting the civilised dwellings of the better off tenants with those of the smallholders and landless?

We might consider the agenda behind descriptions of the longhouse in sources such as *The New Statistical Account* and question the widespread applicability of statements like MacDonald’s. However, this does not establish whether the longhouse was widespread or not in the pre-Improvement period in the southwest Highlands. I shall consider this question further here by comparing the buildings of Balmavicar and the late Medieval structures at Finlaggan and the other sites discussed above with those on Barra. It will become clear that the widespread existence of the longhouse in Kintyre, Kilfinan, and the surrounding area is at least questionable. In fact, there are reasons to suggest that the usual dwelling form did not also include a byre within an undifferentiated space.

As has already been mentioned, the size range of the various structures at Balmavicar, Finlaggan, and those other sites discussed was roughly 6 to 12m by 4 to 8m. This is a similar size range to the Barra blackhouses discussed above. Further, while the position of the hearth in many of the houses is towards one end of the structure, allowing



for the differential use of space, there is nothing to suggest that the opposite end was for cattle. No drains seem to have been found and there is a general lack of cobbling, yet no major disturbance of the floor deposits is reported. Indeed, one of the Finlaggan structures has been interpreted as a byre in its own right (Caldwell, McWee and Ruckley 2000: 62), suggesting that if the cattle were housed at all, they were housed in separate buildings.

Of the excavated structures in Cowal, the two that show a marked division in the use of space within the dwelling, at Ardnadam and Auchategan, seem to be associated with industrial activity (Marshall 1978: 67-68; Rennie 1984: 35; figures 5.21 and 5.22). Further, in two of the Macewen's castle structures the hearth was placed in the centre of the house and immediately beside the entrance, suggesting that cattle were not meant to come into it (figure 5.20).

It seems likely from all of this that the longhouse was probably not common in the extreme south of the Highlands and the adjacent islands. This is not to say that, in cases, some people in the Medieval or immediately pre-Improvement periods did not share their dwelling with cattle. Many of the houses discussed had opposed doorways, a feature that Branigan and Merrony suggested to be associated with the byre-dwelling. However, upon excavation, in most cases and as we have already seen, this entrance arrangement was not found to be associated with other diagnostic evidence for a longhouse.

Site A at Macewen's castle is one possible exception, where the opposed entrances were of different sizes (figure 5.20). Perhaps one *was* meant for humans and the other for cattle. The excavator also argued for a division of the use of space within the house (Marshall 1983: 137-138). This was based on artefact distribution within the house and the difference in floor deposits between the hearth end and the other end. At the end without the hearth there was some evidence of cobbling. Interestingly, this possible exception, where the cattle may have been housed with the human population, was probably the dwelling of a member of the clan gentry (see above). Their cohabitation with cattle may have been related to the significance of the latter as rent or tribute and in the feasting and hospitality that played a key role in the maintenance of the clan (see Dodgshon 1988 on redistributive exchange within the clan). The Macewen's Castle structure is only one example, of course, and not too much should be inferred from it alone.



## The material environment of Improvement

### Settlement

With Improvement, the *bailtean* came, on the whole, to be replaced by a pattern of dispersed settlement. This consisted largely of isolated farmsteads, with the dwelling and outbuildings of the farm grouped together in linear ranges or rectangular courtyards (see Gailey 1961: 269-274 for a range of examples). Occasionally, we also find linear ranges of cottages, presumably those of farm labourers. Broadly, then, Improved settlement forms can be divided into three categories: these are what I have called the range farmstead, described first below; the cottage range, described next; and, finally, the courtyard farmstead.

The change in settlement pattern and morphology with Improvement is quite obvious on the Mull of Kintyre (figure 5.4; plate 5.1)). Returning to Balmavicar, it will be remembered that structures A and B were set aside from the rest. B has been substantially rebuilt in recent years (RCAHMS 1971: 194), perhaps as some form of shelter. It may originally have been similar to C and D. Structure A, on the other hand, stands apart in character from the other buildings at the site. In contrast to those other buildings, A is a long tripartite structure, 19.2m by 5.3m (RCAHMS 1971: 194). The Royal Commission interpret the most westerly subdivision of the structure, probably the first built as the others appear to be tacked on to it, as a byre. It has a single entrance and few other distinctive features. There is no internal communication between this and the other apartments, which appear to be domestic spaces. Adjacent to the byre, to the east, is the kitchen. This apartment has opposed entrance-doorways and a window. There is a fireplace built into the partition wall that separates the kitchen from the next apartment to the east. This inner room, or *spence* (analogous to a parlour), can only be reached through a door from the kitchen. The uses of these various domestic spaces will be returned to below. It is enough here to note that structure A seems to represent the grouping of previously disparate elements of the farm, byre and dwelling, in one linear range. Further, structure A stands in isolation. Where there had previously been several dwellings with their associated outbuildings on the site, now there was one. Some of the surviving pre-Improvement structures may have been reused as outbuildings.

To the northwest of Balmavicar, perhaps no more than 100m away, is a large



rectangular drystone sheepfold (plate 5.4). This is probably contemporary with Structure A as together they resemble a pattern of association found in other places up the west coast of the Mull.

Notable here are the sites of Currach Mor and Ballygroggan, both of which are very similar. I will take Currach Mor as an example. That site is about 500m south of the current mapped position of the place name Innean Coig Cailleiche, a settlement marked on the Roy Map, and may represent the successor of that settlement. The lack of pre-Improvement settlement remains in the immediate area may be the result of the robbing of stone to build the extant structures, of which there are two at Currach Mor. One is a simple rectangular structure, reduced to turf covered foundations, measuring some 4m by 6m. The other is a larger, tripartite structure measuring 18m by 5m and aligned east to west (plate 5.5). This structure survives to wallhead height in places. The western space has opposed doorways. There are no diagnostic internal features, although a knocking stone is still to be seen sitting on the floor (plate 5.6). This is a large stone with its centre hollowed to create a mortar in which grain was dehusked by being beaten with a pounder or mallet (see Fenton 1999: 103-104). The middle space of the building, probably the domestic space or kitchen, can only be entered from the room with the knocking stone. This middle space has what appears to be a fireplace in its southern long wall. The final space, to the east, does not communicate with the other two, having its own external door facing into a yard. It could be a byre, or a store, although there is nothing to suggest its use. There is a kiln to the west of this structure.

These structures at Currach Mor are associated with three small enclosures. The easternmost division of the tripartite structure is only accessible from one of these yards, the enclosure walls of which are tacked onto the building. Another enclosure, this time a sheepfold, is to be found about 400m to the north (plate 5.7). Currach Mor was probably, therefore, a sheep farm. The knocking stone, kiln and small enclosures associated with the settlement suggest that some crop production was also taking place, perhaps at subsistence level. There may also have been a small amount of subsistence farming at Balmavicar, if the westernmost section of the dwelling there is to be interpreted as a byre.

There are several other sites along the western and southern coasts of the Mull of Kintyre that should probably be associated with sheep farms like Balmavicar and Currach





Plate 5.5: Range farmstead at Currach Mor, Kintyre, looking northwest. The building has three compartments. The furthest two intercommunicate, with the middle compartment (the kitchen) only accessible from the one to the left. The compartment on the right does not intercommunicate with the others and opens into the walled enclosure in the foreground (photo: C. Dalglish)



Plate 5.6: Knocking stone, Currach Mor, Kintyre. This was a mortar for dehusking grain and its presence suggests that some arable farming took place here (photo: C. Dalglish).





Plates 5.7 and 5.8: Sheepfolds at Currach Mor (top) and Borgadale Glen (bottom), looking southeast and east respectively. These simple rectangular enclosures are very similar to that at Balmavicar (plate 5.4) and relate to the same large sheep farm that came to dominate the Mull of Kintyre with Improvement. Such enclosures are to be found spread along the western and southern coasts of the Mull (photos: C. Dalglish).



Mor. There are several sheepfolds, which are usually fairly simple drystone enclosures, such as those found in Borgadale Glen (plate 5.8). Occasionally, these sheepfolds are associated with one or two small, single cell structures, perhaps only measuring 2m by 3m internally. Such structures, as at Innean Goathach (plate 5.9) and Innean Beithe (plate 5.10), are found associated with sheepfolds in isolated stretches of the coastline and are probably shepherd's bothies. Massive, naturally occurring boulders have been joined with sections of drystone walling, in places, to create shelters, this time probably for the sheep (e.g., at Creagan Fithich; plate 5.11).

Associated as all these sites are with sheep farming, they must date to the period when the Mull of Kintyre was converted to a sheep walk, by 1818 (Gailey 1961:85). As we saw above, Balmavicar is listed as uninhabited on the 1779 census, and so presumably out of use as a township by that time (Cregeen 1963: 115). Range farmsteads and their associated features on the Mull can therefore be dated in general to the last quarter of the eighteenth and first quarter of the nineteenth century.

These range farmsteads are not confined in distribution to the Mull of Kintyre, but can be found throughout the peninsula. The association with sheep farming is less prevalent away from the high ground, however, and many examples outside of the Mull should be associated with mixed farming regimes (see Kelly 1845: 432-433; MacDonald 1845: 387-390; Stark 1845: 367). Some farms in Kintyre were increasingly associated with commercial dairy farming through the nineteenth century (MacNeilage 1912: 290; McClement 1927: 23).

Range farmsteads in other areas of Kintyre are similar to those on the Mull, although they can be larger and often exhibit greater internal subdivision (figure 5.24). Two such ranges at Drumgarve, situated some 200m from each other, illustrate this (see RCAHMS 1971: 196-197). The first resembles structure A at Balmavicar, being a tripartite structure, measuring 33m by 6m (plate 5.12). In this case, the presence of the byre is certain, being evidenced by a central drain (plate 5.13). The second structure at Drumgarve, although of similar dimensions to the first, displays greater subdivision. Separating the byre from the kitchen this time is a small lobby, about 1.5m wide. Beside the kitchen, and separated from it by a partition wall containing a hearth, is the spence. Beyond the spence, though not communicating with it, is a small store. Adjacent to the store is a mill. The greater subdivision of this structure is, therefore, to be associated with



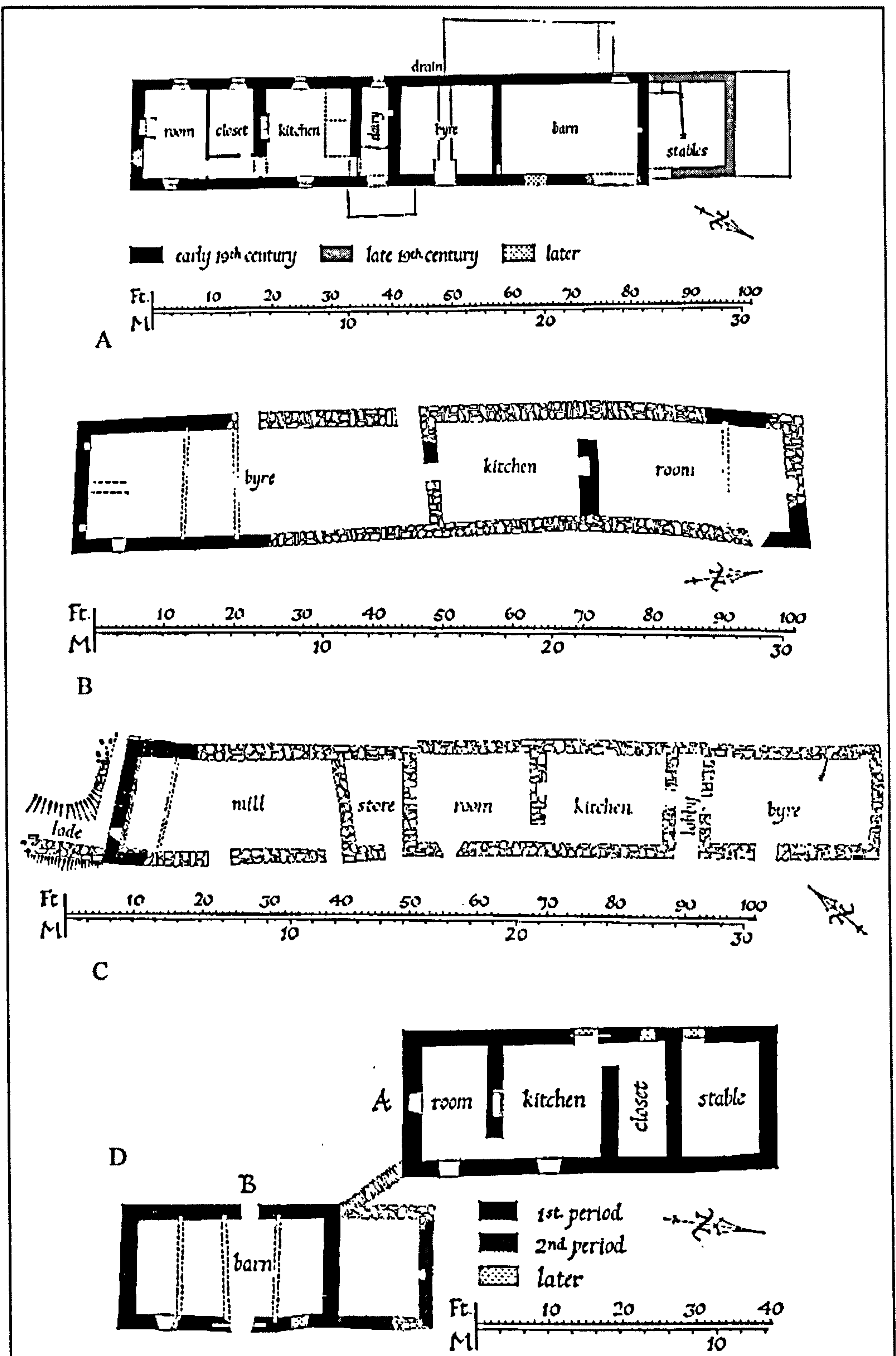


Figure 5.24: Range farmsteads from Kintyre. A) Keremenach; B) Dwelling at Drumgarve; C) Dwelling with Mill at Drumgarve; and D) Garvoine (after RCAHMS 1971: 196, 199, 200, figures 184, 185, 187, 189). Despite their differences, all of these farmsteads are highly subdivided in comparison to the typical pre-Improvement settlement.





Plates 5.9 and 5.10: Shepherd's bothies at Innean Goathach (top) and Innean Beithe (bottom), looking south and northeast respectively. Both are on the Mull of Kintyre. Such single-cell structures are found attached or adjacent to sheepfolds and represent temporary accomodation for shepherds. These bothies would have been necessary as the sheepfolds they service are several miles, at least, from the nearest settlements (photos: C. Dalglish).





Plate 5.11: Sheep shelter, Creagan Fhithich, Kintyre, looking south. A section of drystone walling in the centre of the photograph closes the gap between two naturally occurring rock outcrops, forming a basic shelter on this exposed part of the Mull of Kintyre (photo: C. Dalglish)



Plate 5.12: One of the range farmsteads at Drumgarve, Kintyre, looking south. The long, gable-ended range runs diagonally left to right in the centre of the foreground and sits amongst other ruins. The far gable is that of the byre (photo: C. Dalglish).





Plate 5.13: The byre of the range farmstead shown in plate 5.12. Note the central drain leading out through the gable wall and the small recesses in that wall, for a lamp? (photo: C. Dalglish).



Plate 5.14: Cottage range (structure S1) at Low Stillaig, Kilfinan, looking northeast. Unlike the range farmsteads, each compartment here has its own entrance and does not communicate with its neighbours (photo: C. Dalglish).



its part function as a mill.

Other range farmsteads in Kintyre are likewise highly subdivided (e.g., Keremenach, RCAHMS 1971: 200; The Bastard). However, the reasons for greater internal subdivision at these sites is either unclear as a result of the dilapidated nature of the buildings (The Bastard; figure 5.25), or seems to be unrelated to the presence of such specialised elements as a mill (Keremenach; figure 5.24).

The examples discussed above appear to be the working farmhouses of a single family. That is, the individual divisions of the range add up to the different functional spaces of a single farming family. There is *one* living space (kitchen), *one* spence, *one* byre, and so on. However, there are linear ranges elsewhere in Kintyre and in Kilfinan that appear to be the congregation of several spatial units of the same type. It is arguable that the provision of several large windows in more than one of the divisions of the longest range at Low Stillaig, Kilfinan, (structure S1) indicates that this structure was primarily an agglomeration of dwellings (figures 5.26 and 5.27; plate 5.14). A second structure at Stillaig (S2) may be an isolated labourer's cottage, and has an attached outhouse and one other adjoining space (plate 5.15). A more denuded range farmstead can be found at Gortain, Kilfinan, and Meall Darroch may be an example in Kintyre (see MacDonald (ed.) 1992; figure 5.28). That such single structures are actually several combined dwellings is underlined by the fact that the individual divisions do not intercommunicate as do those of the range farmsteads. The individual dwellings of the cottage ranges typically consist of a single undivided space, entered through a door placed centrally in one long side of the house.

The occurrence of these two different forms of linear range in Kintyre and Kilfinan can be explained by the social dynamics of Improvement in those areas (see chapter 8 below). It is enough to note here that the cottage ranges probably represent the houses of farm labourers. The site of Low Stillaig, for example, is shown as inhabited on the first edition OS map of the area (1863), when it must have been on the lands of the single or double tenancy farm of Stillaig (see chapter 8).

So, the cottage ranges of Kilfinan were certainly in use by the mid-nineteenth century. When they were first built is unclear, but if they do represent the labourers' cottages of the large tenant farm then they may only predate the first edition OS maps by a few years (see below). In Kintyre, on comparison with the other linear ranges and the large



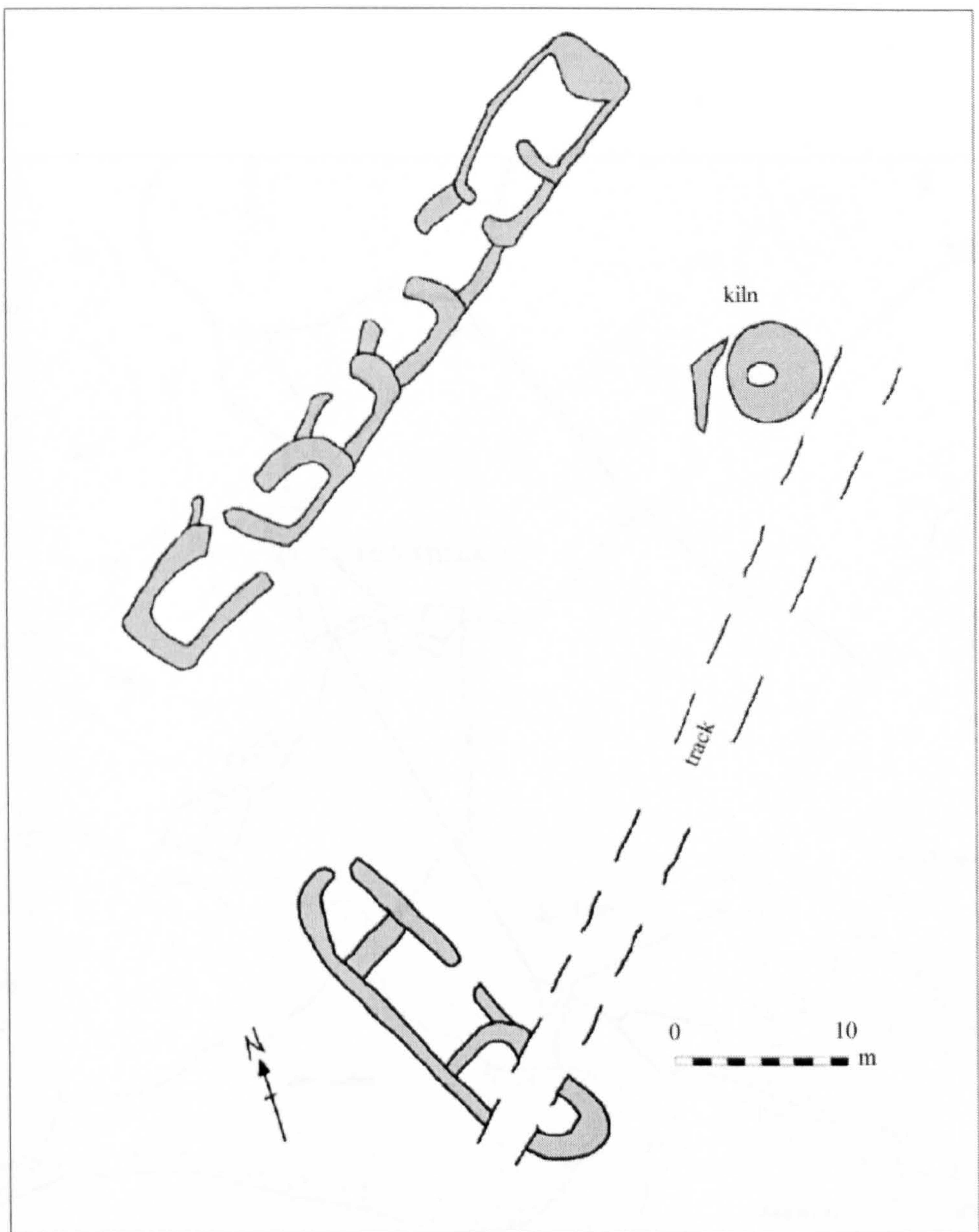


Figure 5.25: Linear range and associated structures on The Bastard, Kintyre (plane table survey conducted for this thesis).



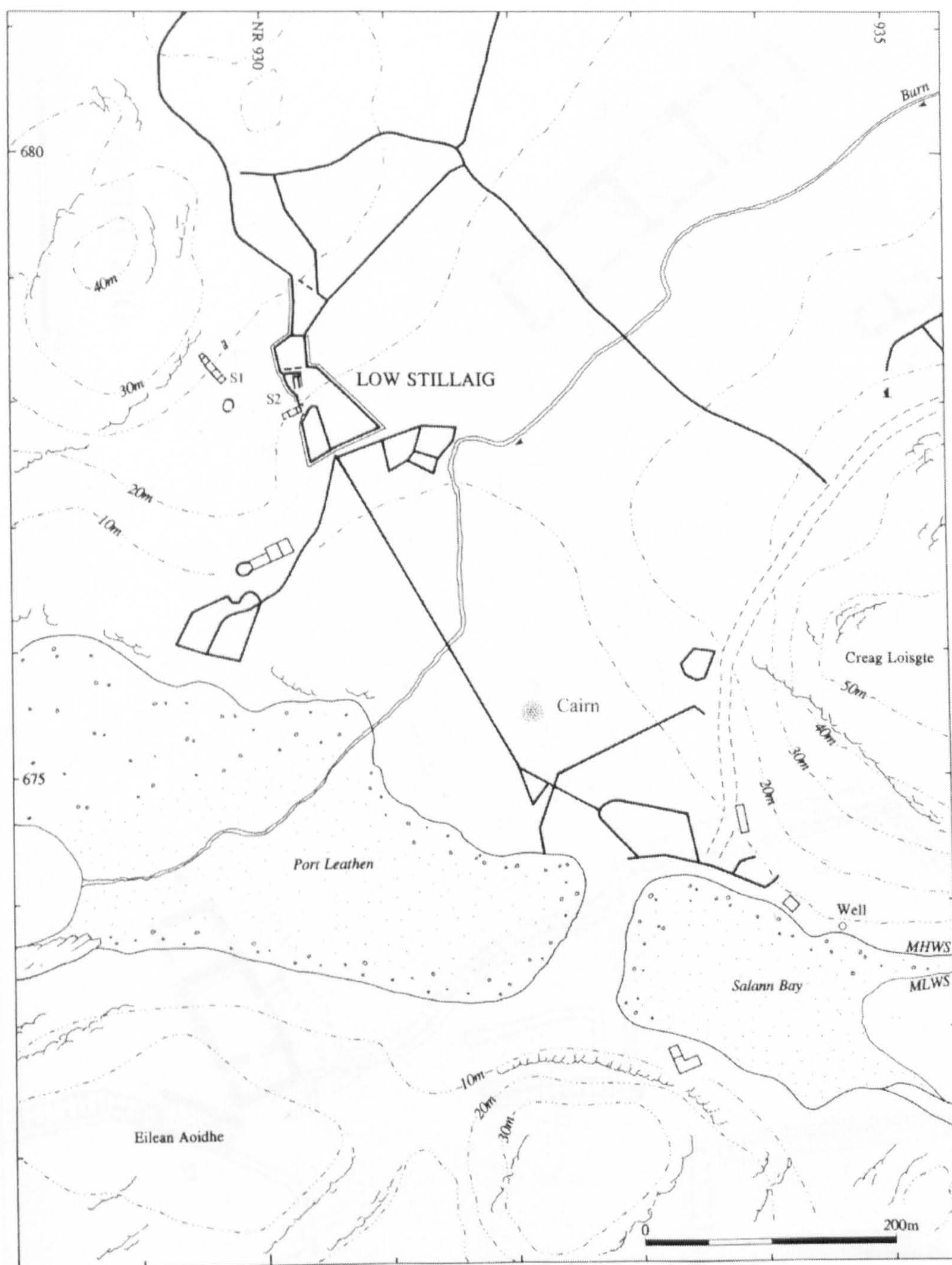


Figure 5.26: Settlement at Low Stillaig, Kilfinan (illustration courtesy of Dr.S.T. Driscoll, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Glasgow). North to top of page. The cottage range is structure S1, in the top left of the picture. The beginnings of the amorphous enclosure system can be seen leading from S1 off to the north.



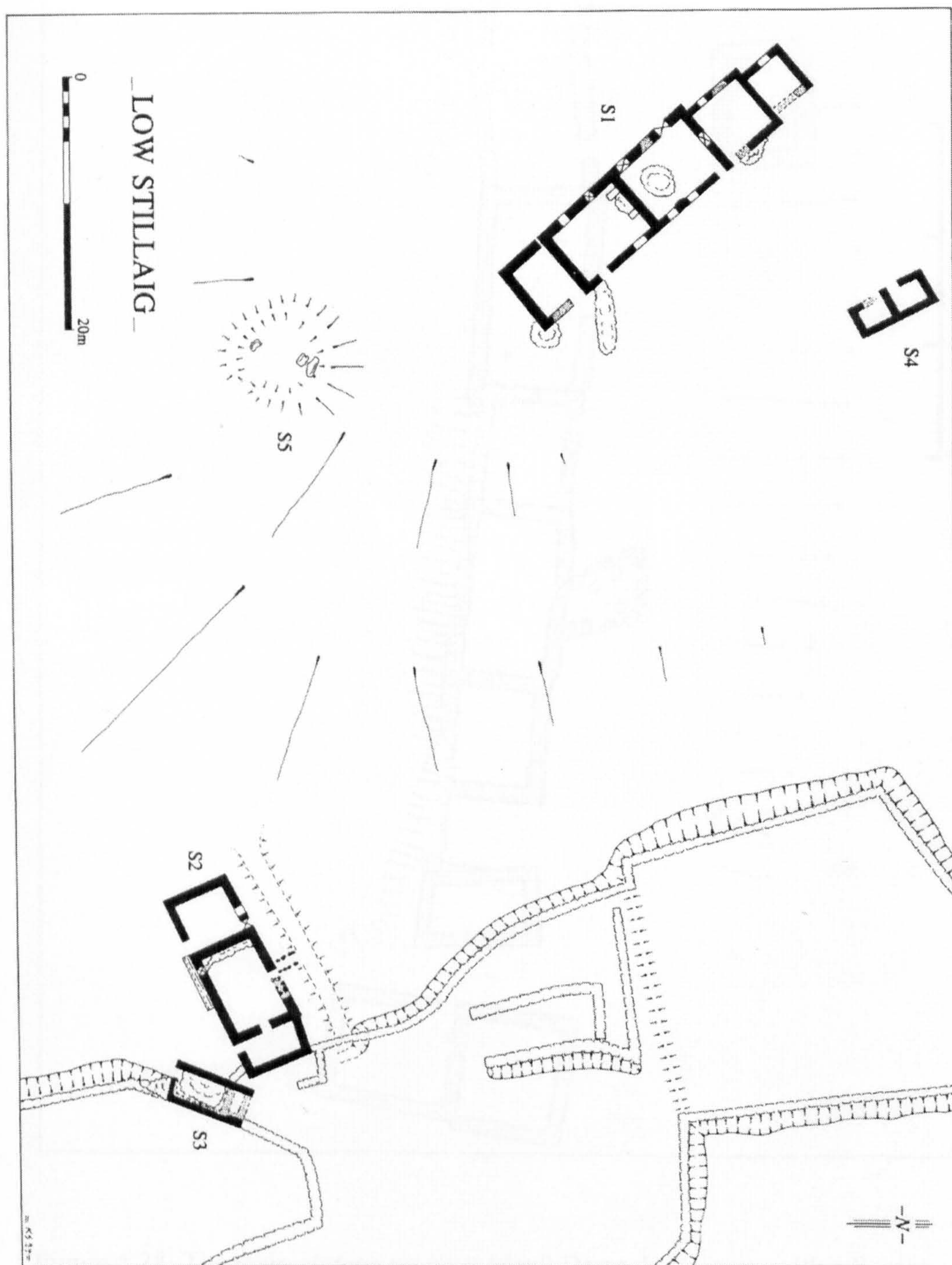


Figure 5.27: Structures S1, S2, and S3 at Stillaig (illustration courtesy of Dr. S.T. Driscoll, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Glasgow).



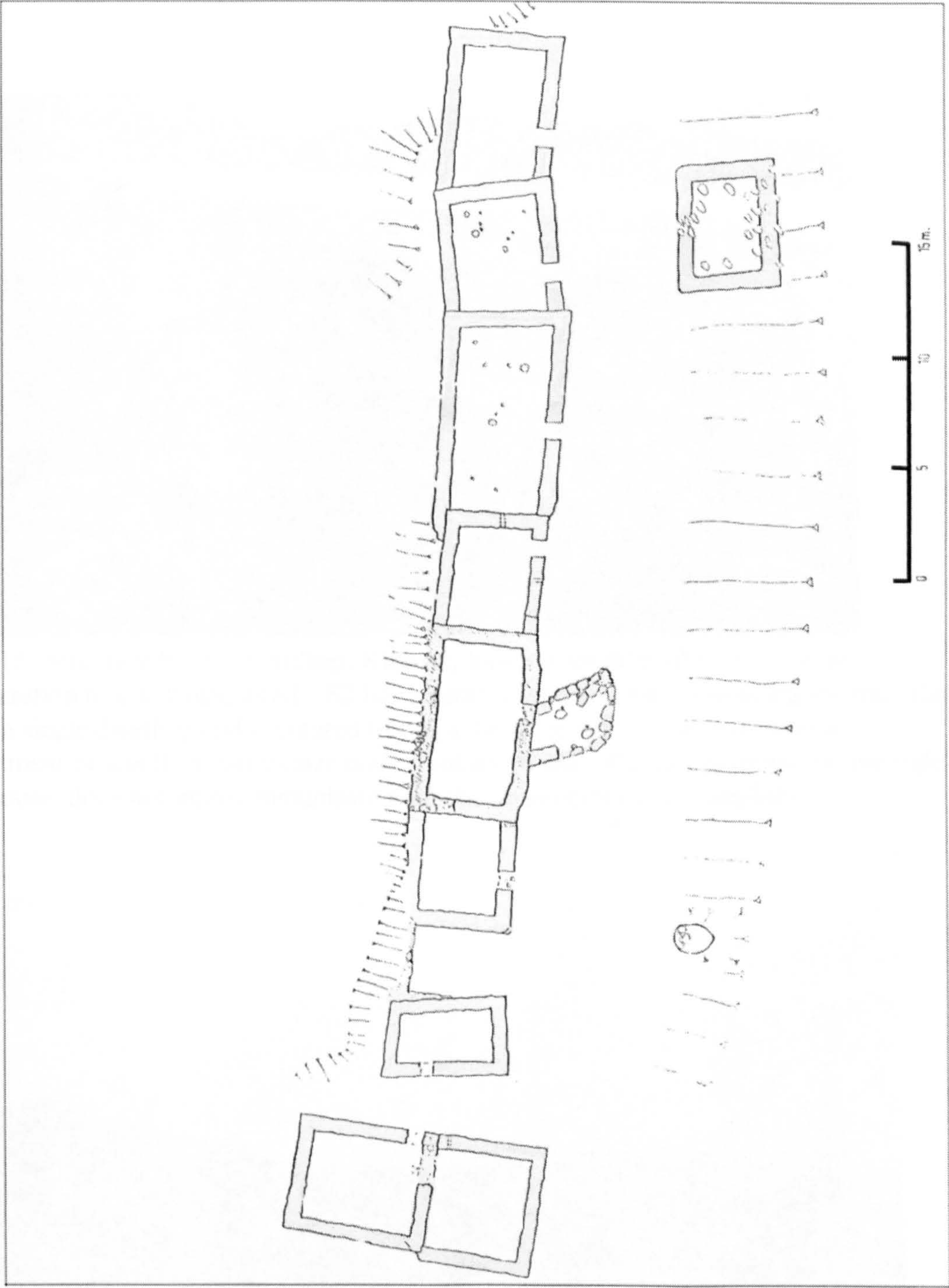


Figure 5.28: The main cottage range at Meall Darroch, Kintyre, with adjacent structures (after MacDonald (ed.) 1992: 6). North to top of page. Note that none of the compartments of the structure intercommunicates with it's neighbours.





Plate 5.15: Structure S2, Low Stillaig, Kilfinan, looking north-northwest. Not an agglomeration of dwellings, as S1. S2 has a central compartment, containing the tree, that may be a single dwelling and is entered through the door seen on the left, from a compartment of less than half its size and of unknown use. The compartment on the right, an outhouse, does not intercommunicate with the others (photo: C. Dalglish).



Plate 5.16: The courtyard farmstead of Machribeg, Kintyre, looking northwest. The dwelling sits in the centre, with a chimney in each side wall. The courtyard abuts it to the left and right. On the right there is further dwelling space (photo: C. Dalglish).



tenant farms (see below), the cottage ranges may be as early as the first years of the nineteenth century, or perhaps slightly earlier.

The labourers' cottages represented by cottage ranges like Low Stillaig should not be viewed in isolation from the contemporary houses of the large tenant farmers, on whose farms they stood. The dwellings of these larger tenants have been described by some as the Lowland-type steading, and are referred to here as courtyard farmsteads (Gailey 1960: 104-105). In describing just such a steading, the minister for Southend parish noted with pride in 1843 that "[t]here has . . . been lately a farm-steading erected on the Duke of Argyll's lands of Machribeg, which will compete with most in any part of the kingdom" (Kelly 1845: 433; plate 5.16).

The courtyard farmstead is the prevalent farm dwelling in Kintyre and Kilfinan today (see Gailey 1961: 94). It was first widely introduced to the Argyll Estates in Kintyre in the early years of the nineteenth century (Gailey 1961: 94). Its date of introduction in Kilfinan is unknown. The minister for the parish in 1843, Joseph Stark, considered that it was "necessary that suitable farm-buildings be erected instead of the old black huts which are now on the farms" (Stark 1845: 368). If we are to take him literally, then the courtyard farmstead had still to be introduced in 1843. Certainly, examples of the form, that survive today, appear on the first edition OS maps of the parish (1863), such as the example at Stillaig already discussed. The courtyard farmstead was possibly introduced, then, in the 1840s or 1850s in Kilfinan, although there may have been earlier examples that Stark chose to ignore. This conclusion fits with the observation that Improvement in general came late to Kilfinan (Atkinson, Driscoll and Watson 1993: 7).

However, in Kintyre at least, the courtyard farmstead had a longer history. Limecraigs House, now within Campbeltown, but previously standing within its own policies in the countryside, has been described as having a layout typical of that adopted for the small laird's house of the early eighteenth century (RCAHMS 1971: 190; figure 5.29; plate 5.17). The widow of the first Duke of Argyll occupied it as a dower-house and died there in 1735 (RCAHMS 1971: 190). In some ways, Limecraigs is very similar to nearby tacksmens' dwellings of the same period. Cara House, on the small island of that name off the west coast of Kintyre, was probably built in 1733 (RCAHMS 1971: 189). Like Limecraigs, it is of two storeys and internally highly subdivided. Although these buildings are exceptional in being the dwellings of the local gentry, they can in many ways



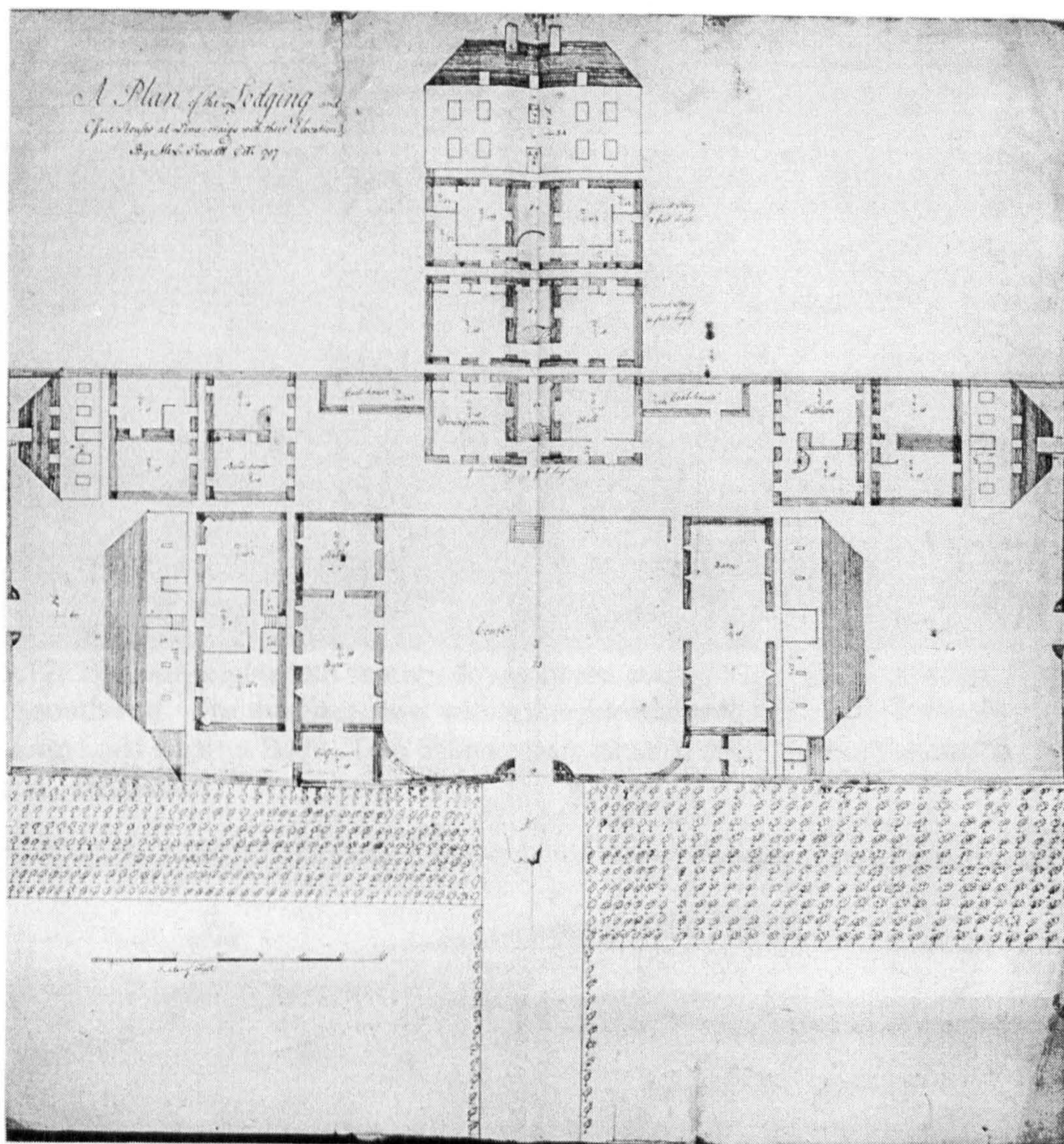


Figure 5.29: A 1757 plan of Limecraigs House, Kintyre (reproduced from RCAHMS 1971: plate 81a). The dwelling is surrounded by a courtyard of out-Buildings and it is highly subdivided.





Plate 5.17: The early eighteenth century dower house and farmstead of Limecraigs, Kintyre, looking southwest. The dwelling, now within a residential area of Campbeltown, has two main storeys and a garret floor. Two chimneys are situated either side of the central hall (photo: C. Dalglish).



Plate 5.18: The house of the courtyard farmstead of Inveryne, Kilfinan, looking northwest. The whole courtyard has recently been renovated (photo: C. Dalglish).



be considered as of one class with the courtyard farmstead. Limecraigs was certainly a working farm in the mid-eighteenth century, to judge from its outbuildings.

Like the range farmstead discussed above, the courtyard farmstead is an isolated dwelling with appended outbuildings. In the more fertile areas of Kintyre, only 0.5 or 1km may separate such farmsteads. In other areas, a separation of 1.5km is common and in the more upland regions 2 to 3km is not unusual. Throughout Kilfinan, courtyard farmsteads are fairly regularly dispersed, with intervening distances of around 1km, although they can be separated by 2 to 3km.

In contrast to the range farmsteads, the dwellings of the courtyard farmstead are of two-storeys and highly subdivided internally (plate 5.18). These two-storey dwellings often form one side of a three-sided courtyard, together with outbuildings that are often substantial structures in themselves (plates 5.19 to 5.22). A stable, byre, and barn are common separate elements. A plan of Limecraigs House drawn in 1757 shows in addition to these elements a calf-house, coalhouse, bakery, and what are probably labourers or servants cottages (RCAHMS 1971: plate 81a). In cases, as at Corra in Kilfinan, the courtyard stands apart from the dwelling (figure 5.30). Here, in addition to the usual elements we find a mill. A separate courtyard is also to be found at Saddell Castle, where farm outbuildings laid out from the 1770s by Campbell of Glensaddell fill the courtyard of a late Medieval castle (RCAHMS 1971: 161-165; figure 5.31). These offices were probably built when the castle was abandoned as the principal family residence, and at the time of building of the adjacent Saddell House (RCAHMS 1971: 191).

The courtyard and the range farmstead will be returned to in more detail below. The important point to note here is the dispersal and isolation of settlement with Improvement. The range and courtyard farmsteads represent, on the whole, the house and associated outbuildings of one farming family. More families may have lived side by side in the cottage ranges. On the whole, however, with Improvement we see the fragmentation of the *baile*. The cottage range and courtyard farmstead often represent the dispersal of the population of a single large farm throughout its territory, being the dwellings of the farm labourer and tenant, respectively. The range farmstead is the single isolated dwelling of a smaller farm. In some cases, several small farms might be amalgamated into one large one, resulting in the presence today of several deserted range farmsteads near to a courtyard farmstead. Such is the case at Glenahervie in southern Kintyre, where several



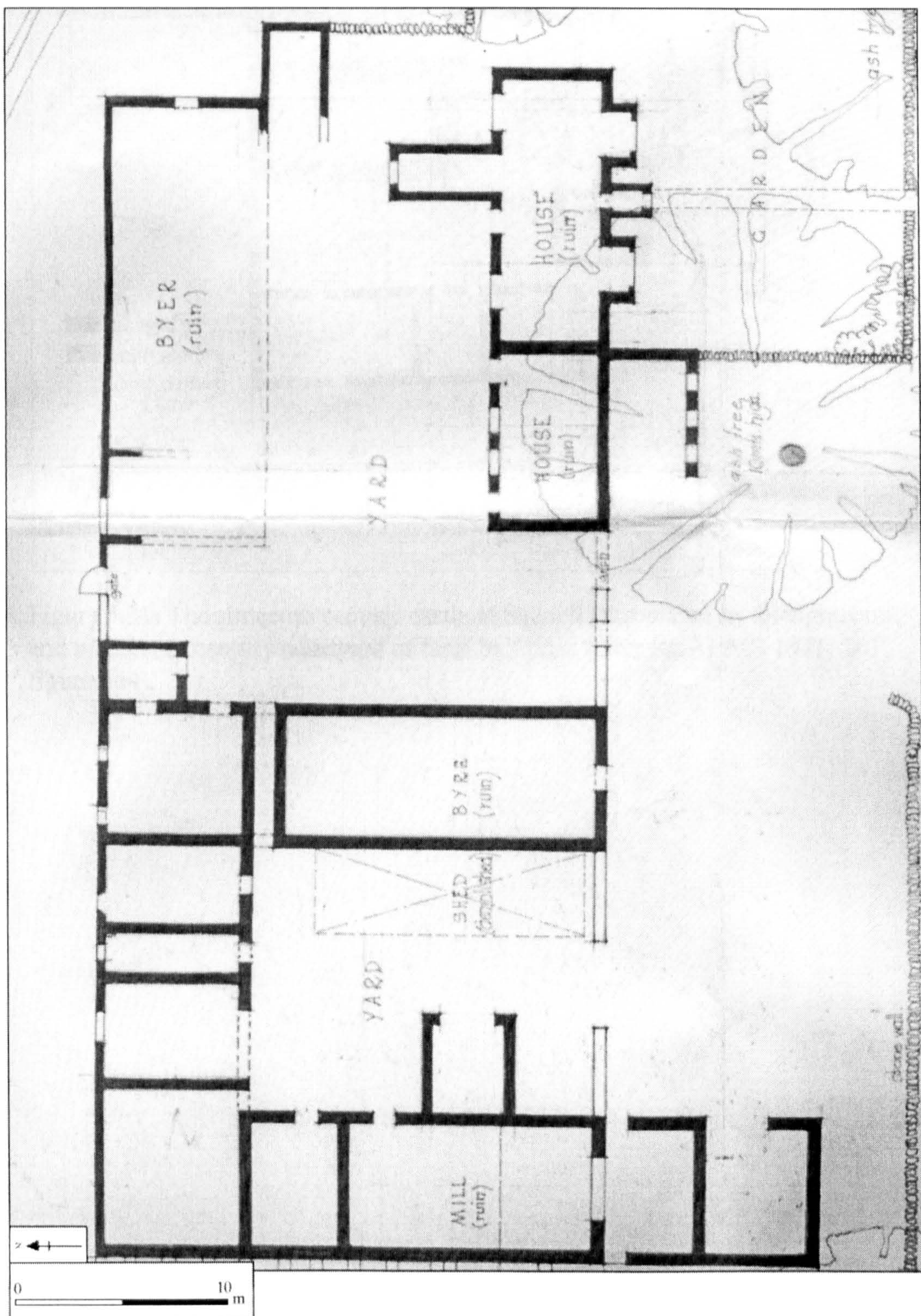


Figure 5.30: Architect's plan of Corra Farm, prior to redevelopment (plan drawn by and courtesy of Brian Leech, Corra Farm). In this case, the courtyard of outbuildings stands apart from the dwelling.



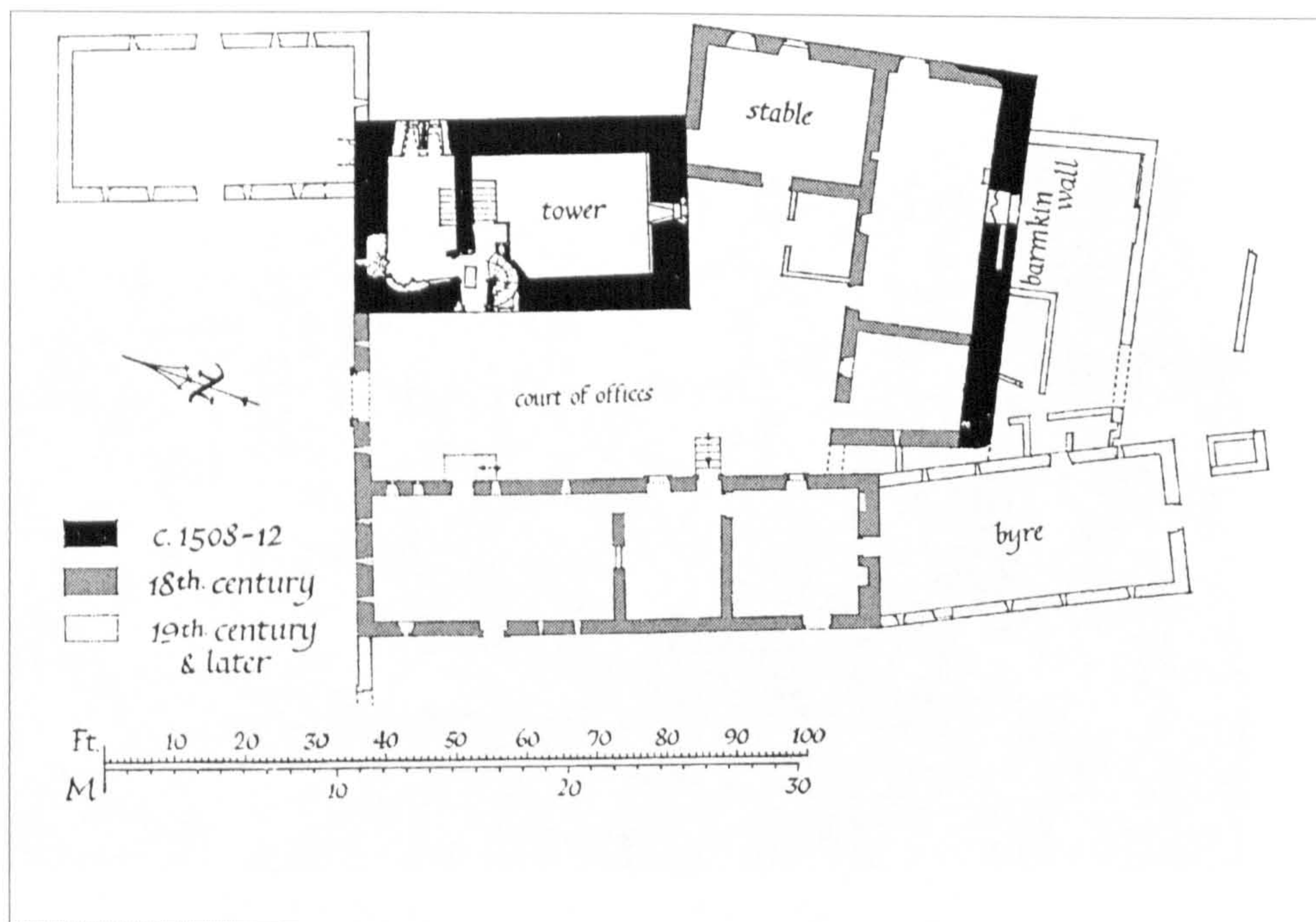


Figure 5.31: The sixteenth century castle at Saddell surrounded by an eighteenth and nineteenth century courtyard of farm buildings (after RCAHMS 1971: 161, figure 164).





Plate 5.19: The northeast side of the courtyard at Inveryne, Kilfinan. The narrow door and windows on the left suggest this was a workshop or store rather than a byre or barn. At the top of the right hand gable, the openings of a pigeon loft can be seen, serviced by vents on the facing wall. These outbuildings abut the dwelling (plate 5.18) on its right side (photo: C. Dalglish).



Plate 5.20: More outbuildings at Inveryne. These abut the dwelling in plate 5.18 on its left side. The wide entrances to these outbuildings suggest original use as a cartshed, byre or store (photo: C. Dalglish).





Plate 5.21: The final (southeastern) side of the courtyard at Inveryne. This is a water-driven mill and faces the dwelling across the courtyard, which is on the other side of the mill in this photograph (photo: C. Dalglish).



Plate 5.22: The courtyard farmstead of Inveryne, Kilfinan, from the air and looking northwest. The rigidly geometric form of the farmstead is clearly seen here. The two-storey dwelling is furthest away, flanked by two ranges of outbuildings. The mill is nearest (photo courtesy of Dr. S.T. Driscoll).



deserted ranges occur on the lands of a single sheep farm created in 1853 (Gailey 1961: 101-102). These structures appear as unroofed on the first edition OS map of the area, suggesting that they went out of use soon after this amalgamation, if not before. However, the introduction of the courtyard farmstead in the early nineteenth century, and in cases before, means that in many areas it would have existed contemporaneously with the range farmstead, as did the large and smaller farms to which these buildings belonged.

As noted earlier, there are exceptions to the process of settlement fragmentation with Improvement. In Kilfinan, though not in Kintyre, there are several nucleated settlements resembling the earlier *bailtean* in form, notably Ardgaddan North and South, Ascog, and Craignafeoch. However, I will leave discussion of these settlements for now, and they will be considered in greater detail in chapter eight. The only other notable nucleation of settlement in the study area is in the few villages and the burgh of Campbeltown. Both should be considered quite different in character from the *bailtean*.

There are several small villages in Kintyre and Kilfinan. Kilfinan itself had a post office, church (also housing a school), and inn in the first half of the nineteenth century, but seemingly little else (Stark 1845: 366, 369-370, 372). This rural service centre, if we can call it such, seems to have been the only one of its type in the parish at the time. Inns and churches may have formed similar settlement foci in Kintyre. The name of the present village of Clachan certainly suggests a settlement focused on a church. Certainly, the fishing village of Tarbert seems to have been fairly sizeable by the mid-nineteenth century (McArthur 1845: 411; see also RCAHMS 1971: 191), by which time there were also significant service centres at Machrimore and Rhunahaorine (Martin 1987: 5).

The village of Southend is of a slightly different character, being laid out as a planned settlement around 1800, rather than developing more organically around a church or similar focus (see Lockhart 1997; figure 5.32). The Duke of Argyll founded Southend, or Moneroy as it was originally known, in 1797 (Lockhart 1997: 16). By 1851 it housed eleven agricultural labourers and the same number again of tradespeople, including a road labourer, weaver, grocer, shoemaker, coalwright, innkeeper, schoolmistress, midwife and seamstress (Lockhart 1997: 17). Some of these residents also worked small patches of land part-time. Such planned villages, and, in this period, established villages like Kilfinan, were distinct from the *bailtean* and should be associated with Improvement. They provided services and a market for the isolated farms and resettlement and employment for



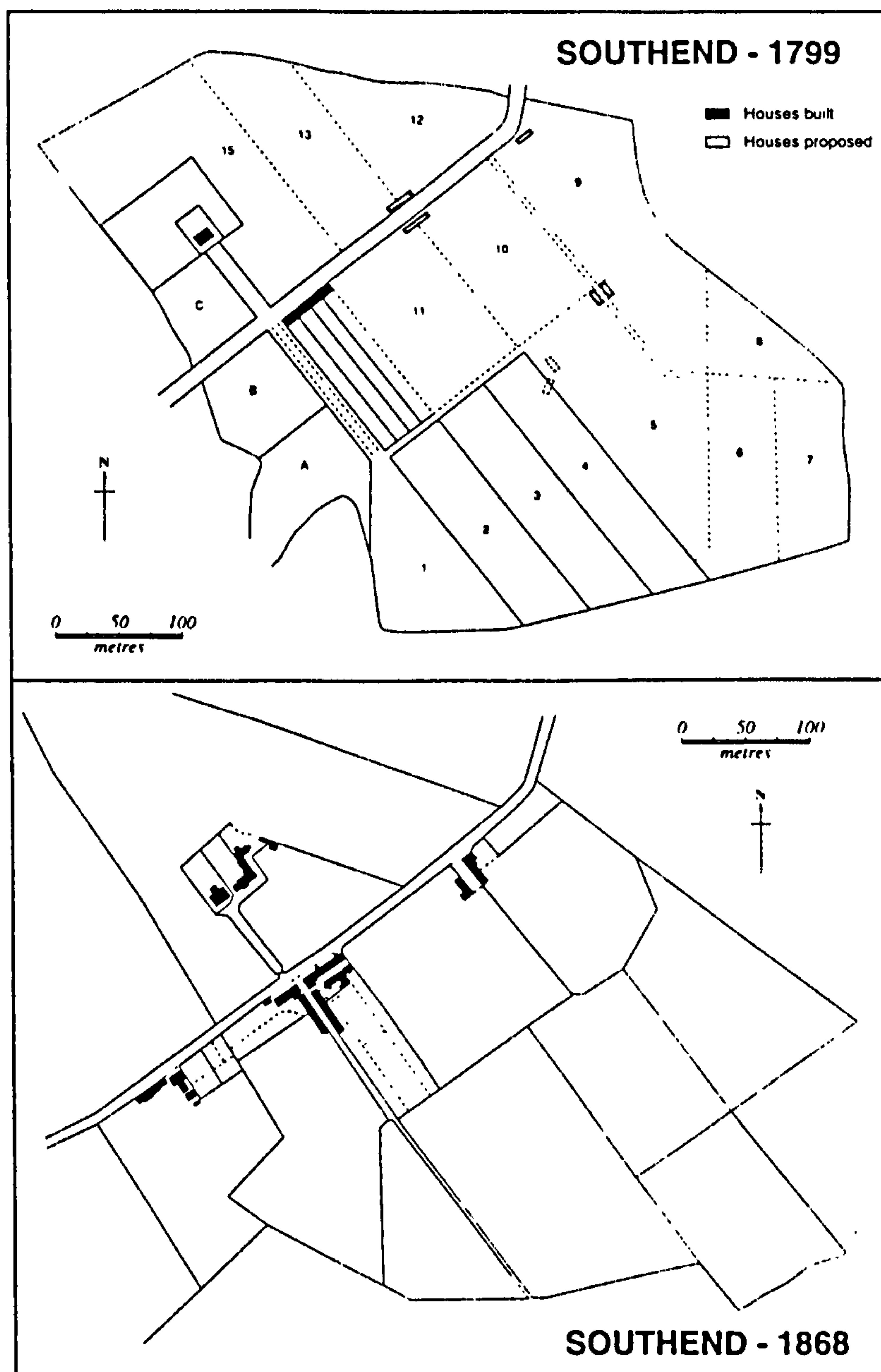


Figure 5.32: The development of the planned village of Southend (after Lockhart 1997: 19). The top illustration shows the village in its initial stages. The consciously planned nature of Southend can be seen in its regular layout.



those dispossessed by Improvement (Lockhart 1996: 31-32; Smout 1996: 75-81).

Campbeltown, founded in 1609 by the seventh Earl of Argyll, had become a substantial settlement in Kintyre before Southend had even been conceived (see RCAHMS 1971: 184-187; figure 5.33). The role of the town in the local economy, and beyond, is suggested in the New Statistical Account. Listed for the Parish of Campbelton at that time, apart from some 390 people involved in agriculture, are 100 “proprietors, wholesale merchants, ship-owners, capitalists, bankers, and professional men”, 520 “masters and workmen employed in manufactures and making machinery, shopkeepers and dealers”, and an unascertainable number of “sailors, fishermen, and jobbers” (Anon. 1845: 463). Also listed are a number of artisans, colliers, and miners, some of whom may have lived in the burgh, but most of whom probably resided elsewhere in the parish. At this time, Campbeltown had its own town council, court, and customhouse (Anon. 1845: 465). The burgh, then, served as the main market for the peninsula, and presumably a wider area, even providing access to international trading networks. It also presumably provided services, employment, and resettlement for the rural population of the area (see Martin 1987: 5 on these last two points), as the other villages did on a much smaller scale.

## Landscape

Returning to rural Kintyre and Kilfinan, the landscape within which the settlements discussed above were situated also underwent fundamental change with Improvement. The landscape around the *bailtean* was largely open, the only widespread boundaries being the head and march dyke. There were, however, small areas of enclosure. There were the yards associated with the houses of the *baile*, which had in cases been planted with trees; the enclosures in the policies surrounding landowners houses; and, the area around Whitehouse in the north of Kintyre where an enclosed field system on a grid pattern had already been laid out by the time of the Roy Map. Above the head dyke the landscape was almost completely open, consisting largely of moorland and hill pasture, with associated shieling settlement.

With Improvement, low-lying areas of farmland became completely transformed as the openfield landscape became more systematically enclosed. On higher ground, the shielings fell out of use and the hillsides were turned over to other uses, such as large-scale sheep grazing or, eventually, sports like hunting.



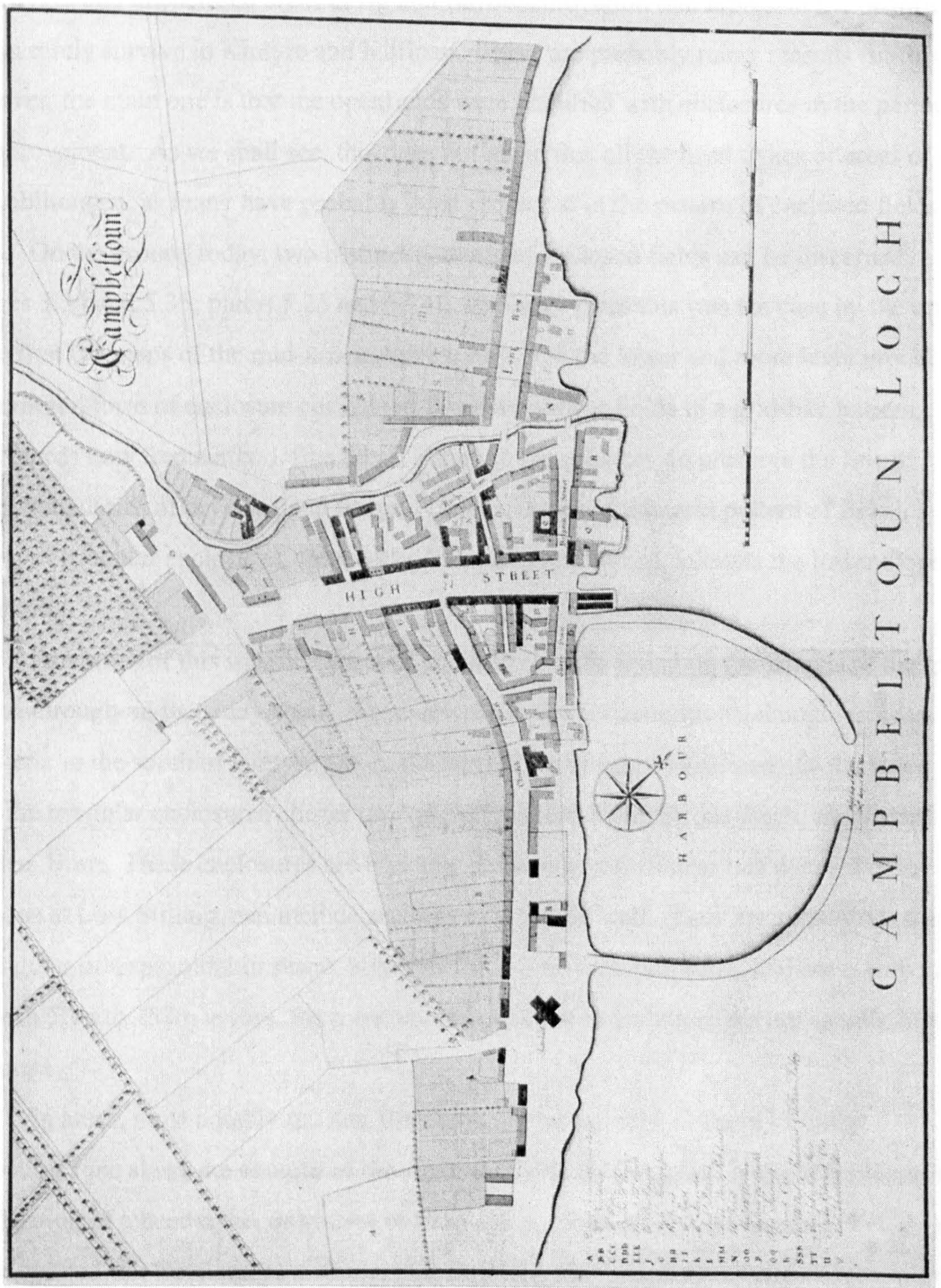


Figure 5.33: A plan of Campbeltown ca.1760 (reproduced from RCAHMS 1971: plate 73).



Head dykes and unenclosed areas of rig and furrow cultivation that represent the openfield system rarely survive in Kintyre and Kilfinan. There are probably many reasons for this. However, the main one is that the openfields were engulfed with enclosures in the period of Improvement. As we shall see, this does not mean that all the head dykes or areas of rig were obliterated, as many have probably been preserved in the pattern of enclosed fields.

On the ground today, two distinct patterns of enclosed fields can be discerned (figures 5.34 and 5.35; plates 5.23 and 5.24)). In many areas this was the case by the time of the first OS maps of the mid-nineteenth century. On the lower and more level ground the common form of enclosure consists of large rectilinear fields in a grid-like pattern. Wire fences now frequently define these, although these fences do preserve the line of earlier boundaries of drystone and hedge. On the fringes of this grid pattern of fields, a system of irregular enclosures, frequently defined by turf dykes, inhabits the lower slopes of the hills.

Examples of this irregular form of enclosure can be found on the fringes of the grid system throughout the study areas. There are particular concentrations, though, in Glen Breakerie in the south of Kintyre and in the area of the village of Kilfinan. In the latter area, the irregular enclosures cluster on Ardgaddan Barr, along Strone Burn, and around Kilfinan Burn. These enclosures are typically defined by curvilinear turf dykes, but in cases, as at Low Stillaig, can include sections of drystone wall. They are sometimes sub-rectangular or trapezoidal in shape, although there is no common form, and are commonly between 50m to 250m across. Such enclosures can exist in isolation, but are usually linked in groups.

In areas, most notably in Glen Breakerie, the upper edge of these irregular enclosures runs along the contour of the slope at a level that suggests it might represent the fossilisation of a head dyke, or system of head dykes. Similarly, Piers Dixon (1994: 34) has suggested, for Scotland as a whole, that such irregular boundaries represent the piecemeal enclosure of open areas of rig as a first step of Improvement. His assertion (Dixon 1994: 34) that such enclosures were subsequently abandoned holds for Kintyre and Kilfinan, where they largely form relict landscapes today.

In contrast to the irregular enclosures are the areas of grid-pattern fields. These grids occur on lower and more level ground than do the irregular fields. These are the



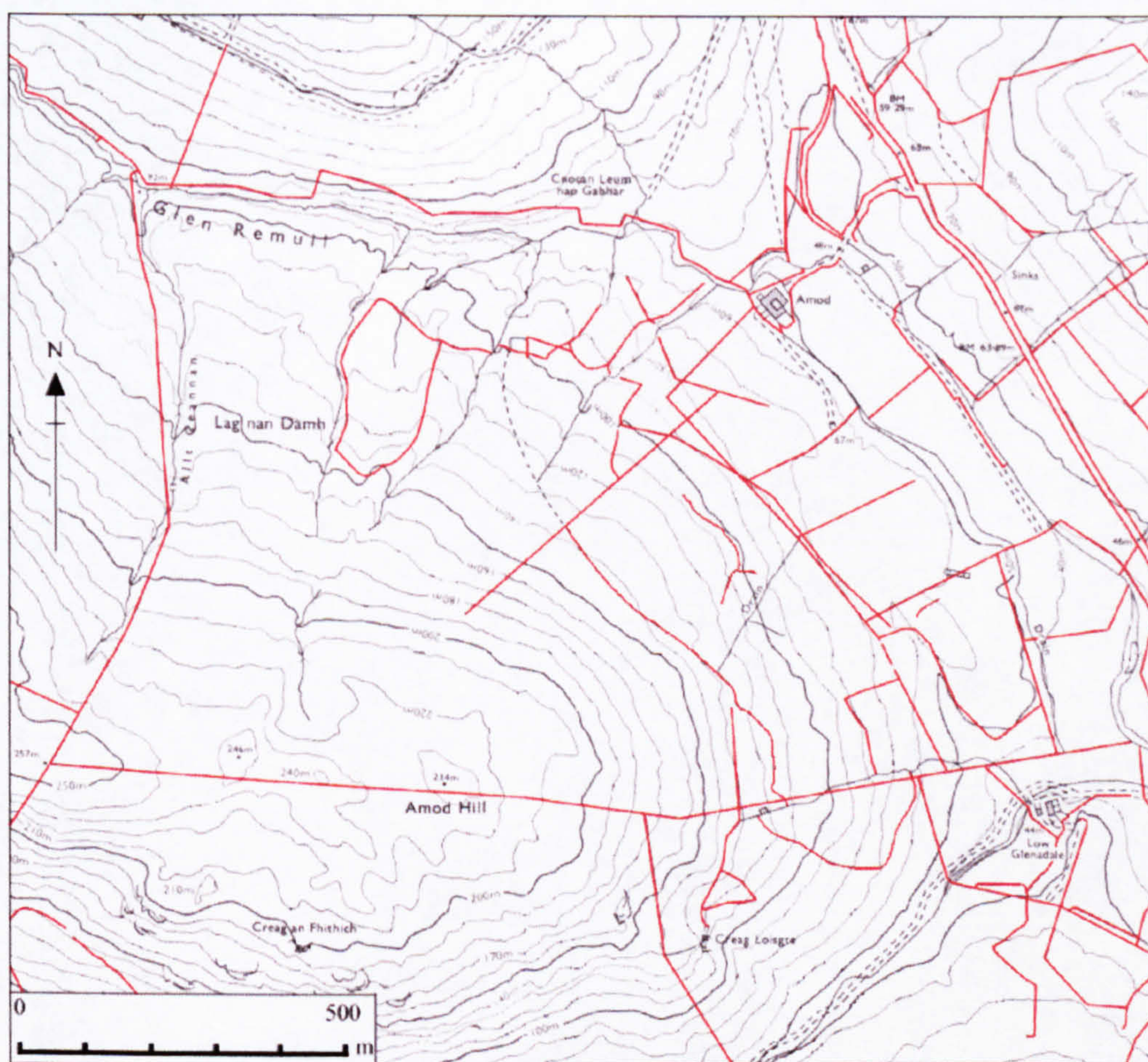


Figure 5.34: Regular enclosures and, on the high ground, the remains of amorphous enclosures. At the head of Glen Breakerie, Kintyre (as redrawn from the current OS 1:10 000 series).



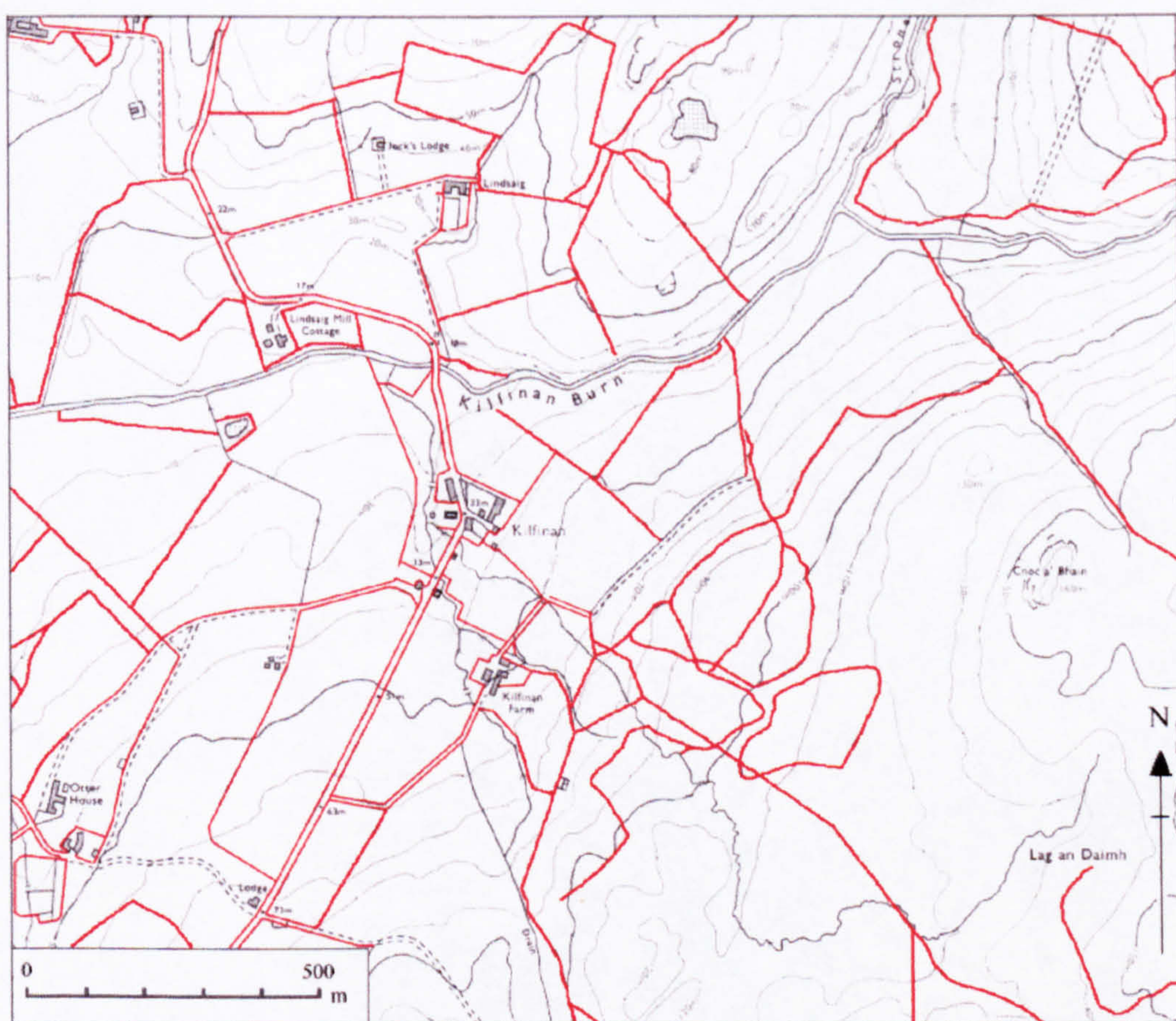


Figure 5.35: Regular and amorphous enclosures around the village of Kilfinan (as redrawn from the current OS 1:10 000 series). The enclosures, shown in red, are amorphous in plan on the higher slopes of the hills and become more regular as they move downslope, around Kilfinan and the surrounding farmsteads.





Plate 5.23: System of amorphous enclosures near Ardgaddan, Kilfinan, from the air. There are several phases of turf dyke here. Some can be seen crossing over others while some appear to be cut by later rig cultivation (photo: Dr. S.T. Driscoll).



Plate 5.24: Grid-like enclosure on the Laggan, Kintyre. The stone wall on the left has been replaced by a wire fence. In the process, the position of the field boundary has moved slightly. This is rare, however, and most boundaries in these field systems are situated today as they were defined in the nineteenth century or before (photo: C. Dalglish).



areas where those laying out the enclosures would have had more of a free hand with regard to form, the topography being less constraining. In Kintyre, the grid enclosures concentrate on the west coast and, principally, in the area from the Laggan south, excepting the Mull of Kintyre and other high ground. An estate plan of the Pennyland Estate, surveyed in 1806 by Alex. Langlands, shows such grid-pattern enclosure well (ABDA DR4/4/8; figure 5.36). This estate, the property of William MacDonald of Ballishare, seems to have been enclosed not long prior to the survey as field boundaries can be seen overlying a kailyard attached to one of the depicted settlements. It is possible that this survey represents intended rather than existing enclosure.

The Laggan in particular saw extensive draining in the period of Improvement, providing an expanse of fairly level ground for enclosure (figure 5.37). It will be remembered from above that Aros Moss was largely shown as bog on the Roy Map, but by the first edition OS map it had been drained and enclosed almost to its present state. In Kilfinan, the main concentration of grid enclosures is on Ardlamont point, though there are smaller patches around Kilfinan village and Otter Ferry, all on the coast.

Where the irregular fields are curvilinear, the grid-like fields are rectilinear, with sharp changes of direction at the junction of boundaries. The shape of the fields varies. Many are rectangular, either close to square or elongated, or trapezoidal. Occasionally other forms are found, like kites or triangles, filling the gaps between the rectangular and trapezoidal fields. The size of these fields also varies. Most fall within the same size range as the irregular fields, although the average size of the grid-like fields is larger, with many falling at the top of that range. Some grid-like fields are even larger, being between 250m and 500m across.

Such rectilinear fields have been seen by some as the successor of the irregular enclosure (Dixon 1994: 34). However, the history of enclosure in the study areas seems to have been more complex than this linear evolution. As has been discussed, irregular fields can be associated with an early phase of Improvement, and subsequently went out of use. The date at which they began to be constructed is unknown. However, they are often found in the same areas as deserted range farmsteads, and may therefore date to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries.

Rectilinear fields were, as we have also seen, in limited use at the time of the Roy Map. Soon after, they were becoming more widespread. Argyll Estates leases in Kintyre



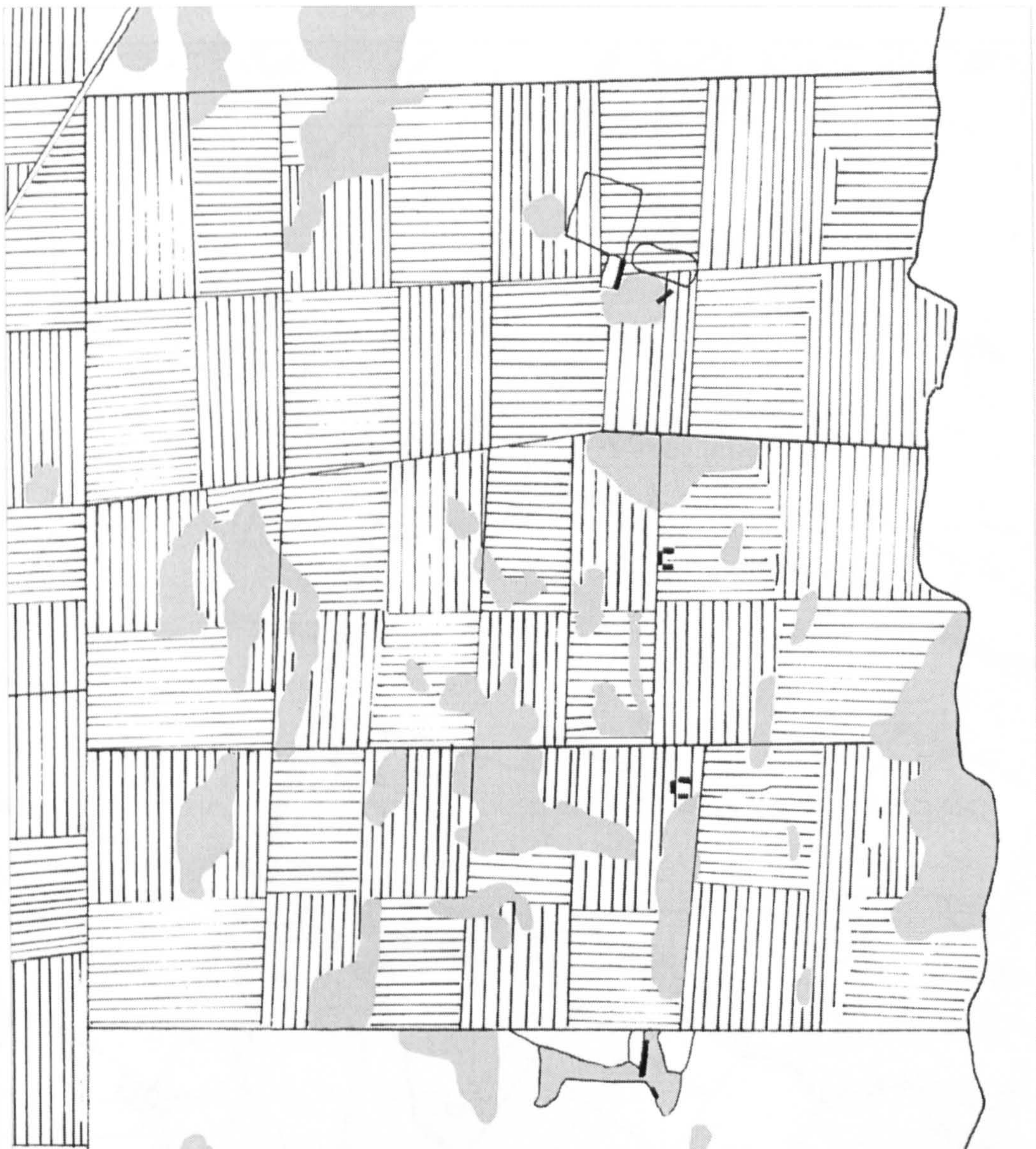


Figure 5.36: Part of the Pennyland Estate, Kintyre, as surveyed by Alex. Langlands in 1806 (redrawn from ABDA DR4/9/109). The plan appears to show two courtyard farmsteads and two other settlements of two buildings each. The regular enclosure system is clearly seen. The grey patches may represent boggy land.



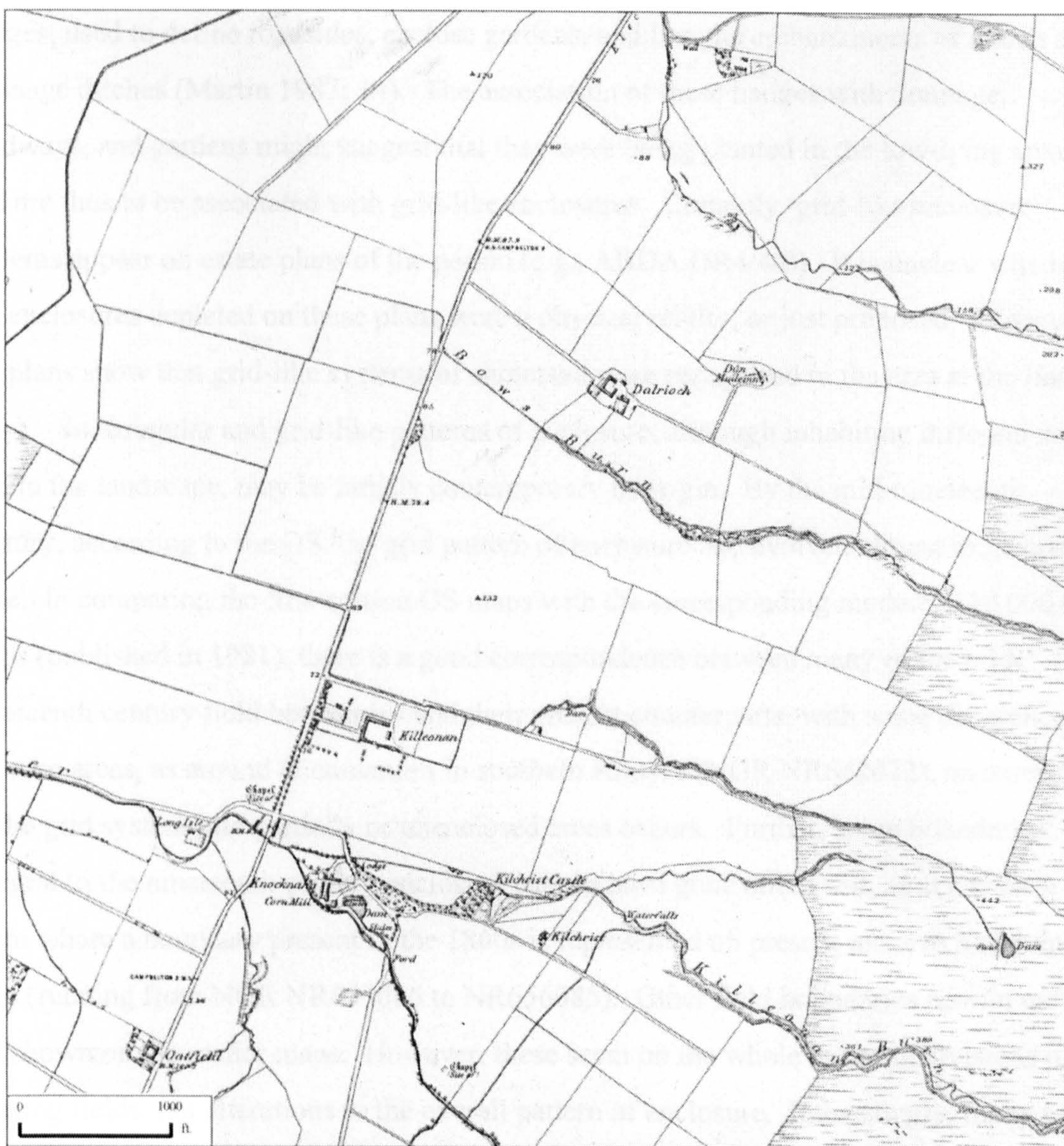


Figure 5.37: Part of the grid pattern of enclosure on the Laggan in Kintyre, as shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1867). Large areas of this level plain had been bog, patches of which can still be seen on the map. North to top of page.



in the late eighteenth century contained a clause binding tenants to plant and preserve thorn hedges, used to define roadsides, enclose gardens, and line the embankments of march and drainage ditches (Martin 1987: 14). The association of these hedges with drainage, roadways, and gardens might suggest that they were being planted in the low-lying areas, and are thus to be associated with grid-like enclosures. Certainly, grid-like enclosure systems appear on estate plans of the period (e.g., ABDA DR4/4/8). It is unclear whether the enclosures depicted on these plans were a physical reality, or just proposed. However, the plans show that grid-like systems of enclosure were recognised in the area at the time.

So, irregular and grid-like patterns of enclosure, although inhabiting different zones within the landscape, may be largely contemporary in origin. By the mid-nineteenth century, according to the OS, the grid pattern of enclosure had evolved almost to its present state. In comparing the first edition OS maps with the corresponding modern 1:10 000 OS maps (published in 1981), there is a good correspondence between many of the mid-nineteenth century field boundaries and their present counterparts, with some differences. In some areas, as around Glenmanuilt in southern Kintyre (NGR NR642072), an extension of the grid system into partially or unenclosed areas occurs. Further, some boundaries integral to the nineteenth century enclosure pattern have gone out of use, as at Carskey Farm where a boundary present in the 1860s is represented on present maps as a disjointed relic (running from NGR NR654086 to NR656085). Other field boundaries now in use are not shown on the earlier maps. However, these seem on the whole to be subdivisions of existing fields, not alterations to the overall pattern of enclosure. Interestingly, many of the relic irregular enclosures shown on present maps are omitted from the first edition OS maps, suggesting that they had gone out of use by that time. Other relic features, like some amorphous settlement and head dykes on the Mull, are also not shown even though they survive as ruinous structures and landscapes.

Although the grid and irregular patterns of enclosure were largely contemporary in origin, then, the grid-like pattern seems largely to have superseded the irregular by the mid-nineteenth century. This seems to be reflected in several comments by the minister for Southend in the New Statistical Account of 1845. He says: "The earlier cultivation of the soil seems to have occupied solely the higher parts of the ridges, and in almost every hill top in the eastern portion, at least the furrows and enclosures of fields, are easily traced in the old sward" (Kelly 1845: 419); and, "Of late years, the spirit of agricultural



improvement has carried the cultivator into the low rich lands of the valleys; and draining has enabled him to reap the reward of his enterprise” (Kelly 1845: 420).

The landscape beyond the area of enclosure, which we have seen as being the lower slopes of the hills and below, also saw fundamental change of use with Improvement. Linked to the coming of enclosures was the decline of the shieling system (Martin 1987: 15). With Improvement, the common grazings of the shieling were parcelled out to individual farms and tenants, and largely converted to sheep grazings (Gailey 1961: 90, 104; Martin 1987: 15; Stark 1845: 367). The Mull of Kintyre, already discussed in some detail, was by 1843 a single sheep walk supporting some six thousand sheep (Kelly 1845: 435). The landscape above the enclosed area, and previously above the head dyke, has on the whole remained open. This and the use of the hills as rough grazing demonstrate some continuity between the pre- and post-Improvement eras. The fundamental break was in the way these grazings were organised and managed, to which we shall return below, and in the concomitant abandonment of shieling settlement. By the mid-nineteenth century, in certain areas of Kilfinan at least, the hill ground was seeing increasing use for sport, with a number of areas described as shootings in a Valuation Roll of 1860/1861 (ABDA 1/73/13:52-54; see chapter 7 below). Again, this meant that the hillside remained largely open, although going through another change of use.

### Domestic space

As noted in brief above, material culture change with Improvement was not confined to the provinces of settlement and landscape. It also entered the home, where the organisation of domestic space was significantly altered. Increasing subdivision of space within the house and decreasing emphasis on the hearth as a focus of domestic life are considered here as the two main elements of Improvement within the home. It will become clear that Improvement in domestic space was not a simple process and, just as there are several different forms of settlement associated with Improvement, there is variation in the adoption of Improved domestic space.

Pre-Improvement dwellings were marked by their lack of internal division. All activities, whether cooking, eating, sleeping, or whatever, took place within a single space. With the courtyard steading there is an obvious transformation of the use of space within the house. The dwellings of these later steadings are highly subdivided internally.



As we have seen, the houses of courtyard farmsteads are generally of two storeys. This in itself provides a basic division between upper and lower floors. An early example of the type was seen at Limecraigs (at one stage a dower house, but a working farm all the same). This house has two rooms to the storey, of which there are two with a garret floor, divided by a central stairwell (figure 5.29). On a plan of the house, drawn in 1757, the two ground floor rooms are described as a dining room and a hall. The upper rooms are not labelled. Some at least must be bedrooms. A kitchen and bake-house are situated in two detached buildings to the sides of the main dwelling.

Although the precise arrangement of rooms in courtyard farmsteads throughout Kintyre and Kilfinan varies, all have as a common defining feature this elaborate subdivision of internal space. Many have facades similarly symmetrical to that at Limecraigs, suggesting a similar arrangement of rooms either side of a central hallway. Others, like Oatfield in Kintyre, have asymmetrical facades suggesting a different arrangement of rooms, but no less internal subdivision (plate 5.25).

Range farmsteads also exhibit a subdivision of domestic space (figure 5.24). Typically this subdivision is limited to the two rooms of the kitchen and the spence. In many examples, a fireplace evidences the kitchen in one of its end walls, although the spence often also has a fireplace (e.g., RCAHMS 1971: 197, 200). In some surviving abandoned range farmsteads, like Keremenach and Garvoine in Kintyre (RCAHMS 1971: 197, 200), there is also a small room, which has been called a closet. The reasons for the Royal Commission's use of this term, and their definition of it, are unclear, as are the activities to be associated with the space. Some of these linear ranges may have had a useable loft space, probably entered via a wooden stair in the entrance vestibule (RCAHMS 1971: 200). Again, our knowledge of the use of such lofts is limited, but it certainly could have provided additional sleeping space as well as storage. That this may have been the case is suggested by a recommendation in the *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Argyll* (Smith 1798: 18) that tenants should be encouraged to live in houses with a kitchen at one end, a family room at the other, and garrets for keeping and sleeping places, accessed by a stair opposite the door.

The subdivision of the dwelling of the range farmstead is more limited than that within the courtyard steading. Most daily domestic activities within the range farmstead





Plate 5.25: The courtyard farmstead of Oatfield, Kintyre, looking southwest. This farmstead is different from those like Machribeg and Inveryne (plates 5.16 and 5.17) in that the dwelling at Oatfield, on the left in the photograph, is not symmetrical in plan. However, the dwelling at Oatfield is highly subdivided and has fireplaces that are incorporated into the walls, as do the symmetrical dwellings at the other courtyard farmsteads (photo: C. Dalglish).



would have inhabited the kitchen space, something to which we will return below. However, the range farmstead still shows marked subdivision in comparison with the typical pre-Improvement dwelling.

With the cottage range internal subdivision is more limited again. The probable dwelling spaces within such ranges show no evidence of internal subdivision. These spaces could have been divided by box beds, or by other impermanent means. However, the fact that the dwelling spaces are fairly small may suggest that this was not the case. At Low Stillaig they are 7m by 5m internally in structures S1 and S2 (figure 5.27). At Meall Darroch in Kintyre the possible dwellings have dimensions in the range 4 to 10m long by 2.5 to 4.5m wide (see MacDonald (ed.); figure 5.28). Most of the dwellings at Meall Darroch are therefore of similar size to those at Low Stillaig, although at least one is substantially longer.

The other main element of pre-Improvement domestic space outlined above was the position of the hearth centrally placed in the floor. Again, with Improvement, this arrangement changed as the hearth was moved to the edge of the floor by an end wall. As with the subdivision of domestic space, though, the history of change in the position of the hearth cannot be understood in a simple linear fashion.

In the courtyard farmstead, hearths are found in many of the rooms within the dwelling, and are situated against the walls of those rooms and not centrally in the floor. This is evidenced by the position of the chimneys of the house. At Machribeg in southern Kintyre, for example, the main dwelling house has two chimneys, one in each of its end walls. These chimneys are positioned in such a way as to service most of the rooms of the house with fireplaces in the end walls. Limecraigs has a slightly different arrangement, with two chimneystacks situated either side of the central hallway. This arrangement still services most of the rooms with end wall fireplaces, however.

In some of the range farmsteads there is evidence of a similar movement of the hearth. The kitchen in Structure A at Balmavicar has a fireplace built into the wall separating it from the room, or spence (RCAHMS 1971: 194; figure 5.4). This is also the case at High Kilkivan. At Garvoine, both structures at Drumgarve, and Keremenach (figure 5.24), both the kitchen and spence have their own fireplaces built into their end walls. The remains of an end fireplace are to be seen at one site in Kilfinan, Achadachoun. Although the structure containing this end wall hearth survives as a single,



undifferentiated space, the construction of the building suggests it is later and different in character from the cottages at places like Low Stillaig. The structure at Achadachoun has substantial walls, built with large amounts of lime mortar and standing to a height of about eight feet; the corners of its walls are sharply square; and, the doorway is elaborated with a marked inward splay.

The movement of the hearth to an end wall was not universal with Improvement. In some houses in Kintyre visited by the English traveller Edward Bradley (*alias* Cuthbert Bede), the hearth sat in the centre of the floor (Bede 1861, volume 2: 135-137). Indeed, Bradley connects this use of space with that described for Highland houses by earlier travellers, such as Dr. Johnson (Bede 1861, volume 2: 107,135-137). He quotes Lord Teignmouth's 1836 description of Kintyre houses as still being relevant in his time (Bede 1861 volume 2: 107). Teignmouth said:

The farm-houses are generally, throughout Cantyre, old and poor habitations, far behind the general improvement visible in this part of the country . . . the fire is placed in the middle of the floor, contained in a grate, either square or shaped like a bowl, and raised a little above the ground, a custom peculiar to Cantyre . . . . There are some few farm-houses in the modern style, indicating the slow growth of Improvement. (Teignmouth 1836: 388)

The situation described in these texts is similar to that found in Fairhurst's excavations at Lix, Perthshire (Fairhurst 1969; figure 5.38). There the deserted houses and outbuildings were arranged on a roughly rectilinear pattern, with the structures sometimes forming several sides of a courtyard (Fairhurst 1969:166, fig.4). The general pre-excavation assessment of Lix, therefore, is that the majority of visible remains resulted from a period of Improvement. This stands in contrast to the excavated plans of several of the structures at East Lix. A representative building (EL/I/D) was excavated (Fairhurst 1969:181-185; figure 5.39). The plan of this structure suggests a longhouse. A single entrance in the south wall leads into a largely unpartitioned space. This door leads into the western, byre end of the building, identifiable through the presence of a central drain. Turning right would take you into the eastern, dwelling end, with a hearth placed in the centre of the earthen floor.



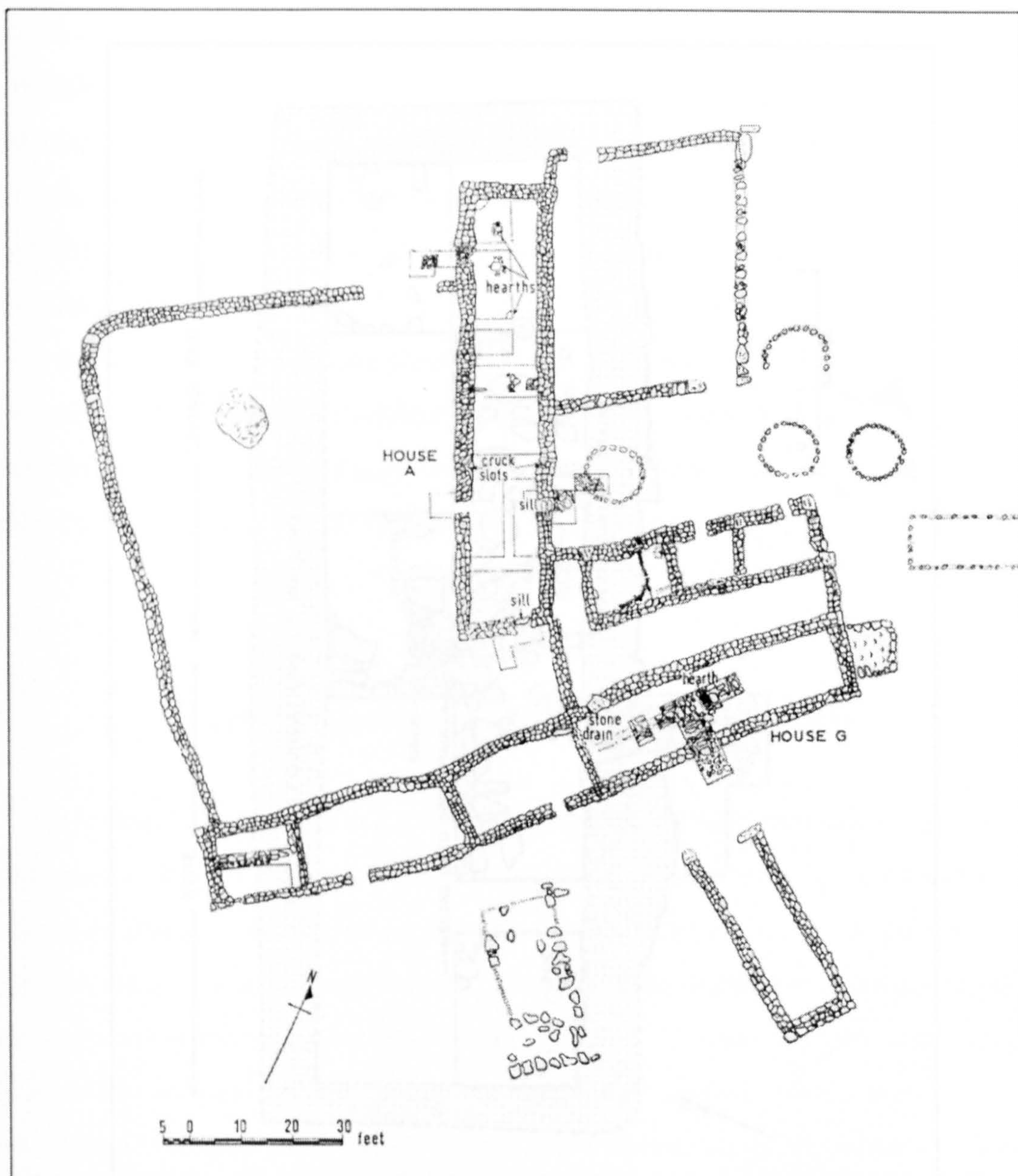


Figure5.38: The loose courtyard of East Lix cluster 3 (after Fairhurst 1969: figure 9). Two sides of the courtyard are formed by dwellings and outbuildings, with the third and fourth sides completed by an enclosing wall. One of the dwellings certainly contains a byre at one end, seen from its central drain.



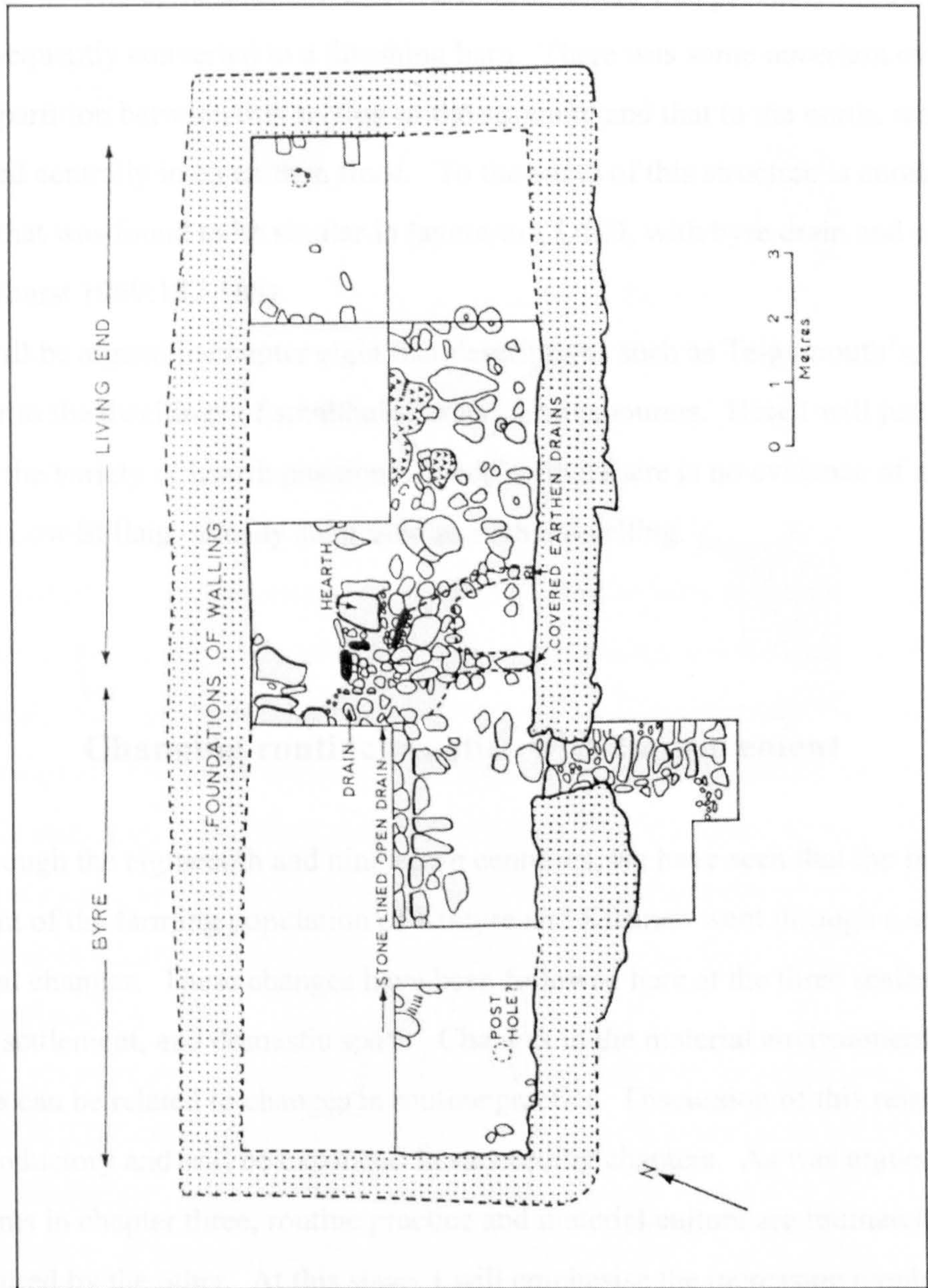


Figure 5.39: Byre-dwelling with central hearth, East Lix EL/1/D (after Fairhurst 1969: figure 7). The byre is evidenced by a central drain.



A second excavated structure (EL/III/A) follows a similar pattern (Fairhurst 1969:186-187). There, the southern end of a long structure was probably used initially as a byre, subsequently converted to a threshing barn. There was some uncertain evidence of an internal partition between this section of the structure and that to the north, which had a hearth placed centrally in an earthen floor. To the south of this structure is another (EL/III/G) that was found to be similar in layout to EL/I/D, with byre drain and central hearth (Fairhurst 1969:187-188).

It will be argued in chapter eight that descriptions such as Teignmouth's, quoted above, refer to the dwellings of smallholders and farm labourers. Here I will just underscore the variety of hearth positions by saying that there is no evidence of an end wall fireplace at Low Stillaig, already suggested as such a dwelling.

## **Changing routine practice with Improvement**

Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we have seen that the familiar environment of the farming population of Kintyre and Kilfinan went through a series of fundamental changes. These changes have been followed here at the three scales of landscape, settlement, and domestic space. Changes in the material environment at these three scales can be related to changes in routine practice. Discussion of this relationship here is introductory and will be expanded in succeeding chapters. As was argued in general terms in chapter three, routine practice and material culture are intimately related, each structured by the other. At this stage, I will emphasise the increasing emphasis on the individual within routine practice. As seen in chapter four above, this emphasis on the individual can be seen as commensurate with the emergence of capitalism. However, as we have seen in this chapter, changes to the material environment with Improvement were significantly varied. This clearly has implications for a discussion of changing routine practice and this is something I shall return to in more detail in chapter eight.

Pre-Improvement routine practice was communal and familial. By this I mean, specifically, that the individual experienced everyday activities as a member of the community of the *baile* or of several *bailtean*, or as a member of a family. The communal aspects of routine life are largely to be associated with the settlement and landscape scales



of the material environment. Familial aspects are to be associated more with domestic space.

It was through daily or cyclical communal activity that the community, of the *baile* or several neighbouring *bailtean*, was constituted. Cultivation, often using a plough that required the draft-livestock of several tenants, was communally organised (Fairhurst 1960: 69; Grant 1995: 44). Individually owned livestock were also periodically communally maintained. The cattle and other livestock of the whole farm or even several neighbouring farms were taken to and kept at the shieling as a unit (see Bil 1990). Where, in other situations, a herd was employed, this was the responsibility of the tenants as a group (e.g., Stewart 1992: 216). Other tasks, such as the cutting of peat for fuel, were also communal (Grant 1995: 199).

The pre-Improvement elements of landscape and settlement outlined above all played a part in structuring such communal activity. Shieling and herding made sense in a landscape that was largely unenclosed and where cattle might otherwise freely wander amongst the crops. The intermixture of tenants' strips of arable under the open-field system made communal ploughing sensible and the lack of enclosure of individual portions of arable made such communal ploughing easier. Nucleated settlement would have placed the inhabitants of a farm in close daily proximity, meaning that they were already gathered for communal activity.

The typical pre-Improvement dwelling was a single unpartitioned space with a central hearth. Thus, all daily activity within the house took place in the presence of other members of the family. Sleeping, cooking, and eating would have all happened in this way. The position of the hearth in the centre of the floor meant that all those activities associated with it literally took centre stage. This could include some household industries, such as spinning, weaving, or the firing of pottery (Mitchell 1880: 27-28). Those facing the fire would direct their attention to others sitting around it. In some of the sites discussed above, we saw the presence of turf benches positioned round the hearth, and thus directing attention inward towards the fire and those surrounding it. The hearth provided a focus for story telling or other aspects of the *ceilidh* (Grant 1995: 162), an impromptu gathering that could involve music, discussion, and food. This multi-variant use of space is to be seen in Dorothy Wordsworth's description of the kitchen of an early nineteenth century Highland inn:



About seven or eight travellers, probably drovers, with as many dogs, were sitting in a complete circle round a large peat-fire in the middle of the floor, each with a mess of porridge, in a wooden vessel, upon his knee; a pot, suspended from one of the black beams, was boiling on the fire; two or three women pursuing their household business, children playing on the floor. (Wordsworth, in Thin (ed.)1981: 183)

Material change with Improvement undermined the pre-Improvement structuring of family and community. Settlement was dispersed, consisting of isolated farmhouses grouped together with their associated outbuildings in a courtyard or linear range. The settlement pattern of Improvement represented the fragmentation of the *baile*. People would have had less opportunity to spend time together as part of their daily routine under these new circumstances. Further, when occasional visits did occur, the arrangement of space within the house to some extent distanced the visitors from the host family. The use of the spence of the range farmstead or parlour, dining, or other similar room in the courtyard farmstead separated the visit from other activities within the house. Cooking, sleeping and other areas were avoided, showing the visitor only a fragment of the daily environment of their hosts.

The growth or creation of towns like Southend, Campbeltown and Kilfinan was no exception to the process of the fragmentation of community. These nucleations of settlement consisted of the homes and workplaces of merchants, craftspeople and others that were not engaged in communal routine in the way that the farming population of the *bailtean* had been. Internal subdivision of the houses in such towns was also increasingly common in the period of Improvement (e.g., RCAHMS 1971: 184-187). Indeed, several villas in Campbeltown, dating to the early nineteenth century, have an internal arrangement of space very similar to that of dwelling within the courtyard farmstead (e.g., RCAHMS 1971: 185-186; figure 5.40).

The coherence of the community of the *baile*, as routinely structured, was also undermined at the landscape level. The enclosure of fields dispensed with the need for herds or for shieling as livestock were separated from crops and each other by field boundaries. Enclosures were considered necessary by some for just this reason. Enclosures saved the expense of herding and allowed the cattle to graze freely, without



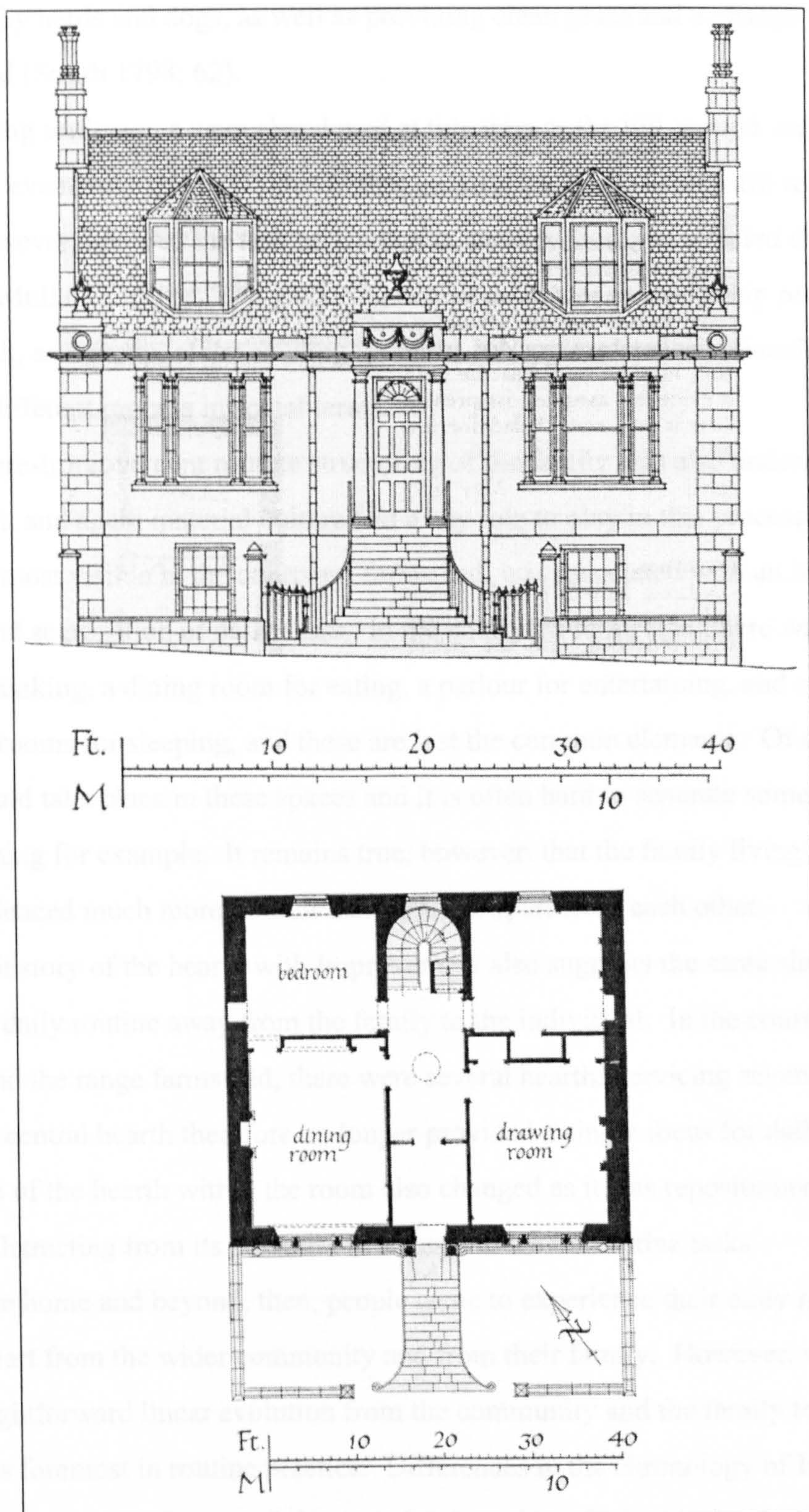


Figure 5.40: An early nineteenth century sea captain's villa in Campbeltown (after RCAHMS 1971: 185-186, figures 176 and 177). This town house is similar to the dwellings of nearby courtyard farmsteads in that it is highly subdivided and has chimneys that are incorporated into its walls.



being teased by herds and dogs, as well as providing clean grass and a change of pasture when required (Smith 1798: 62).

Shieling settlements were abandoned at this time as the hill ground was turned over to sheep, and eventually sport. On this higher ground, the sheep would still require herding. However, this was the task of shepherds, perhaps living in isolated dwellings like those on the Mull of Kintyre. The gathering of a large part of the township population and their livestock, as a group, at the shieling grounds, although related functionally to herding, was quite a different process in social terms.

The pre-Improvement routine structuring of the family was also undermined with Improvement, and again material culture had a key role to play in this process. Internal subdivision, most visible in the courtyard farmstead, was associated with an increasing separation and segregation of daily tasks. In the courtyard farmstead, there was (and is) a kitchen for cooking, a dining room for eating, a parlour for entertaining, and several separate bedrooms for sleeping, and these are just the common elements. Of course, other activities could take place in these spaces and it is often hard to separate some, like eating and entertaining for example. It remains true, however, that the family living in such a house experienced much more of their daily routine apart from each other.

The history of the hearth with Improvement also suggests the same shift in emphasis in daily routine away from the family to the individual. In the courtyard farmstead and the range farmstead, there were several hearths servicing several different rooms. The central hearth therefore no longer provided a single focus for daily activity. The position of the hearth within the room also changed as it was repositioned against a wall, again detracting from its potential to act as a focus for routine tasks.

In the home and beyond, then, people came to experience their daily routine more and more apart from the wider community and from their family. However, we cannot draw a straightforward linear evolution from the community and the family to the individual as foremost in routine practice. Differences in the chronology of Improvement between Kintyre and Kilfinan, and the varied penetration of Improved orderings of space and practice within those areas are clearly significant considering the arguments advanced in the previous two chapters.

The next three chapters will explore the reasons behind these variations. Variation in the general chronology of Improvement will be argued to relate to the varied biographies



of individual landowners in Kilfinan and Kintyre. Improvement, for these landowners, came with the adoption at a varied rate of the tenets of Enlightenment thought, and the connection between Improvement and Enlightenment is explored in the next chapter. The landowners in question were not simply passively influenced by Enlightenment philosophy, but instigated Improvement in order to address certain social contradictions specific to their personal biographies or family histories. The Kintyre case study is used in chapter seven to investigate Improvement as a solution to long-seated conflict arising from a peculiarity of Highland society under the clan system. This peculiarity was that members of the farming population were at once members of the community of the clan and tenants of a landlord, and therefore potentially held conflicting obligations, rights, and responsibilities. The Kilfinan case study considers Improvement in the context of the conflict between the position of landowners as members of the emergent Middle Class and as proprietors of traditional Highland estates.

Improvement, therefore, will be seen to have a varied history in different areas in relation to the individual histories of different landowning families. However, the history of Improvement in the study areas is not just the history of innovating landlords. Above, we have seen significant variation in terms of material change with Improvement. Improvement in the landscape, most importantly involving enclosure and the decline of shieling, was essentially universal. However, internal subdivision of domestic space and the social defocusing of the hearth were less widespread. The presence of amorphous nucleated settlements in Kilfinan, within an otherwise Improved landscape, may also be significant.

In chapter eight, the significance of variation in the progress of Improvement will be understood as varied response to Improvement on the part of the resident farming population. Improvement and capitalism were accepted, rejected, or more ambiguously received through the cessation or continuation of different aspects of pre-Improvement practice. The nature of the response of the farming population to Improvement and capitalism will be seen to revolve, above all, around the question of land rights.



## Chapter Six

### Improvement and Enlightenment

In order to understand why some landowners instigated Improvement and why they attempted to reorganise landscape, settlement, and domestic space in the way they did, it is necessary to recognise the link between Improvement and the Scottish Enlightenment.

This chapter begins by considering the nature of that link. There is a general connection between Improvement and Enlightenment at an intellectual level, both movements expressing complementary views of the world. We might go so far as to consider Improvement a practical manifestation of Enlightenment thought, which should only be separated analytically.

Beyond this general link, the landowners concerned in the case studies of this thesis can be shown to have adopted the main tenets of Enlightenment thought in more specific contexts. The Improving Dukes of Argyll had direct links with the Scottish Enlightenment through their relationship with David Hume, in particular. It is possible that they discussed Enlightenment social theory directly with such members of the *literati*, and several of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Dukes certainly read major Enlightenment works.

Improving landowners in Kilfinan, in general, came to the Enlightenment rather later and less directly. For most of this latter group of landowners, their contact with the Enlightenment was through their membership of the urban-based Middle Class, emergent from the late eighteenth century. The Scottish Middle Class at that time developed a distinctive Enlightenment-inspired culture.

Several key aspects of Scottish Enlightenment social theory and philosophy are emphasised below in relation to Improvement. Enlightenment historiography understood the past as stadial. The history of all societies was seen to be their progression in stages to the commercial age. This progression was universal and inevitable as its driving force was the innate desire in all humans to improve their condition, an aspect of human nature.

Importantly, the commercial age was considered to be that stage of society already attained in England and to which the Scottish Lowlands were at least in transition. Scottish Enlightenment thought, then, can be seen to have imbued a distinct form of cultural



inferiorism.

The third main aspect of the Scottish Enlightenment discussed below is its cultivation of a disposition of independence. This disposition was characterised by a belief that people were free to alter the conditions of their existence.

These three aspects of Enlightenment thought combined to provide Highland landowners with the mental capacity for Improvement. They could envision the large-scale alteration of their material and social environment. Further, Enlightenment thought suggested the character of Improvement by encouraging reliance on English and Lowland Scottish exemplars for change. Significant aspects of Highland Improvement had a prior history in England and the Lowlands. These included enclosure, the decline of shieling, the dispersal of settlement, the subdivision of domestic space, and the spatial and social decentralisation of the hearth.

In common with the previous chapter, discussion of the relevant aspects of the English and Lowland material environment is discussed below at the scales of settlement, landscape, and domestic space. Also as previously, this changing environment is related to changing routine practice.

## **Improvement and the Scottish Enlightenment**

General links have been noted between the Scottish Enlightenment and agricultural Improvement. As Adams says (1980: 173-174):

These were the years of overpowering intellectual vitality in Scotland that we know as the Scottish Enlightenment . . . [and] the Agricultural Revolution was a facet of the intellectual whirlwind that swept across the land. Man had come to believe that the new science made all things possible.

Improvement, as Berry (1997: 11-12) notes, was far from something that happened behind the backs of the Enlightenment *literati*. Henry Home, Lord Kames, one Enlightenment scholar, was himself an Improver and even wrote a handbook on the subject entitled *The Gentleman Farmer: Being an attempt to improve Agriculture, by subjecting it*



*to the Test of Rational Principles* (1776). The work most associated with the Improving movement, the *Statistical Account*, has itself been described as *the* distinctive product of the Scottish Enlightenment (Mitchison 1962: 124). Elements of the social theory of the Scottish Enlightenment, discussed below, were almost ready-made to explain differences between Highland and Lowland or English agriculture (Berry 1997: 12) and provided a course for action in Improving the Highland material environment.

### The Dukes of Argyll and Enlightenment

The link between Improvement and Enlightenment is not just general. It can be demonstrated that all the landowners concerned in the case studies of this thesis had different kinds of connection to the Scottish Enlightenment. The connection is direct in the case of the Dukes of Argyll. David Hume, described by some as the central figure of the Scottish Enlightenment and primarily known for his philosophical and historical works (Broadie (ed.) 1997: 799), was an admirer and protégé of Archibald, the third Duke (1743-1761) (Lindsay and Cosh 1973: 193). Hume also spent some time at Rosneath, an Argyll seat on the Gareloch, in 1769 when John was fourth Duke (1761-1770) (Greig (ed.) 1932b: 207). Further, he was amongst the large retinue that accompanied John, the fifth Duke (1770-1806), on his first visit to Inverary since receiving that title (Lindsay and Cosh 1973: 193). Recently prior to the visit to Inverary Hume had been appointed an Under-Secretary of State by Duke John's brother-in-law General Henry Seymour Conway (Lindsay and Cosh 1973: 193).

It is possible, then, that the fifth Duke, one of the noted Improvers of the family, and Hume discussed topical issues, including perhaps agricultural Improvement and Enlightenment literature. Certainly, Hume's published letters suggest discussion of the latter, if not the former, with Archibald, third Duke, also a noted Improver. In a letter of 13th February 1748 and addressed to Lord Tinwald, Hume asks for several of his essays to be forwarded by the addressee to Duke Archibald, whom he describes as "undoubtedly a Man of Sense & Learning" (Greig (ed.) 1932a: 113). Duke Archibald's opinion is clearly valued by Hume who says in a letter of April 12th 1759, this time addressed to Adam Smith, philosopher and economist (see Broadie (ed.) 1997: 804 for a biographical sketch):

I give thanks for the agreeable present of your *Theory* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*,



Smith's first book, just published]. Wedderburn and I made presents of our copies to such of our acquaintances as we thought good judges, and proper to spread the reputation of the book. I sent one to the Duke of Argyll . . . (Greig (ed.) 1932a: 303)

Argyll's praise of the book is mentioned later in the same letter, although Hume suggests Smith's usefulness in the Glasgow elections as a subtext to this (Greig (ed.) 1932a: 305).

Direct connections with prominent Enlightenment figures aside, the appreciation of Scottish Enlightenment thought by the Dukes of Argyll is evident in other contexts. The eighth Duke (1847-1900), born too late to have met the likes of Hume, says in his autobiography that he read the works of Hume and William Robertson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and noted for his historical works, with pleasure and that he was extremely interested in the work of Dugald Stewart, mathematician and moral philosopher (Campbell 1906: 84, 224; see Broadie (ed.) 1997: 802-803, 805-806 for biographical sketches). This Duke, George, was a prolific author and one of his major works (Campbell 1887), which discusses pre- and post-Improvement Scottish society, is a good example of the progressive, stadial type of history that emerged in Scotland with the Enlightenment, and to which we shall return.

### Enlightenment and the emergent Middle Class

The connection between the House of Argyll and the Scottish Enlightenment is fairly direct. For the Improving landowners of Kilfinan the Scottish Enlightenment also provided a conceptual framework for Improvement. It is certainly possible that some or all of the landowners in question read Enlightenment works, though had they not there is still a demonstrable and less overt connection to be found between them and the Enlightenment. As will be seen in chapter seven, and in one way or another, most of these landowners were part of the emergent Middle Class, whose outlook had Enlightenment reason at its core. It was through their connections to the Middle Class that they absorbed Enlightenment principles.

Nenadic (1988: 111) defines the Scottish Middle Class, emergent from the late eighteenth century, as consisting of four broad groupings. The largest, around 80% in late eighteenth century Glasgow and Edinburgh, and more in the smaller towns, consisted of businessmen. This group was made up of the makers and sellers of goods and services,



such as merchants, manufacturers, shopkeepers, craftsmen, bankers, and distributors. The second largest group were professionals, dominated by the ancient professions of law and the church and the more recent medical professions. The other two groups were employees (tax, customs and excise, and local government officials, or business or law clerks) and the leisured (mostly independent women and retired men) (Nenadic 1988: 112). It was in the large towns of Edinburgh and Glasgow that the Middle Class was large and prosperous, although ports like Greenock and Port Glasgow also had substantial Middle Class populations (Nenadic 1988: 112).

Between the time of the first Statistical Account (1780s-1790s) and the 1830s a distinct Middle Class consciousness can be seen to have emerged (Nenadic 1988: 118,120). The sense of identity and collective solidarity that evolved in this period can be discussed with reference to a number of themes outside of the basic fact of geographical proximity provided by town life (Nenadic 1988: 120-122). Of the themes discussed by Nenadic, I have highlighted those pertinent here.

First, within the context of the towns, ideas, knowledge, and an awareness of common interests or grievances was articulated widely. A sense of intellectual proximity was linked to geographical proximity. By the later eighteenth century a new intellectual culture was based in the thought of the Enlightenment, both in its refined academic and more popular forms:

The mood was essentially optimistic; there was faith in future progress. With an emphasis on intellectual improvement, rational enquiry and the positive use of time, this culture was distinct. (Nenadic 1988: 121)

Also contributing to the formation of Middle Class identity in this context were the connected themes of consumerism and the re-ordering of space. The display of material goods, centred in the towns on the elaboration of the home, combined with the increasing physical separation of the domestic and work spheres of life, allowed the Middle Class to distance themselves from the rest of urban society. A new type of home, and the social activities and relationships that home allowed, were central to the development of a distinct Middle Class. The re-ordering of space went further than this, however:



The development of the 'new town' in the later eighteenth century – Edinburgh was the British exemplar, though there were lesser versions in most towns – is vital to an understanding of the Middle Class. New town design, symmetrical and grid-like, articulated the desire for a new sort of orderliness to replace existing patterns of incoherent urban growth; it was a powerful metaphor for social order and control. (Nenadic 1988: 121)

Added to a new conception of ordered space, consumerism and a flourishing new intellectual culture born of the Scottish Enlightenment was the desire for cultural assimilation with England. Indeed, I will argue below that this last factor itself cannot be separated from Enlightenment ideas of progress and of stadial history. Part of the Middle Class identity that emerged was a disdain for Scotticisms and the pursuit of the English idiom in speech and literature (see, in general, Basker 1991), or a conscious revision of aspects of the Scottish past, such as Jacobitism, in a romantic and non-threatening form.

Directly or indirectly, then, the Improving landowners of Kintyre and Kilfinan adopted the tenets of Scottish Enlightenment thought. The social theory of the Scottish Enlightenment, often expressed in discourses on history and historiography and on human nature, will be seen below to have provided a definite programme of reform for the Improving movement. Scottish Enlightenment thought not only justified and naturalised Improvement, but suggested where exemplars for Improved houses, settlements, and landscapes were to be found. This intimate link between Improvement and Enlightenment provides one explanation for the chronological discrepancy of Improvement between Kintyre and Kilfinan. The Dukes of Argyll came into direct contact with Enlightenment thought during the *floruit* of the Scottish Enlightenment itself, in the mid to late eighteenth century. Landowners in Kilfinan, for whom the Middle Class context was their prime contact, came to Enlightenment thought later, from the late eighteenth century at earliest.

### **Enlightenment historiography. The stages of society**

According to Kidd (1993: 28-29), Medieval and Early Modern Scotland had a



strong ethnocentric tradition of political discourse. This was founded on a version of history that emphasised Scottish nationhood and was proud of a past of national independence closely linked to domestic constitutional freedom from tyrannical kings. However, from the late seventeenth century this view of the Scottish past was increasingly undermined as constitutional freedom became increasingly associated with English prosperity (Kidd 1993: chapter 3).

Historiography in the first half of the eighteenth century was dominated by partisan Whig-Jacobite debates over the Scottish past (Kidd 1993: chapter 5). These histories were grounded with reference to an Original Contract (in which the majority in society, where in the State of Nature each individual has the right to freedom, agree to set aside their natural right to govern themselves) or ancient constitution (giving aristocrats the right to resist the monarchy). Questions such as the nature of kingship (absolute or elected?) were debated in an arena that emphasised party, not nation. With the fading of the Jacobite threat after the mid-eighteenth century, party legitimacy ceased to be the keystone of political debate. The disappearance of this bipartisan discourse coupled with the emergence of Enlightenment historical sociology resulted in historical inferiorism and the adoption of an Anglo-British institutional identity (Kidd 1993: 96-99).

Scottish Enlightenment historiography was markedly different from its predecessors theoretically. It rejected appeals to the Original Contract or ancient constitution, arguing that all human history was stadial and could be understood with reference to human nature, which was universal and uniform.

Perhaps the most famous of the stadial accounts of human history is Smith's four-stage theory. He says:

There are four distinct states which mankind pass thro: first, the Age of Hunters; secondly, the Age of Shepherds; thirdly, the Age of Agriculture; and fourthly, the Age of Commerce. (Adam Smith, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 479)

As we might suspect from the labels given to each of these ages, Smith defined them in economic terms. On the Age of Hunters he argues:

If we should suppose 10 or 12 persons of different sexes settled in an uninhabited



island, the first method they would fall upon for their sustenance would be to support themselves by the wild fruits and wild animals which the country afforded. Their sole business would be hunting the wild beasts or catching the fishes. (Adam Smith, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 479)

However, these imaginary hunters would soon feel the need to progress to the next stage of history:

In process of time, as their numbers multiplied, they would find the chase too precarious for their support. They would be necessitated to contrive some other method whereby to support themselves . . . . The contrivance they would most naturally think of, would be to tame some of those wild animals they caught, and by affording them better food than what they could get elsewhere they would induce them to continue about their land themselves and multiply their kind. Hence would arise the age of shepherds. (Adam Smith, in Broadie 1997: 479)

The population growth that this economic advancement allowed would engender further change:

. . . when a society becomes numerous they would find a difficulty in supporting themselves by herds and flocks. Then they would naturally turn themselves to the cultivation of the land and the raising of such plants and trees as produced nourishment fit for them . . . they would gradually advance into the age of agriculture. (Adam Smith, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 480)

Finally:

As society was farther improved, the severall arts, which at first would be exercised by each individual as far as was necessary for his welfare, would be separated; some persons would cultivate one and others, as they severally inclined. They would exchange with one another what they produced more than was necessary for their support, and get in exchange for them the commodities they stood in need of and did



not produce themselves. This exchange of commodities extends in time not only betwixt the individualls of the same society but betwixt those of different nations . . . Thus at last the age of commerce arises. (Adam Smith, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 480)

Note the inevitability of this stadial progression and the qualitative judgement implied by terms such as improved.

Others propounded this stadial view of human history in a variety of forms. John Millar's description of societal progress is similar, if more succinct (John Millar, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 491), and Adam Ferguson compares the history of mankind, from "rudeness to civilization" with the development of a child from infancy to manhood (Adam Ferguson, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 499; for biographies of Millar and Ferguson see Broadie (ed.) 1997: 797-798, 801), again implying an inevitability in the process and offering a qualitative judgement on the stages prior to that of the modern, civilised, and commercial age. Hume in general, also adopts the stadial view:

The bulk of every state may be divided into *husbandmen* and *manufacturers* . . . . As soon as men quit their savage state, where they live chiefly by hunting and fishing, they must fall into these two classes; though the arts of agriculture employ *at first* the most numerous parts of the society. Time and experience improve so much these arts, that the land may easily maintain a much greater number of men, than those who are immediately employed in its culture, or who furnish the more necessary manufactures to such as are so employed. (David Hume, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 388-389; emphasis in original)

The economic basis of each stage in a society's development is referred to throughout, but the change from one age to another involved much more than the simply economic. Smith's description of the process, seen above, comes in the context of a discussion on the origin and development of property rights. He argues that regulations concerning property rights vary according to the stage society is in at a given time (Adam Smith, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 479-487). In contemporary North America, he argues for example, the age of hunters subsisted. As a result, the only injury that could be done to an individual was to deprive them of their game. This lack of personal property resulted in a



lack of laws and regulations concerning it and in a lack of regard for theft. In such a stage of society, property begins and ends with physical possession. With the age of shepherds, flocks and herds would be considered the property of those who tamed them, with physical possession becoming less relevant in determining property rights. As a result, laws and regulations become more numerous and complex and theft is regarded more seriously, being punishable by death in Tartary, as Smith's example goes. With the age of agriculture, theft and open robbery is less of a threat and property laws will be less rigorous, but more complex to deal with the extension of property over areas of land. Lastly, with the age of commerce, property laws become proportionately increased with regard to the subjects of property. It is in this last age that private property really emerges as common land is divided once and for all. Smith's example here is the rise of a city, where an individual will farm that land adjacent to their fixed abode. The course of society through history therefore not only involves stadial and progressive economic change, but also corresponding change in the laws and institutions of that society.

The social changes that accompany each stage were considered by some to go further still and to include changes in a society's mentalité. Henry Home, Lord Kames, for example, says in his discussion on the rise and fall of patriotism:

The members of a tribe, in their original state of hunting and fishing, being little united but by a common language, have no notion of patria; and scarce any notion of society, unless when they join in an expedition against an enemy, or against wild beasts. The shepherd-state, where flocks and herds are possessed in common, gives a clear notion of common interest; but still none of patria. The sense of patria begins to unfold itself, when a people leave off wandering, to settle upon a territory which they call their own. Agriculture connects them together; and government still more . . . a man's country, and his countrymen, are to him in conjunction an object of peculiar affection, termed *amor patriæ*, or patriotism: an affection that rises high among a people intimately connected by regular government, by husbandry, by commerce, and by a common interest. (Henry Home, Lord Kames, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 521)



## Human nature, the Commercial Age, and human independence

Enlightenment historiography posited that each stage in a society's history is quite distinct in terms of economy, social institutions and cultural values. Further, the progression from stage to stage is generally in a set order and moves gradually towards civilisation (the commercial age). This pattern was considered to be universal and to explain the diversity of social life throughout the world, accounting for the history of contemporary western nations and the differences between the then current state of those nations and those societies increasingly encountered in areas like the American continent. Why should this progression be universal? The answer to this question was seen to lie with human nature, although other important forces for change were discussed (Chitnis 1976: 104-106).

John Millar sums up the aspect of human nature of interest here:

There is . . . in man a disposition and capacity for improving his condition, by the exertion of which, he is carried from one degree of advancement to another; and the similarity of his wants, as well as of the faculties by which those wants are supplied, has everywhere produced a remarkable uniformity in the several steps of his progression. (John Millar, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 490-491)

There is an innate drive in all people to improve their condition in life. This coupled with the stadial account of history explains the diversity in human society and history. All societies naturally progress from the uncivilised to the civilised, it is human nature (it is *natural*) that they do so, and the diverse societies of the world are different because they are at different stages in this development. With time all societies will reach the end point of the commercial age.

The commercial age needs further consideration as it is a value judgement on the superiority of that age that conditions much of Enlightenment thinking on society. The commercial stage was seen to bring prosperity and liberty, existing in a complex inter-relation with the rule of law and justice (Berry 1997: 122-123). In refutation of the view that love of liberty is most perfect amongst barbarians, Millar argues:



Where-ever men of inferior condition are enabled to live in affluence by their own industry, and, in procuring their livelihood, have little occasion to court the favour of their superiors, there may we expect that ideas of liberty will be universally diffused. This happy arrangement of things, is naturally produced by commerce and manufactures; (John Millar, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 545)

Another important association was between commercial society and England. The *literati* considered that Scotland was under a progression to the commercial age and were aware of England as a neighbour advanced to that position (Chitnis 1976: 117). This conditioned (and inspired) their enquiry into human history and society. As a result, the benefits of commercial society outlined above came to be associated with English society. Although Enlightenment *literati* did conceive of social problems that the commercial age could bring (see, e.g., Adam Ferguson, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 497-506), it was generally held to be a superior age and such problems as there were often entered discussion not in argument against progress to the commercial age, but in order to define remedies to those problems and, thus, aid social progression.

The natural progress of history, then, was the stadial movement of society toward the commercial age, above all to be associated with English society. This line of thought directed Improvers to English (and, in the case of the Highlands, Lowland Scottish) agriculture and rural society for exemplars for change. However, there was one other key aspect of Enlightenment thought essential to Improvement. We might term this the introduction of a concept of human agency in relation to the material world.

Charles Camic (1983) has defined one of the major shifts in cultural orientation with the Scottish Enlightenment as that from dependency to independence. The disposition of dependency is witnessed in the cardinal documents of Scottish Calvinism, such as The Westminster Confession of Faith, The Longer Catechism and The Shorter Catechism, and was a highly traditional cultural orientation prior to the spread of the teachings of the Scottish Enlightenment. It was amongst the most elemental components of early eighteenth century Scottish culture (Camic 1983: 15). It can be defined as “the orientation, or set of orientations, that renders the action, judgement, or situation of human beings primarily subservient to agents regarded as removed in essence from human control” (Camic 1983: 16). This means that:



. . . in their being and in their believing, in practice and in theory, existentially and intellectually, individuals are not their own. The inescapable message of the Calvinist teachings was . . . that humans and their world are wholly and absolutely dependent upon the will and the grace of God. (Camic 1983: 18)

One of the major facets of early eighteenth-century Scottish culture, then, was a belief that in this world a sovereign God is the source of everything from predestination for everlasting life to a summer shower (Camic 1983: 20). *Everything* was governed according to God's will and human beings were perceived as passive actors on His stage, playing out a role defined for them.

With the Scottish Enlightenment, this view of dependency began to be replaced by the distinctly modern attitude of independence. Independence is defined as "the orientation, or family of orientations, which regards the human condition (human actions, judgements, or situations) as essentially autonomous, rather than as primarily subordinate to agents transcending human control" (Camic 1983: 46). David Hume argued that the ideal character is "entirely master of his own disposition" and that "every wise man will endeavour to place his happiness on such objects chiefly as depend upon himself" (quoted in Camic 1983: 56). Further afield, for Kant the motto of the Enlightenment was have the courage to use your own reason (Berry 1997: 2). With the shift from dependency to independence the premise of the fall of man (*sic.*) and original sin were supplanted with the notion that man is born pure and untainted, with the result that humans were no longer deprived of moral and intellectual worth and predestined to everlasting dependency. Rather, their dignity was constantly proclaimed in a universe inhabited by capable beings that no longer demanded perpetual supernatural assistance (Camic 1983: 57-59). Hume and Smith admitted Providence no role in explaining human action and granted God no direct entry into the sequence of events in this world. Indeed, Hume considered the purpose of his work as being in order "to free men from unexamined beliefs", to render them independent (quoted in Camic 1983: 63-65).

This new orientation of independence, I would argue, allowed a new attitude to the material environment that stressed human agency. It was not that God was no longer held to be the creator of the Earth. The complexity of and order within the Earth was seen as



evidence of divine creation, as James Hutton, farmer, chemist, and geologist, explains:

When we trace the parts of which this terrestrial system is composed, and when we view the general connection of those several parts, the whole presents a machine of a peculiar construction by which it is adapted to a certain end. We perceive a fabric, erected in wisdom, to obtain a purpose worthy of the power that is apparent in the production of it. (James Hutton, in Broadie (ed.) 1997: 773; see Broadie (ed.) 1997: 800 for a brief biography)

Rather, with Enlightenment the important philosophical innovation was the consideration that people could act to alter the created material environment and their relationship with it.

There are a few problems with this simplified picture of shifting cultural orientations. Whether Camie's reading of the orientation of dependency is entirely appropriate for all social contexts of the time is unclear. Further, the attitude of human agency in the material world had been developing since the Renaissance (Berry 1997: 70) and, so, was not an entirely new phenomenon. However, several obvious material aspects of Improvement show a relatively greater intervention in the natural world than had previously been the case. Courtyard farmsteads in particular were abstract and geometric in form, commonly forming a rectangular courtyard, where the *bailtean* had been disposed according to the pre-existing local topography of the site. Pre-Improvement agriculture had predominantly been located on the naturally draining lower slopes of hills, but with Improvement lower and previously boggy areas could be drained and colonised.

Thus, the Enlightenment disposition of independence gave potential Improvers the mental capacity to dramatically transform the physical nature of the rural world. The specific character of this transformation came from the example of rural Lowland Scotland and England, now to be discussed.



## **Exemplars for Improvement. Lowland Scotland and England**

### **Settlement**

The general pre-Improvement, or sixteenth to eighteenth century, settlement pattern in the Lowlands was one of nucleated farming townships, known as fermtouns (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 4). These fermtouns were generally clusters of between six and twelve households with buildings loosely scattered or strung out in an irregular line, with no indication of planning (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 4; see Whyte 1981: 12-15 on variation in Lowland settlement morphology and size).

From the 1760s, and in places the 1740s, Lowland settlement form saw comprehensive change with the fragmentation of the fermtoun (Fenton and Walker 1981: 102; figure 6.1). However, as we shall also see at the scales of landscape and domestic space, Improvement in the Lowlands, although most associated with the eighteenth century was underway in the seventeenth century. An early example of a planned farmstead layout is West Gagie in Angus, the form of which can be reconstructed from an inventory of 1649 which includes the compass orientations of the various buildings and indicates which of these are under the same roof (Whyte 1975: 65). There, the dwelling house and some of its offices formed three sides of a courtyard, with a wall and gate forming the fourth. The remaining outbuildings formed a separate cluster, possibly enclosing a second yard. Elsewhere, different but equally planned and geometrical forms were introduced in the late seventeenth century, as with the L- and Z-shaped steadings in the barony of Lasswade near Edinburgh (Whyte 1975: 66).

The courtyard farm, however, is the type that became the most popular from the late eighteenth century (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 139; figure 6.2). At first, such farm steadings were arranged in a U-shape with the fourth side open or completed with a wall and gate. Subsequently, many farms in the east and south east of the country filled the fourth side of the courtyard with an additional range of buildings, often pierced by an arched entrance. Sometimes, notably in the nineteenth century, more complex plans emerged as additional courtyards were built and farmhouses were separated from the rest of the steading. In the NorthEast and the dairying areas of the SouthWest, where the farms were smaller, U-shaped and L-shaped farms continued in use.



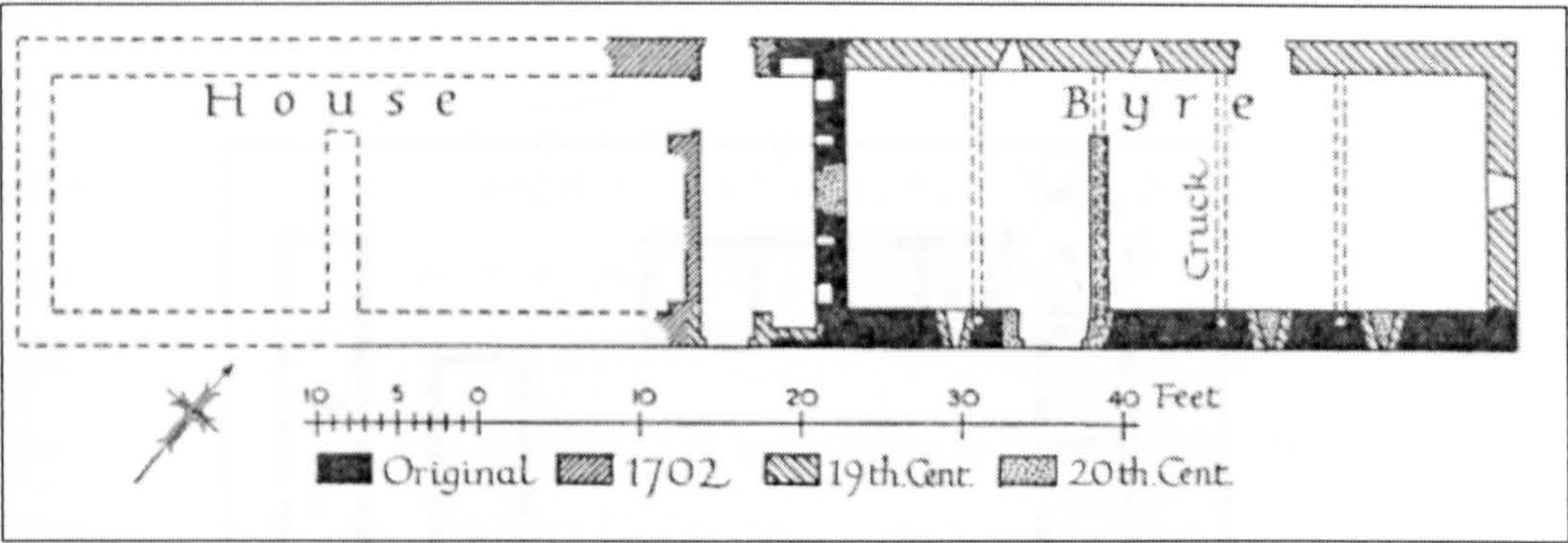


Figure 6.1: A Lowland range farmstead from Leys, near Denny, Stirlingshire (after RCAHMS 1963: 385, figure 163). The original part of the structure may date as early as the 1660s.



Figure 6.2: Two farms of Lowland courtyard (after Whittington 1967: 55, figures 2 and 3). Top: (1) bedroom, (2) kitchen, (3) hall, (4) bedroom, (5) bathroom, (6) garage, (7) milking parlour. Two further bedrooms upstairs. (a and b) stables, (c and d) byres, (e and f) horses, (g) granary, (h) root store, (i) threshing mill, (j) cartshed, (k, y, and z) labourer's dwellings. Bottom: (1) kitchen, (2) bedroom, (3) office, (4) milking parlour. Two further bedrooms upstairs. (a) threshing mill, (b) hay store, (c and d) stables, (e) cartshed, (f, g and h) byres, (i and j) labourer's quarters, (k) barn, (l) granary, (m) entrance to two store cattle, (n) 2, (o) dovecot.



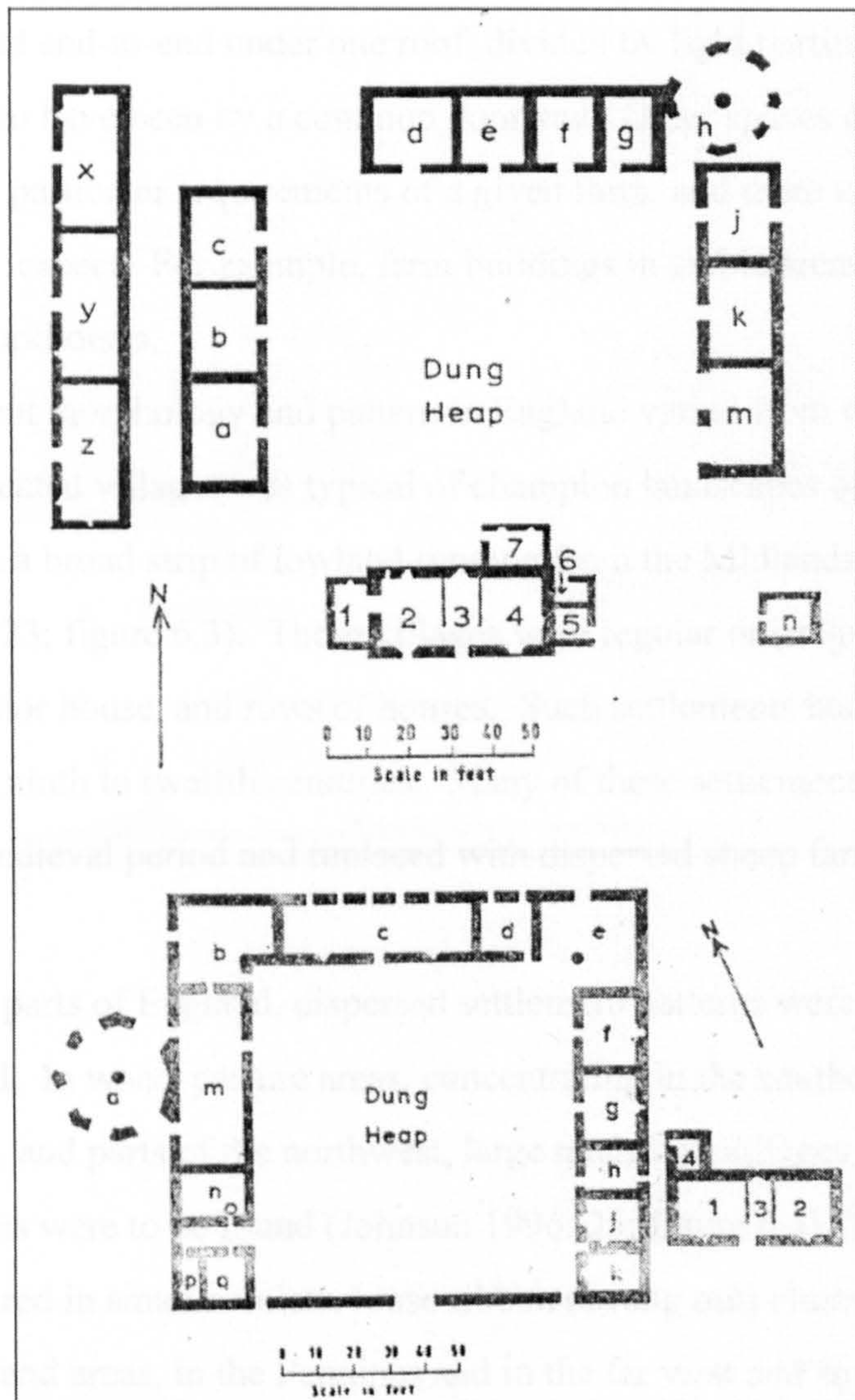


Figure 6.2: Two forms of Lowland courtyard steading (after Whittington 1967: 55, figures 2 and 3) Top: (1) bedroom, (2) kitchen, (3) hall, (4) bedroom, (5) henhouse, (6) pigsty?, (7) milking parlour. Two further bedrooms upstairs. (a and k) stables, (b, c and j) byres, (d and e) barns, (f) granary, (g) root store, (h) threshing mill, (m) cartshed (n) dovecot, (x, y, and z) labourer's dwellings. Bottom: (1) kitchen, (2) bedroom, (3) stairs, (4) milking parlour. Two further bedrooms upstairs. (a) threshing mill, (b) hay store, (c and d) stables, (e) cartshed, (f, g and h) byres, (j and k) labourer's quarters, (m) barn, (n) grain store, (o) entrance to root store cellar, (p) ?, (q) dovecot.



Also increasingly common through the seventeenth century were farmhouses similar to the range farmstead of the southern Highlands (see Whyte 1975: 63; figure 6.1). In these Lowland ranges, the dwelling, byre and barn, usually in that order, were commonly placed end-to-end under one roof, divided by light partitions. Entry to dwelling and byre seems to have been by a common doorway. Other spaces could be added according to the particular requirements of a given farm, and there was significant regional variation in this respect. For example, farm buildings in arable areas often included a stable for the workhorses.

Settlement morphology and pattern in England varied from region to region. A network of nucleated villages was typical of champion landscapes of the Medieval period, concentrating in a broad strip of lowland running from the Midlands into the northeast (Johnson 1996: 23; figure 6.3). These villages were regular or irregular in form, consisting of a church, manor house, and rows of houses. Such settlements had their origins in the period from the ninth to twelfth centuries. Many of these settlements were depopulated from the late Medieval period and replaced with dispersed sheep farms (Johnson 1996: 47-49).

In other parts of England, dispersed settlement patterns were common in the Medieval period. In wood-pasture areas, concentrating in the southeast, southwest, the Welsh Marches, and parts of the northwest, large nucleated villages were rare, although small nucleations were to be found (Johnson 1996: 25; figure 6.4). Settlement was more generally clustered in small hamlets, loose ribbon (strung out) clusters, or dispersed altogether. Upland areas, in the Pennines and in the far west and southwest, also had a dispersed settlement pattern, though settlement was much less dense than in areas of wood pasture (Johnson 1996: 28).

## Landscape

The pre-Improvement landscape of Lowland Scotland was in many ways similar to that described for the Highland study areas in chapter five above (see, e.g., Fairhurst 1960: 70-71; Whyte and Whyte 1991: chapter 3). Arable farming was in openfields separated from hill pasture by dykes of turf and stone.

The process of enclosure did not substantially affect the rural landscape of the Lowlands until well into the eighteenth century, but it is a process that first began much





Figure 6.3: A nucleated village with surrounding openfields typical of champion landscapes (after Johnson 1996: 24, figure 2.2).



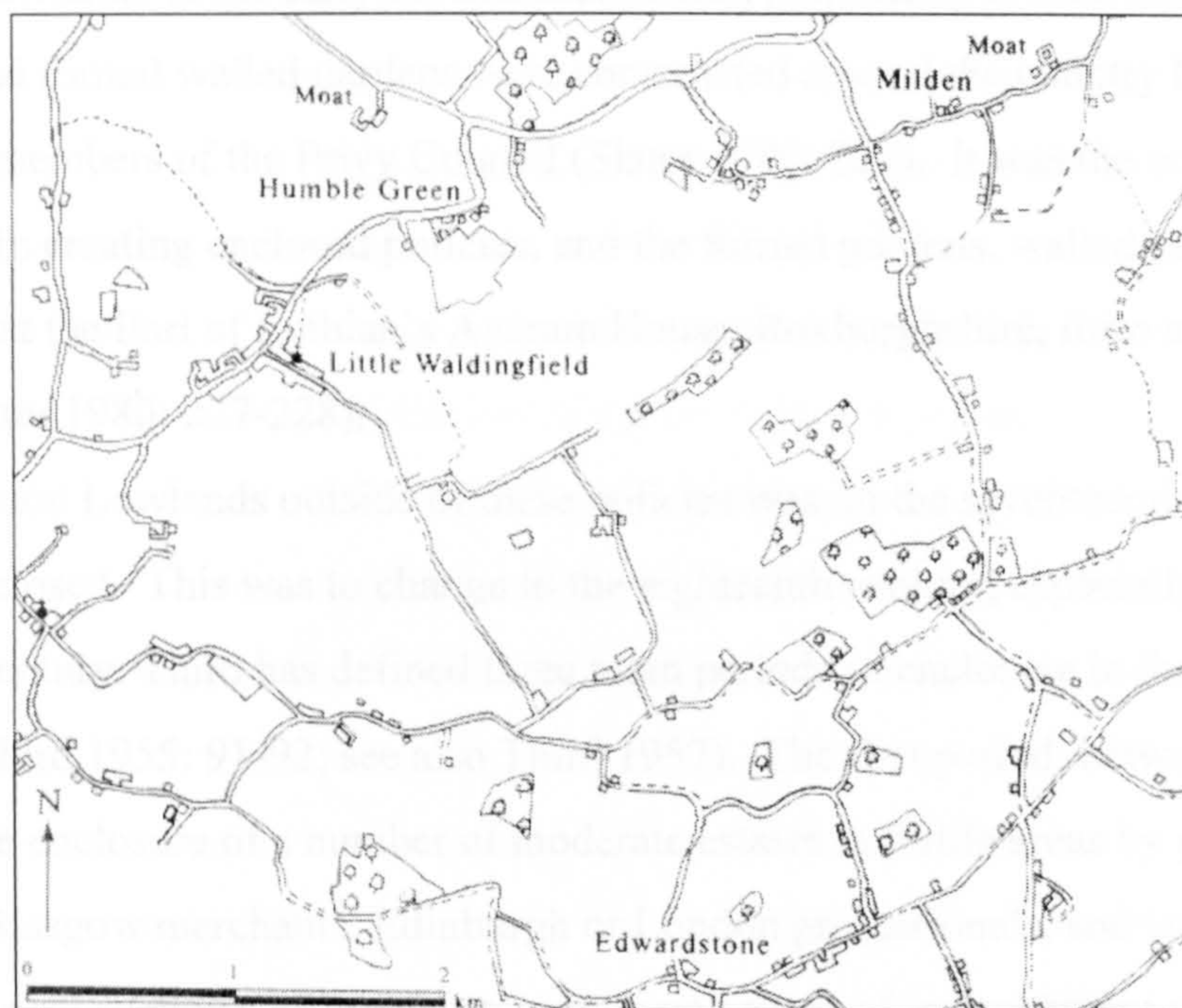


Figure 6.4: A wood-pasture landscape in Suffolk (after Johnson 1996: 26, figure 2.3). Note the dispersed settlement pattern.



earlier. Enclosure of policies in the vicinity of the seats of landowners really began to take hold in the Lowlands in the early seventeenth century, especially around Edinburgh where deer parks and formal walled gardens were constructed around the country houses of lawyers and members of the Privy Council (Slater 1980: 227). It was the nobility who took the real lead in creating enclosed policies, and the formal gardens, walled park and orchard of the 1630s at the Earl of Lothian's Ancram House, Roxburghshire, form an early example (Slater 1980: 227-228).

The rural Lowlands outside of these policies was, in the seventeenth century, largely unenclosed. This was to change in the eighteenth century, especially from the mid part of that century. Third has defined three main periods of enclosure in the eastern Lowlands (Third 1955: 91-92; see also Third 1957). The first period, between 1720 and 1760, saw the enclosure of a number of moderate estates in fertile areas by people such as prosperous Glasgow merchants, Edinburgh or London professionals, and lairds who belonged to local societies of Improvers. An even spread of improvement was not always achieved, however, and enclosure often remained confined to policies and home farms. The second period, between 1760 and 1800, saw a more comprehensive and striking transformation of the Lowland rural landscape, with vast sums of money being expended by the great landowners. Enclosure in this phase was often well organised and strictly supervised by estate officials and could cover wide areas, resulting in uniform adherence to current doctrines and theories on landscape improvement and in grids of rectangular enclosures. Such could be the will to adhere to a predetermined plan that often little regard was shown for the courses of streams or the position of previously existing farm steadings. Hundreds of labourers were employed in such projects by families like the Hamiltons, resulting in rapid and uniform changes (see Third 1955: 91). The third phase of enclosure, between about 1800 and 1820, saw the Improvement of estates above 650 feet, which were hampered by poor terrain, transport difficulties, and low financial resources. There, Improvements were initially tentative and the form of enclosures was heavily influenced by the previous arrangement of arable under the open-field system and by the local topography. This three stage phasing of the enclosure process is generally true for large parts of the Lowlands, but is not universal. For instance, large-scale commercial orientated enclosure came much earlier (first, in fact) to Galloway, where it was related to the cattle trade (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 130). In places, such enclosure was happening as early as



the late seventeenth century (Dodgshon 1981: 262).

As just discussed, in form Lowland enclosure could assume a grid-like pattern of rectangular fields or, on higher ground, a more irregular pattern where the shape of fields was more dependent on local topography and previously existing patterns of land use (see also Lebon 1946; figure 6.5). Sometimes the individual enclosures in a grid-like system could take other forms, being wedge-shaped or arranged in long strips (Third 1955: 86-91). This diversity of enclosure is represented in the arrangement in Kintyre and Kilfinan.

Shieling as a practice had existed in the Lowlands (see, e.g., Whyte and Whyte 1991: 70-71). However, it had died out there much earlier than in the Highlands. A number of place names in hill areas like the Lammermuirs contain the element shiel(s) and denote former shieling sites. Many of these shielings probably went out of use in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in cases being converted into permanent sheep farms by monastic houses (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 70-71). In parts of the Borders, shieling survived as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 71). Possible survivals of shieling into the seventeenth century, in Galloway for example, are rare in the extreme (Whyte 1979: 84).

Enclosure in England largely predated that in Lowland Scotland and took place within many different historical contexts. In wood-pasture areas of England, enclosures that appear on nineteenth century or modern maps can often be seen to have survived from the Roman period or even earlier, although there are cases of later piecemeal enclosure of land within such areas (Johnson 1996: 25-26, 50-53; figure 6.6). Areas of champion landscape were characterised by open arable and pasture fields in the Medieval period (Johnson 1996: 23-25; figure 6.3). However, from the late Middle Ages, these areas were increasingly enclosed as the farms were turned over to sheep, with a peak period of enclosure between 1450 and 1550 (Johnson 1996: 48-49). Areas of champion land that survived unenclosed into the eighteenth century were often subject to Parliamentary enclosure, that is enclosure by Act of Parliament, after 1750 (Johnson 1996: 55-56). Fenlands around the borders of Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Lincolnshire were extensively drained and enclosed in the seventeenth century (Johnson 1996: 50). Enclosure accompanying the reclamation of waste, that is land not under systematic cultivation, occurred in two main periods, prior to 1300 and from the seventeenth century (Johnson 1996: 55). As in Scotland, the morphology of enclosure varied and both grid-like



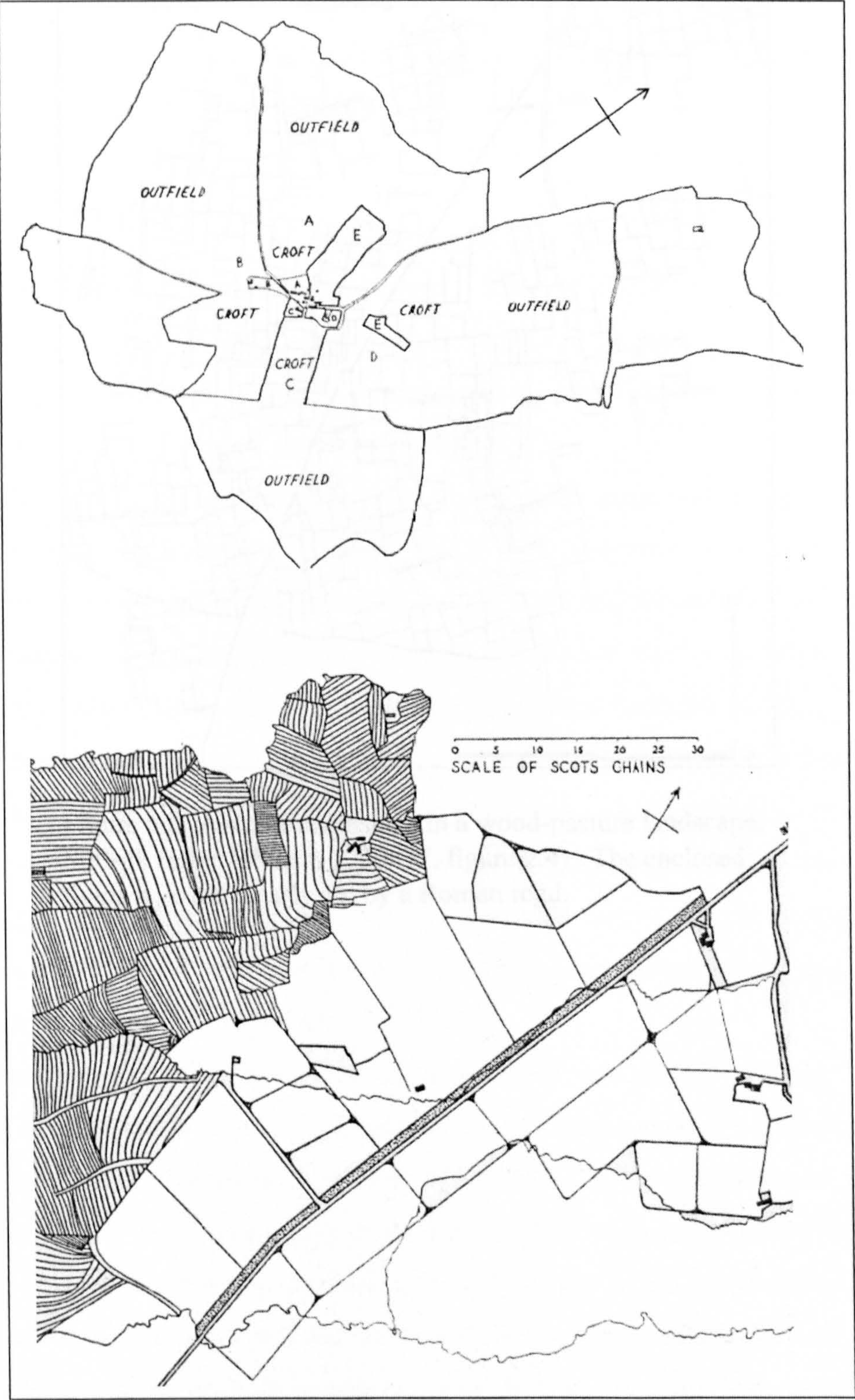


Figure 6.5: Enclosure in the Scottish Lowlands (after Third 1955: 87 and 92, figures 3 and 7). Top: Irregular enclosure at Draffen, Lesmahagow. Bottom: A grid pattern of enclosure either side of a new turnpike road between Hamilton and Ayr.



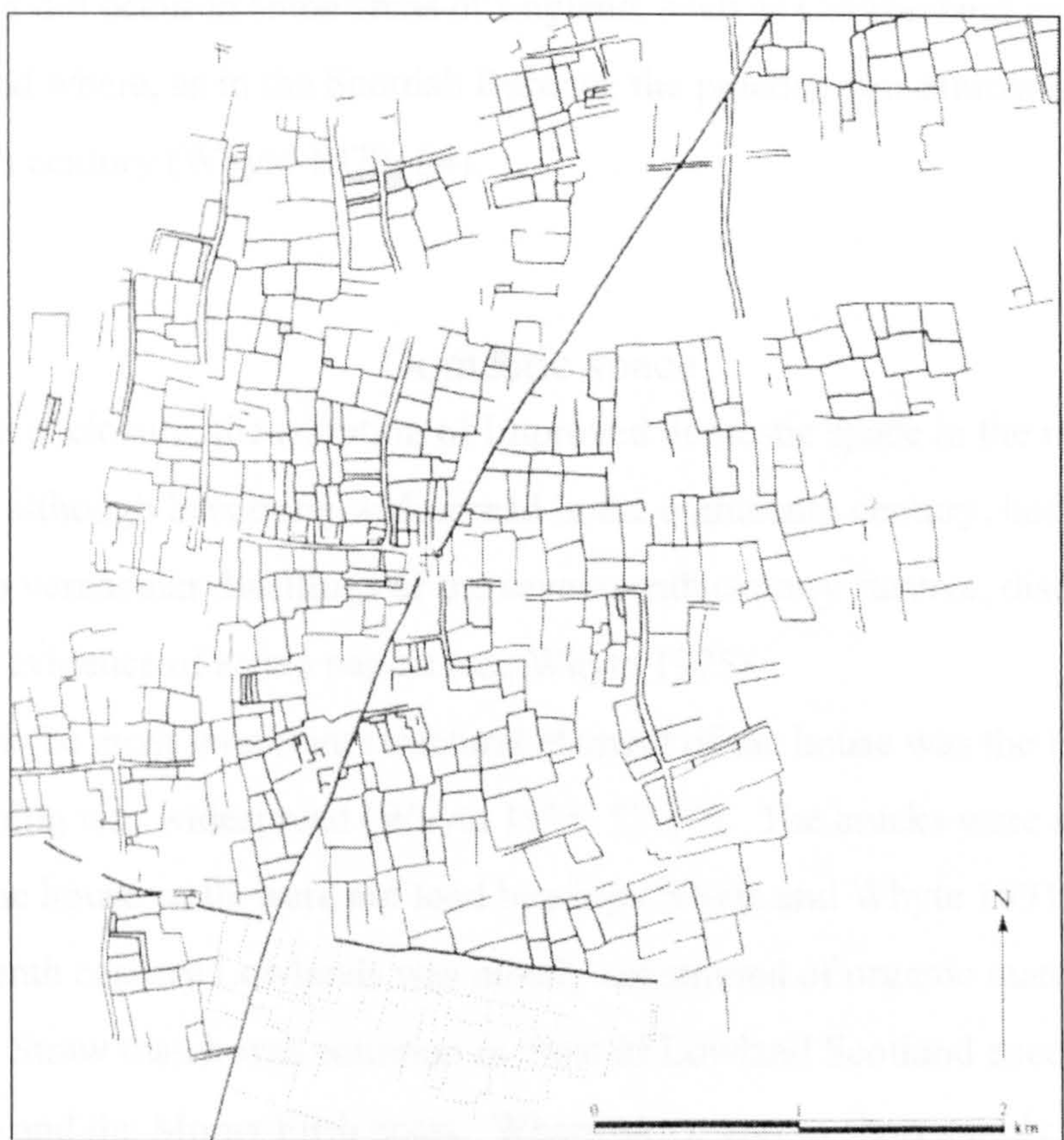


Figure 6.6: Ancient enclosures in a wood-pasture landscape, Suffolk (after Johnson 1996: 27, figure 2.4). The enclosed fields here are clearly cut by a Roman road.



and more irregular systems exist, the latter often preserving previous patterns of land use.

Shieling did occur in some areas of England, such as Cumberland and Northumberland where, as in the Scottish Borders, the practice was almost abandoned by the seventeenth century (Whyte 1979: 84).

### Domestic space

As with enclosure, the adoption of Improved domestic space in the rural houses of the Lowlands, although becoming widespread in the eighteenth century, had earlier roots. As virtually no vernacular dwellings of the seventeenth century survive, discussion has centred on the evidence of estate papers (see Whyte 1975).

Perhaps the most important structural element of the house was the timberwork, and cruck framing was widespread (Whyte 1975: 57-59). The crucks were structurally important as the house walls were not load bearing (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 31). Roofing in the seventeenth century Lowlands was mostly constituted of organic materials (Whyte 1975: 59-60). Straw thatch was common in most of Lowland Scotland except Aberdeenshire and the Moray Firth coast. Where straw was in short supply or too precious as fodder, turf and heather were common roofing materials. Walling was built from those materials ready to hand and the principle materials were stone, clay, and turf (Whyte 1975:60-62). The earliest known use of lime mortar in the context of tenant housing construction was on the Aberdour estate in Fife in 1625, although the bulk of references relate to the period 1660-1700 (Whyte 1975:62).

These building traditions continued into the eighteenth century, in places into the nineteenth (Fenton and Walker 1981: chapters 5 and 6). However, their popularity was increasingly eroded in that period (e.g. Caird 1980: 216-217). Roofing was increasingly of slate or pantiles and walls increasingly of stone and lime (Fenton and Walker 1981: 69-70, 90-93). In terms of construction techniques, then, the history of the Lowland farmhouse from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries parallels that of the Highlands closely. Originally built predominantly from organic materials, from the mid to late eighteenth century these were increasingly replaced by stone, lime mortar and slate. Documentary sources, however, suggest that the internal subdivision of space was increasingly common in the seventeenth century, if not widespread or universal.

Ian Whyte has drawn a general picture of domestic space in the seventeenth century



Lowlands from surviving estate papers (Whyte 1975: 62-67). The size of the dwelling space could vary from one couple (that is, the space between two cruck trusses) to fourteen. The smallest dwellings probably had one room, heated by a central hearth, but the more common dwelling area of two to three couples was large enough to allow some subdivision of space. There seems to have been considerable variation in internal organisation of the dwelling according to the occupier's status. Tenants of larger holdings seem to have lived in houses with more complex internal layouts and made from more durable materials. For example, an eight-couple house at Bridgend of Lintrathen in Angus, described in an inventory of 1656, consisted of a hall, back chamber, inner chamber, and pantry (Whyte 1975: 64). Increased spatial complexity was further facilitated by some of the constructional innovations mentioned above, especially lime mortar and its associated load bearing walls. These allowed upper floors to be constructed, as at the factor's house at Belhelvie, Aberdeenshire, described in 1705 (Whyte 1975: 64). Houses such as this were probably becoming increasingly common throughout the seventeenth century with the quickening pace of agricultural commercialisation, especially after the Reformation (Whyte 1975: 65).

Such seventeenth century houses, with complex and compartmentalised internal layouts, were the forerunners of the type of house that became common from the eighteenth century (figure 6.7), and the spatial organisation of these dwellings often derived from the homes of ministers and small lairds (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 138). Typically, such houses were of two or three storeys, with symmetrical facades. There was some regional variation in the specific character of Improved houses, with the South-West generally retaining the single-storey farmhouse, and the two or more storey farmhouse being more common in the east (Fenton and Walker 1981: 69).

Most seventeenth century houses in the Lowlands, as in the Highlands, had a single hearth in the middle of the floor (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 36). Nevertheless, from descriptions in estate papers it seems that some seventeenth century houses had gable-ends that incorporated a chimney, prefiguring the typical Improved hearth (Whyte 1979: 165). Presumably the two or more storey farmhouses and highly subdivided linear ranges, discussed immediately above, had several individual fireplaces servicing different rooms.

The process of the increasing subdivision of internal space and the decentralisation of the hearth can be traced in England for a period earlier than that in Scotland. In a study



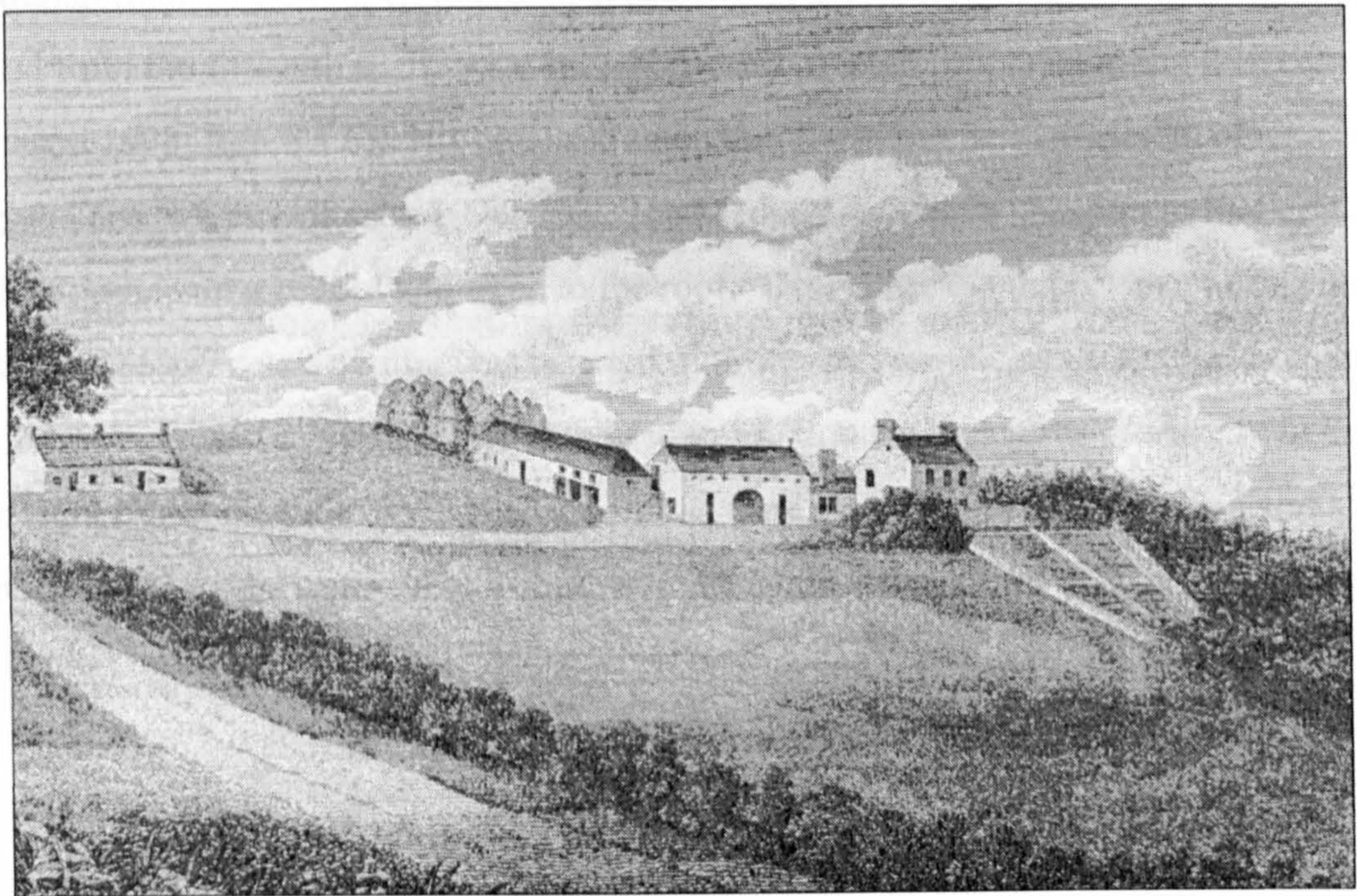


Figure 6.7: An early nineteenth century engraving of a farm of Lowland type in Kincardine (after Fenton 1999: 194, figure 70a). The double-storied, Improved farmhouse sits on the right. A double cottage, probably that of the farm labourers, sits on the far left.



focusing on the domestic architecture in western Suffolk, Matthew Johnson has argued for the transformation from open to closed space within the houses of middling farmers in the period from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, though primarily in the sixteenth (Johnson 1993; figure 4.6). His conclusions in that study can be extended to other parts of England and Wales (Johnson 1996: 79). The Medieval house in question in England and Wales focused on a central hall open to the roof. Over time, the importance of this open space was reduced as a ceiling was inserted, limiting its size. Separate rooms at the ends of the house increased in number and increased in importance as centres of activity in their own right (Johnson 1996: 79). Upstairs rooms were also increasingly common and more heavily used. At the same time, a chimneystack against a partition wall of the hall replaced the central hearth.

### Routine practice

From the Medieval period, then, the material environment of rural England and Lowland Scotland at the scales of landscape, settlement, and domestic space began to exhibit many of the traits of Improvement that were to become common in the Highlands. In parts of England at least, what were to become key material elements of Improvement, like enclosure, had much longer histories. Just as later in the Highlands, communal and familial aspects of routine practice declined with the material environments that structured them and that they structured.

Improvement in the Scottish Lowlands was associated with changes in the way the land was worked and should be considered a gigantic strategy of social and economic engineering (Devine 1994a: 70). The fact that the single-tenant farm was triumphant there by the mid-eighteenth century (Devine 1994a: 27) neatly sums up the decline of community. By the seventeenth century, shieling, which was probably a similar practice in the Lowlands to the Highlands (see Whyte and Whyte 1991: 70-75), had disappeared. Thus, one of the main practices where the people of one fermtoun or more congregated and worked in common disappeared. As in the Highlands, enclosure negated one of the main functions of shieling, which acted to separate the cattle from the ripening crops (see Fenton 1999: 138). Enclosure was also accompanied by changes in arable farming. By the end of the eighteenth century, changing plough technology allowed the reduction in size of plough teams, eventually to one horseman and two horses (Devine 1994a: 53, 154).



Enclosure in England opened the way to a commodification of the landscape and created a farming landscape more appropriate to the accumulation of private wealth by the individual tenant (Johnson 1996: 206). Dispersed settlement there is also to be associated with the fragmentation of the community. Even in the Medieval period, champion landscapes with their nucleated villages housed communities with tighter social bonds and more emphasis on neighbourliness than wood-pasture regions, where dispersed settlement was more common (Johnson 1996: 25).

Returning to the Lowlands, the subdivision of domestic space and the multiplication and relocation of the hearth can be associated with the fragmentation of routine familial practices. Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the house of the better-off tenant farmer increasingly had a separate kitchen, living room, and bedroom/private apartment (Whyte and Whyte 1991: 36). Similarly, in England there was a growth in social distance with the increasing subdivision of domestic space (Johnson 1993: 107). The exact nature of this social distancing differed in cases from that on Highland farms. In the middling English household the walls separated master and servant as much as members of the same family. The removal of the hearth to an end wall and the splitting of its functions meant that it was no longer a centralising but a dividing feature (Johnson 1993: 119).

### **Conclusion. A partial understanding of Improvement**

Material and social changes with Improvement in Kintyre and Kilfinan had clear antecedents in Lowland Scotland and England. Some of these antecedents, like enclosure and dispersed settlement in wood-pasture areas of England, had existed for millennia and many dated from the late Medieval period. Improvement in Lowland Scotland, on the other hand, was generally recent by comparison. Shielling had been abandoned in some areas as early as the twelfth century, but many Improvements were only introduced in the seventeenth and did not become widespread until well into the eighteenth. I do not wish to suggest that Improvement had universally transformed the material and social environment of the Scottish Lowlands and of England before commencing in the Highlands. Especially in Lowland Scotland, the transformation remained partial. However, Improvement was



widespread and established enough to provide Enlightened Highland landowners with exemplars for change on their own individual estates.

Landowners' knowledge of these exemplars was probably acquired in a variety of ways. For example, the Dukes of Argyll owned an estate in the Lowlands, in Peebleshire. This they renamed Whim when embarking on a series of experimental Improvements from 1729 (see RCAHMS 1967: 326-331). They had first hand practical knowledge of the progress and character of Improvement in the Lowlands. Some of the Kilfinan landowners would have repeatedly travelled through the Lowlands on their way to the Clyde burghs in their capacity as merchants, a role we shall see more of in the next chapter. Other Improving landowners in Kilfinan were of English or Lowland Scottish extraction and had only recently bought their Highland estates when they began to Improve (see chapter 7 below). Further to all this, literature promoting Improvement and advising on the practicalities of that process was increasingly common from the seventeenth century in Scotland (see, e.g., Fenton 1999: 17-18).

That the Scottish Lowlands and England were the appropriate places to look for exemplars was suggested in Scottish Enlightenment thought. An Enlightened view of the world was acquired by some, like the Dukes of Argyll, through direct involvement with the Enlightenment in its eighteenth century *floruit*. Others, as many of the Improving landowners of Kilfinan, absorbed or adopted the main tenets of Enlightenment thought later and through their membership of the emergent Middle Class.

Enlightenment social theory not only suggested where exemplars for change were to be found, but also provided legitimation for Improvement and the mental capacity to drastically alter the material environment. Stadial history coupled with a particular conceptualisation of human nature suggested that progress to the commercial age was natural, desirable, and even inevitable. In this sense, the landowners of Kintyre and Kilfinan were merely hastening or aiding the unavoidable course of history. Added to this was a sense of independence whereby humankind was free to alter its world at will.

Placing Highland Improvement in its context, with reference to the Scottish Enlightenment and Lowland Scottish and English exemplars, does not fully explain why it happened, however. In chapter three, the significance of the concept of social contradiction was highlighted in relation to the explanation of social change. The next chapter, chapter seven, argues that landowners in the case study areas sought to address certain significant



social contradictions with Improvement. For Kintyre, that is for the House of Argyll, the significant social contradiction was one inherent in the structuring of the clan system. Land under this system could be the collective heritage of a clan and the patrimony of an individual at one and the same time. As such, it was subject to competing claims. Improvement, in creating the conditions whereby the ideology of the individual would become knowable to the majority of the population, privileged the understanding of land as individual patrimony, to the advantage of the House of Argyll.

For landowners in Kilfinan, the significant contradiction addressed by Improvement was that between their simultaneous existence as members of the emergent Middle Class and as proprietors of traditional Highland estates. Their continued inclusion in the urban-based Middle Class meant the remodelling of their estates in line with emerging, Enlightenment based Middle Class ideals. These included a concern with geometric forms of spatial order and a degree of Anglophilia, both of which can be seen to have played a role in shaping the course of Improvement.



## Chapter Seven

### Improvement from the landowners' perspective

In chapter three, contradiction within the social structure was argued to be a fundamental locus of social change. Such contradiction is exposed, becomes the site of conflict and eventually leads to qualitative social change, through constant quantitative change in social relationships or qualitative changes in other social contexts. Quantative change describes change in existing social relations that does not alter their constitution, such as a change in ownership of an estate. In this case, the landlord-tenant relationship continues to exist, but the identity of the landlord is different. Qualitative change in other social contexts describes situations such as that explored in part two below where the landlord is also a member of urban society, which undergoes fundamental social and cultural change from the eighteenth century.

This chapter explores two different social contradictions that are significant in understanding Improvement. The first half of the chapter considers Improvement on the Argyll Estates in Kintyre. It is argued that with Improvement the Dukes of Argyll aimed to resolve the primary relational contradiction of west Highland society, that is the one between individual and collective systems of social organisation. West Highland society from around from the late Medieval period, at least, consisted of the fusion of two contradictory principles of territorial and social organisation, where society was structured according to the landlord-tenant relationship *and* that of the clan gentry-clan at one and the same time. This situation is evident in the Gaelic terms *duthchas*, the collective heritage of the clan, and *oighreachd*, individual heritage. When these two relationships were aligned, as when the tenant's landlord was also their clan chief, this duality was not the site of conflict. However, change in legally defined landholding in Kintyre, in the wake of the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles in the late fifteenth century, resulted in the misalignment of *duthchas* and *oighreachd*, resulting in sometimes open conflict. The House of Argyll came to own land in Kintyre through political decisions taken by the Scottish Crown, but their control of that estate was threatened by continued claims to that land, as *duthchas*, from Clan Donald.



Contradictory principles of landholding were therefore a prime area of conflict resulting in the instigation of Improvement. Improvement was not simply a course of action suggested to the Dukes of Argyll at an intellectual level, by the Scottish Enlightenment. Improvement should also be seen as part of a longer-term project of the *civilising* of the west Highlands and Islands. Previously, the Crown and their agents, the Argylls, had tried a variety of strategies in attempting to render the area more peaceful and loyal on their terms. These included the plantation of Lowland farmers and the creation of burghs like Campbeltown. Improvement was part of this political and social project aimed at resolving conflict in the area.

Improvement was fundamentally different from earlier civilising projects in aiming to undermine the routine practices that constituted clanship and to make the associated concepts of collective heritage unknowable. In privileging the individual in routine practice, Improvement aimed to resolve the contradiction between *duthchas* and *oighreachd* in favour of the latter, with the House of Argyll as legally defined proprietors. Improvement also sought to undermine routine familial experience. With such routine practice a tenant's traditional, hereditary right to their holding made sense. In privileging the individual, Improvement made the ideology behind the individual lease knowable. Tenants could now be required to sign a lease pledging their loyalty to the House of Argyll, and would have no basis for a competing claim to their portion of the land.

Part two of this chapter considers the case of Kilfinan, where the primary contradiction in understanding Improvement is different. There, Improvement sought to address the contradiction between the landowners' position as members of the emergent Middle Class and as proprietors of traditional Highland estates. In this case, landowners sought to maintain their Middle Class status by reorganising their estates to conform with emerging, Enlightenment based ideals. As we have seen, the Scottish Enlightenment pointed to rural Lowland Scotland and England as the most progressive areas in terms of rural society. Estates that did not Improve along those lines would, literally, have been seen as backward.



## Part One

### **Clanship as a socio-political system**

As Robert Dodgshon (1998: 7-8) suggests, the importance of the clan system, and the reason why it can be regarded as a system, lies in the multi-dimensional character of clans and their chiefs. It is well known that clans were structured around kin-ties, real or assumed. However, it is important to view clans as more than just communities bonded by and stratified through such kin ties. The identity and position of a clan was also given meaning through their strategic control of land and its potential resources. These resources were exploited in the distinct ideological behaviour, centred on feasting and feuding, that structured relationships within the clan. Control over land and resources were fundamental in maintaining social relationships in the west Highlands and Islands in this period.

Chiefs might secure control over land in a number of ways (Dodgshon 1998: 32-34). First, a chief might secure overarching control over his territories through the creation of canopy clans, where land was granted to their younger sons or to the more senior branches of the clan, the *uachdaran*. Otherwise, land could be granted out to cadet branches of the clan, with senior members of those branches serving as tacksmen, or *fir-tacsa*. These cadet branches would then proceed to fill their territories with kinsmen in a process of downward genealogical emplacement (Dodgshon 1998: 33), although it would also be necessary to grant land to non-kinsmen. This process meant that the physical topography underlying a chieftdom was overlaid by a social topography. Bonds of manrent and friendship could also be used to extend ties of dependence, complementing and adding to the kin-group. Such alliances could foster more composite or aggregate clans.

The result of this process of territorial control was a close association of particular territories with specific kin- or allied groups. In many cases, flux in territorial control could lead to conflict:

The estates held by the clan elite, conveyed as their individual heritage, their *oighreachd*, were usually of lesser extent than the territories settled by their clansmen for whose collective heritage, their *duthchas*, the *fine* were trustees. Jeopardised or frustrated endeavours to align *oighreachd* and *duthchas* created the grounds for feuding. (Macinnes 1996: 38)



Shift in control of a territory from a landlord who also bore some relationship under the clan system to the tenants of that territory to one who did not potentially engendered conflict. The previous landlord, as clan chief or as a member of the clan gentry (*fine*), still bore responsibilities towards his former tenants and expected certain dues from them. This could lead to feuding between different clans, but also to obstruction and resistance by the tenants towards their new landlord (Macinnes 1996: 38). The close relationship of territory and kinship under the clan system was a potential source of conflict, when *duthchas* and *oighreachd* were unaligned.

Another important aspect of the clan system was the place of the ordinary population of the clan within the overall kinship structure, and the degree to which they were bound into that system by genuine or putative ties of kinship. This is of relevance in assessing where the conflict inherent in the structuring of territorial relationships around both *duthchas* and *oighreachd* lay. That is, was the ordinary tenant's identity sufficiently defined by the kin-ties of their clan to cause them to consider a change of landlord a potential source of conflict? Again, I refer back to Dodgshon's discussion of the subject (Dodgshon 1998: 41-50).

From extant records, it would appear that the ordinary Highlander could build up their identity with reference to different coordinates:

- 1) to their patronymic, emphasising their immediate genealogy, for example *John MacGillychallum vic Gillyffadrick* (individual then father then grandfather);
- 2) with reference to lateral relations, noting someone by their first name and then emphasising their relationship to a brother or cousin, for example;
- 3) with reference to an epithet, with first name followed by a descriptive element e.g. *more/beg* (great/little);
- 4) and, with reference to a clan name, such as MacDonald.

In most cases, then, tenants defined themselves in relation to kin-ties. This



definition, however, was at various degrees of remove and the coordinates referenced by an individual could vary. This variation was not random, but was structured according to context. Patronymics were often used in situations where it might be important to emphasise the individual tenant's hereditary right to their holding and a share of the local community's resources, their individual *duthchas* (e.g. in rentals where no tacksmen are listed and townships are directly divided amongst the tenants, or where a tenant's landlord was not their chief).

The use of clan names also seems to have varied according to circumstance. Clan names could be used to draw on the support of a chief and they could also be used to challenge authority. For example, all the inhabitants of Inninmore in Morvern labelled themselves as Camerons, when it is unlikely they were, at a time when the landowner of the township was the Campbell Earl of Argyll (Cregeen 1968: 163). In reality, patronymics and clan names often appear side by side.

It seems, then, that kin-ties to a wider clan were significant to the bulk of the population, but that significance was dependent on circumstance. In some instances it was seen as most important to emphasise hereditary rights to a holding and its associated resources as individuals. In such cases, it is possible that the identity of the current landlord might not be too significant as long as tenants were allowed to enjoy what they saw as their customary rights. In other instances, however, clan affiliation was seen as a significant enough aspect of identity to advertise, and this sometimes in protest at the fact that their current landlord was not the tenant's chief. It is possible that these two aspects of identity can be related, with tenants using a clan name as a form of protest against perceived threats to their traditional rights, rather than simply against a change in landlord.

Members of the farming population and the landed gentry in the west Highlands alike could mobilise their membership of a clan as a strategy in relation to their claims to certain resources or rights. The clan gentry might claim access to the resources, including people, of a given territory as the collective heritage of the clan, its *duthchas*. The name of the clan could be mobilised by those inhabiting a territory in the face of threats to their traditional rights to its resources, not least their right to hereditary occupancy of a holding.

Concepts of the community of the clan and of hereditary occupancy did not exist in isolation, however. They were made knowable in routine practice. In pre-Improvement routine, in just that period covered by Dodgshon's discussion of the structuring of the clan,



we have seen that a *sense of community* and a *sense of family* were structured (see chapter 5 above).

In general terms, everyday experience of the world as part of a community would have made the more abstract idea of the community of the clan knowable. In other words, abstract notions of the clan would appear as common sense. Routine practice also helped to structure the clan in more tangible ways. The *bailtean* communities were related to the clan in practice, through the tacksmen. While a tacksmen's holding need not be confined to one *baile*, this was the prevalent pattern (Macinnes 1996: 16). In some cases, the tacksmen certainly lived within the *baile* (see, e.g., Stewart and Stewart 1988). Thus, the tacksmen were at once part of the community of the *baile* and members of the *fine*, the clan gentry. This link allowed the clan elite to mobilise a series of small groups who attained some coherence as such through their everyday experience of living and working together.

It was also argued in chapter five that the pre-Improvement material environment and associated routine practice would have fostered experience of the world as part of a family. This form of experience above all took place in the domestic setting. Again, routine practice made certain more abstract understandings of the world knowable. In this case, concepts of hereditary occupancy were common sense as they were in agreement with general experience of everyday life as part of the family.

### ***Duthchas and oighreachd in Kintyre***

#### **Kintyre and the Lordship of the Isles**

Conflict could arise, then, if *duthchas* and *oighreachd* became misaligned. This is just the situation we find in Kintyre.

The Lordship of the Isles, of which Kintyre was a part, has been described as the largest and most powerful province of fifteenth century Scotland (Bannerman 1977: 211; figure 7.1). The brief historical sketch of the Lordship to follow here is derived from Steer and Bannerman (1977: 201-205). The earliest known record of the title of Lord of the Isles is in an indenture of 1354 wherein the chief of Clan Donald, John, styled himself *Iohannes*



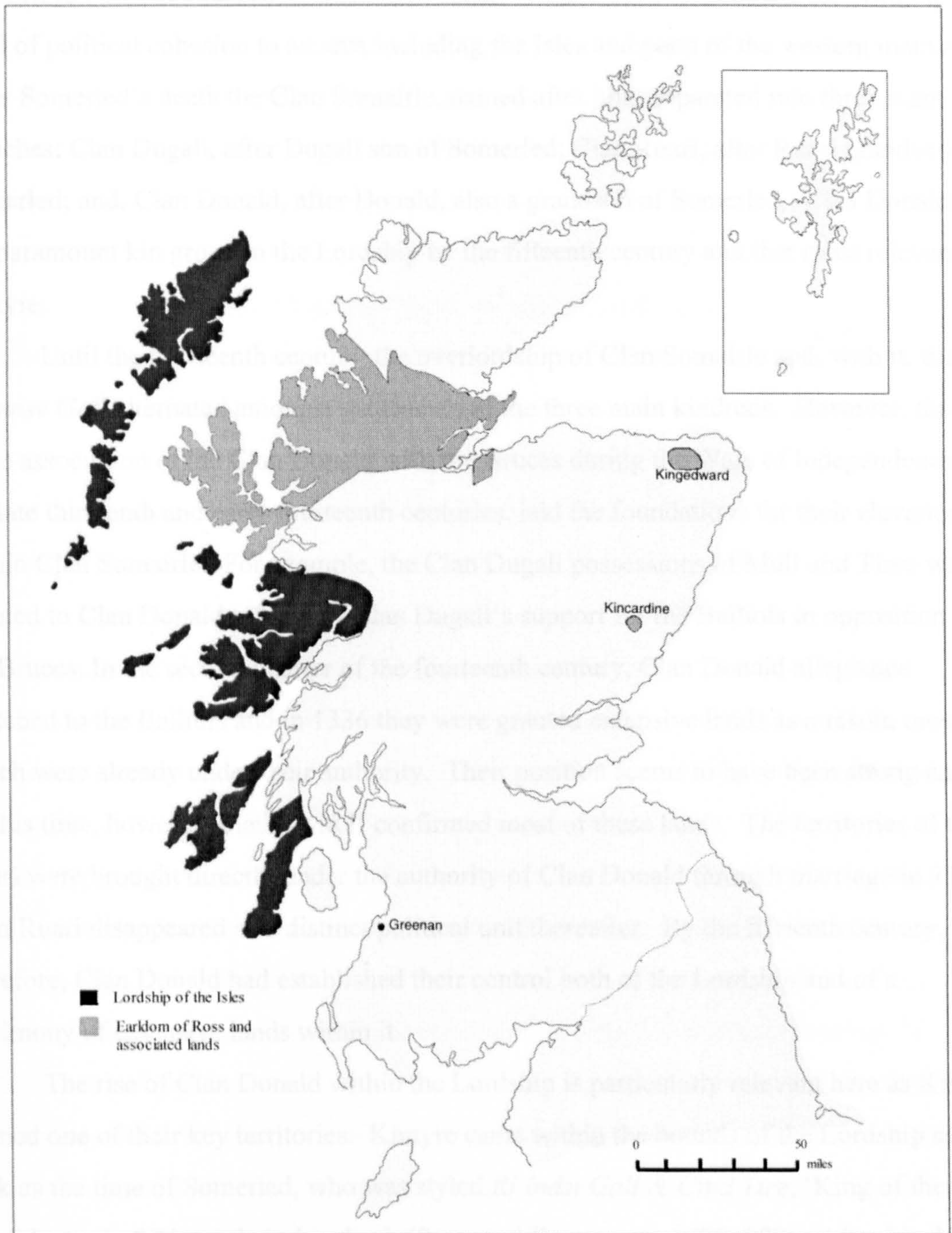


Figure 7.1: Maximum extent of the Lordship of the Isles in the fifteenth century (after McNeill and MacQueen 1996: 442).



*de Ile, Dominus Insularum*. However, the history of the institution may be extended back further if we consider his Gaelic title *Ri Innse Gall*, ‘King’ or ‘Ruler of the Hebrides’, first ascribed to Somerled (d.1164). Somerled seems to have been responsible for bringing a level of political cohesion to an area including the Isles and parts of the western mainland. After Somerled’s death the Clan Somairle, named after him, separated into three main branches: Clan Dugall, after Dugall son of Somerled; Clan Ruari, after Ruari grandson of Somerled; and, Clan Donald, after Donald, also a grandson of Somerled. Clan Donald was the paramount kin group in the Lordship by the fifteenth century and that most relevant to Kintyre.

Until the fourteenth century, the overlordship of Clan Somairle and, with it, the title *Ri Innse Gall* alternated amongst the leaders of the three main kindreds. However, the close association of the Clan Donald with the Bruces during the Wars of Independence, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, laid the foundations for their elevation within Clan Somairle. For example, the Clan Dugall possessions of Mull and Tiree were granted to Clan Donald in light of Clan Dugall’s support for the Balliols in opposition to the Bruces. In the second quarter of the fourteenth century, Clan Donald allegiance switched to the Balliols and in 1336 they were granted extensive lands as a result, most of which were already under their authority. Their position seems to have been strong enough by this time, however, that David II confirmed most of these lands. The territories of Clan Ruari were brought directly under the authority of Clan Donald through marriage in 1337. Clan Ruari disappeared as a distinct political unit thereafter. By the fifteenth century, therefore, Clan Donald had established their control both of the Lordship and of a patrimony of extensive lands within it.

The rise of Clan Donald within the Lordship is particularly relevant here as Kintyre formed one of their key territories. Kintyre came within the bounds of the Lordship as far back as the time of Somerled, who was styled *Ri Indsi Gall & Cind Tire*, ‘King of the Hebrides and of Kintyre’, on his death (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 202). After his death, Kintyre passed to Clan Donald (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 202). Kintyre was also amongst those territories granted by Balliol in 1336 (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 203). It was excluded from the later grant of confirmation from David II, but could not conceivably have been alienated in any effective way by its absence from that grant, due to its position at the very centre of Clan Donald power (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 203).



In the fifteenth century, Kintyre was possessed by that section of Clan Donald known variously as Clan Ian Mor (after Ian, or John, Mor (d.1427), younger brother to the Lord of the Isles), Clan Donald South, or the MacDonalds of Dunivaig and the Glens/MacDonalds of Islay and Antrim (with respect to their territory extending into the north of Ireland). Thus, Kintyre formed part of the patrimony not only of Clan Donald, but of a senior lineage within that clan. The head of that lineage held a prominent position in the *Concilium Insularum*, the Council of the Isles. The heads of the kindreds who attended the council in the fifteenth century were divided into four grades, with the highest grade of “four great men of living of thair royal blude of Clan-donald lineally descendit” including MacDonald of Dunivaig (Bannerman 1977: 221-222). Further, a deed of 1475 describes Donald Balloch of Dunivaig as “primus et principalis conciliarus” (Bannerman 1977: 222, note 48).

So, as part of the patrimony of Clan Ian Mor, Kintyre formed one of the key territories within the Lordship. The heads of Clan Ian Mor were probably primarily based on Islay, where the principle meeting place of the council is to be found on Loch Finlaggan (see Caldwell and Ewart 1993 on Finlaggan). However, Kintyre was more than just another territory. The Crown rentals for North and South Kintyre drawn up in 1505 and 1506, after the forfeiture of the Lordship, make interesting reading in this respect (see Bannerman 1977: 219). They show the contemporary head of the MacMhuirichs, hereditary poets to the Lords of the Isles, possessing five named holdings *per poetam*. Further, the MacIlshenaich harpists are also recorded as holding lands in the area. Hereditary bards and musicians played an important role in feasts, in particular, that were an important aspect of the ideological behaviour that played a role in structuring the control of resources and the territory from which they came (Dodgshon 1988; 1998: 8). The cultural importance of Kintyre in the fifteenth century is further underlined by the existence of a school of late Medieval monumental sculptors there, producing a corpus of carved stones that contributed to the distinctive sculptural tradition associated with the Lordship of the Isles (see Steer and Bannerman 1977 on this subject in general; figure 7.2). The Kintyre school of sculptors, probably based at Saddell Abbey, came into being some time after 1425 and ceased operation before 1500, with the forfeiture of the Lordship (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 48-50).



## Forfeiture and unrest. Kintyre and the decline of the Lordship of the Isles

From the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, the Lords of the Isles held a claim to the Earldom of Ross (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 205). This came by virtue of the marriage of Donald, Lord of the Isles, to an heiress, in MacDonald eyes at least, to the Earldom. A campaign to make good her claim culminated in the battle of Harlaw in 1411 and the Crown's subsequent formal recognition that the right of inheritance to the Earldom belonged to Donald's son, Alexander. Despite this, the MacDonald's hold on the Earldom remained precarious and depended on their military presence and strength at any given time. Conflict with the Crown over attempts to consolidate their possession of the Earldom, together with a penchant for treating with the Crown of England, helped lead to the forfeiture of the Lordship in the late fifteenth century (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 206-207). Forfeiture finally came in 1493. The weakness of the Lordship at that time and an expansionist policy of the Crown formed the context for the forfeiture (Bannerman 1977: 212-213; Nicholson 1974: 541-542). Legal annexation of the Lordship's territories by the Crown, however, did not simply lead to Crown control in the area.

Annexation by the Crown was followed by a series of military expeditions and the garrisoning of several key strongholds, which included the construction of a new castle at Loch Kilkerran, later the site of Campbeltown (Nicholson 1974: 542-544). The Earl of Argyll played an increasingly prominent role in governing the former Lordship on behalf of the Crown. He was granted custody of Tarbert Castle in 1499; was an essential member of the commission of assessment, set up in 1500, to grant tacks of the lands of the Lordship excepting Islay and Kintyre; and, was to be the King's lieutenant-general in the lands subject to that commission (Nicholson 1974: 544). Despite all this, the Crown had not introduced order, on its terms, to the region. Rather, they had created a power-vacuum that led to what the MacMhuirich seannachies recorded as "a great struggle among the Gael for power", a struggle which took three main forms (Nicholson 1974: 548). One form came in attempts to restore the Lordship up until the death of Donald Dubh in 1545. Secondly, the heads of cadet branches of the MacDonalds struggled to achieve some of the pre-eminence that had formerly belonged to the senior branch. Thirdly, other clans strived to increase their territory and power at the expense of the MacDonalds.

There were at least seven major risings before the inhabitants of the Lordship finally accepted its forfeiture, risings in which Clan Ian Mor were prominent (Steer and



Bannerman 1977: 210). Indeed, the pronouncement of forfeiture did not become effective for more than 50 years, until the death of Donald Dubh, grandson of the forfeited Lord (Bannerman 1977: 213). Despite this, Kintyre seems to have remained in Crown hands from soon after the forfeiture of 1493. The Crown rentals of 1505 and 1506, mentioned above, bear testament to this, as does that of 1541, which was drawn up after the Kintyre lands were inalienably annexed to the Crown in 1540 (McKerral 1948: 12).

This is not to say that Clan Ian Mor had no interest in Kintyre in the sixteenth century. They survived the forfeiture and became the most powerful of the branches into which Clan Donald split (Stevenson 1980: 22). In 1545, large tracts of land in Kintyre and elsewhere were granted to James MacDonald of Dunnyveg (McKerral 1948: 14). He had restored the House of Dunnyveg to its former prestige and power, being viewed by the Crown as the most likely leader of the west Highlanders. However, this situation was not to last long. Following James' death in 1565, Somhairle Buidhe (Sorley Boy), his brother, seized possession of the clan's Antrim lands (Stevenson 1980: 22). The MacDonalds of Dunnyveg and the Glens thus split into the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg and the MacDonnells of Antrim, or Dunluce. The final downfall of the House of Dunnyveg came soon after. In 1607, Kintyre formed part of a Crown grant to the Campbells of Argyll following from a feud between the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg and the MacLeans that came to involve most of the clans of the Western Isles, and as such led to serious Crown intervention (Stevenson 1980: 23-27).

### Feud. Clan Campbell and Clan Donald from the late sixteenth century

The Campbells, as the MacDonalds, had supported Bruce in the Wars of Independence and profited thereby, mainly at the expense of the MacDougalls of Lorn (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 210). They remained, however, within the confederacy of clans that looked to the authority of the Lords of the Isles, until the fifteenth century when they began to take a more independent line (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 210). From that time, they seem to have begun to distance themselves culturally from the Lordship. Within the Lordship, a distinct Gaelic identity seems to have been fostered. This can be seen archaeologically in the distinct late Medieval carving tradition of the region (Steer and Bannerman 1977; figure 7.2). However, from the fifteenth century the Campbells



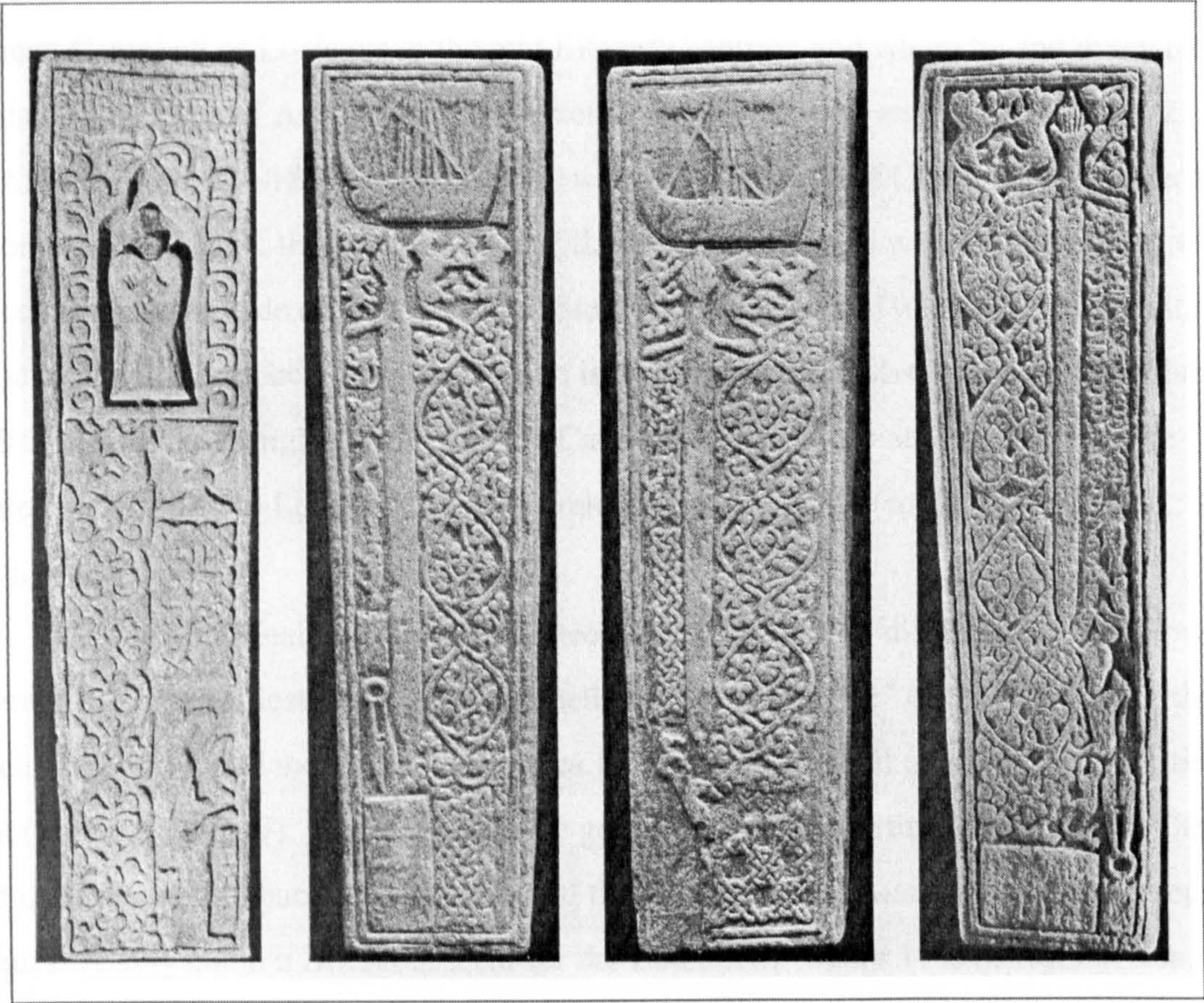


Figure 7.2: Some late Medieval sculpted grave slabs of the Kintyre school (after Steer and Bannerman 1977: plate 18). This style of sculpture is distinct to the west Highlands in the Medieval period.



increasingly fostered a Lowland identity. Again, there is surviving material culture that suggests this. Most notable is the collegiate church at Kilmun in Cowal erected by Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochawe in the mid fifteenth century, and where he and many other heads of the House of Argyll were subsequently buried (Cowan and Easson 1976: 223; RCAHMS 1992: 174-186; figure 7.3). He was of that lineage of Clan Campbell later to become the Earls and, then, Dukes of Argyll. Significantly, this was the only collegiate church founded outside of the Lowlands (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 210). The sculpture associated with Campbell burial at Kilmun is distinct from the Medieval West Highland tradition, with the effigies of Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochawe and his second wife related stylistically to Lowland Scottish examples, for example (see RCAHMS 1992: 179-181).

Campbell genealogies from the fifteenth century on also display a marked Lowland orientation. The earliest surviving Campbell genealogy, *MS1467* of the first half of the fifteenth century, and the *Kilbride MS* of ca.1550 trace Campbell genealogy to a British root (Sellar 1973: 117). *MS1467* takes the genealogy back to Arthur, and possibly Uther, and the *Kilbride MS* back to the eponym of the British race, *Briotain*. These genealogies unquestionably claim a British descent for the Campbells (Sellar 1973: 118), but it is also clear that a parallel Gaelic consciousness was maintained in this period, and in some form down to the eighteenth century (Gillies 1978: 257-263). This shows that the Campbells were not simply attempting to divorce themselves from the Gaelic cultural world. Rather, the Campbells seem to have aspired to a prominent, even dominant, position in Gaelic society, which would have required them to place themselves in the context of that Gaelic society. However, in aspiring to this position, they may have felt it necessary to distance themselves to some degree from the MacDonald Lords of the Isles and, so, tactically fostered a parallel British identity.

A close political relationship with the Scottish Crown was no doubt also concerned in the fostering of a part Lowland identity. Certainly, this relationship was instrumental in the rise of the Campbells to a dominant position in the southwest Highlands (Cregeen 1968: 153-156). The original patrimony of the House of Argyll in the Highlands was the Barony of Loch Awe, although Colin Campbell of Loch Awe, created Earl of Argyll in 1457, moved the family seat to Inverary on Loch Fyne. For much of the fifteenth century, there is no evidence that the Campbells were in any way in conflict with the Lords of the



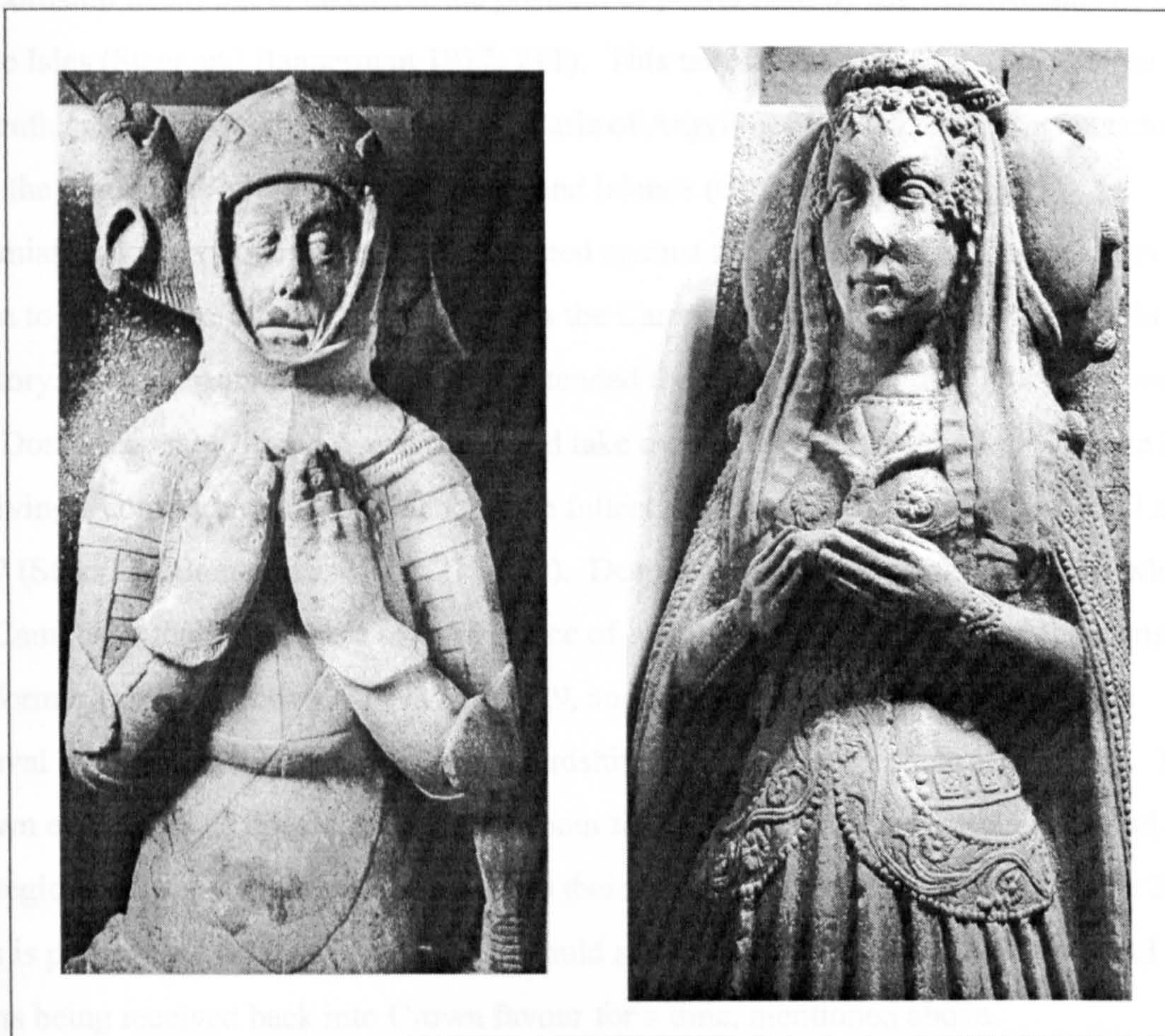


Figure 7.3: Two Campbell effigies from Kilmun. Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochawe, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Argyll, d. 1453 (left) and Lady Margaret, his wife, d. ca.1442 (right) (after RCAHMS 1992: 179, illus. C and 181, illus. A). This form of sculpture is quite distinct from that produced by the Kintyre school (see figure 7.2) and more akin to Lowland than Highland forms.



Isles (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 211). Indeed, it seems that they did not wish to destroy the Lordship itself, but to take over the position of power held by the MacDonalds as Lords of the Isles (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 211). This takeover was instituted in the late fifteenth century, from the time when the Earls of Argyll became the Crown agents charged with the 'daunting' of the west Highlands and Islands (Cregeen 1968: 156-157). A commission to carry out the forfeiture decreed against the fourth Lord of the Isles was given to the first Earl in 1475, and with this the Campbells acquired some MacDonald territory, such as Knapdale in 1493, and extended their overlordship over many former MacDonald vassals. In many ways they did take over the position of the Lords of the Isles, receiving a commission of lieutenancy with fullest powers over the Lordship in 1500 and 1517 (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 211-212). Despite the position of authority into which the Campbells then rose, there is no evidence of hostilities between them and the clans of the former Lordship between 1493 and 1529, and this in spite of major risings in the interval by MacDonald claimants to the Lordship (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 212). The Crown evidently had considerable doubt about this large increase in Campbell control of the region and measures were taken to curb their power (Steer and Bannerman 1977: 212). This is perhaps the context in which we should see the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg and the Glens being received back into Crown favour for a time, mentioned above.

The rise of the House of Argyll in this period, then, was at the expense of the former MacDonald Lords of the Isles in terms of political control of the region, with a stress on the continuity of the institution of the Lordship, in form if not name. Further, there was still scope for the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg and the Glens to maintain a position of some status and exercise a fair degree of territorial control in the area. The infamous feud between the MacDonalds and the Campbells does not seem to have broken out until the late sixteenth century, a period when the focus of Campbell aggrandisement shifted from the takeover of the Lordship as a political institution to the acquisition of new territory (Hopkins 1998: 18). The Lordship of the Isles had consisted of and exercised authority over various different clans. The Campbells, from the second half of the sixteenth century, threatened the very existence of those clans in moving to expand their territory. Control of a wide territory by assuming the authority of Lords of the Isles as heads of a confederacy of different clans had potentially very different implications from achieving control of that territory through the expansion of personal ownership of land. In the latter situation, there



was extensive scope for the *duthchas* (collective heritage) of a given clan to become severely unaligned with its *oighreachd* (the personal patrimony of the clan *fine*), as Campbell *oighreachd* expanded at its expense. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that when we turn to the specific case of Kintyre, acquisition of the territory by the Campbells was followed by serious unrest.

### Kintyre in the seventeenth century. Campbell territorial expansion and resulting civil unrest

The Campbells of Argyll began to acquire territory in Kintyre in the sixteenth century. As early as 1502, the lands of Skipness were granted to Archibald, second Earl of Argyll, and in 1576 the Campbells obtained superiority to the church lands of Iona at Skierchanzie, with those of Whithorn at St. Ninians following in 1584 (McKerrall 1948: 13). Substantial territorial gains in the peninsula were made in the early seventeenth century when the Earls of Argyll obtained a charter to the lands of the Lordship of Kintyre itself (McKerrall 1948: 13; figure 7.4). This territorial advance into Kintyre largely came in the context of general Campbell territorial expansion, whereby the House of Argyll roughly quadrupled its estates (*oighreachd*) to not less than 500 square miles (Cregeen 1968: 157). Further, the Earl of Argyll was by this time feudal superior of an area of around 3000 square miles in the Highlands and, as Sheriff of Argyll, the Earl represented the law of Scotland in the west Highlands, being charged with the administration of justice and having control of the region's official armed forces and ample powers to use them with impunity (Cregeen 1968: 157).

In 1594, the lands of Angus MacDonald of Dunnyveg were forfeited as a result of actions related to the MacDonald-MacLean feud, but he was still in actual possession of a good part of his lands in 1605, if only as a Crown tenant (McKerrall 1948: 15-16). Following several Crown military expeditions to Kintyre, the Earl of Argyll was granted charter to the lands of Kintyre in 1607 in light of his services to the Crown in subduing the MacGregors and other turbulent clans (McKerrall 1948: 15-19). This grant was on condition that all broken men of the surnames of MacDonald and MacLean were expelled from the lands granted and that none of these lands were set to anyone of the name MacDonald. The grant was made despite the Privy Council's opinion that trouble would arise from the MacDonalds as a result.



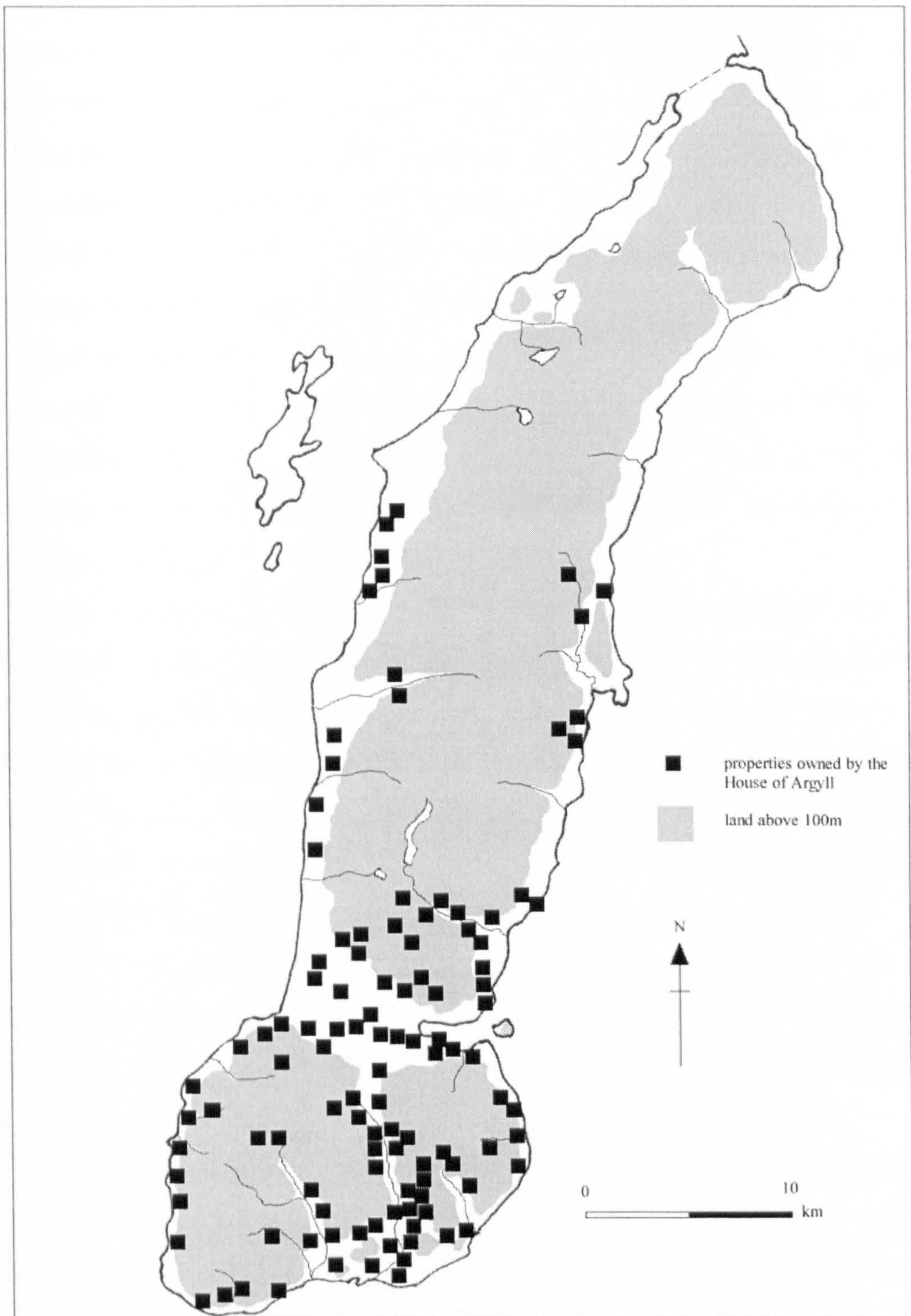


Figure 7.4: Distribution of the House of Argyll's lands in Kintyre (landholding data given in Timperley (ed.) 1976: 29-30, 35, 37-38, 42-43. 17% of the Argyll's farms could not be located). Note the concentration of lands in the south and west.



On receipt of the news of the change in possession of Kintyre, Sir James MacDonald, son to Angus MacDonald of Dunnyveg, attempted to escape his captivity in Edinburgh Castle, but was re-taken, brought to trial, and convicted of treason for earlier offences (see McKerral 1948: 17-22 on this and what follows). He had been imprisoned in 1603 after actions, including an unsuccessful attempt on his father's life, aimed at settling the Crown-MacDonald dispute on his own behalf. Despite the conviction of treason, sentence was not carried out and he remained captive until 1615. In that year, he made a successful escape, finally reaching Islay and retaking Dunnyveg. From there he proceeded to Kintyre, raised his clan, and captured the castle at Kinloch (Campbeltown). This rebellion was ultimately unsuccessful and Sir James fled the country, returning to London on a pardon in 1620, where he died. Sir James' death, and that of his father previously in 1614, ended the male line of the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg.

Subsequent to this, the main threat to Campbell control of Kintyre came from the MacDonnells of Antrim and from the population of the peninsula itself (McKerral 1948: 34-71, 114-130). In 1635 Lord Lorne (first son of the Earl of Argyll) actually granted charter of the lands and Lordship of Kintyre to Viscount Dunluce (son to the first Earl of Antrim, who was head of the family of MacDonnell of Antrim). This followed from Lorne's displeasure that control of Kintyre had been granted to his younger half-brother, Lord Kintyre. However, the Privy Council stopped the grant to Antrim and Kintyre was granted to Lorne in 1636. On his insistence, Lochhead castle was garrisoned and a proclamation was issued warning the people of Kintyre not to attend any courts set up by the MacDonnells. From that time, the MacDonnells recurrently jeopardised the House of Argyll's position in Kintyre through military expedition, real or threatened.

With the first Bishops' War of 1639, the Earl of Antrim was fully expected to invade the west of Scotland, with Lochhead perceived as the most likely landing place. In response to this perceived threat, the first, and only, Marquis of Argyll constructed an entrenched camp on the north side of the Loch, Fort Askamylne, now commemorated in the place names Trench Point and Fort Argyll. However, the threat of invasion waned with the victory of Covenanters in 1640. The fort was maintained, however, and a grant of permission to keep it manned speaks of the "known inmitie" of the Earl of Antrim and of Clan Donald towards the Marquis and his friends.

Maintenance of the fort was perhaps prudent, for in 1644 surviving lineages of Clan



Ian Mor again posed a threat to Argyll's position. In that year, the Marquis of Montrose took up arms on behalf of King Charles I, and against Argyll. Montrose found an ally in the Earl of Antrim, who sent a force of some 1500 to join him under the command of his cousin, Allaster, or Alexander, MacDonald of Colonsay. The Colonsay MacDonalds were, like the Antrims, a branch of the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg. Allaster fought with Montrose for over a year, but after the Battle of Kilsyth in 1645 split off to wage a private war against the Campbells, aiming to win back the MacDonalds' old patrimony of Islay and Kintyre. For two years from 1645, Allaster and his father, Coll Ciotach, worked their will on the inhabitants of Campbell lands in Argyll (McKerral 1948: 44). Argyll's estates were extensively raided with houses burnt, their inhabitants slain, crops destroyed, and cattle driven off. The MacDonalds actually took possession of Kintyre and, in 1647, the Marquis of Argyll reported to Parliament that he had no rents from his Kintyre lands in three years. It is notable that in all the provisions for ameliorating the affects of the raids none was made for Kintyre, which was outside of Campbell and Crown influence at the time. In 1647, an expedition to Kintyre ended MacDonald control of the district.

For the remainder of the seventeenth century, threats to Campbell control were less overt in nature, but the peninsula was continually held under suspicion of being a nest of rebellion. This suspicion continued into the eighteenth century in the context of the Jacobite rebellions. Suspicion of rebelliousness extended beyond the indigenous population to include members of the Lowland plantations that Argyll, ironically, had fostered in an attempt to increase the security of his control of the area (see below). This climate of suspicion can be seen in the context of the Pentland Rising. Although Argyll had not been asked to take to the field against the rebels and on behalf of the Crown, he proceeded to Kintyre on his own initiative. After rounding up the entire Lowland colony there he was able to state that although he found the place in no rebellious state, the people were not principled as he wished (McKerral 1948: 115). Around this time, Argyll determined to have the sub-tenants on his Kintyre lands each take out a written lease. He had some control over the activities of the tack-holders through written leases, but their sub-tenants did not hold land directly of him or by written agreement and were seen to be more free to engage in political activity opposed to his own interests. In his eyes they had formed an unwelcome club (that is, political society or clique).

That the indigenous Highland population remained a problem for Argyll can be



seen in the context of his own rebellion of 1685. During this, he managed to recruit many of the Kintyre Lowlanders. However, none of the old MacDonald vassals joined him and some even joined the Marquis of Atholl, positioning themselves against Argyll.

Argyll's suspicion of the loyalty of the population of Kintyre continued into the eighteenth century. During the '45, part of a regiment was dispatched to Tarbert by Colonel Campbell (Argyll's cousin). This was with a view to controlling the southern approach to Inverary from Knapdale and Kintyre, following intelligence that a force under MacDonald of Largie and others was to advance that way to join the Jacobite army (Ferguson 1951: 25-26). Having said this, sections of Kintyre society, most notably the Lowland colonists, were no longer held under any suspicion of rebelliousness by this time and were considered loyal. Upon the arrival of General Campbell (the Colonel's father) in Campbeltown, he "found 450 men rais'd for His Majesty's service in that corner of the country and ready to march at one day's notice" (quoted in Ferguson 1951: 49).

### **The legacy of unrest. Improvement and the *civilising* of Kintyre**

From the late sixteenth century, James VI sought to deal with unrest in the west Highlands through means other than military. In a series of legislative actions, he attempted to pacify the region by *civilising* its inhabitants. Civilising essentially involved undermining the traditional basis of clanship and the re-structuring the society in a way more akin to that of the Lowlands. For example, in 1597:

The Kingis Majestie . . . found it meit and expedient, baith for the reducioun of the Illis to his Heines obedience, establisching of justice and quietnes, and furthsetting of his Hienes commoditie and proffeit within the samyn, that certane tounis should be erected and sett down in Kintyre, Lochabir, and the Lewis, upoun commodious pairtis maist proper for the saidis effectis. (reproduced in Masson (ed.) 1882: 455)

Burghs had long been a feature of Lowland society and are clearly associated here with the maintenance of Crown control. As we shall see below, the suggestion that a burgh be planted in Kintyre was soon, though not immediately, acted upon.



Perhaps the best-known piece of legislation associated with the process of civilising is the Statutes of Iona (1609). In the Statutes, an attempt was made to systematically undermine the practices that sustained feasting and feuding and, thus, played an important role in the display behaviour that ideologically structured the clan system (Dodgshon 1998: 105-107). This legislation, and other associated actions, in part suggested a strategy to the House of Argyll in securing its control of Kintyre and other of its estates.

Following the grant of Kintyre to the Argylls, they embarked on a similar project to civilise the area. In the seventeenth century, this project largely found form in plantation. The first phase of plantation involved the creation of the burgh at Lochhead, later Campbeltown (McKerrall 1948: 23-29). Originally, the Campbell charter to lands in Kintyre had been granted in feu-farm, with attendant feu-duties owed. In 1609, the Exchequer passed an act discharging the Earl of Argyll from the payment of these feu-duties on condition that he planted a burgh in Kintyre. Further, the conditions included that this burgh should be inhabited by "Lowland men and trafficking burgesses" (quoted in McKerrall 1948: 24). On these terms, then, the idea was to create not only a burgh in Kintyre, but also a Lowland plantation. Such plantation was a common means at the time of addressing political and other disputes, as with the settlement of the Fife Adventurers in Lewis around 1600 and the plantation of Ulster about 1610. The political context of the plantation of Kintyre is further underlined by the conditions of the charters granted to the first of the Lowland planters. These forbade the sub-leasing or sub-feuing of any of the lands granted to those of the names of MacConnell or MacDonald, MacLean, MacLeod, MacAllaster, or MacNeill.

Despite a Decree of the Lords of Council in 1609 giving Argyll permission to eject 53 Kintyre tenants of old stock, the creation of the burgh seems to have been delayed until at least 1617. This is when the Earl received an Act of Ratification with regard to his Kintyre lands. Perhaps in part due to this delay, the planned clearance of indigenous Kintyre tenants did not take place.

The main phase of Lowland plantation seems to have begun later, under the Marquis of Argyll, from around 1650 (McKerrall 1948: 80-86, 118-119). The initiative for this phase of plantation came not from the Crown, but directly from the Marquis himself. This plantation differed in its constitution. Grants of land were now given to Lowlanders higher on the social scale than the original Lochhead burgesses, including lairds and



barons. These second phase planters were commonly connected to the Marquis through the Covenanting party. Grants were also made to members of the Clan Campbell from other parts of Argyllshire. These grantees then sub-let, as tacksmen, to tenants from their own estates. McKerral (1948: 80) has suggested two motives behind this phase of plantation. Firstly, the intention was to secure a strong political and, if necessary, military backing for the Marquis in the area. Secondly, the plantation introduced tenants to recover the value of the Kintyre estate, recently wasted through war, famine, and plague. These plantations began in 1650 and continued into the next quarter century and beyond. The first planters of this phase seem to have settled principally in the old parishes of Kilkerran, Kilchousland, Kilkivan, Kilmichael, and at Saddell. However, from 1669 settlement increasingly focused in the far south of Kintyre, in Southend parish, which was by 1678 the centre of gravity of the Lowland population, along with the burgh at Lochhead.

We can perhaps understand these projects of Lowland plantation better if we return to consider the orientation of the House of Argyll towards Lowland Scottish society. The cultivation of genealogies emphasising a Lowland ancestry, together with the Campbell's important role in Scottish affairs of state in that period, would have influenced their course of action with regard to securing control of Kintyre. A British ancestry is particularly emphasised in Campbell genealogies of the fifteenth century. However, the active creation of Campbell genealogy continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed, in these later centuries the writing of manuscript histories of the family seems to have been a considerable growth industry (Sellar 1973: 112). These accounts all tell roughly the same story and have been referred to as the later approved Campbell tradition (Sellar 1973: 112). They all derive from two earlier seventeenth century manuscript histories of which that given in Duncanson's *Ane Accompt of the Genealogie of the Campbells* will serve here as illustration of the main emphases (see Sellar 1973: 112-117).

In this, the earlier tradition of British ancestry remains and the line is traced back to Arthur, who is given a son, Smerevie or Merevie (Merlin), supposedly born at Dumbarton. The main difference to earlier genealogies occurs in the eleventh generation after Smerevie. There, it is related that Malcolm son of Duibne and grandson of Diarmaid O'Duibne travelled to France where he married the heretix of Beochamps (or Campus Bellus), niece to William the Conqueror. Malcolm's second son, Gillespic, returns to Scotland where he marries his cousin, Eva, the heiress of Lochawe. This account also



includes the popular etymology of the name of Campbell that derives it from *de Campo Bello* and, thus, relates it to Beauchamps by way of *Campus Bellus* and *Bellus Campus*. Campbell genealogy in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, then, attempted to reconcile a Gaelic past (particularly prominent with Diarmaid O'Duibne, a companion of Finn), with earlier traditions of British descent. Further, the name of Campbell and the ancestry of that family are linked to a Norman past and, even, to William the Conqueror himself.

From the late fifteenth century in Kintyre, then, a struggle for political control of the area was bound up with changing control of the land and its resources. Eventually, this resulted in the misalignment of *duthchas* and *oighreachd* and conflicting and contradictory claims to land in the peninsula and the support of its population. By the seventeenth century, the Campbells, and the House of Argyll in particular, were the dominant legally defined landowners in Kintyre. However, various descendants of Clan Donald, or allied kindreds, maintained claims to land in Kintyre as the collective heritage of their clan. Even when this misalignment of *duthchas* and *oighreachd* did not result in overt conflict, the peninsula was considered a potential nest of rebellion against the House of Argyll and, in most instances, the Scottish Crown.

Efforts of the Crown and the Campbells to civilise the area were intended to address opposition to their interests there. With plantation this is obvious, as tenants disposed to Argyll and to the Crown physically replaced the old stock. Plantation also worked on a more subtle level, being intended to introduce Lowland practices that were considered more lawful and peaceful. Most notable is the attempt to introduce commerce through the creation of the burgh at Lochhead and, thus, perhaps the attempt to draw the population of Kintyre into a more concrete relationship with the rest of the country through trade.

Thus, from the early seventeenth century, the House of Argyll sought to address opposition to their ownership of land in Kintyre by introducing Lowland practices and tenants. Improvement, which we saw in chapter six as drawing on Lowland exemplars, should thus be situated at the end of a long-lived process. Indeed, the House of Argyll had actively been cultivating their association with the Lowlands from at least the fifteenth century. This is clear from the manipulation of their genealogy. The fact that suspicion of



unrest in Kintyre continued into the eighteenth century, however, shows that the civilising of Kintyre had not been entirely successful.

Although Improvement is connected to earlier actions, like plantation, it was also radically different. Improvement was a distinct part of a longer-term project that came from the conjunction of a political need to pacify Kintyre in favour of the Dukes of Argyll with a particular way of seeing the world born of the Scottish Enlightenment. Enlightenment thought gave the Dukes of Argyll the ability to conceive of Improvement as a wide scale and fundamental alteration of the material and social conditions of existence on their estates. Further, it explicitly stated that economic, social, political, and legal change were all intimately associated.

Improvement was different from earlier civilising projects in two main ways. First, it became a sustained enterprise where previous projects had been more sporadic. Secondly, Improvement sought to fundamentally alter routine practice and the everyday environment on a wide scale. Where previous projects involved relatively small-scale plantation or attempts to induce *aspects* of Lowland practice, Improvement in Kintyre sought to undermine routine practice in such a way as to make the ideology of clanship unknowable. With Improvement, experience of the daily round was increasingly from the perspective of the individual isolated from community and family. Claims by an absent clan gentry to the resources of farms of Kintyre and the loyalty of their inhabitants would become increasingly absurd in such a situation. Further, hereditary claims to occupancy of a given portion of land would equally be undermined. At the same time, claims to legitimate legal ownership by the House of Argyll, as their personal property, would make more sense, as would occupation of the land on individual lease. Improvement, for the House of Argyll, primarily sought to resolve the contradiction between *duthchas* and *oighreachd* in favour of *oighreachd* and, thus, to legitimate ownership of their vast estate to its inhabitants.



## Part Two

### **Improvement in Kilfinan and the emergent Middle Class**

The contradiction in the nature of the land rights of the gentry, that between *duthchas* and *oighreachd*, was potentially significant in Kilfinan. As we shall see below, many Kilfinan landowners of the Improving period were in the same position as the House of Argyll in Kintyre in that they owned their estates as private property, *oighreachd*, but were not of the clan of their tenants. Indeed, many were of no clan at all, coming from a Lowland or English background and only purchasing their Highland estates in the nineteenth century. However, contradiction between *duthchas* and *oighreachd* is not known to have resulted in conflict in Kilfinan. There is no real indication that landowners' possession of their estates was threatened in the same way as in Kintyre. The potential for conflict was there, of course, and tenants could have mobilised their connection to a clan, and their hereditary right to occupation of a holding, if their perceived traditional rights were threatened. These concepts would have still made sense well into the nineteenth century, considering the continuance of pre-Improvement routine practice and the pre-Improvement material environment into that period.

Threats to landholding arising from the misalignment of *duthchas* and *oighreachd* would certainly not have been a concern on the largest estate in the parish, that of the Lamonts of Lamont. They enjoyed much of this estate from the Medieval period as their personal patrimony, by charter, but they were also chiefs to their tenants. In this case, *duthchas* and *oighreachd* were aligned. In light of this fact, and the consideration that there seems to have been little actual threat to other landowners' possession of their estates, below I have concentrated on another social contradiction as of more importance in motivating Improvement in the parish. This was the contradiction between the landowners' simultaneous position as members of the emergent Middle Class and as proprietors of traditional Highland estates.

In exploring this social contradiction, it will first be necessary to trace the history of landholding in the parish. No comprehensive summary of landholding in Kilfinan exists and, as such, that given below is detailed and relies heavily on primary sources. Establishing who owned land in Kilfinan in the period of Improvement is significant in establishing the context from which those landowners would have approached



Improvement. As will be seen, some Improving landlords were from long established landholding families in the parish, most notably the Lamonts. However, the history of their landholding is not straightforward, periodically losing their lands in the aftermath of the Civil Wars of the mid-seventeenth century, for example. This trauma in landholding is particularly significant for the ensuing and connected commercial reorientation of the estate economy.

This reorientation encouraged already existing commercial activities, particularly trade in cattle, and led to the eventual inclusion of the Lamont gentry in the Middle Class, emergent from the late eighteenth century. Membership of the Middle Class, as will be seen, was something the Lamonts had in common with other Kilfinan landowners of the nineteenth century. As suggested in the last chapter, Middle Class membership was also the common context of contact with the Scottish Enlightenment for Improving landowners in Kilfinan.

Continued membership of the Middle Class, however, not only provided the landowners of Kilfinan with access to the intellectual context of Improvement, the Enlightenment, but also engendered a social contradiction between their position within that Middle Class and as traditional landowners. With the emergence of a Middle Class culture based in the Enlightenment, an unImproved estate would have come to be seen as backward. This would be in the sense that such an estate existed in a stage of society one step behind that of the urban Middle Class and the commercial age. So, from the late eighteenth century established landowners, long engaged in mercantile activity, and new landowners who purchased estates with the profits of trade or their profession can be seen to have Improved their estates as a strategy in establishing or maintaining their membership of the newly coherent Middle Class.

## **The landholding history of Kilfinan**

### **A detailed account of landholding**

The parish of Kilfinan was seen at the time of the first Statistical Account in the early 1790s to be divided into two unequal parts (McFarlane 1983: 204-205). At that time, the Campbells of Otter were proprietors of nearly the whole of the smaller northern



division, Otter, and the Lamonts of Lamont of the most part of the southern division, Kerry. This pattern of landholding, with the parish divided into two major geographical divisions and essentially between two different kin groups, can be traced back into the late Medieval period. In the nineteenth century, the Lamonts remained dominant in landholding terms until the sale of their property there in 1893. Alongside this, the Otter estate fragmented, with an influx of new landowners there and in some of the minor holdings in the parish (figures 7.5 and 7.6).

The Lamonts really emerged as a kindred in the thirteenth century (Barrow 1981: 111). The eponym of the clan is Sir Laumon. He first comes on record in 1235 in gifting the churches of Kilmun and Kilfinan and the chapel of Kilmory on Lochgilp with their respective lands and fishings to Paisley Abbey (McKechnie 1938: 41-42). At that time, the Lamonts held extensive lands in Cowal under Laumon and in Glassary (in the Lochgilp area) under his uncle, Duncan (McKechnie 1938: 51). However, a decline in the fortunes of the family came at the end of the thirteenth century when Laumon (d.1293) sided with John Balliol in opposition to Robert Bruce and rose against Bruce with MacDougall of Lorne (McKechnie 1938: 52-61). After Bannockburn, as part of the general retribution against those who sided with Balliol, the Campbells annexed a large part of Lamont lands in Cowal, including the whole of the Kilmun and Loch Eck districts. However, this Campbell annexation seems to have been difficult to implement in practice. As John Barbour said:

After King Robert the Bruce had won the crown of Scotland . . . he gave authority to the Black Knight of Lochow [Sir Colin Campbell] to take part of his lands from Lamont. The knight of Lochow claimed the lands that were confiscated by the King, but Lamont refused to give them up. (quoted in McKechnie 1938: 58)

The translation of Campbell legal right to the lands into actual possession seems to have taken much longer and to have been achieved through diplomatic means. Sir Colin Campbell's son, Archibald, married Isobel Lamont, daughter of the Lamont chief. This seems to have pacified Campbell-Lamont relations and was probably the context in which the Cowal lands were finally ceded to the Campbells, who first appear in possession



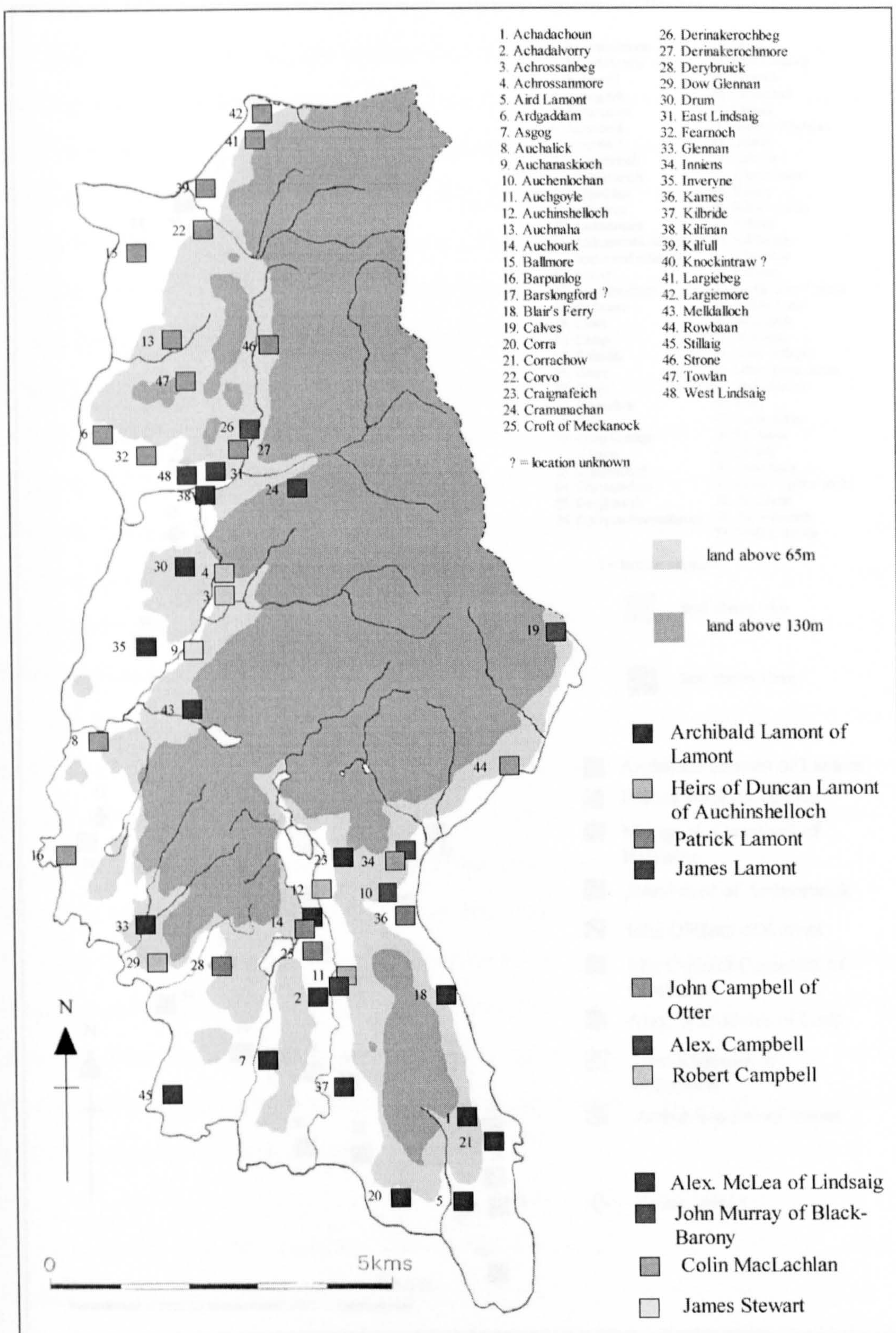


Figure 7.5: Distribution of landholding in Kilfinan in 1751 (compiled from landholding data given in Timperley 1976 (ed.): 36-37).



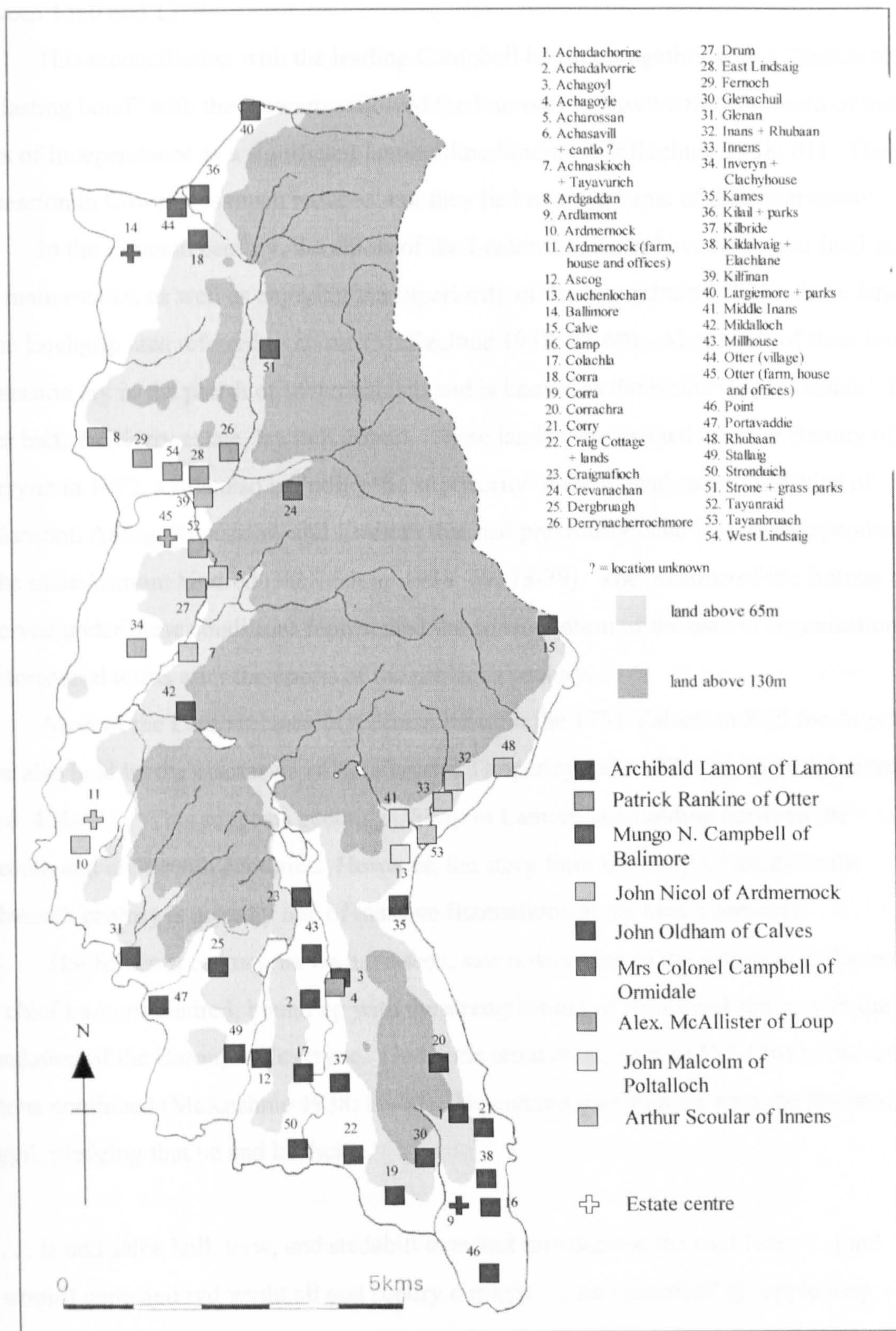


Figure 7.6: Distribution of landholding in Kilfinan in 1861 (compiled from landholding data given in the 1860/1861 Valuation Roll, ABDA 1/73/13).



between 1360 and 1370.

This reconciliation with the leading Campbell kindred, together with a “profitable and lasting bond” with the Stewarts, allowed the Lamonts to survive the aftermath of the Wars of Independence as a significant landholding kindred (McKechnie 1938: 61). Their possession in Cowal was much reduced, but they had retained some of their patrimony.

In the fifteenth century, the chiefs of the Lamonts seem to have held their land as two main estates, as well as enjoying the superiority of the Monydrain Estate - those lands in the Lochgilp area referred to above (McKechnie 1938: 68-69). About half of their total possession lay in the parish of Inverchaolain and is known as the Nether Cowal estate. The other half, the Kerry estate, lay in Kilfinan. These lands were erected into the Barony of Inveryne in 1472, a title also including the superiority of the Cowal cadet lairdships of Ardlamont, Ascog, Knockdow and Coustan that had previously been largely independent of the main Lamont kindred (McKechnie 1938: 69, 78-79). The erection of the Barony of Inveryne under these conditions represented the consolidation of the clan in organisational and territorial terms after the upsets of the previous century.

Most of the Lamont lands in Kilfinan listed in the 1751 Valuation Roll for Argyll were also held by the charter of 1472 (compare Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36-37 with Lamont 1914: 424-425). This suggests general stability in Lamont landholding between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. However, the story from the early sixteenth to the eighteenth century is actually one of massive fluctuations in the clan’s fortunes.

The fifteenth century, as we have seen, saw a widening of the sphere of influence of the chief Lamont kindred, bound up with the strengthening of their legal status with the foundation of the Barony of Inveryne. Under the tenth chief, John (1515-1568), this rise in fortune continued (McKechnie 1938: 85-97). He entered into alliance with the House of Argyll, pledging that he and his heirs:

... is and salbe leill, trew, and stedabill men and servandis to the said Erle ... [and would] gang and ryd wytht all and sundry our kyn ... [in Campbell’s] supple help and defence to quhat place or quhat tym ... [he was] lauchfully warynt thereto aganis any persoun or personnis in his ... gud and honest querellis and actiounis, excepad the Kingis grace. (quoted in McKechnie 1938: 86)



Making this bond would have been an expedient move for the Lamonts at a time when the Campbells were emerging as the dominant power in Argyll after the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles. Not only might it have allowed the Lamonts some measure of security, but may also have facilitated expansion of their landholding from that time.

From 1520, John was granted lands in Kilfinan by the Earl of Argyll, purchased various properties there and elsewhere in Cowal and Bute from other Lamonts and the Crown, and feued churchlands at Kilfinan and in Strathlachlan from Paisley Abbey. In total, he increased the family patrimony by one third. The subsequent chief, Duncan (1568-1579), did not add much to the patrimony in absolute terms. However, the failing Ardlamont cadets were absorbed into the Barony of Inverynie at that time, although Monydrain, Ascog, Knockdow and Couston remained strong (McKechnie 1938: 107). Furthermore, a new cadetship was created at Stillaig under John for his second son, Archibald (McKechnie 1938: 100)

Under Duncan, Lamont-Campbell relations soured as an unspecified quarrel arose between the two kindreds. In 1573, Argyll assembled the barons of Cowal, including Baron Ruadh (Lamont) of Knockdow, on *Tom-a-Mhoid* (McKechnie 1938: 113-115). Knockdow was instructed to bring the Campbell Earl the head of Lamont of Lamont, with certain lands offered as reward. Attempts to carry out this mission failed and Lamont and Argyll reconciled, with the situation further pacified by the conference of Knockdow's estates on his grandson in 1601. With the accession of James as chief in 1579 potential conflict with the Campbells and with the Crown arose again. In that year, James formally allied himself with the MacDonalds of Dunnyveg against all comers and, despite the disclaimer "the authority and my Lord of Argyle only excepted", this aligned him against the Crown and Argyll as its agent (McKechnie 1938: 120). However, despite this bond and the fact that various Lamont cadets were in contact with Dunnyveg at the time and later, serious conflict with the Campbells and the Crown does not seem to have materialised while James was chief (McKechnie 1938: 120-127).

James' successor, Coll (1614-1634), seems to have reversed the policy of his father to the Campbells (McKechnie 1938: 130-132). Coll supported Argyll in his suppression of the rebellion following the escape of Sir James MacDonald of Dunnyveg from Edinburgh Castle. However, specific instructions from the Crown to Argyll that he should not press the Lamonts too hard perhaps suggest that differences between the two clans were not



entirely buried. Coll also seems to have fostered good relations with the Crown (McKechnie 1938: 134). He was made a Justice of the Peace and was returned Member of Parliament for Argyllshire.

Lamont landholding at this time remained fairly stable (McKechnie 1938: 137). Coll repurchased two properties in Kilfinan sold by his father, Kildavaig and Achadachoun, and bought another, Acharossan, from Bannatyne of Kames.

The succeeding chief, Sir James (1634-1650), again reversed family political policy (McKechnie 1938: 147-148). Supporting the Covenanters, as did Argyll, while they seemed ascendant in the Civil Wars, he turned to support the Royalists. James seems to have done so on condition that an Irish force sufficiently large to ensure his neighbours' subjection was sent to Cowal. The Civil Wars were a pretext for him to pursue his own local agenda, with his sights on the Lordship of Cowal that had been in Lamont hands under Laumon.

This eventual choice of side in the Wars was to prove fatal (McKechnie 1938: 181-207). With the defeat of King Charles in England, the Campbells, including the Kilfinan family of Otter, descended in force on Cowal. The Lamonts soon capitulated and the Campbells took the opportunity to further their ambitions in Cowal. The leading Lamonts were seized and their estates were scorched. Thirty-six prominent clansmen were hanged in Dunoon shortly after and the chief and heads of the cadet families were carried to Inverary. Sir James surrendered his lands and goods under duress to the will of Argyll and Campbell of Ardkinglas, as did Ascog and Stronlbanach. Sir James was subsequently held captive in Dunstaffnage Castle for five years. His estates were parted between the Campbells and his creditors.

A Charter of Apprising to George Campbell, sheriff depute for Argyll, in 1646 legitimised Campbell appropriation of Lamont lands in Cowal (Lamont 1914: 202-203). The apprised lands remained outwith Lamont hands for varying lengths of time. The Stillaig estate was restored by Act of Parliament in 1661 and James was restored to the Barony of Inverryne in 1663 (Lamont 1914: 235-238; McKechnie 1938: 219). James' son, Archibald, redeemed the bulk of the rest of the patrimony from various creditors by the end of the century (McKechnie 1938: 198). This episode represents the most complete trauma to Lamont landholding in Cowal and their restoration perhaps only came about due to the increasing distance between the authorities and Argyll at that time.



Campbell expropriation of Lamont estates also resulted in a degree of social trauma. Apart from the execution or imprisonment of many of the clan *fine*, many of the smaller tenants went into exile on Mull and elsewhere (McKechnie 1938: 200-201). Further, the Marquis of Argyll introduced some Lowland tenants onto the appropriated estates (McKechnie 1938: 203). Even with their estates restored, the traditional basis of Lamont power had been weakened. This power was based in the social structuring of clanship with its perceived kinship ties between chief, *fine*, tenant, and others. The exile of a number of the previous tenantry and their replacement with Lowlanders to whom this social network was probably partly if not wholly alien would have acted to undermine the clan gentry's authority in their traditional territorial sphere.

The bulk of the chief's patrimony was restored when Archibald, the fifteenth chief, managed to pay off his creditors in the 1680s (McKechnie 1938: 237-238). This left only two minor apprisings, which were settled in 1694 and 1714, with only Argyll still holding a creditors interest in the estates, and this mostly in relation to lands in Inverchaolain, some of which were re-acquired by Lamont cadets in the eighteenth century (McKechnie 1938: 238-239). The cadet branches of Couston and Silvercraigs (in Glassary) disappeared at this time, with their lands falling to an illegitimate son of Archibald and to Stillaig, respectively (McKechnie 1938: 263-264). In political terms, the Lamonts remained in opposition to the House of Argyll for the remainder of the seventeenth century (McKechnie 1938: 239-244). After the Earl of Argyll's conviction for treason in 1681, Lamont gentry came to represent the Crown in the area with commissions of militia, excise, and cess and signed bonds with the Crown as to their service if required in opposition to an invasion under Argyll.

In 1685, when Archibald Lamont was M.P. for Argyll and appointed officer commanding in Cowal, the suspected Campbell insurrection arose. Several Campbells from Cowal, including Campbell of Otter from Kilfinan, joined Argyll. However, the insurrection proved unsuccessful and Argyll was executed in 1685. Lamont-Campbell acrimony was not necessarily over-riding, however, as Archibald supported William and Mary, as did the House of Argyll (McKechnie 1938: 252-253).

By 1714 the chief's patrimony was without encumbrance, and the head of the clan now had the combined resources of his own estate and that of Stillaig (McKechnie 1938: 280). The chief's estate increased further under another Archibald (1729-1767), who recovered Achafour by Toward from Argyll through litigation, and annexed the whole



estate of Lamont of Auchinshelloch and purchased that of Ascog on the failure of those cadet branches (McKechnie 1938: 287). Further, he succeeded to the Kilfinan estate in 1740 (McKechnie 1938: 288).

This consolidated estate is what appears in the Valuation Roll for Argyll of 1751 (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36-37). There, Archibald Lamont of Lamont is the largest landowner in Kilfinan parish, with John Campbell of Otter second. Three other Lamont estates are listed. Largest of these is that pertaining to the heirs of Duncan Lamont of Auchinshelloch, which, as we have seen, Archibald annexed. Then there are the minor estates of a Patrick and a James Lamont. The latter consisted of only one property, Auchgoul. Auchgoul is presumably Auchagoyl, from which the cadet branch of Auchagoyl derived its appellation. In 1765, Lamont of Auchagoyl settled his estates upon Archibald, second lawful son of the chief, before departing for Virginia, leaving Knockdow as the sole remaining cadet (McKechnie 1938: 311).

By the middle decades of the eighteenth century, then, the Lamonts of Lamont had successfully expanded and consolidated their estate in Kilfinan, despite the near catastrophic reverse of the previous century. Their expansion was largely achieved by bringing most of the cadet estates under their direct control and ownership, along with other purchases of land. The result was clear landed dominance in Kilfinan. The pre-eminence of the chiefly kindred in Kerry had previously been maintained by the extension of the clan, through cadets, over the territory in question. This was now largely transformed into control through personal ownership.

The larger part of the Nether Cowal estate, around Toward, was sold by John (1767-1816). This meant that from the latter part of the eighteenth century, the Kerry estate became the core and focus of Lamont of Lamont lands.

The Lamonts sold their Cowal estate in 1893 (McKechnie 1938: 370). R. and W. Watson, papermakers in Renfrewshire, acquired the larger part, and the estate centre at Ardlamont. A smaller portion was sold to Donald N. Nicol of the neighbouring estate of Ardmarnock. This latter estate seems to have been newly created from the properties of several small landowners sometime in the first half of the nineteenth century, as will be discussed below. Prior to the sale, the Lamont estate seems to have increased in the latter half of the eighteenth century and remained fairly stable throughout the nineteenth century.

In the Valuation Roll of 1751, Archibald Lamont of Lamont is listed as owning



some 15.5 farms, as well as other properties such as mills (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36). Other Lamont landowners held in total some 9.5 farms (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36-37). As we have seen above, these other Lamont estates were soon to be largely subsumed within the estate of the Lamonts of Lamont. So it is that in the 1802 Valuation Roll for Argyll, John Lamont of Lamont is listed as holding 24 farms (ABDA 1/13/6:26-27). This 24 consists of all of Archibald Lamont of Lamonts 1751 holdings, together with all but one of the other Lamont holdings of 1751 (90%). Lamont of Lamont estates as a percentage of the total farms held in Kilfinan thus rose from 31% to 46%, at the expense of the other Lamont heritors.

According to the 1860/1861 Valuation Roll, their landholding as a percentage of the total number of properties remained fairly stable through the first half of the nineteenth century, dropping from 46% to 44% (ABDA 1/73/13: 52-56). The total number of farms held rose from 24 to 26. The percentage drop despite an increase in the number of farms held is accounted for by an increase in the total number of farms listed for the parish from 52 to 59. These figures suggest continuity in the size and relative importance of the estate within the parish. However, they disguise some change in the nature of estate composition. Of the 26 farms held in 1860/1861, 13 remain from the 24 listed for 1802. It seems, though, that only three of the 1802 farms had passed into other hands. The other eight just disappear from the Valuation listings. This might be explained by the consolidation of farms. The other 13 farms making up the 26 of 1860/1861 do not seem to be new acquisitions, but rather have names that do not appear on the 1802 Roll at all. This suggests that they were new creations, perhaps as a result of draining and other Improvements, on previously held Lamont land. Nearly all the farms listed were held as single-tenancies. Some of the new names may arise from the consolidation of joint-tenancy farms into two or more single-tenancy farms, as opposed to the direct translation of joint-tenancy to single-tenancy farms in a 1:1 ratio. Certainly, in terms of geographical extent and location the 1860/1861 estate is almost identical to the 1802 estate.

The estate consisted of 26 farms in 1880/1881 (ABDA 1/13/47:61-69). One of the 1860/1861 farms had disappeared from the records to be replaced by another. This new farm is not listed at all in 1860/1861, but seems to be in Lamont of Lamont possession in 1802. There is no clear explanation for this and, anyway, the concern here is largely with the general landholding situation. For the Lamonts this seems to have remained virtually



static in the later nineteenth century. Their percentage of the total number of farms increased from 44% to 50% from 1860/1861 to 1880/1881, but this does not represent expansion in absolute terms as the total number of farms listed for the parish dropped from 59 to 52.

As mentioned above, the Campbells of Otter owned Otter, the smaller northern division of the parish of Kilfinan, in the late eighteenth century. They had come into possession of the estate in the late Medieval period.

The lordship of Otter had previously been under the control of the MacEwens (Marshall 1983: 132-133). The eponym of that kindred was Eoghan, who flourished in the fourteenth century (Sellar 1971: 32-33). Their territory seems to have encompassed areas in Knapdale and Kintyre, as well as Otter. However, in the mid-fifteenth century they were either ousted from Otter by the Campbells (Marshall 1983: 133) or, as is more likely, the estate changed hands with the marriage of a Campbell to a MacEwen heiress (Atkinson, Driscoll and Watson 1993: 6). Certainly, an agreement was made in 1432 whereby Suffne McEwyn laird of Ottirinweran gave first refusal on the lands of Otter, if leased, to Gillaspy Cambel, son of Duncan Cambel of Lochaw (Bannatyne Club 1854: 54). In this agreement it was also stipulated that should McEwyn have an heir he was obliged to pay recompense to Gillaspy. All this suggests that the transfer of land did come about peaceably, and perhaps as the result of a marriage between the two families. It has also been suggested elsewhere that the Campbell presence in Otter came through the marriage of Alexander, son of Duncan of Lochow (d.1453), to the third daughter of Stewart Lord Lorne (Anon. 1871: 32).

In the 1751 Valuation Roll, John Campbell of Otter is listed as holding 14 of 50 farms in the parish, or 28% of the total (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36-37). While there are some major gaps in the landholding history of Otter prior to this date, it is clear that the Campbell estate had grown considerably in the previous century. Several significant holdings seem to have come into the Campbells' possession as a result of the upsets of the Civil War period. This occurred in some cases in a rather roundabout manner. For instance, Ballimore can be traced in Lamont ownership from a charter of 1524, given by John Lamont of Ardlamont, to the charter of apprising to George Campbell in 1646 (Lamont 1914:35 and 202). The lands next appear in the burgh records of Glasgow in



1694 when:

The Magistratis and Toune Counsell did . . . subscribe ane dispositioun and assignatioun in favouris of Donald Campbell of Sroandauin, Donald McCallum, bailie of Glasserie, and Coline McLauchlane of Achingarran . . . each of them for their own pairts, proportionally to the respective soumes payed be them to the said Robert Campbell [of Silvercraigs, son of Robert Campbell, merchant in Glasgow] . . . of all and haill the lands and others underwritten [including Balemoir], formerly pertaining to Coill Lamont of Silvercraigs, and apprysed frae him . . . (Lamont 1914: 422)

So, it seems probable that the lands, having been appraised in 1646, passed to a creditor of Coill Lamont, Robert Campbell. These lands then passed to Campbell's creditors in 1694, having been appraised at the instance of *Hutchesones Hospitall* for debt (Renwick (ed.) 1908: 139). The property next appears in Campbell of Otter's possession in 1751 (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 37). How he acquired it is unknown.

Other Campbell properties in 1751 are known to have previously been in Lamont hands and passed, presumably but not certainly, as a result of the Civil Wars. For example, Auchnaha is listed as pertaining to John Campbell of Otter in 1751, but belonged to Archie Lawmond of Stilaig in 1587 (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 37; Lamont 1914: 417). Fearnoch also belonged to Campbell of Otter in 1751, but had been appraised to George Campbell from Sir James Lamont of Inneryne in 1646 (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 37; Lamont 1914: 203).

The Campbells of Otter, then, stood in opposition to the Lamonts during the Civil Wars, and gained in landholding terms by this, albeit indirectly in cases. They had sided with Campbell of Argyll and had engaged directly against the Lamonts after the defeat of King Charles in England (McKechnie 1938: 181). They had supported the winning side and, more important in the southern Highlands, had kept Argyll's favour. This meant they had not exposed themselves to the retribution visited on kindreds like the Lamonts. Their support for Argyll continued during the 1685 uprising (McKechnie 1938: 243). However, they do not seem to have suffered much, despite Argyll's defeat. As with most other Campbell kindreds, association with Argyll continued in opposition to the House of Stuart during the first Jacobite rebellion of 1689-1690 (McNeill and MacQueen (eds) 1996: 150).



In terms of the absolute number of farms held by the Campbells of Otter from 1751 to 1802, the situation remained fairly stable (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 37; ABDA 1/13/6: 27). However, the actual make-up of the estate seems to have altered somewhat. Of the 14 farms held by John Campbell of Otter in 1751, nine are listed as in his, or another John's, possession in 1802. The remaining five farms had passed to three heritors that had not previously held land in the parish – Mungo Campbell (1 farm), John MacIver (3), and Thomas Harkness of Clachaig (1) (ABDA 1/13/6: 27). It is likely that these three were creditors of Campbell of Otter and the properties passed in satisfaction of debt. Certainly, Mungo Campbell's context as a prominent Glasgow burgess makes it likely in his case (see Renwick (ed.) 1940: 697; (ed.) 1941: 57, 122, 174, 223). In partial replacement of these properties Campbell of Otter had acquired West and East Lindsaig, with corn mill (ABDA 1/13/6: 27). These had pertained to Alex McLea of Lindsaig in 1751 (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36). Further, a previously unlisted property, Tayinluig, had been added to the Otter estate (ABDA 1/13/6: 27). It is possible that this property might not have been a farm in its own right. It is listed with East Lindsaig and the name Tayinluig, containing as it does the Gaelic element *taigh* (house), might suggest that it was a newly created croft or simply a cottage associated with East Lindsaig.

By the Valuation Roll of 1860/1861, the Campbell of Otter family had disappeared as heritors in the parish (ABDA 1/73/13: 52-56). They had been bankrupt by 1818, when a John Black from Jamaica acquired their properties of Auchalick, Barpuntag and Auchnaha (McKechie 1938: 351). In 1826 these properties passed to John MacIvor, and show as his in the 1844 Assessment of Roads. He, as we have seen, had previously acquired a portion of the Otter estate (ABDA DR1/12; RCAHMS 1992: 313). These acquired properties formed the newly created Ardmarnock estate.

By 1844, the bulk of the Campbell of Otter holdings had essentially bifurcated into a smaller incarnation of the Otter estate and into the Ballimore estate (ABDA DR1/12). At that time, both new estates remained in Campbell hands. The Otter portion was in the hands of a Mrs. Campbell of Otter and Mungo Nutter Campbell had formed the estate of Ballimore. He, as seen above, had already acquired one property in the area by 1802. By the Valuation Roll of 1860/1861 the new Otter estate had passed to a Patrick Rankine (ABDA 1/73/13: 54).



In the first half of the nineteenth century, then, alongside the continuation of the Lamont Kerry estate, the story of landholding in the rest of the parish is largely one of change. The Otter estate split into those of Otter and Ballimore and the Ardmarnock estate was created under John MacIvor. By the 1840s, these three new estates were the most significant in size after Lamont's (ABDA DR1/12). According to the 1860/1861 Valuation Roll, the Lamont Kerry estate included 44% of the total number of farms, with the Ballimore and Otter estates each at 12% and Ardmarnock at 9% (ABDA 1/73/12).

The Ardmarnock estate was sold to Dr. John Nicol of Liverpool in 1852 (RCAHMS 1992: 313). While only five separate properties are listed for this estate in 1860/1861, as opposed to nine in 1844, the missing farms do not seem to have passed into other hands (ABDA DR1/12; ABDA 1/73/13). The extent of the estate probably remained the same under Nicol as under MacIvor, with the decrease in named properties probably due to consolidation of farms or their abandonment with the conversion of part of the estate for sport (as witnessed by the listing of Shootings let in the Valuation Roll).

The Ardmarnock estate remained in Nicol hands in 1870/1871 and in 1880/1881, and its role as a sporting estate seems to have continued (ABDA 1/13/33: 105; ABDA 1/13/47: 61). Indeed, the estate remained the property of the Nicol family until about 1980 (RCAHMS 1992: 313).

The Ballimore estate remained in Campbell hands through the 1860/1861, 1870/1871, and 1880/1881 Valuations, first under Mungo Nutter and then under C. MacPherson Campbell (ABDA 1/73/13: 52; ABDA 1/13/33: 105-106; ABDA 1/13/47: 61). In 1880/1881 the estate comprised all those properties that it had done in 1860/1861. Sometime after the 1880s, the estate changed hands again. By 1951 it belonged to Captain Duncan MacRae of Eilean Donan (Cairns 1961: 316).

As we have seen, the Otter estate had passed to Patrick Rankine by the beginning of the 1860s. He is listed again as the proprietor in 1870/1871, and in 1880/1881 the estate is listed under his trustees and pertaining to John Scott, land agent in Airdrie (ABDA 1/13/33: 107-108; ABDA 1/13/47: 62-63). In 1951, the owner was still a Rankin, Dr. John (Cairns 1961: 316). As with Ballimore, Otter comprised all those properties in 1880/1881 that it had in 1860/1861.

Besides the two main estates of Otter and Kerry listed in the 1751 Valuation Roll, there were several other smaller estates, comprising maybe one or two farms, in the parish



(Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36-37). As we have seen, several of these were listed under the names of various Lamonts and became consolidated under the Lamonts of Lamont through the eighteenth century. An estate of one farm under an Alex. Campbell was part of the Otter estate by 1802, as was the small estate of the McLeas of Lindsaig (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36-37; ABDA 1/13/6: 27). The farm of Auchanaskioch pertained to a James Stewart in 1751 and those of Acharossanmore and Acharossanbeg to a Robert Campbell (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36). By the 1802 Valuation, the former had passed into the joint ownership of Dr. Colquhoun and John MacIvor of Ardmarnock and the latter two into that of Andrew McFarlane and John MacIvor (ABDA 1/13/6: 27). By 1844, all were under the sole ownership of John MacIvor and formed part of the Ardmarnock estate (ABDA DR1/12).

Geographically, the Lindsaig estate sat between those of Otter and Kerry. Its inclusion within Otter represented the southward extension of that estate. Auchanaskioch and the Acharossans sat within the northern part of the Kerry estate and were encompassed by Lamont lands. This situation continued with the creation of the Ardmarnock estate which included and expanded beyond those lands, although by 1844 the lands to the north of it that had been under the Lamonts had passed into the possession of another landowner new to the parish, Alexander MacAlister of Loup and Torrisdale (ABDA DR1/12).

So, after the mid-eighteenth century, Otter and Kerry swallowed up many of the smaller estates in Kilfinan, while others formed part of a new estate (Ardmarnock). Eventually, the major landholding block of Otter was subdivided and fell to new proprietors, as did a small part of Kerry. This leaves two estates yet to be discussed.

In 1751, there were two small estates bordering Kerry to the east, in the vicinity of the later village of Tighnabruaich, which belonged to neither Lamonts nor Campbells (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 36). The first of these comprised part of Inniens, Calves, and Auchenlochan under John Murray of Blackbarony. The second comprised part of Inniens and Rowbaan under Colin MacLachlan. By 1802, both estates had changed hands (ABDA 1/13/6: 27). The first had passed to Archibald McArthur Stewart and the second to John Moodie of Inins. By 1844, these properties had changed hands again and there seems to have been a slight shift in the composition of the first estate (ABDA DR1/12). At that time, Achinlichan and Mid Inans belonged to Niell Malcolm of Poltalloch and Inans with Rubaan to Arthur Scoular of Inans. Calves does not appear in this Assessment. However,



it does appear in the 1849 assessment as Calics and that of 1850 as Calves again, under John Oldham Esq. (ABDA DR1/12). This situation remains in the 1860/1861 valuation with Niell Malcolm's property having passed to John Malcolm of Poltalloch and with the newly created Taynanbruach listed under Arthur Scoular (ABDA 1/73/13: 52-53). The properties of John Malcolm and Arthur Scoular continued into the early 1880s, although by that time Scoular had died and his estate pertained to James Scoular (ABDA 1/13/47: 63). Calves still belonged to John Oldham in 1860/1861, but is not listed at all for 1870/1871 (ABDA 1/73/13: 52; ABDA 1/13/33). However, Calves is probably the same as the property listed at that time and in 1880/1881 as Glencaladh Castle and belonging to George Robert Stephenson, another change of ownership (ABDA 1/13/33: 106; ABDA 1/13/47: 61).

In 1951, Auchenlochan still belonged to a Malcolm of Poltalloch, but Innens and Glen Caladh had fallen to new owners, Arthur Millar and Col. G.F. Ingham-Clark respectively (Cairns 1961: 316).

## Landholding summary and family biographies of the landowners of Kilfinan

This, essentially, is the history of landholding in Kilfinan parish from the late Middle Ages through to the end of the nineteenth century (figures 7.5 and 7.6). The story of the largest estate in the parish, Kerry, is largely one of continuity. However, this apparent continuity masks periodic traumas to ownership and the erosion of the Lamonts territorial and social power outside of Kilfinan. A recurrent theme is their loss in opposition to the Campbells.

In the late twelfth century Laumon sided with Balliol and the MacDougalls against Bruce. In general, those Highland kindreds who sided with the victorious Bruce faction benefited in local and regional terms, while those who sided with Balliol suffered (see, e.g., McDonald 1997: chapter 6). This is partly true for the Lamonts. The Campbells gained territory in Cowal at their expense. However, diplomatic initiative seems to have led to the survival of the Lamonts as a locally significant kindred and allowed them to retain a portion of their lands.

In the fifteenth century, we witness the consolidation of the Lamont chief's position in territorial terms and in social and political terms as head of the clan. This is to be seen in the erection of the Barony of Inverlyne in 1472. Despite apparent continuity in



landholding between that date and the mid-eighteenth century, there were serious reversals.

In the fifteenth and into the sixteenth centuries, the Lamont chief's sphere of influence and landholding was not only consolidated, but expanded. This was also a period of friendly relations with the Campbells and the two situations are probably related. In the later sixteenth century, relations with the Campbells and the Crown soured, but serious conflict was avoided. The early seventeenth century saw another period of the pacification of Lamont-Campbell relations, as well as the fostering of good relations with the Crown. At that time, Lamont landholding remained fairly stable.

The period of the Civil Wars is one of the most significant in this narrative for our understanding of subsequent Improvement, and I will return to it below. During the Wars, the Lamonts eventually sided with the Royalists, against the Covenanters and the Campbells. This led to the execution of many of the *fine*, the wasting of Lamont lands, and the forfeiture of the estates of the clan gentry. This forfeiture was not permanent and the bulk of the estates, along with the Barony of Inverryne, were restored by the end of the century.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the position of the chiefs, then referred to as Lamont of Lamont, was further strengthened by the consolidation of the Lamont cadetships under their personal ownership. This was a significant change in the manner in which the clan's territory was controlled. Previously, this had been achieved through a territorial umbrella of cadet kindreds. Now it took the form of personal ownership. There was some increase in Lamont of Lamont holdings in the later eighteenth century. For the whole of the nineteenth, until the sale of the estate in 1893, the estate remained static.

From at least the fifteenth century to the end of the nineteenth, the Kerry estate remained a fairly stable Lamont possession, despite serious fluctuation in Lamont holding elsewhere and with the notable exception of the immediately post-Civil War period.

This stands in marked contrast to the situation in Kintyre. There, Campbell expansion in the wake of the forfeiture of the MacDonald Lordship of the Isles resulted in a serious misalignment of *oighreachd* and *duthchas*. Conflict between the legal right of ownership over and the traditional kin-based relations within the territory in question was the core problem addressed by Improvement.

Improvement under the Lamonts cannot be understood in these terms. They had been on the receiving end of Campbell aggrandisement, most notably in the fourteenth and



seventeenth centuries. The extent of their territorial and social control had been reduced as Campbell estates expanded. Lamont *duthchas* and *oighreachd* did conceivably become seriously misaligned as a result of this process. However, in this case, as with other kindreds such as the MacDonalds, the situation was the reverse of that experienced by the Campbells. If anything, any attempt to restore Lamont territorial control to its height would have been more properly based in the traditional structuring of social and territorial relations under clanship than those of capitalism. As we have seen, in the eighteenth century if not before, the Lamonts of Lamont themselves began to undermine the traditional structure of their clan. The emphasis became firmly placed on personal ownership of clan territory under the person of the chief as landlord.

Thus, Improvement in the case of the Lamonts cannot be explained in the first instance with reference to the problems of social and territorial control resulting from the misalignment of *duthchas* and *oighreachd*. Rather, Lamont Improvements in Kilfinan have to be explained with reference to a different context. This is their increasing involvement in mercantile activity and the society of the nearby Clyde burghs, from the early seventeenth century. This context perhaps became even more significant after the Civil Wars. We will return to this below.

Throughout the rest of the parish, the history of landholding stands in contrast to the (troubled) continuity of Kerry. The Otter estate enjoyed some kind of stability from the later Middle Ages until the early nineteenth century, but with a major change in ownership. The MacEwens controlled Otter in the fifteenth century and probably the fourteenth, if not before. Ownership passed to the Campbells of Otter during the fifteenth century. This most probably happened by peaceful means and does not represent the ousting of some authors.

Little is known of the subsequent history of the estate up until the eighteenth century. However, it seems that Otter expanded in the aftermath of the Civil Wars. This was largely at the expense of the Lamonts, even if lands did not necessarily pass directly into Campbell hands. Certainly from that time, and most likely before, the Campbells of Otter were politically aligned with the House of Argyll. This placed them in opposition to the Lamonts during the Civil Wars. Support for Argyll continued in the 1685 uprising and during the first Jacobite rebellion.

Between the Valuation rolls of 1751 and 1802, the size of the Otter estate remained



stable overall. There was some flux in the ownership of individual holdings, however. This period represents the initial significant phase in a process whereby heritors new to the parish came to dominate landholding. In many cases, they were new to the Highlands. In the second half of the eighteenth century, several farms on the Otter estate passed into the ownership of three of these new heritors – Mungo Campbell, John MacIvor, and Thomas Harkness. Two of these, Campbell and MacIvor, were later to become prominent landowners in the district. However, the overall size of Otter was maintained by the absorption of the small estate of the McLeas of Lindsaig. The McLeas themselves had only recently acquired land in the parish, at some time in the eighteenth century, with profits from mercantile activity (Atkinson, Driscoll and Watson 1992: 9). They may previously have held this land, though, for service as surgeons and notaries to the Lamonts (Rennie 1993: 72).

The first half of the nineteenth century saw the intensification of change in landholding. This part of the process can perhaps be divided into two main phases. Although there were significant changes in landholding at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, it is the first half of the nineteenth century that is of importance here. This was the period of intensive Improvement.

First, by 1818 the Campbells of Otter were bankrupt and their loss of the Otter estate at that time resulted in its fragmentation. Several farms eventually passed to John MacIvor in 1826. These farms and previous acquisitions were formed into the new estate of Ardmarnock. Two further new estates were created from the remains of Otter. First was Ballimore, owned by Mungo Nutter Campbell. Second was a smaller incarnation of the Otter estate, also under Campbell ownership. So, by the 1844 Assessment, three new estates had been created, largely at the expense of Otter. These estates were the most significant in extent in Kilfinan after Kerry.

The next significant phase belongs to the mid-nineteenth century. Then, two of these new estates changed hands. By 1860/1861 the estate of Otter had passed to Patrick Rankine. Ardmarnock passed to Dr. John Nicol of Liverpool in 1852.

Alongside the creation of these three new major estates, several small estates all changed hands through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The majority of the small estates listed in the 1751 Valuation were subsumed within Kerry and Otter during the remainder of the eighteenth century. Others were in the hands of Dr. Colquhoun/John



MacIvor and Andrew MacFarlane/John MacIvor by 1802 and subsequently all included in the Ardmarnock estate under John MacIvor. There were two small estates that survived from 1751 into the nineteenth century, although they did change hands. These were the holdings of John Murray of Blackbarony and Colin MacLachlan in 1751. By 1802 they had passed to Arthur MacArthur Stewart and John Moodie of Inins respectively. By 1844, the first estate had passed to Niell Malcolm of Poltalloch and the latter to Arthur Scoular of Inans. A new estate, if that word can be used for a holding of one farm, had been created with the transfer of Calves to John Oldham. Calves had been part of MacArthur Stewart's estate in 1844. Calves, renamed Glencaladh, passed to George Robert Stephenson by 1880/1881. The other two holdings remained with the Malcolm and Scoular families.

The main estate in the parish, Kerry, was owned throughout the period of Improvement, and previously, by the Lamonts. A local and established family up until the early nineteenth century likewise owned the estate of Otter. It remains to establish whom the other landowners throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were.

As we have seen, by the early nineteenth century the Otter estate had absorbed some smaller estates that had probably belonged to local families (Campbells and McLeas). However, during the early nineteenth century Otter fragmented.

A portion passed to John MacIvor. He had also acquired several other small estates in the area. It is unclear who specifically John MacIvor was. However, there is a reasonable chance that he was either local or had local connections. The MacIvors were a sept of Clan Campbell (Anon. 1871: 172-178). The main branch of the family is synonymous with the Campbells of Asknish (in Knapdale), which family preferred that surname to MacIvor from the late seventeenth century. Evidence of the interchangeability of these names is to be seen in several seventeenth century sasines relating to that family and to other branches (e.g. Campbell (ed.) 1933: 100; (ed.) 1934: 10, 69, 128-129, 136). If John MacIvor of Ardmarnock was not of the family of Asknish, which was commonly referred to as Campbell from around 1700, he may still have had strong local connections.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Ardmarnock passed to the Nicols. As has been said, the first Nicol of Ardmarnock was a medical doctor from Liverpool. The estate had, thus, passed to an English professional and to someone quite unlike the traditional landed proprietors of the region. Ardmarnock remained in Nicol hands into the twentieth century.



The main portion of Otter fragmented into the estates of Ballimore and (a reduced) Otter. At its inception, Ballimore was the property of Mungo Nutter Campbell and remained with his family through the nineteenth century. As with MacIvor, it is possible that Campbell had strong local connections or might have been of a local family. However, what information is available relates to his life in the burgh of Glasgow. From the burgh records it seems that Campbell was a prominent Glasgow burghess, presumably a merchant of some description, in the first half of the nineteenth century. He was elected Dean of Guild in 1822 and 1823 and Provost in 1824 and 1825 (Renwick (ed.) 1940: 697; (ed.) 1941: 57, 122, 174, 223).

It is unclear who the Campbells who owned the reduced estate of Otter were. They may have been of the same family as the previous Campbells of Otter, or have been related. This estate passed to the Rankines in the mid-nineteenth century. Again, little is known of them. Certainly, they were not established landowners in the district. No Rankines appear in the Valuation Roll of 1751, whether for Cowal or for Argyll as a whole (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 28-45).

Of the smaller landholders in the parish, little can be said of most. John Murray of Blackbarony owned the estate of Inniens, Calves, and Blackbarony in 1751. The Murrays of Blackbarony had held that title and barony in Peebleshire from the late Middle Ages (Burke 1856: 720). The estate passed to Arthur MacArthur Stewart by 1802. The MacArthurs held a small amount of land in Cowal in 1751, and small pockets of land elsewhere in Argyll (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 31-33). By that time, Stewart holdings in Argyll were confined to Lismore and Appin, although Stewart expansion from Renfrewshire in the Medieval period had previously given them estates in Cowal (Rennie 1993: 73; Timperley (ed.) 1976: 40-41). So, Arthur MacArthur Stewart may have had local family connections, but this is far from certain and such connections may have been insignificant.

By the mid-nineteenth century and from then into the twentieth century most of this small estate belonged to the Malcolms of Poltalloch. They were a local southern Argyll kindred (Macinnes 1998a: 173-174). They had originally been a satellite family traditionally associated with the Clan Campbell. They become established as landowners in Mid-Argyll in the sixteenth century and consolidated that position during the seventeenth. However, their real rise as significant proprietors in the area came on top of



the fortune they acquired as colonial adventurers in the wake of the Union of Parliaments in 1707. Principally, they were plantation owners in Jamaica, which allowed them to cut loose from political clientage to the House of Argyll and involved the re-orientation of their interests to the Imperial context. The latter process is witnessed by the Anglicisation of their name from MacCallum to Malcolm.

A small portion of MacArthur Stewart's estate, Calves, passed first to John Oldham by 1844 and subsequently to George Robert Stephenson. Again, little is known of these landowners and neither came from established landholding families in Argyll (see Timperley (ed.) 1976: 28-45).

The other small estate that survived from 1751 into and through the nineteenth century was Innens. In 1751 this belonged to Colin MacLachlan. It is likely that he was related to the MacLachlans of MacLachlan who were significant landowners in the neighbouring parish of Strathlachlan. That family was established in the west of Cowal by the thirteenth century at least (Rennie 1993: 72). Innens passed to John Moodie by 1844 and then to Arthur Scoular. Yet again, little is known of these two and they do not belong to established Argyll landowning families (see Timperley (ed.) 1976: 28-45).

By 1844, the Lamont properties of Kilfinan, Drum and Inveryne had passed to Alexander MacAlister of Loup and Torrisdale and remained with him until some time between 1861 and 1870, when they became part of the Otter estate (ABDA DR1/12; 1/73/13: 53; 1/13/33: 107-108). His kindred were well established locally, being a sept of Clan Donald (MacMillan 1960: 26-29). In 1751, their landholding concentrated in Kilcalmonell parish in Kintyre and in South Knapdale (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 35, 43).

The remaining landowner to consider is Thomas Harkness of Clachaig, who had acquired the farm of Derinakerochmore from the Otter estate by 1802. This passed to Archibald Harkness Clachaig of Derrynacharachmor by 1844, but to Campbell of Ballimore by 1860/1861 (ABDA DR1/12; 1/73/13: 52). Harkness was not an established Argyll landowner (see Timperley (ed.) 1976: 28-45). The title of *Clachaig* may refer to a Clachaig in Dunoon and Kilmun parish. However, this property was in the possession of Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy in 1751 (Timperley (ed.) 1976: 31). If Harkness derived his title from that property, this could only have come about sometime in the late eighteenth century.



So, from about 1800 there seems to have been significant flux in landownership in Kilfinan. Outside of the Lamont estate, ownership passed from traditional landholders to a wide variety of newcomers. Several of the new landowners can definitely or presumably be associated with established local kindreds, like the Malcolms of Poltalloch, MacAllisters of Loup, and MacIvors. Most, however, are likely to have been from outwith the area, from the Lowlands or England. Such is the case with the Campbells of Ballimore, the Rankines of Otter, and the Nicols of Ardmarnock.

This situation fits a general pattern of changing landownership found throughout the west coast of the Highlands and the Islands in the nineteenth century (in general see Devine 1989a, 1994b; for a parish-based case study see Gaskell 1996; similar trends have also been noted for the central Highlands (Stewart 1990: chapter 16)). The period 1800 to 1860 in particular saw the disappearance of many traditional landed families from the west Highlands. Those who did survive were often forced to sell large parts of their patrimony. By the 1850s, about 60% of the larger estates outside of Sutherland had passed to a new elite, and this does not include those estates of less than 3000 acres that many new purchasers tended to acquire (Devine 1989a: 110). Further, most of these land transfers involved non-resident Highland purchases, that is the buyers were mostly of a non-Highland background, and many were English landowners, merchants, or financiers (Devine 1989a: 111). Devine's sample included sale to 13 English or Lowland landowners, 10 merchants and financiers, four professionals (three lawyers and an academic), and two industrialists (Devine 1989a: 112).

The landholding history of Kilfinan broadly fits into this pattern. The Lamonts continued as significant landowners through the nineteenth century, but with a slightly reduced patrimony. The Campbells of Otter may have continued to hold a much-reduced estate until this passed to the Rankines. There were two main phases of estate transfer, both in the early to mid nineteenth century. The background of the new landowners included an English professional (Dr. Nicol) and several prominent merchants (Campbell of Ballimore in Glasgow and the Malcolm of Poltalloch family in the colonies). Those newcomers about whose background nothing is known overwhelmingly came from families previously unestablished in Argyll at least. However, one contrast with the model is the significant number of new landowners from previously established Highland families (MacAllister of Loup, Malcolm of Poltalloch, and possibly MacIvor of Ardmarnock). The



reasons behind the transfer of these estates will be returned to below.

## Urban society and the emergent Middle Class

The Lamonts and Campbells of Otter were established Highland landowners and might readily be viewed in a context of traditional clan-based society, as *ceann-cinnidh* (chiefs, head of the kindred) or *fine*. However, it is also possible to include the Lamonts, and perhaps the Campbells of Otter, within the emergent Middle Class introduced in chapter six and, thus, to situate them with a part common biography with the new landowners of the nineteenth century.

From the early seventeenth century, various members of the Lamont family were admitted as Glasgow burgesses. The first of these was in 1609 and probably traded in Loch Fyne herring (McKechnie 1938: 128). In 1628, we find Sir Coill Lamont of Innerin (the head of Clan Lamont), his son James Lamont, and Robert Lamont of Silvercraigs (a cadet) admitted as burgesses (Anderson (ed.) 1925: 70). So, both the chiefs and other members of the *fine* were becoming involved in burgh life.

Inclusion of the clan gentry as Glasgow burgesses can be traced into the eighteenth century. For example, Duncan Lamont of Auchshilag (Auchinshelloch) was admitted in 1716 (Anderson (ed.) 1925: 325). In 1774, John Lamont of Lamont's brother, Hugh, left Scotland for America after serving an apprenticeship as a Glasgow merchant (McKechnie 1938: 321). The Laird of Ascog features in the burgh accounts for 1737 to 1738 and 1752 to 1753 "for two braces in his shop and drawing them up in the touns corner house" (Renwick (ed.) 1909: 510; (ed.) 1911: 560). Other Lamonts, untitled and non-landholding, were also admitted during this period. Such is the case with Archibald Lamont, servitor to the above Duncan Lamont of Auchinshelloch (1706), and Duncan Lamont, servitor to the Earl of Bute (1720) (Anderson (ed.) 1925: 267, 351). Aside from those clan gentry acting as merchants, then, there were members of the kindred entering the burghs in a professional capacity.

The activities of some of the eighteenth century chiefs also testify to their continued inclusion in the commercial society of the burghs. Perhaps most obvious is John Lamont of Lamont's entering into partnership in a firm established to trade with British America in



the 1770s, when he was already a stockholder in the Royal Bank of Scotland (McKechnie 1938: 321).

Aside from their inclusion within Glasgow society, various Lamonts were also active in the surrounding local burghs. Coll Lamont of Inverryne was the first laird to do regular business in Rothesay on Bute (McKechnie 1938: 135). The family's connection with that burgh was long established. The Ardlamont Lamonts had a property there from the early fifteenth century and the chiefs acquired property there in 1540 and 1563 (McKechnie 1938: 88). Members of the *fine* are also recorded as regularly purchasing meal and other goods in Port Glasgow and Greenock in the seventeenth century (McKechnie 1938: 235, 251).

Dugald Lamont, merchant in Kilfinan, is listed as a burghess of Inverary in 1724 and 1726 (Beaton and MacIntyre (eds) 1990: 24, 27). However, he and other similar merchants are of little relevance here. As Devine (1995: 22-24) has pointed out, the Scottish merchant class was far from homogenous, being a complex and diverse grouping ranging from the petty shopkeeper to the merchant elite, like the Tobacco Lords of Glasgow. It is likely that Dugald Lamont, merchant in Kilfinan, was an innkeeper rather than a merchant in the sense of the John Lamont of Lamont involved in trans-Atlantic trade, seen above. Dugald Lamont's sphere of action was therefore probably extremely localised and he would have had little contact with wider mercantile society.

In terms of the activities associated with these various Lamonts in the burghs, we have seen that they were largely merchants and professionals. The landowning clan gentry, however, were almost exclusively merchants. This mercantile role largely concerned the marketing of local produce within Scotland, though, as we have seen, they were occasionally involved in trans-Atlantic trade.

Reference has already been made to the trade in Loch Fyne herring. The Loch was well known for that product and references to this appear in sources such as MacFarlane's Geographical Collections and the first Statistical Account, both of the eighteenth century (Mitchell (ed.) 1907: 146; McFarlane 1983: 215). Certainly, Lamont of Stillaig was engaged in a speculation in Loch Fyne herring in 1689 (McKechnie 1938: 251). It is probable that others among the Lamont *fine* were too.

Perhaps more significant here was the trade in produce of the land. This trade seems to have been more significant in its recorded extent, particularly for the Lamonts of



Lamont. There is some evidence for the marketing of meal, by Lamont of Stillaig again (McKechnie 1938: 235). However, the more significant trade seems to have been in cattle.

The Argyllshire droving trade can be traced back into the sixteenth century, at least, and was most significant in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Haldane 1952: 84-85). Cattle bred on the islands, principally Mull in the north and Islay and Jura in the south, were ferried or swam to the mainland (Haldane 1952: 86-88, 94-97). The destination of the droves was the Lowland cattle trysts, and, ultimately for many, England. There were many routes by which these droves could pass to the Lowlands. With the shifting of the main tryst from Crieff to Falkirk, from the mid-eighteenth century, the focus of Mull area droving traffic shifted further south than previously, towards Inverary and Loch Fyne (Haldane 1952: 89, 112). At Loch Fyne, the northern droves met up with others from the west - from Islay and Jura via Kintyre and Knapdale (Haldane 1952: 91, 94-94, 97). Their immediate destination was the major local tryst at Kilmichael-Glassary in the valley of the River Add (Haldane 1952: 97). From there they would proceed to the Lowlands. The route to the Lowlands from Kilmichael-Glassary passed through Glen Kinglas, on the northern boundary of Cowal (MacDonald 1994: 6).

From this it may seem that Cowal was largely by-passed by the droving trade. This was not the case. As early as 1613, Coll Lamont (the Glasgow burgess) is recorded as raising an action against three burgesses of Linlithgow, a noted Lowland cattle mart, for the price of 85 "ky" and three "bullis" purchased by them from his tenants (McKechnie 1938: 136). Coll was probably acting as an organising go-between, dealing cattle to the Lowlands on behalf of his tenants. The chiefs of Lamont also bought and fattened cattle on their own behalf. For instance, in the mid-eighteenth century Archibald Lamont of Lamont took an active role in the cattle trade (McKechnie 1938: 305). This was in partnership with Lamont of Auchagoyl and a MacAllister from Ardpatrik at the mouth of West Loch Tarbert. They bought cattle in Kintyre, Knapdale, and Cowal and sold locally and in the Lowlands. The cattle they bought were often collected at cattle ranches in Kilfinan, as well as in Knapdale. The principal Kilfinan depots were at Craignafeich and Auchinshelloch (McKechnie 1938: 305). Ground at Ardlamont was also enclosed with dykes intended to control cattle, in the 1750s (McKechnie 1938: 304-305). It therefore seems likely that the first enclosures were associated with the droving trade and, certainly, there is a complex of irregular enclosures at Criagnafeich. Later Improvements have obscured much at



Ardlamont, however.

The cattle in question probably reached Kilfinan by ferry across Loch Fyne to Otter. Such a ferry is noted in the records of the Commissioners of Supply (MacDonald 1994: 2). The Commissioners, of whom John Lamont of Lamont was one in 1771, were responsible for highways, bridges, and regulation ferries from 1686 and, therefore, had a major aspect of the droving trade as their concern (MacDonald 1994: 1, 6).

The Lamonts of Lamont, then, were active in the droving trade through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at least. Cattle dealing from Kilfinan certainly continued into the nineteenth century under Peter Lamont in Stillaig (McKechnie 1938: 351). He was a gentleman farmer, Justice of the Peace, and a grandson of the Lamont cadet Stronalbanach.

The Campbells of Otter likewise had connections with Glasgow from the seventeenth century. Archibald Campbell of Otter was admitted as a burghess in 1628, as was John Campbell of Otter in 1715 (Anderson (ed.) 1925: 70, 309). Information regarding this family's inclusion in burgh society is scant, however. Presumably they were engaged in similar mercantile activity to the Lamonts, principally the herring and cattle trade. This cannot be established, though, as their direct inclusion in the emergent Middle Class cannot.

The landowners of Kilfinan were closely involved with the burghs of western Scotland, principally as merchants. This burgh context is relevant from at least the early seventeenth century, certainly for the Lamonts and perhaps for the Campbells of Otter. The majority of the new landowners of the nineteenth century can also be linked to a similar context, as merchants or professionals. Perhaps the key significance of the burgh context is the emergence of a self-aware Middle Class there in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As we saw in the last chapter, this Middle Class cohered not just because of common interest or conflict, but through a distinctive intellectual and cultural outlook. This had its roots in the Scottish Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and exhibited those Enlightenment traits previously highlighted as providing a framework and justification for Improvement. Justification came with faith in future progress. An intellectual and spatial framework for developing rural settlement and landscape came from the inspiration provided by the emphasis on ordered geometric space, exemplified by the



new-town, especially in Edinburgh. This was accompanied by disdain for Scotticisms in speech, but no doubt also with reference to traditional forms of architecture and landscape conceptualisation and organisation, and by the heralding of rational and scientific enquiry. Membership of the Middle Class also entailed other more concretely political and social motives for Improvement.

### **Improvement and the establishment and maintenance of Middle Class status**

Improvement in Kilfinan should be understood as a strategy in the maintenance of Middle Class status. In the case of the Lamonts, consideration of this motive begins with the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century and the subsequent commercial reorientation of their estate economy. As Macinnes (1998a: 166-169) has pointed out, the trauma of the Civil Wars was followed by the reconstruction of Scottish Gaeldom along commercial lines. The clan *fine* in many areas changed in status from tacksmen to proprietors and the exercise of power within the clans was transformed as the clan elite was gradually redefined as a commercial network of landed entrepreneurs. New opportunities were increasingly sought outwith Gaeldom and were facilitated by social networking within Lowland and English society. This re-orientation of *fine* interests and networks had material and social ramifications within their Highland estates. The clan gentry were increasingly physically distanced from their tenants with the construction of policies and the introduction of mansion houses. Further, Lowland tenants were introduced to many estates to counter the depopulation of the War years (Macinnes 1996: 106-107).

The Lamont's position in Kilfinan suffered catastrophic reverse during the Civil Wars. This was followed by the exile of the chief for a number of years on Arran and in the Lowlands, under the protection of the Semples, the Duchess of Hamilton, and the Earl of Wintoune, as well as for five years on Bute (McKechnie 1938: 205-206, 211). This exile no doubt strengthened their links with Lowland society, previously initiated in their context as merchants in Glasgow. The management of their estates after restoration included aspects of those strategies outlined in general by Macinnes. Lowland tenants were introduced, for example (Macinnes 1996: 106-107). Further, following the



destruction of Toward castle, Ardlamont House became the principal residence of the Lamont chiefs (RCAHMS 1992: 309). The most part of the mansion house as it stands today dates from the early eighteenth and early nineteenth century phases of construction, although elements of it may have been influenced by the late seventeenth century structure (RCAHMS 1992: 24, 309, 311; figure 7.7). However, it seems that the shift from Toward to Ardlamont represents a shift from the old style of estate centre to the new. Toward consists of a fifteenth century tower house with sixteenth and seventeenth century additions (RCAHMS 1992: 297). It is evident, however, that policies on the Lamont of Lamont estate predate the Civil Wars and the move to Ardlamont. During the Wars, Campbell of Achavoulin and Campbell of Evanachan “did cut doune and destroy the wholl planting in and about the hous of Towart, orchzairds, parkis, and wallis thereof” (quoted in McKechnie 1938: 195).

The dislocation of the Civil Wars also came at a time when Sir James Lamont was heavily in debt (McKechnie 1938: 147). This, with the devastations of the Wars, threatened the survival of the Lamont estates and the social position of the chiefs. Commercial reorientation was a common strategy in this situation at the time. For the Lamonts, a focus on mercantile activity, and the associated partial restructuring of their estates, would have been a strategy suggested by their pre-war burgh context and no doubt further naturalised during their period of exile. Commercial reorientation towards Lowland mercantile interests was a strategy intended to reconsolidate and maintain their social position. However, the nature of that position had now changed and was increasingly associated with their role as proprietors and estate managers, rather than their role as clan chiefs. This is evidenced in the changing way in which territorial control was exercised. As seen above, during the eighteenth century, the lands of the various Lamont cadets were consolidated under the personal ownership of the Lamont chiefs. This represents the erosion of the traditional means by which territory was organised and controlled through kin ties under the clan system. In the late seventeenth century, the basis of the cadetships had already been placed on monetary as opposed to the previous military tenure (McKechnie 1938: 230).

The commercial reorientation of the estate provides a background context for



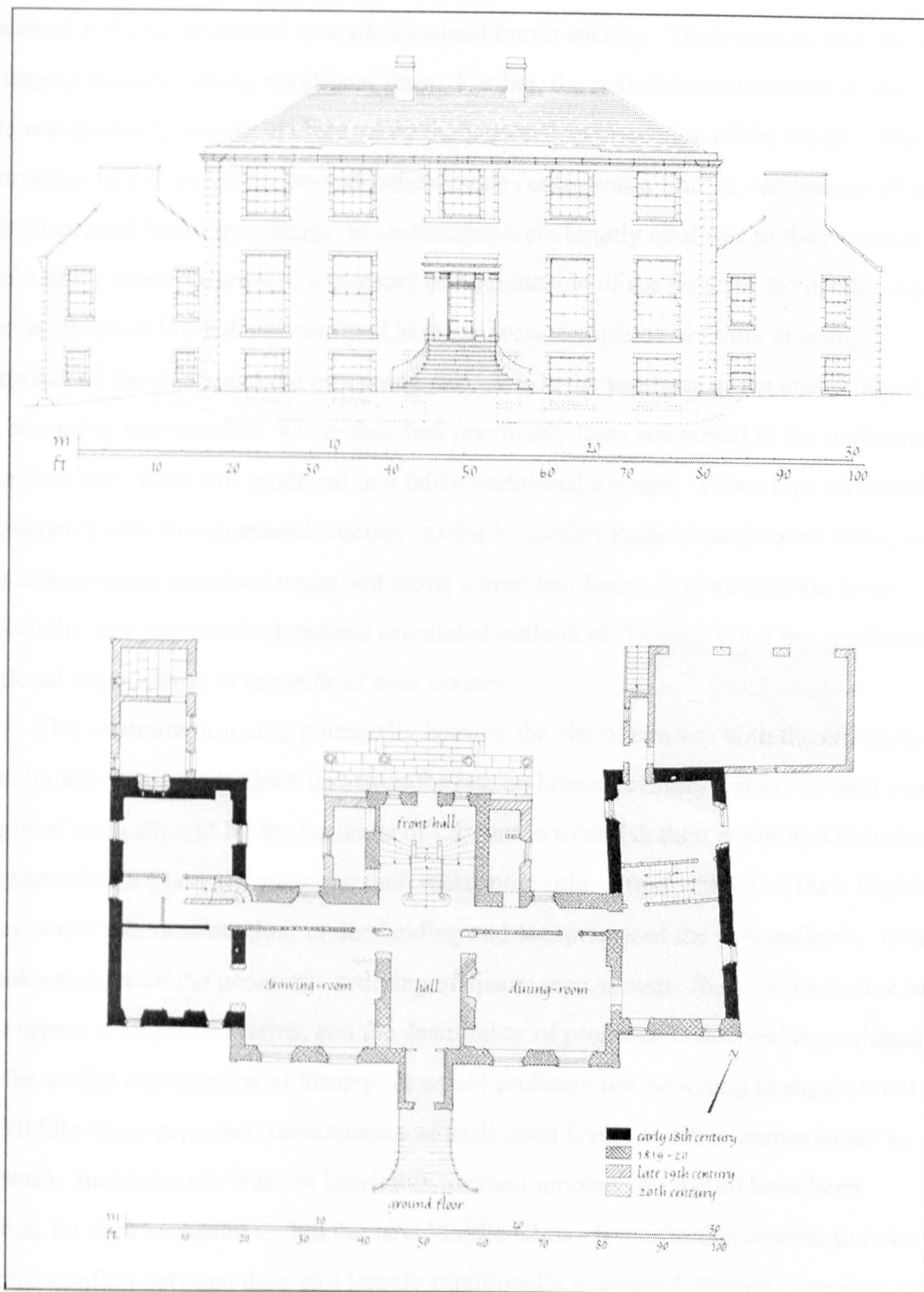


Figure 7.7: Ardlamont House (After RCAHMS 1992: 310, 311 figure a). The Eighteenth century residence of the Lamonts of Lamont.



Improvement. The chiefs/proprietors were from the seventeenth century increasingly associated with and orientated towards Lowland burgh society. Their estates, though, were still largely managed along traditional lines. Further, the material environment of the estate was probably largely unchanged by the personal reorientation of the chiefs. The construction of a mansion house-and-policy estate centre was a limited acceptance of new architectural and landscape ideals. Such changes were largely confined to the personal domain of the chief/proprietor. Enclosure of land outside of the policies did occur. Again, however, this was limited and confined to those areas associated with the droving enterprises of the chiefs and the remaining *fine*. While the products of the estate might now be sold as merchandise, where they had previously been consumed in the maintenance of the clan, they were still produced in a fairly traditional manner. Townships remained in joint-tenancy until the nineteenth century, as the Valuation Rolls quoted above show, and fields and grazings remained organised along communal lines. A contradiction arose between the new mercantile, Lowland orientated outlook of the chiefs and the continued traditional organisation of the bulk of their estates.

This contradiction only potentially became the site of conflict with the emergence of a culturally distinct Middle Class from the late eighteenth century. Improvement can be thought of as an attempt by the Lamonts of Lamont to establish their position within the emergent Middle Class and maintain their mercantile role. Improvement of their Highland estates would demonstrate their understanding and acceptance of the new outlook. This outlook emphasised the geometric ordering of space, seen in some forms of enclosure and in the layout of Improved farms, and the desirability of progress, conceived in conjunction with the stadial organisation of history. It would probably not be wrong to suggest that the new Middle Class perceived maintenance of traditional forms of estate management as backward. Improvement was not inevitable for the Lamonts, but would have been essential for their inclusion within the new Middle Class. It was in this context that the potential conflict between their still largely traditionally organised, though changing, estate and their wider, mercantile sphere emerged and had to be addressed. The need to address this issue perhaps became more acute with the growth of tourism in the area from the early nineteenth century (see Lloyd-Jones 1991: chapter 4 on tourism in Kilfinan; Rennie 1993: 115-117, on tourism in Cowal in general), exposing estates in Kilfinan to the scrutiny of leisure seekers from Glasgow and other burghs.



A similar understanding can be drawn for Improvement on the other Kilfinan estates. The Campbells of Otter were similarly increasingly involved in mercantile activity and burgh life. Like the Lamonts, their estates also remained largely organised along traditional lines. Little is known of the Campbell of Otters mercantile role, but it seems clear that the emergent Middle Class provides a possible context for Improvement there also. They were not noted Improvers, though, and the fragmentation of Otter in the early nineteenth century probably constitutes the key Improvement context.

Mungo Nutter Campbell of Ballimore was a noted Improver (Stark 1845: 367-368). He and the other new proprietors, such as the MacIvors and Nicols of Ardmarnock and the other smaller proprietors, are of most interest here. As has been said, the majority of these new landowners were associated with the emergent Middle Class, as merchants or professionals. This provides the context for their Enlightenment based outlook and their potential will to Improve. However, the specific reasons why a new landowner Improved would have been slightly different from those of the Lamonts.

Devine (1989a: 124-126) has suggested that the purchase of Highland estates during the nineteenth century does not represent rational economic self-interest, although such estates clearly did provide an income. The key factors were the romanticisation of the Highlands, the growing interest in certain forms of leisure, and conspicuous consumption (Devine 1989a: 126-130).

Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, external observers perceived the region as a barren and sterile wilderness, inhabited by a barbarous population largely disaffected to the British Crown. In the early nineteenth century, a change in perception on the part of the affluent and leisured classes of British society meant that the area was seen in quite a different light. Modern ideas of the sublime and picturesque meant that the ascribed characteristics of isolation and wildness became a positive attraction.

Growing interest in the sports of hunting, shooting, and fishing and the growth of the Highlands as an area for leisure followed this change in attitude. Sport was not the only leisure. With the hunter came the scientist (geologist and botanist, for example) and the artist.

That the leisure aspects of a Highland estate were important to nineteenth century landowners in Kilfinan is clear from the Valuation Rolls. The Valuation Roll of 1860/1861 describes several properties as shootings or shootings let (ABDA 1/73/13: 52-54). These



lands occur on the estates of John Nicol of Ardmarnock and John Malcolm of Poltalloch. It is possible that lands unlet and in the hands of the proprietors Mungo N. Campbell, Archibald Lamont of Lamont, and Arthur Scoular of Innis may have included areas set aside for sport. The Malcolm of Poltalloch estate in Kilfinan also contained fishings (ABDA 1/73/13: 54). By the Roll of 1870/1871, the Lamont, Campbell of Ballimore, and Rankin of Otter estates all had shootings listed (ABDA 1/13/33: 105-108). However, the sporting aspects of the Kilfinan estates do not appear significant until the mid-nineteenth century and later. For those landowners who purchased in that period, such as the Rankins and Nicols, the sporting estate may have been what they had in mind. For others this may not have been an initial reason for purchase.

On top of those leisure and scenic aspects, Devine (1989a: 129) suggests that the acquisition of a Highland estate also served the psychological drives of the wealthy:

...[the land's] main function may have been simply to satisfy the urge for territorial possession. It became a form of conspicuous consumption, a means by which material success could be demonstrated, status and place in society assured and a family line established. In this sense, buying a Highland estate and 'improving' it gratified the same passion for possession as the collection of fine art or the acquisition of expensive and elaborate furniture. (Devine 1989a:129)

I would draw attention to the social aspects of the desire for land, mentioned briefly here by Devine. The emergent Middle Class may have viewed estate acquisition as a way to secure their social position through reference to and entrance into the traditional basis of social and political power (Campbell 1988: 98).

The establishment and maintenance of the newly consolidated and increasingly dominant social position of the Middle Class is perhaps the key to understanding why its members purchased Highland estates. The key to understanding why they improved these estates is the fact that, at the time of purchase, they had a specific conceptualisation of what constituted an appropriate estate. The Highlands were becoming known for their isolation and wildness and appropriate for sport and leisure. However, the Middle Class context of the new landowners meant that they would have held ideas of progress and probably have considered that the farmed areas of an appropriate estate should resemble the farms of the



Lowlands, just as the mansions at the centre of these estates were newly constructed and Georgian in design (figure 7.8). This means that the new landowners, on buying their Kilfinan estates, would have experienced the same conflict as did the Lamonts. Their acceptance or continued inclusion within the Middle Class would have naturalised and required the reorganisation of their estates, the inherited spatial and managerial organisation of which would have still been along significantly traditional lines.

### **Conclusion. Improvement as a strategy in resolving social contradiction**

Two different explanations for Improvement have been offered here. Both centre on social contradiction. For the House of Argyll, Improvement formed part of a longer-term civilising project and aimed to consolidate their dominant landholding position in the southwest Highlands. Their position as landholders was threatened in Kintyre by rebellions, real and potential, based in competing claims to the land and its resources. The existence of competing claims to land as *duthchas* and as *oighreachd* was the principle contradiction that Improvement sought to address.

In Kilfinan, Improving landowners sought to consolidate their position within the Middle Class, contingent upon the growing coherence of the class in social and cultural terms from the late eighteenth century. Here, the primary contradiction was between their simultaneous existence within what would have been conceived of as progressive (Enlightened, commercial) Middle Class society, and backward traditional Highland society.

Improvement, therefore, did not simply come with exposure to Scottish Enlightenment thought. Improvement, involving the fundamental reorganisation of routine practice in the Highlands, was instigated by landowners in order to address specific social problems, or contradictions, peculiar to their own personal and family biographies. To understand Improvement simply as an aspect of the intellectual enterprise that was Enlightenment would be to ignore the fact that, as Devine has said of the Lowlands, it was a gigantic strategy of social and economic engineering (Devine 1994a: 70).

It would be equally wrong, however, to assume without consideration that



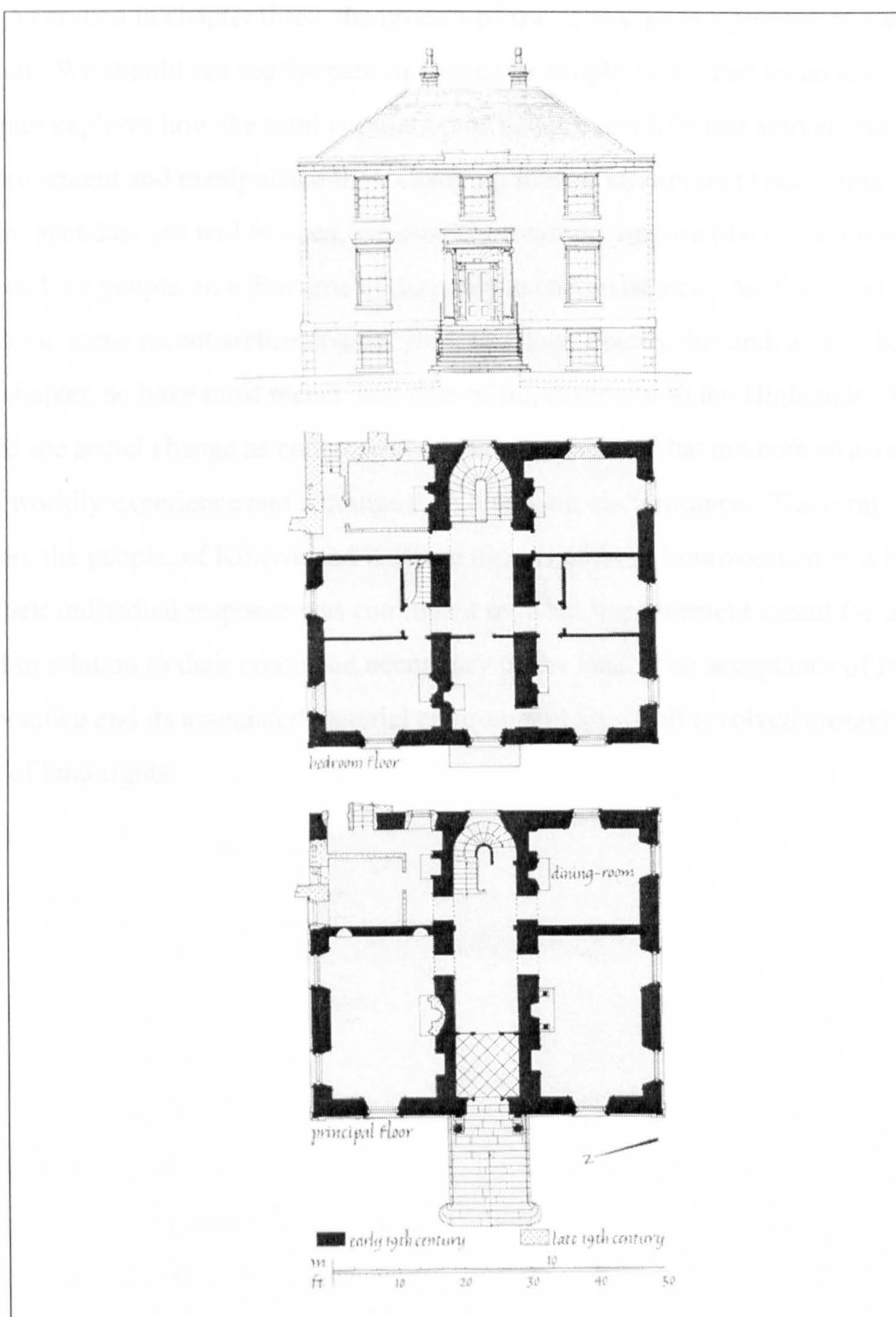


Figure 7.8: Ardmarnock House, Kilfinan. A residence of the new landed elite (after RCAHMS 1992: 313, figure b).



Improvement was overwhelmingly successful in restructuring routine practice and, thus, society. As argued in chapter three, the process of social change is a process of social negotiation. We should not see the path of change as simply controlled by an elite. The next chapter explores how the rural population of Kintyre and Kilfinan actively interacted with Improvement and manipulated their changing routine environment according to their own social agendas. As will be seen, we should not simply oppose two social groups, the landlord and the people, in a dialogue of domination and resistance. As discussed in chapter three, some recent archaeological work has done exactly this and, as will be seen in the next chapter, so have most recent histories of Improvement in the Highlands. Rather, we should see social change as composed of a series of actions that are both structured by previous worldly experience and contingent on changing circumstance. The rural population, the people, of Kintyre and Kilfinan did not address Improvement as a body. Rather, their individual response was contingent on what Improvement meant for them, above all in relation to their continued occupancy of the land. The acceptance of Improved routine practice and its associated material environment above all revolved around the question of land rights.



## Chapter Eight

### Response to Improvement and the process of social negotiation

In the previous two chapters, the process of Improvement has been analysed from what might be described as a landowner's perspective. For them, material change with Improvement drew on Lowland exemplars, which became appropriate to the Highlands with the adoption of the main tenets of Scottish Enlightenment thought. The connection between Improvement and Enlightenment varied in nature for the Dukes of Argyll and the smaller landowners of Kilfinan. However, for them all, Enlightenment thought rendered Improvement desirable, justified the radical material and social changes involved, provided the mental capacity for radical change and suggested the nature of that change.

The various social and political motives of the landlords have also been explored. For Kintyre, Improvement was seen as playing a role in securing the legally defined land rights of the House of Argyll. Their control of land in Kintyre had repeatedly been threatened by rebellion, actual and potential, based in the social structuring of clanship. In Kilfinan, Improvement had more to do with the involvement of the landlords in Middle Class society. Enlightenment derived concepts of space and of society formed the basis of Middle Class culture from the late eighteenth century and Improvement in Kilfinan was a strategy of various landowners in securing Middle Class status.

In light of the theoretical arguments against the dominant ideology thesis put forward in chapters three and four, we now need to go on to consider in more detail the social dynamics of Improvement. We should consider how the populations of Kintyre and Kilfinan responded to the various initiatives of their Improving landlords. Was Improvement accepted or rejected, and by whom? In fact, response to Improvement was subtler than this, with different individuals and groups manipulating their material environment and related routine practice in a complex manner that involved both acceptance and rejection of Improvement. Here I have chosen to examine the role of Improvement in relation to changing understandings of land tenure and in relation to different social groups as defined by tenurial status (such as tenant, cottar, labourer). Other social dimensions of Improvement, such as the role of the subdivision of domestic space in



gender relations, are not discussed.

It will be argued below that we should not see Improvement as a one way process whereby landlords imposed fully formed capitalist social relations, and the material environment that helped maintain those relations, on the rural population. Neither should we necessarily assume that those who did not accept Improvement were rejecting it, where to accept or reject are seen as mutually exclusive responses. Response to Improvement is examined here as a complex process, wherein the actions of the rural population in restructuring their social and material world were both structured by previous experience and contingent on circumstance.

Continued occupancy of the land was the key concern in responding to Improvement. This had been a concern of pre-Improvement Highland society, seen in concepts of hereditary tenure. The concern with occupancy reacted with people's varied circumstances as large or middling tenants, smallholders, or labourers to produce a material world that was complex. All groups were concerned with continued occupancy of the land, with land rights. For some, their position on the land was fairly secure with Improvement, as they occupied their farms on long leases and were financially comfortable. Others were dispossessed or had their continued occupancy of the land put to question with Improvement. The former, who would have been favoured under a lease system that dealt with the individual, might readily accept Improved domestic space. For the latter, however, we shall see that the maintenance of unImproved forms of domestic space was connected to the maintenance of hereditary claims to occupancy, which provided a form of resistance to their dispossession or insecurity. By contrast, though, Improvement at the levels of landscape and settlement seems to have been much more uniform and was connected to the abandonment of pre-Improvement routine practice in these environments. This suggests that the routine structuring of community, and thus of the clan, was less of a concern for nearly all groups.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the varied narratives that have been produced by documentary historians in relation to the dynamics of Improvement. Despite the often-conflicting interpretations of the process given by different historians, it will be argued that their narratives have several common themes. First, response to Improvement is often considered largely in terms of overt, often violent resistance. This concern has come with a concentration on Clearance and, thus, with the northwestern Highlands and



Islands. The second main theme is the characterisation of the Highland population as two diametrically opposed and homogenous social groups, the landlords and the people.

These two main aspects of the historical approach are criticised on theoretical grounds and on the basis that they ignore the potential of archaeology to consider covert resistance to, or acceptance or manipulation of, the process of Improvement. The remainder of the chapter considers varied responses to Improvement from an archaeological perspective. The data available for Kintyre are more useful here. There are, for example, a greater number of explicit documentary sources defining use of domestic space. It is for this reason that I have concentrated on that case study area. However, a comparison of the situation described for Kintyre with what can be said for Kilfinan does allow some significant contrasts and similarities to be drawn between the two areas. The contrast between widespread Improvement in the landscape, but more varied adoption of Improved domestic space, will be argued for Kilfinan as well as for Kintyre. Nucleated settlement continued on some farms in Kilfinan, however. Considering the importance of the *baile* in structuring a sense of community, this continuity in settlement is potentially significant. There are problems, though, in defining the routine practices associated with these post-Improvement townships. The other significant contrast between Kilfinan and Kintyre with Improvement is between the different horizontal social divisions that emerge in these two areas. In Kintyre, the farming population came to be divided between large, middling and small tenants, and farm labourers. In Kilfinan, the group of middling tenants was largely absent. Significantly, the range farmstead, argued below to be associated above all with the middling tenant, is common in Kintyre but rare in Kilfinan. It will be argued that distinct uses of domestic space and the maintenance of materially distinct houses by different tenurially defined groups were both a cause and result of the emergence of those groups. A comparative archaeology of Improvement between Kintyre and Kilfinan, therefore, can explore the different social consequences of Improvement in different areas and underline the fact that Improvement was not an homogenous process resulting in a uniform capitalist society in the Highlands.



## Traditional narratives of response to Improvement

Literature on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Highlands has grown significantly since the 1960s and can be divided into two main schools (Carter 1981; MacDonald 1997: 69-75; Macinnes 1998b: 180-184). Sharon MacDonald has labelled these two groups *people's historians* and *economic historians*, while admitting the simplification inherent in these categories. Here I will focus on their work relevant to the themes of Improvement and related social change.

The first group, the people's historians, includes writers such as John Prebble (e.g. 1963), James Hunter (e.g. 1976; 1992), and Ian Grimble (1962), who might in a longer term perspective be placed together with authors of the period in question itself (e.g. MacKenzie 1986 [1883]). Their writings focus on the common people through themes such as:

. . . the projection back of the notion of a 'people' and the materialisation of this through descriptions of the people's 'way of life'; oppression of 'the people' by those in power - a conflict which may also be mapped onto an ethnic divide (e.g. Scotland versus England); and the resilience or rebellion of 'the people'. (MacDonald 1997: 69-70)

People's histories have primarily focused on the period of the Clearances and the Crofter's War and related Crofting issues.

The view presented of Improvement, primarily Clearance, in this case is one of bipolar oppositions. The people are oppressed by their landlords, who have betrayed their paternal charge. In this view both people and landlord are homogeneous categories.

Prebble says in his preface to *The Highland Clearances*:

This book . . . is the story of how the Highlanders were deserted and betrayed. It concerns itself with people, how sheep were preferred to them, and how bayonet, truncheon and fire were used to drive them from their homes . . . . The chiefs remain, in Edinburgh and London, but the people are gone. (Prebble 1963: 11)



The impression given in such studies of the process of Improvement is one of (selfish, profit-oriented) landlord action and (laudable, justified) popular reaction. In a simple cause and effect relationship, clearance for sheep is followed by overt resistance on the part of the people that is followed by suppression by the landlords, often with the aid of state-sanctioned legal and military force (e.g. Prebble 1963: 15-18 and *passim*). The landlords *act* and thus initiate conflict, while the people *react* to oppression and are, thus, further oppressed. People's histories effectively deny the people agency. Their actions are, rather, reactions to an infringement on traditional rights, relationships, and a traditional way of life.

MacDonald's economic historians differ in approach from the people's historians and mutual criticism has been marked (MacDonald 1997: 73-75; see, by way of example, the complementary articles of Hunter (1975) and Richards (1975) on the Sutherland Clearances).

Perhaps best known amongst the economic historians are Thomas M. Devine (e.g. 1989b; 1994b: chapter 14; 1995: chapter 12), Philip Gaskell (1996), Malcolm Gray (1957), and Eric Richards (1973, 1982, 1985). Their approach has focused less on themes of exploitation and oppression and more on the broader, inevitable consequences of agricultural and economic developments. Indeed, in cases, the statement that agrarian capitalism in the Highlands was inevitable is explicit (Gray 1957: 89).

People's historians have criticised the economic historians for being too sympathetic to the Highland landlords and for ignoring questions of the people affected by Improvement, while the economic historians have suggested that the popular historians romanticise the pre-Clearance period and exaggerate the extent of the brutality involved in Clearance. The class-conflict model of Prebble and others is criticised as too simplistic, ignoring as it does the wider forces affecting the landowners.

There has, then, been some heated and often polarised debate surrounding the historiography of Improvement, and particularly Clearance. On the face of it we are being asked to choose between a model that emphasises the oppression of a betrayed people at the mercy of profit mongering landlords and one that underlines the fact that landlords were subject to impersonal economic forces beyond their control, inevitably leading to the rationalisation of the estate economy. The difference between the two models in these



terms is stark, and both are rooted in contemporary political and social circumstance (MacDonald 1997: 74-75). The choice between these histories is largely a political one. MacDonald (1997: 74-75) consciously avoids adjudicating between the two, taking an anthropological approach and concentrating on the role they play in “contemporary social imaginings” within Highland localities. However, such an attitude is rare, even among scholars. Even philosophers have been enjoined to discuss the thorny issue of assessing the value and ethics of passionate and economic realist histories of Highland Clearance (e.g. Sutherland 1975).

I would argue, however, that if the question of the social dynamics of Improvement is asked with reference to both schools, we find several significant assumptions common to their approaches.

As seen above, Prebble, Hunter, and others have tended to write the history of Improvement with reference to two homogenous and competing social groups, the landlords and the people. This is also the case in economic histories of the process. In considering popular resistance in the Highlands, Devine discusses the development of certain cultural stereotypes of the Highlander in the nineteenth century (1994b: 211-212). However, throughout the rest of the chapter in question, the existence of the Highlander/the Highland people in reality is not questioned. With statements like “[t]he Highland people were mainly devoid of power during the clearances” (Devine 1994b: 212) it is clear that people is not to be taken in a general sense of those that inhabited the Highlands. The Highland people were a homogeneous and coherent ethnic group. *Their* language and *their* culture had long been under attack (Devine 1994b: 212).

As with the people’s histories, this definition of the Highland people as an homogenous ethnic group in opposition to an equally homogenous landowning group seems to logically demand overt reactionary protest to Improvement from the people. Rather than simply relate cases of protest to the introduction of sheep, as Prebble does for example, the economic historians approach the subject in a more sober and seemingly objective manner. They ask two key questions: how much overt resistance was there; and, why was there not more? (see e.g. Devine 1989b; 1994b: chapter 14; 1995: chapter 12; Fraser 1988: 269-272). To ask why there was no more resistance implies that overt reaction to Improvement is a logical expectation. This leads Devine (1994b: 212) to follow the argument of Eric Wolf (1971: 268) that “[p]easants cannot rebel in a situation of



complete impotence” and state that the Highland people appeared docile in the nineteenth century because they did not have the power to act otherwise. He says:

The Highland people were mainly devoid of power during the clearances. They did not own the land and only had access to it through short-term leases at the landlords’ will . . . . The power of the authorities was overwhelming and the landowners had full legal control over their properties. The army was engaged . . . and on the appearance of troops from Inverness, Aberdeen, Fort William or Glasgow, resistance tended to disintegrate rapidly. (Devine 1994b: 212)

The Highland people were thus weakened in economic, legal and political terms. This was compounded by a cultural weakness whereby the concept of *duthchas* brought with it a reverence for the landlord/chief (Devine 1994b: 214-215).

From this perspective overt and often-violent protest was the logical reaction of the people to the impositions of their landlords. The seeming lack of protest is to be explained not with reference to a lack of will on the part of the people, but to the efficiency of the oppressive functions of the state. Reverence on the part of the people for their landlord also meant that any overt protest that did occur was directed away from the landlord and towards others, such as the factor, sheep farmer, and even the sheep (Devine 1994b: 215).

I would suggest that these two key themes, of characterising the Highland population as a homogeneous people in opposition to a homogenous landowning group and of a subsequent concern with overt resistance to Improvement, restrict our ability to see a nuanced and dynamic process of Improvement. Those living on Highland estates probably did not conceive of themselves as members of a Highland people prior to the 1880s (MacDonald 1997: 81). We need to restore an element of agency to our consideration of the process of Improvement and consider that the responses of tenants and others to the varied initiatives of their landlords could vary. Further, the dialogue between the various individuals and groups concerned in Improvement need not be seen as confined to one of imposition and simple acceptance or overt resistance. Our consideration needs to expand beyond the protests associated with Clearance. We should consider more varied manipulations of the material aspects of Improvement, which may or may not be conceived in terms of resistance.



Importantly, archaeology has an essential role to play in furthering our understanding of Improvement. In accounting for the diversity within the archaeological record of that process I believe we can begin to restore the element of agency mentioned above and provide an alternative understanding not founded in bipolar opposition.

## **Archaeology and the dynamics of Improvement**

A general model of Improvement, in terms the changing material environment at the scales of dwelling, settlement, and landscape has been developed in the previous chapters of this thesis. This model of the changing material environment was tied to a consideration of changing routine practice. As argued in chapter three, different practical understandings of the world are developed in routine practice. Explicit ideological statements that claim to describe the true nature of the world and to justify asymmetrical social relationships will be evaluated by individuals and groups in relation to their practical understanding of the world. Some ideological statements will appear as common sense because they conform to that practical understanding, others will appear as false because they do not.

Pre-Improvement routine was seen to play a role in structuring the community and family ties that made the community of the clan and hereditary conceptions of land occupancy and ownership knowable. Improvement, progressing in slightly different ways in the two case study areas, sought to reorder this routine and thus reorder the nature of social relationships. Improvement created a routine world in which it made sense that the individual was more significant than kin and community and in which occupancy of land was to be by legal agreement and not related to traditional rights. Capitalism as a network of social relations was introduced to the Highlands in no small part through the manipulation of material culture and lived space. Routine practice with Improvement made the individual knowable and, thus, allowed the pre-eminence of relations of absence over those of presence.

However, if we reconsider the archaeology of Improvement in Kilfinan and Kintyre, and beyond, in more detail and in light of the above discussion, we can begin to see how this general model masks a world of diverse experience.



## Dual material response to Improvement

The first edition OS maps of Kintyre make it clear that enclosure, on a grid pattern where possible, was advanced by the mid-nineteenth century. Other aspects of Improvement associated with the reordering of the wider landscape and environment and the processes of daily work in that landscape were also adopted. In Southend parish, the tenants were industrious in draining at that time (Kelly 1845: 433). Earlier, it had been reported that the tenants were readily using lime (Smith 1798: 199).

Externally, houses appeared Improved too:

One or two white farm-houses, with slated roofs, are seen in the valley, and by their neat and cared-for appearance show that the present proprietor of the Barr estates is improving the property in the spirit of the age. We also see on the opposite hill-side, some scattered cottages, with their whitewashed walls and dark thatch . . . (Bede 1861, volume 2: 41-42)

To the traveller passing through Kintyre, for example, the impression might well be that the tenants had fully accepted the main aspects of Improvement, including a reordering of space from the landscape to the domestic scale (figure 8.1).

However, as seen in chapter five, Improved space was not to be found within all houses of the mid-nineteenth century. To quote Lord Teignmouth's 1836 description of Kintyre houses again:

The farm-houses are generally, throughout Cantyre, old and poor habitations, *far behind the general improvement visible in this part of the country*. The entrance is usually through the byre, which is a continuation of the house in the same line: the fire is placed in the middle of the floor, contained in a grate, either square or shaped like a bowl, and raised a little above the ground, a custom peculiar to Cantyre . . . . There are some few farm-houses in the modern style, indicating the slow growth of Improvement. (Teignmouth 1836: 388; my emphasis)

In several cases, in Kintyre and beyond, Improvement seems to have been accepted



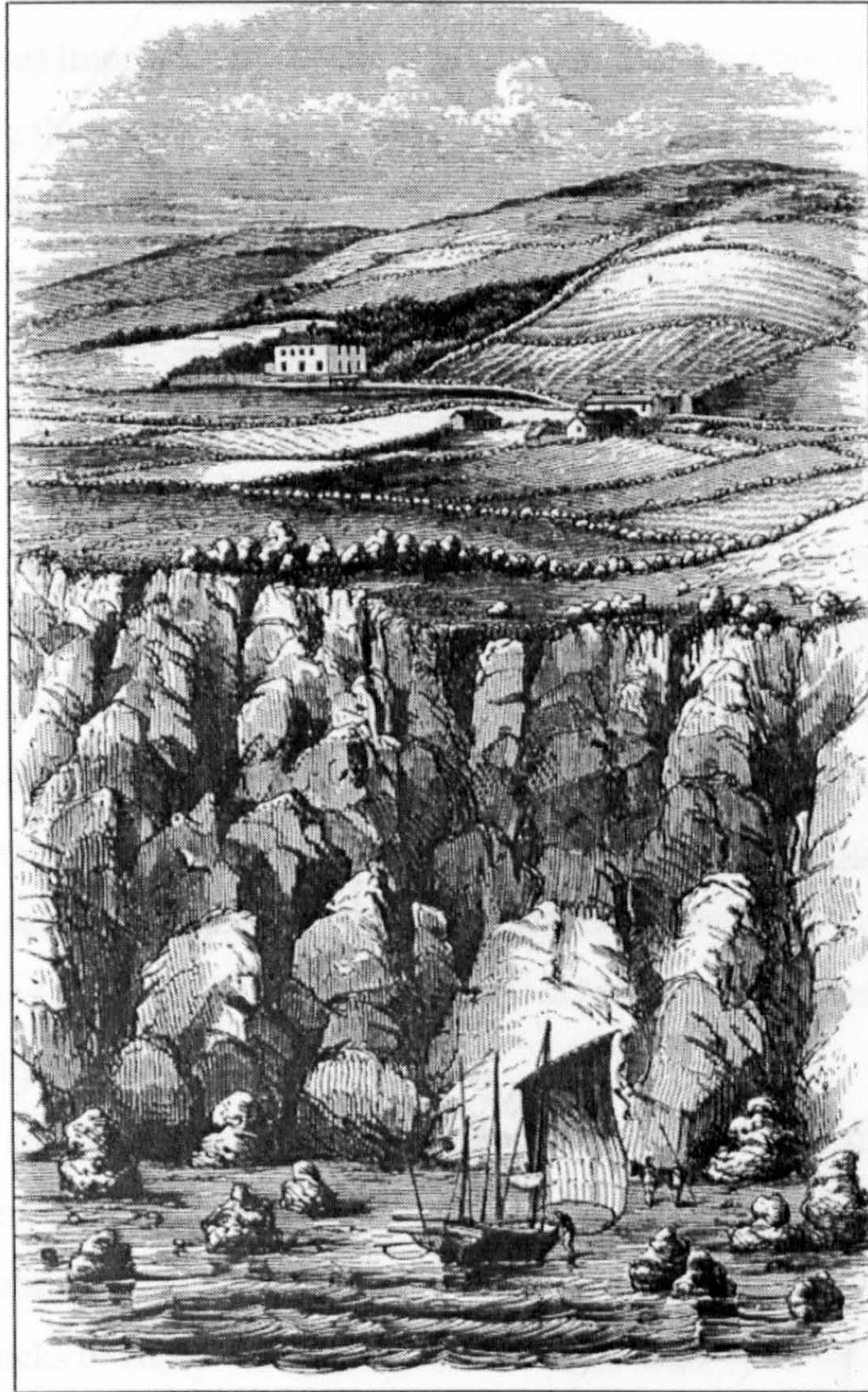


Figure 8.1: A traveller's view of the Kintyre landscape in the mid nineteenth century (after Bede 1861, volume 1: 264). Immediately obvious to the traveller is the widespread Improvement in settlement and landscape.



in some material domains while rejected in others. In general, and in cases, we can see a distinction between external (landscape organisation, settlement morphology, external appearance of house) Improvement and change and internal (domestic) continuity in use of space. Considering this material pattern with reference to the role played by the form of the dwelling, settlement, and landscape in structuring the social relationships of the clan and the social changes attendant on the adoption of Improved space we can begin to understand some of the complexities of the process of Improvement.

The adoption of enclosure and the dispersal of settlement that was widespread by the mid-nineteenth century would, as seen in chapter five, have facilitated the deconstruction of community ties that had previously been maintained by the congregation of people in the nucleated township. Everyday tasks had also previously reinforced the sense of community. To name a few examples, ploughing of the openfields was a communal exercise and the taking of the cattle and other animals to the shielings in summer and maintaining them there was the task of a large part of the township community, or of several townships. Enclosure was associated with the destruction of this interdependency and activities like ploughing were carried out by the tenant and his family, or with the aid of hired labour.

Enclosure and dispersed settlement need not necessarily imply the complete destruction of a sense of community. The club farms of Morvern, in northern Argyll, involved the operation of individual smallholdings together with communally owned and managed sheep flocks or cattle herds (Gaskell 1996: 51). However, the routine structuring of community would at least partly be undermined in such a situation. Certainly in Kintyre, communal practice decreased with Improvement in some key areas of farming. Improved farm machinery was becoming increasingly popular there in the first half of the nineteenth century (Bede 1861, volume 2: 101-104). This machinery included labour-saving devices such as new types of plough, requiring fewer people to operate, and the wheeled cart. Adoption of this new machinery no doubt reflects a changing attitude to the everyday tasks in which they were used. Fewer people were needed, or available, with Improvement.

Alongside this seeming acceptance of the decline of pre-Improvement social structure at the level of the township community we can see the continued use of unImproved space within the house, suggesting that traditional concepts of tenancy could



have continued to operate. The continued popularity of the central hearth and largely unpartitioned space would have continued to foster strong family ties through proximity in everyday activities like cooking, eating, sleeping, and much more.

This varied response was structured and can be understood as determined by an underlying concern with occupancy, or continued access to land and its resources. Tacks to farms were first offered in open auction to the highest bidders in Kintyre around the early date of 1710 (Cregeen 1970: 11). This occurred on the Duke of Argyll's lands, and similar reforms followed in other parts of his vast estates in the 1730s. However, such tenorial reform had its perils for the House of Argyll:

Ironically the clan Campbell had never been more vitally important to their chief than in the years following 1737. Jacobitism was rife and a rising was preparing to overthrow the Hanoverians. Some of the native gentry had regained their old lands by outbidding the Campbells in the newly-established auction of leases . . . . The new landlordism of the ducal house was placing in peril the police and security of the estate, perhaps even the stability and safety of the government. Without the backing of his clan the Duke's traditional role as guarantor of peace and order in the west highlands could not be sustained. (Cregeen 1970: 15)

Cregeen is writing here with reference to Mull, in particular . However, the consequences of this situation affected the whole of the Argyll estates, including Kintyre. In 1744 the third Duke, in full appreciation of the threat of Jacobite insurrection, issued instructions to his various chamberlains that made political loyalty a pre-condition of tenancy on his lands (Cregeen 1970: 15). He instructed that:

You are to treat with the tenants of that part of my estate under your management for tacks of the farms where the possessors are under bad character or are not affected to the Government or my interest, and in farms that are not now under tacks you are to use your endeavours to introduce tenants that are well-affected to the Government and my family, and as I am informed that my lands are rather too high-rented in these countrys, so that there may be a necessity of some abatement of rent, I do approve that those abatements be chiefly given in those farms where you can bring in people



well disposed to my interest. (quoted in Cregeen 1970: 15)

So, from the mid-eighteenth century political loyalty to the House of Argyll and the Hanoverian succession was an explicit condition of tenancy on the Argyll estates. Considering the political, social, and moral implications of Enlightenment thought for the nature of settlement and landscape, we need not consider the expression of this loyalty as simply being conceived in terms of agreement to a clause in a lease. The cultivation and acceptance of an Improved farm, as part of a landscape of dispersed settlement and enclosed fields, would be as much an expression of disposal to Argyll's interest as would a signature on a lease. The settlement and landscape changes associated with Improvement were intended to foster social change that would undermine the structuring of social relations under clanship and remove the basis for rebellion against that interest.

In this context, continued occupancy of a farm required Improvement. This occupancy seems, in the end, to have been an overriding concern for many tenants. The continuity of community seems to have been less important, if we consider the seemingly peaceful adoption of an Improved landscape and settlement pattern in this area. Under clanship, the tenants might hold land by lease, but more generally considered themselves to have a heritable right to a portion of land. With the acceptance of both internal and external Improvement, some tenants were accepting a change to the nature of their holding and the structuring of their everyday life. However, they were also servicing the traditional expectancy of occupancy of a particular holding, despite the fact that the nature of that occupancy had changed radically. Tenants response to Improvement was with reference to aspects of past concepts of landholding that had been maintained through everyday practice.

In contrast to the concern with occupancy, the community ties that had been constantly reaffirmed through the everyday experience of the nucleated township and the practices of communal farming seem to have been more readily altered. A more detailed consideration of the pre-Improvement nature of the community in the Highlands than has been attempted in this thesis is required in order to understand this situation. It may be that more detailed analysis of the pre-Improvement environment will reveal longer-term changes in the everyday structuring of community that prefigured Improvement. We might expect variation in the significance of different routine practices between localities.



So, the given response of tenants to Improvement need not necessarily be expressed as reactionary protest. Improvement might be actively accepted in the maintenance of previously structured relationships, in this case that of the tenant and their immediate family to the land. This would of course entail change within those relationships. As seen in chapter seven, traditional rights to land were justified with reference to the kin-relationship of the individual to previous occupiers. This relationship was constructed and continually strengthened in everyday practice. Unpartitioned space as the locus of a wide variety of daily activities, with its focus on the central hearth, would have encouraged the individual to conceive of themselves as an integral part of the familial unit. Their experience in almost every facet of life was experience as part of that unit; it was shared experience.

Viewed from this perspective, the discrepancy between the external acceptance of Improvement, in terms of landscape and settlement, and internal rejection of it, in some of those houses described above, becomes informative. Improvement could be rejected in one sphere and accepted in another in relation to the same general issue, occupancy. The situation here is clearly not simply one of landlord (Improving and oppressive) versus tenant (traditional and reactionary). The tenant accepts Improvement in the external sphere to ensure continued occupancy, but rejects it in the traditional locus of the structuring of the relationships that justify heritable occupancy.

This response to Improvement might be viewed as contradictory. Indeed, a report by the Duke of Argyll's Chamberlain, dated 1810, shows that some contemporaries perceived such contradiction, commenting on some of the settlements discussed here as an evil standing in the way of further Improvement (Gailey 1960: 104). It would be easy to dismiss this apparent contradiction in practice within and outside of the house as a lack of understanding of Improvement.

However, there is, I think, a more useful way to conceive of the situation. Recent anthropological work in the Scottish Highlands, by Sharon MacDonald, has established the existence of ambivalence and of seemingly contradictory practices and expressions in relation to the Gaelic language, the concept of a Gaelic people, and the nature and significance of crofting and tradition (MacDonald 1997). On her experience of researching the Highlands she says:



. . . [I was led to] question some of the modernist assumptions about identity as singular and unified. While I had expected to find differences between individuals, I found myself surprised by an apparent contrariness within individuals, who would sometimes espouse what seemed to me contradictory views about their culture and language. Within the same conversation an individual might castigate young people for not speaking Gaelic and complain about attempts to encourage them to do so . . . they might embrace aspects of both 'traditional' and 'modern' culture. (MacDonald 1997: 11)

Importantly, MacDonald does not conceive of this ambivalence as unstructured or as pathological:

Such ambivalences are not, however, simply a matter of individual contrariety. Nor are they a symptom of pathological identity. Rather, they express different currents within the repertoire on which local people draw in negotiating and expressing their senses of belonging and difference. (MacDonald 1997: 11)

Such thinking on the general nature of identity is appropriate in considering the nature of response to Improvement. Those who Improved the landscape and settlement pattern, but maintained the traditional structuring of space within the house were not displaying some kind of pathological, fractionated cultural identity that was neither traditional nor modern. Neither were they misunderstanding Improvement. To say this would be to conceive of Improvement as a monolithic process. Rather, we should see response to Improvement as contingent. Improvement in one material sphere and not another should be seen as the mobilisation of different aspects of a newly constructed cultural identity. Which aspect of the cultural repertoire was to be mobilised (the unImproved or the Improved) is contingent on the nature of the relationship in question. Both Improved and unImproved aspects are mobilised in different contexts in relation to the same question of continued occupancy.

Improvement might be rejected or adopted as contextually appropriate within a strategy where continued occupancy of the land was key. One result of this would be the continued existence of seemingly contradictory principles of occupancy, maintained



through daily practice, and it is interesting in this respect that one of the main aspects of conflict between crofters and their landlords in the north western Highland and Islands, as late as the 1880s, revolved around the issue of traditional as opposed to legal rights to land (see Cameron 1998: 54). It would be worth considering the role of material culture in maintaining these attitudes amongst various individuals and groups in those areas through the nineteenth century.

Working in an Improved landscape and living in dispersed settlements could be seen as tacit acceptance of Improvement, where it was being rejected in some houses. In other cases, Improvement was more completely accepted as it entered the house. When we look in more detail at domestic space in the period of Improvement, we will see below that response to Improvement within the house varied amongst the farming population in a meaningful way, related to occupancy and contingent upon what Improvement meant for that concern.

### Improvement and the horizontal division of the farming community

The routine structuring of community seems to have faded quickly with Improvement in Kintyre. In some houses, routine practice was restructured in such a way as to make hereditary concepts of tenure increasingly unknowable, whereas in others the opposite was the case. This complicated situation in the adoption of Improved practice seems to relate to the significance of continued occupancy of the land, something that will now be explored in more detail. Further, it is worth considering that variable acceptance of Improvement played a part in the structuring and restructuring of social relationships amongst the farming population itself, as well as between its various elements and the landlord. Acceptance or not of Improvement played a role in creating and maintaining specific social divisions and dependencies within the rural community.

Improvement in Kintyre was associated with the growth of a threefold division of farmers into small tenantry, middling tenant farmers, and gentleman or large tenant farmers (Cregeen 1970: 14). The construction of these divisions was accompanied by the creation of a rural proletariat engaged in wage-labour (Cregeen 1970: 9). The detailed historical and archaeological work required in order to consider the daily material environments of these groups simply has not been done. However, there are at least some indications that material culture, and the use of space in particular, did play a role in constructing these



divisions.

The Rev. D. MacDonald, minister for Killeen and Kilchenzie parish, in the New Statistical Account of the mid nineteenth century describes the situations of two different social groups as he saw them. The farmers are “upon the whole, comfortably enough lodged” (MacDonald 1845: 386). It is, of course, impossible to say quite what MacDonald means by comfort. However, considering the context of his writing for a text of the Improving movement, it is likely that comfortable and Improved go together.

Of the other group, the cottagers or day-labourers he says: “Three or four poor families frequently congregate into one farm, live in wretched hovels, rudely constructed without any mortar, one division of which is occupied by the family, and the other converted into a kind of byre” (MacDonald 1845: 387). Lord Teignmouth suggested that a distinction between the houses of cottagers and of farmers was a new phenomenon, arising in the fifty years or so prior to his writing in the 1830s (Teignmouth 1836: 388-389).

Edward Bradley (Cuthbert Bede) is more informative on the differing nature of the houses of the farmers. He describes a visit in Kintyre to the house of “Mr. and Mrs. Mac” and compares their dwelling with those of neighbouring farmers (Bede 1861, volume 2: 110-124). The Macs’ house may be fictional, and certainly their name is, but Bradley intends it as an example of a type of dwelling in Kintyre that he encountered on his travels and, as such, the picture he draws was at least representative to him.

The Macs’ house is a “low range of building one story high”, a “long, low hovel” (Bede 1861, volume 2: 110). Bradley entered one of its several doors into an earthen-floored passage, allowing access to a byre on the left and dwelling on the right (Bede 1861, volume 2: 113-114). The living quarters contained box beds against one wall, with a gable fireplace opposite (figure 8.2):

A suffocating smoke pervades the room, and makes your breath catch, and your eyes smart. It proceeds from the peat-turf, heaped on the fire . . . [that] is laid upon a low brick hearth; over it hangs a gigantic cauldron . . . . The smoke, after making a complete tour of the room, finds its way out through a hole in the thatch that does duty for a chimney . . . . The side walls of the room are not so high as a grenadier, and the timbers of the pitched roof rest upon them, and are all laid open to view, together with the heather that forms the thatch. A pitched roof it may well be called;





Figure 8.2: 'Inside the Macs' house', a range farmstead (after Bede 1861 volume 2: 116, 133). These engravings depict life in the kitchen.



for the peat smoke has blackened it . . . . Two small windows in the low walls face each other . . . . On the third side of the room is the hearth before mentioned; and, on the opposite side, the whole extent of the wall, save a small space for a doorway, is taken up by a rudely-enclosed cupboard, divided into four parts, two above the other two. These four divisions . . . proclaim themselves to be the sleeping berths of the family . . . (Bede 1861, volume 2: 114-115)

To this description we might add other furniture like the spinning wheel, kist (chest), and ambry (dresser, adorned with platters and jugs) (Bede 1861, volume 2: 116-117).

The traveller is next led by Mrs. Mac into “an inner room, of which she is visibly proud, - a room reserved for visitors, and high days and holidays, the *spence* or parlour” (Bede 1861, volume 2: 118):

The spence is a step higher than the other room; it has a boarded floor, a plastered ceiling, a good sized window . . . and a fireplace after the new and improved fashion, with a mantelpiece . . . . There is a shiny mahogany table, *ditto* chairs, *ditto* chest of drawers, on the top of which is a writing desk [on which lie several, mostly theological, books] . . . by far the chief object in the room is an enormous four-post bed, reaching to the ceiling . . . . It is covered with snowy linen, and a smart patchwork counterpane, and looks as though it had never been slept in, and was not intended to be occupied - as, indeed, I found that it was not, except by extraordinary visitors on extraordinary occasions. (Bede 1861, volume 2: 119)

Mrs. Mac goes on to entertain Bradley in the spence, with sherry and cake (Bede 1861, volume 2: 120).

This general description of a Kintyre farmhouse in the mid-nineteenth century accords well with several surviving archaeological examples of the range farmstead (see chapter 5 above).

What is of interest about this type of structure is the fact that it is associated with the upper ranks of farmers. On the spence, Bradley informs us that Mr. and Mrs. Mac are “bettermost people” and that some of the neighbouring farmers had no such room (Bede 1861, volume 2: 118-119). These neighbours not only had no such spence, but did not



have the cake and sherry of the Macs with which to entertain the traveller (Bede 1861, volume 2: 122).

In the New Statistical Account for Southend, a distinction was likewise drawn between the houses of the “inferior” tenant, which were “low”, “narrow”, and “cold”, and those of the “better class” of tenant, which were “excellent and substantial” (Kelly 1845: 433). A distinction between the dwellings of a lower and substantial class of tenants had been put forward some fifty years previously for Argyll in general (Smith 1798: 15).

The picture is still vague in many respects, but we can begin to see the role that acceptance of Improvement might have played in the strategies of individuals acting to define and redefine their social position *within* the rural population as well as negotiating their occupancy. Although we cannot define a type of dwelling for each of Cregeen’s tenurially-defined social groups, and there is no reason to necessarily correlate social group and house type on a strict one-to-one basis, we can see varied response to Improvement that equates roughly with tenurial status.

The houses of those tenants with large holdings, the bettermost or substantial tenant, seem to display a greater division of space. This greater subdivision of space was associated with the separation of daily routines and social distancing within the family and between the family and other members of the farm, such as the labourers. In the Macs’ house a separate room exists for entertaining and accommodating special guests. In known archaeological examples of this type of house, we can see the separation of other functional areas, such as the dairy (e.g. Keremenach, RCAHMS 1971: 200).

Quite what a substantial tenant might be is unclear. However, the houses just described might be associated with the middling class of tenant rather than the gentleman farmer.

There is also some suggestion that amongst the upper classes of the tenantry, the gentlemen farmers, houses had a greater division of space again. The New Statistical Account of Southend certainly seems to equate a better class of tenant with large, two storey courtyard farmsteads like Machribeg, near Southend itself (Kelly 1845: 433). These large farmhouses had and have a greater internal division of space, being essentially the same in layout as a modern large farmhouse. The sleeping, cooking, eating, and working activities evidenced in the box beds, hearth and cauldron, and spinning wheel in the main room of the Macs house were separated in a house like Machribeg. There you would find



bedrooms, a kitchen, a dining room, and much else.

The smaller tenant in Kintyre generally may not have had a house with a separate spence. It is unclear how space may otherwise have been arranged there. It is likely that some of these tenants lived in the unpartitioned houses with central hearth, seen in chapter five above.

Cregeen is clear that the existence of the middling farmer in Kintyre had much to do with the fact that the presence of Campbeltown produced an economic situation there differing from elsewhere on the Argyll estates (Cregeen 1970: 14). Elsewhere, the farming population was divided into the small tenant, gentleman farmer, and labourer (Cregeen 1970: 9, 14). If such a situation operated at Lix in Perthshire, then we might equate the tenants inhabiting longhouses there with the small tenant. Certainly, the size of holdings there seems to have been small (Fairhurst 1969). We also saw above the suggestion that the agricultural labourer inhabited an unpartitioned house also, perhaps with a central hearth.

Despite these reservations of uncertainties mentioned, there does appear to be a general pattern of the increasing division of space within the house with increasing size of holding. I would also suggest that this increasing division of space is related to the nature of occupancy of the land. Those with houses with perhaps the most internal division were the gentlemen and middling farmers who enjoyed the securest tenure, holding long leases by this point in time, perhaps of as long as nineteen years (Martin 1987: 7-8). The smaller tenantry may also have held long leases, but their situation was perhaps rendered less secure by the smaller size of their holdings. On the Argyll estates in Mull, Morvern, and Tiree, eighteenth century small tenants reverted from long leases to holding year by year due to insolvency and other factors, and the small tenantry of Kintyre have in general been seen as impoverished by the competitive system of leasing (Cregeen 1970: 14). Those with the least security of tenure and the minimum amount of land were the day-labourers:

They hold their dwelling-houses from year to year, and the tenants, who are their landlords, can dispossess them at pleasure. A rent of L.4 or L.5 Sterling is exacted for a house kept in bad repair, a small kail garden, the scanty pasture of a cow, and some ground for planting potatoes, in the outskirts of the farm. (MacDonald 1845: 387).



In general then, with decreasing security of tenure under the new conditions of occupancy in the era of Improvement we can see increasing concern for the maintenance of traditional concepts of hereditary tenure through the use of space within the house. Here we can see resistance to Improved housing forms when Improvement was accompanied by a fall in tenurial security. However, as shown above we should expect the situation to be more complex than a simple case of resistance to *or* acceptance of Improvement. These small tenants and labourers still worked in Improved fields, often lived in dispersed settlement, accepted positions as paid labourers, or signed Improving leases.

For the larger tenant, continued occupancy was more secure under the lease system and, as such, they had less cause to mobilise concepts of hereditary right. The maintenance of a sense of family in everyday practice including the experience of space was less important than for the smaller tenantry and the dispossessed. Thus, we find a decreasing emphasis on near constant familial interaction as we move from the house of the labourer through that of the small and middling tenant to the large tenant. For the larger tenantry, continuity of tenure and Improvement in the house were commensurate. Theirs were also the houses where provision was made to welcome and impress the extraordinary visitor. For them the concern with impressing the outside world with their efforts to Improve may, therefore, have extended from the landscape into the home. Part of this concern may well have been with showing solidarity with the interest of the estate and the landlord and retaining their position, both in terms of retaining their lease and in separating themselves from the lower classes.

Material culture played a role in individuals' strategies in coping with their varied situations as occupants of the land. They were negotiating their relationship with their landlord through structuring and restructuring the routine conditions that made different conceptions of tenancy knowable.

However, the varied responses to Improvement discussed above also affected other social relationships. In creating differing material environments the various members of the rural community were playing a role in the creation of new social divisions within that community, consciously or not. The horizontal social divisions noted by nineteenth century writers were vague. However, they appear more marked than those of the pre-Improvement period. It is not that horizontal division had been absent before, rather that it was now to be emphasised over the vertical divisions of clanship.



It appears that a section of the tenantry, at least, played some active role in the introduction of Improved spatial organisation. They thus furthered the landlord's aim to socially and spatially restructure Highland society. However, they did so with reference to at least one significant pre-existing structuring principle of Highland society, the concern for continued occupancy of the land.

This same concern also structured the response of those who in part rejected the spatial restructuring of Improvement. Their use of material culture as part of a strategy in regulating their occupancy was different from that of the larger tenants, but they approached Improvement with the same basic concern. In responding as they did to Improvement, they also played a role in widening horizontal social distinction by placing themselves within a distinct material environment.

### Regional variation in the construction of modern Highland society

With the above arguments in mind we can use differences in the archaeology of Improvement in Kilfinan, as opposed to Kintyre, to suggest that Improvement in the two different areas meant slightly differing changes in social structure.

We saw in chapter five that the range farmstead is largely absent from Kilfinan, in opposition to Kintyre. Rather, alongside the courtyard farmsteads of Kilfinan we find cottage ranges, which are also to be found in Kintyre (figure 8.3). These latter structures are often to be found on the periphery of large single-tenancy farms. The structure at Low Stillaig lies on the lands of Stillaig. Both the cottage range and the large modern farmhouse at Stillaig itself appear as roofed on the first OS map of the area of 1863.

The suggestion, then, is that these agglomerated ranges, possibly in Kintyre and certainly in Kilfinan, are to be associated with large single tenancy farms. It is likely that the ranges represent the habitations of farm labourers. Certainly, Stillaig was a single, or double, tenancy from at least the time of the 1850 Assessment for Roads (ABDA DR1/12). There we find one tenant and twelve cottars listed under the farm.

Alongside the isolated farmhouses and agglomerated ranges of labourer/smallholders' cottages we find a third contemporary element within this Improved landscape in Kilfinan, and absent from Kintyre. There are a series of nucleated settlements that are shown as roofed on the first OS maps (figure 8.4). In places, such as at Ascog, all



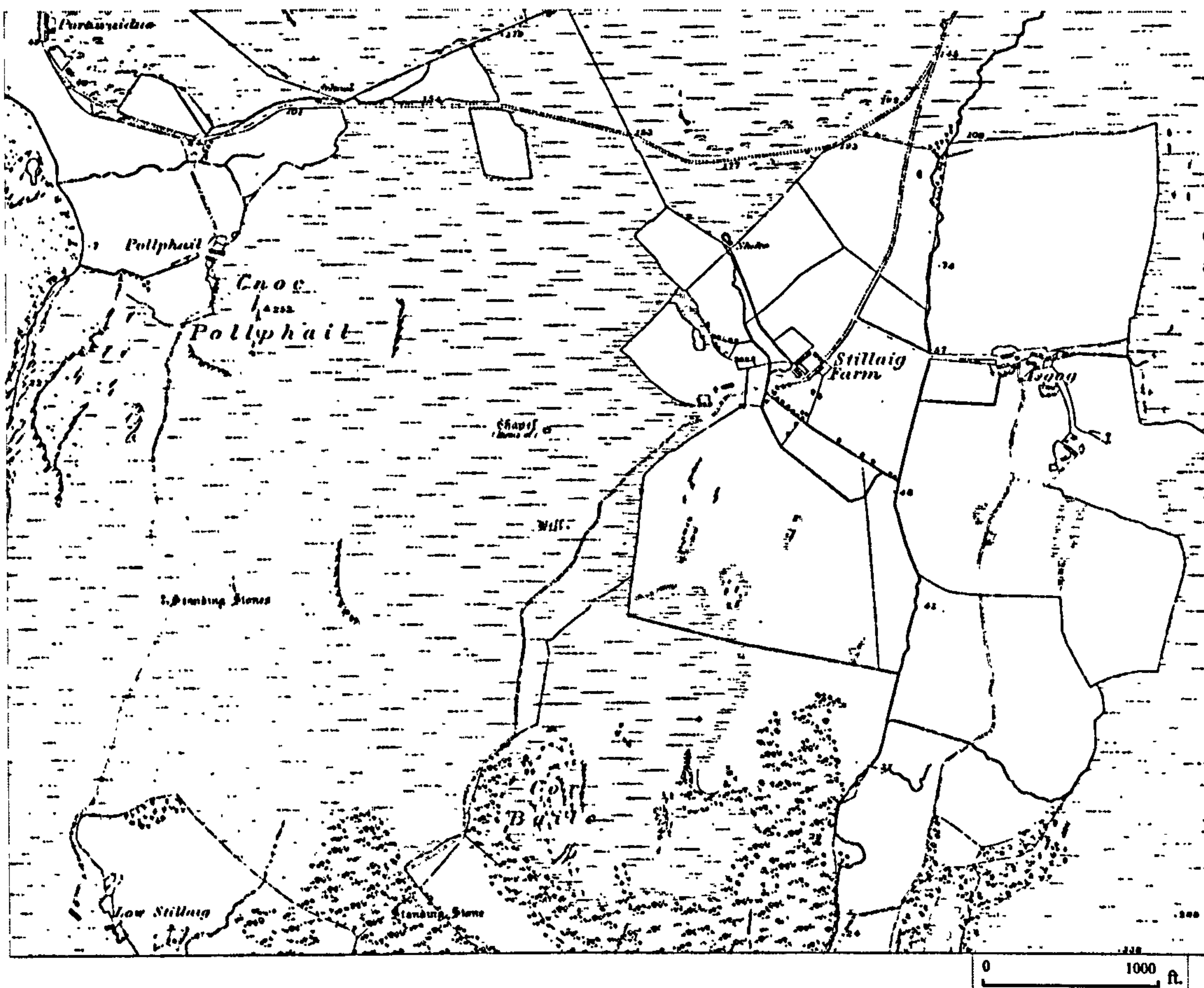


Figure 8.3: The courtyard steading at Stillaig with associated settlements of Low Stillaig and Ascog, as depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map of the mid nineteenth century. North to top of page. These three settlements were all elements of a single farm.



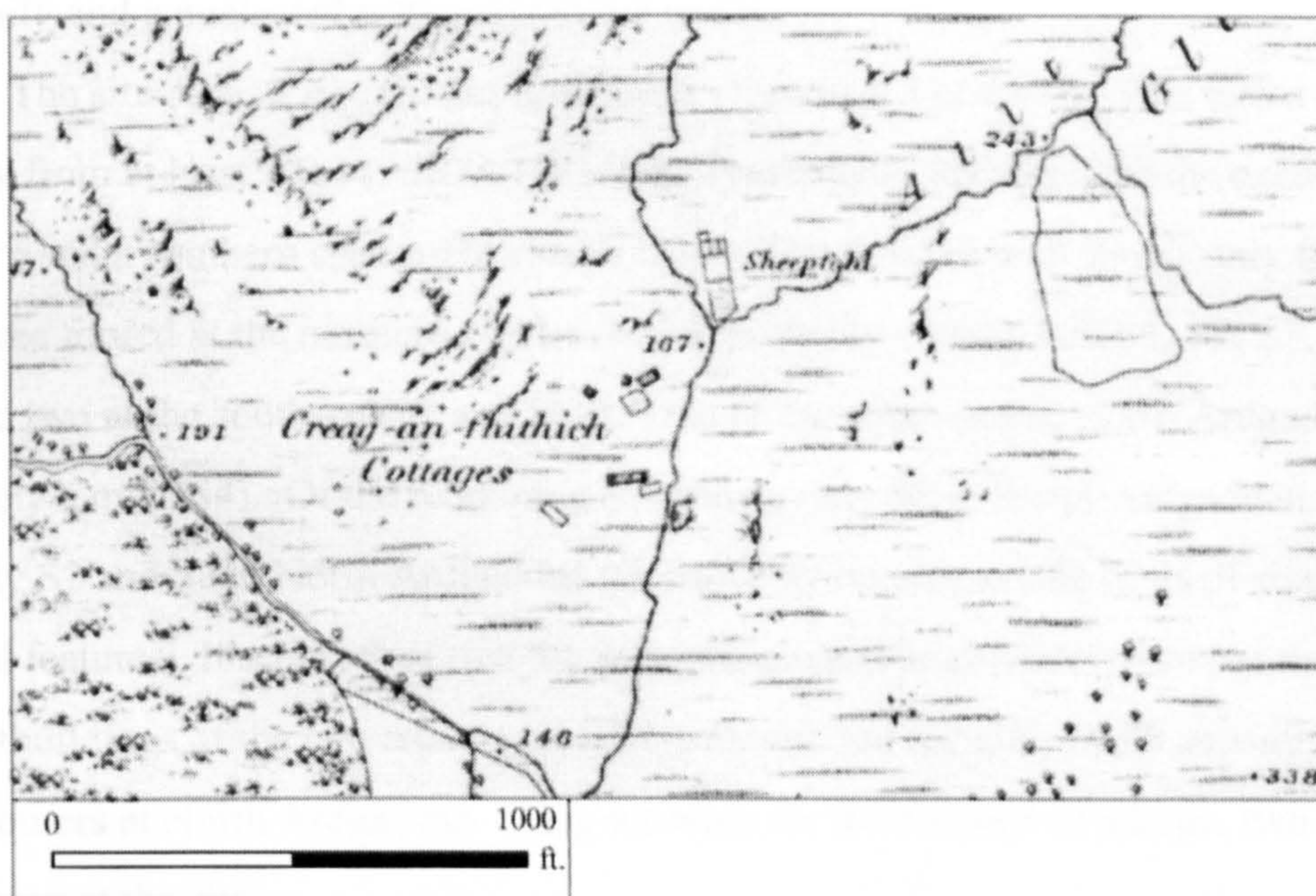
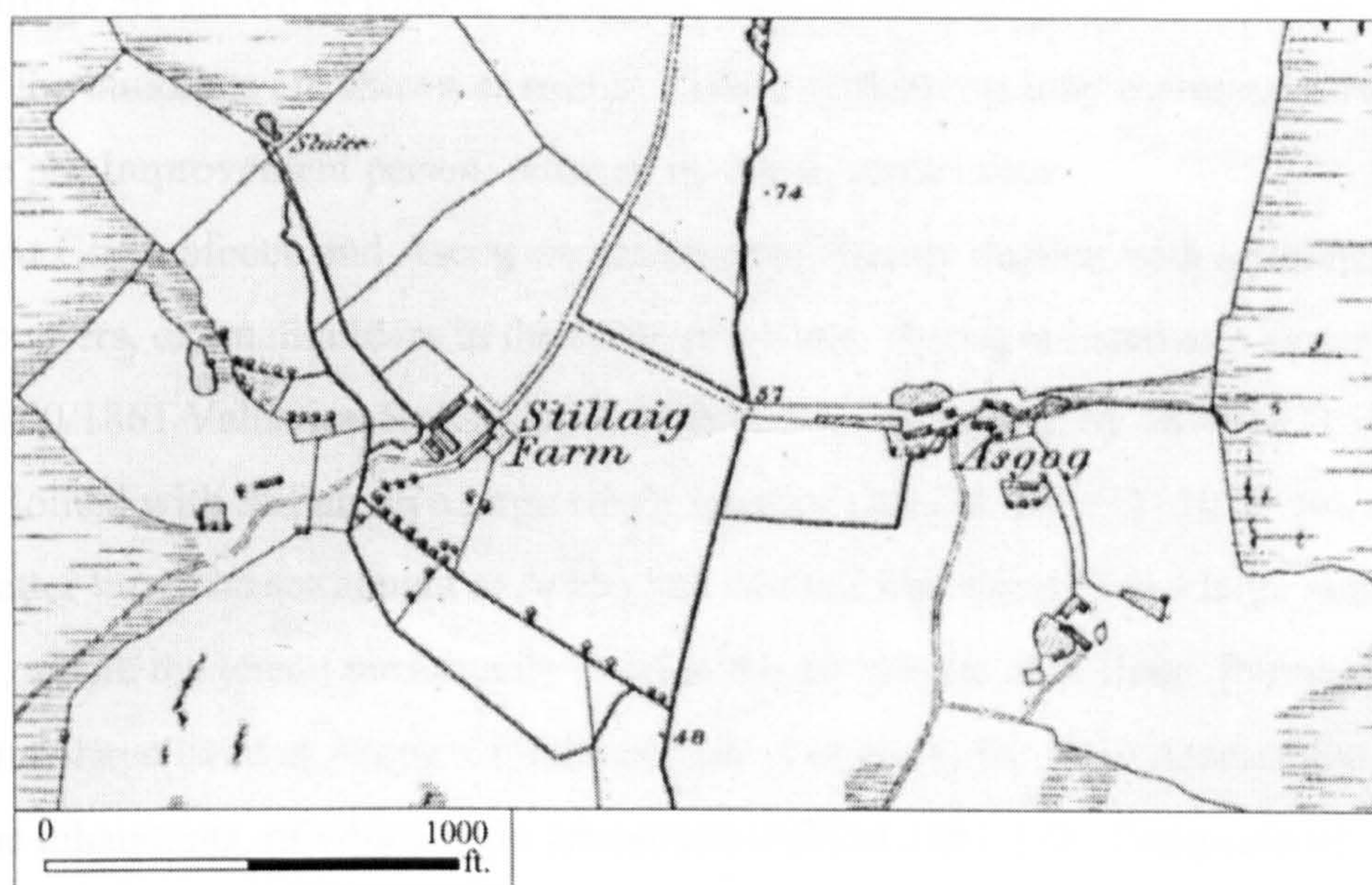


Figure 8.4: The nucleated settlements at Ascog (top) and Creag-an-fhithich (bottom), as depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map of the mid nineteenth century. North to top of page. Ascog is located near to the courtyard farmstead of Stillaig and represents the dwellings of the labourers of the latter farm. Creag-an-fhithich is located to the northeast of another courtyard farmstead of the same name (not shown).



the buildings are shown as roofed. At others, such as Ardgaddan and Craignafeoch, only some of the buildings are shown as roofed. These settlements may represent survivals from the pre-Improvement period, reduced in size in some cases.

At Craignafeoch and Ascog we are almost certainly dealing with settlements of farm labourers, or smallholders in the sense of cottars. Ascog is listed as a single tenancy in the 1860/1861 Valuation Roll (ABDA 1/73/13:52). However, by 1870/1871 it had become joined with Stillaig in a large single tenancy (ABDA 1/13/33: 107). So, certainly by the latter time, the settlement at Ascog had become one element in a large single-tenancy, where the tenant presumably lived in the farmhouse at Stillaig. Previously, the tenant may have lived at Ascog with the cottars. Certainly, the 1850 Assessment for Roads lists nine inhabitants, of which eight are cottars (ABDA DR1/12). Craignafeoch was a single tenancy from at least 1844 (ABDA DR1/12). This single tenancy farm, at the time of the first OS map, had both the isolated farmhouse that presumably housed the tenant and his family and a nucleated settlement to the north.

The situation at Ardgaddan is different (figures 8.5 and 8.6). This was a double tenancy from at least 1844 (ABDA DR1/12). Presumably this explains the existence of a northern and a southern settlement cluster there. The first OS map shows only five structures roofed at the northern cluster (which probably equate with S1, S2, S3, S4, and S5) and two at the southern (S3 and S9?). One of the structures at North Ardgaddan is definitely a mill (S4). Of the remaining structures, only S9 at South Ardgaddan and S1 and possibly S2 and S3 at North Ardgaddan are probably houses, on the basis of size and internal features. It seems then that the amorphous nuclear clusters consist of the dwellings and outbuildings of the two tenants, possibly, though not certainly, with accommodation for labourers at North Ardgaddan. This accounts for the absence of a large, two-storied farmhouse at the site.

The post-Improvement social structure of Kilfinan, as seen from the archaeological settlement pattern in conjunction with the documentary sources, appears slightly different to that in Kintyre. In Kilfinan we find a general twofold division of the rural population. There is the tenant, generally housed in a large, isolated farmhouse and the labourer/cottar housed on the periphery of these large tenancies either in a division of a cottage range or in an amorphous, nucleated settlement.

The middling farmer of Kintyre with their linear domestic range, with its spence



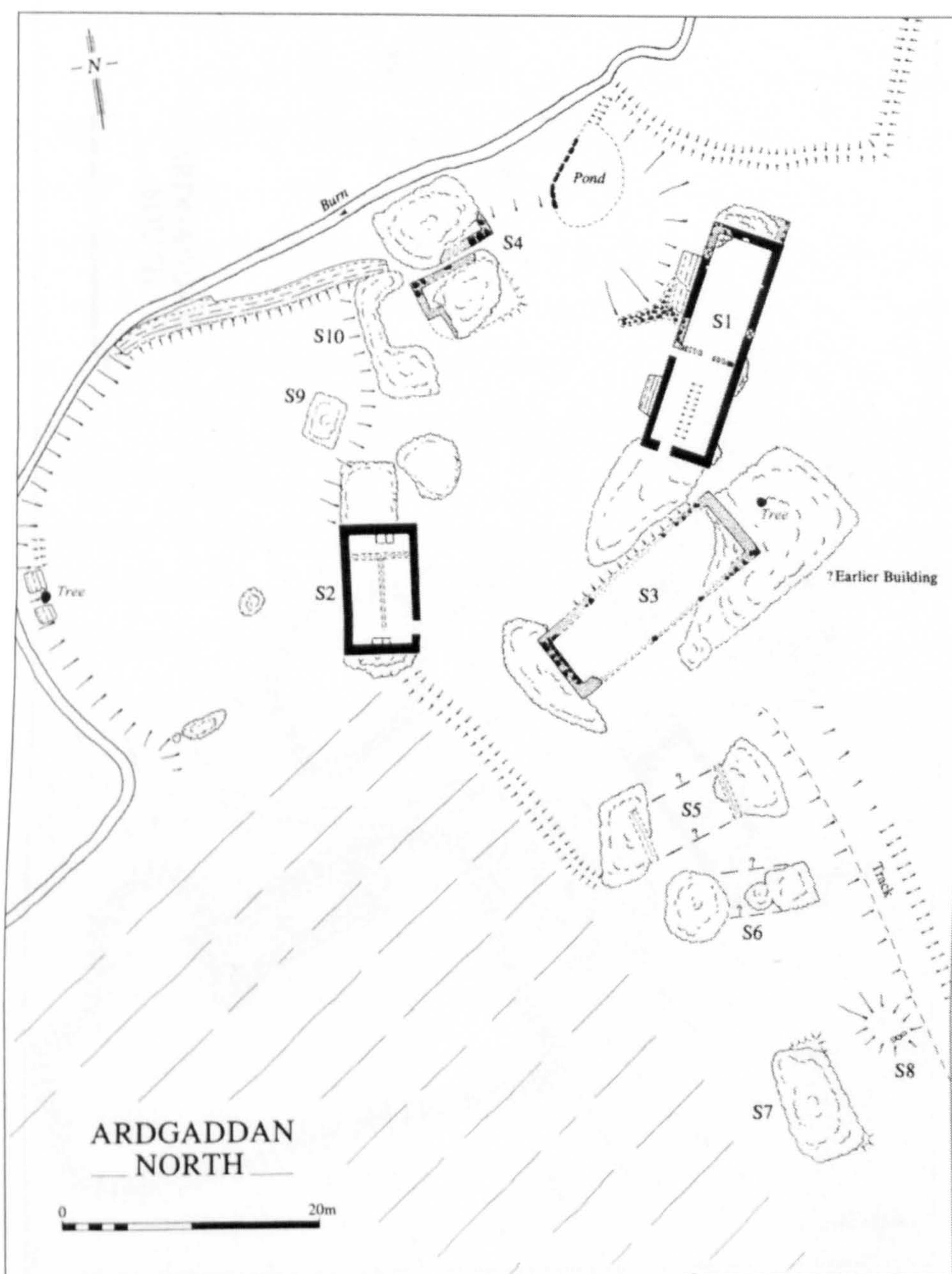


Figure 8.5: Plan of North Ardgadden, Kilfinan (illustration courtesy of Dr. S.T. Driscoll, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Glasgow). S1 is probably A dwelling with appended byre. S4 is a mill. The functions of the other Structures is less clear.



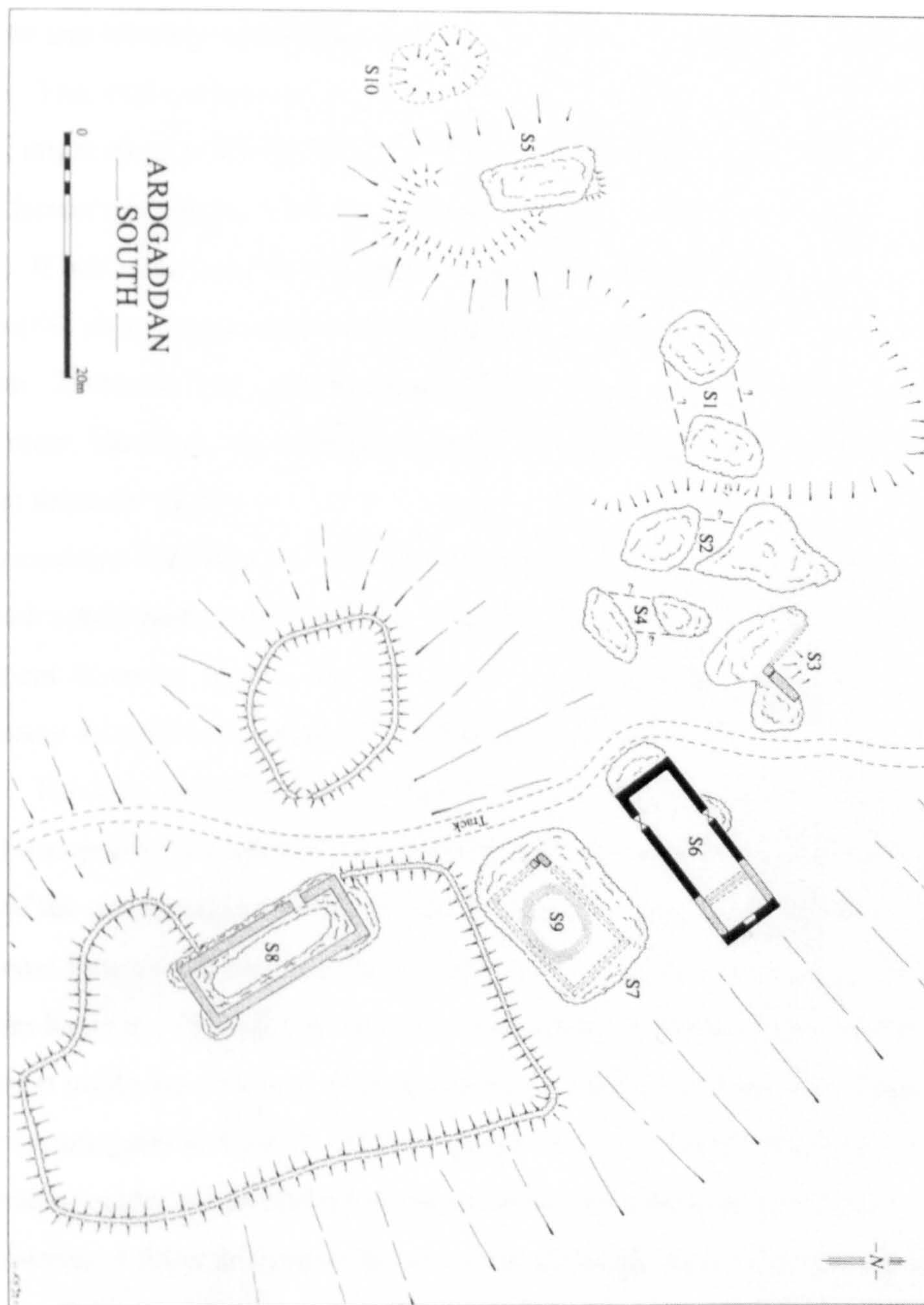


Figure 8.6: Plan of South Ardgadden, Kilfinan (illustration courtesy of Dr. S.T. Driscoll, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Glasgow). The well-preserved structure S6 is surrounded by an amorphous nucleation of less distinct buildings.



and byre, is absent. This situation accords well with Cregeen's characterisation of the social structure of Kintyre as exceptional to the area, with the twofold division between large tenant and labourer/smallholder found in other areas. Ardgaddan may be an exception. The small population of perhaps just the two tenants, maybe with one or two labourers, might suggest that the situation of those tenants might compare with the middling farmer of Kintyre. They would fall somewhere in between the large tenant and the cottar. If this is the case, then it is interesting that one of the North Ardgaddan structures (S1) shows signs of inter-communicating subdivisions, rare in the linear ranges of Kilfinan. There is a byre, with its central drain, and one other space, presumably the dwelling room. However, the two tenants might themselves just have been smallholders, working at times for others.

In common with Kintyre, the large tenants seem to have adopted highly Improved, that is much subdivided, domestic space. The response of the smallholders/labourers to Improvement, however, is even less clear than it was for Kintyre. For Kilfinan we do not have the same documentary sources as for Kintyre. Travellers tended in general to pass Cowal by. The New Statistical Account for the parish (Stark 1845) is uninformative. The continued occupation of nucleated settlements in cases is suggestive of at least a partial rejection of the reorganisation of settlement. Continuity of nucleated settlement might suggest some form of continuity of the pre-Improvement spatial structuring of community, absent from Kintyre. The response of some of Kilfinan's smallholders/labourers to Improvement might have been to resist by asserting different material and social structures than their counterparts in Kintyre. Their response may have been to maintain a township-like community under the conditions of encroaching individual rights to land.

However, a fuller analysis of the everyday activities within these post-Improvement nucleated settlements and the single-tenancy farms of which they formed a part is required. Nucleated settlement does not in itself necessarily enduce a sense of community. In the pre-Improvement township and landscape seen in earlier chapters, this community was created through communal work practices. Nucleated settlement in itself is only a part of the process of constructing and maintaining a sense of common interest. Excavation of some of Kilfinan's deserted settlement sites is also badly needed if we are to consider the ways in which the structuring of domestic space played a role in maintaining different concepts of occupancy. At the moment we do not even have the fragmentary and



ambiguous sources that at least proved suggestive for Kintyre.

## **Conclusion. The dynamics of Improvement**

The simple bipolar opposition of people and landlord characteristic of most recent historical writing on Improvement can be questioned. This characterisation engenders concentration on overt resistance to Improvement as the most significant response to the projected material and social changes that aimed to introduce capitalism to the Highlands. Other responses are on the whole denied, or ignored. Archaeology, in close conjunction with documentary history, can allow us to explore more complex dynamics of Improvement.

Changes in material culture during the period of Improvement, in landscape organisation, settlement pattern and morphology, and the use of domestic space, vary from region to region. In comparing the archaeology of Improvement in Kintyre with that in Kilfinan we can see that the course of Improvement varied significantly between these two geographically adjacent areas. Significantly, this variation can be understood with reference to the construction of differing social structures in those areas with Improvement. In Kintyre, we find a middling class of tenant that seems absent from Kilfinan. This social class may be detectable archaeologically, as having a distinct approach to the construction of domestic space. The reasons behind these different regional trajectories remain to be explored.

However, the above discussion does suggest that any explanation of regional variation in the material and social process of Improvement must consider the farming population as playing an active role. The tenants of varying sizes and the labourers did not passively accept a new and pre-fabricated social world handed down from a landlord, who might variously be conceived as beneficent or oppressive. Members of the rural population approached Improvement from the standpoint of existing social structure. They were predisposed to evaluate Improvement with reference to continued occupancy, with reference to land rights. These people were concerned with continued access to the land and resources of their particular locality. They did not respond to Improvement with migration to the growing cities or with emigration, which were of course the responses of



some.

The concern with occupancy did not produce a homogenous acceptance or rejection of Improvement on the part of the people. Rather, occupancy was negotiated in contingent circumstances. The individual or group worked and lived within an Improved external environment, with its enclosed and often grid-like fields, dispersed settlement pattern, and rectilinear settlement morphology. At the same time, they might have inhabited unImproved domestic space, where in daily routine the family was in constant physical proximity in the single undivided space of the house, with its central hearth for a focus.

This seeming material contradiction is understandable if we consider both patterns as contingent manifestations of the same underlying concern of occupancy. Material responses to Improvement varied with individual security of tenure. Those with access to the most secure forms of tenure inhabited more subdivided domestic space. They were less concerned to maintain the routine conditions in which traditional concepts of hereditary tenure would continue to make sense. The provision of the *spence* in the house of the middling farmer, and the drawing room in the large, two-storied farmhouse, neatly evidence a concern on the part of these tenants to appear to the outside world as promoting the new order. These are the spaces, separated from the rest of the house, where visitors were received. The main interest of the inhabitants of such houses, in terms of occupancy, was to conform to the landlord's interest to varying degrees.

Those who were least secure in their occupancy, the smallholders and labourers, continued to organise domestic space on more traditional lines. They thus allowed the survival of the concept of hereditary right to land. Their response to Improvement was that it did not satisfy their concern for continued occupancy, and so they looked elsewhere. However, to say that this was resistance in simple oppositional terms would be to misunderstand this response. Labourers and smallholders still worked and lived within an Improved landscape, and so at least gave that landscape and the social relations it helped to construct tacit consent. This was perhaps as their response in the external domain was publicly obvious and, therefore, their continued occupancy required expression of solidarity with the landlord's interest.

Responding to Improvement with reference to continued occupancy also had unintended consequences. Rural society became increasingly structured along horizontal lines as the divisions between its various tenurially defined groups were emphasised. This



was in no small part a result of the fact that these different groups increasingly inhabited contrasting material worlds. Nineteenth century travellers and ministers could define several classes within the rural population and did so with reference to their houses.

Of course, there are many other variations in response to Improvement that might prove significant. The restructuring of domestic space could be accompanied by the restructuring of other relations within the family, those of gender for example. Differing responses within the various groups discussed above might also become evident. Discussing such variation requires more detailed reconstruction of the changing material worlds of the people in question. We should also consider that despite the fact that modern domestic space, settlement pattern and landscape organisation might seem familiar and self-explanatory, their social characteristics depend on use (see, e.g., Bennett 1998, especially chapter 6; Glassie 1995). Highly subdivided space only constructs marked social divisions within the family and community if associated with the separation of daily routines.



## Chapter Nine

### Conclusion

In concluding below, I have summarised the narratives of Improvement developed in the case studies of this thesis in relation to two main themes. First, Improvement has been explored in terms of the changing material environment and routine practice. Changing architectural, settlement, and landscape forms were intimately connected to a restructuring of routine experience of the world that privileged a sense of the individual over a sense of the community and a sense of the family. This changing routine experience of the world made new understandings of society knowable, that formed nothing less than a new ideology emphasising the individual and private property. The second section of this conclusion summarises the argument that these changes to routine practice and the material environment were bound up with the negotiation of social relations and can only be understood by looking at the local social and political context. Landowners in Kintyre and Kilfinan instigated Improvement in attempting to resolve specific social contradictions in their favour; contradictions that were quite different in each case. The farming populations of those areas responded in different ways, in turn, to their landlords' initiatives according to their own social concerns.

In Kintyre, the contradiction between Campbell rights to land as their *oighreachd*, or private patrimony, and MacDonald rights to land as *duthchas*, or the collective heritage of the clan, had been the site of serious conflict for centuries. Improvement sought to privilege the rights of the Campbells to the Kintyre estate as their private property. Improvement was thus a solution to a long-lived problem, but the particular form it took derived from its basis in Enlightenment thought. The social theory of the Scottish Enlightenment suggested to the landowners that they might radically alter the material environment, that to do so was desirable and justifiable as natural progress, and even suggested Lowland and English exemplars for change.

In Kilfinan, through Improvement, landowners sought to address the contradiction between their position as proprietors of traditional Highland estates and as members of the emergent Middle Class. The Middle Class emerged as a coherent social group from the



late eighteenth century, and this coherence was achieved in large part through a distinct Enlightenment based culture. In this situation, continued membership of the Middle Class required the landowners of Kilfinan to Improve their estates, or risk being seen as socially backward in the terms of the Enlightenment.

In both these cases, Improvement did not happen in a social vacuum and the farming populations of Kintyre and Kilfinan variably accepted and rejected aspects of Improved material culture and practice. They approached Improvement with their own concerns, structured in the prior history of the region and understood according to the contingent social ramifications of Improvement for them. The primary concern for the farming population discussed in this thesis was for their continued occupancy, or residence upon and use of the land, and how that population approached Improvement depended on its ramifications for this concern.

Following this two-part summary, the implications of the arguments developed in the case studies for an archaeology of capitalism in general are outlined. It is helpful to distinguish between capitalism (as an individualistic ideology made knowable in routine practice) and capitalist society (where capitalism is widespread). Such a distinction allows us to write histories capable of distinguishing forms of social existence alternative to capitalism within capitalist societies. As we have seen, not everyone in Kintyre and Kilfinan accepted capitalism wholesale, despite living within an emergent capitalist society. The particular significance of capitalism and its configuration with other forms of social relationship will vary locally within a capitalist society. Further, the significance of capitalism will vary within the daily routine of specific individuals or groups. It will have more or less significance depending on whether they are working in the fields or sitting round the fire at home, for instance. The emphasis on routine environment and practice not only allows consideration of such social variety and difference, but gives archaeology a fundamental role in writing histories of capitalism as it is uniquely situated to deal with such routine.

## **Improvement, the material environment, and routine practice**

In chapter five, Improvement was discussed as change in the material environment



and routine practice at the three scales of settlement, landscape, and domestic space. Prior to Improvement, the material environment and routine practice were structured in such a way as to produce a sense of the community and of the family. In other words, people experienced their daily routine as a member of the community (of the *baile* or several *bailtean*) or as a member of a family. With Improvement, changes to the material environment and to routine practice were structured to produce a sense of the individual. Daily structuring of the community and of family was undermined and people increasingly came to experience the world as individuals.

From at least the sixteenth to the eighteenth century the majority of the population of the study areas lived in nucleated farming townships, or *bailtean*. Buildings within the *baile* were disposed according to the natural topography of the site, often resulting in an amorphous plan layout. Sites like Balmavicar in Kintyre and Finlaggan on nearby Islay consisted of several dwellings, with perhaps three to five at Balmavicar. In some cases, dwellings were associated in paired groups with larger outbuildings, perhaps threshing barns or byres. Occasionally we find other elements to the *baile*, like a mill or a church. These various structures were frequently accompanied by small enclosures that represent kail, stock, and stackyards.

The landscape immediate to the *bailtean* was composed of unenclosed rig and furrow fields. These fields, as with the buildings of the *bailtean*, were disposed according to the natural topography, avoiding boggy areas and concentrating on the naturally draining lower slopes of the high ground. The intensively cultivated area is defined upslope by the head dyke. The landscape beyond the *baile* was thus physically divided into two broad zones of the cultivated land and the hill ground. One main use of the hill ground was as pasture and shieling settlements are sometimes found up to several kilometres from the parent settlement. Such shieling groups can be as large as forty or more structures and were associated with areas of commonly held open pasture.

Houses within the *bailtean* of Kintyre and Kilfinan were typically round-ended, and thus hip-roofed, and constructed from any of a number of different materials, principally turf, turf and stone, unmortared stone, or lime-mortared stone. The roof was thatched and supported on cruck trusses. The size of these dwellings ranged from 6 to 12m by 4 to 8m. Many had two opposed entrances in the long walls, but this was not universally the case. Inside, the house consisted of a single, unitary space focusing on a central hearth. There is



little to suggest that these dwellings were generally longhouses, with cattle and humans inhabiting a common space.

With Improvement, the *bailtean* were almost universally replaced by dispersed and isolated settlement, principally consisting of farmsteads arranged as courtyards or linear ranges and ranges of labourers' dwellings. These new settlement forms were coming into widespread use from the late eighteenth century in Kintyre and by the mid-nineteenth century in Kilfinan. Where the *bailtean* had been amorphous in plan and disposed according to local topography, these new settlements were markedly geometric in plan and, thus, disposed according to abstract ideals of settlement layout without regard for the nature of the site. The courtyard and linear range farmsteads brought previously separate elements of the farm, like the dwelling, barn, byre, and sometimes the mill, together in one structure. The linear labourers' dwellings were likewise composed of several units, although in this case the units were mostly houses. They differed from the courtyard and linear farmsteads in that the farmstead was the dwelling and associated outbuildings of a single farming family. With the ranges of labourers' dwellings several families or individuals might be housed side by side. The courtyard farmsteads and rows of labourers' dwellings represent distinct elements of large Improved farms, with the former housing the farmer and family and the latter their workers. The labourers' dwellings are frequently found on the outskirts of the farm and distant from the farmstead. The Improved settlement pattern of Kilfinan is dominated by courtyard farmsteads and associated ranges of labourers' dwellings. In Kintyre, linear range farmsteads are found alongside the courtyards and labourers' dwellings. In both areas the spread of this pattern of dispersed farming settlement is accompanied by the growth of a few nucleated villages and towns, re-housing those removed from the land during Improvement and providing services for the surrounding countryside.

Associated with the dispersal of settlement were the enclosure of the landscape and the decline of the shieling system. Enclosure had begun in Kintyre at least by the first half of the eighteenth century and became widespread there from the later eighteenth century. It was widespread in Kilfinan by the mid-nineteenth century. Enclosures concentrated on the lower slopes of the high ground and the valley floor. On the lower slopes they are often irregular in form and probably represent the enclosure of existing patches of arable, even re-using head dykes in cases. On the low ground, enclosure often went hand in hand



with drainage, and the level nature of the topography together with the lack of previous intensive use of these areas allowed the creation of extensive geometric systems of enclosure. Although the irregular and geometric forms of enclosure were largely contemporary, the former dropped out of use to leave a landscape divided between a zone of geometric enclosure and one of open hill ground. The shielings that had inhabited the open hill ground prior to Improvement went out of use and were replaced with extensive sheep pastures and eventually with areas set aside for sport.

Improved houses are characterised by the subdivision of space and the associated multiplication of the hearth, which declines in importance as a focus for activity. The dwellings within courtyard farmsteads are commonly of two storeys and consist of a variety of separate spaces including bedrooms, kitchens, and dining rooms. Many of the rooms within such houses have their own hearth that no longer sits centrally in the floor, but is incorporated within a wall. Linear range farmsteads also exhibit an increased subdivision of space, but to a lesser extent than the courtyard farmstead. Commonly the dwelling area of the linear farmstead consists of a kitchen, a room or spence, and perhaps a loft space. The spence and kitchen often have their own separate hearths, again frequently incorporated within or abutting a wall. In contrast to the farmsteads, labourers' dwellings are often a single space, perhaps still with a central hearth. Excavation has shown this to be the case with the dwellings of small tenants at Lix in Perthshire, and smallholders in Kintyre and Kilfinan may likewise have maintained unimproved dwellings.

Change in the material environment with Improvement can be related to changing routine practice. Pre-Improvement routine practice was communal and familial, where everyday activities were experienced by the individual as a member of the community of the *baile* or of several *bailtean*, or as a member of a family.

Cultivation was communally organised, which made sense where tenants' individual cultivation rigs were intermixed. Communal ploughing was facilitated by the lack of enclosure. Livestock were often communally maintained, either by herds whose employment was the responsibility of the whole township or at shieling grounds where the livestock of one or more *bailtean* seasonally gathered. Communal and organised herding was sensible considering the lack of enclosure and the damage free-roaming livestock might do to the crop. The concentration of the farm population in the nucleated *baile* meant that people were already gathered for communal work.



The pre-Improvement house was a single unpartitioned space with central hearth. Thus, all activity within the house potentially took place in the presence of other members of the family. Activities associated with the hearth, such as cooking, eating, and some household industries like ceramic production, took centre stage. Other activities, like sleeping, and crafts like spinning or weaving likewise occurred in the presence of others. The hearth and unpartitioned space of the house also provided an appropriate arena for story telling, music, discussion and other activities that could combine in the *ceilidh*.

Improvement undermined the routine structuring of community. The *bailtean* were fragmented and houses became isolated from each other. People thus had less opportunity to socialise, and visits were now separated from the routine domain of the family, taking place in specialised spaces like the spence, parlour, or dining room. Enclosure dispensed with the need for herds or for shieling, as livestock were thus separated from the crop and from each other. Enclosure also required the consolidation of the tenant's land into discrete units separate from the land of their neighbours.

Internal subdivision of the house, most apparent in the courtyard farmstead, was associated with the segregation of routine tasks. With Improvement there was a kitchen for cooking, bedrooms for sleeping, a dining room for eating, and much else. The family experienced much more of their daily routine apart from each other. The provision of several hearths in the Improved house detracted from its role as a focus of activity, as did its removal from the centre of the room to a wall.

In general, then, pre-Improvement settlement, landscape, and domestic space played a role in the reflexive structuring of routine practice in such a way as to inculcate a sense of the community and of the family. These senses of community and of family were not strictly defined or codified ways of comprehending the world. Rather, they were specific forms of practical consciousness (practical cognition, or *habitus* in Bourdieu's terms) that were vague and unspoken. However, they made certain more consciously and rigorously defined ideologies knowable or unknowable. Explicit ideological statements would have been assessed by the general population in comparison with their experience of the world. In other words, some statements would thus appear as common sense, while some would make no sense.

The pre-Improvement sense of community made the community of the clan possible. Claims by the clan gentry to the resources of a given territory and on the support



of its population, their clan, made sense in a world where daily routine was experienced as part of a community wider than the individual or the family.

The sense of family made hereditary claims to land and its resources conceivable. A tenant's claim to a portion of land farmed by their family for generations was obvious and natural where routine experience of the world told them that the family was a fundamental unit of society and the focus of much daily activity.

The sense of the individual encouraged by the Improved routine environment made the community of the clan unknowable. Claims by the clan gentry would make no sense where the routine structuring of the community had been undermined. The ideology of the clan would no longer accord with practical apprehension of the world. Rather, the claims of a landlord to a territory and its resources, as their individual right, would seem more natural.

The sense of the individual was also cultivated by Improved domestic space, making hereditary claims to the land increasingly strange. Routine experience apart from the family made individual rights to the land as a leaseholder knowable.

### **Improvement and the negotiation of social relations**

It is not enough simply to understand Improvement as changing routine practice. Improvement had an explicit intellectual context in the Scottish Enlightenment and was a strategy in addressing existing social concerns and problems.

Kintyre had been a part of the MacDonald Lordship of the Isles until the end of the fifteenth century. Under the Lordship it had largely been the patrimony of a prominent MacDonald kindred called, amongst other things, the MacDonalds of Dunnyvaig and the Glens. After the forfeiture of the Lordship in 1493, the MacDonalds of Dunnyvaig and the Glens were prominent in rebellions concerned with its restoration. These rebellions often drew on the continued support of Kintyre's population for the rights of their clan and the peninsula was held under suspicion as a nest of rebellion into the eighteenth century. The Campbell House of Argyll, the most prominent agents of the Crown in the southern Highlands, played a key role in the suppression of rebellion in the region and benefited with the legal acquisition of a large estate in Kintyre and land elsewhere. Their ownership



of the Kintyre estate was actually or potentially threatened on many occasions by the continued loyalty of the population of the estate to an absent MacDonald clan gentry. The House of Argyll's claim to the land and resources of Kintyre as their private property (their *oighreachd*) made less sense to the farming population than did the claims of the MacDonald clan gentry to the same resources as the heritage of the community of the clan (the clan's *duthchas*). Further, potentially rebellious tenants had a hereditary claim to the land, made knowable in routine practice, and did not rely on the consent of their landlords, the Campbells, to justify the occupancy of their holding.

The Campbells, as agents of the Crown and on their own behalf, tried to resolve the contradiction between their personal claims to the land and its resources and its simultaneous existence as MacDonald clan heritage, that is the contradiction between *oighreachd* and *duthchas*, which were in conflict when unaligned. The creation of a burgh at Campbeltown and the plantation of a Lowland farming population were intended to civilise the peninsula, that is to render it more like the Lowlands. However, these and other schemes met with little success and Improvement should be seen as part of this ongoing civilising project.

Improvement differed significantly from earlier civilising schemes of social engineering. It grew from the same need to pacify Kintyre in favour of the House of Argyll and the Crown, but its specific form came from eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment thought. The Enlightenment favoured a stadial account of history where all societies inevitably progressed through stages to the peak of civilisation, the commercial age. Scottish Enlightenment thinkers associated the commercial age with England in particular, and the Scottish Lowlands were considered to be in transition to that age. With the Enlightenment, then, commercial society and private property were justified as the inevitable outcome of history. Further, the economy, institutions, and even mentalité of a given society were seen to be intimately connected. Thus, Enlightenment thought suggested that private property could be privileged with economic change and suggested that Lowland and English ideals and institutions would come to the Highlands with Lowland and English forms of economy and material culture. Added to this was the Enlightened notion of *independence*, which stressed that people were free to alter the conditions of their existence and not entirely dependent on divine will. Enlightenment, after all, was defined as the courage to use your own reason.



Improvement in Kintyre, therefore, was a new phase in a longer term civilising project aimed to resolve conflict arising from the contradiction between individual and communal/hereditary forms of land rights, but it was a distinct strategy born of the Scottish Enlightenment. It was a distinct phase in that it was sustained and in that it aimed to privilege private property and the rights of the House of Argyll as legal proprietors through the fundamental reorganisation of routine practice and the material environment.

Improvement in Kilfinan has to be explained in somewhat different terms. There the contradiction between *duthchas* and *oighreachd* does not seem to have resulted in conflict. The primary social contradiction in Kilfinan was that between the position of many landowners there as proprietors of traditional Highland estates and as members of the emergent Middle Class. In the period of Improvement, two groups dominated landholding in Kilfinan. There were established families like the Lamonts who had held land in the parish for centuries and there was a group of new proprietors, largely drawn from the ranks of the emergent Middle Class, who purchased estates with the profits of their mercantile activity or their profession. The Lamonts can also be linked to the emergent Middle Class, being involved in the nearby burghs as merchants from at least the early seventeenth century.

From the late eighteenth century a self-aware Middle Class emerged, centred in the Scottish burghs. This class cohered in part through a common and distinctive culture based in the thought of Scottish Enlightenment. This Middle Class culture included a faith in progress, an emphasis on ordered geometric space, exemplified by Edinburgh new-town, and a disdain for Scotticisms in speech, and no doubt also disclaimed traditional architecture, settlement layout and landscape organisation.

Their membership of the Middle Class thus provided the landowners of Kilfinan with the inspiration and justification for Improvement. A specific motive for Improvement was also provided in the contradiction engendered between their simultaneous existence as owners of traditionally organised Highland estates and as members of an emergent Middle Class. Establishment and maintenance of Middle Class status would have required the Improvement of estates that would literally have been considered backward. Membership of the new Middle Class, with its coherent, Enlightenment-based culture, would have required Kilfinan landowners to demonstrate the will to move their estates into the commercial age.



The House of Argyll and the various landowners of Kilfinan therefore had specific motives for Improvement and drew inspiration from their contact with the Scottish Enlightenment. However, Improvement was not a simple process and landowners did not manage to re-order the material environment and routine practice entirely according to their will. The populations of Kintyre and Kilfinan did not simply and uniformly accept or promote Improvement. Returning to the archaeology of Improvement in these areas we find significant variation in the adoption of Improved domestic space in particular.

Enclosure and the dispersal of settlement were advanced in Kintyre by the mid-nineteenth century, as were other Improved practices within the farming landscape, like draining, the use of Improved farm machinery, and the use of lime to Improve the fields. External to the home, then, Improvement was widely accepted. Within the home, however, the story is much more complicated. Some people did live in Improved houses, like the courtyard and linear farmsteads, but some maintained central hearths and lived in barely partitioned spaces.

This dual material response to Improvement, where Improvement was simultaneously accepted and rejected, is particularly significant if we consider its implications for routine practice. The dispersal of settlement and advancement of enclosure would have facilitated the deconstruction of pre-existing community ties. This process would have been furthered by the adoption of Improved farm machinery, which required fewer people and draught livestock to operate. In this situation, routine experience of the landscape would have cultivated a sense of the individual more than a sense of community. Within the house, by contrast, routine practice within an unImproved space would have produced a sense of family rather than a sense of the individual.

Improved material culture and routine practice, therefore, were variably accepted in Kintyre. This variation is not random and both acceptance and rejection of Improvement relate in this case to the same underlying concern of continued occupancy. Occupancy is defined here as the continued residence upon a portion of land and use of its resources. As seen above, this was considered a hereditary right prior to Improvement.

From the mid-eighteenth century at least, political loyalty to the House of Argyll and the Hanoverian succession was an explicit condition of leases on the Argyll Estates. Continued occupancy in Kintyre, under these conditions, would require the tenant or sub-tenant to express their disposal to Argyll's interest. Considering the links drawn in



Scottish Enlightenment thought between economy, social institutions like law, the commercial age and progress, the acceptance and promotion of an Improved landscape would be an overt expression of solidarity with the landlord's interest. At the scale of landscape, occupancy seems to have been a priority for most people over the maintenance of community. In this sense, Improvement acted to undermine one previously structured relationship, that of community. However, at the same time it was accepted because it maintained another previously structured relationship, that of the farmer and their family to the land.

This same concern with occupancy informed peoples' response to Improvement within the home. Some people maintained pre-Improvement domestic space, with its lack of partitions and central hearth. This would have continued to make hereditary claims to a portion of land knowable. Others accepted Improved domestic space, defined by subdivision and by the decrease in emphasis on the hearth as a focus, to varying degrees. The dwellings of courtyard farmsteads were highly subdivided and had many individual fireplaces. Activities within the house were highly segregated. The linear range farmsteads were also subdivided, with multiple hearths, but to a lesser extent. They may have had sleeping quarters in a loft and a spence for entertaining, but much activity concentrated in the single space of the kitchen.

This variation in the acceptance of Improved domestic space becomes meaningful when we consider the tenurial position of the occupants of these different houses with Improvement. Improvement in Kintyre was accompanied by the threefold division of the tenantry into the small tenantry, the middling farmer, and the gentleman (substantial/large) farmer, and the growth of a rural proletariat employed in wage labour. Contemporary observers equated the adoption of Improved space with tenurial rank. Some drew a distinction between the house of the farmer, which was described as comfortable (read Improved), and that of the wage labourer or cottager (smallholder), which was unpartitioned and unImproved. This distinction was seen to have arisen from the late eighteenth century and, so, can confidently be related to Improvement. The linear farmstead was also associated at the time of its currency with a better class of tenant.

In general, then, Improved space was associated by contemporaries with the upper and middle ranks of the tenantry. It may be that the courtyard farmstead is to be associated with the large tenant/gentleman farmer, the linear farmstead with the middling tenant, and



the unImproved house with the lower tenants and the landless, although it may not always be possible to maintain such rigid distinctions. In this case, acceptance of Improved domestic space can be related to the implications of Improvement for occupancy. Improved domestic space was common in the houses of the large tenant, whose occupancy was most secure in that they held their land by a long lease and were better off financially and, thus, less prone to insolvency. The middling farmer also lived in an Improved house, though with a less distinct subdivision of space. The small tenant, prone to insolvency in this period and thus insecure in their occupancy, less commonly inhabited an Improved house. The labourer, employed year by year by the tenant, held little or no land with Improvement and insecure employment. They maintained the central hearth and lived in unpartitioned dwellings, even if these were arranged in Improved ranges.

Where Improvement meant secure occupancy of a holding, such as for the large and perhaps middling tenant, Improved domestic space was more readily accepted. The occupants of the house benefited in terms of occupancy under the lease system and adopted and promoted the routine conditions that cultivated a sense of the individual and made the lease and private property knowable. Those dispossessed by Improvement, or whose holdings were insecure, continued to live in routine conditions that made hereditary claims to the land knowable. They resisted Improvement of the home in order to resist the erosion of their right to occupancy. The maintenance of unImproved space allowed the maintenance of an alternative claim to the land, based in concepts of hereditary tenure rather than in the legal, lease system.

Improvement in Kintyre was variously accepted or rejected, and sometimes both by the same people, primarily with reference to occupancy. The actions of various groups in responding to Improvement according to this concern also had the unintended consequence of strengthening the distinctions between them. Contemporaries could now define different tenorial groups by their distinct forms of dwelling.

Improvement in Kilfinan seems to have involved different changes in social structure in comparison to Kintyre. Linear farmsteads with spences are largely absent and there emerged, rather, a widespread pattern of large farms, with their courtyard farmsteads and labourers' dwellings. This suggests that the middling rank of tenant was confined to Kintyre, for reasons unknown.

In common with Kintyre, the large tenants of Kilfinan adopted Improved domestic



space. The response of the labourers is less clear than for Kintyre. However, in some cases at least, nucleated settlements do seem to have been maintained, housing the labourers servicing the large farms. It may be that such settlements were maintained in such a way as to produce some sense of community. However, this will remain unclear until the routine activities taking place in such settlements can be examined. If community was more important in Kilfinan than in Kintyre this will have to be explained. It can only be suggested that subtle differences in the pre-Improvement routine structuring of society in these two areas might have provided different structural backgrounds from which people acted in response to Improvement.

## **Archaeologies of capitalism and conceptions of capitalist society**

The complex histories of Improvement followed in this thesis demonstrate the necessity of considering existing social structure and contingent action in specific historical situations in understanding capitalism and capitalist society.

Improvement, and the introduction of capitalism to the study areas, was instigated and assessed by different groups and individuals with reference to prior history. The House of Argyll initiated Improvement in an attempt to resolve the contradiction between *duthchas* and *oighreachd* in their favour. This social contradiction had a long history, was specific to the west Highlands, and was potentially and actually conflictual. Improvement, in this instance, was part of a longer-term project of civilising, but part that gained its specific form through the involvement of the House of Argyll in the Scottish Enlightenment. This connection to the Enlightenment was itself part of a longer-term history of involvement in Lowland society and culture.

The landowners of Kilfinan likewise came to Improvement with a prior history, as did their estates, and in contingent circumstances. Most were connected to the Middle Class. Some, like the Lamonts had been involved in mercantile activity for several centuries, and perhaps placed greater emphasis on such activity after the Civil Wars. Others were professionals. The Middle Class only began to cohere as a group with a distinct culture from the late eighteenth century and, so, longstanding economic activities took on new social meaning from that time. A contradiction arose between membership of



the new Middle Class and ownership of estates whose prior history meant they were in a backward organisational state, in the terms of the Enlightenment. Improvement in this instance was a strategy in the continuance of pre-existing mercantile, professional, and social lives under the new conditions of emergent Middle Class culture.

The response of tenants and others to Improvement was structured by a concern for occupancy and contingent upon the ramifications of Improvement for that concern. In Kilfinan, other pre-existing concerns, like community, may have played a role in structuring response to Improvement. The contingent nature of social action is particularly clear in the case of the farming population of the study areas. Occupancy was an existing concern at the time of Improvement, but particular expressions of the *right* to occupancy changed in relation to a particular individual or groups' experience of Improvement. Some Improved and accepted the lease system as the appropriate, legitimate basis for occupancy. Others rejected Improvement and maintained the conditions under which established, hereditary claims to occupancy could continue. In many instances Improvement was neither simply rejected nor accepted, but more ambiguously received. That is, it was accepted or rejected in different environments, such as the wider landscape or the home, with reference to the same underlying concern of occupancy.

Following from this, specific prior histories and particular contingent circumstances produced different histories of capitalism. It is essential that we consider variation as a key concern in writing histories of capitalism, where capitalism (as an ideology of the individual made knowable in routine practice) is distinguishable from capitalist society (where capitalism is widespread, but not necessarily universal).

Consideration of variation in such a situation will include consideration of regional variation. The comparison between society with Improvement in Kintyre and in Kilfinan demonstrates that even in two small and geographically adjacent areas there is significant variation in the history of capitalism and capitalist society. It becomes even more important, then, that we consider the significance of regional variation when our analysis is extended to Scotland as a whole, beyond to Britain, and out to include the global spread of capitalism.

Just as importantly, our consideration of variation has to include an understanding of the penetration of capitalism within these different regions, and even an understanding of the differential penetration of capitalism into the various aspects of one person's life. As



seen with the case studies, capitalism did not simply spread and was not simply accepted or rejected. Rather, response was potentially ambiguous. As such, the social relations of capitalism should not be considered the sole social relations operative in capitalist society and, further, the configuration of capitalism with other forms of social relationship will vary not only from place to place and time to time, but even within the daily routine of one person. For some, social relations structured in presence continued to be of fundamental importance, especially within the home.

The major conclusion of this thesis in relation to histories of capitalism is that it is vital to maintain a distinction between capitalism and capitalist society and that, in establishing this analytical distinction, histories of capitalism become a consideration of the interplay of capitalism with other forms of social relations in capitalist societies. Thinking about capitalist society in terms of the widespread, but not universal, existence of capitalism allows us to recognise alternative forms of social relationship within such capitalist societies.

In writing an archaeology of capitalism, we should not simply be content to map the emergence or spread of the Georgian Order, or some such material expression of the individual, regardless of whether we conceive of this as a cultural package (e.g. Deetz 1996) or the culmination of many distinct genealogies (Johnson 1996). Rather, we should consider the routine conditions of existence in emergent and established capitalist societies and how those conditions render ideologies of the individual knowable or not. Histories of capitalist societies written in this way will be complex in that capitalism will not be considered the sole form of social relations. In having the material environment and routine practice as a primary concern, archaeology has an invaluable contribution to make to our understanding of capitalist societies in exploring their variable constitution.



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