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An interdisciplinary study of the ecclesiastical centre of Abernethy before the early thirteenth century

Victoria Anne McCormack

MLitt

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School of Celtic & Gaelic
College of Arts
University of Glasgow

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Abstract:

Many prominent medieval sites in Scotland, such as St Andrews and Iona, have been researched, excavated, and assessed by scholars over the centuries, and rightfully so with an impressive assemblage of stones and fortifications and textual evidence. This leads to the question: what was Abernethy? Similarly, to St Andrews and Iona, Abernethy was a prominent site that has a foundation legend, a stone assemblage, a rare round tower, and an abundance of charter evidence, yet has been often overlooked by scholars. What happened to Abernethy's prominence? In the quest to further our understanding of what was Abernethy before the thirteenth century and when did it change, the methodology will consist of interdisciplinary research based on chronological order from the earliest source to the latest source. To begin, the foundation legend of Abernethy will be addressed, followed by archaeology, and finishing with the charter material. To understand the assemblage, each stone will be assessed with basic information such as dating, dimensions, and descriptions, followed by a deeper analysis of what the overall assemblage could indicate for Abernethy's status and prominence. Following the archaeology chapter is the charter evidence, where certain charters containing crucial moments concerning the abbacy, the land, and the church of Abernethy's involvement with the wider Church will be presented with a summary of the text and a description of the charter, following an overall analysis to help further our understanding of what Abernethy was like towards the end of the thirteenth century. The loss of prominence could be related to the Treaty of Abernethy or attributed to the continuous loss of lands from the abs of Abernethy. Overall, the textual and archaeological evidence supporting the prominence of Abernethy before the thirteenth century is characterised by high-quality carvings and wealthy patronage with a valuable centre for learning, while providing a glimpse of how the ecclesiastical establishment of Abernethy viewed itself.

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Introduction

Although there is scarce information on the church before the eleventh century,[1] it is apparent when looking into the different facets of textual and physical evidence that Abernethy played a continual role in the development of the medieval church of Scotland. Today, Abernethy is a small village situated in Perth and Kinross, close to the River Tay with St Madoes on the other side. Abernethy has a local museum containing medieval sculpture and sits below a road connecting to the remarkably preserved medieval round tower. Though the village today displays remnants from its medieval past, the contemporary evidence surrounding Abernethy's prominence suggests a rich site over centuries, from the production of various artefacts, monuments, and landscapes to the creation of a miraculous narrative. Similarly to St Andrews and Iona, Abernethy was a prominent site that has a foundation legend, a stone assemblage, a rare round tower, and an abundance of late-medieval charter evidence, yet has often been overlooked by scholars. What was Abernethy in the medieval period, and what happened to it? After the thirteenth century, the church of Abernethy ceases to hold influence amongst its various relationships with other establishments, ceases to produce high-quality art, and ceases to be mentioned so frequently in the charter evidence. How did a once-influential site lose its prominence? This question will be addressed throughout the investigation by methods of interdisciplinary research, involving an analysis of the foundation legend, archaeology, and charter material.

The foundation legend is a distinctive source which recounts the origin of an ecclesiastical institution. Typically, these narratives are older in date than the compilation in which they are found. In most of these works, the narratives involve a king, a conflict the

[1] Driscoll, S.T. (2011) 'Pictish archaeology: persistent problems and structural solutions' in Driscoll, S.T., Geddes, J. and Hall, M.A. (eds.) *Pictish Progress: New Studies on Northern Britain in the Early Middle Ages*. Series: The Northern World (50). Brill: Leiden, The Netherlands, p. 270.

king has, a visitation from an ecclesiastical figure, the blessing of a saint and the dedication of that saint to a church. The production of such a document typically implies a site of learning and can show us how the ecclesiastical community viewed themselves. In this case, the foundation legend reveals how the ecclesiastical community of Abernethy viewed themselves in connection to Ireland and Pictish royalty. Therefore, the foundation legend will be assessed first to provide a basis for Abernethy's reputation as a site which produced innovative work in both the arts and the church. Additionally, it will be compared to the well-known St Andrews foundation legend.

The archaeological evidence allows us to delve into history by the discovery and analysis of various types of artefacts, architecture, sites, and cultural landscapes. Employing archaeology can help to either confirm, deny, or question the textual sources. Therefore, when researching medieval topics, archaeology plays an imperative role when addressing historical questions, as the textual evidence is often limited. In general, the sculptural trends of Abernethy represent different facets of early religious practices, from the iron age and beyond the later medieval period. Specifically, the presence of the round tower in Abernethy not only signifies a rare connection with Ireland but also implies the ecclesiastical establishment had the resources to produce such a monument. This broad spectrum of worship and artistry further emphasises the importance Abernethy had proceeding and extending the medieval period. To understand the sculptural assemblage, each stone will be assessed with basic information such as dating, dimensions, and descriptions based on Edwina Proudfoot's catalogue,[2] followed by a deeper analysis of the overall assemblage, the round tower, and geographical proximity in comparison to other sites.

[2] E. W. Proudfoot, 'Abernethy and Mugdrum: towards reassessment', in Henry, D., *The worm, the germ and the thorn: Pictish and related studies presented to Isabel Henderson.* (Balgavies: Pinkfoot Press, 1997).

For the charter evidence, access to the People of Medieval Scotland Database is essential. The database provides all information about every individual involved in actions in documents relating to Scotland in the later medieval period, 'written between the death of Malcolm III on 13 November 1093 and Robert I's parliament at Cambuskenneth on 6 November 1314'.[3] The database contains charters covering many different transactions such as establishing churches, granting land, transfer of property, as well as particular rights, privileges, and various disputes. The charter evidence should give insight as to how the ecclesiastical community of Abernethy functioned, including the social and political relationships the individuals associated with the church had with other establishments. Because the goal is to find out what Abernethy was before the thirteenth century, the several charters documented before this period are vital for forming an understanding as to why the church lost its prominence.

Although there are a few desired outcomes of this research, the goal is to integrate the various types of evidence into a bigger picture to understand what happened to Abernethy. This research project will attempt to emphasise the importance of Abernethy's role in early medieval Scotland's politics through interdisciplinary research concerning contemporary sources, both textual and archaeological. From this interdisciplinary perspective, the research will also attempt to place Abernethy in the context of wider society and geography with the help of place-name evidence. Furthermore, it is expected that the integration of various source materials will reveal more context surrounding the geographical and personal relationships in which the communities of Abernethy were involved. Therefore, using these various strands of evidence will be fruitful when addressing historical questions.

[3] Beam, Amanda, Bradley, John, Broun, Dauvit, Davies, John R., Hammond, Matthew, Jakeman, Neil, Pasin, Michele and Taylor, Alice (with others), *People of Medieval Scotland: 1093–1371* (Glasgow and London, 2019), <www.poms.ac.uk> [online].

Chapter 1: Foundation Legend

Introduction:

In the quest to uncover what Abernethy was and what happened to it before the thirteenth century, the foundation legend will be explored as this is where the prominence of Abernethy can initially be traced. The foundation legend is a remarkable source that emphasises Abernethy's ecclesiastical importance. It was recorded in the Pictish king-list, the sole surviving text written by the Picts themselves. The list was written with Pictish orthography and includes over sixty Pictish kings with reign lengths. There are two main versions of the king-list,[4] with one version recorded in a fourteenth century codex called the Poppleton MS and the other version written in Irish texts, specifically an eleventh century translation called *Lebor Bretnach*. Because there are two versions of the Pictish king-list, there are two versions of the foundation legend: a longer version in the Poppleton MS and a shorter version in *Lebor Bretnach*. When assessing medieval Scottish sources, foundation legends are not very common, so it is fortunate Abernethy has one. To begin an assessment of the foundation legend, both versions of the text will be investigated followed by an evaluation of the similarities and differences between the two versions. Then, comparisons will be drawn from other valuable texts to provide further clarification of Abernethy's role amongst the wider Church, including the St Andrews foundation legend and the Loch Leven property records. This assessment will be made in an attempt to obtain a greater understanding of Abernethy's position as an influential Pictish ecclesiastical centre.

As mentioned, the Poppleton MS is a codex that contains a somewhat arbitrary selection of works, including texts from Paulus Orosius, Gerard of Wales, and Geoffrey of

[4] Marjorie O. Anderson, 'The Lists of the Kings: II. Kings of the Picts', *The Scottish Historical Review*, *29.107* (1950), pp. 13 – 22.

Monmouth.[5] More importantly, the Poppleton MS contains a series of documents about medieval Scottish history.[6] The Poppleton collection begins with a pseudo-historical Pictish origin story and contains various king-lists and genealogies, and finishes with an account of the foundation legend of St Andrews. In this list, the foundation legend of Abernethy occurs in the middle of the record under the reign of Nechtan son of Eirp.[7] It is worthy of note that Nechtan son of Eirp is the only king in the Pictish king-list to have a lengthy narrative attached to his reign. The text presents the following:

> Nechtan Morbet, Erip's son, reigned for twenty-four years. In the third year of his reign, Dairlugdach, abbess of Kildare, came from Ireland to Britain, in exile for Christ. In the second year of her arrival, N[echtan] offered up Abernethy to God and St B[rigid], in presence of Dairlugdach, who sang Alleluia over this offering. So, N[echtan] the Great, Eirp's son, the king of all the provinces of the Picts, offered to St B[rigid], to the day of judgment, Abernethy, with its territories, which are situated from the stone in Apurfeirt to the stone beside Ceirfuill, that is, Lethfoss, and thence upwards to Athan.
>
> Now the cause of the offering was this. N[echtan], when his brother Drust expelled him to Ireland, begged St B[rigid] to beseech God for him. And she prayed for him, and said: "If thou

[5] Edward J. Cowen, 'The Scottish Chronicle in the Poppleton Manuscript', *The Innes Review,* 32:1, 3-21 (1981), p. 4.
[6] Loc. cit.
[7] Nechtan son of Eirp is the only king with a lengthy narrative in either king lists.

> reach thy country, the Lord will have pity upon thee. Thou shalt possess in peace the kingdom of the Picts."[8]

The story describes the long-reigning king Nechtan son of Eirp having consecrated Abernethy to God and dedicated it to Saint Brigid of Kildare. This was done after a visit from Darlugdach, the abbess of Kildare.[9] The following section in the narrative describes Nechtan son of Eirp as king of all the Pictish provinces, having bestowed this in dedication to Saint Brigid.[10] This dedication stems from an event in which Nechtan was exiled by his brother Drust, wherein he sought Saint Brigid in Ireland and 'begged Saint Brigid to beseech God for him'.[11] She informed him that if he were to return to his homeland, the Lord would take pity so Nechtan would take over in peace.[12] Because of this great gift, Nechtan son of Eirp not only offered Abernethy to Saint Brigid but also its territories, which are marked by stones and listed as *Apurfeirt*, *Ceirfuill,* and onto the high ground as far as *Athan*.[13]

The foundation legend in the *Lebor Bretnach* is shorter than the text in the Poppleton MS and includes the following main themes of the narrative: the visit from Darlugdach, the consecration of Abernethy to God, and the dedication to Saint Brigid of Kildare.[14] The *Lebor Bretnach* is an eleventh century translation and a summarised compilation based mainly on the *Historia Brittonum* attributed to Nennius, focused on matters of the ancient history of Britain.[15] It has been suggested that the 'Nennian' recension is the earliest traceable text of the longer Pictish king-list, which has been proposed by Dauvit Broun to date to the reign of

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[8] For original Latin text see Marjorie O. Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland,* 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1980), p. 247. For the translation, see Alan O. Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History*, (Edinburgh, 1922), I, pp. cxx–cxxi.
[9] Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History,* p. 247.
[10] Loc. cit.
[11] Loc. cit.
[12] Loc. cit.
[13] Loc. cit.
[14] *The Irish version of the Historia Britonum of Nennius,* 'CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts' (2016). < https://celt.ucc.ie//published/T100028/index.html> [retrieved 25 February 2021], p. 162.
[15] Loc. cit.

Caustantín mac Cinaeda (862-876/7).[16] Interestingly, the version of the foundation legend in the Poppleton MS ends before the reign of Cináed mac Ailpin.[17] Furthermore, this version of the list contains over forty names in the beginning not recorded in *Lebor Bretnach*.[18] The main difference between the two versions however is the additional mention of territories and their respective place-names listed in the Poppleton MS. The Abernethy foundation legend is how the ecclesiastical establishment viewed its status among the wider Church, and the overall 'adoption of Pictish power centres may signify a degree of continuity or a desire to associate with the Pictish past and gain authority'.[19]

Dating and provenance:

The dating and provenance of the foundation legend have been speculated by scholars due to the appearance of Abernethy in the text. Although the story is set in the sixth century, it was recorded later, sometime between the establishment of the church of Abernethy and the ninth century.[20] Furthermore, the first distinct section found in both versions of the legend, describing the consecration of Abernethy and the dedication of Saint Brigid, has been suggested to develop around 880AD.[21] Additionally, the second distinct section featuring local knowledge of Abernethy is only found in the Poppleton MS version. Because the Poppleton MS contains the later version of the foundation legend with intimate local knowledge, it is more than likely the text was edited and expanded in Abernethy. This perspective is reinforced in an article by Thomas Clancy, where an analysis of the *Lebor Bretnach* correlates to the text

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[16] Dauvit Broun, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain: From the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 76–8
[17] Cowen, 'The Scottish Chronicle in the Poppleton Manuscript', p. 3.
[18] Anderson, 'The Lists of the Kings: II. Kings of the Picts', pp. 13 – 22.
[19] Meggen Gondek, 'Investing in sculpture: Power in early historic Scotland'. *Medieval Archaeology*, 50 (2006), p. 130.
[20] Simon Taylor, 'The Abernethy Foundation Account & its Place-Names', *History Scotland,* 5.4 (July/August 2005), p. 14.
[21] Ibid, p. 15.

originating in Abernethy.[22] Specific points used for the argument included highlighting the clerical individuals ascribed to Abernethy, context clues for the author being based in Scotland, property records, and interpolation.[23] For example, the dedication to Saint Brigid in the foundation legend shows that Abernethy was not under Columban influence unlike many other Scottish churches at the time,[24] distinguishing Abernethy from a wider Church community generally influenced by Columba.

Ostensibly, the research also reveals chronological issues between reign dates and St Brigid's timeline, as the reign lengths suggested in the king list would place the foundation legend before the time of St. Brigid. Interestingly, the foundation legend presents their founder Nechtan son of Eirp as 'king of all the provinces of the Picts',[25] effectively placing Abernethy highly within the Pictish church. This idea is supported in the king-list chronology since the foundation of Abernethy takes place before other prominent churches, such as St Andrews. Furthermore, there is a possibility the first forty kings or so were added by the scribes responsible for the Abernethy foundation legend, creating the image of Pictland as a single kingdom from Fife to Caithness.[26] Therefore, the ecclesiastical establishment of Abernethy was engaged in redefining the kingdom during the late ninth century. Abernethy's elaborate appearance in the Pictish king-list suggests the scribe could have written the story in Abernethy, or at least have provenance within Northern Britain. Further indication to support Abernethy as the place of provenance for production of the text can be uncovered in the place-name evidence found in the longer version of the foundation legend.

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[22] Thomas Owen Clancy, 'Scotland, the 'Nennian' recension of *Historia Brittonum*, and the *Lebor Bretnach*', in Simon Taylor (ed.), *Kings, clerics and chronicles in Scotland, 500–1297: essays in honour of Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson on the occasion of her ninetieth birthday*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p. 97.
[23] Ibid, p. 102.
[24] Alex Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba, 789-1070.* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 316.
[25] Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History*, pp. cxx–cxxi.
[26] Broun, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain: From the Picts to Alexander*, pp. 76–8.

Place-name evidence:

Place-name evidence is a constant companion when researching medieval Scottish topics and has proven essential when closing the gaps between archaeological and historical evidence. When it comes to the Abernethy foundation legend, we are fortunate to have place-names in the text. The second section of the foundation legend lists stones in *Apurfeirt*, *Ceirfuill,* and *Athan* as boundary markers for the territory of Abernethy comprising the dedication to Saint Brigid.[27] Simon Taylor has used place-name evidence to suggest *Apurfeirt* as Aberargie and *Ceirfuill* as Carpow.[28] Aberargie could have formed the north-western limit to this offering and Carpow formed the eastern limit. The stone 'near to Ceirfuill' could be the monumental cross stone in Mugdrum, located only about a two-mile distance away from Carpow. The Mugdrum Cross, standing over three meters tall, is a clear example of investment and quality sculpture. The stone contains decorative panels with key patterns, vine scroll, and interlace carved in relief, as well as hunting imagery of dogs and deer, horsemen, and other creatures.[29] It should be mentioned that the area is home to an early medieval Pictish cross slab fragment eventually found in Carpow and now housed at Mugdrum, and comparably to the sculpture found in Abernethy, the fragment was cut down and repurposed.[30] Overall, the local knowledge demonstrated in the second section points to Abernethy as the place of production for the text, and demonstrates the importance of interdisciplinary research, since the place-names came from historical text and are supplemented by the remaining archaeology of the site.

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[27] Loc. cit.
[28] Taylor, 'The Abernethy foundation account & its place-names', p. 15.
[29] E. W. Proudfoot, 'Abernethy and Mugdrum: towards reassessment', in Henry, D., *The worm, the germ and the thorn: Pictish and related studies presented to Isabel Henderson.* (Balgavies: Pinkfoot Press, 1997), pp. 55-56.
[30] Canmore. 'Carpow Early Medieval (Cross-Slab)' (2016). <https://canmore.org.uk/site/259816/carpow> [accessed 27 February 2021].

St Andrews foundation legend:

To further establish Abernethy's status amongst the wider Church community, a comparison to the St Andrews foundation legend is valuable. Foundation legends are rare and provide an uncommon glimpse into the contemporary status of a place and people. Typically, the narratives involve a king who either succeeds in battle or succession by a miraculous encounter with an ecclesiastical figure, and that king offers their church and extended territory to the ecclesiastical figure's respective saint. Because of its rarity, a foundation legend is highly valuable as a source that gives researchers a unique understanding of the politics surrounding the church and state for the period it was compiled in. Therefore, a comparison between the St Andrews foundation legend and the Abernethy foundation legend is essential because they share several key features. These features include key characters such as a Pictish king, an ecclesiastical figure, and a saint, geographical proximity, similar word structure, a specific territory of the church marked by stones, and they have more than one version. Although both versions of the St Andrews foundation legend are longer and more complex than either of the accounts of Abernethy's foundation, it is clear both sites were great places of learning to record such narratives.

As the most well-known Scottish foundation legend in the medieval period, the St Andrews foundation legend surrounds the story of a Pictish king visited by a saint. In short, the origin legend includes the Pictish king Onuist son of Uurgust, who is visited by Saint Andrew in a dream to inform him that he will aid him to victory in a forthcoming battle.[31] In contrast to an abbess, the St Andrews story in the shorter foundation legend involves a Bishop Regulus, who arrived on the shores of Fife at the Pictish settlement called *Kilrymont*, now St Andrews, where king Óengus mac Fergusa welcomes the bishop who bears the bones of Saint

[31] Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife*, (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2009), III, pp. 564 – 600.

Andrew.[32] Drawing on more comparisons between the texts, Marjorie O. Anderson noted the abbess of Kildare is described as the one, 'who sang Alleluia over that offering' in the Abernethy foundation legend.[33] This structure of prayer is written similarly in the longer St Andrews foundation legend when the 'Bishop Regulus sang the prayer Alleluia so that God might forever protect that place given in alms'.[34]

The boundary offering in the St Andrews foundation legend is physically presented in a similar way to the boundary offering at Abernethy. The St Andrews story records the boundary as 'a sign of royal favour, the holy men [under Bishop Regulus] erected twelve stone crosses at intervals around the circumference of the place', [35] creating stone boundary markers in and around the church. Though there are no recorded place-names in this section of the St Andrews text, the passage is similar to the boundary stones of *Apurfeirt*, *Ceirfuill,* and *Athan* in the Abernethy text. Previous studies in the geopolitics of monumental carvings demonstrate sculptures found within a specific landscape could indicate a land or state affiliation, power, and investment.[36] This is why the 'territories' of Abernethy suggest a rich site amongst the wider Church associations Abernethy could have taken part in. Perhaps the Abernethy foundation legend should be regarded as a property record with all of this considered.

Another point of discussion is the mention of a distinct place-name in the longer version of the St Andrews foundation legend: Naughton. In both versions of the foundation legends, a gift is repeated in the longer version with additional material.[37] This material

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[32] Loc. cit. Interestingly, according to the longer foundation legend of St Andrews there is mention of an operating 'royal nunnery at Kilrymont' which was initially presided over by Mouren, daughter Óengus mac Fergusa.
[33] Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland,* p. 92.
[34] Taylor and Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife*, pp. 564 – 600.
[35] Loc. cit.
[36] Gondek, p. 106.
[37] A. A. M. Duncan, 'The Foundation of St Andrews Cathedral Priory, 1140'. *The Scottish Historical Review 84.217*, (2005), p.6.

describes how king Óengus mac Fergusa gave to the church 'of the holy apostle as a paruchia whatever land [was] between the sea which is called the Firth of Forth, as far as the sea which is called Firth of Tay; and in the adjacent province along with its bounds from Largo, as far as Ceres' with a further grant 'from Ceres as far as Naughton MacIrb, which land is now called Naughton.'[38] The place-name Naughton, originally documented as *Hyhatnachten Machehirb* and meaning a 'ford of Nechtan mac Irb' (i.e., the king in the Abernethy foundation-legend), suggests the area was recognised at a much earlier date than the second version of the St Andrews foundation legend, twelfth century compilation, in which it appears.[39] Furthermore, the territory of the paruchia given to the church by the king is stated as being from the Firth of the Forth to the Firth of the Tay, as far as Naughton. This suggests the ecclesiastical establishments of St Andrews and Abernethy had large paruchiae which covered a lot of ground, and both establishments were equally redefining the church during the late ninth century. Overall, the place-name Naughton was a remarkable finding, as this evidence can undoubtedly be linked to the king Nechtan son of Eirp, serving as a local memory of previous patronage and the role of Pictish kings in that area.

Loch Leven property records:

One of the Loch Leven property records gives insight as to how Abernethy functioned as a centre for learning. The documents are a series of property records, and typically record the transaction of granting lands or possessions. The particular document of interest, recorded between 13 November 1093 and 8 January 1107, describes a ceremony in Abernethy

[38] Taylor and Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife*, pp. 564 – 595.
[39] Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife*, (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2010), VI, pp. 181 – 184.

wherein Ethelred, son of king Malcom III, granted the land of Auchmuir to 'St Serf and [the] Céli Dé of Island of Loch Leven'.[40] The text, translated by Simon Taylor, is as follows:

> Anent the gift of Auchmuir and its liberty Ethelred a man of venerable memory son of Malcolm king of Scotland, abbot of Dunkeld, and moreover the earl of Fife, gave to Almighty God, to St Serf and the Culdees of the Island of Lochleven with the utmost reverence and honour and with all freedom and without exaction and demand of anyone in the world, be they bishop or king /St. Lib., 116/ or earl, Auchmuir with its right bounds and marches. And because that possession was given to him by his parents when he was young, for that reason he has given it with (all the) greater affection and love to God and to St Serf and to the aforesaid men serving God there now and in future. And, Ethelred's two brothers, David and Alexander, confirmed that gift and grant when it was first made, in the presence of many trustworthy men, namely Constantín earl/mormaer of Fife, a most prudent man, and Ness, and Cormac son of Macbethad, and Mael Snechta son of Beólán priests of Abernethy; and Mael Brigde another priest, and Túathal, and Augustine the priest of the Culdees; Berbeadh rector of the schools of Abernethy, and before the crowds of the whole community of Abernethy living there at that time, and before Almighty God and all his saints. And there was given fully and comprehensively by all the priests, clerics and laymen, the curse of Almighty God and of the Blessed

[40] PoMS, Document 3/1/1 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/1443/; accessed 20 July 2021).

> Virgin Mary and of all the saints, that the lord God might give him into destruction and perdition and (in) all those who might invalidate and revoke and diminish the alms of Auchmuir, and all the people answered, 'Let it be, amen'.[41]

To clarify, the relevant witnesses with their titles of the ceremony are listed as follows:

- Augustine, priest of Céli Dé of Abernethy
- Berbeadh, rector of the schools of Abernethy
- Cormac, son of Macbeth, priest of Abernethy
- Máel Brigte, priest
- Máel Snechta, son of Beollan, priest of Abernethy

This list of witnesses presents two implications: a rector of schools gives Abernethy an unquestionably important status as a place for learning and the various priests of Abernethy indicate that, at least until this point, the site had already been a significant ecclesiastical centre.[42] This particular property record presents another connection between Abernethy and St Andrews in addition to the foundation legends since some of these names appear in another document.[43]

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[41] Simon Taylor, with Peter McNiven and Eila Williamson, *The Place-Names of Kinross-shire* (Donington, 2017), pp. 552 - 637.

[42] For more information, refer to Clancy, 'Scotland, the 'Nennian' recension of *Historia Brittonum*, and the *Lebor Bretnach*'.

[43] Thomas Clancy has argued Sawley received information from Scottish centres. Since both Abernethy and St Andrews were great centres for learning, the Sawley material is speculated to have been produced in either location. Curiously, some of the extra material is the Pictish king-list, increasing the case for Abernethy's provenance. It is after this time however that Abernethy loses its place in the ecclesiastical hierarchy as the diocesan structure grows, unlike other influential churches such as Brechin and St Andrews, Abernethy did not develop a bishopric. This point will be useful regarding the to-be-discussed charter evidence, as the records show Abernethy functioned under the bishop of Dunblane. See Clancy, 'Scotland, the 'Nennian' recension of *Historia Brittonum*, and the *Lebor Bretnach*'.

Discussion:

When discussing medieval textual evidence, it is essential to acknowledge common issues when using them as primary sources. In the context of Abernethy's early sources, some of these problems include chronological issues and the presence of alternative information. For example, some later texts record different versions of the foundation legend, particularly relating to the people involved. The later texts often confuse which Pictish king was responsible for the foundation of Abernethy, such as in Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* where Abernethy is regarded as a Pictish 'capital' founded by king Gartnait son of Domelch in the late sixth century.[44] Chronologically, Gartnait son of Domelch could fit the sequence of events in the foundation legend because Saint Brigid's death is recorded around the 520s.[45] This contrasts with Nechtan son of Eirp's earlier reign between 456 and 480. There is further speculation that the foundation of Abernethy took place during the reign of a later Pictish king called Nechtan grandson of Uerb, who was king between 595 to around 616.[46] Due to a similar first name, this could be a possibility since primary sources often contain scribal errors when copying from one source to another. Regardless of the dating inaccuracies, primary sources such as the foundation legend and property records offer a helpful glimpse as to how the ecclesiastical establishment of Abernethy functioned, and what kind of structures were present at the site, such as a centre for education. Because the origin legend was very likely written in Abernethy, the text provides a glimpse of how the ecclesiastical community of Abernethy viewed themselves, which demonstrates the site was a valuable centre for learning. The once-influential ecclesiastical status Abernethy held during Pictish times is evident not only in the textual sources but also in the archaeology.

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[44] Walter Bower, *A History Book For Scots: Selections From Scotichronicon*, ed. by D. E. R. Watt (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1998), p. 37.
[45] *Annals of Ulster*, AU 524.2 and AU 526.1 (https://celt.ucc.ie//published/T100001A/index.html; accesses 20 July 2021). Of course, the dating in the annals should be considered with caution, as the *Annals of Ulster* attribute three different birth years to Brigid (AU 439.2, AU 451.1, and AU 456.1).
[46] Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland*, pp. 92 – 93.

Chapter 2: Archaeology

When trying to understand what became of Abernethy, a look at the archaeological evidence is crucial. Interdisciplinarity allows researchers to use multiple fields of research to investigate a topic to its fullest potential and medieval history in particular benefits from using both textual and archaeological evidence. The role of archaeology in interdisciplinary research is the physical remnants of what was contemporarily present, allowing the historical texts to either be confirmed or contradicted. In the case of early medieval Abernethy, the physical evidence is as substantial as the later textual records and therefore can help fill in gaps created by the textual evidence. For example, the foundation legend references a large church or monastic site at Abernethy, although there is currently no archaeological evidence indicating the presence of a monastery. However, Canmore notes the monastery associated with the Céli Dé at Abernethy, which 'was situated on the north side of the churchyard and part of its walls were still standing around 1780'.[47] So, although there is no current archaeological evidence of a monastery at Abernethy, the sculpture assemblage and the round tower provide deeper insight into how ecclesiastical Abernethy functioned.[48] Although the collection of sculpture found in Abernethy is much smaller than the collections found at other major church sites, e.g. Meigle, St Andrews, and St Vigeans, the present sculpture thus far proves to be eclectic as other sites since the designs, shapes, dating, and/or presentation vary from each other. As listed in Edwina Proudfoot's article, the known assemblage includes one Class I Pictish symbol stone and nine pieces of crosses/cross-slabs, specifically five free-

[47] Canmore, 'Abernethy Culdees Monastery' (1996), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/27936/abernethy-culdees-monastery> [accessed 13 September 2021].
[48] At present, the excavations at Castle Law cover an earlier period of history which is not the focus of this investigation and therefore will be omitted. For detailed reference to the Castle Law excavations, see Mairi Helen Davies, *An archaeological analysis of later prehistoric settlement and society in Perthshire and Stirlingshire*, Durham theses, (Durham University, 2006). Available at Durham E-Theses Online: http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2662/.

standing crosses, two cross-slabs and two indeterminate pieces. Five of these stones were discovered in the immediate vicinity of the parish church, either in the churchyard or along School Wynd,[49] whereas seven of the stones were found around the immediate vicinity, often repurposed in cottage walls or alongside roads. Furthermore, in 2012 an additional fragment was found in a garden along School Wynd and will be added lastly to the existing list.[50] Because the sculptural assemblage and the round tower of Abernethy offer different perspectives of the medieval church, they will be discussed separately.

Abernethy's assemblage is representative of the overall Pictish stone sculpture repertoire, demonstrating various trends such as ambiguous Class I symbols and ecclesiastical imagery, as well as an ancient stone and a distinctive round tower. Although there is a notable lack of burial monuments,[51] the surviving sculpture represents a tangible perspective on the historical trends Abernethy experienced, from pre-Christian activity to an established ecclesiastical site. For a clearer understanding of the sculpture at Abernethy, each fragment will be listed based on Edwina Proudfoot's labelling of the monuments and basic information such as dating,[52] dimensions, descriptions, and discovery. Additionally, objects found in or around the churchyard and objects found outside the proximity will be distinguished. This will be followed by a deeper analysis of how the overall assemblage contributes to the question of what Abernethy was.

1. **Abernethy 1**

   Type: Pictish symbol stone ('Class I') (incomplete)

   Date: c. 5th to 7th century

[49] The road at which the round tower, churchyard, and the Museum of Abernethy sit.
[50] Canmore, 'Abernethy, School Wynd' (2016), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/242534/abernethy-school-wynd> [accessed 13 September 2021].
[51] Proudfoot, p. 61.
[52] Dating is taken from CANMORE and will be individually cited.

Dimensions: 838mm high by 559mm wide

Description: The carving consists of an incised crescent and v-rod, a hammer and anvil, and a tuning fork.[53]

Discovery: The stone has been cut down and was originally found underneath the foundations of a house in School Wynd,[54] the street where the stone and tower are situated, had probably been used in an earlier structure, which Proudfoot suggests as part of the monastic enclosure.[55]

Figure 1. Abernethy 1 along the round tower next to the entrance of the churchyard cemetery. Author: Victoria McCormack, 2021.

Current Location: On a modern plinth, against the exterior wall of the round tower, by the entrance to the churchyard.

[53] Ibid, p. 48.
[54] Canmore, 'Abernethy' (2016) <https://canmore.org.uk/site/27924/abernethy> [accessed 2 September 2021].
[55] Proudfoot, p. 48.

2. **Abernethy 2**

Type: Fragment of cross-slab (possibly recumbent)

Date: c. 9th century

Dimensions: 380mm high by 242mm wide and 76mm thick

Description: This small fragment of a much larger monument. The surviving carving consists of three letters of an Ogham inscription and the remnants of a rear horse leg, with perhaps the forehoof of another behind it in procession.[56]

Discovery: First recorded in the churchyard, but traces of mortar on this fragment, cut down for building use, suggest it was previously built into a structure.

Current Location: National Museum of Scotland (NMS IB98)

Figure 2. Image of Abernethy 2, Plate II in Dugald Butler, *The Ancient Church and Parish of Abernethy: A Historical Study with Plates* (British Library: Historical Prints Editions, 2011).

3. **Abernethy 3 (lost)**

Type: Fragment of a cross-slab or cross

Date: c. 9th century

[56] Katherine Forsyth, *The Ogham inscriptions of Scotland: an edited corpus*, Ph.D. thesis, (University of Harvard, 1996), pp. 2 – 10.

Dimensions: 220mm high by 340mm wide

Description: This fragment displays a key pattern carved in relief.[57]

Discovery: The stone was found built into the gable wall of a cottage in Abernethy.

Current Location: Unknown

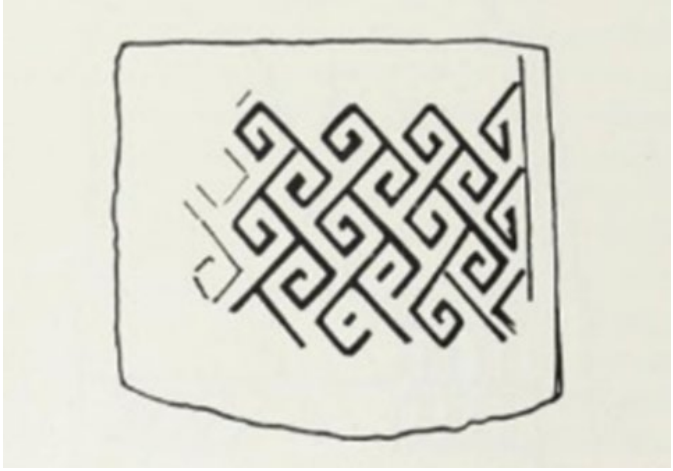

Figure 3. Abernethy 3 as illustrated in Allen and Anderson, *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, p. 310.

4. **Abernethy 4**

Type: Fragment of a cross

Date: c. 9th – 10th century

Dimensions: 590mm high by 381mm wide by 152mm thick

Description: This stone represents a fragment of a large cross, which depicts the lower part of Jesus' Crucifixion, detailed with Longinus and Stephaton on either side bearing a spear and a sponge.[58] Crucifixion depictions are quite rare in Pictish stone sculpture, with a few other examples found in Angus, such as Monifieth and Camuston.[59]

[57] Ibid, p. 49.
[58] George Henderson and Isabel Henderson, *The Art of the Picts: Sculpture and Metalwork in Early Medieval Scotland*, (Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2011) pp. 44 – 46.
[59] John Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson, *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (Balgavies: Pinkfoot Press, 1993), p. 406.

Discovery: It was originally found built into a cottage as a door jamb.[60]

Current Location: National Museum of Scotland (NMS IB255)

Figure 4. Image of Abernethy 4, National Museum of Scotland.

5. **Abernethy 5**

Type: Fragment of cross-shaft (defaced)

Date: c. 9th century

Dimensions: 431mm high by 340mm wide by 152mm thick

Description: This fragment has four faces: the carving on two faces has been removed while one side has a plant scroll with three-berry clusters, and the other side has double-bead interlace.

[60] Proudfoot, pp. 49 – 50.

Discovery: Like Abernethy 18, this stone was discovered built into a wall, 'found re-used in a retaining wall beside the road SW of Abernethy in 1896'.[61]

Current Location: National Museum of Scotland (NMS IB176)

Figure 5. Abernethy 5 as illustrated in Allen and Anderson, *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, p. 312.

[61] Ibid, p. 50.

6. **Abernethy 6**

Figure 6. Abernethy 6 before the stone was damaged, Plate V in Butler, *The Ancient Church and Parish of Abernethy: A Historical Study with Plates*.

Type: Cross-slab, possibly a recumbent stone

Date: c. 9th to 10th century

Dimensions: 660mm high by 482mm wide and 120mm thick

Description: This stone is broken into two pieces and bears an undecorated cross and shaft carved in high relief. There is fire damage on both sides.

Discovery: It was found inside the churchyard porch and could have been used as a recumbent stone.[62] According to a note on Canmore, the stone was dug up and found intact in 1894.[63]

Current Location: Museum of Abernethy

Figure 7. Image of Abernethy 6 in its current condition, from Canmore, 'Abernethy Churchyard Gravestone' (2016).

[62] Loc. cit.
[63] Canmore, 'Abernethy Churchyard Gravestone' (2016) <https://canmore.org.uk/site/27999/abernethy-churchyard-gravestone> [accessed 13 September 2021].

7. **Abernethy 7 (lost)**

Type: Fragment of cross-shaft

Date: c. 9th century

Dimensions: Unknown

Description: This is a very defaced fragment showing traces of high carving, including a large central figure in the middle of a cross with traces of interlace.[64]

Discovery: Unknown

Current Location: Unknown

Figure 8. Image of Abernethy 7, Plate VII in Butler, *The Ancient Church and Parish of Abernethy: A Historical Study with Plates*.

[64] Proudfoot, p. 51.

8. **Abernethy 8**

Type: Fragment of a large upright cross (or cross-slab)

Date: c. 10th century

Dimensions: 394 mm high by 584 mm wide and 253 mm thick

Description: This stone is a very detailed, high-relief fragment of a cross depicting ten figures holding different objects, such as croziers, a harp, scales, and a scourge.[65] The other face is almost completely weathered with traces of interlace. Canmore lists this stone as Abernethy 9 but for consistency, Proudfoot's labelling will be used for all stones.

Discovery: The stone was found in 1957 and built into a window frame of Kinclaven House towards the east of Abernethy.[66]

Current Location: National Museum of Scotland (NMS IB290).

Figure 9. Image of Abernethy 8 as seen in Robert B. K. Stevenson, 'The Inchyra Stone and Some Other Unpublished Early Christian Monuments' *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 92*, (1959) pp. 33 – 55.

[65] Ibid, p. 52.
[66] Canmore, 'Abernethy No. 8', (1996) <https://canmore.org.uk/site/28000/abernethy> [accessed 13 September].

9. **Abernethy 9**

Type: Fragment of cross-slab

Date: c. 10th century

Dimensions: 780mm high by 510mm wide and 190mm thick

Description: The fragment is decorated on both sides, with one side displaying part of a cross shaft while the other side has incised details of key patterns.

Discovery: This stone was originally found at the base wall of a parish church which was demolished in 1801. In 1976, the stone stood behind the church and was moved inside the museum by 1985.[67]

Current Location: Museum of Abernethy.

Figure 10. Images of Abernethy 9 from Canmore, 'Abernethy, Old Church' (2016) <https://canmore.org.uk/site/260084/abernethy-old-church> [accessed 13 September 2021].

[67] Proudfoot, p. 53.

10. **Carpow, Abernethy 10**

Type: Fragment of a cross-slab

Date: c. 9th – 10th century

Dimensions: 736mm high by 457mm wide and 152mm thick

Description: The stone represents the central part of a cross-slab carved in relief of a ringed cross. The surviving side-arm extends the edge of the slab while the space between the ring and armpit has a hole. One side of the cross and the ring are bordered by a 'recessed band with a spiral pattern' while the panel beside the right side of the shaft shows two entwined serpents with a fishtail.[68] The other side of

Figure 11. Images of the Carpow Fragment from Canmore. 'Carpow Early Medieval (Cross-Slab)' (2016). <https://canmore.org.uk/site/259816/carpow> [accessed 27 February 2021].

the cross has a detailed interlace, with a stag with antlers carved in the upper panel and with the upper part of an animal with spiral joints and bared teeth

[68] Ibid, p. 54.

carved in the lower panel.[69] Another side of the stone is incised with the date '1610' which may directly reveal when the stone was repurposed as a lintel.[70]

Discovery: This fragment was discovered at the Old House of Carpow but moved next to the Mugdrum cross for safety from demolition.

Current Location: Mugdrum House (private possession).

Figure 12. Image of the '1610' inscription on the Carpow fragment from Canmore, 'Carpow Early Medieval (Cross-Slab)' (2016). <https://canmore.org.uk/site/259816/carpow> [accessed

11. **Mugdrum cross (Abernethy 11)**

Type: Cross-slab

Date: c. 10th century

Dimensions: 3.36m high by 0.74m width and 0.41m depth

Description: About three miles Northeast of Abernethy sits the Mugdrum cross which stands on a slight rise on the River Tay. The cross has been exposed to harsh weather resulting in major erosion on the west and south faces. Face A consists of four panels with the top panel containing a rider and horse facing left with a strip of interlace separating them from another rider holding a spear and horse in the subsequent panel, followed by the third panel showing two more horsemen riding

[69] Loc. cit.
[70] Canmore. 'Carpow Early Medieval (Cross-Slab)' (2016). <https://canmore.org.uk/site/259816/carpow> [accessed 27 February 2021].

while the fourth panel shows a hunt with deer being attacked by dogs.[71] Face B is also divided into four panels with the top two panels including traces of knotwork and zoomorphic motifs, the third panel consisting of various vine scrolls with bunches of berries in between, and the fourth panel has a diagonal key pattern.

Current Location: In situ at Mugdrum.

Figure 13. Sketches of the Mugdrum Cross, Canmore, 'SC 730093' (1831), <https://canmore.org.uk/collection/730093> [accessed 5 September 2021].

12. **'Abernethy area' (Abernethy 12)**

Type: Fragment of cross-slab

Date: c. 9th – 10th century

Dimensions: 310mm wide by 255mm in height on right and 130mm on the left, 140mm thick

Description: This fragment represents the upper part of a cross-slab with carving on five faces. Face A shows a cross outlined by a roll moulding with remnants of a carved motif at the centre of the crosshead. Face B is carved with a panel outlined by a roll moulding containing a key pattern while face C shows a panel of interlace.

[71] Proudfoot, pp. 56 – 57.

Face D also has a panel of key patterns while face E has a panel of two interlaced double-stranded cords.[72]

Discovery: Find circumstances have not been divulged however a note from the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* in the mid-1950s suggests the 'fragment of 10th century sculptured cross, found at Abernethy, Perthshire' was purchased for the Museum.[73]

Current Location: Museum of Abernethy.

13. **'Abernethy Glen' (Abernethy 18)**

Type: Fragment

Date: c. 2nd – 5th centuries

Dimensions: 230mm high by 555mm long and 370mm wide

Description: This stone is unique as it bears Bronze Age cups with Iron Age carvings of four faces. Additionally, the multi-faced stone supports the notion that there may have been a shrine in the area.[74] The seven-faceted piece of sandstone, peculiar as it consists of four faces, whereas other similar stones found in Celtic sculpture typically contain three faces, representing *tricephalos*.[75] Professor Katherine Forsyth has noted the piece likely had a cult function, but since it was found in a secondary location it is difficult to determine. Although there are comparisons for the number of faces on the stone, there are no current examples similar in structure, with two faces on one side and one face on two other sides.[76]

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[72] Ibid, pp. 58 – 59.
[73] 'Donations to and purchases for the Museum', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 90,* (1957), p. 264.
[74] Ibid, p. 61.
[75] Davies, p. 291. For more information on the tricephalos sculpture found in Netherton, Lanarkshire, see Anne Ross, 'A Pagan Celtic Tricephalos from Netherton, Lanarkshire' in *Glasgow Archaeological Journal, 3,* (1974), pp. 26 – 33.
[76] Proudfoot, p. 61.

Discovery: Originally found in a rubble garden wall in Glenfoot along an old path near Ballo, from the Gaelic 'bealach' meaning 'routeway'.[77]

Current Location: Unknown.

14. **School Wynd Fragment**

Type: Fragment

Date: 10th century

Dimensions: 260 mm high by 210mm wide and 170mm in depth

Description: This fragment bears a diagonal key pattern carved in relief. It is overall very worn and weathered with a large hollow.

Discovery: As mentioned, this fragment was found along School Wynd in a garden in 2012, in the 'in the immediate vicinity of the parish church'.[78]

Current Location: Abernethy Museum Trust.

Figure 14. Image of the School Wynd fragment, Canmore, 'Abernethy' (2016) <https://canmore.org.uk/site/27924/abernethy> [accessed 2 September 2021].

[77] Loc. cit.
[78] Canmore, 'Abernethy, School Wynd' (2016).

Discussion:

Abernethy's sculptural assemblage displays an array of sculptural trends across Northern Britain. Although the evidence is generally fragmented, the stones represent high-quality carvings and investment given to the site over an extended period. Most of these stones are very weathered and defaced due to repurposing, so the surviving imagery is fortunate. Despite design and theme variations within Abernethy's sculptural assemblage, some of the stones have designs and themes that fit into a wider Insular aesthetic, with similarities to sculpture and manuscripts found in notable locations with scriptoriums and monasteries such as Lindisfarne, St. Andrews, and Iona. For example, the fragment of Abernethy Glen (11 – 17) shares key patterns with Iona crosses and the Lindisfarne gospels,[79] while Abernethy 5 shares interlace and plant scroll ornamentation comparable to stones found in Meigle and St. Andrews, and shares similarity to Abernethy 13.[80] Another example is Abernethy 4, the cross fragment depicting Jesus with trousers cut above the knee, with stocky legs and his feet spread out, which shares iconography and style choices akin to Muiredach's Cross in Monasterboice and the Cross of Scriptures in Clonmacnoise.[81] In addition, the Carpow cross fragment (Abernethy 10) shares similar zoomorphic designs found on Meigle 4.[82] Furthermore, Abernethy 2 has an ogham inscription with the rear leg of a Pictish horse,[83] which is particularly notable.

Ogham inscriptions are predominantly found in Ireland but have also been found in Pictish areas of Northern Britain, with the largest concentration found in Aberdeenshire. The language of Ogham is typically Primitive Irish except for a few fragmented stones which

[79] Iain Bain, *Celtic Key Patterns* (Sterling Publishing, 1994), p. 75.
[80] Proudfoot, p. 50.
[81] Mhairi Claire Semple, *An archaeology of Scotland's early Romanesque churches: the towers of Alba*. PhD thesis, 2 vols (University of Glasgow, 2009), I, p. 106.
[82] Proudfoot, p. 54.
[83] Ibid, p. 49.

record the Pictish language,[84] such as Rodney's stone near Forres in Moray and the Formaston fragment of a cross-slab in Aboyne, Aberdeenshire.[85] If Ogham inscriptions were strictly in the Irish language aside from these Pictish examples, then the nature of Abernethy 3 could strengthen the argument for Irish influence in Abernethy's development.[86] However, because examples of Ogham inscriptions are found widespread throughout Northern Britain, the attribution of Irish origins does not necessarily correlate. Moreover, the Ogham inscription with a Pictish horse strengthens the idea the Picts of Abernethy contributed to the contemporary trends in sculpture and sought to sustain their association with Irish links. Although Abernethy's assemblage is eclectic, the parallels found in sculpture across a wider Celtic context strongly indicate a wealthy presence. The comparisons with other key sites in Scotland represent a link to wider connections of a prominent and interconnected Church community in which Abernethy was included.

An additional implication of royal patronage can be observed within the 'territory' of Abernethy, particularly the Mugdrum cross. As the foundation legend states, the territory boundary markers include a stone mentioned 'near to Ceirfuill', or Carpow, which could be the monumental cross stone in Mugdrum. Due to its intricate ornamentation and detailed imagery, the Mugdrum cross is the result of high investment and a symbol of wealth. The ecclesiastical establishment of Abernethy had enough resources to obtain and distribute its wealth within its parish and additional territories. Moreover, the figures 'are comparable in an arrangement in vertical panels to those of the St Madoes stone', and the horses comparable to Meigle 3.[87] It is curious if the foundation was produced earlier than the tenth

[84] For detailed discussion, see Katherine Forsyth, *Language in Pictland: the case against 'non-Indo-European Pictish'*, Series: Studia Hameliana 2, (Utrecht: De Keltiche Draak, 1997), pp. 33 – 38.
[85] Canmore, 'Aboyne, Old Parish Church, Cross-slab' (2017), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/17507/aboyne-old-parish-church-cross-slab> [accessed 5 August 2021].
[86] The Ogham inscriptions, the round tower, and the foundation legend all connect Ireland with Abernethy. See Proudfoot, p. 62.
[87] Proudfoot, pp. 55 – 56.

century Mugdrum cross, was the ecclesiastical establishment of Abernethy seeking to build tangible representation to fit the narrative of the foundation legend? Or does the notable connection with Saint Brigid date to this era? Perhaps some of the sculpture is a response to fit the narrative. Given the overall Irish relation and similarities to Irish sculpture, is curious the foundation legend states three separate territories of Abernethy, being *Apurfeirt*, *Ceirfuill*, and *Athan*,[88] are marked by stones, considering the spatial relationships between the towers of Monasterboice and Clonmacnoise about the high-crosses, were strategically placed for three coordinates.[89]

An overall theme amongst Abernethy's sculptures is that they were all cut down and repurposed, many of which were found in nearby cottages and garden walls. Could this suggest that at some point the ecclesiastical establishment of Abernethy no longer viewed their sculpture as meaningful? The lack of preservation could suggest the stones eventually became irrelevant and lost their sacredness to Abernethy's ecclesiastical community. The change in the continuity of the stones suggests the imagery was no longer viewed as relevant, perhaps as the social structures experienced change. Although the sculpture may have lost prominence, still standing, however, is the remarkable round tower of Abernethy.

[88] Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History*, pp. cxx–cxxi.
[89] O'Keeffe, p. 58.

Figure 15. Image of the round tower of Abernethy in its current setting along School Wynd and connected to the church graveyard. Author: Victoria McCormack, 2021.

Round tower:

The round tower, an early medieval Irish invention typically associated with wealthy churches, is rarely found in other countries except for one in the Isle of Man and two in Scotland, the two being Brechin and Abernethy.[90] The round tower at Abernethy stands at about 22 metres tall and was initially built in the eleventh century and rebuilt in the twelfth century.[91] The tower has an elevated and tall doorway, with four windows and a modern

[90] Allen and Anderson, *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, p. 132.
[91] Proudfoot, p. 83.

clock attached dated to 1868, while the current bell dates further back to 1782.[92] The tower also has later iron jougs attached to it to the left of the previously mentioned Class I symbol stone, Abernethy 1, which sits on a modern plinth, against the exterior wall of the round tower by the entrance to the churchyard. Like most round towers, the tower of Abernethy shares common features, such as a raised doorway and large belfry windows for a bell. Interestingly, the doorway stands at about 2.4 metres tall which is unusual for the typical round tower height of around 1.6 metres.[93] Curiously, the only other examples of an elongated doorway are found in county Kildare, though a study has shown the elongation of the Abernethy doorway occurred around the twelfth century.[94] Considering the choice of

Figure 16. Image of the detail of the elongated doorway showing both the yellow and grey sandstone. Author: Victoria McCormack, 2021.

[92] Loc. cit.
[93] Ibid, pp. 70 – 91.
[94] Semple, p. 112.

elongation is an adaptation and not original, this could further the notion that the ecclesiastical establishment of Abernethy wanted to strengthen the Irish connection, or simply were inspired by the design of the Kildare tower and wanted to keep up with the architectural trends.

In contrast to the similarities akin to Irish round towers, the tower of Abernethy has uncommon design choices not observed in typical Irish constructions, such as the arched belfry windows with side nook-shafts whereas Irish towers have 'lintelled or angle-headed' windows.'[95] Although none of the windows from the first tower survive, it could be supposed the original windows had either lintelled or angle-headed openings in their bell-storey like Ireland's round towers.[96] Mhairi Claire Semple has argued that two building phases are visible, observing that the 'arched lintel and the bottom west jamb stone are carved from the same grey sandstone as the tower's base while the remainder of the door is of the yellow sandstone

Figure 17. Image of the doorway of the Abernethy round tower. Author: Victoria McCormack, 2021.

[95] Ibid, pp. 111 – 112.
[96] Ibid, p. 116.

of the upper courses […] therefore, this door is partially constructed with re-used stone from the earlier tower'.[97]

Additionally, the two phases of construction are implied by the use of different building techniques used for either stone type. This can be seen on the lower part of the tower, as the stones 'are cut and laid so that the masonry beds are horizontal', while most of the upper part of the tower utilises some of the stone in a 'tooth-bedded fashion […] where the natural beds are at right angles to the ground and gravity'.[98] Semple concludes the distinction between the masonry is valuable as it shows there were two separate decisions made by separate 'schools of masonry'.[99] Although there is a lack of evidence for a monastery, round towers are a distinctively Irish phenomenon and the first building phase of one at Abernethy in the eleventh century suggests that the links with Ireland reflected in the foundation legend continued in this later period. Additionally, the round towers of Ireland were built within a close spatial relation to churches and high crosses.[100] Because there are iconographic and stylistic similarities between the cross fragment of Abernethy to the famed high crosses of Monasterboice and Clonmacnoise, it is clear the sculptor of the cross fragment of Abernethy was no amateur and produced high-quality carving, supporting the notion of affluent patronage. It would be interesting if the sculpture fragments of larger monuments found in the immediate vicinity of the site formed a close spatial relationship to the tower, similar to the spatial patterns found at Monasterboice and Clonmacnoise.[101] The dates of the first phase of the round tower's production predate the development of bishoprics and the wider Church recorded in the charter material, which will be discussed in the charter section.

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[97] Ibid, p. 113.
[98] Ibid, p. 114.
[99] Loc. cit.
[100] Tadgh O'Keeffe, *Ireland's Round Towers: Buildings, Rituals and Landscapes of the Early Irish Church,* (Tempus Publishing, 2004), pp. 57 – 58.
[101] Ibid, p. 58.

As well as during the rebuilding of the tower in the twelfth century wherein Abernethy seems to have lost its bishopric seat.[102]

Round towers serve as indicators of an affluent site, and it has been suggested that the fortifications in Abernethy and Brechin may be the first towers in Northern Britain.[103] Although the exact function of the round tower is unclear, it is generally considered that they were 'consecrated spaces, perhaps reliquary churches' and have had enigmatic appeal to scholars for centuries.[104] Furthermore, the round towers of Ireland are one of the few phenomena in archaeology that have annalistic references, totalling about twenty-five records.[105] Examples of these include reference to the tower of 'Slane [which] was burned by the foreigners of Áth Cliath,'[106] in addition to when all of Armagh was 'completely burned', including 'the great stone church with its lead roof and the bell house [or round tower] with its bells'.[107] Most of the annalistic references refer to the demise of places or people, such as the obituaries of kings, clerics, and entire towns, and the references to the round towers are no different. Interestingly, there are a few records of the construction of three individual towers, with a notable reference to the building of the tower in Clonmacnoise recorded in 1124,[108] under the patronage of a king of Connacht and an abbot of Clonmacnoise, signifying royal investment. There is no doubt that with the many mentions the round towers were of great interest to the medieval scribes of Ireland, as well as royalty and scholars. This strengthens the implication that Abernethy was a centre of importance and the ecclesiastical establishment of Abernethy recognised this importance.

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[102] Oram, p. 360.
[103] Semple, p. 104.
[104] Ibid, pp. 99 – 100.
[105] O'Keeffe, pp. 18 – 24.
[106] *Annals of Ulster*, AU950.7.
[107] *Annals of Ulster,* AU1020.4.
[108] O'Keeffe, pp. 18 – 14.

Although the round tower is the sole surviving structure constructed during Abernethy's prominence, there are later, antiquarian engravings depicting other structures surrounding the round tower. For example, in Francis Grose's *The Antiquities of Scotland*,[109] there are drawings of various structures surrounding the round tower The engraving portrays a thatched structure north of the tower, immediately behind the tower towards the right, and a roofless structure west of the tower, with the latter depicting a ruined part of a church built before 1802.[110] Although these buildings could be of any era before the eighteenth century, it is necessary to highlight the presence of other buildings around the tower, which could have had earlier foundations. Additional antiquarian drawings will also be included. Despite a lack of building preservation, the sculpture with the foundation legend gives us a compelling

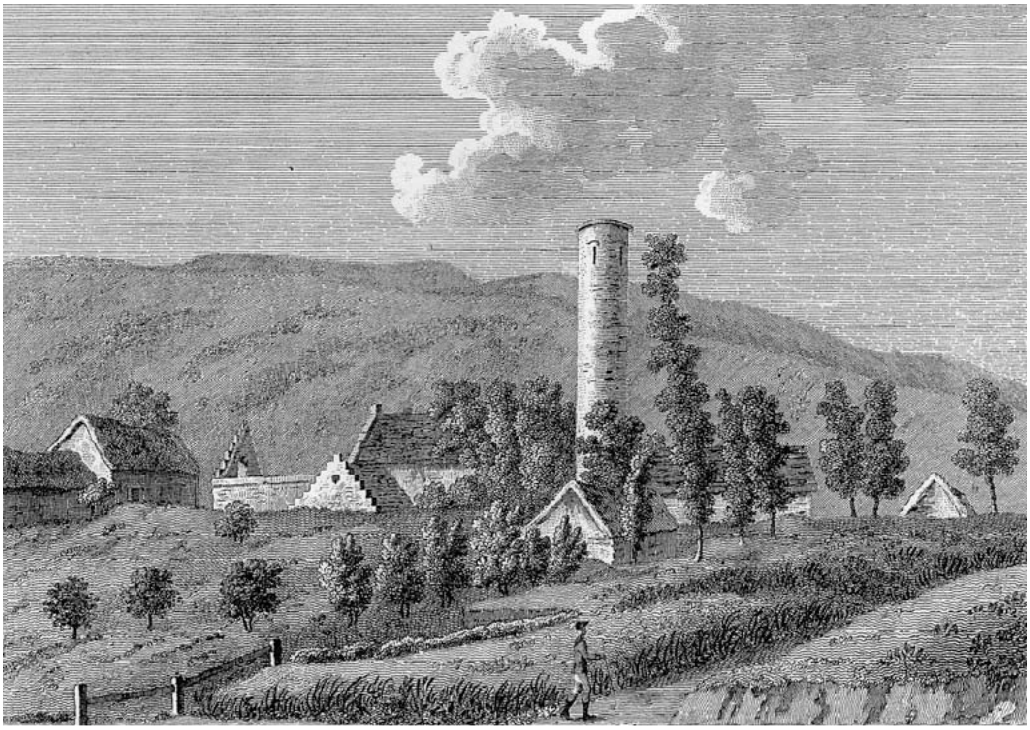


Figure 15. Engraving of Abernethy in Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of Scotland*, (1797).

[109] Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of Scotland*, (London, 1797).
[110] Loc. cit.

perspective that Abernethy was indeed influential throughout the Middle Ages, with special interest given from wealthy patrons and the Church.

Figure 19. Engraving of Abernethy Tower inscribed with the following: 'Engraved by J. Walker from an original drawing by T. Girtin' and 'Published May1st 1802', by J. Walker, No 16 Rosomans Street., London'. John Walker, 'Engraving of Abernethy', *The Copper-plate Magazine* (London, 1795).

The round tower experienced many changes but remained an impressive monument, displaying 'a significant technological and conceptual shift' in medieval Scottish construction.[111] In addition to the tower's architecture, the destruction of the earliest building occurred before the 1090s, which means the construction pre-dates many Irish round towers.[112] Although it is difficult to date the tower's dates with certainty, it is clear the architects of Abernethy's tower were well equipped with the contemporary trends and the

[111] Semple, p. 133.
[112] Loc. cit.

contemporary technology. If round towers are considered Ireland's most distinctive medieval monuments, then the rare presence of the round tower reinforces the idea that Abernethy was a place of high investment, education, and interest, supplementing the grandeur depicted in the foundation legend. Although the status of Abernethy was arguably at its peak during the construction of the round tower, its influence within the wider Church diminished. So, what happened to the eminent status Abernethy had for an extended period? A look at relevant charter material between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries can help us further understand why Abernethy lost hold of its apparent legacy.

Overall, the sculpture, the round tower, and excavations in and around Abernethy support the notion of high investment and the presence of affluent patronage. As previous excavations of prominent and wealthy sites have revealed notable centres such as Clatchard Craig, Dunadd, and Dundurn,[113] Abernethy has shown its high status through legend and sculpture without substantial excavation, apart from the Castle Law excavations which revealed high-status items of the Iron Age, further suggesting the overall idea that over centuries, the community of Abernethy had wealth.[114] The production of quality sculpture over time indicates there was a continuation of power held by the people who inhabited Abernethy. It would be interesting to see what further excavation could uncover considering the fragment discovered in 2012.

[113] Gondek, p. 138.
[114] See Canmore, 'Castle Law, Abernethy' (2017), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/27917/castle-law-abernethy> [accessed 4 August 2021].

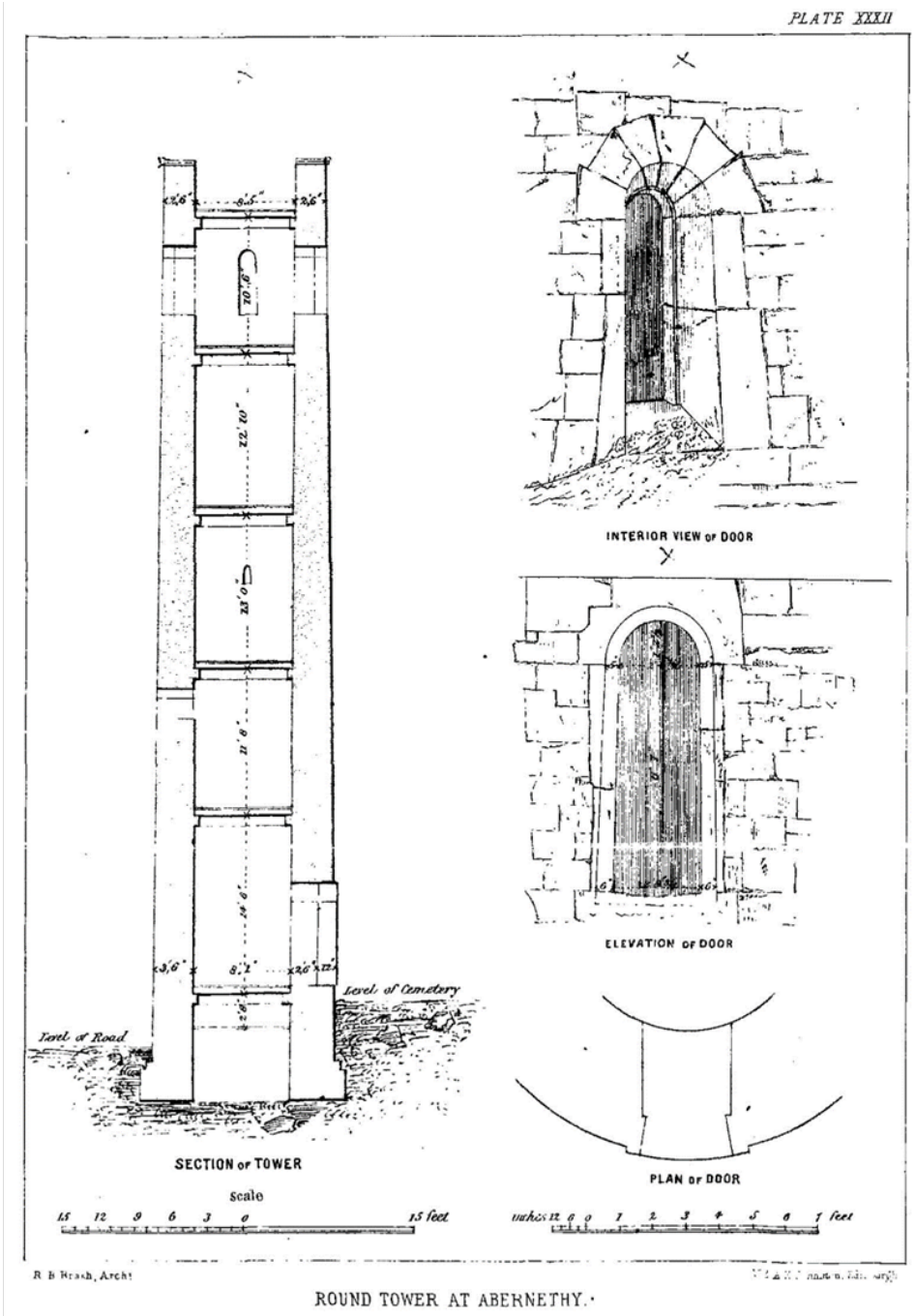


Figure 20. Sketch of the interior of the round tower, Plate XXXII 'Round Tower at Abernethy' (1859), *The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Vol III.*

Chapter 3: Abernethy's sculpture in context

To further explore what Abernethy's sculpture could imply for its promenance and loss of promenance, comparisons with sculpture assemblages at different sites will be drawn. The sites chosen are the following: Brechin, Dunkeld, Kinneddar, Meigle, Portmahomack, St Andrews, St Vigeans, and Rosemarkie. Although the textual evidence is not as consistent amongst these chosen sites, a consistency they share is that they all have well-known sculptural assemblages and share ecclesiastical iconography, providing useful comparisons to see how Abernethy's sculpture relates to or is differentiated from the overall sculptural trends of the medieval period in North Britain. Each site will be briefly compared to Abernethy in four categories based on several massive crosses above 1.8 metres, big crosses above 1.3 metres, small crosses, recumbent stones, and architectural fragments, as well as overall artistic themes. In addition to graphs displaying the overall differences and similarities more plainly, such as how many stones are in each category for each assemblage, more specific graphs will be included with each comparison. These graphs will display the percentages of which categories make up each site, such as Portmahomack being mostly characterised by small crosses and Meigle being characterised by recumbent stones. An issue with this method of comparison is of course the fragmentary nature of some sites, most notably Portmahomack, so the numbers and types of stones will mostly be taken from excavation notes and cited as such. To begin, as mentioned in Chapter 2, a more obvious comparison to Abernethy is Brechin as both sites share ecclesiastical themes, one recumbent stone, and small crosses, but more importantly, both sites have the only two round towers in mainland Britain, while, as mentioned, the only other one outside of Ireland is at Peel on the Isle of Man.

Brechin:

Despite having similar archaeology like the round tower, looking over the ecclesiastical activity in Brechin can perhaps further reveal Abernethy's relationship with the Church. For both sites, the presence of the round tower and additional sculptures are strong indications of rich locations. The substantial sculptural evidence at Brechin parallels the textual evidence and indicates there was an ecclesiastical centre at Brechin before the tenth century.[115] At about 26 metres in height, the round tower of Brechin, originally free-standing, has been attached to the nave of Brechin Cathedral since 1806.[116] The doorway of the round tower, standing at 1.89 metres,[117] is arguably the most fascinating feature as it is carved with a crucifixion at the top and unidentified saints on either jamb, while the sill just extends the

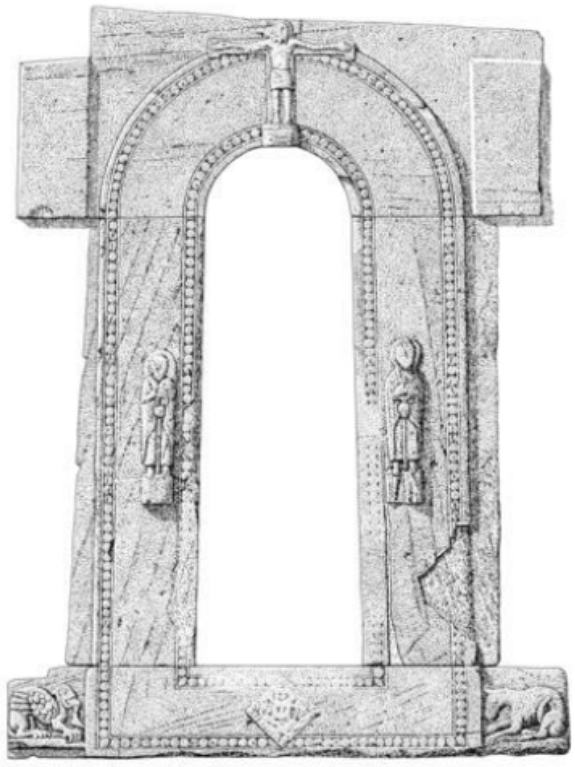


Figure 21. Sketch of the Brechin doorway from Canmore, 'Brechin Cathedral' (2016), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/35067/brechin-cathedral> [accessed 23 August 2021].

[115] Gray, pp. 58 – 60.
[116] The height of this doorway is similar to most of the doorways in Irish round towers. See Semple, p. 117 – 119.
[117] Ibid, p. 112.

jambs with carved, crouching beasts flanked on either side.[118] As previously mentioned, the towers of Brechin and Abernethy are potentially the earliest in Northern Britain and are two of the three round towers outside of Ireland.

The archaeology of Brechin and Abernethy share the unique similarity of the round tower, but also the sculpture, with a selection of various stones such as recumbent, large crosses, and architectural fragments. Additionally, the overall theme of design on the stones at both sites is strictly ecclesiastical, without mythological imagery seen at sites such as Meigle, St Vigeans, and St Andrews. The Brechin assemblage includes the Aldbar stone, an eighth and ninth century cross-slab with one side bearing a ringed cross containing interlace, and the panels contain two seated clerics on either side of the cross above a square base.[119] The other face has varying imagery, including a version of David and the lion next to a harp

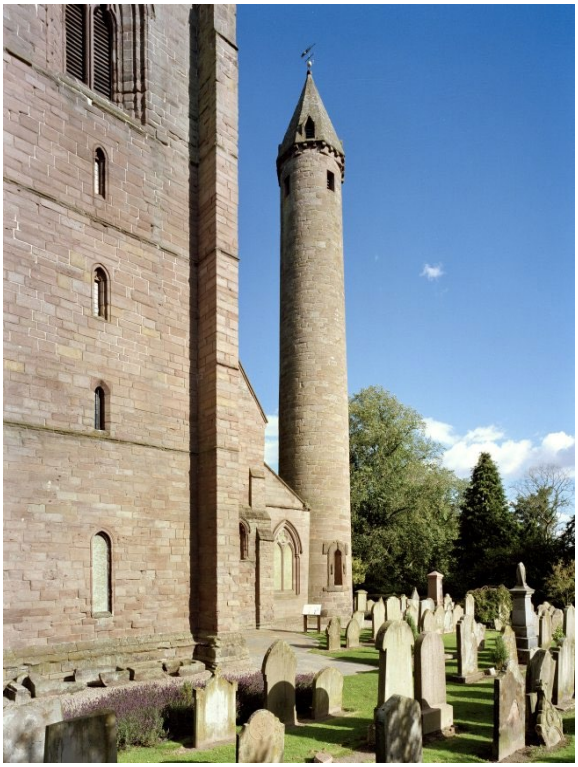


Figure 22. Image showing a view of the Brechin round tower from Canmore, 'Brechin Cathedral' (2016), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/35067/brechin-cathedral> [accessed 23 August 2021].

[118] Loc. cit.
[119] Canmore, 'Brechin Cathedral' (2016), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/35067/brechin-cathedral> [accessed 23 August 2021].

Figure 23. A side-by-side comparison etching of the doorway of the Abernethy round tower on the left, and the doorway of the Brechin round tower on the right. Alexander Gordon, *Itinerarium Septentrionalis* (London, 1726).

and sheep, two robed monks, a long-haired figure holding an animal, and a figure riding a horse atop a large donkey.[120] Furthermore, a late ninth century cross-slab fragment called the Mary Stone contains intricate Christian iconography including a depiction of Mary holding young Jesus in the centre of the crosshead.[121] On either side of the cross are four angels, two above the cross arms and two within, while beneath the centre of the cross are two figures with one likely representing St Peter.[122] In addition, the overall design of the highly decorated Brechin hogback stone is evidence of considerable patronage of the late tenth century.[123] Despite similarities in the type of stone and with the exclusion of the round tower, what is apparent is Abernethy's sculptural assemblage and Brechin's sculptural assemblage could not be more different and the presence of the round tower may solely be coincidental.

[120] Loc. cit.
[121] Canmore, 'Brechin Cathedral, The Mary Stone' (2016), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/35069/brechin-cathedral-the-mary-stone> [accessed 23 August 2021].
[122] Loc. cit.
[123] Isabel Henderson, 'Towards defining the function of sculpture in Alba: the evidence of St Andrews, Brechin and Rosemarkie' in Simon Taylor (ed), *Kings, Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland, 500-1297: Essays in honour of Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson on the occasion of her ninetieth birthday* (Four Courts Press: Dublin, 2000), p. 40.

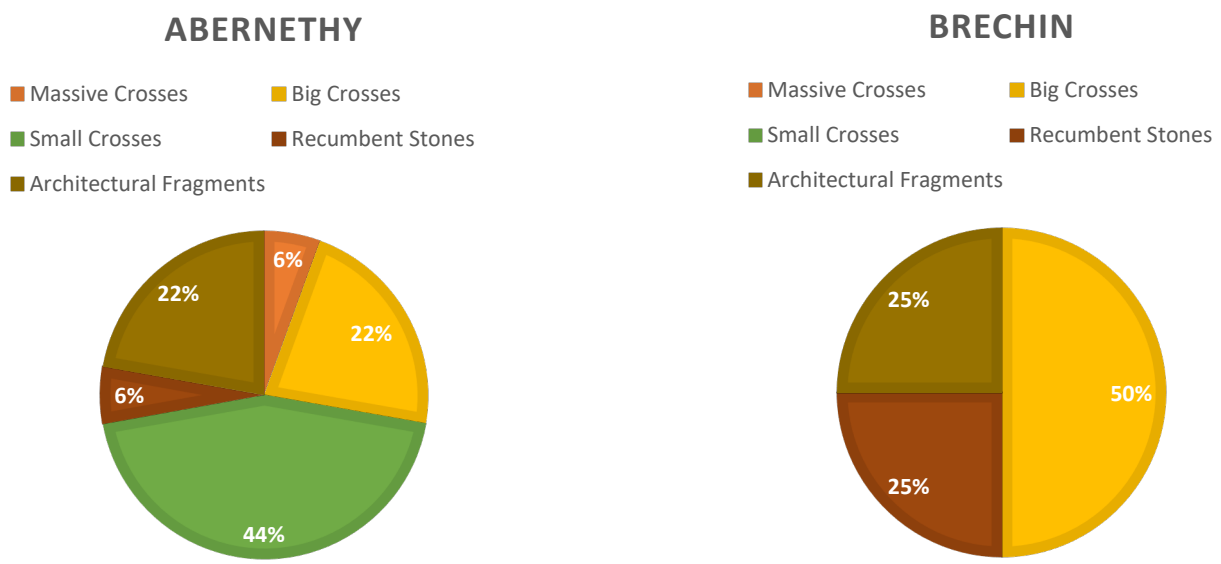


Chart 1. Abernethy's sculptural assemblage versus Brechin's sculptural assemblage. While Abernethy's assemblage is dominated by small crosses, Brechin's is more limited.

Dunkeld:

The next site for comparison is Dunkeld. Compared to the other sculptural assemblages, Dunkeld has the least in common with Abernethy and the least amount of surviving sculpture. Despite sharing themes of ecclesiastical imagery, Dunkeld has considerably fewer sculptures preserved. Where Abernethy has fragments from multiple large crosses, Dunkeld has one large stone called the 'Apostles' Stone' dating to the tenth century, which is an impressive fragment representing the lower part of a massive cross-slab portraying twelve figures associated with apostles, immediately positioned below a scene depicting several stacks of severed heads next to a large figure on the left.[124] The stone also has scenes with horsemen and animals with ornamentation in other panels. It should be noted that a few of these sites have either David or Daniel imagery in the sculpture. While Dunkeld

[124] Canmore, 'Dunkeld Cathedral, Apostles' Stone' (2016), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/79388/dunkeld-dunkeld-cathedral-apostles-stone> [accessed 12 February 2021].

has Daniel imagery in a panel on the Apostles' Stone, Abernethy has neither. Additionally, Dunkeld is the only site amongst the comparisons which does not have a recumbent stone. Although the assemblage is not as vast as the assemblage at Abernethy, it is noteworthy to mention Dunkeld, along with Abernethy and Brechin, also makes a few notable appearances in the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba,* including being chosen as a site where a portion of Columban relics ended up after they were removed and divided from Iona to Kells for

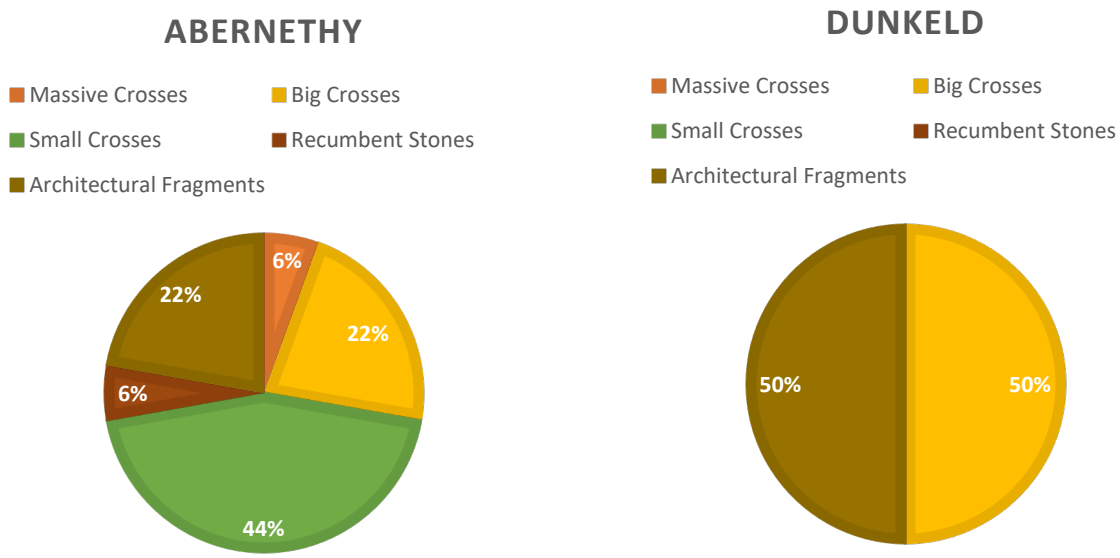


Chart 2. Abernethy's sculptural assemblage versus Dunkeld's sculptural assemblage.

protection against attacks.[125] What is similar between Abernethy and Dunkeld is that both had influential ecclesiastical centres, production of high-quality carving, and substantial historical narratives.

Kinneddar:

The next comparison is Kinneddar, located in the parish of Drainie in Moray. In summary, Kinneddar's sculpture assemblage is characterised by small crosses consisting of eighteen small crosses, four large crosses, one recumbent stone, and one architectural

[125] For more information on this, see Dauvit Broun, 'Dunkeld and the origin of Scottish Identity', *The Innes Review*, *48.2* (Autumn 1997), pp. 112 – 124.

fragment, with the majority of the stones dating to the eighth and ninth centuries.[126] The quality and themes of the carving at Kinneddar share close parallels with the sculpture found in Burghead, Rosemarkie, St. Andrews, and Portmahomack.[127] In particular, a fragment at Kinneddar has David imagery comparable to the St Andrews sarcophagus.[128] Similarly, Kinneddar's assemblage is fragmented and like Abernethy, Kinneddar has stones with elaborately decorated crosses as well as a plain, undecorated cross. Kinneddar also had a Class I symbol stone which had a large crescent with spiral decoration and a V-rod, perhaps comparable to Abernethy 1. Unfortunately, the stone is now lost, originally discovered in 1855 when the church manse was demolished.[129] Furthermore, Kinneddar was an influential parish in the bishopric of Moray in the late medieval period,[130] akin to Abernethy in the bishopric of Dunblane.[131] Comparable to the Castle Law excavations at Abernethy, the Kinneddar excavations revealed early settlement. Unlike Brechin and Dunkeld however, Kinneddar does not appear in any of the preserved, early textual sources until a twelfth century charter.[132]

[126] Gordon Noble et al., 'Kinneddar: a major ecclesiastical centre of the Picts', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 148*m (2018), pp. 113 – 145.
[127] Loc. cit.
[128] Ibid, p. 118.
[129] Loc. cit.
[130] In a Papal charter dated to 15 November 1187, Kinneddar makes its first appearance in the textual sources as 'the church of Kinneddar from the gift of Simon, bishop of Moray'. See PoMS, Document 2/134/1 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/3735/; accessed 18 September 2021) for more context.
[131] Noble et al., p. 115.
[132] PoMS, Document 2/134/1.

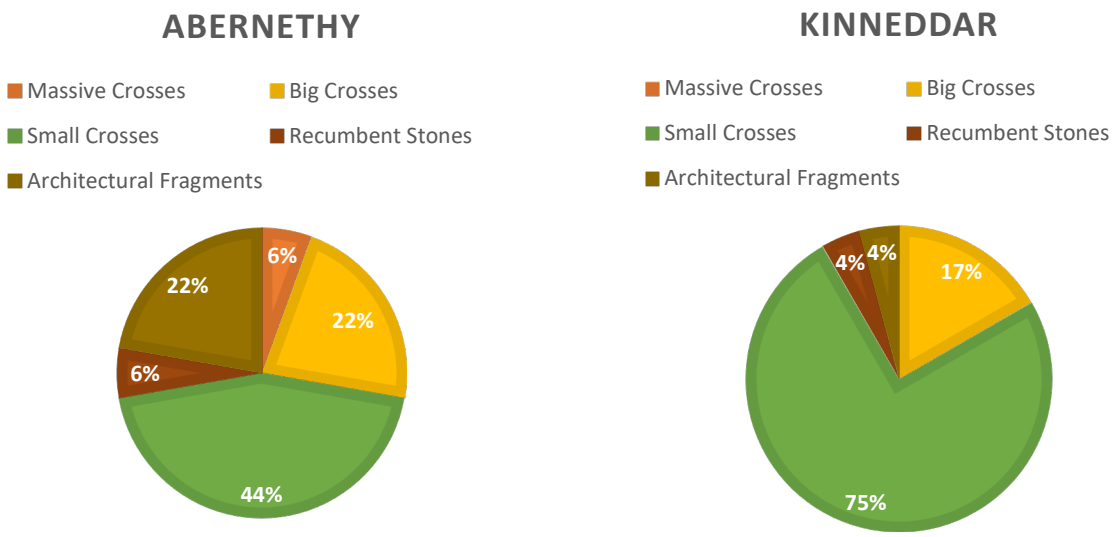


Chart 3. Both sculptural assemblages of Abernethy and Kinneddar share similarities in being mostly composed of small crosses.

Meigle:

The following site for comparison is Meigle, known for its late eighth to late tenth century sculpture collection, many of which depict mythological imagery. The assemblage has

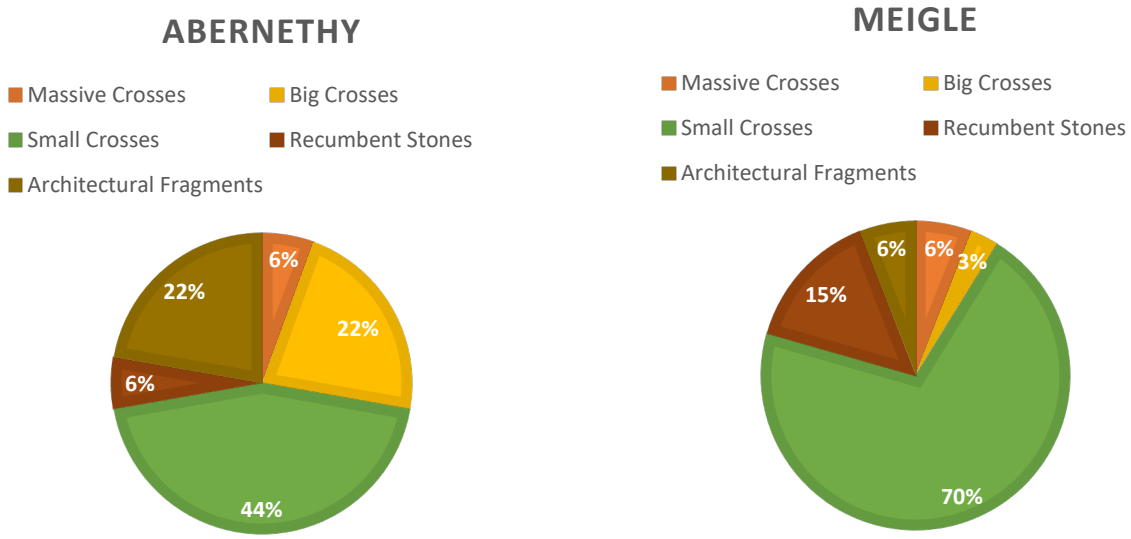


Chart 4. Evidentially, Meigle's sculptural assemblage has an impressive amount of recumbent stones and has an overall unique sculptural repertoire compared to the other sites, but the similarities Meigle does share with Abernethy are noteworthy.

three large crosses, twenty-four small crosses, one recumbent stone, and two architectural fragments.[133] Meigle has sculptures with various themes, including horse riders, beasts, and mythological creatures such as sirens, manticores, and centaurs. However, as noted, the assemblage of Abernethy shares many stylistic choices akin to sculpture found at Meigle. As mentioned, the Carpow cross fragment, also referred to as Abernethy 10, shares similar zoomorphic designs found on Meigle 4,[134] such as serpents with fishtails intertwined as knotwork. Additionally, the horses of the Mugdrum cross are comparable to Meigle 3.[135] Curiously, the similarities of artistry in some of Abernethy's sculptures akin to Meigle are mostly stones found outside the immediate vicinity of the parish church. Similarly, like Dunkeld, Meigle 2 has Daniel imagery depicted as he is flanked by lions.[136] Although the themes vary noticeably, both sites have a handful of high-quality sculptures. Notably, Meigle appears in the B version of the foundation legend of St Andrews, being credited as the estate in which 'Cano son of Dubabrach wrote this record for King Uurad son of Bargoit',[137] indicating Meigle was a valuable centre for learning, much like Abernethy.

[133] Canmore, 'Meigle Museum' (2018), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/30837/meigle-meigle-museum> [accessed 14 February 2021].
[134] Proudfoot, p. 54.
[135] Proudfoot, pp. 55 – 56.
[136] Canmore, 'Meigle Museum' (2018).
[137] Taylor and Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife*, pp. 564 – 600.

Figure 24. Comparisons of the snake with fish tail motif with the Carpow fragment on the left and Meigle 4 on the right. Canmore, 'Carpow Early Medieval (Cross-Slab)' (2016). [accessed 13 September 2021].

Portmahomack:

The next comparison to Abernethy's sculpture is Portmahomack. One of the largest archaeological investigations in Scotland between 1994 and 2007, directed by Martin Carver, uncovered evidence of a Pictish monastery in Portmahomack. In addition to traces of burnt timber, objects used for metalworking and leather production were uncovered,[138] including stone fragments. The archaeology found at Portmahomack is various, from many stone fragments to burnt timber, giving a unique insight into a major Pictish ecclesiastical centre,

[138] The evidence found for leather making workshops, and the assemblage identified are comparable to those found on Iona. See Martin Carver, 'An Iona of the East: the early-medieval monastery at Portmahomack, Tarbat Ness'. *Medieval Archaeology*, (2004) pg. 23.

Figure 25. Comparison between sculpture and manuscript details. On the left is a high-quality fragment from Portmahomack, known as Tarbat Fragment 7, displaying intricate interlace with encircled spiral work. On the right is an image from The Book of Kells (Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin MS 57 f. 3v) also showing encircled spiral work.

and potentially indicating manuscript production.[139] Moreover, Portmahomack is located on the Tarbat peninsula where well-known cross-slabs have been found, such as the Hilton of Cadboll Stone, the Nigg stone, and the Shandwick stone. The many fragments discovered at Portmahomack share many ornamentations paralleled to those monuments, such as key patterns and ornamentations.[140] For example, many of the key patterns seen in Portmahomack's assemblage can be identified in manuscripts, such as a straight border pattern identified in the Book of Kells as nos. 944, 1021, and 1022b which are identifiable on the Hilton of Cadboll and a fragment found in Portmahomack.[141] Further comparisons of stones found at Portmahomack also relate to the Carpet Page in the Book of Durrow, which has another shared motif with another 'fragment from an upright cross-slab with trumpets and spirals with small triangles in the interstices, reflecting a painted model like the Carpet Page'.[142] Other examples of similar stylistic choices in the sculpture of the Tarbat peninsula

[139] Canmore, 'Tarbat Sculptured Stone Fragment' (2018), < https://canmore.org.uk/collection/874916> [accessed 2 December 2020].
[140] Carver, p. 23.
[141] Isabel Henderson, 'Pictish art and the Book of Kells', in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, eds. D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick, and D. Dumville (Cambridge, 1982) p. 89.
[142] Nancy, Netzer, 'The Book of Durrow and the Lindisfarne Gospels', in *The Lindisfarne Gospels* ed. by Richard Gameson (Brill, 2017), p. 175.

include snakehead termination, human head termination, and encircled spiral work. The comparisons suggest that 'Portmahomack sculptors had knowledge of the decorative vocabulary employed in the Book of Durrow, and by extension the Book of Kells, and were influenced by it'.[143] Considering the impressiveness of Portmahomack and the textual evidence of Abernethy, being a great centre for learning is a further indication of wealthy patronage and high investment present at either site. Like Abernethy and Kinneddar, Portmahomack has an array of big crosses, small crosses, a recumbent stone, and architectural fragments. The inscription fragment is most impressive and demonstrates the person who carved it was 'familiar with an alphabet used in the production of *de luxe* illuminated texts', similar to the book hand found in the Lindisfarne Gospels.[144] Although Portmahomack is not mentioned in early historical texts and has quite a specific era of sculptural trends uncovered, it is clear it was a rich site that had all the attributes Abernethy had: a learning centre and high investment.

[143] Loc. cit.
[144] Isabel Henderson, *The Art and Function of Rosemarkie's Pictish Monuments* (Groam House Museum Trust, 1990), p. 6.

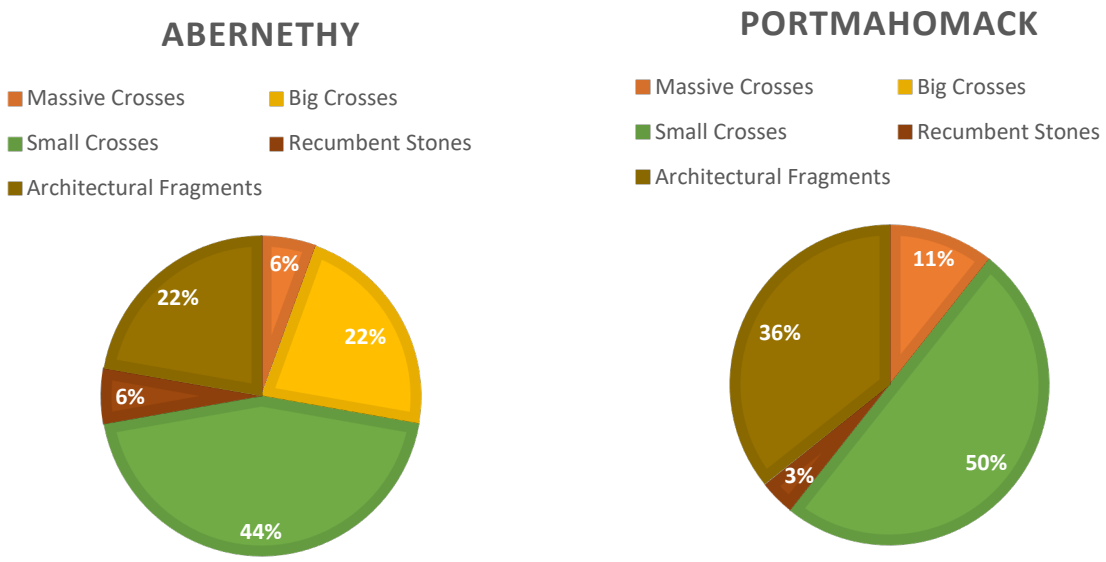


Chart 5. Abernethy's sculptural assemblage versus Portmahomack's sculptural assemblage. Both sites have a high percentage of small crosses and both sites are known for their fragmentary nature.

St Andrews:

The earlier comparison of Abernethy to St Andrews in Chapter 1 based on similar textual evidence in the foundation legends is a clear indication of prominence, as well as their respective sculpture. St Andrews assemblage is made up of ten large crosses, forty-five small crosses or fragments of small crosses, five recumbent stones, and six architectural fragments, making it the vastest sculptural assemblage in Northern Britain. Besides the amount of sculpture, St Andrews also has David imagery and folklore imagery, such as monsters, which Abernethy does not. However, some similarities in stylistic choices can be identified, such as Abernethy 5 sharing interlace comparable to stones found in St. Andrews,[145] for which the St Andrews' assemblage is known to have a considerable amount of interlace. Another element of the St Andrews archaeological evidence is the St Rule's tower. The tower at St Andrews is a square fortification standing thirty-three metres tall.[146] Although

[145] Proudfoot, p. 50.
[146] Canmore, 'St Andrews Cathedral' (1987), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/34299/st-andrews-cathedral> [accessed 10 September 2021].

it is not a round tower like the towers of Abernethy and Brechin, it is interesting the tower is attributed to Saint Regulus, who is described in the foundation legend as having brought relics to *Kinrymont* which is now St Andrews.[147] The tower is currently located in the ruined cathedral grounds but remains older, and records show the tower 'served as the church of the priory up to the early twelfth century'.[148] Originally, the tower was part of the old church built after the eleventh century to house the relics of St Andrew, with much of the church in ruins.[149] Considering the building dates of St Andrews tower and Abernethy's tower, as well as the dedication of St Rule's tower to the bishop in the St Andrews foundation legend, perhaps the tower at Abernethy is a response to the dedication of Abernethy and its territories to St Brigid in the foundation legend.

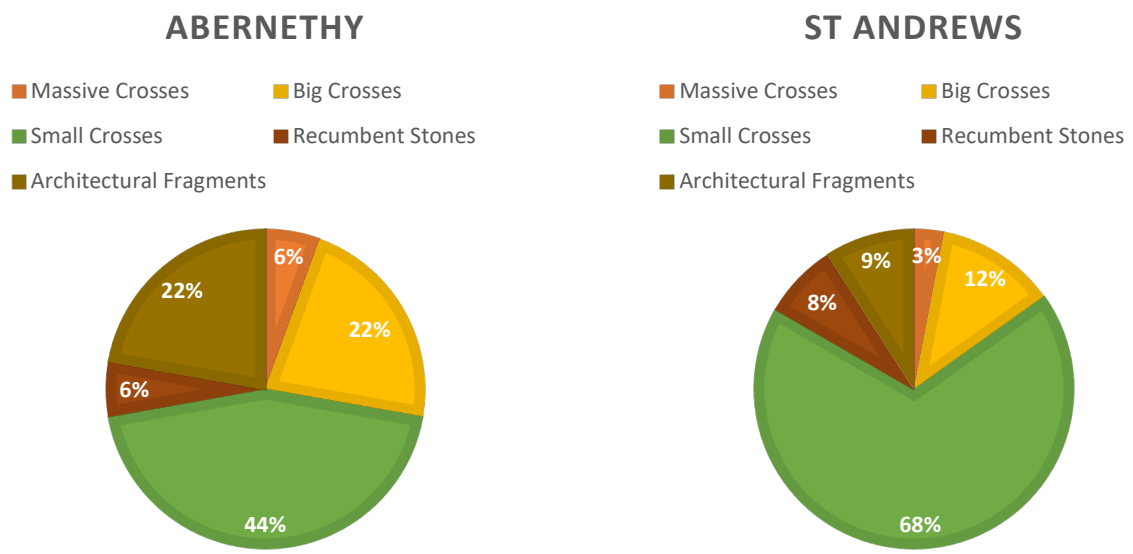


Chart 6. Abernethy's sculptural assemblage versus St Andrews's sculptural assemblage.

[147] Loc. cit.
[148] Loc. cit.
[149] Loc. cit.

St. Vigeans:

Abernethy and St Vigeans share similar types of archaeological evidence, such as large crosses, small crosses, one recumbent stone, and architectural evidence with the majority dating to the ninth century. Of all the sites in this chapter, St Vigeans shows the most diversity in depicting types of people, such as clerics with books, hooded hunters, nude

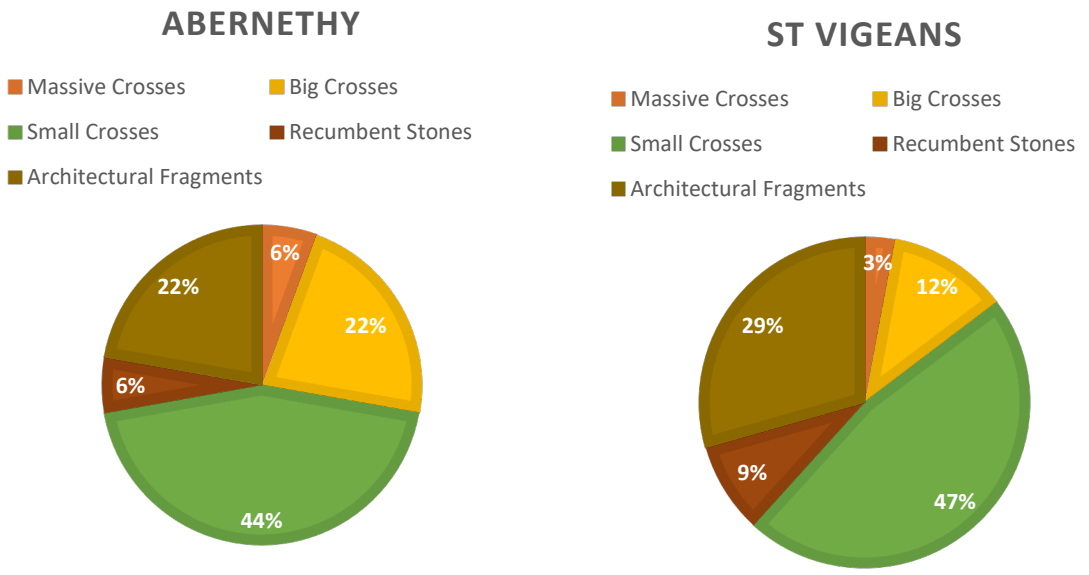


Chart 7. Abernethy's sculpture assemblage versus St Vigeans sculpture assemblage.

pagans, and seated clerics.[150] St Vigeans has the only other preserved stone which has Insular half-uncial script, often called the Drosten stone due to the inscription having the following three names: *Drosten*, *Uoret*, and *Forcus*.[151] Because the spellings of the names stem from Latin, Old Irish, and Pictish, it is clear the sculptor also had access to manuscripts or a scriptorium, similar to the Portmahomack sculptor. Although the Abernethy comparison is in Ogham, inscriptions in Pictish sculpture are rare and it is noteworthy that the sites in which they are preserved all have impressive carvings, likely the result of investment. Additionally, St Vigeans has a group of stones representing wealthy patronage and the possibility of hosting

[150] Historic Environment Scotland, 'St. Vigeans stones (And Museum) Statement of Significance', (Edinburgh, 2015).
[151] See Thomas Owen Clancy, 'The Drosten Stone: a new reading', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 123*, (1994), pp. 345 - 353.

a reliquary, those being the recumbent stones, possible sanctuary marker, the dedication of the 'Drosten stone', and the stones representing part of a shrine.[152] Like Meigle, St Vigeans is the only other of two sculpture assemblages with great quality carvings, inventiveness, and a large number of stones which was discovered *in situ*.[153] When compared to Abernethy however, St Vigeans shares both ecclesiastical imagery and depictions of folklore, whereas the assemblage of Abernethy only has ecclesiastical themes. Furthermore, neither St Vigeans nor Abernethy share David or Daniel imagery. However, both St Vigeans and Abernethy have stones with inscriptions, again those being Abernethy 2 with the Ogham inscription and the St Vigeans 'Drosten stone' bearing a Latin inscription.[154] Overall, the St Vigeans sculpture assemblage is very different from Abernethy's sculpture mostly due to varying themes and quantity of stones, but the similarities should be noted.

Rosemarkie:

Another site comparable to Abernethy in Rosemarkie. Both sites have large and small crosses bearing ecclesiastical imagery, one recumbent stone, and architectural pieces. Rosemarkie's sculpture dates mostly to the eighth and ninth centuries, and like Dunkeld and Meigle, Rosemarkie has Daniel imagery. Additionally, the sites' assemblages have both ornately decorated crosses and undecorated crosses,[155] which can be compared not only to Abernethy 6 but also to Kinneddar's plain crosses. Overall, the sculpture found at Rosemarkie is very high-quality, with imagery parallel to manuscripts such as the Book of Durrow and the Book of Kells.[156] Interestingly, the many snake motifs found on Rosemarkie's assemblage

[152] Historic Environment Scotland, 'St. Vigeans stones (And Museum) Statement of Significance.
[153] Canmore, 'St Vigeans, Drosten Stone' (2017), <https://canmore.org.uk/site/35560/st-vigeans-drosten-stone> [accessed 13 September 2021].
[154] Loc. cit.
[155] See Henderson, *The Art and Function of Rosemarkie's Pictish Monuments*, p. 15.
[156] For more detailed info on these similarities, see Ibid, pp. 13 – 14.

compare to those found on stones from the Tarbat Peninsula, i.e., Nigg, Shandwick, and Portmahomack, as well as all the high crosses of Iona.[157]

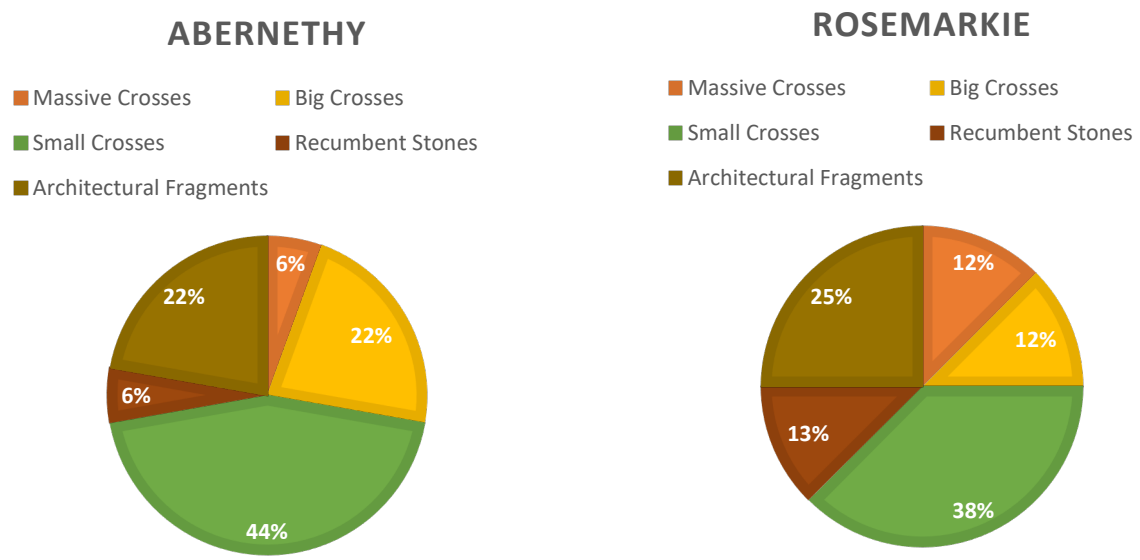


Chart 8. Abernethy's sculpture assemblage versus Rosemarkie's sculpture assemblage.

Discussion:

Overall, the comparisons offer interesting perspectives into the different characteristics of prominent ecclesiastical centres of the medieval period. Many of these sites share similar characteristics with Insular manuscripts, however, the differences are striking. Curiously, only Kinneddar and St Andrews have both David and Daniel imagery present amongst their respective assemblages, whereas Dunkeld, Meigle, and Rosemarkie share David depictions while Brechin has a Daniel depiction. It is noteworthy that as one of the few sites with an inscription stone, Abernethy has a rather small assemblage versus the other sites with preserved inscription stones in large assemblages, i.e., Portmahomack, St Andrews, and St Vigeans. Considering the foundation legend, the schools of Abernethy, and the fragmentary nature of Abernethy's assemblage, perhaps the original assemblage was much larger.

[157] Ibid, p. 14.

When it comes to historical sources, it is worthy to note that Kinneddar, Portmahomack, and St Vigeans do not have surviving early historical references, unlike Abernethy, Brechin, Dunkeld, Meigle, and St Andrews, which are all mentioned in foundation legends, king lists or lists of bishops. Furthermore, almost all these sites appear in charter material between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries except for Portmahomack, despite some records of churches in proximity on the Tarbat peninsula.[158]

Unlike most of the comparisons, Abernethy's sculpture embodies a wide range of artistic trends. For example, Abernethy's four-faced stone represents the Roman period, while the recumbent, undecorated cross on Abernethy 6 represents most eleventh century sculpture.[159] This contrasts with sites that show a surge of sculptural activity within a concentrated period, such as Portmahomack. While the Portmahomack assemblage is representative of eight century art, the Abernethy assemblage is representative of various, medieval trends.

What could all these comparisons indicate for Abernethy? Well, while some sites are dominated by certain aspects of their sculpture, such as Meigle is defined by recumbent stones while Portmahomack is defined by small crosses, Abernethy's sculpture is defined by fragments that have been repurposed. However, when considering the categories of large crosses, small crosses, recumbent stones, and architectural fragments, Kinneddar, Meigle, Portmahomack, St Andrews, and St Vigeans tend to dominate the majority. There is no doubt that the sites with larger assemblages, such as Kinneddar, Meigle, Portmahomack, St Andrews, and St Vigeans, had great significance in medieval Northern Britain as major ecclesiastical centres, while Meigle, Portmahomack, St Andrews and St Vigeans show both

[158] A charter notes the separate 'the garbal teinds of the churches of Nigg and Tarbat' when confirming prebends, clergy, and churches of Ross. PoMS, 2/144/58 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/3714/; accessed 7 February 2022).
[159] Although Abernethy 6 is not as stylistically advanced as other stones in Abernethy's assemblage but nonetheless shows sculptural patronage was still present later.

quality and a range of depth in their respective assemblages. However, the sites with smaller surviving assemblages, Abernethy, Brechin, Dunkeld, and Rosemarkie, show high investment in the sculpture preserved and they too had significance in the medieval ecclesiastical world. Despite lack of preservation or even lack of early textual reference, it is clear all these sites participated in sculptural trends and the wider Church.

Charts and Lists:

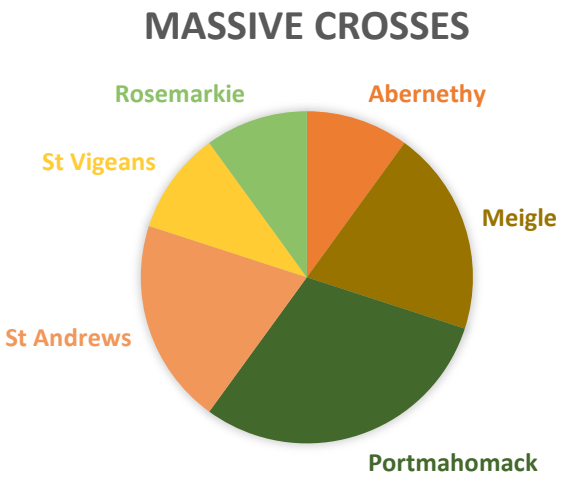


Chart 9. Massive crosses categorised above 1.8 metres. Meigle, Portmahomack, Rosemarkie and St Andrews dominate the category.

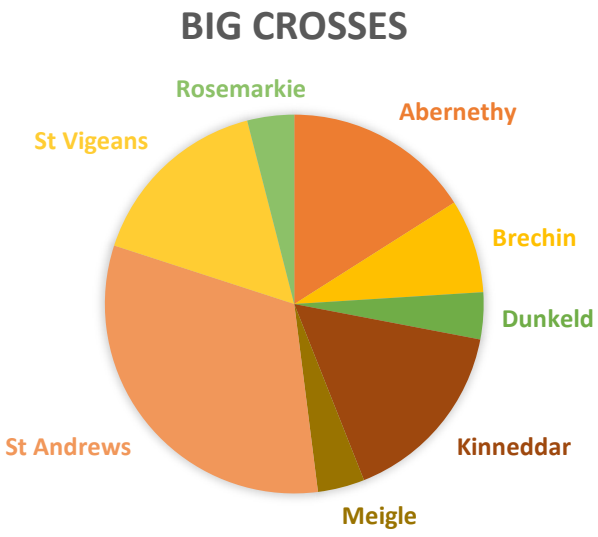


Chart 10. Big crosses categorised above 1.3 metres.

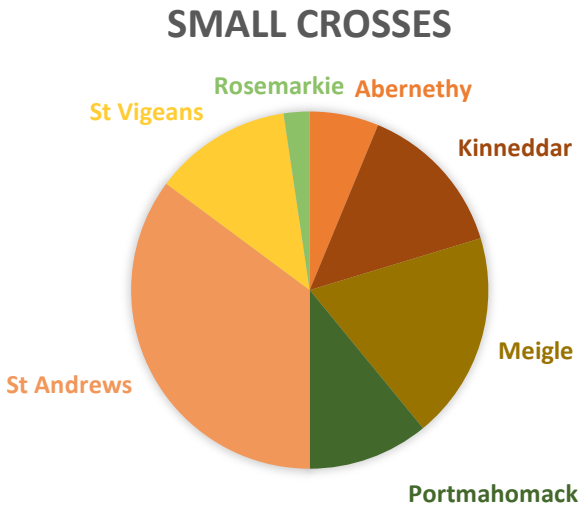


Chart 11. Small crosses.

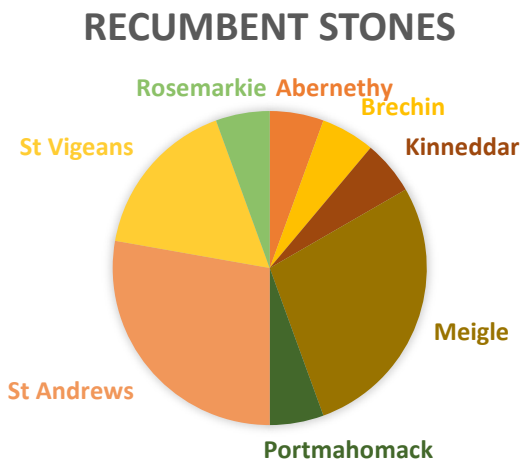


Chart 12. Recumbent stones.

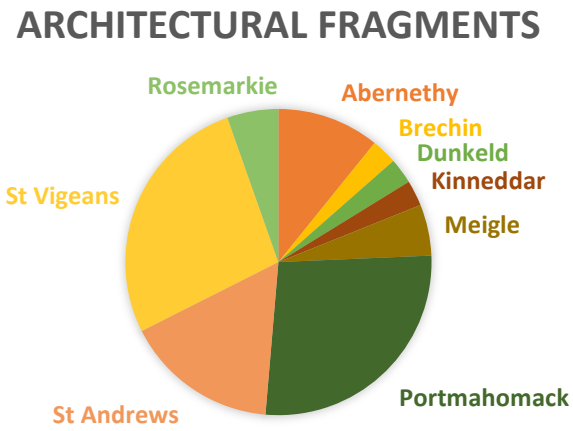
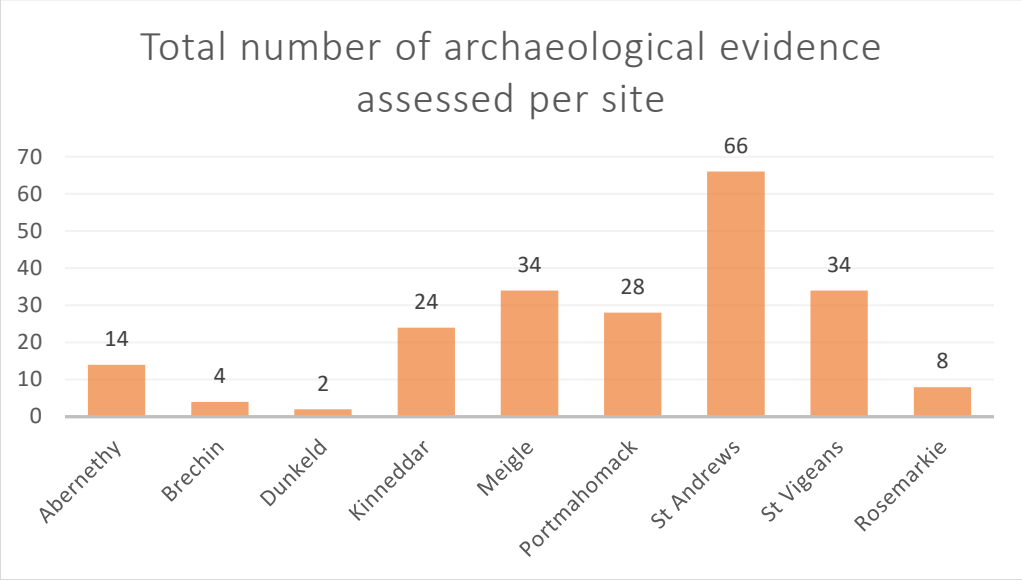


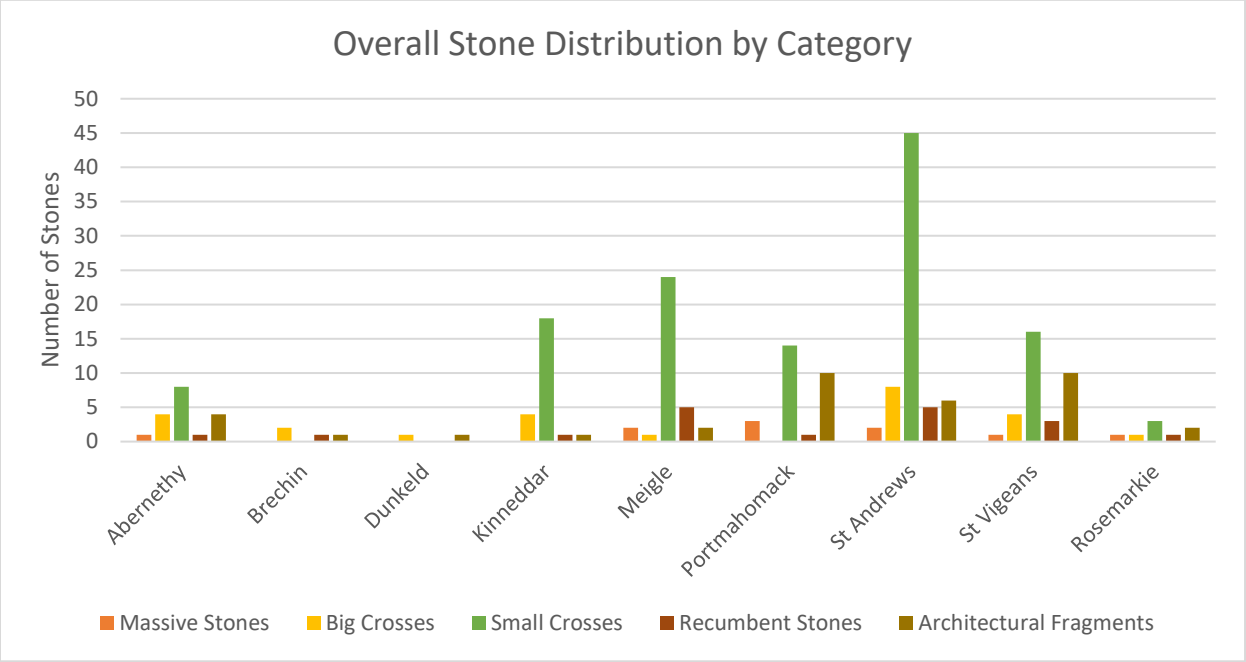
Chart 13. Architectural fragments.



Themes of Stone Assemblages

	Ecclesiastical Imagery	Mythological Imagery	Stones with Inscriptions	David Imagery	Daniel Imagery
Abernethy	✓	X	X	X	X
Brechin	✓	X	X	✓	X
Dunkeld	✓	X	X	X	X
Kinneddar	✓	X	X	✓	X
Meigle	✓	✓	X	X	✓
Portmahomack	✓	✓	✓	X	X
St Andrews	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
St Vigeans	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Rosemarkie	✓	X	X	X	✓

Chart 14. Table of themes either present or not present at selected sites.



Chapter 4: Charter Evidence

The gap between Abernethy's status as a significant Pictish settlement to losing prominence amongst the wider Church in the 12th and the 13th centuries could be further understood by the use of charter material. Typically written on a single sheet of parchment with a seal attached,[160] charters show which lands were gifted to which church communities. Most of the recorded transactions related to land disputes and specified privileges, as well as which lands were granted, donated, or quitclaimed made by laity and royalty. Where Abernethy is concerned, it is understood that the donor of a charter is guaranteeing the transaction, such as a king affirming the rights and privileges of a church.[161] The donor of a charter was typically a bishop, lay elite, or a king, and the recipients or 'beneficiaries' were either other lay elite, ecclesiastical institutions, or the *ab* of the church, one of the laity who holds the abbacy.[162] If the land was quitclaimed in a charter, the individual or institution exercising the quitclaim effectively acknowledging the rights of the property to another individual or institution, relinquishing all rights associated with the property to the new owner. To further understand Abernethy's charter material, a deeper look into the transactions is essential.

Thirteen out of twenty-five charters issued between 1173 × 1249 were selected because these documents shed the most light on Abernethy's history.[163] These charters will help to identify different aspects of the various activities going on in and around Abernethy

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[160] Joanna Tucker, 'Scottish charters and the emergence of government' *The National Archives* (2017) <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/scottish-charters-emergence-government/> [accessed 11 May 2021].
[161] 'Introduction' in *Documentary Culture and the Laity in the Early Middle Ages,* ed. by W. C. Brown, M. Costambeys, M. Innes, A. Kosto (Cambridge, 2012), p. 15.
[162] Tucker, 'Scottish charters and the emergence of government'.
[163] It should be noted that some charters repeat information, which is not uncommon with this material.

during the time. Each charter will be presented with the document numbers recorded on PoMS, as well as dates, a summary of the text, and a description of the charter. After this is done, all the charter material will be investigated and discussed with concluding thoughts to help further our understanding of what Abernethy was.

A. Document 1/6/132
   Date: 1173 × 1178

> King William to Orm, son of Hugh [son of Gille Míchéil, earl of Fife]; he has granted and by this charter established the [abbacy] of Abernethy, as it was in the year and on the day when King David died. [164]

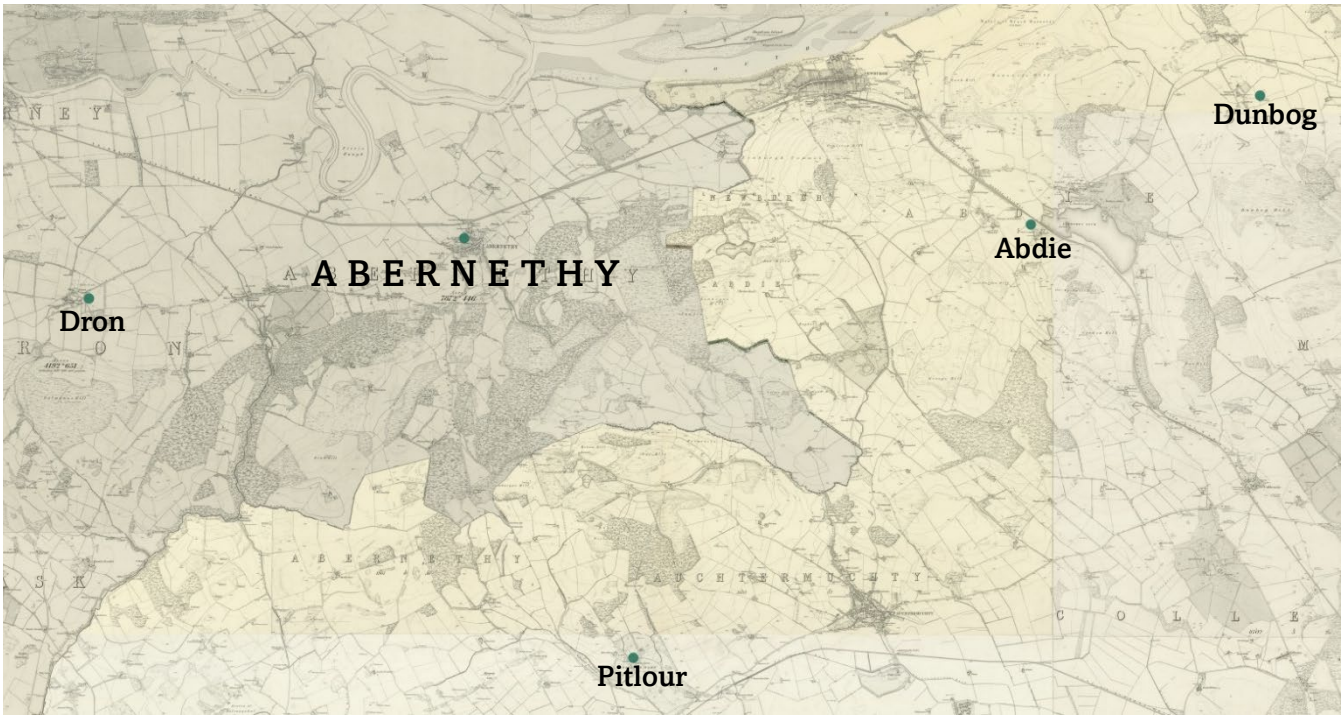
The initial charter concerning the church of Abernethy was recorded between 1173 × 1178 and addresses the confirmation of the abbey of Abernethy 'as it was in the year and on the day when King David died', i.e., 24 May 1153,[165] in which William the Lion grants his charter confirming the abbey of Abernethy to Orm with all the rights, the first *ab* of Abernethy mentioned in the charter material.

B. Document 1/6/310
   Date: 1189 × 1195

> King William to Arbroath Abbey; has given the church of Abernethy with chapels of Dron, Dunbog, Abdie, and lands of Ballo and Pitlour, and certain teinds as specified.[166]

[164] PoMS, 1/6/132, RRS, ii, no. 152 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/644/; accessed 19 March 2021).
[165] Loc. cit.
[166] PoMS, 1/6/310, RRS, ii, no. 339 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/380/; accessed 8 March 2021).

The second charter in the chronology, also recorded between 1189 × 1195, is guaranteeing possession of the church of Abernethy with various chapels and the lands of Ballo and Pitlour,[167] because William the Lion is taking the role of the donor. As a donor, William is implicitly guaranteeing the gift. Again, certain teinds are specified to show the separate teinds between the parish church of Abernethy and the Céli Dé of Abernethy.



Map 1. Charter B (Document 1/6/310) showing Abernethy with the land of Pitlour and chapels of Dron, Abdie and Dunbog. Ordnance Survey Maps - Six-inch 1st edition, Scotland, 1843-1882 [online].

C. Document 2/5/2

Date: 1191 × 1194

> Simon, bishop of Dunblane, for Arbroath Abbey; at the request of William, king of Scots, has given the church of Abernethy with

[167] Loc. cit.

> chapels of Dron and Airlie [Abdie], lands of Ballo and Pitlour, half of all teinds derived from money of abbot of Abernethy and all other teinds and rights belonging rightfully to that church, for their own uses. They may constitute whichever chaplains they wish in that church, reserving the synodal dues.[168]

This charter emphasises which lands the parish church viewed as valuable, such as Ballo and Pitlour. In contrast to the previous charter, the *ab* is not named other than teinds deriving from his own money. Furthermore, this charter grants the use of chaplains of Abernethy to the monks of Arbroath Abbey while reserving synodal dues, the standard payments bishops were entitled to seek from clerics and monasteries in their dioceses.[169] This charter places emphasis on the original guarantee of the church of Abernethy and assets. Additionally, the mention of Airlie comes from a mistake as it should be Abdie, which will be discussed in detail later. The Bishop of Dunblane is confirming the land and teinds made in the previous charter.

D. Document 3/42/1
   Date: 1189 × 1195

> Laurence, son of Orm of Abernethy has quitclaimed to Arbroath Abbey in perpetuity all right which he had or which he could claim to the advowson of the church of Abernethy, with its just pertinents, namely, with the chapels of Dron, Dunbog and 'Erolyn' [probably Abdie], and with the land of Ballo and Pitlour,

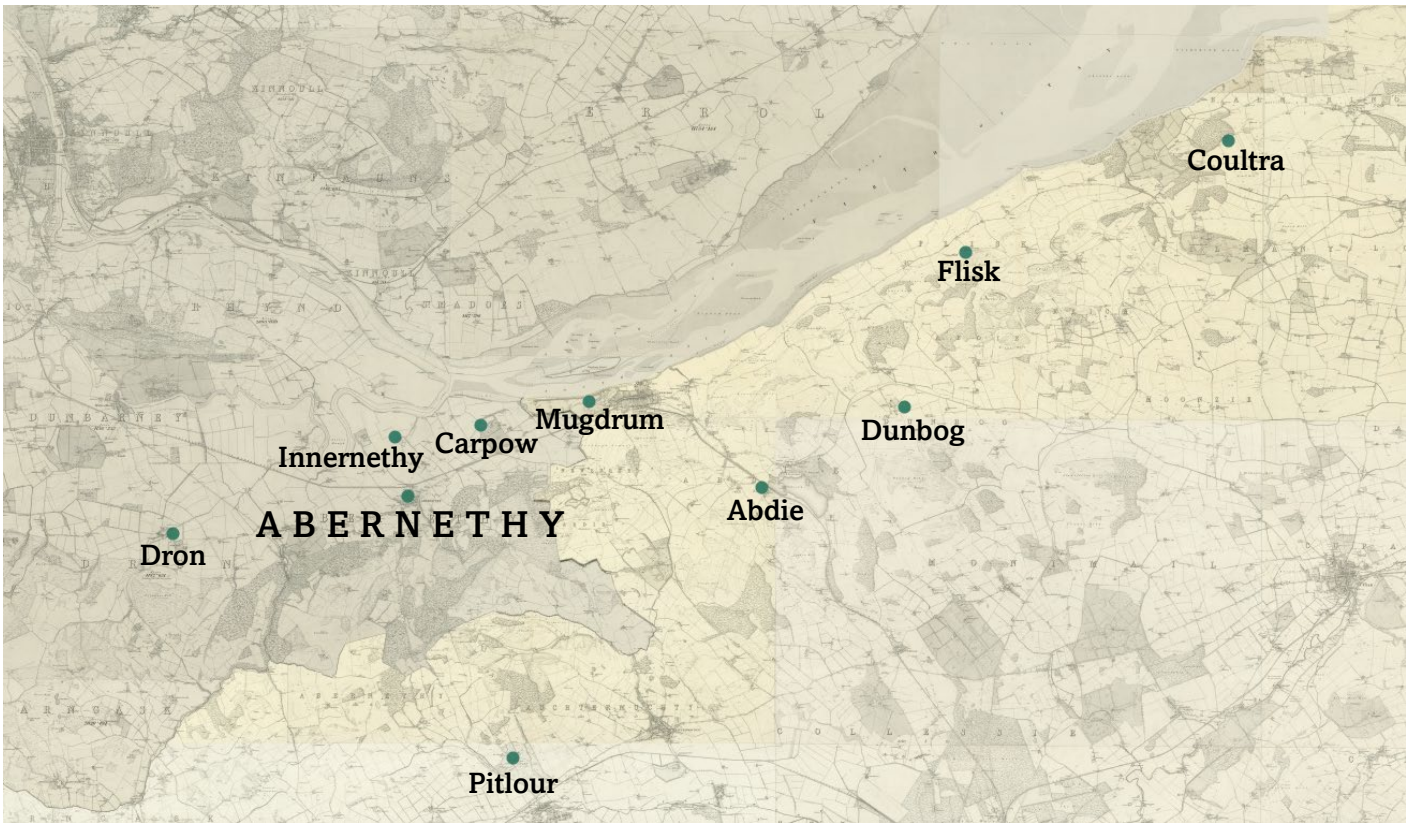
[168] PoMS, 2/5/2, SEA, i, no. 31 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/1184/; accessed 8 March 2021).
[169] Allison D. Fizzard, 'Episcopal Support for the New Foundation: Donations to Plympton Priory from the Bishops of Exeter and their circle' in *Plympton Priory a house of Augustinian Canons in south-western England in the late Middle Ages* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 45.

> and with half of all the teinds coming out of his own money. The céli De of Abernethy shall have the other half of the teinds. Arbroath Abbey shall have all the teinds of the territory of Abernethy and all the just pertinents of the same church, except those teinds which belong to churches of Flisk and Coultra, and except his teinds of his demesne of Abernethy, which the céli De shall have, namely, of Mugdrum, Carpow, 'Balehyrewell', 'Balecolly' and Innernethy on the east side of the burn. This is to be held in free, pure and perpetual alms, free from all risk from himself and his heirs in perpetuity. [170]

The fourth charter referencing Abernethy now addresses the second *ab* of the charter material, Laurence, the son of Orm. Sometime between 1189 × 1195, Laurence quitclaims 'in perpetuity all right which he had or which he could claim to the advowson of the church of Abernethy' to Arbroath Abbey.[171] An advowson is the 'perpetual property right, which allows [the patron] to present a new [occupant] when there is a vacancy in their benefice'.[172] This is all done in respect for William the Lion and his new establishment of Arbroath Abbey, and the original quitclaim includes named chapels, lands, and teinds, namely chapels of Dron, Dunbog, and 'Erolyn', (i.e. Abdie), and the land of Ballo and Pitlour.[173] With his own money, Laurence of Orm provides for certain teinds along with various churches under 'free, pure and perpetual alms'.[174] In subsequent charters about the possessions of the parish church of

[170] PoMS, 3/42/1, Arb. Lib., no. 35 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/4344/; accessed 7 March 2021).
[171] Loc. cit.
[172] Teresa Sutton, 'Advowsons and private patronage', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal, 21, 3* (2019) p. 1.
[173] Loc. cit.
[174] Teinds is the Scots word for a tenth part of the produce from agricultural land.

Abernethy, the lands of Ballo and Pitlour and the chapels of Dron and Abdie remain as essential aspects of the original gift.



Map 2. Charter D (Document 3/42/1) showing Abernethy with the land of Pitlour and chapels of Dron, Abdie and Dunbog, in addition to three teinds of the Céli Dé of Abernethy, being Innernethy, Carpow and Mugdrum, with the teinds of churches Flisk and Coultra. Ordnance Survey Maps - Six-inch 1st edition, Scotland, 1843-1882 [online].

E. Document 2/5/7

1198 × 1198

> Jonathan, bishop of Dunblane, for Arbroath Abbey; at request of King William, has given church of Abernethy with chapels of Dron and Airlie [Abdie], land of Ballo and Pitlour, half of all teinds of profits arising from money of abbot of Abernethy and all other teinds and obventions rightfully belonging to that church, for

> their own. The monks may constitute whichever chaplains they please in that church, reserving the episcopal dues.[175]

The following charter is a renewal of churches to Arbroath Abbey and is a verbatim repeat of the previous charter information however recorded in 1198 along with a different bishop of Dunblane named Jonathan. As mentioned before, repeated charters are not routine but are also not surprising, often acting as additional confirmation of transactions. In this document, for Arbroath Abbey at the request of the king, bishop Jonathan of Dunblane confirms the giving of the church of Abernethy with chapels Dron and Abdie, the land of Ballo and Pitlour, 'half of all teinds' paid for by the *ab* of Abernethy, and all other teinds and obventions, or random incomes, that belong to the church,[176] much akin to the previous charter.

F. Document 3/502/1
   Date: c. 1200

> Henry Revel and Margaret (daughter of Orm of Abernethy), his spouse, have given and granted, and by this their charter established, to St Andrews Priory in pure and perpetual alms land at Coultra towards the north and from the road that goes from Balmerino to Coultra towards the west as Henry Revel and Richard Revel his nepos and Matthew the canon with his worthy men perambulated it, amounting to 15 acres, with common pasture, for their souls, free and quit from service and secular exaction. [177]

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[175] PoMS, 2/5/7, SEA, i, no. 36 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/1193/; accessed 9 April 2021).
[176] Loc. cit.
[177] PoMS, 3/502/1, St A. Lib., 271 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/5411/; accessed 9 April 2021).

The next charter is the first familial transaction which involves Orm's daughter Margaret and her husband, Henry Revel, gifting the land of Coultra in Fife to St Andrews Priory.[178] The charter describes the given and granted land of Coultra to be 'towards the north, and from the road that goes from Balmerino to Coultra towards the west' as Henry, his nephew or grandson Richard Revel, and Matthew the canon along with his company walked the 15 acres of land, 'with common pasture, for their souls, free and quit from service and secular exaction', effectively clearing them from payment.[179] The dating for this particular charter is broad, as it gives dates between 1173 × circa 1210 but PoMS suggests the dating to be closer to circa 1200, which is why it is placed here in the chronology.[180] Additionally, the broad dates of this charter surround other actions which impact Abernethy, such as William the Lion originally giving and granting and confirming Coultra to Henry Revel sometime between 1173 × 1178.[181]

G. Document 2/137/11
   Date: 26 April 1200

> Pope Innocent III writes to Henry, abbot of Arbroath, and the brethren there, taking the monastery into his protection; all the possessions and goods which they have or may acquire by papal permission, by the liberality of kings or the gifts of the faithful, may remain with the abbot and his successors, including the place in which the monastery is situated and all the shire, and all pertinents by their right marches; from the gift and grant William, king of Scots, founder of the abbey […] from the grant

[178] Loc. cit.
[179] Loc. cit.
[180] Loc. cit.
[181] PoMS, 1/6/127, RRS, ii, no. 147 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/627/; accessed 17 May 2021).

of Jonathan, bishop of Strathearn (Dunblane), the church of Abernethy with pertinents and liberties. [182]

The following charter in the chronology of Abernethy is a Papal bull, a charter issued by the Pope. The overall context of this document, recorded 26th April 1200, relates to the gifting and granting of William the Lion to Arbroath Abbey, and each bishopric is named along with their respective parishes, such as the grant of bishop Jonathan of Dunblane to Arbroath Abbey of the church of Abernethy with pertinents and liberties.[183] It should be noted the document lists Jonathan as bishop of Strathearn because between 1200 × 1350AD, the episcopal titles of 'Strathearn' and 'Dunblane' were often used interchangeably.[184] Interestingly, the only specific parish listed in this charter under the diocese of Dunblane is Abernethy whereas some other bishoprics have listed more, such as bishop Turpin of Brechin who donated the churches of Old Montrose, Panbride, Monikie, Guthrie, Catterline, Dunnichen, Kingoldrum, with all pertinents and liberties, which is no surprise since Arbroath is in the diocese of Brechin.[185] In addition, bishop Roger of St Andrews, bishop Matthew of Aberdeen, and bishop Richard of Moray donated various lands to Arbroath Abbey as well.[186] It is known that the diocese of Dunblane contained a little over thirty parishes in addition to Abernethy, such as St Madoes, Muthill, Fowlis Wester, etc.,[187] so Abernethy appearing in the Papal bull as the sole church being donated by Dunblane further implies its overall importance, or perhaps Abernethy was the only parish donated because of status or geographical location. Further, the church of Abernethy is recorded in another papal

[182] PoMS, 2/137/11, Arb. Lib., no. 221 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/3731/; accessed 12 April 2021).
[183] Loc. cit.
[184] James Hutchison Cockburn, *The Medieval Bishops of Dunblane and Their Church*, (Edinburgh, 1959), p. 2.
[185] PoMS, 2/137/11.
[186] Loc. cit.
[187] Simon Taylor, 'Introduction and Notes to the Parish List' *Scottish Place-Name Society* (2021) <https://spns.org.uk/resources/parish-list> [accessed 15 May 2021].

document two decades later under the papacy of Pope Honorius III, who takes the abbot and convent of Arbroath Abbey into protection, 'especially' various churches including Abernethy.[188] Unlike the previous Papal document, however, there is no mention of the bishops involved with the said churches.

H. Document 3/599/1
Date: 1204 × 1247

> Reginald de Warenne has granted and quitclaimed to Laurence, son of Orm (of Abernethy), 'Couentre' by its right bounds, and with its just pertinents, free and quit from all services and customs, with all his right, in exchange for Wester Dron and 'Munethin' which belongs to Dron, saving the forinsec service of the lord king. He and his heirs will acquit Laurence and his heirs of the military service about the land.[189]

The following charter addresses the granting and quitclaiming of 'Couentre', or Coven Trees in the parish of Forgandenny, by Reginald de Warenne to Laurence in exchange for Dron territories, being Wester Dron and 'Munethin', or Mundie in the parish of Dron. As revealed, Dron was one of the prominent chapels of Abernethy given as part of the original gift to Arbroath Abbey, and Wester Dron belonged to Laurence. The transaction indicates 'saving' the *forinsec* service, the dedicated service that a lord is obligated to render beyond the service which he owes to his immediate lord or king.[190] The word forinsec, from the Latin

[188] Loc. cit.
[189] PoMS, 3/599/1, Douglas, iii, no. 281 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/5564/; accessed 15 April 2021).
[190] Foster, C. W., 'Introduction: Explanation of Terms', in Final Concords of the County of Lincoln 1244-1272, xli-xlvi, (Horncastle: Lincol Record Society, 1920) <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/lincoln-record-soc/vol2/xli-xlvi> [accessed May 31, 2021].

forinsecus meaning 'outside', typically included military service, certain payments, and labour supply.[191]

I. Document 3/452/2
Date: c. 1205 × 8 November 1210

> Walter Olifard, son of Walter Olifard, has given and granted, and by this his present charter established, to Alan son of Alan son of Cospatric of Swinton, Colzie by its right marches and the land of Abernethy, with all pertinents and rights pertaining to the lands, in feu and heritage, for an annual render of two marks, one mark on Martinmas and one mark on Pentecost, for all service pertaining to Walter or his heirs, except his aids, namely, of his prison if it happens, and of making his first son a knight, and of marrying his first daughter.[192]

This charter represents the gift of Colzie, the detached land of Abernethy, from Walter Olifard to Alan, son of Alan, son of Cospatric of Swinton. The land of Abernethy probably refers to Easter Colzie, as another charter with identical dating of 8 November 1208 × 1210 documents the separation further when William the Lion grants the donation made by Walter Olifard of Colzie, Wester, North and South in Perthshire and the detached land of Abernethy, being Easter Colzie.[193] Wester Colzie seems to have been in the Abernethy parish and Perthshire at some point, while Easter Colzie was in Fife.[194] These series of documents are the only charters referencing Colzie in general.

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[191] Loc. cit.
[192] PoMS, 3/452/2, Swinton, SHR 2, no. 3 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/5097/; accessed 15 April 2021).
[193] PoMS, 1/6/450, RRS, ii, no. 484 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/577/; accessed 31 May 2021).
[194] *Regesta Regum Scottorum, vol.ii, The Acts of William I King of Scots 1165-1214*, ed. G.W.S. Barrow with W.W. Scott (Edinburgh 1971), no. 484.

J. Document 2/5/10
Date: 1210 × 4 December 1214

> Abraham, bishop of Dunblane, for Arbroath Abbey; at the request of Sir William, king of Scots, and with consent of his clergy, has given church of Abernethy with chapels of Dron and [Abdie] and lands of Ballo and Pitlour and with half of all teinds coming from abbot's own money from Abernethy. [195]

This is the first of three charters relating to Abraham, bishop of Dunblane, and the church of Abernethy, in particular a conflict with the Céli Dé of Abernethy. This document records the gift from the newly consecrated bishop Abraham of Dunblane to Arbroath Abbey by request of William the Lion, stating that 'with the consent of his clergy' he has given the church of Abernethy, the chapels of Dron and Abdie, the lands of Ballo and Pitlour, and half of all teinds coming from the *ab* of Abernethy's resources.[196] The 'abbot' in question would be Laurence, son of Orm. Overall, this charter emulates the previous charters D and E in the chronology, where bishops Simon and Jonathan of Dunblane request the gifts of the church of Abernethy, with various chapels and lands, for Arbroath Abbey at the request of William the Lion.

K. Document 4/33/9
Date: 1210 × 4 December 1214

> Bishop Abraham of Dunblane wishes to make known that the litigation between Dom. [Gilbert], abbot, and the convent of Arbroath and the prior and Céli Dé of Abernethy concerning certain teinds of the lands in the parish of Abernethy, which was

[195] PoMS, 2/5/10, Arb. Lib., no. 213 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/1583/; accessed 7 March 2021).
[196] Loc. cit.

> made before the court of King W[illiam], was settled as follows: The abbot and convent shall have and possess the said church of Abernethy just as their predecessors did. Both parties have agreed to this and taken an oath that nothing will come contrary to this sentence.[197]

The second charter relating to Abraham and the church of Abernethy records that the bishop 'wishes to make known' the litigation between the abbot and convent of Arbroath versus the prior and Céli Dé of Abernethy fell in favour of the abbot and convent of Arbroath.[198] The settlement includes certain teinds the Céli Dé was concerned about, but the said teinds were agreed upon by both parties involved in the litigation. Either party has agreed to not cause further issues regarding this settlement.

L. Document 4/33/10
Date: 1210 × 17 June 1219

> Bishop Abraham of Dunblane makes known that before him a case was called between Arbroath Abbey and the prior and Céli Dé of Abernethy, concerning the teinds of Petkarry, Petyman, Malcarny, [P]etkorny, Pethwnegus and Gattaway, the marches of which Arbroath Abbey asserted to belong to their church of Abernethy. He has adjudicated the case in favour of the abbot, who was the procurator of the said monks, and the prior, who was the procurator of the said Céli Dé, has been sentenced to silence.[199]

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[197] PoMS 4/33/9, Arb. Lib., no. 215 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/3945/; accessed 7 March 2021).
[198] Loc.cit.
[199] PoMS, 4/33/10, Arb. Lib., no. 214 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/3946/; accessed 7 March 2021).

The final charter about the settlement between Abraham and the Céli Dé of Abernethy lists the lands previously concerned in the litigation, called Petkarry, Petyman, Malcarny, Petkorny Pethwnegus, and Gattaway, all of which, except for the latter, are not identified., despite a heavy concentration of Pit names in the area.[200] The prior of the Céli Dé was sentenced to silence on the matter by the bishop. Interestingly, this document is the last reference to the Céli Dé of Abernethy.[201]

M. Document 4/32/81
Date: 10 June 1237 × 20 August 1241

> W[illiam], bishop of Glasgow, and G[eoffrey], bishop of Dunkeld, recite letters from Pope Gregory IX appointing them papal judges-delegate in the case between [Clement] bishop of Dunblane and the abbot and convent of Arbroath over the church of Abernethy, which had already been committed to the bishops of St Andrews, Brechin and Dunkeld. The judges have ordained that all right which the abbot and convent of Arbroath had in the altarage of Abernethy with the lands of Pitlour and Ballo shall fall to the bishop of Dunblane and remain in perpetuity, saving half the land of Ballo to the monks and easements, and saving all garbal teinds pertaining to the church of Abernethy, converted for their own uses. The bishop of Dunblane shall provide the

[200] Loc. cit.
[201] Loc. cit.

> goods for the altarage and see that the church is suitably served.[202]

This charter proves crucial to the church of Abernethy. The final document in the chronology describes a particular case committed to the three bishops of St Andrews, Brechin, and Dunkeld, but after what seemed like a delay, the Pope became involved again to appoint new papal judges-delegates as the bishops of Glasgow and Dunkeld to hear the case instead.[203] Interestingly, during this time, the bishop of Glasgow was the chancellor of the king's government. The eagerness to solve the case by the Pope and papal judges-delegates suggests the overall importance Abernethy had to have a separate case dedicated to it. The document concludes that the judges officially ordered that the altarage of Abernethy, the lands of Pitlour and Ballo, and teinds which all were originally the right of Arbroath Abbey, now fall to the bishopric of Dunblane in perpetuity.[204] Bishop Clement successfully persuaded the papal judges-delegates, and this is the last example that Abernethy falls under the authority of Dunblane in the charter material, but also further indicates that Dunblane has power and persuasion.

[202] PoMS, 4/32/81, Arb. Lib., i, no. 241 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/3942/; accessed 7 March 2021).
[203] Loc. cit.
[204] Loc. cit.

Discussion:

Overall, the charters concerning the church of Abernethy give various perspectives on what could have happened to the church's prominence, from several quitclaims of possessions to donations by a leading bishopric. The first record in the sample of charters chosen is substantial not only because it records the granting of the Abernethy abbacy by William the Lion to Orm,[205] but it commences the ongoing transactions that show the connection the church of Abernethy had with the building of Arbroath Abbey.[206] The *abs* of Abernethy were descended from a lineage connected to the *mormaer* of Fife named Gille Míchéil, in which the first *ab* of Abernethy mentioned is this Orm, Gille Míchéil's grandson.[207] *Mormaer* was a title given to the head of a province, in this case Fife.[208] Because the foundation already existed, William the Lion was recognising Orm's possession because, in some other way, Orm already acquired the abbacy before the charter was recorded.

The documents about the abbacy and lands of Abernethy category effectively demonstrate how the *ab* of Abernethy, predominately Laurence, utilised the abbacy as a resource for transactions such as quitclaiming or gifting land, such as in Charter H, Document 3/599/1, where the land of Abernethy belonging to Laurence is exchanged with a lord for personal use.[209] As Laurence's priorities may have been focused elsewhere, this could be because there was little interest in developing the abbacy due to competing and expanding institutions such as Arbroath Abbey and later Balmerino.[210] Likewise, the Land of Abernethy

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[205] PoMS, 1/6/132.
[206] Arbroath Abbey was founded in 1178AD by the patronage of the king for a group of monks to independently prosper from Kelso Abbey, its founding monastery. See Loc. cit.
[207] The *mormaership* of Fife is complicated, and it is suggested by Alice Taylor that Gille Míchéil was a co-*mormaer* with two other earls. The other two, potentially being of the same kin, succeeded into the *mormaership* whereas Gille Míchéil descendants retained power as Lords of Abernethy. See Alice Taylor, 'The Shape of the State in Medieval Scotland, 1124 – 1290', (Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 42 – 45.
[208] See G. W. S. Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots: Government, Church, and Society from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century* (St. Martin's Press, 1973), pp. 65 – 74.
[209] PoMS, 3/599/1.
[210] My thanks to Dauvit Broun for suggesting this possibility.

category emphasises the use of the abbacy as a resource for personal transactions such as in Charter F, Document 3/502/1, where the land of Coultra represented property part of the *ab* of Abernethy, and Henry Revel may have received it as part of a dowry given by Orm.[211] Another example of using the abbacy as a resource is in a document dated 11 September 1233 × 1241, when Laurence quitclaims 'all the land of Coultra, Ballindean, 'Balnedart', Corbie and Balmerino, and all right that he and his heirs have or might have in those lands' in the presence of King Alexander II for 200 marks.[212] On the other hand, while Laurence quitclaims many lands of Abernethy, he is also gaining lands. For example, in a document dated 24 June 1233, a summary is recorded of King Alexander II giving Laurence land within the castle of Roxburgh.[213] This is the last reference to Laurence of Abernethy concerning the affairs of the church in the charter material.

It is noteworthy that when Laurence initially takes on the abbacy, the title 'abbot' is discarded in the charters and is occasionally replaced with the title 'lord' or *Dominus*. Moreover, in a charter documenting the dispute between Laurence and an Alwin son of Duncan of Foffarty, Laurence is referred to specifically as 'lord of Inverarity'.[214] This is the only title associated with the then *ab* of Abernethy but is not unusual, as various *abs* were also lords, acting as hereditary holders of the church and their respective lands, and lordship was usually bestowed by a king in a previous generation. In this context, a charter reveals the 'Lord of Inverarity' could be dated back to Orm between 1166 × 1171 when William the Lion gifts Inverarity to Orm.[215] Towards the end of his long life, Laurence is not referenced by title

[211] PoMS, 3/502/1.
[212] PoMS, 3/42/2, Balm. Lib., no. 7 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/4345/; accessed 8 March 2021).
[213] PoMS, 1/7/200, RRS, iii, no. 193 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/2061/; accessed 8 March 2021).
[214] PoMS, 3/229/1, Stair Society Misc V, App. (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/4746/; accessed 12 April 2021).
[215] PoMS, 1/6/98, RRS, ii, no. 114 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/546/; accessed 19 April 2021).

but by status as *Fidelis* or 'sworn man' of King Alexander II in a charter dating to 1244.[216] Laurence's son Patrick of Abernethy is also referred to as *Dominus* while Hugh of Abernethy eventually becomes a knight to the king, often being referred to alone as Hugh of Abernethy or as 'sir.'[217] After Hugh's abbacy, the title *Lord of Abernethy* was passed to his son Alexander, a Scottish noble whose daughter Margaret passed the title on to her husband *jure uxoris,* that is, passing the title of nobility used by the husband of the wife from whom the title originally came.[218] Overall, Laurence's time as *ab* was categorised by quitclaiming land of Abernethy, and the title 'Ab of Abernethy' became 'lord of Abernethy'.

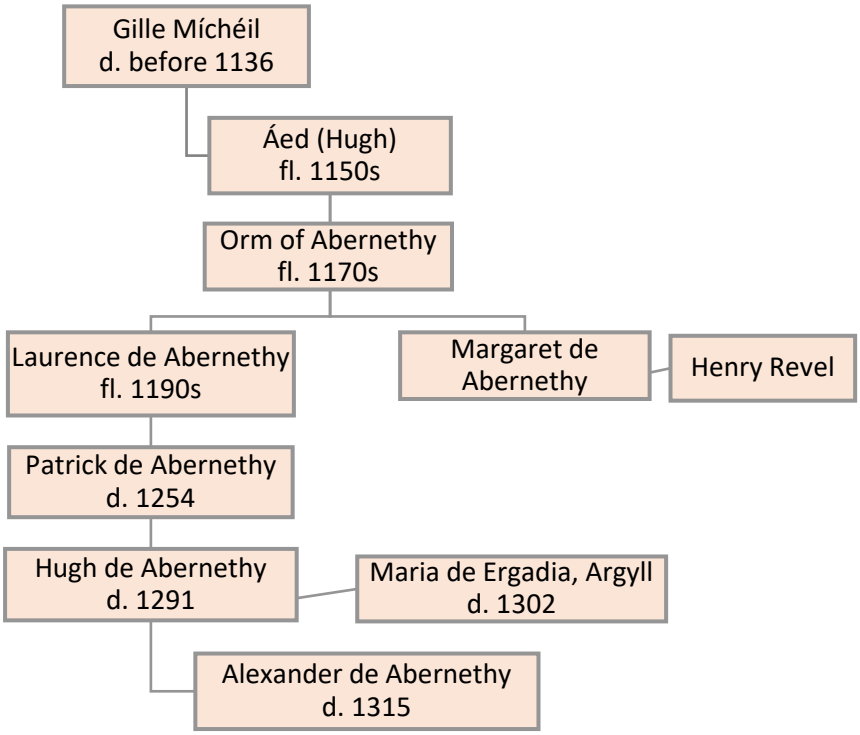

Figure 26. Family tree of the Abs of Abernethy and family based on the charter material, beginning with Gille Míchéil.

[216] PoMS, 1/7/306, RRS, iii, no. 299 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/1938/; accessed 19 May 2021).
[217] PoMS, 3/42/3 and 1/7/193.
[218] Matthew H. Hammond, 'Women and the adoption of charters in Scotland north of Forth, c. 1150–1286', *The Innes Review 62.1* (2011), p. 5.

The charter material pertaining to the church of Abernethy shows specific land division amongst Abernethy, such as in the Charter D, Document 3/42/1, which gives a snapshot of land division between the parish church of Abernethy and the Céli Dé of Abernethy, reinforcing the notion that they functioned as separate institutions on the same ecclesiastical site.[219] The document records the quitclaim of 'all the teinds of the territory of Abernethy and all the just pertinents of the same church' to Arbroath Abbey with exceptions of churches of Flisk, Coultra, and various teinds.[220] Despite showing the reality that the parish church of Abernethy and the Céli Dé of Abernethy operated as separate groups, with the latter specifically exempt from this quitclaim, effectively keeping their teinds as well as the land in Mugdrum, Carpow, Balchyrewell, Balecolly and Innernethy',[221] while holding additional teinds,[222] the charter specifically records the 'teinds of [Laurence's] demesne of Abernethy' are also exempt from the quitclaim. The demense of Abernethy, or the territory directly under the lordship of the *ab*, contained much of the land Laurence quitclaimed and used as a resource throughout the charter material, such as Coultra or Balmerino.

Notably, Charter D presents the curious element of Dunbog. Originally part of the quitclaim by Laurence, Dunbog is only mentioned once more in the subsequent charter of the same year, when King William gives the church of Abernethy with certain chapels, lands, and teinds to Arbroath Abbey.[223] Once the bishops of Dunblane become involved with the affairs of Abernethy, the chapel of Dunbog seems to disappear from Abernethy's parish. It is revealed however in another charter that Dunbog belongs to St Andrews, when an agreement is formed between Roger, bishop of St Andrews, and abbot Henry, and the convent of

[219] PoMS, 3/42/1.
[220] Loc. cit.
[221] Loc. cit.
[222] As mentioned, in Document 4/33/10 the teinds of Petkarry, Petyman, Malcarny, [P]etkorny Pethwnegus and Gattaway are mentioned however are not identified despite the high concentration of Pit- names in and around the Abernethy parish.
[223] PoMS, 1/6/310.

Arbroath sometime between 24 August 1198 × 17 March 1199.[224] This agreement includes a quitclaim made by Roger 'from cain and conveth' various churches with the lands and chapels belonging to them, listing Dunbog as one of them.[225] The subsequent charters involving the bishopric of St Andrews continue to list Dunbog as one of their chapels, including Charter G, the aforementioned Papal bull recorded on 26 April 1200,[226] which suggests Dunbog may have belonged to a different lordship at some point, in this case to Sir Roger, and the transaction between Abernethy may have been lost or the ownership was uncertain. Another factor is the proximity of Dunbog to St Andrews compared to Abernethy, so maybe Abernethy resigned the chapel to St Andrews, or perhaps the abbacy never had possession over it.

It is necessary to address how the place-names listed in these charters uncover more information. For example, the documents presented on PoMS originally confused the chapel of Abdie with Airlie, and the correction has been noted throughout the material. This confusion comes from the early form of 'Erolyn', referring to Airlie in Angus. It is plausible Charter D, Document 3/42/1 contained a scribal error where 'Erolyn' was originally meant to be 'Ebedyn',[227] a reference to a particular chapel in the Abdie area before Abdie is referred to as a chapel. Scribal errors are common occurrences when using multiple textual sources, so when the error was copied, Airlie remained where Abdie should be. It should be noted that the name Abdie was probably originally from the Gaelic word *apdaine*, meaning 'abbacy' as in the 'the land of the ab'.[228] Because it derives from a Gaelic word, it has been suggested that the church or abbey which existed within the Abdie area was likely connected to the Pictish

[224] PoMS, 4/4/3, SEA, i, no. 255 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/4010/; accessed 22 June 2021).
[225] Loc. cit.
[226] PoMS, 2/137/11.
[227] Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife,* 5 vols (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006), vol iv, pp. 70 – 1.
[228] Loc. cit.

foundation of Abernethy.[229] Furthermore, Abdie is later referred to as the 'mother-church' in two separate cartularies.[230] It is noteworthy that other place-names in and around Abernethy suggest both ecclesiastical origins and contextual etymology. For example, Pitlour comes from Gaelic meaning 'land-holding of the gospel book' or 'of the leper', while Ballo comes from the Gaelic *bealach* meaning 'way' or 'passing through hills', which referred to the king's highway south to Strathmiglo, from Perth to Kinghorn.[231] In addition, it has been suggested that the road went through a place called Pittenbrog, meaning 'farm or land-holding of the shoe(s)' in Gaelic, which could relate to a shoe-relic of St Brigid, Abernethy's patron saint.[232]

The most striking component shown in the charter material is that the church of Abernethy is continually given by both the king and by the bishops of Dunblane to Arbroath Abbey. As the documents have shown, if the king felt the church of Abernethy was his to give, he would have done so without the request of the bishops of Dunblane. This is shown in Charter C, Document 2/5/2, and represents a pivotal moment as from Bishop Simon of Dunblane and onwards, the church of Abernethy was in the bishropic of Dunblane during this time.[233] Not only do the charters involving Bishops Simon, Jonathan, and Abraham demonstrate the Dunblane bishopric agency over the church of Abernethy for the first time, but also this charter reveals that the king himself went to the Bishop of Dunblane to ratify and execute this request. This signifies the bishopric of Dunblane either had rights next to the king as a double donor or the bishopric was the actual owner, at least to an extent since Abernethy functioned under the Diocese of Dunblane. The overall pattern in the charters is

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[229] University of Glasgow, *Fife Place-Name Database*, 'Abdie', <https://fife-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk/placename/?id=2354> [accessed 28 July 2021].
[230] See PoMS, 4/33/19, Lind. Cart., no. 63 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/3931/; accessed 2 July 2021) and PoMS, 3/100/5, Lind. Cart., no. 62 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/4623/; accessed 2 July 2021).
[231] University of Glasgow, *Fife Place-Name Database*, 'Pitlour', <https://fife-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk/placename/?id=3222> [accessed 28 June 2021].
[232] Loc. cit.
[233] PoMS, 2/5/2.

that the bishops of Dunblane act like the previous owner in a transaction whereas William the Lion acts as the future donor. Because of the bishops of Dunblane's privileges as a donor, they effectively received a lot of the land back when the opportunity arises in disputes, such as in Charter M, Document 4/32/81. All in all, the charter material shows us that the bishops of Dunblane owned the church and chapels, while the *ab* owned the separate demesnes. From the document of Bishop Simon of Dunblane, the presence of the bishopric continues to be relevant in all the church of Abernethy's affairs, which could be a correlation to Abernethy's loss of prominence and Dunblane's rise of status.

When considering the archaeological evidence, it is curious the round tower of Abernethy had two building phases after the time the treaty took place, with the first phase dated to the later eleventh century and the second phase to the early twelfth century.[234] Perhaps William became interested in the site and offered investment towards the production.

Since a comparison was made for the sculptural assemblage at Brechin to the assemblage at Abernethy, a look at the charter material relating to Brechin may prove useful. As previously mentioned, Brechin appears in the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba*, sharing an early medieval reference akin to Abernethy.[235] However, unlike Abernethy, a defining note is recorded during the reign of Cináed mac Maíl Coluim in 971 – 995, proclaiming '[h]ere is he who bestowed the great city of Brechin to God',[236] a common phrase used for the establishment of monastic dedications. This is the extent of a monastery existing at Brechin in

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[234] Richard Fawcett, *The architecture of the Scottish medieval church, 1100-1560*, (London, 2011), p. 7.
[235] Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History*, p. 516.
[236] The passage is recorded as the following: 'Kenneth son of Malcolm reigned [24] years. Immediately he plundered part of Britain [i.e. Strathclyde]. Kenneth's foot soldiers were slain, with very great slaughter, on the moss by the Cornie. The Scots plundered England as far as Stainmore and as far as the Clough, and as far as the pools of the Derwent. Moreover, Kenneth fortified the banks of the fords of the Forth. After a year, Kenneth proceeded to plunder England and carried off the son of the king of the Saxons. It is he who gave the great monastery of Brechin to the Lord'. Benjamin T. Hudson, 'The Scottish Chronicle', *The Scottish Historical Review 77. 204*, Part 2 (October 1998), p. 161.

the textual sources. The gap in our understanding jumps to the bishopric of Brechin, which can be traced back to Léot of Brechin, the first known lay abbot of Brechin who appears in the *notitiae* on the *Book of Deer* as 'Leod, abb of Brechin', a witness in a charter recorded between 23 April 1131 × 22 April 1132.[237] The known bishop of Brechin is also recorded in the *notitiae* of the margins in the *Book of Deer* as a royal witness is Samson of Brechin,[238] perhaps the son of Léot of Brechin.[239] Sometime between 1140 and 1153AD, Samson is initially listed as a witness to a charter granted by King David I to the community of Deer,[240] and he appears as a witness to a charter involving King Máel Coluim IV as late as 1165AD.[241] Also, an initial mention of a bishop of Brechin in a papal bull is dated 1155AD, where Pope Adrian IV writes about the consecration of a newly appointed bishop to various bishoprics of Scotland, including Turpin, Bishop of Brechin.[242] Turpin seems to be a very dependable subject during William the Lion's requests of various support for the establishment of Arbroath Abbey, as the bishop gave away various lands, teinds, churches, and 'tofts and crofts'.[243]

The bishopric of Brechin held various churches with lands in both Angus and the Mearns, 'two distinct areas which had strong connections throughout history'.[244] Other Bishops who took on Turpin's role remained generous towards the establishment of Arbroath Abbey. For example, between 1211 × 1214AD, Bishop Ralph of Brechin granted seven churches to Arbroath Abbey.[245] Brechin not only gave land but acquired it as well, such as when 'Randulf of Strachan granted all right that he had in the land of Bractullo to Brechin

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[237] PoMS, Document 3/12/1, Forsyth, *Book of Deer*, III (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/2603/; accessed 24 August 2021).
[238] Kenneth Jackson (ed.), *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer: The Osborn Bergin Memorial Lecture 1970*, (Cambridge, 1972), p. 36.
[239] Loc. cit.
[240] Ibid, p. 89.
[241] Ibid, p. 81.
[242] PoMS, Document 2/130/1, Haddan and Stubbs, Councils, ii, I, 231-32 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/2891/; accessed 20 March 2021).
[243] See PoMS 'Brechin' for various entries.
[244] Gray, p. 21.
[245] See PoMS, *Scottish Episcopal Acta*, i, nos. 18 – 21.

Cathedral' sometime between 1219 and 1225.[246] As an official see recognised by the pope, the Bishopric of Brechin had various privileges and protection in their control, unlike Abernethy which was dependent on the decisions made by the Bishopric of Dunblane. These privileges undoubtedly would be favourable to the church and the king, helping to secure Brechin's position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In addition to hosting a Céli Dé community who were later converted into regular canons,[247] Abernethy and Brechin's evidence seems very comparable however the great disparity between the two establishments is that Brechin had a known and well-established bishopric. After his assignment of the diocese of Brechin under the 'ancient church of a Celtic monastic type' category, G. W. S. Barrow stated the ten dioceses of medieval Scotland 'are characterised by an extraordinary intermingling of territories and a profusion of detached portions often remote from the mother church. Had the twelfth-century kings been starting from scratch it is inconceivable that they would have produced such complexity'.[248] Where Brechin had an established bishopric to keep itself afloat during emerging hierarchical changes in the thirteenth century and beyond, Abernethy did not. The overall comparisons show it is evident both Abernethy and Brechin had remarkable status, however, while Abernethy became a parish under the diocese of Dunblane, Brechin thrived as a small bishopric.

The charter material not only reveals the many social and political relationships the clergy and lords of Abernethy held before and after the thirteenth century, but they also reveal geographical relationships. The large territory of Abernethy included the advantageous lands of Ballo and Pitlour, the chapels of Dron, Dunbog and Abdie, and included Mugdrum, Carpow, and Innernethy as land belonging to the Céli Dé of Abernethy. Also, Abernethy is

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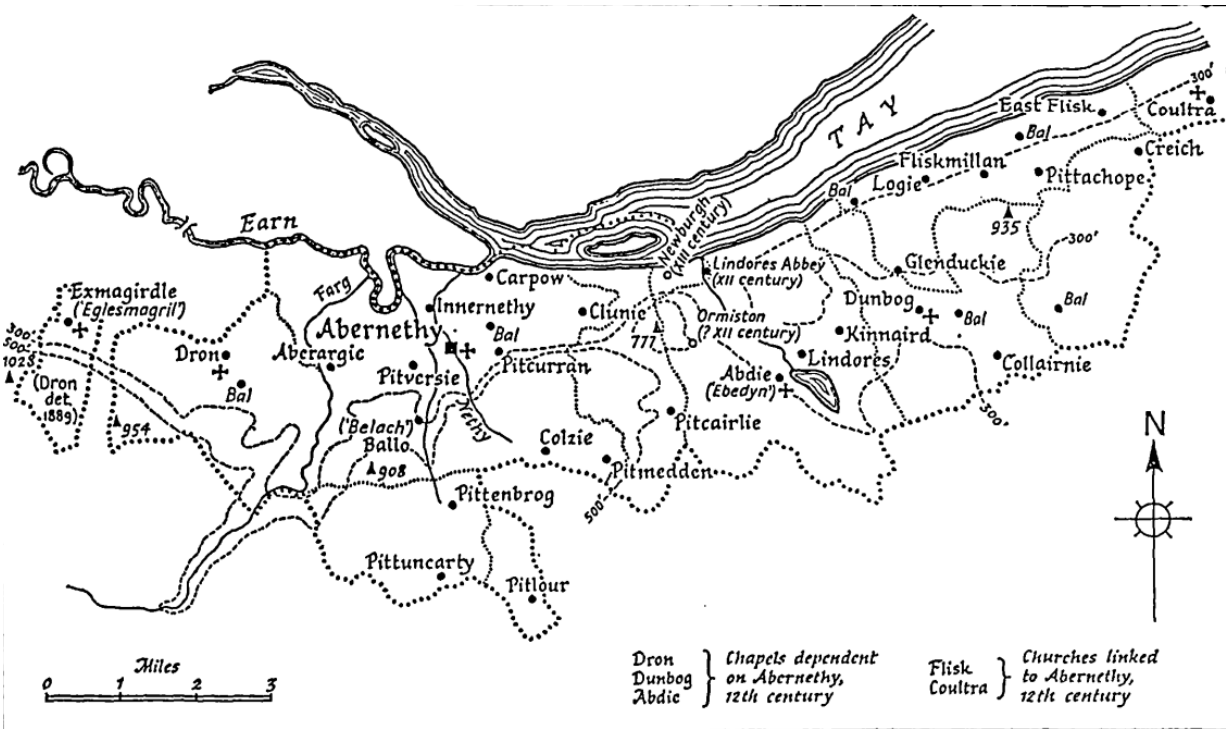
[246] Catriona Anna Gray, 'The bishopric of Brechin and church organisation in Angus and the Mearns in the central Middle Ages' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2014), p. 77.
[247] Various reference to the Céli Dé of Brechin. See PoMS, 1/6/99 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/547/; accessed 20 March 2021).
[248] G.W.S. Barrow, *Kingship and Unity: Scotland 1000-1306* (Second Edition, Edinburgh, 2003), p. 76.

situated in close proximity to major ecclesiastical sites, including Lindores Abbey and St Madoes.[249] Interestingly, Lindores Abbey was founded by Kelso Abbey, the same institution which founded Arbroath Abbey.[250] St Madoes, however, has a direct link to Abernethy in the period of interest because it is believed to have been one of the properties of the abs of Abernethy. Sources reveal that the patronage of St Madoes was held by the earls of Rothes who were the heirs of part of the lordship of Abernethy between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.[251] Similarly, St Madoes also was a parish under the Diocese of Dunblane and also hosts high-quality Pictish stones,[252] with examples previously compared to the Mugdrum cross.[253] Most of the territory of Abernethy was mapped by G.W.S Barrow and includes many of the teinds, chapels belonging to the church and the Céli Dé of Abernethy,[254] as shown below:

[249] Loc. cit.
[250] PoMS, 2/73/11 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/2280/; accessed 2 May 2022).
[251] Ian B. Cowan, *The Parishes of Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 178.
[252] Loc. cit.
[253] See Chapter 2, p. 41.
[254] G. W. S. Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots: Government, Church, and Society from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century* (St. Martin's Press, 1973), p. 51.



Map 3. Map of the Conjectural 'shire' of Abernethy showing various teinds, land and chapel locations as mentioned in the charters, from G.W.S. Barrow, *Kingdom of the Scots*, p. 51.

Abernethy after the thirteenth century:

After the papal judges-delegate settled the dispute involving the altarage of Abernethy, the lands of Pitlour and Ballo, and teinds were ceded to the bishopric of Dunblane between 1237 and 1241,[255] and the presence of the church of Abernethy in the charter material declines considerably. The settlement concluded the altarage of the parish church was to go to Clement, and the abbot of Arbroath became a canon of Dunblane, in place of the rector of Abernethy.[256] The next charter to mention the church of Abernethy as an entity dated to 13 November 1313, when the then abbot of Arbroath granted all garbal teinds of 'the little villa of Culfargie' to Master Roger, the rector of the church of Blairgowie 'for his

[255] PoMS, 4/32/81.
[256] A Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches, 'Abernethy Parish and Collegiate Church' (https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/corpusofscottishchurches/site.php?id=156961; accessed 29 April 2022).

use annually, for his whole life'.[257] The church of Abernethy is mentioned in reference to their monks, where the garbal teinds are were 'pertained by reason of the monks' church of Abernethy', and given to Master Roger for his 'faithful service, council, aid and labour to the monks and their monastery'.[258] As this Master Roger is noted for his generosity, it appears the monks of Abernethy also expressed generosity by allowing Master Roger to visit 'their monastery' as often as he wished, and would be provided with food, drink, and horses.[259] Not only is this an interesting glimpse into how the church functioned after the thirteenth century, but this is textual evidence that there was a monastery present at Abernethy during this era.

Despite the church of Abernethy appearing in a few charters relating to the renewal of Arbroath Abbey's possessions, the subsequent charter material only references Abernethy as a title or by miscellaneous lands of Abernethy. For example, many charters relate to Hugh of Abernethy, the grandson of Laurence, and his acquisitions of land and subsequent imprisonment.[260] The Abernethy's continued to have influence in this era as seen in a charter where Hugh of Abernethy wrote to King Edward requesting the king to intercede with the Pope concerning his business'.[261] Furthermore, Alexander of Abernethy, son of Hugh, has a substantial presence in the charters in many transactions concerning the granting of lands, retainment of men and land, and performing fealty and homage to the king.[262] Another title revealed in later charter material belongs to Andrew, the prior of the Céli Dé of Abernethy,

[257] PoMS, 2/64/38, Arb. Lib., no. 336 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/6734/; accessed 29 April 2022).
[258] Loc. cit.
[259] Loc. cit.
[260] PoMS, 5/1/16, Douglas, iv, no. 1 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/factoid/79138/; accessed 28 April 2022).
[261] PoMS, 3/42/8, Stevenson, Docs., i, no. 49 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/7891/; accessed 28 April 2022).
[262] PoMS, no. 16105 'Alexander Abernethy' (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/person/16105/; accessed 29 April 2022).

where between 1235 × 1239, where he signed a statement as a judge in a legal case.[263] This is a particularly interesting title because it indicates that the Céli Dé of Abernethy continued into the thirteenth century, despite the prebends and teinds of the churches and chapels being taken from them previously.

[263] PoMS, 2/5/19, Lind. Cart., no. 51 (https://www.poms.ac.uk/record/source/1763/; accessed 28 April 2022).

Discussion and Conclusion

Overall, the interdisciplinary evidence surrounding medieval Abernethy, and ancient Abernethy considering all of the archaeological evidence, from four faces on Abernethy 18 and the excavations of Castle Law to the round tower, represents a substantial site of learning, creativity, and wealthy patronage. The foundation legend is the product of well-educated scribes who, like the sculpture of Abernethy, were perhaps funded by wealthy patronage with access to a scriptorium. Because Nechtan son of Eirp's reign was written before the mention of other prominent churches, such as St Andrews and Brechin, the attachment of a foundation legend into a Pictish king list is a good indication the scribes and overall ecclesiastical community of Abernethy viewed Abernethy as substantial. Furthermore, because king Nechtan son of Eirp is written as 'the king of all the *provinciae* of the Picts', this reinforces the notion the scribes saw Abernethy as worthy of high status within the Pictish church. The dedication of the foundation to St Brigid by Nechtan son of Eirp presents the initial connection Abernethy had with Ireland. For Abernethy, the presence of the foundation legend is a textual justification that the original foundation was established by sacred influence, in this case, the connection with Saint Brigid. More significantly, the existence of the four-faced stone with cult associations and the objects of high investment found at the excavations of Castle Law indicated the site was affluent since ancient times, and this affluence is reflected in the substantial, medieval sculpture assemblage.

The overall archaeological evidence of Abernethy is representative of many trends in sculpture in Northern Britain and Ireland. The assemblage includes ancient to late tenth century carvings, mostly all high quality but in fragmented condition, except for the Mugdrum Cross. It is curious the depiction of the crucifixion on Abernethy 4, dated to the ninth and tenth centuries, shares iconographic styles like well-known Irish high crosses in Monasterboice

and Clonmacnoise, both date to the tenth century. With this in mind, and if the round tower of Abernethy predates most of the Irish round towers as the construction of the first tower and 'subsequent ruin' occurred before the rebuilding during the 1090s,[264] perhaps the Irish took inspiration from Abernethy. Perhaps the rebuilding of the tower was a response to new structures. The round tower alone represents a phenomenon unique to medieval Irish architecture and connects Abernethy to Ireland further, which is reinforced by the adaptation of the elongated doorway of the tower, matching the height of the doorways to the round towers in County Kildare, the only round towers of Ireland with a tall doorway. Perhaps this adjustment to the tower was when the connection to St Brigid was postulated. Whether the round tower is a product of keeping up with architectural trends or to create an image supporting the foundation legend's association with Saint Brigid or the abbess of Kildare, interconnectivity between Ireland and Abernethy is apparent.

Overall, Abernethy was the site of a major ecclesiastical institution with chapels, and following the general trend, those chapels eventually became independent churches. Much like Abernethy has the foundation legend to establish prominence, some of the churches have place-names suggesting substantial origins, such as Abdie, from *apdaine* as 'the land of the ab', and Pitlour, from 'land-holding of the gospel book'. Furthermore, Abernethy had different dimensions of land between the parish church and the Céli Dé of Abernethy, although some of the Céli Dé teinds are no longer identifiable. In addition, Abernethy had an evident and intricate relationship with the bishopric of Dunblane, where many transactions concerning the giving of lands, chapels, and/or teinds in and around Abernethy fell into the hands of the bishops of Dunblane, signifying their role as either the double donor alongside the king or the actual owners of these possessions. As a result of all this, many lands, chapels, and teinds belonging to the parish church of Abernethy were donated, quitclaimed, or gifted

[264] Semple, p. 133.

to various beneficiaries, dowry rights and to major monastic institutions. Although the status of Abernethy was diminished, the once major ecclesiastical site remains important to understanding what the ecclesiastical establishment thought about themselves and how they sought to create texts and sculptures to strengthen their rich narrative.

For future research, it would be most helpful to do a more in-depth analysis of the archaeology found at major Pictish ecclesiastical centres and to include more sites such as Deer, Iona, Burghead, Tullich, and Rhynie. Additionally, the Irish connection with Abernethy could be explored more in a comparative analysis with other sites, and perhaps from an Irish point of view. The potential for future work could be to conduct an in-depth comparative investigation on the many antiquarian drawings of Abernethy, and perhaps a wider comparison to antiquarian drawings of other sites mentioned. And finally, a careful study surrounding the Céli Dé of Abernethy and other Céli Dé communities might be fruitful in understanding their role alongside the parish church. When considering the foundation legend, the archaeological evidence, and the involvement in Arbroath Abbey, it is clear Abernethy had a significant role in the wider physical and political landscape of early medieval Scotland. As much of the conversation about the church in the context of early medieval Scotland involves places such as St Andrews and Iona, Abernethy should be included.

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