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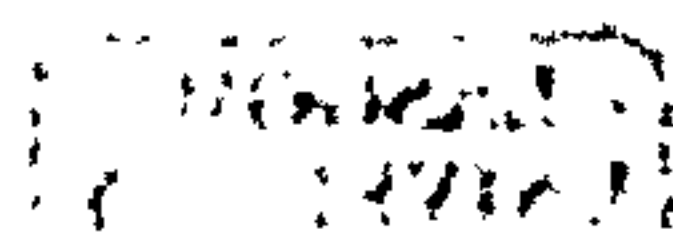
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# **Mapping sculpture and power: Symbolic wealth in early medieval Scotland, 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries AD**

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**This thesis is submitted in fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts, University of Glasgow, June 2003.**

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## PhD Abstract

### Mapping sculpture and power: Symbolic wealth in early medieval Scotland, 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries AD

This thesis is a study of the articulation of power in Scotland c. 500 – 1000 AD using an analysis of manifestations of ‘symbolic wealth,’ particularly sculpted stones.

In studying the power structures of early medieval Scotland, both textual and archaeological evidence must be considered. Documentary evidence for Scotland is poor, but comparison can be made with Ireland, which has relatively rich textual evidence. The archaeological evidence of the early medieval period in Scotland is considerable, but has an uneasy relationship with textual sources. Previous attempts to understand the power structures of early medieval Scotland through contemporary descriptions, such as those existing for the monastery at Iona, have resulted in constructed ideal types. These ideal types (e.g. for monasteries, *emporia*, *civitates*) have hindered the recognition of difference and variety in early medieval settlement. Within this thesis, relevant documentary evidence is considered alongside the archaeology with the aim of exploring variability in contemporary perceptions and perceived hierarchies of places of power.

This research recognises that control of resources, material and physical, is a crucial aspect of power relations in the early medieval period and approaches power by looking at the type and distribution of material culture and how it indicates changes in ideology and politics. Aspects of material culture invested with social meaning are termed ‘symbolic wealth.’ Traditional manifestations of symbolic wealth, such as imported pottery, glass vessels, and fine metalworking are considered. The main body of evidence comes from a new methodological approach to sculpted stones that argues sculpture can be ranked by virtue of the relative investment in its creation process. This, in turn, indicates the degree to which power and investment were centralised. The methodology evaluates the relative time involved in the steps of the creation process of individual monuments.

The analysis of sculpted monuments and other manifestations of symbolic wealth is tested in three regional studies - Argyll, Fife and Perthshire, and Dumfries and Galloway. The results are regional stories of change over the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Argyll and Fife and Perth, the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries stand out as high points of investment particularly in stone sculpture. In Argyll, this reflects the increasing wealth and influence of the monastery at Iona, while in Fife and Perth the increase is linked to patronage and secular authority. In Dumfries and Galloway, the apex of sculptural investment comes in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries concentrating on the bishopric and See of Whithorn. The settlement at Whithorn has consistent concentrations of symbolic wealth of various forms throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Excavations of the site are re-evaluated in the light of these findings, showing Whithorn to be a complex mix of secular and ecclesiastic settlement and power – a mix that cannot be defined by ideal types. The resulting stories of change show the dynamic nature of power in early medieval Scotland and the multiple strategies used to display and articulate that power through the creation and use of symbolic wealth.

Table of Contents

Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of Illustrations	vi
List of Tables	ix
Chapter One: Power in Early Medieval Scotland	1
Introduction	1
Interpreting power in early medieval Scotland: using documentary sources	4
Civitas and other places of power in the textual landscape	6
Interpreting power in early medieval Scotland: using archaeology	28
Power and archaeological thinking	28
Early Medieval Society and Economics	34
Conclusion	41
Chapter Two: Mapping Symbolic Wealth	43
Introduction	43
Assessing Symbolic Wealth	43
Carved Stones	44
Assessing monumental resources	48
Resource Assessment Scheme	54
Mapping	60
Dating Sculptured Stones	63
Settlement	70
Imported pottery and glass	73
Non-ferrous metalworking	78
Hoards and Coins	82
Regional Studies	84
Conclusion	87
Chapter Three: Symbolic wealth and changing power systems in Argyll	88
Introduction	88
Topography and Environment	88
Overview of Early Medieval Settlement in Argyll	90
Argyll in the 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	92
Monuments: The Argyll carved stones	94
Monuments of the 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	96
Imported pottery, glass, and fine metalworking	113
Argyll in the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	122
Monuments of the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	123
Fine metalwork and imported pottery	136
Argyll in the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	140
Monuments of the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	141
Fine metalwork and hoards	145
Conclusion: Changing power structures in early medieval Argyll	150
Phase I	150
Phase II	153
Phase III	158



Chapter Four: Symbolic wealth and changing power systems in Fife and Perthshire	161
Introduction	161
Topography and Environment	161
Overview of Early Medieval Settlement in Fife and Perth	162
Fife and Perth in the 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	166
Monuments: The Fife and Perthshire carved stones	168
Monuments of the 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	169
Imported pottery, glass, fine metalworking, and hoards	179
Fife and Perth in the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	188
Monuments of the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	190
Fine Metalwork and other objects of portable wealth	211
Fife and Perth in the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	215
Monuments of the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	216
Fine Metalwork, Hoards, and Coins	223
Conclusion: Changing power structures in early medieval Fife and Perth	225
Phase I	227
Phase II	234
Phase III	241
Chapter Five: Symbolic wealth and changing power systems in Dumfries and Galloway	246
Introduction	246
Topography and Environment	246
Overview of Early Medieval Settlement in Dumfries and Galloway	247
Dumfries and Galloway in the 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	250
Monuments: The Dumfries and Galloway carved stones	251
Monuments of the 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	253
Imported pottery and glass	268
Fine metalworking and metalwork	276
Dumfries and Galloway in the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	283
Monuments of the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	284
Fine metalworking and metalwork	301
Hoards and Coins	304
Dumfries and Galloway in the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	309
Monuments of the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	312
Fine metalwork and coins	322
Conclusion: Changing power structures in early medieval Dumfries and Galloway	325
Phase I	327
Phase II	331
Phase III	334
Chapter Six: Symbolic wealth and power in early medieval Scotland	341
Introduction	341
Stories of Power	342
Symbolic wealth and landscapes of power	350
Conclusion	356
Avenues for future research	357

Appendix One	359
Appendix Two	360
References	369

*Dedicated to my grandmothers,  
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In love and admiration.*

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Meggen M. Gondek, Glasgow, June 2003



## List of Illustrations

Fig. 1.1 Diagram of relationships between existing and postulated annal Collections	12
Fig. 1.2 Three regional models of Central Place Theory	39
Fig. 2.1 Upper portion of Hilton of Cadboll stone in the National Museum of Scotland	50
Fig. 2.2 The lower portion of Hilton of Cadboll with laying out marks indicated	53
Fig. 2.3 The Hilton Reconstruction in the workshop	54
Fig. 2.4 Relationships and major tables in the database	61
Fig. 2.5 Abernethy symbol stone with assessment	62
Fig. 2.6 Abernethy No. 4 with assessment	63
Fig. 2.7 Example of resources invested in stones maps - Abernethy	64
Fig. 2.8 Weighted distributions A) D ware, B) E ware	75
Fig. 2.9 Weighted distribution of glass	77
Fig. 2.10 The Hunsterton Brooch	80
Fig. 2.11 Mould and Crucible from Dunadd	81
Fig. 2.12 Map of case study areas	85
Fig. 3.1 Secular sites in Argyll	91
Fig. 3.2 The territories of Dál Riata	93
Fig. 3.3 Carved rock outcrop behind Daltote Cottage	95
Fig. 3.4 Resources invested in carved monuments 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	97
Fig. 3.5 Loch Caolisport and Ellary House	99
Fig. 3.6 Cladh a'Bhile	99
Fig. 3.7 Plan of Cladh a'Bhile	100
Fig. 3.8 Carved pillar at Cladh a'Bhile	101
Fig. 3.9 Cross slab at Cladh a'Bhile	102
Fig. 3.10 Plan of A'Chrannag	106
Fig. 3.11 Plan of Iona	110
Fig. 3.12 Slabs from Iona, dating to 6 <sup>th</sup> or 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	112
Fig. 3.13 Weighted map of imported pottery and glass dating to the 6 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	115
Fig. 3.14 Fine metalwork and metalworking, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	117
Fig. 3.15 Plan of Dunadd	119
Fig. 3.16 Resources invested in stone monuments 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	124
Fig. 3.17 Inscribed slabs with ringed crosses, Iona	125
Fig. 3.18 St Oran's Cross	126
Fig. 3.19 St John's Cross	127
Fig. 3.20 St Martin's Cross	129
Fig. 3.21 Kildalton Cross	132
Fig. 3.22 The Keills Cross	134
Fig. 3.23 View of cross base, St Blane's, Bute	135
Fig. 3.24 Cross shaft, St Blane's, Bute	135
Fig. 3.25 Fine metalwork and metalworking, 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	138
Fig. 3.26 Resources invested in stone monuments 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	142
Fig. 3.27 Kilmartin Cross	143
Fig. 3.28 Pyramidal recumbent monument, St Blane's	144
Fig. 3.29 Fine metalwork and metalworking, 10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	146
Fig. 3.30 Hoards in Argyll of 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> century dates	148

Fig. 3.31 Resources in sculpture Phase I to III	151
Fig. 4.1 Secular sites in Fife and Perthshire	163
Fig. 4.2 Resources invested in monuments, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	171
Fig. 4.3 Class I stones from Abernethy, Lindores, and Walton	173
Fig. 4.4 Curved streets of Abernethy	178
Fig. 4.5 Imported pottery and glass	180
Fig. 4.6 Fine metalwork, metalworking, and hoards, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	182
Fig. 4.7 Plan of Dundurn	184
Fig. 4.8 Plan of Clatchard Craig	185
Fig. 4.9 Engraved plaque or tag from Norrie's Law	187
Fig. 4.10 Resources invested in monuments, 8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	191
Fig. 4.11 St Andrews	193
Fig. 4.12 St Andrews 'workshop' slabs	194
Fig. 4.13 St Andrews Sarcophagus	195
Fig. 4.14 Plan of Meigle Churchyard	197
Fig. 4.15 Meigle No. 2	198
Fig. 4.16 Carved stone arch from Forteviot	199
Fig. 4.17 Cropmarks at Forteviot	202
Fig. 4.18 The Dupplin Cross	204
Fig. 4.19 Meigle No. 22	207
Fig. 4.20 Possible shrine panel, Meigle No. 10	208
Fig. 4.21 Dunkeld No. 1	208
Fig. 4.22 Resources invested in monuments, 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries without St Andrews and Meigle	209
Fig. 4.23 Apostle's Stone, Dunkeld No. 2	210
Fig. 4.24 Fine metalwork and metalworking, 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries, and the coin from the Isle of May	212
Fig. 4.25 Glass boss or mount from Dundurn	213
Fig. 4.26 Inchcolm hogback monument	216
Fig. 4.27 Resources invested in monuments, 10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	217
Fig. 4.28 Slab from Lethendy	219
Fig. 4.29 Meigle hogback	220
Fig. 4.30 Cross slab from New Scone	221
Fig. 4.31 Scone palace and the moot hill	222
Fig. 4.32 Fine metalwork from the 10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries and the location of the 10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> century hoards	224
Fig. 4.33 Resources in sculpture Phase I to III	226
Fig. 4.34 Potential boundaries in the Fife peninsula	232
Fig. 4.35 Location of free-standing crosses	238
Fig. 5.1 Northern Britain in the second Antonine Period	247
Fig. 5.2 Secular sites in Dumfries and Galloway	249
Fig. 5.3 Resources invested in monuments, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	254
Fig. 5.4 Above: Plan of Trusty's Hill. Below: Pictish symbols at Trusty's Hill	255
Fig. 5.5 Plan of Ardwall Island and excavations	257
Fig. 5.6 Inscribed stone from Kirkmadrine	258
Fig. 5.7 Map of region and sites around Kirkmadrine, Rhinns	260
Fig. 5.8 Entrance to St Ninian's Cave, Physgil	261
Fig. 5.9 Banks of promontory fort at Isle of Whithorn and St Ninian's chapel in the foreground	261



Fig 5.10 The <i>Petrus</i> stone, Whithorn	262
Fig. 5.11 Approximate location of <i>Petrus</i> stone	263
Fig. 5.12 General plan of Whithorn with 1984-1991 excavations	265
Fig. 5.13 Glebe, filed, Whithorn Period I/0 and I/1.1-.3, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	266
Fig. 5.14 Imported pottery and glass, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	270
Fig. 5.15 Early medieval imported glass and ceramics, early 6 <sup>th</sup> century	271
Fig. 5.16 Early medieval imported glass and ceramics, 7 <sup>th</sup> century	272
Fig. 5.17 Whithorn Period I.4, showing Hill's zoning	273
Fig. 5.18 Mote of Mark plan and location of excavations	274
Fig. 5.19 Fine metalwork and metalworking, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	278
Fig. 5.20 Casting debris and related finds from the earlier 6 <sup>th</sup> century, Whithorn	279
Fig. 5.21 Distribution of scrap metal in 7 <sup>th</sup> century	281
Fig. 5.22 Distribution of Anglian place-names	284
Fig. 5.23 Resources invested in monuments, 8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	285
Fig. 5.24 Small stone cross from Ardwall Island	286
Fig. 5.25 Portable altar' from Ardwall Island	287
Fig. 5.26 Ruthwell Cross	289
Fig. 5.27 Panel from the Ruthwell Cross – Jesus with the (hamster-like) beasts	289
Fig. 5.28 Reconstruction of Hoddum monuments by Collingwood	291
Fig. 5.29 Stone slab from Hoddum	292
Fig. 5.30 'Baptistry' building from Hoddum	294
Fig. 5.31 Cross shaft from Whithorn showing two 'haloed' figures	294
Fig. 5.32 Slab depicting Golgotha	296
Fig. 5.33 Glebe field, Whithorn. Period II/1 features	297
Fig. 5.34 Glebe field, Whithorn. Period II, general plan of the early 9 <sup>th</sup> century features	299
Fig. 5.35 Fine metalwork, 8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	302
Fig. 5.36 Weighted distribution of coins and the location of the Talnotrie Hoard, 8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	306
Fig. 5.37 Groups of the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> century coins	307
Fig. 5.38 Scandinavian place-names in Galloway	310
Fig. 5.39 Resources invested in monuments, 10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	313
Fig. 5.40 Monreith cross	314
Fig. 5.41 Whithorn School sculpture, Barhobble	315
Fig. 5.42 Glebe field, Whithorn. Period III/3, 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	317
Fig. 5.43 Alternative models for Period III/3	318
Fig. 5.44 General plan of Period IV/5 showing Hill's putative boundary and suggested alternative linear organisation	319
Fig. 5.45 Excavation and orientation of Hartlepool	321
Fig. 5.46 Fine metalwork, metalworking, and coins, 10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	323
Fig. 5.47 Resources in sculpture Phase I to III	326
Fig. 6.1 Resources in sculpture Phase I-III Argyll	343
Fig. 6.2 Resources in sculpture Phase I-III Fife and Perthshire	346
Fig. 6.3 Resources in sculpture Phase I-III Dumfries and Galloway	348

**List of Tables**

Table 1.1 Entries used to describe places in AU from the 6 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	14-15
Table 2.1 Monumental resource assessment scheme	57
Table 2.2 Complexity scale for monuments	58
Table 2.3 Types of imported pottery found in Scotland and Ireland	74
Monumental resource assessment scheme	
Table 3.1 Sites in Argyll and Bute with imported pottery and glass, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> century	114
Table 3.2 Metalwork in Argyll, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	116
Table 3.3 Finds from Dunadd	122
Table 3.4 Metalwork in Argyll, 8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	137
Table 3.5 Imported pottery in Argyll, possibly from the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	137
Table 3.6 Metalwork in Argyll, 10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	145
Table 4.1 Imported pottery and glass, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries in Fife and Perth	181
Table 4.2 Metalwork in Fife and Perth, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	181
Table 4.3 Architectural fragments and church furniture in Fife and Perth	203
Table 4.4 Metalwork in Fife and Perth, 8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	211
Table 4.5 Hand bells in Fife and Perth	214
Table 4.6 Metalwork in Fife and Perth, 10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	223
Table 5.1 Inscriptions from Kirkmadrine	258
Table 5.2 Imported pottery and glass, 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	269
Table 5.3 Metalwork of the 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> centuries	276
Table 5.4 Metalwork of the 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	301
Table 5.5 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> century coins	307
Table 5.6 Metalwork of the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries	324

# Chapter One: Power in early medieval Scotland

## INTRODUCTION

Scotland in the early medieval period encompassed at least five language groups – British, Anglo-Saxon, Irish/Gaelic, Old Norse, and Pictish. These language groups are loosely affiliated with regional and political groups – e.g. ‘Pictland,’ Dál Riata, Northumbria, Strathclyde - that inhabited parts of Scotland through the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The iconic symbols of early medieval Scotland include elaborate penannular brooches, ‘mysterious’ abstract symbols, rocky hilltop forts, and elaborate sculpted monuments. All of these can be interpreted as symbols associated with ideological and social power.

This thesis approaches power in early medieval Scotland by looking at symbols and manifestations of power as the articulation of ideological and political change. The aims of the following study are to explore the organisation and relationships of power in Scotland and how they changed over the period c. 500 – 1000 AD. This is done principally by investigating the siting and investment in monuments – meaning carved stones, which are perhaps the most ubiquitous survivors of early medieval material culture. This is complemented by analysis of other types of material culture, discussed in chapter two, recognised as having monumentality (settlement) and as indicators of wealth (imported pottery, coins, and fine metalwork).



The argument behind the analysis in this thesis is that patterns of *symbolic wealth* can define and illustrate changes in *power centres*, *landscapes of power* and *power structures*.

*Symbolic wealth* is a concept discussed further in this chapter. It is a phrase that encompasses an economic interpretation of a variety of objects and actions.

Essentially, it is an approach that argues for a degree of economic calculation for all types of actions, materials, and events. For example, symbolic wealth is present in a piece of foreign tableware, in the act of trading for that tableware, and in the ability to acquire that foreign item.

A *power centre* is a place important in the control of resources where control might be administered, collected, transformed (i.e. metalworking) or exchanged, and may also act as a residence (Foster 1998a: 3). The term is useful because it is flexible and context dependent (relying on contemporary comparisons) and is not fixed to a certain historical period or site. Although the nature of the power centres might change, it is as valid a term in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC as it is in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. For early medieval Scotland these places or centres of power might include secular fortifications, bishoprics, and monasteries. The thesis aims not only to explore and identify potential power centres, but also the organisation of landscape and socio-political relationships that formed their backdrop (Fabech 1999: 37).

A *landscape of power* forms the basis for interpretation of different *power structures*. The landscape of power is defined by patterns or concentrations of symbolic wealth (e.g. close regional distributions of sites using imported wares).

While the landscapes in this thesis are discussed as physical spaces, they are not necessarily bounded and I will not attempt to find boundaries for individual polities or territories, although these may be suggested by the distributions in some cases.

The landscape of power may even break across boundaries, the Christian ideological landscape, for example, by the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries had boundaries largely independent of political units at the broadest level.

*Power structures* are those political, ideological and social institutions, such as 'Christianity,' that make up early medieval society and that range from hierarchical relationships between lords and clients to patterns of ritual and symbolic communication (Renfrew 1986:1).

The body of this thesis examines how wealth and resources were used and controlled within three modern administrative regions in Scotland. The regional studies in chapters three to five concentrate on examining those activities and things into which people were channeling their wealth and resources, including cultural (non-material or scarcely material) resources. This is accomplished by a regional and chronological analysis of manifestations of wealth that establishes potential patterns in the use and manipulation of symbolic wealth.

The archaeology of power is arguably what drives the discipline – from the identification of great strategic citadels to the relationships displayed in domestic spatial arrangements. Power is an amorphous and complex subject to look for and interpret. Power as a concept is not visible, but can be seen through symbols and patterns in material culture that articulate relationships of hierarchy, display, or

control. The challenge for early medieval archaeologists is not to 'find' power, but to study the structures of power in relation to the societies that created and used them. How to study early medieval power is a problem that has been embroiled in the theoretical debates of archaeology and related disciplines. In this chapter there follows a review of the approaches to power that have shaped early medieval archaeology, particularly in Scotland. Being at the edge of historical archaeology, the search for early medieval society includes both documentary and archaeological sources.

#### INTERPRETING POWER IN EARLY MEDIEVAL SCOTLAND: USING DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

The early medieval period in Scotland was an historic period. Texts themselves in a period when literacy was a limited commodity are a symbol of power and authority while they also shed light on places and people making up the structures of society. The amount of textual evidence is poor and the majority of surviving textual references are from Irish manuscripts or annals. These include references to events particularly involving battles or kings of Pictland and Dál Riata in the annals (see Broun 1998 for a summary). This shortage of documents means that the following study uses texts mainly derived from Ireland or later Scottish texts. The textual background of early medieval Ireland is comparatively good and presents a certain picture that can inform our understanding of Scotland (Foster 1996: 19-23).

The historical record is neither complete nor objective and using it requires caution. Religious texts dominate the period, as the church was the focal point for literacy. While this inevitably creates an agenda within the textual evidence, it is not a



reason to ignore the documents. Textual sources tell us little about daily life, for example, aspects of trade or exchange. The few references for this have been discussed by Wooding (1996), but archaeology provides the best resource. Using early medieval texts requires caution because of their fragmentary nature, historical contemporaneity, bias, and the issues surrounding language and translation. Entries in annals are sometimes contemporary, but as the *Annals of Ulster* entry AU 444.2 that records Patrick's founding of Armagh shows, there were also attempts to fill in historical gaps (MacAirt and MacNiocaill 1983: 42,43). Broun's comprehensive study of the birth of a 'Scottish' history from the contexts of Pictland and Dál Riata also has shown how history was manipulated and created by contemporary authors (Broun 1997; 1998; 1999a; 1999b).

Translating from the early medieval Irish vernacular and Latin is problematic. "As long as society is perceived to be in a certain state sources are translated appropriate to that state" (Doherty 2000: 52 – 53). Doherty argues this was particularly a problem for translating the vernacular against an international background (ibid.). This seems equally so with Latin. Although it was an international language and words crossed cultures, the local interpretation and application of such words, *civitas* for example, still raises issues when they are translated. Although, there are problems inherent in their use, documents do provide a perspective on contemporary worldviews and the mechanisms and places of power making up those worlds.

The texts written during the early medieval period can be broken down into three broad groups: the annals, hagiography, and other works of religious and secular

value. The authors crafted these texts with specific goals in mind – to teach, to honour, and to record. Events and stories help build a picture, seen through the individual authors' eyes, of the different types of places people lived in and visited. There are two general assumptions when looking at places and people mentioned in the documents. One is that they are real and did exist. This we can be fairly certain of in most cases and mythical figures, such as eponymous founders of dynasties, are recognisable as such. The second assumption is that places mentioned in texts are relatively important. While this may be true if the place is mentioned frequently, it cannot always be assumed for every place mentioned. It is more accurate to say that the sites are important to archaeology and history because they are mentioned, but not that they are necessarily mentioned because they are important.

### **Civitas and other places of power in the textual landscape**

The following consideration of a sample of 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century texts looks in more detail at the use of phrases associated with early medieval places associated with power and at the use of *civitas* in particular. I have chosen *civitas* as an example because it is a relatively common word used in the sources and it has generated considerable debate as to its proper translation and meaning (Valante 1988; Doherty 1985; Bradley 1998; Etchingham 1999). Although *civitas* is often translated as such, in a classical Latin sense *civitas* would not translate directly to monastery. Rather, *civitas* generates a variety of meanings including state, community, or city (Traupman 1995: 96). Community seems the most likely direct



link from *civitas* to monastery, but annalists also had another word for the community of a monastery – *familia*.

*AU 807.9 Bellum inter familiam Corcaidhe et familiam Cluana Ferta Brendain inter quas cedes innumerabilis hominum ecclesiasticorum et sublimium de familia Corcaighi.*

Battle between the **community** of Corcach and Cluain Ferta Brenainn, among whom resulted a slaughter of a countless number of ordinary ecclesiastics and of eminent men of the **community** of Corcach (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 262-3 emphasis mine).

*Familia* also occurs in events at Iona (*AU 717.4, AU 806.8*), a place not called a *civitas*, but referred to by name. *AU 717.4* refers to the expulsion of the *familia* of Iona from beyond the ‘Spine of Britain’ and *AU 806.8* refers to the *familia* (numbering 68) being killed by the heathens. There does seem to be some subtle difference between the uses of *familia* and *civitas* in these entries. In the *familia* entries, we see the people of the monastery taking action or having actions taken against them. *Civitas*, on the other hand, appears in a much more static use. If it refers to the community, it refers to the place of the community – its physical presence and not necessarily to the people that make it up. It is a built community with people in it, not just the collection of people.

A semantic discussion of the use of *civitas* in 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> century Irish texts by Etchingham (1999) concluded that *civitas* sometimes denoted a royal site, but most often referred to an ecclesiastical settlement (ibid.: 149). Meanings and use vary between texts, but the term also appears for different sites (secular and religious)

within the same text (ibid. : 95). While his analysis showed that *civitas* often appears in reference to a bishopric, there is no automatic concordance of *civitates* and bishoprics. What does emerge from the discussion is the frequent use of the term in association with church and secular organisation and by extension as part of the structures of power (ibid.: 149, 154-155), as well as the ecclesiastical *civitas* as the replication of the ideal city of refuge (ibid.: 49, 167).

*Civitas* also appears in a late 10<sup>th</sup> century compilation ‘The Chronicle of the Kings of Alba’ in reference to a meeting that took place in 906 at the royal *civitas* of Scone (Anderson 1922i: 445). With reference to the Irish use of the term, *civitas* might be referring to either the church or royal-secular site at Scone. From Etchingham’s analysis it is clear that there is a considerable amount of flexibility within the language of the texts. Although an ecclesiastical settlement is most often described with *civitas* and we know what is usually referred to by the term, it does not really explain what the term meant, how the *civitas* worked as a place of power, or if it was always considered a place of power and administration.

Early medieval authors did not restrict their texts to Biblical works or subjects close at hand. *Civitas* was used to describe local places but also settlement in the Holy Land and Mediterranean. These local writers belonged to the greater Christian world and participated in Christian scholarship, which can be seen in the following two examples of texts describing the wider world.

Adomnán’s late 7<sup>th</sup> century treatise on the holy places, *De Locis Sanctis*, offers a rare surviving glimpse into how this scholar, the ninth abbot of Iona, envisioned

one of the most important areas of the early medieval world – the Holy Land. As befitting a conscientious scholar, Adomnán received first hand information from a visiting cleric, Arculf, and combined this with known written descriptions (O’Loughlin 1994). The treatise is an exegetical exercise and a virtual tour of holy places particularly interested in their physical presence and built environment. It describes the shapes of churches, numbers of towers, gates, walls and where they lie in relation to each other. Much of the first book deals with Jerusalem and its immediate surroundings. Adomnán describes Jerusalem as a *civitas* (*DLS Book I.1*, Meehan 1958: 40-43). Foremost in the description of Jerusalem itself are the walls with their eighty-four towers and six gates. The Dome of the Rock is briefly mentioned at the end of the first chapter as a replacement for the temple. The Saracens built it ‘roughly’ according to Arculf, but it still manages to hold three thousand people (*ibid.*: 43).

Accounts of other holy places in Jerusalem follow: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the adjacent church to the Virgin, the stone from Jesus’ tomb, Golgotha with its church and neighbouring Constantinian basilica (with the lance that pierced Jesus’ side) and nearby chapel with the holy grail containing the vinegar soaked sponge Jesus sipped from while on the cross. It is a wonder from Adomnán’s description that anything could exist in Jerusalem apart from places of worship. Yet, there also occurs in the city on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, an annual market where the crowds not only do business but stay in the city for several days with their merchandise and filth-depositing beasts. This filth however, disappears due to heavenly rains that descend on the city after the market days are over. The overall image of Jerusalem is of a busy place decidedly packed with holy

monuments. It is important that a holy city, a *civitas*, like Jerusalem was described and revered for its monuments marking the sites of religious happenings. The act of visually commemorating a site of religious importance with a monument is also an important aspect of ecclesiastical settlements in Scotland and Ireland. Stone and wooden crosses, churches, or wells marking where saints' rested, performed miracles, or died served the same purpose as the monuments of this holy city.

However, it isn't true that many churches and walls make a *civitas* in Adomnán's eyes. In his description of Mount Tabor (*DLS Book II.27*, Meehan 1958; 96 –97) there are three churches, and other monastic buildings on the mountain including cells for the brethren surrounded by a wall lying on the summit. Adomnán's description of this place is clearly as a monastery or *monasterium*, albeit a large one (*ibid.*). There are important differences between this brief description of Mount Tabor and the chapters on the city of Jerusalem. Many things undoubtedly make Jerusalem a city and Mount Tabor a monastery. Jerusalem has other activities such as exchange noted, while Adomnán mentions no economic features at Mount Tabor. Jerusalem also has a historical tradition of being a city in the Roman Empire, whilst Mount Tabor does not. In reference to two ancient cities, Alexandria and Damascus, Adomnán's language is flexible. Damascus is a great royal city – *civitas regalis magna* (*DLS Book II.28*), and Alexandria is both an *urbs* and a *civitas* (*DLS Book II.30*, *ibid.*: 96 - 105). Adomnán appears to make a distinction between monasteries and cities in the Holy Land, but the terms are not as clearly separated when authors wrote about places at home.



Dicuil was an early 9<sup>th</sup> century Irish monk who travelled to the court school of the Carolingian rulers. He wrote works encompassing subjects from Easter calculations to weights and measures, but of interest here is his work on the measurement of the earth, *Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae* composed in AD 825 (Tierney 1967: 17). The majority of the work is collated from earlier writers on the geography of the known world including Pliny and Isidore of Seville (ibid.: 27). There are, however, a few passages relating directly to Dicuil's homeland and its environs that are his most original contributions to written geography. Dicuil writes that he has not seen good descriptions of the islands around Britain and Ireland in any of the authorities consulted, although he may have missed a mention of them in a version of Solinus (*Liber Ch. 7, v. 15*, Tierney 1967: 76-77 and see n. 16 p. 116). Dicuil as a monk of the world, a teacher in one of the most powerful courts of the time, gives insight into how such an educated man might think of his section of the world in terms of the world as a whole. In this work, Dicuil attempted corrections to the numerous errors he saw in other copies. It is in this light that we should see the insertion of an accurate description of Ireland and Britain. Ireland, Britain, and their surrounding islands may have been at the outer limits of the known world, but they were very much a part of it.

Unfortunately, Dicuil's interests lay in the number and size of landmasses and rivers rather than settlements. He does mention that the shortest sea crossing between Gaul and Britain is where Richborough is - *ubi civitas Rutupi portus est* (Tierney 1967: 96-97). The use of *civitas* is not particularly insightful here as Dicuil was copying directly from another author of geographical works, Solinus

(ibid.). Solinus was active in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and undoubtedly his use and understanding of ‘*civitas*’ carried a different meaning than Dicuil’s.

Writing on subjects closer to home was also an important part of monastic work. One of the most significant corpuses of texts for historians is the annals. The various relevant collections of annals that exist for the early medieval period are fragmentary and appear only in later medieval copies (Hughes 1972). There are no surviving manuscripts from Scotland, but a postulated chronicle originally kept at Iona in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century may be the source for Scottish events seen in later Irish annals (Broun 1998: 72). The earliest set of annal entries are thought to be the posited collection called the Chronicle of Ireland which was probably drawn up sometime before AD 913 (Hughes 1972: 107). Both the *Annals of Ulster* (AU) and the *Annals of Tigernach* (AT) originate from the Chronicle of Ireland (ibid.: 101).

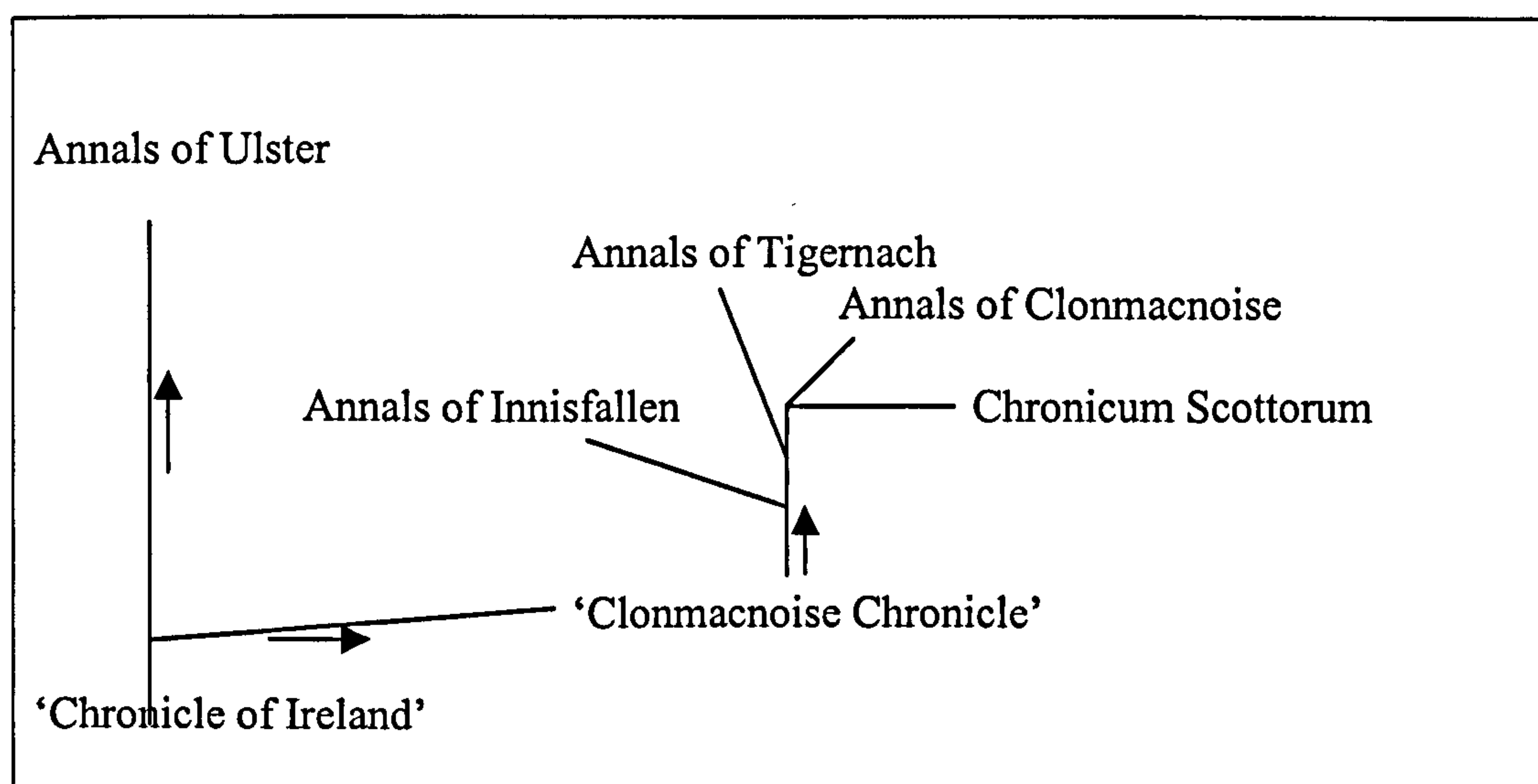


Fig.1.1: Diagram of relationships between existing and postulate annal collections (after Hughes 1972).

The *Annals of Ulster* are one of the most complete sets of annals and can be found in a manuscript dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century (ibid.: 99). The relative contemporaneity of these entries for the period discussed here is fairly good, particularly in

comparison with entries earlier than the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Henderson 1967: 165; Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: vii – xii; Broun 1998). However, later additions and changes are possible, and must be kept in mind, when looking at the language used in the entries. The *Annals of Tigernach*, fragments of which come from a manuscript dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, along with the *Annals of Ulster* are not only important for Irish events, but also events in Pictland and Dál Riata. The *Annals of Innisfallen* are another collection that closely matches the early Chronicle of Ireland entries, but after the 8<sup>th</sup> century it changes focus and becomes a much more localised source for Munster events (Hughes 1972: 112). The most complete set of annals is the 17<sup>th</sup> century compilation the *Annals of the Four Masters*, but its late date and narrative nature questions the historicity of this collection (ibid.: 99).

A closer look at the *Annals of Ulster* highlights the words used to describe places, including *civitas*. Entries record important events and therefore only give glimpses of the authors' world. This world is dominated by religion and the events that happen in, to, or around religious sites make up the bulk of entries. They also record important political and natural incidents – the death of kings and clerics, battles, plague, famine, or the occasional abundance of nuts, for example. In the context of this study, it is the places where these events occur, how they are described, and the language that describes them that is of interest.

The most common way to refer to a place is simply by its name. If the place is a fort, there might be a descriptive element in the name itself – *Dun At*, *Dun Ollaigh*. Only occasionally does an author use an additional word or phrase to refer to a place or places in general. The most common word used in the entries covering the



6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries to describe a place is *civitas*. *Civitas* appears as a word describing Armagh, Tailtiu (Telltown), Cennanus (Kells), and Clonmacnoise. This has led to a tempting but confusing trend of translating *civitas* as monastery, city, or more recently ‘monastic city.’ Other words appearing in the *Annals of Ulster*, usually once but occasionally twice, that describe places are *urbe*, *oppido*, *monasterium*, *cealla*, *dun* (2), *treba*, *cathracha*, *baile*, and *arcem*.

Year	1983 Translation	Irish or Latin text	Pages
780.12	Congress of the synods of Uí Néill and Laigin, in the <b>town</b> of Temair, at which were present many anchorites and scribes, led by Dublitter.	<i>Congressio senodorum nepotum Neill Laginentiumque in oppido Temro ubi fuerunt ancorite et scribe multi, quibus dux erat Dublitter.</i>	235(234)
782.1	Uarchride, grandson of Mael Toile, and Cormac son of Bresal, abbot of Ard Breacán and other <b>monastic cities</b> , and Dub Tholar, king of the Picts on this side of Monoth...died	<i>h-Uarcridhe h. Maile Toile, et Cormac m. Bresaid abbas Airdd Breccain et aliarum civitatum, et Dub Tholargg rex Pictorum citra Monoth...perierunt.</i>	237(236)
783.4	...A very violent windstorm destroyed the <b>monastery</b> of Cluain Bronaig	<i>...Uentus magnus et ualidissimus distruxit monasterium Cluana Bronaigh.</i>	239 (238)
784.9	The coming of the relics of Erc’s son to the <b>city</b> of Tailtiu.	<i>Adventus reliquiarum filii Eirc ad civitatem Tailten.</i>	241(240)
807.4	Building of the new <b>monastery</b> of Colum Cille at Cenannas.	<i>Constructio noue ciuitatis Columbae Cille h-i Cenninus.</i>	263(262)
833.6	Cellach son of Bran, routed the community of Cell Dara in a battle in their <b>monastery</b> , many being killed...	<i>Cathroiniudh for muinntir Cille Daro inna cill re Ceallach m. Brain ubi iugulati sunt multi...</i>	291(290)
837.3	A naval force of the Norsemen sixty ships strong was on the Bóinn, [and] another one of sixty ships on the river Life. Those two forces plundered the plain of Life and the plain	<i>Longas tre-fichet long di Norddmannaibh forBoinn; longs .ii tre-fichet long for abaind Liphí. Ro slatsat iarum in di longais-sin Magh Liphí et Magh m-Bregh eter cealla et dune et treba. Roiniudh re feraib Bregh for Gallaibh ec</i>	295(294)



	of Brega, including <b>churches, forts and dwellings</b> . The men of Brega routed the foreigners at Deoninne in Mugdorna of Brega, and six score of the Norsemen fell.	<i>Deoninni I Mughdornaibh Bregh conid torchradar se fchit diibh.</i>	
840.7	Ioseph of Ros Mór, bishop, excellent scribe, anchorite, and abbot of Cluain Eóis and other <b>monasteries</b> , fell asleep.	<i>Ioseph Roiss Moer, episcopus et scriba optimus et ancorita, abbas Cluna Auis et aliarum ciuitatum, dormiuit.</i>	299(298)
845.3	There was an <b>encampment</b> of the foreigners on Loch Rí, and they plundered Connacht and Mide, and burned Cluain Moccu Nóis with its oratories, and Cluain Ferta Brénainn, and Tir dá Glas and Lothra and other <b>monasteries</b> .	<i>Dunadh di Gallaibh for Loch Ri cor[o] ortadur Connachta et Midhe et coro loscaiset Cluain M. Nois conta dertaigibh et Cluaen Ferta Brenainn et Tir da Glass et Lothra et alaile cathracha.</i>	303(302)
870.6	The siege of Ail Cluaithe by the Norsemen: Amlaíb and Ímar, two kings of the Norsemen, laid siege to the <b>fortress</b> and at the end of four months they destroyed and plundered it.	<i>Obsesio Ailech Cluathe a Norddmannis, .i Amlaiph et Imhar, duo reges Norddmannorum obsederunt arcem illum et distruxerunt in fine .iii. mensium arcem et predauerunt.</i>	327(326)
882.2	Muirchertach son of Niall, abbot of Daire Calgaig, and other <b>monasteries</b> , rested.	<i>Muirchertach m. Neill, abbas Daire Calcaigh et aliarum ciuitatum, pausauit.</i>	337(336)
888.5	...Donnchad son of Mael Dúin, superior of Cell Delca and other <b>monasteries</b> .. (died)	<i>Donncath m. Maele Duin princeps Cille Delca et aliarum ciuitatum...</i>	345(344)
986	I of Colum Cille was plundered by the Danes on Xmas Night and they killed the abbot and fifteen of the elders of the <b>monastery</b> .	<i>I Coluim Cille do arcain do Danaraibh aidhchi Notlaic coro marbsat in apaidh et .xu. uiros do sruithibh na cille.</i>	421(420)
1011.6	Flaithbertach ua Néill led an army to Dún Ehdach, burned the <b>fort</b> and demolished its <b>town</b> , and took a pledge from Niall son of Dub Tuinne.	<i>Slogad la Flaithbertach H. Neill co Dun Ehdach coro loisc in dun et coro bris a baile et co tuc aitire o Niall m. Duib Thuinne.</i>	443(442)

Table 1.1: Entries using words to describe places in AU from the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries emphasis mine (MacAirt and Mac Niocaill 1983).

Many of the place-names are identifiable with known sites – for example, Clonmacnoise, Armagh, and Dunadd. The presence of contemporary archaeology on many sites leads naturally to looking at the word in relation to what is in the ground. There are many difficulties in this type of exercise, the least of which being the incomplete nature of the archaeology we have from most early medieval sites. Monasteries by their very nature if they survive often are still in use for burial and thus unsuitable for large amounts of excavation. While forts and other settlement types may be more open for excavation, we still do not have a clear picture of what the settlement looked like. Wooden buildings, preservation, excavation techniques, and the percentage of the site excavated all introduce elements of interpretation, which may or may not be coloured by reference to the annalists' descriptions.

Within these entries, it is apparent that early medieval annalists had vocabularies in both Latin and Irish that allowed them to differentiate between several types of places, or settlements, and that they were not always strict in their allotment of a particular word to a particular place. Definitions were flexible then as they are today. This flexibility of the language not only amongst the different authors making entries, but even within each author's vocabulary, cautions against an immutable definition for a particular word.

*Monasterium* only occurs once in the entries from the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, but appears frequently in other works like Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis* and his *Life of Columba*. *AU* 783.4 recorded a violent windstorm that destroyed the *monasterium* Cluana Bronaigh (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 238 – 9). This term more

confidently translates as monastery and it is used in an entry sandwiched between years that refer to *civitates* (see Table 1.1). This change in vocabulary seemingly referring to the same type of settlement again highlights the perils of direct translation. Numerous explanations for such a vocabulary change can be postulated: a different annalist, an entry added at a later date, a different type of settlement, or maybe *civitas* and *monasterium* mean something we are no longer able to understand. While different hands and different sources may be an inhibitor to historians attempting to decode the original annals that make up *AU*, this characteristic of annals is important for detecting and demonstrating the variability and flexibility of language and meaning.

Other Latin phrases that appear in *AU* are *oppidum* and *arce*. The appearance of *oppido* in *AU* 780.12 in reference to Temro/Temair/Tara raises several questions. *Oppidum* can be translated as town (Traupman 1995: 289). The Roman use of the term may have encompassed sites such as sizable hillforts and is now a modern academic term for a group of hillforts with town-like attributes (Avery 1976: 40). Tara is not morphologically or functionally similar to what we know of the continental *oppida*. There is perhaps, a clue in the entry as to what types of things happen at an Irish *oppidum*. The entry records a synod of the Uí Néill and Laigin, two large ‘dynastic’ conglomerations. This meeting included several religious participants including the named Dubliter. We are not told what happened at the meeting or why it took place, but only that it did happen and that it took place specifically at the *oppidum* at Tara. There are records of other meetings, but the description of *oppidum* for the meeting place does not occur again in the *Annals of Ulster* for the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century entries. It is particularly important to note that



although Church representatives went to the meeting, Tara is not a monastery, but generally considered a place of secular power and ritual connected to kingship. This may have influenced the choice of word more than any other factor.

*AU* 870.6 describes the siege by the Norsemen of *Ailech Cluathe*, Dumbarton Rock, overlooking the estuary of the Clyde River in western Scotland. Here the fort, which occupies a volcanic plug of two relatively small summits, is called an *arcem* (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 326 – 7). *Arcem* derives from the verb *arceo* – to shut up or enclose, and thus could mean something like enclosure (Traupman 1995: 64). Excavation on Dumbarton Rock revealed evidence of a rubble, earth, and timber rampart on its landward side that augmented the natural cliff defences of the site (Alcock and Alcock 1990: 112-113). When other fortresses or secular centres appear in the entries they do not usually have any descriptions of the site with them. Their names however, often include *dun*, which may have been a sufficient description for the purpose of the entry. The wording of this entry suggests that *arcem* may be either to clarify what Dumbarton is since there is no *dun* in its name or is specifically referring to the palisade rather than the fortress as a whole. The reference to the palisade may also be a literary device figuratively representing the fort.

The 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century Latin entries in the *Annals of Ulster* stress the difficulties in using historical sources to define the archaeology. There is a continuous sense of flexibility and complexity in the vocabulary used. Early medieval Ireland was a place where Tara – the most important symbol of political power – can be an *oppidum*, Armagh and Clonmacnoise – two of the most important religious

settlements – are *civitates*, and the most important place of all, Rome, is simply *Urbs*.

Latin is not the only language of recording used in *AU*. Of the Irish phrases used, one of the most interesting is *AU* 837.3 describing an onslaught of a group of Norsemen on the plains of the Liffey and Brega. During this raid they plundered *cealla*, *dune*, and *treba* – translated by Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill as churches, forts, and dwellings (1983: 294 – 5). *Cealla* could mean monastery on its own as well as church (Quin 1968: 110). *Dun* we are quite comfortable with - understanding it as fort and relating to a variety of enclosed sites of the early medieval period. *Treba* meaning houses, farms, or holdings are probably rural agricultural dwellings and the word is similar to the Welsh *tref* (Quin 1943: 279).

The use of these three terms together suggests the author compared and differentiated types of settlement. We tend to think of Norsemen being particularly attracted, especially in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, to loot and thus they aimed for the larger monastic (a *civitas*, perhaps) and secular centres where portable wealth including people for slaves might be concentrated. This concept owes much to the annals because they tend to concentrate on the monastic centres. This entry, hyperbole aside, indicates a much more widespread Norse interest at least near Dublin. Not only are they plundering the monasteries or churches and secular centres of the plains but the *treba* – or dwellings. There is no indication here if these dwellings are of high status or not and the absence of the *civitas* is perplexing. It would appear, however, that both the raiding Norsemen and the annalists utilised a type of

settlement hierarchy that separated places at the very least into high status secular, church, and agricultural inhabited sites.

*AU* 845.3 records the plundering and burning of a number of places including Clonmacnoise by the ‘foreigners’. The phrase used to describe Clonmacnoise and other places like it is *cathracha*. In Latin entries with similar content, the term *civitatum* would appear in the same context (*AU* 782.1, 840.7). *Cathracha* appears much later in *AU* 1118.7 when the annalist records a great earthquake in the Alps that destroyed many cities/*cathracha* and killed the people in them (*ibid.*: 562 – 3). The term translates as city and derives from *cathair* meaning a chair or seat (Ó Siochthradha 1972: 21). The translations by Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill differ from monastery to city. The use of *cathracha* in these two entries stresses how context dependent is the act of writing, but also highlights how context dependent is the act of translation. There is over two hundred years distance between these two uses. The use of the word, its meaning, and how an annalist would view it in terms of the greater world undoubtedly changed during that period as language is not static. There is flexibility and change over time, place, and in the annalist’s and compiler’s heads as well as in the opinion of the modern translators.

It is dangerous to overemphasise the vocabulary used in the annals to describe these places as a solution of typology – a word will not answer the questions we have about how people lived in and perceived a place. Neither can a word in the annals be substituted as a classificatory scheme for what appears in the archaeological record. *Civitas* will always be fraught with anachronistic interpretation, but it is possible that *civitas* could refer to a physical, built

environment possibly with a certain specialised administrative capacity and that it described many religious and some secular centres throughout the early medieval period. Irish vocabulary in the annals does not offer any clearer insight into categories of settlement, and like its Latin counterpart, should not be used as a classificatory or typological scheme.

The annals, by their nature, are fairly truncated in their descriptions of places and the events that occur at them. Hagiographical texts from the 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> centuries are less succinct and offer more description than annal entries. The most famous use of *civitas* in regards to an ecclesiastic setting is in Cogitosus' version of the *Life of St Brigit* (Connolly and Picard 1987). Cogitosus was a member of the Kildare community and probably wrote his *Life* around the third quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century (McCone 1982: 109).

*Et quis sermone explicare potest maxiumum decorum hujus ecclesiae, et innumera civitatis, quam dicimus, miracula si fas est dici civitas, dam nullo murorum ambitu circumdatur: coviventibus tamen in ea populis innumerabilibus, dum civitas de conventu hominum in se multorum nomen accepit, maxima haec civitas et metropolitana est in cuius suburbanis quae sancta certo limite designavit Brigida nullus carnalis adversarius nec concursus timetur hostium sed civitas est refugii tutissima de foris suburbanis in tota Scotorum terra cum suis omnibus fugitivis in qua thesauri servantur regum et decorati culminis excellentissima esse videtur (Acta Sanctorum, Ch.8 v.39, Bollandus et al. 1863: 141).*

And who can express in words the exceeding beauty of this church and the countless wonders of that **monastic city** we are speaking of, if one may call it a **city** since it is not encircled by any surrounding wall. And yet, since **numberless people assemble within it and since a city gets its name from the fact that**



many people congregate there, it is a vast and metropolitan city. In its suburbs, which saint Brigit had marked out by a definite boundary, no human foe or enemy attack is feared; on the contrary, together with all its outlying suburbs it is the safest city of refuge in the whole land of the Irish for all fugitives and the treasures of kings are kept there: moreover it is looked upon as the most outstanding on account of its illustrious supremacy. (Connolly and Picard 1987: 26).

The translators have stressed the urban sense of *civitas* by using monastic city for the term. M. Valante asserts that the use of *civitas* generally in Irish texts describes a monastery that has a bishop (1988: 8). It is interesting perhaps to question why in this description of Kildare that Valante specifically refers to it is so important to note that while Kildare lacks a wall, many people assemble there and that this is what makes it a *civitas* not a particular mention of the bishop there. The ‘metropolitan’ language here does probably refer to a bishop and bishops were connected with urban places during the early organisation of the Church. *Civitas*, therefore, may denote some type of administrative aspect of a settlement (Etchingham 1999). It is perhaps a bit harsh to say that there is nothing in this passage that might indicate an urban centre at Kildare (Valante 1988: 9). At the very least, there is a possibility in this language to discern a desire for a contemporary perception of Kildare as a great and complex maybe even townlike version of a religious establishment – a *civitas*. Cogitosus leaves us with no doubt that he wished Kildare to be considered part of the administration of power, as even kings use the site as their royal treasury.

The archaeology of Kildare is little known. It is hidden under the current church and town centre; to date it has not confirmed or revealed much about its early



medieval phase. Like so many other sites, it remains in ‘what if or if only’ limbo of keyhole excavation and continued settlement use. Cogitosus’ description of Kildare is the most quoted because it is the most extensive. Other hagiographers do not boast in the same way about their saint’s foundations using such colourful imagery and language.

The primary hagiographical source for early medieval Scotland is Adomnán’s *Life of St Columba (VC)*. Adomnán was born in Ireland c. 628 and became abbot of Iona in 679. His life of Iona’s founding saint, who lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, was written in the early years of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Adomnán’s work is full of references to monasteries, forts, and geographic features in the stories of the saint’s travels and miracles. He consistently refers to Iona and other monasteries using the Latin terms *monasterium* or *cenubium* (Anderson and Anderson 1961). In Book I.iii, Adomnán described Columba’s visit to the *monasterio* of Durrow. While staying at Durrow, he decided to visit *fratres qui in Clonoensi sancti Cerani cenubio commanebant* referring to Clonmacnoise (ibid: 214 – 215). Neither of these terms carries the multiple meanings of the phrase *civitas*. The picture of Iona is quite different than that of Kildare. Iona’s churches and huts for the brethren were surrounded by a *vallum*. The monks welcomed numerous visitors, but there is no sense of the great crowds as at Kildare. Iona is an island and while sea travel was in no way an unusual thing, there are instances described where storms or winds prevented people from coming to the island. Importantly, neither Iona nor Kildare are described as having great crowds or numbers of people residing there. The people assembled or visited there. In the case of Kildare, the crowds are made much of, but at Iona, they cannot even access the island to attend the saint’s funeral

(*VC III.23* Sharpe 1995: 232; Márkus 1999:122). However, Iona was centrally located for sea travel along the West coast of Scotland and between the North of Ireland and the kingdoms of Dál Riata. The presence of imported Continental ceramics and Columba's constant involvement with the politics not only of Dál Riata but also in Ireland shows that the island's capability for communication was important.

Adomnán did not describe Iona as a *civitas*. According to Valante's (1988) use of the term, this would make sense as during both Columba and Adomnán's lifetimes there were no bishops recorded at Iona. Iona is the archetypal early medieval monastery because of knowledge about it from historical sources and excavation. It is not particularly large, has a *vallum* encircling some buildings, is the site of many carved stones, and from excavated evidence appears to have been largely self-sufficient while also having access to some imported or luxury items (O'Sullivan 1999). Iona's position as the mother church of the Columban *familia* perpetuates and was influential in creating this archetype as daughter houses were set up along the same guidelines. However, it is dangerous to use this archetype or middle range assumption (Dark 1994:39) as an argument against having other types of monastic establishments, as Valante appears to do in her discussion of the monastic town (1988). However reliable Iona is as a guideline for its daughter houses and some other monastic sites, it is a remarkable case of historic and some archaeological knowledge colliding for one special site. Its use as a blueprint for every type of early medieval monastery must acknowledge this. Not every monastery was a daughter house of Iona and we do not know if they followed the



same plan, but at the same time not every monastery would have been immune to the influence of the Columban system.

Adomnán did use *civitas* when describing places outside Scotland and Ireland.

One of these descriptions involves the Saint's prophecy concerning a *romani juris civitate*, or city of the Roman dominion, in Italy experiencing a volcanic eruption

or some similar disaster (*Book I.28*, Anderson and Anderson 1961: 262 – 263). In

Adomnán's lifetime, he refers to the great plagues which ravaged regions of

Europe including Italy and the city of Rome – ...*Italia et ipsa romana*

*civitate*...(ibid.: 458 – 459). Rome appears again in the final chapter of the life,

*Book III.23*, as Adomnán tells us how far Columba's fame reaches – *ipsam quoque*

*romanum civitatem, quae caput est omnium civitatem* ... that city of Rome, which

is the head of all cities (ibid: 542 – 43). Adomnán apparently did not view the

local monasteries and religious communities he wrote about as *civitates* in either

his or Columba's time. He seems to relegate the use of this term to places with a

Roman tradition if not Rome itself. This use may be influenced by his earlier

scholarly activities, in particular his work on the holy places.

Both of these lives were written early in the period under discussion. Adomnán

wrote his life in the late 7<sup>th</sup> – early 8<sup>th</sup> century and Cogitosus slightly earlier. Each

of them were looking back on the life of a Saint who lived before them, but project

the realities, politics, and propaganda of the era in which they lived. The images

of these two monastic establishments created in these lives are very different.

These very descriptions, far from serving as a target for assimilation, should be

promoted not as ‘truths’ but as possibilities for the variety of places that existed in early medieval Scotland and Ireland.

Hagiography involves its own motives and possibly more than any other form of contemporary literature apart from exegesis, has a didactic role. Motives such as glorification and commemoration of the saint are most obvious, but financial considerations and inter-monastic competition also factor as important reasons for writing saint’s lives. This is both a boon and an inhibitor when using hagiography for information regarding the built environment and how people perceived their surroundings. There is a tendency towards exaggeration to accentuate the power, supremacy, and holiness of both the saint and his or her foundation. Using texts to approach ideas about the past in the past is not infallible. This is why texts are often used in a highly selective way when combined with archaeology. One or two words or phrases are immortalised by their inclusion in scholarly discussions and turned to again and again for insight or derision. The comparison of places noted in the annals for *cealla*, *duns*, and *treba* does suggest there was a concept of settlement hierarchy. The awareness of the greater world also suggests that this concept recognised a range of types of places that may not have only existed in their immediate environment.

Finally, a look outside the Celtic-speaking literary world at Bede’s writing from the 8<sup>th</sup> century shows he used the same Latin terminology when he wrote about places. Bede’s most common terms for places are *civitas* and *urbs* (Campbell 1979: 34). Campbell’s work on Bede’s names for places suggests a general correspondence, although not without important exceptions, between the vernacular place-names



and the Latin equivalents Bede used (ibid.: 35). He does not use *civitas* as specific to monastic establishments and it does not mean that the place was a bishopric (ibid.: 35). Thus, it is possibly that vernacular place-names ending in *caestir* translated to *civitas* and *burg* as *urbs*. Alcock noted that Bede used *civitas* for places he did not call *urbs*, but that were places of some central organisation and importance (1987: 211, 236). Bede may have been an acute scholar, but he was also a homebody. He did not leave Jarrow frequently and would not have been to London, Dumbarton Rock, or most of the places he mentions. His work in some ways parallels Adomnán's on the Holy Land in that he relied on second hand sources and descriptions. This context is somewhat different than that for annal entries or hagiography where it is often assumed that the author is either resident at or connected to the places written about (events at your own monastery or the story of your community's foundation). Bede's language and in particular his use of the urban-associated words *civitas* and *urbs* suggests changes and nuances in language use are subtle. Bede was writing in and about a region with a different historical and religious context (Roman tradition and ruins) and translating names from a different vernacular. The words may be the same, but the meanings are different.

There is clearly potential and value in using documentary sources in the study of early medieval society and as an aspect of material culture, they should not be ignored by archaeologists. The above discussion on *civitas* and places of power stresses the need for careful and considered use of the texts. Texts do bring another dimension to interpretations of early medieval society, but they are not going to provide definitions or classifications. They tell us that places of power and hierarchy did exist and that these places were diverse in nature and in name. The

flexibility of language means the motivations behind using particular phrases are not transparent. Using contemporary terms to define or rank sites within a hierarchy of power places limits on our understanding of the archaeology.

## INTERPRETING POWER IN EARLY MEDIEVAL SCOTLAND: USING ARCHAEOLOGY

There is much more Scottish archaeological evidence from the early medieval period than documentary evidence, and its relationship to textual sources is often difficult. The pictures painted by the *Life of Columba* and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* are tempting to latch onto, but as discussed above they should not interpret the archaeology. The documentary sources generally do not provide definitions or descriptions of the structures of society – institutions such as political organisation or trading networks, for example. Rarely, the *Senchus fer nAlban* and the Pictish king lists being the only two examples, are structures of power confronted by the scant contemporary Scottish sources. The following section discusses methods for the analysis of centres and structures of power using archaeology (sometimes combined with textual evidence) that are relevant for discussions on early medieval Scotland.

### **Power and archaeological thinking**

Out of the theoretical debates of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century emerged a school of thought that voiced dissatisfaction of the culture history approach (the 'mapping of cultures and cultural influence' (Johnson 1999: 189)). The 'New Archaeologists,' later processual thinkers, developed an attitude towards the past that was more

‘scientific and anthropological’ (ibid.: 20). Key to the processual mindset were theories and ideas adopted and adapted from other disciplines. These included basic constructs such as cultural evolution, and systems thinking both of which stressed generalities of society (e.g. being ceramic) rather than particular cultural aspects (e.g. different decorations on pottery).

The emphasis on generalities encouraged analysis that broke down societies and even sites into their basic constituent parts – systems and subsystems in the case of society and essential defining characteristics in the case of sites. This process led to the search for ideal types or characteristics that could define complex concepts. One of the most hotly debated of these ideal types in early medieval archaeology was that of the ‘town’ (Childe 1951; Schledermann 1971; Heighway 1972; Hodges 1982; Clarke and Simms 1985b; Doherty 1985; Samson 1994; Scull 1997; Clarke 1998). The creation of an ideal type led to expectations of what towns would look like in the past, the proper evolution of urban places, and limits on what could and could not be a town. These restrictions devalued alternative strategies and places, which were as valid and complex as that constructed for urban evolution (Carver 1993).

A similar ideal type was created for the ‘Celtic monastery.’ One method of teasing out understandings and identification of places is to use contemporary texts along with archaeology to create a ‘middle range theory’ (Binford 1983: 213). This method has been used to create a basic type – or middle range assumption - for a 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century monastic site within Celtic-speaking areas. The middle range theory for such a site includes: a *vallum* or symbolic separation between sacred and



profane that encloses both domestic and religious buildings, a community that acts as a patron for crafts like metalworking, a community that might engage in long-range trade or might receive gifts resulting in the presence of exotic goods during excavation (Dark 1994: 39). Such a model helps archaeologists identify sites as monasteries both from physical evidence (an enclosure on an aerial photograph) and functionally (the presence of craft manufacturing at a site). The model has its limits because it is based on relatively few in-depth excavations of such sites and as such lacks the rigorous testing of the middle range assumption. There is a lack of sensitivity to time within the model itself as it ignores change. Some monasteries do look like the model, but there are many that do not. The general acceptance of the model within archaeology affects the categorisation of sites – graveyards without a vallum, small sites without evidence for long-distance contacts or manufacturing. These sites may also have been considered ‘monasteries’ by contemporaries, but do not fit the general model and become exceptions by default. However, they are only exceptions to a rule created by archaeologists not necessarily to anything in the past. While middle range theory has some useful applications, it also pigeonholes sites into categories that do not necessarily encourage understanding of the variety of and relationships between sites. Such a variety was evident in the way authors wrote about settlement. Identification of particular types of sites is only part of coming to terms with places and structures of power.

Processual thinking was extremely influential in the way archaeologists thought about change in society. Culture historical theories that opted for diffusion models were no longer adequate explanations of the complex nature of socio-political



change. Critical to processual approaches to change was the idea of cultural evolution, which proposed that human societies were on a cultural trajectory of increasing complexity (Johnson 1999: 22, 191). Political power structures, for example, changed as societies moved from band to tribe to chiefdom to state. Although identifying the 'stage' of societies along this evolutionary trajectory was part of social analysis, the emphasis turned to mechanisms and methods for seeing the changes between these stages of development.

Peer polity interaction was a concept developed to examine the problems 'of the growth of socio-political systems and of the emergence of cultural complexity' (Renfrew 1986: 1). It concentrated on examining the development of structures – those institutions making up society – and posited change as a result of interaction between polities. Historically documented societies were most suited to peer polity interaction theory as this made assumptions about political status easier to qualify (Cherry and Renfrew 1986b: 150). The theory shares some similarities and is a more complex version of the idea of a core and periphery, that socio-political change starts somewhere and then through exchange networks with social implications ideas are adopted and adapted (Johnson 1999:80). In peer-polity interaction, however, similar changes are happening roughly at the same time in multiple cores with overlapping peripheries.

The interaction between polities (autonomous socio-political units) was posited as the mechanism by which similar aspects of material culture and socio-political developments (i.e. change) occurred in a given region. As an analytical tool it involves the examination of similar features or traits, but must specifically aim to

examine the change represented by these features rather than be used as a shorthand argument to explain the existence of distributions of a particular feature or trait across polities (Renfrew 1986: 7). As it concentrates on distributions of similar features, it is particularly relevant to consider peer polity interaction in regard to the distribution of carved stones, which occur throughout the Insular world and share relatively similar stylistic features and chronologies.

The erection of finely sculpted stone monuments might be considered as evidence of the changing nature of the church or Christianity within the polities that made up the Insular world. Peer polity interaction proposes that the reason why such monuments would be erected is that interaction between polities could take the form of competitive emulation, symbolic entertainment and the transmission of innovation, and the exchange of goods (ibid.: 8). In particular, competitive emulation where polities are exhibiting displays of wealth or power to achieve higher inter-polity status, might account for the number and investment in elaborate Insular sculpture. Grander displays of wealth, technical achievement, and artistic skills at a particular monastic site, for example, would increase the status of that site in relation to other monasteries in the region.

That there is an element of 'competition' in the erection of sculpture might account for the high degree of investment in some cases, and this thesis does suggest that relative degrees of investment are related to socio-political circumstances.

Although emulation or competition might explain the widespread distribution of elaborate sculpted monuments, the reasons behind the erection of monuments was more complicated than competition between monasteries for status. In particular,

once these sculptures are individualised (rather than generalised as ‘monumental sculpture’ in a processual exercise) the messages, forms, and different degrees of investment are highlighted. If the messages or ideologies behind a carved cross, for example, was directed principally at those living within the polity, why should inter-polity emulation or competition take precedence as the mechanism for its initial erection? Who or what are polities in competition with and what are they competing for? Here peer-polity interaction reveals its dependence on cultural evolution, because with evolutionary hindsight we assume they were competing to move up the scale of social complexity. Another criticism of peer-polity interaction is that it is mostly a descriptive rather than explanatory device and that it is a process difficult to see in the archaeological record (Carver 1989: 153). Carver (ibid.) has noted that the same material record could be used both to show that polities interact and that they were distinct.

Post-processual archaeological theory has moved away from generalisations and the search for ideal types of models that could be applied regardless of regional or chronological boundaries focusing instead on ideas and ideology in the past through the archaeological record (Johnson 1999: 85-97). Similar to Carver’s criticism of peer-polity interaction noted above, post-processual theorists challenged single interpretations of patterns in material culture (ibid.: 98).

Alternative strategies and a reaction against cultural evolution as an explanation for change ensued. In particular, vehicles of ideological and political display, such as graves and sculpture, played a part in this archaeological discussion (Driscoll 1988; Carver 1989; Driscoll 1991; Carver 1992a; Bradley, R. 1993; Smith 1996; Carver 1998; Driscoll 2000; Carver 2001; Carver 2003). In these studies, monuments (of



all kinds) could be interpreted as part of the way people saw and understood the world around them. They could be used to legitimise authority with a supernatural past, to proclaim cult beliefs, and to display images and messages of political authority. The flexibility inherent in post-processual methods of interpretation also meant that multiple meanings and reasons behind the use of such monumental displays were valid and not necessarily contradictory. While it may be more immediate to interpret worldviews and landscapes from presumed cult monuments (graves, crosses), the idea-centric agenda of post-processual archaeologies is also applicable to other aspects and material culture of the past.

A critical concept behind the interpretation in this thesis is the idea of symbolic wealth or economy and society. A basic definition of economy is the method by which goods are produced and exchanged. Although trade and manufacture may be the most archaeologically visible aspects, they are only a fraction of what makes up the nebulous term 'economy.' Understanding past economies is more complicated than reconstructing trade routes or plotting coin finds. The broad topic of economy provides a backdrop against which to see the changing approaches of archaeologists over the 20<sup>th</sup> century to economic interpretations of material culture and wealth.

### **Early Medieval Society and Economics**

The understanding of socio-political and economic organisation in Scotland and the early medieval European world in general has largely developed from discussions between history, archaeology, and anthropology. The picture of the economy in

Scotland in the early medieval period is based on contemporary Irish documents, mainly law tracts, and evidence from key excavated sites (Kelly 1988).

Agricultural and pastoral activities were the source of wealth and base of the economy (Patterson 1994: 151). Farming practices, depicted in the collection of law tracts dating mostly from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries as analysed by Kelly (1998), supply much of the evidence for agricultural activity, but these law tracts may record archaic or ideal practices rather than represent a handbook for farmers (Edwards 1990: 8). The historical geographer V. B. Proudfoot's seminal study (1961) of the economy of the Irish rath (or enclosed farmstead) has long proved the basis for how the economy functioned in these regions. Using evidence from raths excavated between 1925-55, Proudfoot created a picture of a mixed farming economy with some hunting, fishing, and fowling. Basic industrial activities were present with evidence of bronze metalworking appearing at both smaller and bigger raths. Essentially the raths appear self-sufficient, but exchange may have come into play with 'luxury' objects like jewellery. Other possible exchange items are raw materials - bog or other ores. The analysis was heavily influenced by textual clues of what to look for and as such, the results produced a similar picture to that of the textual evidence.

More recent environmental studies suggest changes in the amount and type of farming practice occurring in both Scotland and Ireland. An analysis of woodland clearance in West Central Scotland, an area centred on Glasgow, showed a period of woodland regeneration, or a decline in cleared fields used for agricultural purposes, occurred in the 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries for reasons other than climate conditions (Ramsay 1995: 165). This does not mean agricultural activity stopped

and is only representative of a small area of Scotland, but it does contrast the more widespread evidence for the following centuries. Environmental evidence from a wider range of sites within Scotland indicates less woodland and an intensification of agricultural activity in the 9<sup>th</sup> century in Scotland (Crone 1998: 490-491; Ramsay 1995: 166, 170). A similar increase in agricultural activity may occur earlier in Ireland around c. 600 AD linked in part to the use of the mouldboard plough and the horizontal mill (Stout 1997: 132). The increase in agricultural activity suggests an increase in the available wealth during these periods.

The economy was embedded into social actions. Wealth was based on agriculture and the more powerful and wealthy members of society were able to feed their own household and a number of retainers (Patterson 1994: 151). Patron – client relationships were also agriculturally based and reliant on the payment of food renders and manual service from both legally free and base clients (ibid.).

Exchange or gifts of luxury or resource-intensive objects, such as fine brooches, could also be part of this patron-client exchange (Nieke 1993). Some monasteries received land grants, had tenants themselves, and received gifts just as secular leaders might (Gerreits 1983: 41; Etchingham 1999).

The interpretation of social organisation in Ireland is also based on law tracts, particularly *Crith Gablach*, which deals with the rank of different members of society (overviews of Irish social structure can be found in Binchy 1970; Kelly 1988; Edwards 1990; Mytum 1992; and Patterson 1994). According to the laws, the main political unit of organisation was the *tuath*, ruled by a king, which was made up of a group of people sometimes related but also linked by personal bonds



(Binchy 1970: 5 – 7; Gerreits 1983; Kelly 1988: 3-6). Kings and overkings would receive goods or services in return for land or cattle, for example. There is an emphasis on the economic importance of the personal relationship between patrons and clients – reciprocity and redistribution (Gerreits 1983; Patterson 1994: 62 – 63, 151). These political units need not have had fixed boundaries or members. The laws described an ideal, and great dynasties like the Uí Néill appear to imply that confederations over-rode or were more realistic than the idealised *tuath* structure by the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries (Edwards 1990: 8).

Unlike Ireland, Scotland does not have relatively extensive law tracts, idealised or otherwise, to set out a framework for social organisation or economic practices. However, later documentary sources, place-name, and archaeological evidence have been used in some areas to reconstruct aspects of early medieval land and political organisation (Barrow 1973: 7 – 68). In some areas of the eastern lowlands of Scotland, a system of shires, or units of land, can be gleaned from references in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century documents (ibid.: 27). Associated with the shire was a group of high status people, or thanes, who managed the shire (ibid.). The shire is important because it appears to be a system of land management that existed prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and as such was part of the political and economic organisation of the early medieval period. It is not certain how far back the shire can be taken as an administrative system. The shire was the basic unit for assessing and collecting rents and service due to a lord or king, which might include food renders, manual, or military services (ibid.: 41 – 47). Shires imply a hierarchical organisation was part of maintaining social and economic control (Driscoll 1991: 89).

Division of land for administrative purposes was also important in the west of Scotland. The *Senchus fer nAlban*, or 'History of the Men of Alba,' is a document that may originate in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but its earliest surviving compilation dates to the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Bannerman 1966; Broun 1999a: 6). The document is a mix of genealogy and details of civil and military administration. The administration details, which are most specific for the area of the Cenél nOengusa on Islay, highlight the method of land division, tributes, and military requirements that are crucial elements of the relationships between those of differing status.

Land and agriculture appear to be the foundation of socio-political and economic institutions. Approaches to early medieval economy have undergone similar theoretical changes as those to power in archaeology and anthropology. In the 1960 – 70s a debate emerged amongst economic anthropologists over how to interpret past economies. The formalist approach advocated analysis of past economies using the same logic and terminology that would apply to the present. Challenging this, the substantivists headed by Karl Polanyi (1978), argued the opposite. Modern logic, market principles, supply, and demand had little use and were anachronistic in studies of past economies. The substantivists advocated economies of reciprocity and redistribution alongside market exchange. We can envision an economy in early medieval Northwest Europe as one including all three methods of exchange. While the formalist – substantivist debate has, as Matthew Johnson notes, 'lost its heat' recently, the substantivist approach currently dominates (Johnson 1999: 147). Hodges advocated a substantivist approach in *Dark Age Economics* and utilised the current anthropological theories of the time (the 1980s) to investigate the nature of exchange. He linked a type of early

medieval site called an *emporium* to a variant of Central Place Theory described as a dendritic central place system (Fig. 1.2, Hodges 1982: 16 - 19). In this model, the *emporia* are 'gateway communities,' the nodes of inter-regional exchange systems, where commercial activity concentrated and reflected the complexity of prestige goods exchange between political elite and the working of the political economy in general.

These approaches to the economy within early medieval archaeology emphasised exchange as the developing force of the economy. The relatively infrequent finds

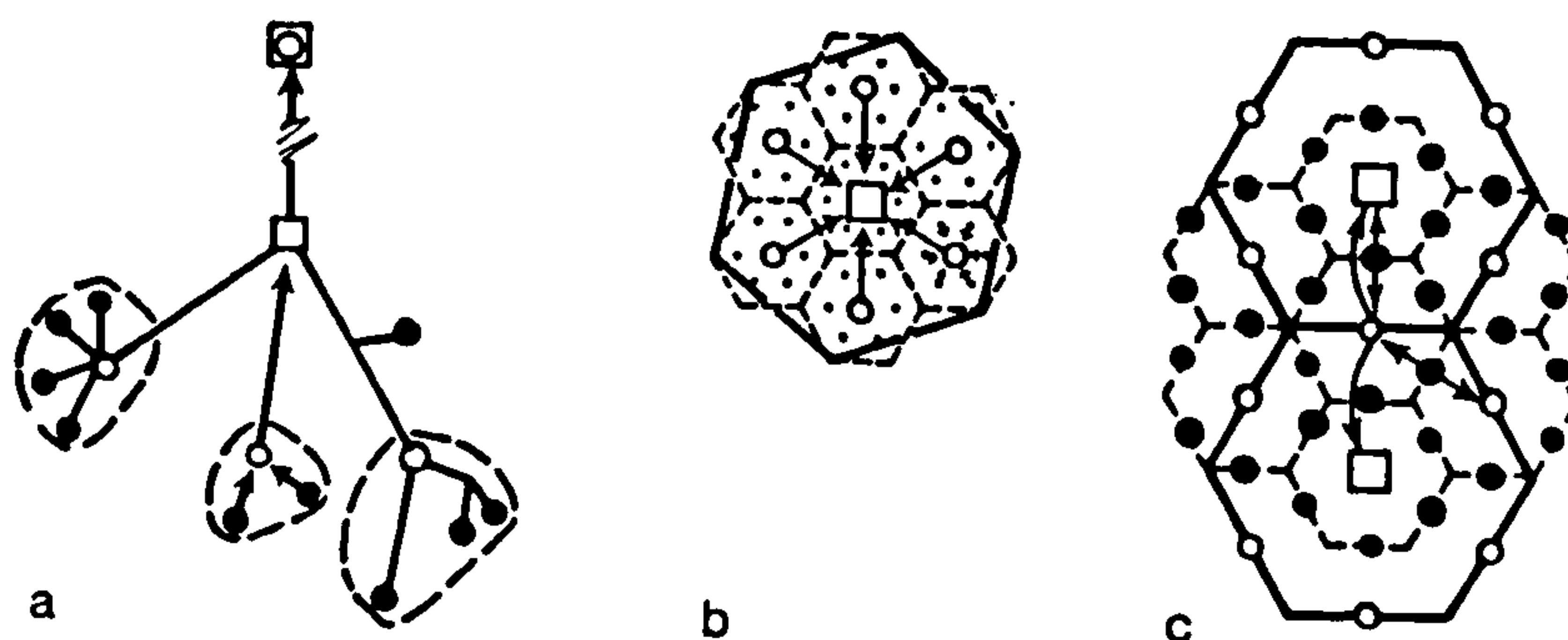


Fig. 1.2: Three regional models of Central Place Theory. (a) Dendritic (b) solar and (c) interlocking Central Place systems (after Hodges 1982: 17).

of exchange items suggests the economy, however, was not exchange based but agriculturally based. This accords to most historic and archaeological evidence. Exchange need not be the most important aspect of the economy, 'the majority of economic activity in antiquity and the early Middle Ages happened without money



and without markets, and that trade only played a minor role in the totality of economic activity, and that towns were not the product of trade or markets nor were they greatly dependent on them' (Samson 1994: 111). Hodges' (1982) generalising model articulated the importance of long distance trade and manufacture to the existence and origins of the European urban tradition and linked them to burgeoning state formation. In this model, alternative economic strategies were unsuccessful attempts on the road to medieval towns and kingdoms.

The intrinsically social aspect of the economy in early medieval Scotland and Ireland means that economics must be considered more than trade and consumerism. Production (agricultural, monumental, habitation) has been largely left out of discussions on economy, particularly in situations where an *emporium* (e.g. in Anglo-Saxon England) was present (Saunders 1995; 2001). The reintroduction of production into the economy will go some way towards the 'economic totality' lacking in the view of early medieval economics. John Moreland pointed out that people 'also enter into and construct social relations in the process of production; that the realm of production is not isolated from ideological and cosmological concerns' (Moreland 2000: 28). The economic act of production of luxury items, a patron's residence, agricultural surplus, or a carved stone monument is embedded with social meaning.

In addition to production, a wider definition of 'economic interest' should be introduced (Bourdieu 1977: 177). By expanding 'economic calculation' to all types of goods, materials, and actions, the early medieval economy opens up to allow more than exchange and manufacturing to matter. Bourdieu called this type

of economic calculation ‘symbolic capital’ (ibid.). Bourdieu asserted that symbolic worth and traditional economic worth were linked and that the use of material wealth generated symbolic wealth (ibid.: 180). An example of this might be the ritual feasts hosted by kings to ensure the loyalty of clients. Material wealth in the form of food, generous helpings of alcohol, and presents guaranteed greater numbers of loyal relationships that made the king symbolically (and in reality) wealthy.

Interpretations of the early medieval economy suggest the economy relied on personal ties (Gerreits 1983). Personal relationships were the foundation of political, economic, and spiritual bonds. This does not mean the economy was ‘weak’ or stagnant. It was not solely an economy of elite trading centres even though they are significantly more prevalent in the archaeological record. Work on the *emporia* themselves is beginning to expand beyond the *emporia* boundaries and consider other aspects of economics and society (Anderton 1999; Hill and Cowie 2001). However, even within the current environment, it cannot be stressed enough that the economy encompasses more than trade and exchange. Future considerations of early medieval society need to come to terms with the more symbolic aspects of economy and see the value of personal bonds and the act of production.

## CONCLUSION

In the following chapters, sculpture, settlement, imported pottery and glass, fine metalworking and coinage are considered as symbolic wealth and their

distributions are studied in each region. Chapter two sets out the methodology for assessing these categories of symbolic wealth and three to five look at symbolic wealth in Argyll, Fife and Perthshire, and Dumfries and Galloway. By looking at the differences and patterns in distribution over time, strategies and ideologies of power can be interpreted. The articulation of power can be seen through the relative degrees of investment in symbolic wealth as it was used to form and reflect the way people viewed and structured their lives. Far from creating a generalised model applicable across time and space, the approach outlined here highlights the alternative and contrasting ideologies and power structures manifested in early medieval Scotland.



## **Chapter Two: Mapping Symbolic Wealth**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In assessing the types of material culture that are significant manifestations of material investment we are concerned mainly with two broad categories. The first is monumental manifestation – symbolic wealth as exhibited in sculpture and in settlement. The other broad category includes those items that are symbolic manifestations of ‘luxury’ or material wealth namely the acquisition and use of imported ceramics and glass, the sponsorship and use of fine metalwork, and the use or hoarding of coins and other materials.

The following chapter discusses these categories of material culture and outlines the methods of assessing these aspects of symbolic wealth and the production of the distribution maps used in the case studies.

### **ASSESSING SYMBOLIC WEALTH**

The categories of objects included in this study are chosen because they have properties of both symbolic and material wealth. Access to imported materials such as pottery and glass vessels, coins and hoarded precious metals, and the resources necessary for enabling metalworking and sculpture have both symbolic and material value. The complementary nature of symbolic and material wealth is clear from the socially embedded nature of the economy (Chapter One).

## Carved Stones

“If we can make its social label stick, the standing stone monument is going to be a powerful tool with which to write history – because we have plenty of them”

(Carver 2001: 17). Monuments were erected partly for the glory of God, but also are representations of the political, economic, and ideological contexts from which they originate. The reasons for erecting stone monuments vary over time, place, and social context. Changes in the use of monuments echo political and religious motivations in physical form.

Early medieval sculptured stones vary in type from rock outcrops with simple incised crosses to elaborate free standing or high crosses covered with decorative and figural sculpture. Productive analysis of such variety necessitates a way of viewing the economic aspects of stones on a scale of material investment involved in each one's manufacture. There is obviously a large difference in resources involved between a stone that could be the product of a casual chiseling and one that would be the product of a master carver.

Carved stone monuments play a large part in the analysis for this thesis because they are a plentiful source of information and also because they are a largely untapped resource in economic analyses. The resources invested in carved stones, as symbolic capital, offer a chance to investigate how patronage and the use of resources work together within economic and social power structures. The production and display of a stone monument is a visual representation of many types and levels of patronage. Possibilities include relationships between the

commissioner and the carver, the commissioner and the monastery or church that displays the monument, and those patronage relationships that supplied labour, food, and services for the duration of the production period. Such relationships are literally set in stone, declared, and displayed when a monument is erected.

The benchmark publication of stone sculpture in Scotland is *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* first published in 1903, which divided sculpture into three groups (Allen and Anderson 1903). Class I stones have only Pictish symbols. Class II includes stones with Pictish symbols and a cross, and Class III includes all stones without Pictish symbols. These classifications are now embedded in discussions on sculpture, but are a shorthand and now seen to overlook the immense variety in early medieval sculpture (Henderson and Henderson 2004:11). Over the past 100 years, the discovery and recognition of new stones makes this corpus insufficient as a sole source of information. Projects are underway to update and modernise the database of 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century sculpture in Scotland under the Scotland Early Medieval Sculptured Stones (SEMSS) project (there has also been a list of monuments compiled by R.M. Spearman (1997) of the National Museum of Scotland). The Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland, RCAHMS, have published a series of archaeological inventories and a handlist of Pictish stones (RCAHMS 1914; 1920; 1933; 1971; 1975; 1980; 1982; 1984; 1988; 1990; 1992; 1994; 1997; Fraser and Ritchie 1999; Fisher 2001) that include sculpture and serve as a major starting point. They also maintain the searchable website CANMORE (<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk>). There are other published guides and lists for Pictish stones (Mack 1997; Sutherland 1997). Information contained in these sources is not always of the same type and



quality. Inventories and databases used in this study were supplemented by published new finds and catalogues as well as site visits to some monuments. The scope of a research project such as this one highlights the need and desirability for comprehensive, modern, and easily updateable records of sculptured stones such as the SEMSS project aims to achieve.

The number of monuments we have today is not the same as what existed in the early medieval period and new material may always challenge, prove, or disprove arguments put forward. Although the corpus is not complete, the surviving monuments can be utilised for meaningful archaeological analysis (e.g. Campbell 1987; Smith 1996; Carver 2001). The known numbers and distributions of early medieval carved stones in Scotland is arguably one of the more complete datasets of early medieval material culture – what survives has largely been recorded to some level. For this study, I assume that the evidence for early medieval sculpture is partial, but an acceptable representation from which to argue. Carver recently argued, “having declared this assumption, the archaeologist should be permitted to develop a model on evidence that is partial” (2001: 2). The models presented here therefore are by nature speculative and await the challenges of new material and theories.

The purposes of carved stones were multiple although several ‘primary’ functions are possible. A commemorative function seems likely for many slabs. The relatively small size of some monuments suggests they may have been used at some point as individual gravemarkers. Inscriptions on some slabs, from Iona for example, support this purpose. As gravemarkers, more resource-intensive or

elaborate monuments may be gifts or sponsored by the more élite members of society. The patrons for carved monuments likely came from both religious and secular environments. Laymen made donations to churches, *oblatio*, in return for religious favours and amicable relations with the religious community (Etchingham 1999: 246). It is tantalising to suggest, although purely hypothetical, that monuments could represent the *oblatio* in solid form.

In addition to being gravemarkers, some carved stones may have commemorated events associated with important persons in a monastery's history. On Iona, Adomnán tells us "In the place where Ernán died, in front of the door of the corn-kiln, a cross was set up, and another on the spot where Columba was standing at the moment of Ernán's death. These are still standing today" (*VC* I.45, Sharpe 1995: 148). These crosses might have been made of wood. Stone crosses likely existed alongside and in some cases may have been replacements for wooden predecessors (Fisher 2001: 11). Crosses and slabs also have been suggested as prayer centres or boundary markers, especially when found outside church grounds (Lynn and McDowell 1988: 58; Fisher 2001: 9). It is also possible that they formed part of the liturgical ritual or pilgrimage rites within the church precinct. On Inishmurray, drystone cairns, *leachta*, with cross slabs make up some of the sixteen stations around the island visited on the Feast of Assumption, a ritual presumed to have an early medieval precedent (O'Sullivan, *et al.* 2002). The liturgy of the Stations of the Cross which re-enacts Christ's journey from his death sentence to the tomb by stopping at particular locations to pray seems to have become typical in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Alston 2003). The idea of a miniature pilgrimage reminiscent of the monuments of the holiest city, Jerusalem, may

however be earlier. Interest in those monuments was certainly high from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, as Adomnán's work on the holy places, *de Locis Sanctis*, attests (Meehan 1958).

The connection of monuments to the landscape has recently been addressed with the proposal that upright carved stones may be a type of estate marker. This interpretation is especially favoured when stone monuments occur across the landscape in a dispersed pattern. Driscoll examined stone monuments as active in the development of estates (1988; 1991; 1998; 2000). Stones, especially those with Pictish symbols, "imply strategy for gaining control of and maintaining landed resources" (Driscoll 2000: 249). Martin Carver saw the Pictish Class II, dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> – early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, as candidates for estate and boundary markers (Carver 2001: 14). He suggested this use of monuments was part of a secular attitude towards Christianity that involved local aristocratic or landowner involvement over monastic and episcopal managing of the Church.

### *Assessing monumental resources*

The creation of a comparative scheme assessing the amount of time and resources devoted to each sculptured stone allows for a general comparison between different types and sizes of monuments on a relative scale. This comparison of resources when mapped and considered with other aspects of resource use graphically points to areas that may be centres of early medieval power. Such a relative scheme is not free from problems. It is a tool to compare monuments to each other and uses 'relative days' or a relative timescale. Its purpose is not to define a monument as



realistically taking one year or two weeks to create. We do not know how long it took to create any stone monuments in the past, as there are no documents that describe even an idealised process step by step.

Knowing little of the stone carver's craft, I was fortunate to be able to witness work on the reconstruction of one of the great Pictish early medieval monuments, the Hilton of Cadboll stone. The Hilton of Cadboll Project (<http://www.pictishstone.freeuk.com/>) commissioned the artist and stone worker Barry Grove, a master carver experienced in reconstructing and recreating Pictish style stones, for the project. Mr. Grove graciously provided information regarding all aspects of the stone carving process.

Hilton is a small coastal village in Easter Ross and there are contemporary Pictish stones on the peninsula at Tarbat (NH 9151 8402), Nigg (NH 8046 7171), and Shandwick (NH 8555 7471). The Hilton of Cadboll stone (Fig. 2.1) is a fragment of an upright rectangular cross slab c. 2.36m high and 1.37m wide. The cross side of the Hilton stone was defaced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and reused as a grave marker for 'Alexander Duff and his three wives.' The stone was gifted to the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Foster 2001: 9). The call for a reconstruction was the result of community desire to have a representation of 'their' stone at its former setting of the chapel of the Virgin Mary in Hilton.

The slab of sandstone used for the Hilton reconstruction, quarried from Clashach Quarry near Elgin, was 4m by 1.5m and 500mm thick weighing about seven tons.



It is aesthetically similar to the original stone, a blonde sandstone. The original's source is still unknown, and the nature of the sandstone and underlying local geology make it difficult to source (Hall 2003: 14). A slab of stone this size would take an estimated four to five days to quarry out of the



Fig. 2.1: Upper portion of Hilton of Cadboll stone in the National Museum of Scotland (copyright Trustees of the National Museum of Scotland).

bedrock using the traditional 'plug and feather' method of extraction (B. Grove, pers com). In this method, 'plugs' are driven into the stone outcrop to outline the rough shape and size and pressure is put on these wedges until the stone is released from the bedrock. After extraction of the block, the stone was transported to the workshop in the village of Hilton. The reconstruction project used a lorry, but transportation in the past would likely have taken a water route if possible, as this would be much easier than moving such a heavy mass over land.



An early reference, from the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century, to a group of stone workers, possibly a workshop, occurs in Cogitosus' *Life of Brigit* (Connolly and Picard 1988: 24-25). The episode tells of the quarrying of a millstone and uses different Latin terms for the people involved in quarrying, transporting, and fixing the stone in place at the mill. Another early reference possibly connected to stone carving and the carver, is an 8<sup>th</sup> century Irish law tract, the *Uraicecht Becc* (MacLean 1995). The tract refers to the status of the master wood craftsman. A reference to wooden crosses amongst the craftsman's repertoire appears in an 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century gloss found in manuscripts of the tract dating at the earliest from the 14<sup>th</sup> century (MacLean 1995: 127). Another later gloss connects the *sáer*, wright or master wood worker, with *rindaigeacht* – *rindaige*, engraver or relief carver. A chief master wright is expected to have the skills to build several types of structures including mills, boats, and buildings or churches (MacLean 1995: 131; Kelly 1988: 61). These skills established him as a higher-ranking member of society, the equivalent to a low noble rank (MacLean 1995: 131). As a low noble, the wright participated in the client – lord relationships set out in the Irish laws. The craftsman, while client of whichever patron required his art, would also be the patron of his own apprentices and clients (ibid.: 130). This conjures up the image of a workshop of several artisans at different levels of expertise working on a monument. The master carver need not perform all the work himself (or even herself) allowing workers to complete the less refined parts of the process.

It is worthwhile to bear in mind this suggested workshop hierarchy when considering the mechanics of carving and erecting a complex stone monument such



as a cross or cross slab. Carving either took place on the site of the stone's setting or in an offsite workshop on either an upright or recumbent slab. The majority of stones leave no clues as to how the process occurred. The recently discovered lower fragment of the Hilton of Cadboll stone, discovered at the Hilton Chapel site (NH 8731 7687) in February 2001 (Murray and Ewart 2001: 55) and fully excavated in August 2001 (James 2001), may shed some light on the process. The lower fragment was found in association with, although not set in, a collar stone and stone setting (James 2001). It is unclear if the setting is from the primary erection of the slab. The lower fragment was broken at the tenon and was reset before it broke or was broken again. Once reset, the lower carving on the cross side of the slab was below ground and the lower carving was sacrificed to ensure the stone was able to stand. The two carved faces of the slab end at different points (Fig. 2.2). The symbol side of the slab stops higher up and was completely visible even when the stone was reset. Tool marks on the symbol side suggest the original carving was laid out to match the cross side (James 2001: 19). This evidence suggests that after quarrying and dressing the Hilton stone went through the following process. The first and second steps were either the carving of the cross side, which is in high relief, or the erection of the monument. It is unclear which of these came first. The symbol side was also laid out around this same time. The tenon snapped and stone needed to be reset causing the symbol side to be redesigned. The symbol side was then carved in the new proportions.



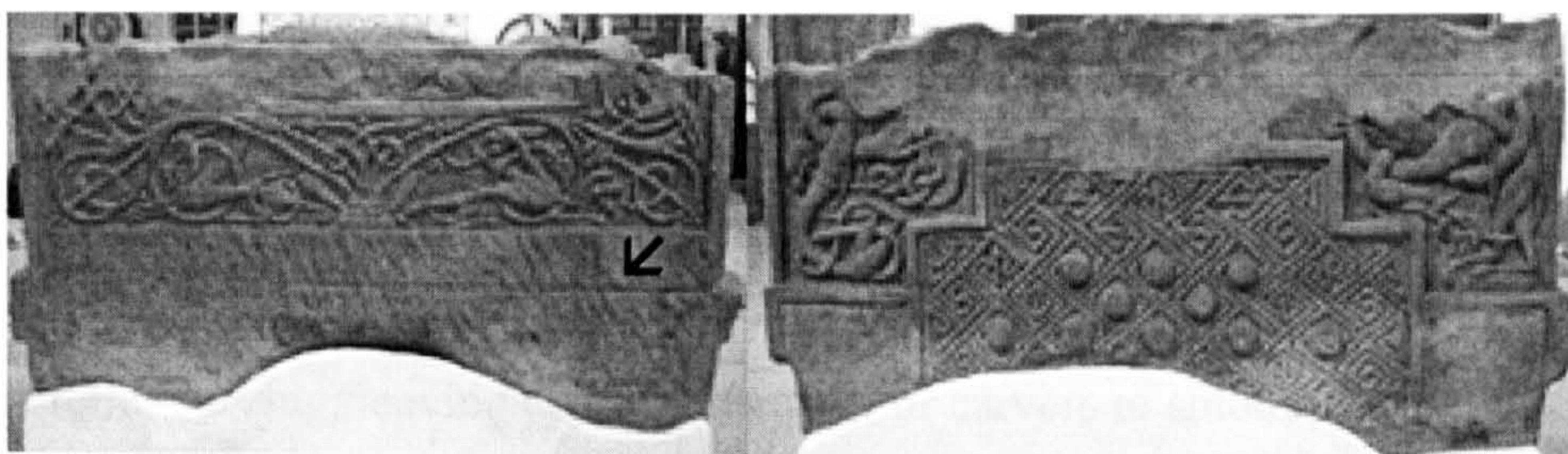


Fig.: 2.2: The lower portion of Hilton of Cadboll with laying-out marks indicated (after James 2001: 18).

The implications are that at least large-scale monuments may have been carved *in situ*. This requires a craftsman and associated workers to be at the site either temporarily or permanently and that their feeding and housing needs had to have been met. It also evokes the idea that the act of carving and putting up one of these monuments is a public process. Mr. Grove received many visitors wanting to watch him carve the stone, and it need not be anachronistic to think that the process might be a public curiosity of sorts in the past as well.

Initially Mr. Grove dressed the Hilton reconstruction alone and using tools not dissimilar to their early medieval counterparts, but improved with modern materials. Unlike his forebears, after two weeks of manually dressing the vast amount of stone with a one inch chisel, Mr. Grove agreed to the aid of Historic Scotland's offer of help in the form of workers with pneumatic air tools. The dressing still took another week to complete. Without the modern tools, the process may have taken three dressers an estimated five weeks (B. Grove, pers com). Transferring the known design and reconstructing the missing pieces of the symbol side took an additional seven weeks. Carving the stone was by far the most time-consuming process involved in creating the monument. While his reconstruction (Fig. 2.3) took longer due mainly to visitor pressure, Mr. Grove



estimates that a single carver would take approximately nine months to complete the symbol side of the Hilton stone (B. Grove, pers com). The process could be sped up considerably with the use of apprentices or extra carvers to remove waste in the relief carving, leaving the master carver or carvers to smooth and refine edges and



Fig. 2.3: The Hilton Reconstruction in the workshop (photo by author).

carve the most delicate areas. The reconstruction was completed in August 2000 and now stands next to the chapel site at Hilton. The carving of the cross face is currently underway inspired by the finds from the February and August 2001 excavations. This carving will be done on the upright slab and promises to be another fruitful experiment for learning about the early medieval carving process.

### *Resource Assessment Scheme*

The creation process of making a sculptured stone can be divided into several steps: designing the monument, sourcing the stone, quarrying, transporting to the carving site, dressing, setting out the design, erecting the stone, and carving. As



some contemporary monuments have evidence of pigment, after carving there is a possibility the stone was painted (Lang 1990). Designing and possibly laying out the design on the complex monuments would require a craftsman of considerable skill, knowledge of current popular motifs, and probably contact with the patron or patrons of the stone (if they themselves were not the patron). The likely environment for a designer to emerge from is either a monastery or secular settlement where access to manuscripts, metalwork, wooden carvings, and models would serve as a corpus of designs and motifs from which to work. The type of stone used in monuments has an impact on the type of carving and effort involved. Sandstone is softer and easier to carve than igneous rocks such as granite or basalt. Sandstone is usually the chosen stone for the complex cross slabs and free-standing crosses. Although easier to carve, over time the water content in sandstone evaporates making the stone more brittle and liable to fractures.

An estimated period of time for quarrying suitable stone once located is a matter of days involving the labour of several people. The amount of resources involved would be relative to the size of the block quarried. In Scotland, the Old Red Sandstone supergroup dominates large areas of bedrock making sourcing particular quarries a difficult task (Ruckley and Carver 1998; Hall 2003). Generally the level of sourcing lies at whether the stone is available locally or not. Because origins are so difficult to identify, the aspect of transport from quarry to carving site is equally problematic. The time and resources devoted to dressing a stone in preparation for carving is directly related to the size of the monument and how many faces are to be carved. Some monuments were never dressed or quarried as carving took place directly into rock outcrops or natural boulders.

Erecting an upright cross slab or free-standing cross requires labour and engineering skills. Several examples of upright stones have bases designed to hold them in place and some of the free-standing crosses on Iona are in segments held together by joins and tenons. Any large upstanding monument would require a considerable amount of labour and resources to erect. We do not know how exactly they were erected, but images of ropes, pulleys, and labourers undoubtedly are not too inaccurate.

These steps form the basis of the relative scale of resources involved in creating sculptured stone monuments. Some steps, while recognised, are not assessed within the scheme. The act of erecting a monument, while certainly labour and resource-intensive, has been omitted as an individual factor in the scheme. Many monuments are no longer in their original positions having been collected in churches, church museums (e.g. St Andrews or Meigle) near their presumed original location, or in museums further afield (see Hall *et al.* 2000; Foster 2001 for examples of how monuments have moved and been viewed over time). The classification of monuments as recumbent or upright cannot be done based on the number of carved faces alone in light of the missing information on their original display setting. The difficulty in sourcing the quarries for stone has already been mentioned. There is, therefore, not enough data available to include transport as a factor in the scheme. When the source of the stone is known, this will be considered within the smaller area studies. From studying the Hilton reconstruction, designing, quarrying, dressing, and carving a monument appear to be the most resource-intensive (in time and or labour) components of the process.

These four steps are the factors chosen for the relative scheme of resource investment.

The aim of mapping resource concentration is to graphically display such concentrations to instigate further interpretation and analysis. When moving beyond simple distribution dots representing location to an interpretative level of resource investment, a jump must be made from textual and ‘fuzzy’ interpretation to measurable numeric analysis because comparative graphics work on a numeric scale. A textual to numeric transition is not a comfortable one to make. There is a flexibility and ambiguity in language that does not translate into numbers which appear more final, unyielding, and ‘scientific.’ The actual numeric value (Table 2.1) I have assigned to each step is arbitrary except in relation to each other and the overall scheme. It is however based on the relative time taken for each stage in the Hilton of Cadboll reconstruction.

Overall Numeric Resource Scheme					
Designing	None	0	Minimal	10	Moderate 20 High 30
Quarrying	None	0	Minimal	10	Moderate 20 High 30
Dressing	None	0	Minimal 20 (rough)	Moderate 40	High 80
Carving	None	0	Minimal	200	Moderate 400 High 800

Table 2.1: Monumental resource assessment scheme.

In addition to this relative scheme, I created another numeric scale based on the complexity of the carving on the monument to emphasise the relative difference between individual stones (Table 2.2).



Complexity Scale	Explanation
I	Singular motif or small area of ornament, minimal planning involved, rougher lines or incision
II	Multiple motifs or larger area of ornament, some planning in design, more complex or time consuming carving methods
III	All-over surface ornament, high level of planning in design, complex carving methods but with rougher finish
IV	All-over surface ornament, high level of planning in design, complex carving methods with fine lines

Table 2.2: Complexity scale for monuments.

Assessment for each stage in the scheme for each monument was based on drawings, photographs, and descriptions supplemented by first hand observation of some monuments.

The numeric values are weighted according to which activity required more material investment in resources and/or labour. Designing and quarrying have the same weighting because while designing may take longer, quarrying involves more labour. Both the dressing and carving processes increase exponentially as the monuments become larger and more complex. Based on the information from the Hilton reconstruction, carving may take up to ten times longer than dressing. Allocation of the numeric values to individual monuments was based on a range of interpretative criteria.

**Designing** - The designing value echoes the reasoning behind the complexity scale with the amount and difficulty of the overall motifs and how motifs are laid out on the monument affecting the value.

**Quarrying** - The quarrying value is related to the size of a monument. When only a fragment of the monument survives, the Quarrying value is based on a best

estimate of the original size. When fragments are recognised as belonging to the same monument, they are grouped together. The general guidelines for the Quarrying values are: 0 (none) for a natural outcrop, boulder, or cave, 10 (minimal) for a monument with measurements under 1 metre, 20 (moderate) for a monument with any measurement between 1 metre and 1.5 metres, and 30 (high) for a monument with any measurement over 1.5 metres. The measurements used to differentiate between categories are based on the frequency of occurrence in an overview of general monument size.

**Dressing** - The Dressing value is also partly based on the size parameters above and on how many faces have been dressed.

**Carving** - The Carving value derives from the number of carved faces, size of the monument, and the type of carving on the monument (incision, false relief, low relief, high relief).

These assigned values added together and then combined with the Complexity Scale value give the final number used in the comparative scale. The following equation yields the final number, which is then mapped:

$$(\text{Designing} + \text{Quarrying} + \text{Dressing} + \text{Carving}) \times \text{Complexity Value} = \text{Final Number}$$

Multiplying by the Complexity Value was considered the best method of accentuating the difference between the resources involved in a complex sculptured stone, such as a free-standing cross, and a simpler incised cross. These 'final numbers' are then transferred into graphic representations on a series of distribution maps.

## *Mapping*

The distribution maps included in this study are GIS (Geographic Information System) based. GIS involves linking a database of information to a map or maps. It is a way to create, manipulate, analyse, and display all types of geographically or spatially referenced data. A GIS allows complex spatial operations that are difficult to do manually or with graphics programs.

GIS programs require digital base map information with coordinates, either real-world or imaginary, that orientates the map and data. For Scotland digital Ordnance Survey map data can be accessed through the Digimap service, a product made available to UK Higher Education by Edinburgh Data and Information Access (EDINA). Digimap allows users to directly download the digital information to their workstation for use in GIS programs. The base map information chosen here from Digimap is the Strategi Data product. Strategi Data is at a scale of 1:250,000, which works well for the large area distribution maps that form the jumping off point for subsequent analysis. A contour line of land over 240 metres was added to the regional maps from a manually registered source map. This project used two versions of MapInfo, a GIS software package designed to handle spatial data, with MapInfo 5.5 replacing MapInfo 4.1.

Data was stored and analysed using a database created in Microsoft Access 2000 (Appendix One). The database consists of basic tables, some of which are linked in simple relationships. The tables within the database store information such as



location and Grid Reference, as well as relevant descriptive information for the study. Table structures for each type of category of wealth are shown in Fig. 2.4.

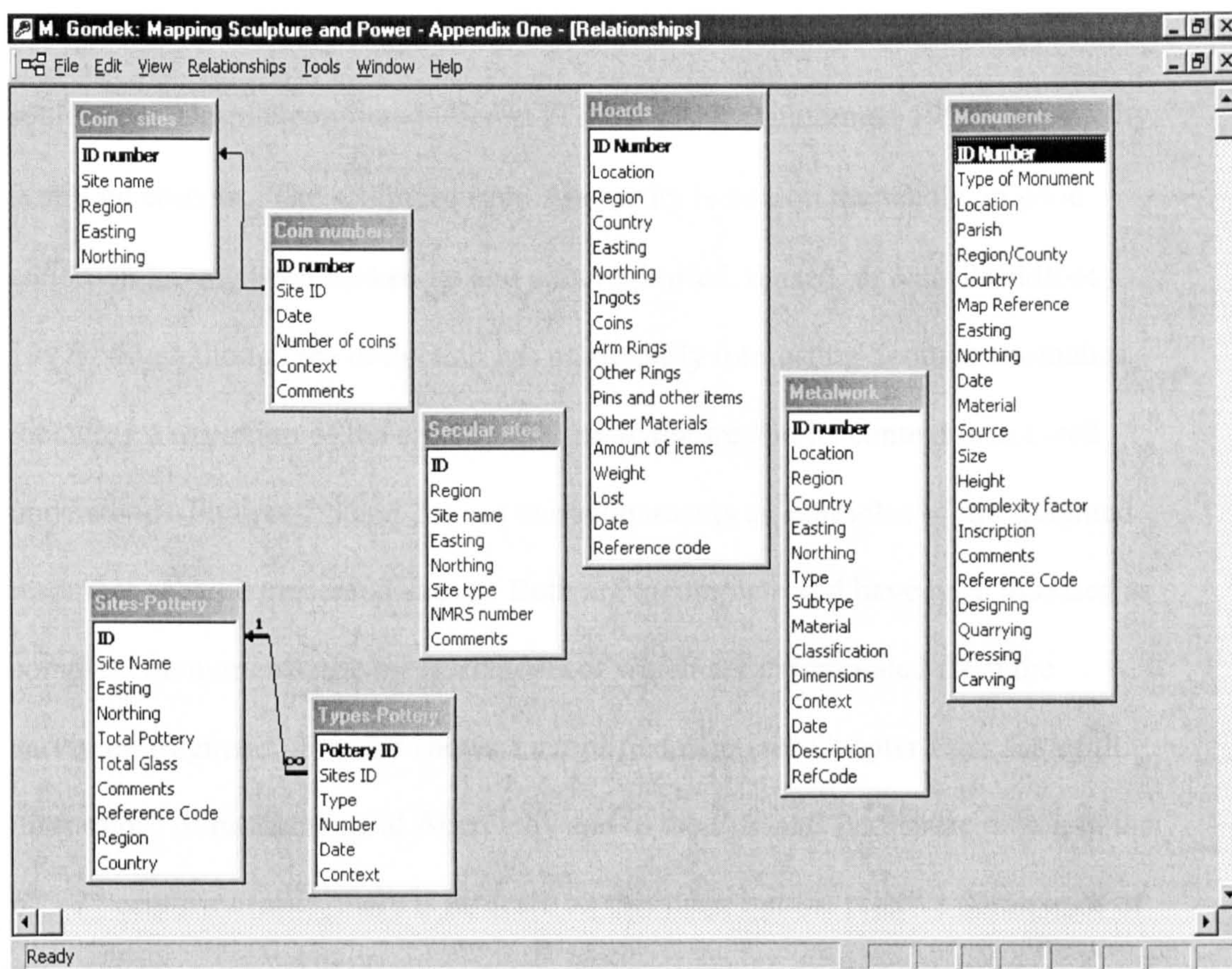


Fig. 2.4: Relationships and major tables in the database.

The methodology concerning carved stones outlined above proves itself to be particularly useful as an aid in filling in voids from other historical and archaeological knowledge. Because it concentrates on the creation process and extrapolates as much as possible from any fragmentary monuments, there is a lesser tendency for the quality and condition of the surviving sculpture to determine what is significant.



Abernethy, Perthshire provides an example. Historically the site is connected to Pictish royalty and potential episcopal status (Anderson 1990i: cxx, 121; Proudfoot 1997). The 12<sup>th</sup> century round tower also stands as a reminder of the status of this settlement. Despite continued interest (Taylor 1997; Bannerman 1996), Abernethy is still an enigma. The sculpture from Abernethy is not, on the whole, in good condition having been broken up and either reburied, reused, or lost (Proudfoot 1997). Even though the collection has particularly interesting Scottish anomalies, including a depiction of the crucifixion, the sculpture and its context is not well understood. Figures 2.5 and 2.6 use two monuments as examples of the weighted resources scheme presented above. Both are incomplete and have been assessed as complete monuments, the measurements of which are extrapolated from the surviving fragment. Fig. 2.7 shows a simplified map (see Chapter Four for a full discussion) of monuments at Abernethy and in the Fife and Perthshire region in the 6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries (note, there is no scale on this map, but the relative dominance of Abernethy as a site is, however, still apparent). The map shows clearly that Abernethy was one of the most important centres for sculpture in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century. The distribution of other early monuments in the immediate region



Abernethy symbol stone (granite), 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century, .84m x .56m,  
Complexity – I, Designing – 10, Quarrying – 20, Dressing – 40, Carving – 200  
=270 on relative resource investment scale

Fig. 2.5: Abernethy symbol stone with assessment (after Proudfoot 1997:48).





Abernethy 4 cross shaft fragment (red sandstone), 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century, .59m x .38m x .15m, Complexity – III, Designing – 30, Quarrying – 20, Dressing – 40, Carving – 400 = 1470 on relative resource investment scale

Fig. 2.6: Abernethy 4 with assessment (after Proudfoot 1997: 49).

suggests a regional focus at Abernethy. When the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century sculpture is considered in its regional context including the fort at Clatchard Craig, the political and religious significance of this area begins to make sense of those historical glimpses.

### *Dating Sculptured Stones*

When comparing the material investment devoted to individual sculpted stones, there is a danger of making anachronistic comparisons. Material investment in the 6<sup>th</sup> century cannot be compared to material investment in the 11<sup>th</sup> century because



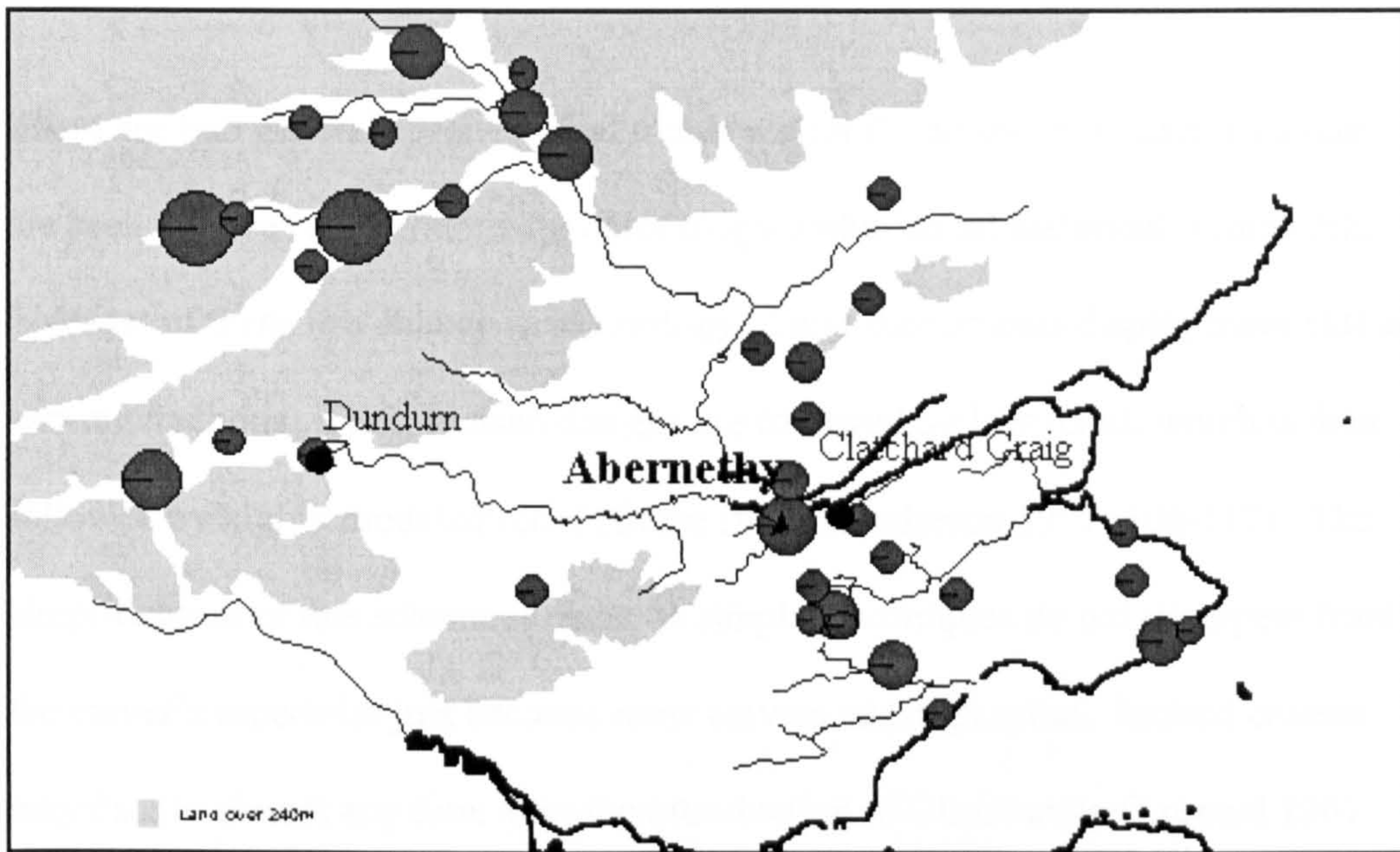


Fig. 2.7: Simplified map of resources invested in monuments, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries in Fife and Perth showing the importance of Abernethy.

of other variables such as stylistic and technological changes. A symbol stone may have had as much monumental significance as an elaborate free-standing cross, for example, even though there may be a great difference in the amount of material investment in the two monuments.

Comparisons between monuments in terms of material investment are most meaningful when the monuments are relatively contemporary. Ascertaining dates for sculpture is a complicated endeavor. The dates assigned to sculpted stones cannot be exact. Even monuments with inscriptions of named historical persons, such as at Dupplin, only guarantee the beginning of a range of dates. The similarities in style and motif, religious and cultural environments means that monuments in one region are often dated with reference or comparison to the other. This is not only true of Scotland, but inter-regional comparisons within the British Isles, Europe, and the Mediterranean are crucial in chronological analysis.



There are two general chronological trends within the corpus of monuments that are seen to have ramifications for chronology within an art historical framework. The first of these is a change in technology. Later monuments display more skilled carving methods. Thus, incised designs are followed by low relief, which is then followed by highly modeled relief (Curle 1940; Henderson 1967: 106-117). The simplification of this scheme is clear, as simpler techniques do not disappear from the carver's repertoire just because some carvers use high relief. Incised crosses may date to almost any time after the introduction of Christianity (Lionard 1961: 101-103; Henderson 1987: 46). Inscriptions are also important to chronological argument through the rare occurrence of historical personages, but more often through paleographical analysis (Macalister 1945; Thomas 1992; Handey 2001).

The other chronological trend is stylistic change. In Scotland, stylistic changes and dating are most interwoven for the corpus of stones from regions associated with the Picts. The most important stylistic change in monuments from Pictland is firstly, the appearance of the cross along with Pictish symbols and secondly, the disuse of Pictish symbols on cross slabs.

The appearance of sculpted stone monuments in Scotland is bound together with questions concerning the introduction of Christianity and conversion (Smith 1996). The inscribed commemorative monument, the Catstane, from Midlothian has an inscription roughly dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century and an associated long cist cemetery with burials beginning as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Cowie 1978: 199 - 201). Stones with crosses, considering the lack of documentary sources and definitive 'church'



sites, are a major source for understanding the spread of Christianity in Scotland (Henderson 1999a: 95). Allen and Anderson (1903) and Hughes (1970) considered symbol stones as pagan. The association of symbol stones with burials, particularly square kerbed cairns, is still not definitive although in several instances the association may be primary (Ashmore 1980; Alcock 1989; Henderson 1999a: 75; Mack 2002). The Inchyra stone, carved with symbols on both sides and an ogham inscription, was found as a flat slab covering a burial (RCAHMS 1994: 92-93). One of the earliest archaeological dates for a symbol stone is from a re-used 6<sup>th</sup> century context in a structure at Pool on Sanday (Hunter 1990: 185). The archaeological associations and great span of dates for symbol stones is a prime example of the complexities of dating sculpture.

It is important to see the traditional Class groupings of Scottish stones as stylistic groups and not following on in chronological order. Class III includes all stones that do not have Pictish symbols. For major regions of Scotland almost all monuments are grouped as Class III, no matter their date or individual style. As a typological group then, Class III does not mean much. Henderson addressed this problem in 1987 with an attempt to introduce a Class IV including stones with crosses but no other ornament. Many of these crosses could be early and potentially contemporary with some symbol stones. Another Class III subgroup that has been examined are stones with a Chi Rho and a cross motif (Trench – Jellicoe 1998). Fine-tuning of the framework for dating sculpted stones has come from further comparative studies of models and motifs (Harbison 1992; Henderson 1998; 2000).

Studies have also questioned the foundations of the framework itself. Laing (2000) recently argued that high relief Pictish sculpture, traditionally dated to a floruit in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, actually belongs to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. This revision affects non-Pictish sculpture because of the relationships between carving classified as Pictish and stones in other traditionally non-Pictish regions. Laing's argument rests on comparisons between objects depicted on the stones with surviving artefacts and motifs outside of Pictland. While his relationships between traditional 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century Viking type artefacts such as swords and axes highlights the possible connections of Pictland with the Scandinavian world, the method for dating these comparative artefacts is not discussed by Laing. There are also no 'Pictish' weapons with which to compare against the stones or Viking weaponry. The suggestion of a later chronological range for these stones might be viable, but the argument does not provide the support for the claim. Revising one relative chronology with another relative chronology does not necessarily clarify the dating process.

Laing also did not offer reasons why the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries would be a more likely period of production for monumental sculpture. With the shift in dating, 'Pictish' sculpture would be at its height when politically it appears the Scots are encroaching on Pictish power and territory. Large monument production might then be part of some social undercurrent of identity reassertion and definition and display of Pictish power. In Laing's dating scheme, Pictish symbols appear on stones in northern Pictland, such as Elgin and Shandwick, as late as the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Laing 2000: 14). The archaeologically dated Pictish symbol stone at Pool, Sanday likely dates to the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Hunter 1990:185). This gives Pictish symbols a



long period of use as a design motif, and has implications on the meaning and changes in meaning of the symbols themselves in the context of this longevity. In Laing's scheme, the general 'boom' of sculptural activity that appears to occur in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries in much of Scotland, could actually begin in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and last into the 10<sup>th</sup>. Both dating schemes, however, see the 9<sup>th</sup> century as a particularly critical time in Pictland for sculpture.

The art historical practice of isolating stylistic influences or motifs to a Pictish, Iona, Northumbrian, or Scandinavian tradition is significant for archaeology in that it highlights the fluidity of ideas and communication particularly in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries and these may indeed lead to interpretations of political or social links. However, such terms have come to be understood by many, particularly outside archaeology, as relating to not only a style or chronological definition, but as a group of people or an 'ethnic' term. Such confusion can be seen in other debates on the origins of great early medieval works such as the later 7<sup>th</sup> c. AD Book of Durrow, with its origins ranging from Northumbria to Ireland on the basis of the style of illuminations and form of writing (Ó Cróinín 1982; Laing 1995; Brown 1993: 99-111). The national biases of such arguments have been pointed out within this particular debate (Netzer 1999), and it serves as a caution for those involved in the study of carved stone monuments to recognise their own biases. Fortunately, the majority of carved stones are less mobile than manuscripts even though they may not be in their exact original location. This avoids for the most part conflicting claims of origin, but does still lead to claims of Northumbrian or Columban power, for example, in particular areas. The stylistic nuances and variations of style, which might incorporate all the trends of the British Isles and

the Continent, is one of the great achievements of the artisans of the early medieval period. This in itself should be celebrated as much as any infiltration of one style into another's supposed territory.

The foundation for dating used here is the art historical chronology as defined by Henderson (1967), tempered with what archaeological dating is known about the stones. Four generalised periods - 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> century, 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> century, 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> century, and Unknown were selected to best represent the trends in monument production. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries are characterised by symbol stones and simpler incised cross forms. Although such designs may have a long period of use, there are no archaeologically proven late examples (of course, absolute dates are difficult to obtain for a carved stone) and there are forms, such as the cross carved in the quernstone from Dunadd that appear to be a regional and chronological characteristic (Campbell 1987). The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries are characterised by the floruit of high modeled relief sculpture seen on the free-standing crosses and Class II cross slabs, while monuments of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries are characterised by relief carving with less fine lines and are more roughly modeled. The basis for these periods comes from the tendencies in typological dating techniques to assign a range of dates to an object. These periods also coincide with trends in dating other artefacts and characteristics of society. The 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries are the period of continental trading and when Christianity widens its power and social influence. The 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries are the centuries associated with the first wave of the Vikings and great political and religious changes. The 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries are part of the second phase of contact with the Vikings particularly as settlers. Some



monuments are undatable because they are lost, too incomplete, or too uncharacteristic making the presence of an 'Unknown' category unavoidable.

## Settlement

The other archaeologically recognisable form of monumental material investment considered in this study is settlement, particularly enclosures of stone and earth. Early medieval settlement in Scotland encompasses several forms: duns, forts, nuclear forts, crannogs, unenclosed sites, possibly brochs, rectangular, subrectangular, and cellular buildings and palisaded sites. Many of these types of sites, such as forts and duns in Scotland, are associated with the Iron Age (c. 700 BC – 500 AD). However, there are excavations of duns or forts, such as Little Dunagoil in Bute and Kildalloig dun in Kintyre that show a period of occupation within the early medieval period (Marshall 1964, RCAHMS 1971: 87-88). Not all duns and forts can be allocated an early medieval occupation phase (Nieke 1990: 133). Forts and duns are often multi-phase so even if they are originally pre-historic in date, reuse or reconstruction in the early medieval period cannot be ruled out except by excavation in most cases. The Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments (RCHAMS) in the Argyll inventories classified sites as forts or duns based on size (1971; 1975; 1980; 1982; 1984; 1988; 1992). The distinction rested on the difference in size of the enclosed area and the relative thickness of the enclosing walls without any recourse or allocation of the functional or cultural elements of the site. A dun, for example, is 'a comparatively small defensive enclosure with a disproportionately thick dry-stone wall with an enclosed area

rarely over 375 sq. metres' (RCHAMS 1980:23). Both forts and duns can have internal structures and associated outworks.

Crannogs are artificial islands constructed for settlement. The amount of material investment involved in crannog building and subsequent maintenance was considerable. While defense may play some part in the choice of building a crannog, the display of status and wealth were surely also factors in choosing such a settlement. Excavation is a crucial element in identifying the date of crannogs. In Scotland, excavated evidence shows construction and occupation of crannogs dates chiefly to three periods - the early Iron Age, the early medieval, and the medieval period (Crone 1993).

The nuclear fort is perhaps the settlement form most securely datable to the early medieval period in Scotland, although they may encompass earlier structures. Nuclear forts are characterised by their hierarchical use of space often with a citadel at the highest point of a natural hill with terraces on the lower slopes suitable for habitation and public spaces. At one point a common term for a fortified settlement with any hierarchical use of space (for example, the RCAHMS 1956 Inventory of Roxburghshire), the term now really only applies to Dundurn in Perthshire and Dunadd in Argyll. Both fortifications seem to be products of a sustained period of occupation and growth. The phrase 'nuclear fort' is best used to describe the hierarchical organisation of space rather than a specific type of fort plan (Alcock *et al.* 1989: 211). The forts utilise both vertical and horizontal divisions to permit and deny access to different zones. If hierarchical use of space is an early medieval characteristic, then forts and duns with substantial outworks or



ones that make use of earlier structural elements may also be candidates for early medieval occupation. Another characteristic that may be associated with a nuclear fort and the hierarchical manipulation of space on a hill is that occupation appears to end in the 10<sup>th</sup> century (ibid: 214).

A program of excavation under the direction of Leslie Alcock examined a series of settlements mentioned in early medieval documentary sources, some of which fulfill the characteristics of the nuclear fort. The program looked at Dundurn, Dunollie, Forteviot, Dunottar, Urquhart Castle, and Dumbarton Rock (Alcock *et al.* 1987; 1990; Alcock and Alcock 1988; 1991; 1992). These excavations largely confirmed early medieval occupation and have been critical in our understanding of the material culture associated with high status settlement.

The majority of identified early medieval settlements are of types associated with higher status inhabitants. This is largely because those settlements inhabited by the small farming family are difficult to detect archaeologically and even if detectable, they may be difficult to date accurately. Duns, forts, and crannogs may represent the homes of higher status families, but their construction and maintenance required a work force probably greater than the average family could provide. Such labour could come from client relationships between high status residents and those who supported them with foodstuffs and services. Where and how these lower status people lived is still relatively unknown.

Within each case study there is a distribution map of all known possible early medieval settlement types derived from Royal Commission inventories and

CANMORE. While these samples may be fairly good representations of early medieval high status settlement, particularly fortifications, the sample of sites of less monumental status is probably not representative of early medieval settlement. The analysis of settlement then within this study is largely confined to determining large-scale settlement patterns (e.g. coastal or upland emphasis) and individual sites are examined in more detail only when other factors of symbolic wealth point to possible inclusion in early medieval power structures.

### **Imported Pottery and Glass**

The acquisition and use of imported ceramics and glass is another manifestation of material investment and symbolic wealth. The discovery of imported pottery and glass is almost completely reliant on the process of excavation. Thus, those sites that have been excavated, which are usually sites associated with high status settlement or those mentioned in the historical documents, dominate the record. The excavated examples have also been excavated to different extents, making absolute comparisons between them difficult. The data for this category is more subject to change as new information and excavation occurs and the samples are less likely to be representative of early medieval distributions than the sample of carved stones. However, the importation and use of ceramics and glass is a feature that has come to define centres of power in early medieval Scotland and Britain (Alcock 1981; Alcock and Alcock 1987; 1990; 1992; Alcock, Alcock and Driscoll 1989; Foster 1998a; Campbell 2000). The analysis of imported pottery and glass contributes an important element to analysis of symbolic wealth. In particular, if



points of importation can be identified, this has ramifications for centres of power and power relationships.

The debate over why Mediterranean and early medieval continental pottery and glass occurs at sites in Britain and Ireland has stressed the importance of long distance trading contacts whether it be for a short stopover (Wooding 1996) or more sustained economic links (Campbell 1991). The importance of these two types of artefacts for early medieval archaeology in the British Isles is discussed in several syntheses of trade and imported goods that address typologies, distribution, and context (Harden 1956a; Thomas 1981; Campbell 1991; 1996b; 1997a; 1997b; 2000; Wooding 1996; Comber 2001). The imported pottery is distinguishable from native wares, which are rare for the

Pottery type	Dates	Origin
B ware amphorae	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> century	Eastern Mediterranean
African red slipware	6 <sup>th</sup> century	Carthage
Phocean red slipware	6 <sup>th</sup> century	Asia Minor
D ware	6 <sup>th</sup> century?	Western France
E ware	7 <sup>th</sup> century	Western France
Post E ware	8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> century?	Northern and Western France

Table 2.3: Types of imported pottery found in Scotland and Ireland.

early medieval period in Scotland, because they are wheelthrown as opposed to handmade (Table 2.3). B ware amphorae generally belong to the late 5<sup>th</sup> to mid 6<sup>th</sup> century and may be indicative of direct trade with the Mediterranean. Amphorae

are large storage jars, and the different subtypes of B ware range from orange to pink and buff coloured fabrics. Possible contents for the jars based on the shapes of jar subtypes and chemical analyses include wine, olive oil, or rare oils. African Red Slip ware and Phocian Red Slip ware are relatively rare in Scotland (Fig. 2.8B). Mainly plates and bowls, they occur most frequently in Cornwall and occasionally in Southwest Wales. D ware is a fairly rare fabric in Britain and Ireland (Fig. 2.8A). Produced in western France probably in the early



Fig. 2.8: Weighted distributions of A) D ware, B) E ware (After Campbell 2000: 35).

6<sup>th</sup> century, it is a type of tableware (Campbell 1997b: 319). D ware characteristics include a soft, fine, grey fabric with few inclusions. E ware, the most widespread type of imported pottery found in Scotland, Ireland and Western Britain in the 6<sup>th</sup>



and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries likely has a southern Gaulish origin, although the exact point of origin has yet to be established (Fig.2.8B). Forms of E ware include jugs of various sizes, bowls, beakers, and pitchers. The fabric is usually off-white, creamy or beige, hard and with a gritty texture and visible inclusions. Three other imported fabrics have been identified in the assemblage from Dunadd. These include a reddish buff, medium hard, gritty ware (type A3) and a pink, soft ware with few inclusions (type A4) (Lane and Campbell 2000:103). F ware, a slightly later ceramic, is usually a buff colour with a soft fabric, few inclusions, and a silty feel (Campbell 1991: 278 – 79). Near Dunadd, the multi-phase settlement at Bruach An Drumein, Poltalloch estate (NR 8203 9719) also produced a sherd when excavated of what Campbell believes to be a possible continental import of early medieval date (ibid: 23). There is also a sherd from Dundurn that is possibly a 9<sup>th</sup> century continental import (Alcock *et al.* 1989: 215). The general distribution of imported E ware shows a concentration around the Irish Sea (Fig. 2.8). The pots themselves were likely containers for other goods such as spices or honey rather than an import of themselves; one of the E ware vessels from Dunadd held the red pigment Dyer's Madder at some point in its use (Campbell 1991: 191 – 195). Their use as storage and transportation vessels in the first instance, and their reuse as table or cooking ware in the second is an attractive and plausible biography for the ceramics (Lane and Campbell 2000: 100).

The presence of glass sherds from at least 44 sites in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales show that glass vessels were being used in the 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (Campbell 2000: 35). The distribution of imported glass vessels echoes and is linked to the distribution of imported pottery particularly D and E ware. In a recent survey of

imported glass in Britain and Ireland, E. Campbell wrote “there is little doubt that the imported glass was part of the same economic system and was largely redistributed from high status sites” in a similar way to the ceramic imports (ibid.: 36). The majority of glass from western Britain in particular is from conical shaped drinking vessels, or cone beakers. There were 54 or 55 cone beakers

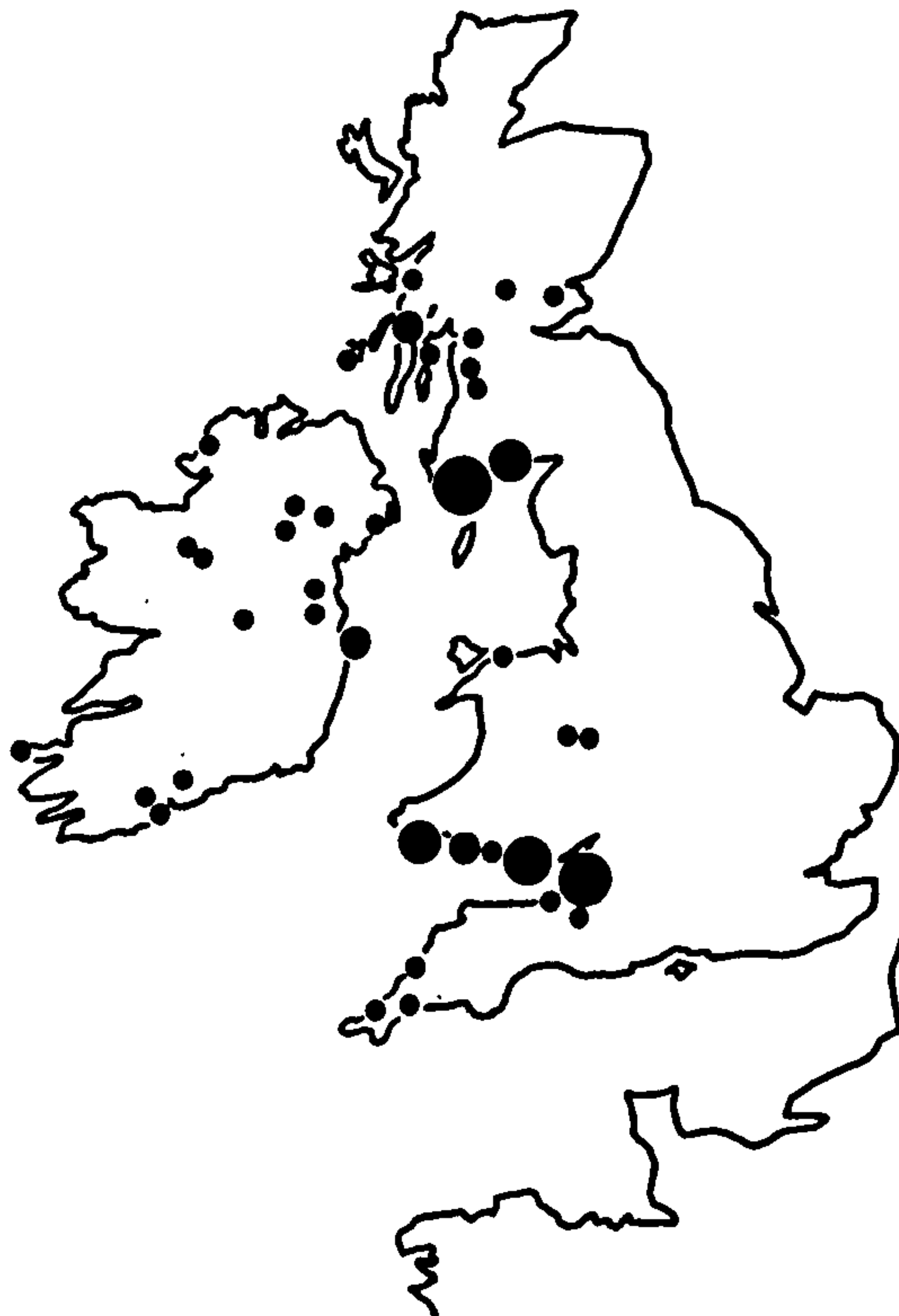


Fig. 2.9: Weighted distribution of glass (After Campbell 2000: 34).

represented from the excavation of Whithorn in Galloway. Other vessel types represented at western British sites include bowls, claw beakers, cups, goblets, flasklets, jars, and bottles (Campbell 1997a: 298). A series of broad categories, as defined by Campbell (2000), describing imported glass vessels appears summarised below.



**Group A** – 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, probably of Mediterranean origin. This type is rare in Celtic speaking regions, although Whithorn has five vessels of this type. The type is characterised as wheel-cut vessels generally greenish or colourless.

**Group B** - 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, probably of northwest European or English origin. Rare in Celtic speaking region with finds from Dinas Powys (Wales) and Whithorn. Most common forms are claw beakers and jars and the colour is sometimes a deep blue.

**Groups C and D** – Group C are plain vessels and Group D has opaque white decorative trails. They date to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, and are probably from western France. Usually thin walled, pale yellow, yellow-green, honey, or colourless. Vessel forms include cones and some bowls. These are the most widespread groups of glass and occur at Whithorn, the Mote of Mark, and Dunadd.

**Group E** – late 6<sup>th</sup> century, found only at Whithorn, like Group C/D, but with thicker walls and different decoration. Possible a local copy (Whithorn made) of C/D vessels (Campbell 2000: 38 – 43).

Weighted distribution maps are used in each case study to represent the distribution of imported ceramics and glass. The distribution of pottery and glass is important not only for long distance trade, but for discovering more local channels of exchange and communications. As an example of symbolic wealth, imports as traditional ‘luxury items’ show the desire and ability to use resources on these ‘extras’ that reinforce and create social standing and relationships.

### **Non-ferrous Metalworking**

Weighted distribution maps also occur within each case study for the distribution of pieces of fine metalwork and evidence for production in the form of moulds. Like imported ceramics and glass, the discovery of evidence of metalworking and the occurrence of metalwork as finds is almost completely reliant on excavation and chance finds. Thus, the same *caveats* of selective sampling apply. The sponsoring of production and distribution of fine metalwork are features that have become associated with centres of power (Alcock and Alcock 1987; 1990; 1992; Alcock, et.al. 1989; Lane and Campbell 2000). Moulds and metalworking debris such as crucibles are often found at high status secular and ecclesiastic sites. The perceived social significance of the production of metalwork, discussed below, indicates that this evidence merits consideration in analysis of symbolic wealth and power.

The context of pieces of metalwork is less secure, as their mobility and collectability means they can occur as single stray finds, as grave goods, within settlement contexts, or in antiquarian collections. Because of this variety, provenance and dating can be difficult to ascertain. Motifs on jewellery or mounts often show similarities with manuscript or sculptural motifs allowing for a general art historical (and sometimes archaeological) date for pieces. Excavations, such as at Dunadd and the Mote of Mark, that have revealed evidence for the metalworking process also allow for finer dating sequences. Breaking the metalworking evidence into categories for analysis - pieces, moulds, and Viking grave goods - allows for consideration of three aspects of metalworking - use, production, and circulation



Much work has been dedicated to fine metalwork, its distribution, styles, craftsmanship, and meaning (Foster 1963; Kilbride-Jones 1980; Campbell and Lane 1993; Laing 1993; Nieke 1993; Graham-Campbell 1995; Comber 1997; Lane and Campell 2000). Brooches in particular are considered a marker of social status and social relationships. They carry a message to the wearer and viewer of a particular social rank and social affiliations when the piece is given or received as a gift (Nieke 1993).

The ornament on the brooches also has multiple meanings as can be seen in the Hunterston Brooch (Stevenson 1974; Fig. 2.10). Some aspects of ornament on this brooch convey Christian symbolism and meanings visible to only the closest viewers and in some cases to only the wearer (Nieke 1993: 131). Brooches did not serve as mere clothing fasteners, but also as personal ornamentation, which consciously or not, sent messages about political affiliations, religious belief, and social status. Pieces found in Viking graves indicate the circulation of and value



Fig. 2.10: The Hunterston Brooch diameter 122mm (Foster 1996:plate 6).



given to such items. Whether as loot, gifts, or traded goods, the pieces represent interaction with the economy and society that produced and used them.

Production of non-ferrous metalwork involves several resource-intensive steps. Initially there is the acquisition of the raw material through mining, recycling, or importation. Then the raw material was smelted, which required a furnace. Moulds and crucibles were involved in melting and shaping the piece, and knowledge and skill was involved in the design of the piece (Fig. 2.11). The end of the process included the finer ornamentation such as filigree, inlays, millefiori, or amber (Comber 1997: 105 – 110; 2001: 80; Lane and Campbell 2000: 201-220). These final two steps, shaping and decoration, are often what is seen in excavation. From excavated evidence, non-ferrous metalworking appears principally as an activity restricted to a high status secular or ecclesiastic venue. However, presumably lower status sites such as Bruach an Drumein are not

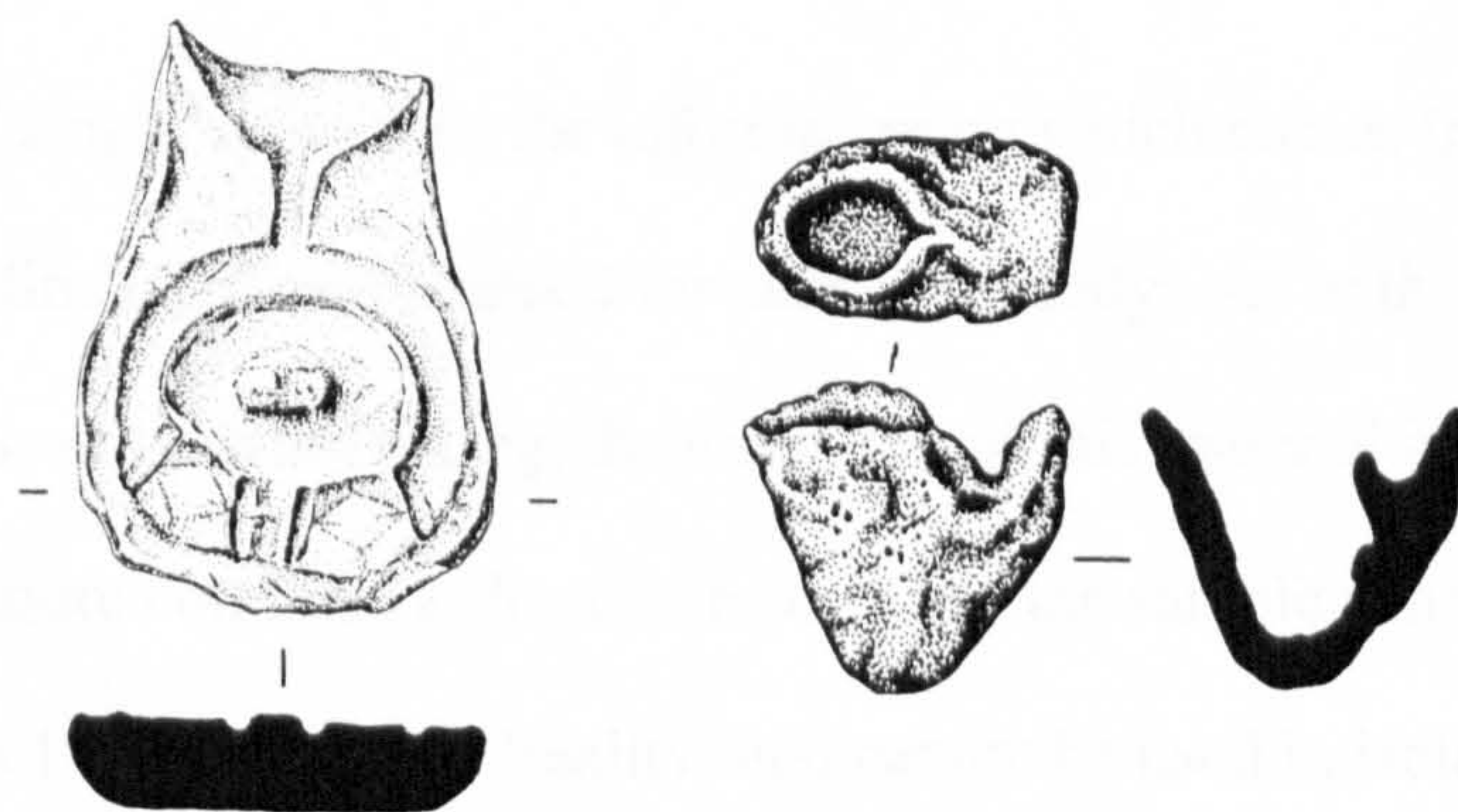


Fig 2.11: Mould (225 - diameter 31mm) and Crucible (459 – height 28mm, diameter c.10mm) from Dunadd (Lane and Campbell 2000: 107, 142).



as archaeological recognisable or excavated as often. The process of non-ferrous metalworking need not take place all at the same time or in a permanent workshop. Steps such as the acquisition of raw material could result from renders or gifts from clients. The resources can come from many places and are not necessarily the products of the immediate landscape. This includes both material and human resources. The excavation of the metalworking deposits of the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> century from Site 3 at Dunadd showed that physical structures associated with the deposits were temporary shelters of stone and organic material (Lane and Campbell 2000:220). While the standards and production of metalwork was relatively high, the events leading to these deposits need not have taken place over a long period of time (ibid.). The final steps of metalworking should be seen then as the culmination of a longer process, and as a symbolic display of the manipulation of precious skills and resources to create final objects of material and social value.

### **Hoard and Coins**

All hoards and single coin finds, the information on which comes from inventories and published finds, are also mapped for each case study. As with imported ceramics, glass, and metalworking, the discovery of this material is reliant on excavation or more commonly chance finds. Thus the sample is not necessarily representative of early medieval ‘reality’ and cannot be used in isolation to articulate centres or structures of power. Hoards and coins, however, are a recognisable example of wealth both symbolic and material and this is why they are included in the following study. When combined with evidence for

monumental sculpture, for example, general patterns of change such as shifting power centres may be suggested.

Coinage as the regular medium of exchange did not become common in Scotland until the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Metcalf 1995:16). Coins did exist before the monetisation of the economy, but Scotland did not have its own mints and did not operate on a coin system. The coins that do appear in early medieval contexts are Northumbrian, early English, a few Continental, Arabic, or Dublin coins. Coins also occur as parts of larger hoard deposits in conjunction with hacksilver, jewellery, ingots, and arm rings (Kruse 1993; Graham-Campbell 1995; Sheehan 1998). In these instances coins may not be valued as hard currency, but as a source of precious material (Metcalf 1995:16).

Most of the hoards date to the Viking period (the late 8<sup>th</sup> century and later). There has been a general assumption that hoards are directly related to Viking raiding activities. “There is a greater chance that people, in times of warfare, bury their valuables and indeed are killed and are therefore prevented from retrieving the silver” (Randsborg 1980: 153). Alternatively, hoarding may be a way of keeping your valuables until you need them rather than as a reaction to violence (Samson 1991a: 128). Some hoards, such as the Tummel Bridge hoard from Perthshire (late 7<sup>th</sup> century to early 8<sup>th</sup> century) are considered to be stocks of silver and other precious metals stored for future recycling into new jewellery (Cessford 1999). The practice of hoarding likely finds its reasoning somewhere in a mix of these views. Particularly attractive is the idea of hoarding as a temporary ‘bank account’ of sorts where the hoarder is in the process of assembling wealth to make a



payment or be gifted. The secrecy of the hoard allows for the accumulation of wealth without the interference of requests or social obligations that might deplete it (Samson 1991a: 131). Following this line of thought, some hoards might be seen as the starting point of the act of procuring or maintaining social and economic relationships. This does not mean that hoarding never acted as an emergency vault in the event of an attack, but we should not assume all hoarding activity is related to violence or destined for the crucible.

## REGIONAL STUDIES

The chronological parameters of the study are the 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, which is generally the period designated as early medieval or early historic in Scotland. Adopting a wide chronological range allows for the discussion of long-term trends and patterns particularly with respect to monument production. The analysis concentrates on three regions based on modern administrative boundaries – Argyll, Fife and Perth, and Dumfries and Galloway. The three chosen districts reflect varied political spheres of influence. The regions share cultural, linguistic (Pictish, British, and Gaelic are Celtic languages), and economic links. This does not mean that these Celtic-speaking regions recognised solidarity or even similarities amongst themselves. Although they spoke languages with a common root, they were not necessarily intelligible to each other. St Columba, a Gaelic speaker, needed a translator to speak to Artbranan, a Pict, on the island of Skye in the 6<sup>th</sup> century (*VC I.33*, Sharpe 1995: 136-137).

Argyll encompasses much of the West coast of Scotland and was the centre of the early medieval kingdom of Dál Riata. The modern region may be roughly comparable to the early medieval kingdom. Dál Riata is a traditionally Irish-derived political grouping where Gaelic was the spoken language. Within Argyll are several important historically documented political and religious centers



Fig. 2.12: Map of case study areas.

such as the fort and inauguration site at Dunadd, the fort at Dunollie, and the great Columban monastery at Iona. On the East coast, the districts of Fife and Perth are part of southern Pictish territory. This region becomes the political centre from the



9<sup>th</sup> century of the kingdom of Alba when Cinead mac Alpín became king of both the Picts and Scots. The area does not appear as frequently in the documentary sources, but Forteviot, St Andrews, Abernethy, and Dundurn are amongst the places that do get mentioned. The districts that make up the third region, Dumfries and Galloway, are the part of the British speaking areas within Scotland, although it was subject to Northumbrian hegemony for a time in the 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the later 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, contacts with the Isle of Man and the Norse and Hiberno-Norse meant that the region was constantly influenced and influencing areas around the Irish Sea and Solway Firth, which plays a large part in the region's landscape and communication. The area also has Scotland's only claimed 'monastic town' at Whithorn where excavations have revealed a long sequence of buildings, evidence for on-site manufacturing, and a large cemetery as well as sculpture (Hill 1997a).

These three regions were chosen because each contains at least one of the major centres of sculpture in Scotland – Iona in Argyll, St Andrews and Meigle in Fife and Perthshire, and Whithorn in Dumfries and Galloway. In this regard, the regions are comparable because monumental display was one enthusiastically embraced method of articulating power in all three. Although the overall samples of sculpture and other forms of symbolic wealth from each region are not exactly what there once was, the amount of sculpture in particular is an acceptable sample of early medieval material culture.

Of the three regions, only Argyll has a likely correlation to a meaningful early medieval unit. The other two regions include smaller portions of 'kingdoms' or

even straddle potential early medieval political boundaries. This offers an opportunity to test the methodological approach to sculptured stones, in particular, and explore whether such methodology can help identify meaningful regional differences through the use of material investment.

## CONCLUSION

In the following case studies, the monuments, artefacts, and landscape are considered together within the context of material investment. Mapping material investment shows the patterns of resource concentration and where material investment was directed during each chronological period. This leads to further analysis of the centres of power and changes in power structures over the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries within each regional study.



## **Chapter Three: Symbolic wealth and changing power systems in Argyll**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter looks at changes in the structures of power within the modern administrative region of Argyll in Western Scotland. In addition to assessing resources invested in monumental sculpture, of which there is a large amount, other activities associated with symbolic wealth such as metalworking, importation of ceramics and glass, and hoarding as discussed in the previous chapter, will be examined.

In Argyll, the analysis of resources invested in carved stone monuments plays an important part in identifying centres in a region where perceptions are dominated by the collection at Iona. Looking at the distribution of imported Mediterranean and Continental pottery, glass vessels, metalworking, and the appearance of hoards balances the emphasis on the ecclesiastical sites where sculpture usually is found and allows the identification of secular based power centres as well. The following analysis shows how power centres changed throughout the early medieval period and considers how these changes may be related to the ideology of power and kingship as well as economic and social fluctuations in Argyll.

### **TOPOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT**

Argyll is a region dominated by water – its extensive coastline, network of waterways, bogs, and high rainfall ensure that contact with the element is never far

away. The modern administrative district encompasses several of the western islands that lie off the west coast of Scotland. The coast of Ireland can be seen from several points in southern Argyll in good weather. The topography and character of the landscape varies substantially within this large area. To the north, the border of Argyll approaches the mountains of the Central Highlands. To the south, Knapdale and Kintyre are relatively flat with small amounts of good quality agricultural land (Macauley Institute for Soil Research 1983). Bute has been included in this regional study because of its proximity to Argyll and the possible inclusion of it within the Cenél nGabráin, or later Cenél Comgaill, territories of Dál Riata (Laing, Laing, and Longely 1998: 554). Bute, however, may also have looked more to Strathclyde and the east as suggested by the styles of sculpture from the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries (ibid.:553).

The modern landscape has been extensively utilised by the Forestry Commission for commercial forestry. Environmental studies of the Knapdale region show that the early medieval and Iron Age woodlands of this region of Argyll likely consisted of mostly oak, birch, and alder with some hazel, ash, holly and rowan. The cultivation of arable lands in the early medieval period included the production of cereal grains, the principal crops being oats and barley (Lane and Campbell 2000:6; Housley *et al.* forthcoming). Modern land use maps are relatively unproductive for analysis of early medieval agricultural potential, as improvements, forestation, peat production, and bog drainage have all altered the landscape. Additionally, the use of modern farm machinery does not allow for cultivation except on the most gentle of gradients, areas that were cultivated in the past (Nieke 1984: 26-27).



## OVERVIEW OF EARLY MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT IN ARGYLL

The distribution of duns, forts, and crannogs of Argyll indicate how important the coast and waterways were for communication and transport (Fig. 3.1). These three types of settlement may date to multiple phases (RCAHMS 1988: 28-31). Duns and forts are associated with the Iron Age (c. 700 BC – 500 AD), and reuse or reconstruction in the early medieval period cannot be ruled out in most cases except by excavation, of which there has been relatively little in the area. Alcock used textual references to suggest early medieval occupation at Dunaverty at the southern tip of Kintyre, Tarbert, and Dunollie all of which also have later medieval settlement. Dunollie was confirmed as an early medieval site by subsequent excavation (Alcock and Alcock 1987). Dunadd is the most thoroughly explored historical site in the region (Christison and Anderson 1905; Craw 1930; Lane and Campbell 2000: 26 – 31). Excavations at the stone-walled dun at Ardifuir, the fort of Dun Chonallaich, the crannog at Loch Glashan, the dun at Eilean Rìgh 1, Kildalloig Dun, Little Dunagoil, and St Columba's Cave all produced artefacts of early medieval date (Marshall 1964; RCAHMS 1971: 87-88; RCAHMS 1988: 160-161, 194, 204-208; Tolan-Smith 2001: 25-72). There is also an 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century cable bead from Eilean da Mheinn near Crinan Harbour (Lane and Campbell 2000:24).



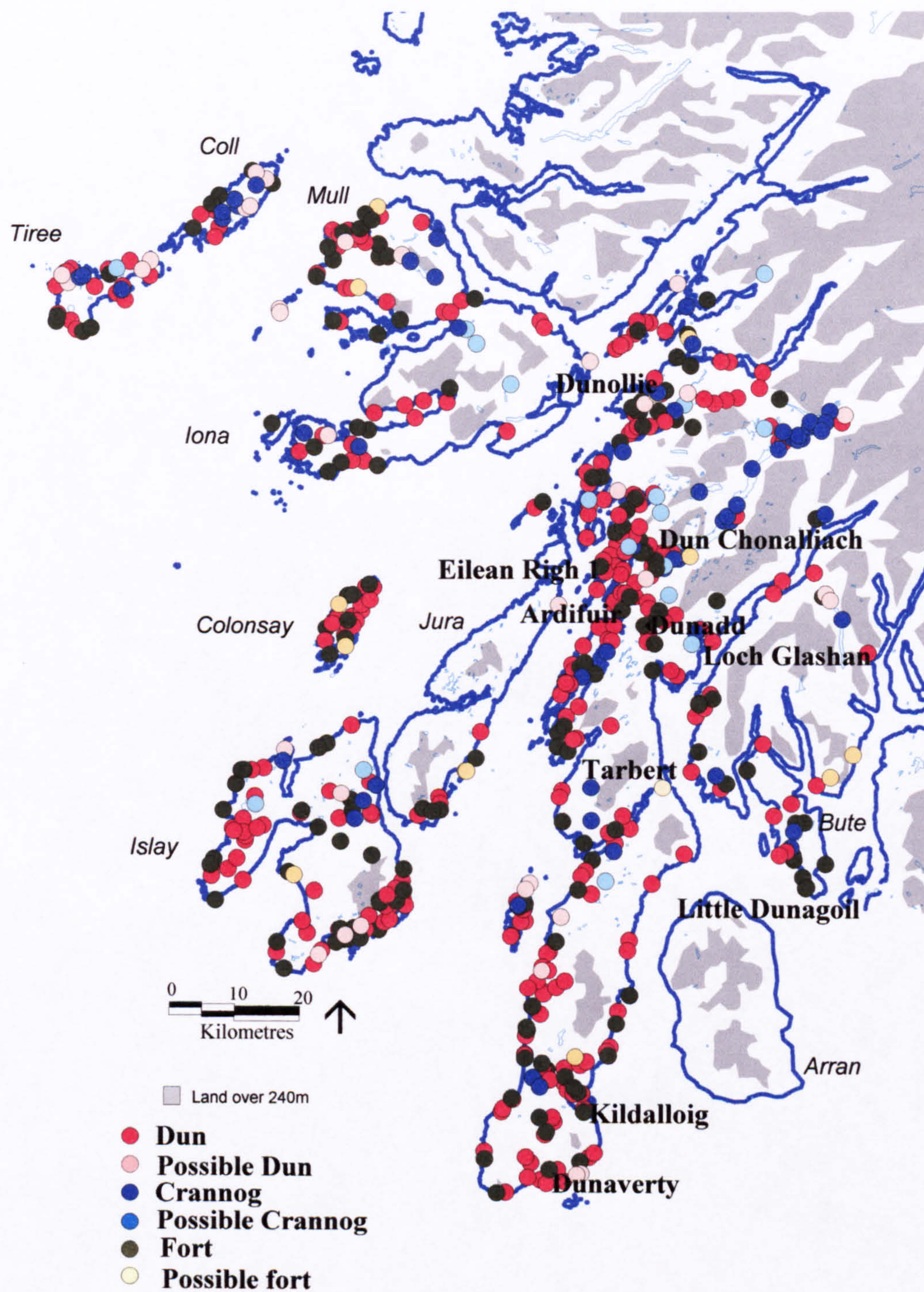


Fig. 3.1: Secular sites in Argyll (information from RCAHMS, Canmore).

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## ARGYLL IN THE 6<sup>TH</sup> AND 7<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

Dominating the historical references in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries are influential individuals and sites. Chief among these is St Columba and his foundation on Iona, founded in 563 (Herbert 1988; Sharpe 1995; Bourke 1997; Broun and Clancy 1999). Columba was a member of the royal Cenél Conaill of the powerful Northern Uí Néill dynasty and his close links with a ruling dynasty in Ireland involved him in many of the political events of his time both in Ireland and Scotland. The majority of the abbots of Iona in the generations following Columba's death were also from the same kindred suggesting a continued interaction between political and religious spheres.

Other dominant themes emerging from historical references are the territories and kindreds of Dál Riata, which traditionally stem from Irish dynasties and have Irish political connections (Duncan 1975: 41-44). Dál Riata is divided between three major kindreds (Fig. 3.2). The Cenél Loairn occupied the northern regions of Argyll, or modern Lorn. The Cenél nOengusa were concentrated on Islay and the Cenél nGabráin in the Kintyre and Cowal region. The boundaries between these political divisions cannot be defined on the ground. The most certain of the divisions was that for the Cenél nOengusa as they appeared mainly connected to the island of Islay. The Cenél Comgall were set in Cowal and gave the area its name, but little is known of them. They were thought to originally be a sept of the Cenél nGabráin (Bannerman 1971: 257). Bannerman suggested the boundary with the Picts lay at the Ardnamurchan peninsula and Pictish control probably extended to the Small Isles of Eigg and Rhum based on two textual references linking Skye



with Pictish rulers (ibid.: 260). Columba needed a translator when he visited Skye and spoke to a probably Pictish ruler there (*VC I.33*, Sharpe 1995: 136). *AU* 668.3 also mentions a Gartnait, identified by Bannerman as a Pictish king, with Skye (Bannerman 1971:260; Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 138-139). There are Pictish symbol stones on Skye (Fraser and Ritchie 1999: 26, 28,34) and potentially Pictish-type square barrows on Eigg (Eigg Heritage Trust 2001) giving archaeological credence to the exclusion of this area from Dál Riata territory.

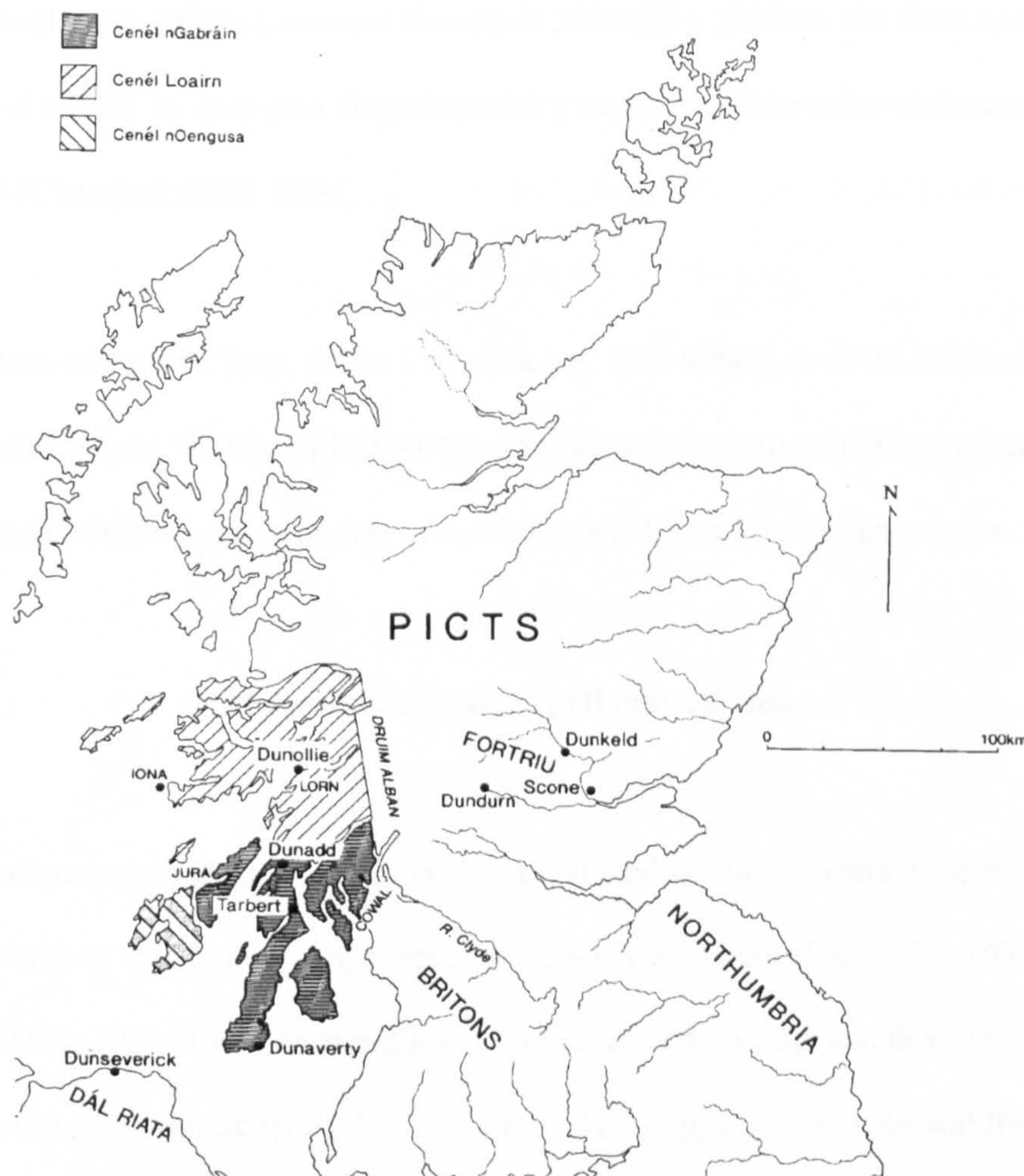


Fig. 3.2: The territories of Dál Riata (Lane and Campbell 2000:259).



While the Irish cultural and political connections between Scottish Dál Riata and Ireland are acknowledged, the legend of the Irish origins and subsequent movement of the Scottish Cenéla is more problematic. There is no evidence for any mass migration to the west of Scotland from Ireland. If the Irish origin of Scottish Dál Riata is valid, then it is more likely to be a takeover on a dynastic level between two regions that already shared much culturally and politically. While some movement, even at a dynastic level, is generally assumed between the two regions (Foster 1996), recent debates have postulated there was no migration at all (Campbell 1999; 2001; Lane and Campbell 2000: 33). Rather, the west coast of Scotland should be seen as a Gaelic speaking region in close communication with Ireland (Campbell 2001: 291).

These two entities of Iona, under Columba and later abbots such as Adomnán, and the territories and leaders of Dál Riata and their interactions are threads that run through the following discussion of symbolic wealth and power structures.

### **Monuments: The Argyll carved stones**

The monuments of Argyll are among the most studied monuments in Scotland. This is largely due to the comprehensive RCAHMS inventories (1971; 1975; 1980; 1982; 1984; 1988; 1992; Fisher 2001) that included drawings and descriptions of many of these monuments for the first time. The Argyll inventories and the subsequent publication of Ian Fisher's (2001) corpus of the sculpture of the west of Scotland provide complete samples of the known monuments of Argyll at their time of publication. It can only be assumed that this sample is not equivalent to the



numbers of sculpted monuments that existed in the early medieval period and that attrition is inevitable. The current sample is however relevant to comparative analysis. The known distribution of carved stones in Argyll is thought to reflect archaeological distributions, rather than a factor of differential recording (Campbell 1987: 107). The original number of monuments cannot be ascertained, but the occurrence of concentrations of monuments likely represents concentrations that occurred in the past. Although excavations in churchyards in particular (events that are not common) may alter the numbers of known monuments, the methodological recording of the published inventories, which includes monuments in situ, lying in churchyards, built into later structures, and found during excavations or digging, allows for a substantial level of confidence in the representative nature of the known corpus.

Encompassing cave scratchings to high crosses, the stones provide a fertile testing place for the methodology of resource analysis. There are 341 known carved stone monuments of the early medieval period from Argyll and Bute, with 48 of these from the isle of Bute. Of the total monuments, 112 stones come from the monastery



Fig. 3.3: Carved rock outcrop behind Daltote Cottage. Carved cross is c. 70cm high (photo by author).



at Iona. Only 36 monuments are classed as of 'Unknown' date or are too fragmentary to be included in the analysis of which eight are from Iona. Most of the monuments are cross slabs. Free-standing crosses of different complexities also occur as do cruciform shaped slabs with and without additional cross ornament. Carvings also occur on natural boulders, outcrops (Fig. 3.3), and caves.

### **Monuments of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries**

In the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, the cross slab and its variants are the most common type of monument. These cross slabs are of a less complex form often with just an incised or relief cross. The amount of elaboration on cross slabs is widely variable, which is why analysis that includes the amount of material investment involved in creating carved monuments helps to clarify a general classification such as 'cross slab.' The general distribution of monuments from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries highlights, as did secular sites, the importance of the coast and rivers for communication and settlement. Two areas that have concentrations of sites with carved stones are Tiree and Mid-Argyll (Fig. 3.4).

There are five individual sites with collections of stone monuments that stand out from the rest. Cladh a'Bhile, Ellary has 26 stones from the early period and shows the highest amount of resources invested in stone monuments (See Appendix Two for a list of 'points' per site). Iona follows with 22 stones and less material investment. These two sites are considerably more active in using stone monuments than any other site in the region. The next most active sites are Achadh Na Cille, Oib, Kilberry, and the isle of Inchmarnock off Bute. The rest of



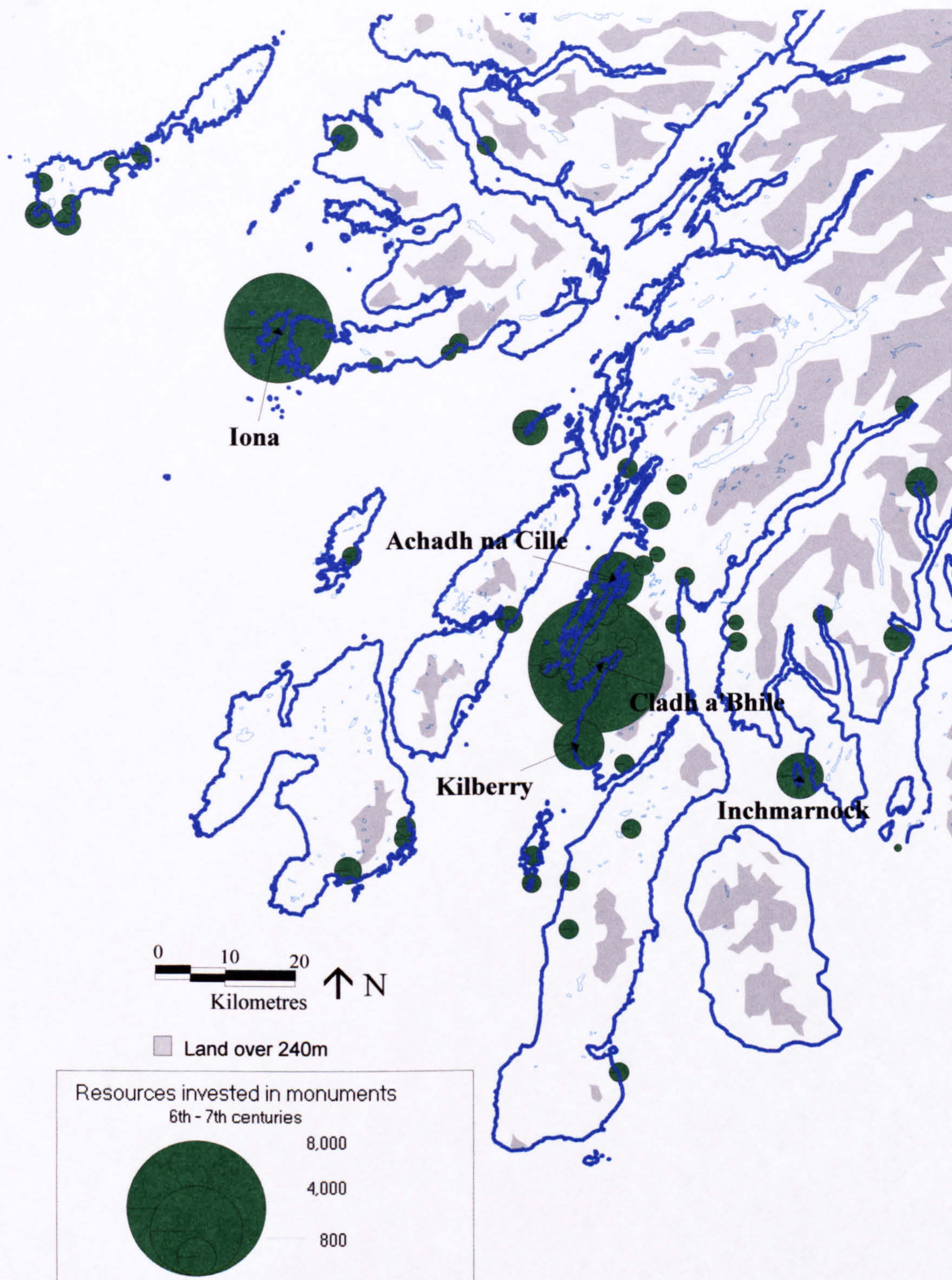


Fig 3.4: Resources invested in carved monuments 6th - 7th centuries.

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the sites generally have one or two carved stones. A closer look at the two dominant sites is particularly warranted because of the amount of stones from this early period at Cladh a'Bhile and its relationship to the better-known site at Iona.

Ritchie (1997: 90) identified Cladh a'Bhile as a 'lay cemetery' and the collection of monuments here has been recognised as the second largest collection in Argyll (Fisher 2001: 8). There are no surviving early enclosures or structures at Cladh a'Bhile and no association with any saint or monastery at this location. There is a cave and 13<sup>th</sup> century chapel site 2km to the northeast at the head of Loch Caolisport associated with St Columba. The cave's association with St Columba is documented as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century and it has also been cited as a stopping place for Columba on his way to visit his relative, a king of Dál Riata at Dunadd (Tolan-Smith 2001:25). Although the cave is only about 20km away from Dunadd, it should be noted that the most direct route would have been by the River Add and not over land from the cave location. The site is a safe landing place for small vessels and the main cave, when excavated in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, revealed occupation deposits that included early medieval layers (ibid.:25-72). The early medieval use is not closely dated and relies on typological dating of artefacts including a folding copper alloy beam from a balance of 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century date, potentially related to Norse balances (ibid.: 53). Inside the cave is a mortar-built altar, probably not of early medieval construction, but placed as to respect and augment the earlier carved crosses on the cave wall. These crosses have stylistic links with cross slabs at Cladh a'Bhile (ibid.: 26). The early medieval activity appears to have been a mix of domestic and industrial from the presence of hearths, midden deposits, slag, furnace debris, moulds, and crucibles (ibid.: 37-51).



That the cave site and the burial ground at Cladh a'Bhile are contemporary is demonstrated by the stylistic links of the carved crosses and the early medieval occupation activity in the cave. Cladh a'Bhile sits a little ways up a slope on the western side of Loch Caolisport above Ellary House (Fig. 3.5). The monuments here consist of a variety of styles. In addition to the carved monuments, there are



Fig. 3.5: Loch Caolisport and Ellary House on the right. Cladh a'Bhile is in the wooded slopes behind the house (photo by author)



Fig. 3.6: Cladh a'Bhile, looking towards the carved pillar from outside the enclosure. The *leac*, or flat boulder, at the left has carved slabs resting on it (photo by author).



quern stones, both saddle and rotary in the burial enclosure probably found at or near the site. Now fairly overgrown (Fig. 3.6), the monuments are located within a rectangular modern dry-stone enclosure wall next to a small stream (Fig. 3.7). The 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure wall may be reflecting an earlier enclosure (Ritchie 1997: 90). The cemetery occupies a small terrace with little other flat land for buildings or associated settlement in the immediate area. In the southern area of the enclosure, there is an area empty of earlier monuments that potentially could accommodate a small building oriented east-west (Fig 3.7; Ritchie 1997:90).

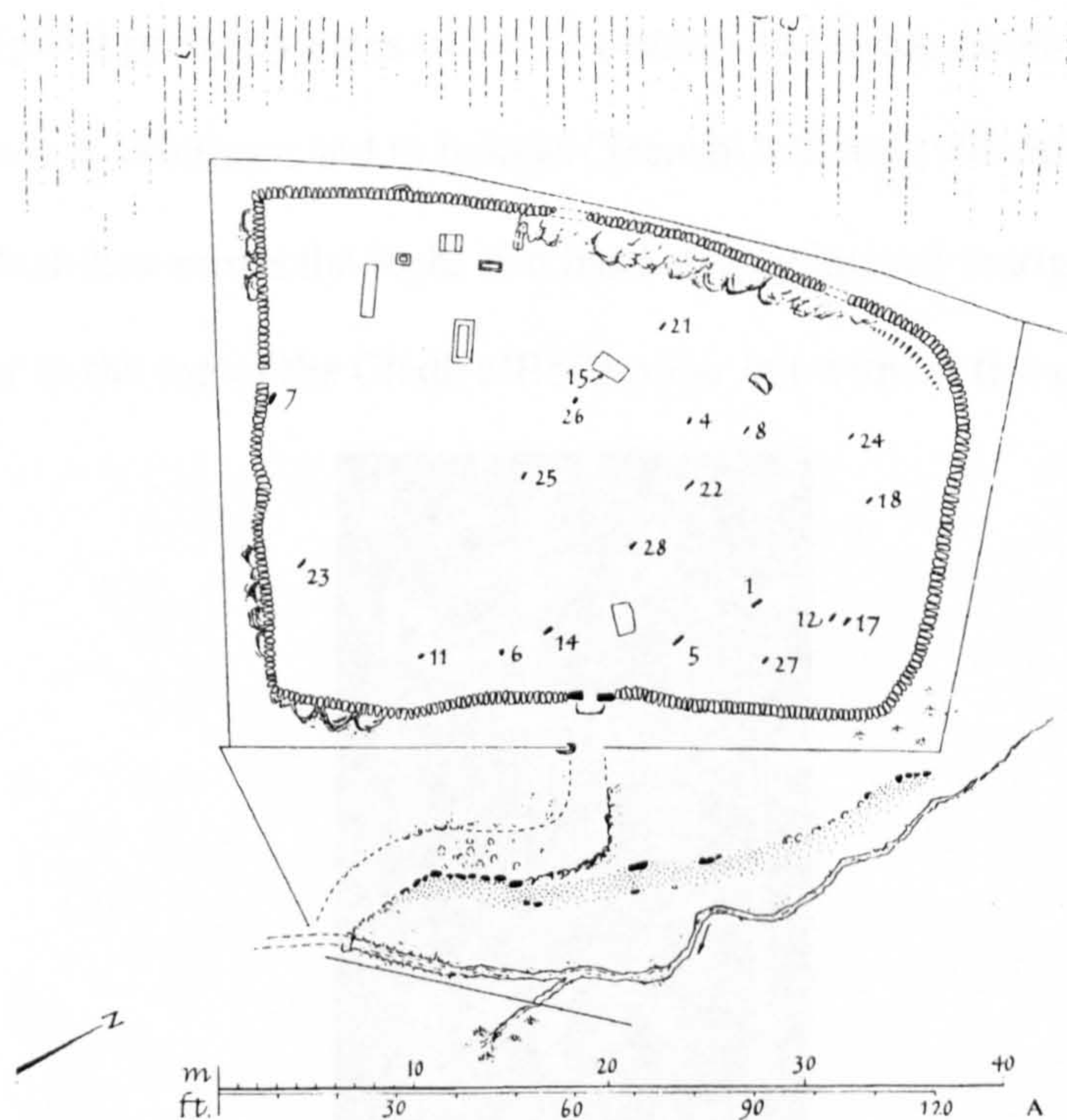


Fig. 3.7: Plan of Cladh a'Bhile marking locations of carved monuments (RCAHMS 1992: 54).

Mixed in with monuments of more recent dates, are 29 stones 26 of which may date to the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Perhaps the most striking monument at Cladh a'Bhile is a pillar that tapers at the top to a point (Fig. 3.8). One face of the pillar



carries a single cross of arcs in a circle with a small central pit. The cross itself is carved away leaving relief ‘petals’ that create an eye-teasing effect when concentrating on one form of cross or the other. The other face bears two elements. At the top an elaborated marigold type cross within a circle is deeply incised and has C scrolls at the end of each petal. Below this is another cross of arcs more elaborately defined than the one on the reverse and again very deeply incised. The marigold pattern appears on two other smaller slabs from the site in a less elaborate form.

This carved pillar probably dates to the 7<sup>th</sup> century and is comparable to other crosses of arcs at Whithorn and in Ireland (Trench-Jellicoe 1998:502). A slab from Kilberry, which lies across the loch, also has a deeply incised marigold within a circle similar to the top of the Cladh a’ Bhile pillar but without the additional C



Fig. 3.8: Carved pillar at Cladh a’ Bhile, visible height c 1.37m (Fisher 2001:142).



scrolls. The Kilberry pillar has markings at the opposite end, now broken, which may indicate another cross within a circle was planned for this area of the monument. The other monuments from Cladh a'Bhile are mostly incised Greek or Latin crosses with minimal elaboration (Fig. 3.9). There are also two flat-topped outcrops, one of which is incised with a cross, that may be versions of a *leac* or flat slab of ceremonial use (RCAHMS 1992: 55).

That such a large amount of resources in stone monument construction is directed towards Cladh a'Bhile, which we know so little about, suggests a site of some significance. Sculpturally speaking, it is equal to if not more significant than Iona in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is even without the fairly intense study and excavation that has in contrast been directed at Iona.



Fig. 3.9: Cross slab at Cladh a'Bhile, height of carving 33cm (photo by author).

The explanation of Cladh a'Bhile as a place of some importance may be supported by the elements of its place-name. *Cladh* is a Gaelic term that generally translates as churchyard or probably burial ground. *Bile* is a great or old tree (RCAHMS



1992: 54). Thus the site in Gaelic is the equivalent of ‘burial ground of the great tree.’ Watson, however, did not include Cladh a’ Bhile in his study of place-names and suggested meanings for possible *bile* derived names such as Tullichville and Coshieville from Gaelic *bil* meaning hillside, especially along a river (Watson 1930: 278). However in the Gaelic world, *bile* also may refer to a tree associated with a ritually important site, often of an inaugural character. Sacred trees may have stood at the inaugural sites of political groups or dynasties (Green 1992: 213; FitzPatrick 1997:20). Watson does discuss tribal trees in connection with Moncrieffe Hill, near Perth where the tree is from *Monaigh Craebi* – hill of the tree (*craeb*) (Watson 1926:401).

In Ireland particularly, the sacred tree may be connected with the idea of kingship and the sacred nature of kingship as the king and his lands are united (FitzPatrick 1997:20). The importance of the tree may stem from the use of a rod of kingship, or *slat na ríge*, in inaugural ceremonies where the rod is cut from the sacred tree (ibid.). In 982, Máel Sechnaill cut and dug up the *bile* of *Aenach-Maigh-Adhair* (*AFM, 2 M981.8*, O’Donovan 1856:715; FitzPatrick 1997: 21). The desecration or felling of a sacred tree was an injury and insult to the kingdom and king.

FitzPatrick’s analysis of sacred trees and inaugural sites in Ireland showed a link between the king and the tree was particularly symbolic, and that *bile* took on secondary meanings of ‘scion’ or ‘hero’ in later Irish medieval poetry (1997: 21).

Other possible *bile* names in Argyll include Dun Cór-bhile and Bile Garbh near Inverary and Cladville/Ben Cladville on Islay. These sites do not have early medieval sculpture.



Sacred trees may also be associated with monastic sites in Ireland, such as the oak of St Brigid (ibid.: 31). There is a single historical reference to a link between kingship and a sacred tree of a monastic site where the *slat na ríge* was cut from St Máedóc's tree in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (ibid.: 20). The *bile* of a religious site also may be a Christianised pagan symbol (ibid.:31). The inaugural nature of the site at Cladh a'Bhile is difficult to prove due to the lack of historical sources and visible upstanding remains, however the surrounding forestry and dense overgrowth may conceal relevant features. Arguably, Cladh a 'Bhile could fall into this latter group of Christianised *bile* sites, however the surrounding archaeology may support an inaugural link. In particular, the presence of the flat-topped outcrops in the burial ground may be part of an inaugural landscape as the act of standing upon a *leac*, a flat slab or rock, flagstone, or paving stone, was part of inauguration ceremonies in Irish contexts (ibid.: 105,108). Driscoll has noted the possibility that the Stone of Destiny, the inaugural stone of Scotland, could have been cut from a *leac* which implies a standing posture during ceremony, and once cut, transformed to a block serving as a seat for a sitting posture, used in later medieval ceremonies (Driscoll forthcoming). The *leachta* at Cladh a'Bhile might have been used for either standing or sitting as they are squared outcrops a little under a meter high. The site is also relatively well placed for public ceremony as it sits on a level part of a gentle slope beneath which people could gather.

There are four medieval inaugural sites in Ireland, identified by FitzPatrick (1997), that are at or associated with church sites. Of these, only Ard Na Croise has no stone monuments, but is associated with a cross through local tradition and its place-name (FitzPatrick 1997iii:34). Cill Mhic Nénáin is near a secular royal site

and is associated with two bullaun stones (ibid.: 11-13). Both Áth an Termoinn and Cluain Tuaiscirt na Sinna have early medieval carved stones with the latter having a collection of eight stones and fragments of a sarcophagus or tomb decorated with interlace (ibid.:45, 47), suggesting a site of some significance.

Possibly associated with the burial ground at Cladh a'Bhile are two duns.

A'Chrannag is approximately 600m to the northwest and Dun a'Bhealaich is 450m to the north. Of these, Alcock and Alcock have suggested A'Chrannag may be a settlement with substantial outworks dividing the space on the hill in a way reminiscent of a nuclear fort and with the potential for an early medieval phase (Alcock and Alcock 1987: 134).

The dun of A'Chrannag (Fig. 3.10) occupies the highest point on a rocky ridge that hinders access on the NW and SE flanks of the site. The core of the settlement is the dun, which shows evidence of vitrification suggesting the walls were of timber-laced construction. The two outer walls (A and B) do not show vitrification and incorporate rocky outcrops to augment the enclosures (RCAHMS 1988: 170).

Outer wall A defines two areas adjacent to the dun and a gap in the west at a gully may be an entrance (ibid.). A circular depression enclosed by boulders in the NE corner of the site may be a spring or well and the two 'unnaturally level' platforms to the south of this feature may be house platforms or settlement areas (ibid.).

Outer wall B is of lesser construction and emerges from wall A (ibid.). The



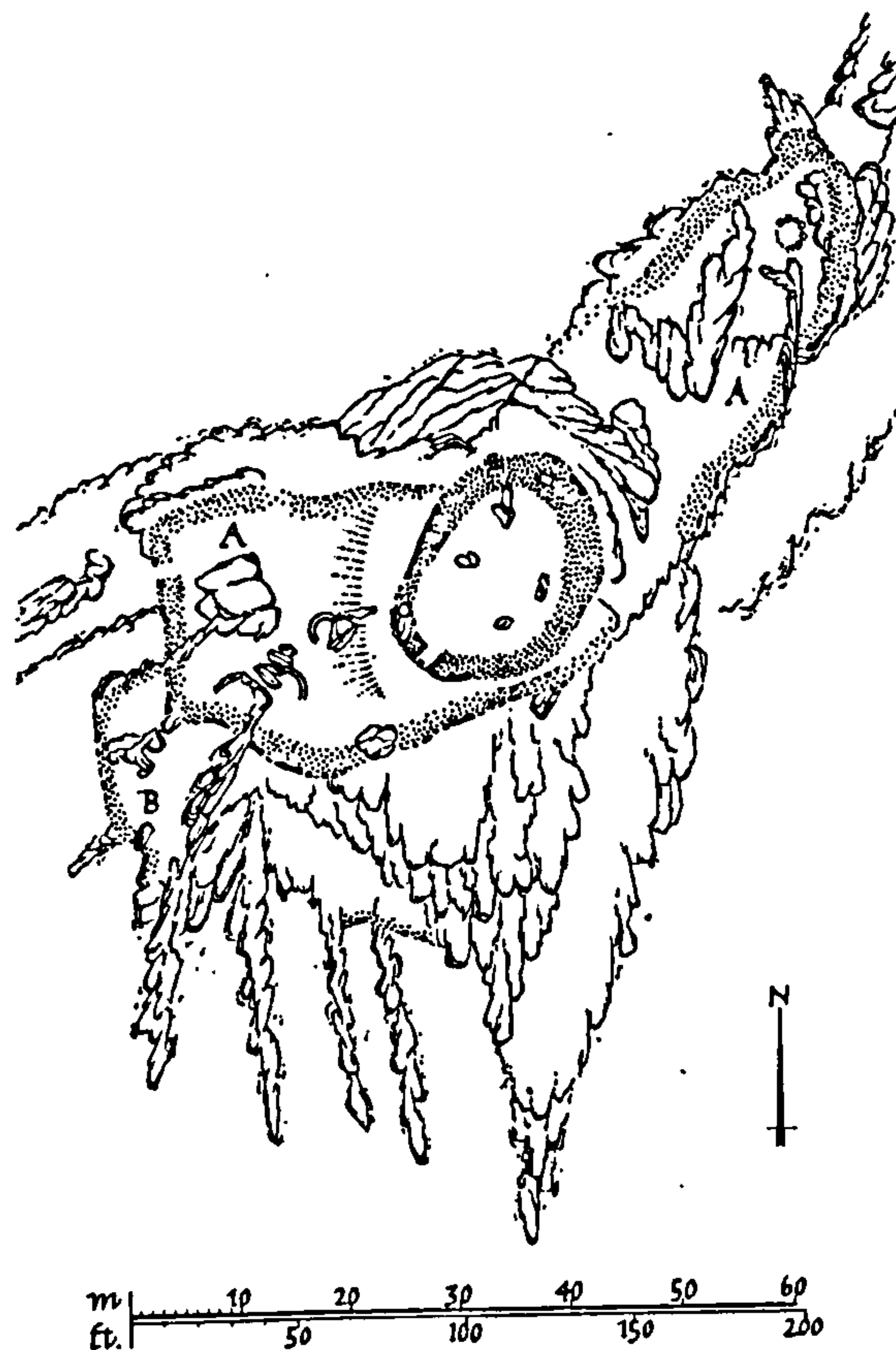


Fig. 3.10: Plan of A'Chrannag (RCAHMS 1988:170).

vitricification of the main dun points to an early date. The presumed multi-phase construction of the settlement is comparable to other early medieval fortifications such as Dunadd where multi-period building is a characteristic of the enclosures (Lane and Campbell 2000: 86-97).

The name of the fort may retain a hint of the link with the burial ground below.

A'Chrannag may be a version of *crannach* or 'tree-place' (Watson 1926:352).

A'Chrannag also has other features associated with Irish inaugural landscapes as suggested by FitzPatrick (1997). Both prospect and access were important factors for inaugural sites. The heavy forestry currently in the area makes it difficult to

envisage the past landscape. However, both A'Chrannag and Cladh a'Bhile are on the shore of the sea loch with views across Loch Caolisport to the mainland of Knapdale. Transportation by sea, enabled by the many sea lochs of this area of Mid-Argyll, would have made the locations easily accessible. Cladh a'Bhile presents no great difficulties in access. A'Chrannag sits atop a craggy ridge but can be ascended on its northern side. At approximately 160m above sea level, it falls within the range of heights usually associated with Irish inaugural sites (ibid.: 47).

The proximity of these two sites is an important feature and may be comparable to other high status, possibly royal and ecclesiastical sites. At Clogher, Co Tyrone, the ecclesiastical and secular site (with potential inaugural links) were within easy walk of each other (Warner 1973). At Dundurn, in Perthshire, there is a small circular churchyard about 500m to the west of the fort (Alcock *et al.* 1989: 213). Dunadd's surrounding ecclesiastical sites are a bit further afield. The church in Kilmartin Village 5 km away from Dunadd was probably in existence at least by the 8<sup>th</sup> century as evidenced by an early cross slab in the churchyard. Barnakill is 2km to the southeast and Kilmichael Glassary lies 2km to the east. Kilmichael Glassary is the most likely site to be directly linked to Dunadd considering Dunadd is in Kilmichael Glassary parish (Driscoll 1998). It is possible that Cladh a'Bhile and A'Chrannag are exhibiting a relational pattern shared by other high status probably royal sites of the early medieval period, particular of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, where a significant secular site has a companion often small ecclesiastical site. However, even if the two sites are part of an early medieval pattern in settlement



perhaps indicative of an inaugural landscape, Cladh a'Bhile would remain anomalous as it is so well endowed with monumental sculpture.

The Knapdale region of Mid-Argyll, particularly the coastal areas around Lochs Sween and Caolisport, is marked by a concentration of carved stone monuments. On the shore of Loch Caolisport there are monuments or carvings from Cladh a'Bhile, St Columba's Cave, Lothead, and on the opposite shore at Kilberry. On the other side of the peninsula from Cladh a'Bhile on the shores of Loch Sween there are monuments at Kilmory Knap, Kilbride, Daltote Cottage, Achadh na Cille, at Duntaynish House, and Eilean Mór. It would appear that the majority of stones are made from local material. There is evidence of quarries in the region such as the 'bluestone' quarry at Doide, Loch Sween, which was used in the medieval period for sculpted graveslabs (Collins 1977; Caldwell and Ewart 1993: 163). The combination of a potential inaugural landscape and the link to St Columba suggests this region of Mid-Argyll was an important political focus in the early medieval period perhaps centering on the sites at Cladh a'Bhile, A'Chrannag, and possibly St Columba's Cave. After the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the sculptural focus on the peninsula changes to the opposite coast at Kilmory Chapel, while the secular focus might change to Castle Sween, which has a fortification of 12<sup>th</sup> century date (Ewart *et al.* 1996).

Iona (Fig. 3.11) is the second most important individual site where stone monuments were concentrated in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century and is one of the most significant sites in all of Scotland for early medieval sculpture. An island only about a kilometre and a half away from Mull, Iona is about 5.5km long and 2.5km

at its widest. There is fertile machair on the west of the island and a raised beach on the east. The fields tilled by the monks as mentioned in the *Life of Columba* I.37 were probably on this western machair (Sharpe 1995: 139 – 140). The early monastery is located on the eastern side of the island on the raised beach.

Excavation in and around the area of the extant Benedictine abbey buildings has shown glimpses of the life described by Adomnán (Reece 1973; Redknap 1977; Barber 1981; RCAHMS 1982; Fowler and Fowler 1988; Haggarty 1988; McCormick 1992; 1993; O’Sullivan 1994; 1999; Bourke 1997).

Survey, aerial photographs, and excavation confirm the presence of ditches surrounding the site although Iron Age radiocarbon dates for an associated bank at the western end of the site indicates pre-Columban use of this part of the enclosure (McCormick 1993). The enclosures that may have made up the monastic vallum would thus be multi-period. The investigation of another section of ditch, this time without an accompanying bank, near Reilig Odhráin, confirmed its early medieval date as its fill contained leather objects and offcuts, turned and unworked wood dated to the early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD (Barber 1981: 318 – 357). Also from this early period is a small bronze bell (O’Sullivan 1999: 228). Recovered from a disturbed deposit inside one of the abbey buildings were three fragments of triangular shaped crucibles, which are paralleled on other early medieval sites such as Dunadd and the Mote of Mark, Kirkcudbright (McCormick 1992: 208-10). Other evidence for metalworking includes the presence of clay moulds for casting studs and a fragment of glass rod (RCAHMS 1982: 14). Thus the monks on Iona not only worked the fields, but conducted or sponsored a certain amount of craftworking as



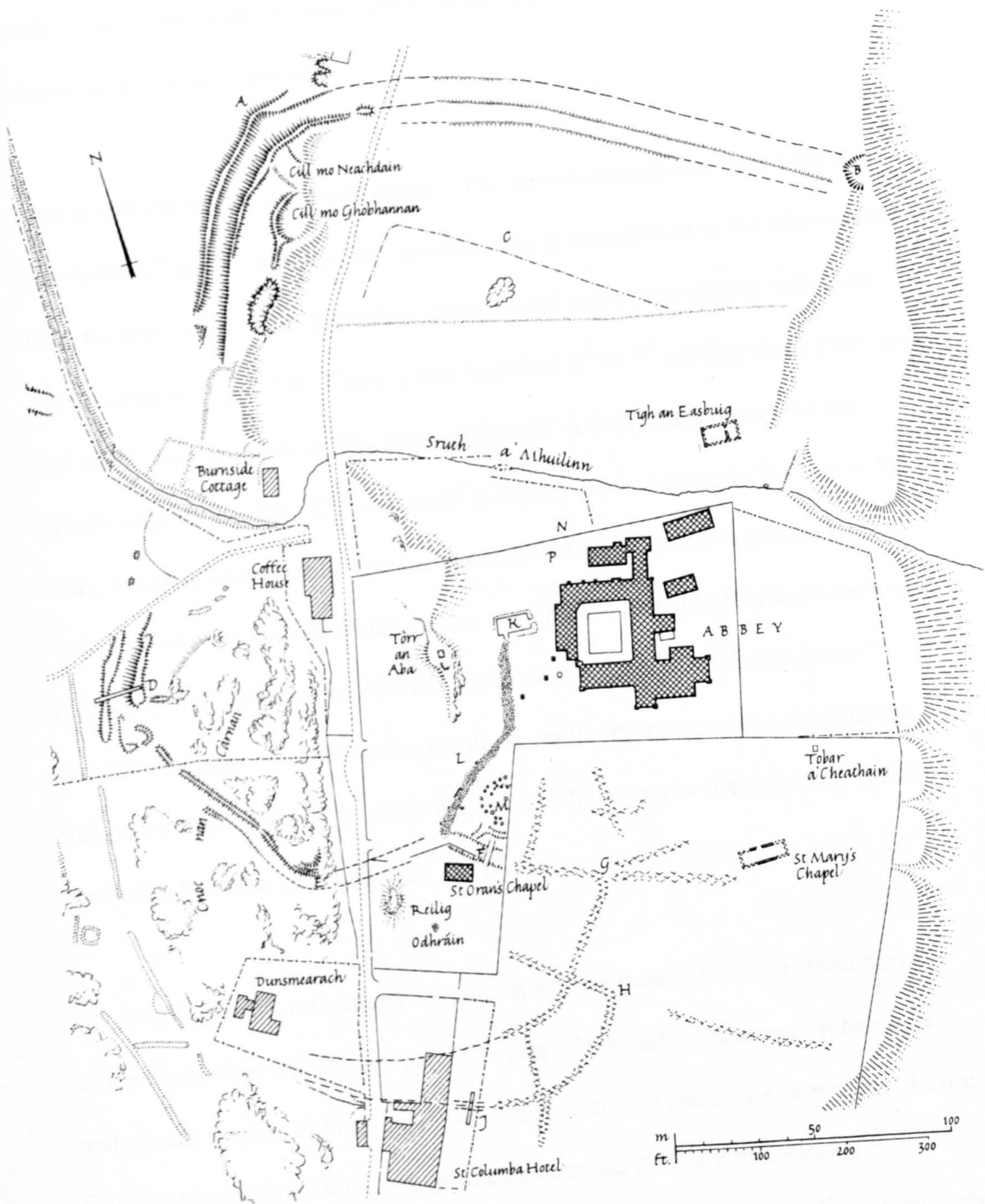


Fig. 3.11: Plan of Iona (RCAHMS 1984:6).



well. The presence of imported pottery at the monastery also indicates the resources available to the site.

Iona is best known for its carved stones. The carved monuments from Iona that date to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries are not elaborate in comparison to the later crosses from the site. Most are of incised or sunken Latin and Greek crosses with little ornamentation (Fig. 3.12). There is one inscribed 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century stone from Iona that reads '*lapis echoidi*' or 'the stone of Echoid' in half-uncial along the top slender edge of the slab. The slab itself is slightly tapered towards the foot of the cross, which is deeply incised with expanded terminals. There is also an incised 'hook' attached to the top, which creates the *Chi Rho* symbol. Of the stones where a source is postulated by RCAHMS (1982), over a third likely derive from immediately local outcrops while the others could originate in the neighbouring area of the Ross of Mull. Most common are sedimentary or metamorphic rocks that easily laminate or break along flat planes.

The extant physical remains of the monastery date mostly from the Benedictine abbey founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The core of the early monastery probably lies underneath these later buildings. While the continued use of the cemetery at Reilig Odhráin has inhibited archaeological examination, Barber's excavations immediately to the north of the cemetery showed the presence of a 7<sup>th</sup> century ditch that divided this burial ground from the sacred core of the settlement (1981: 357).



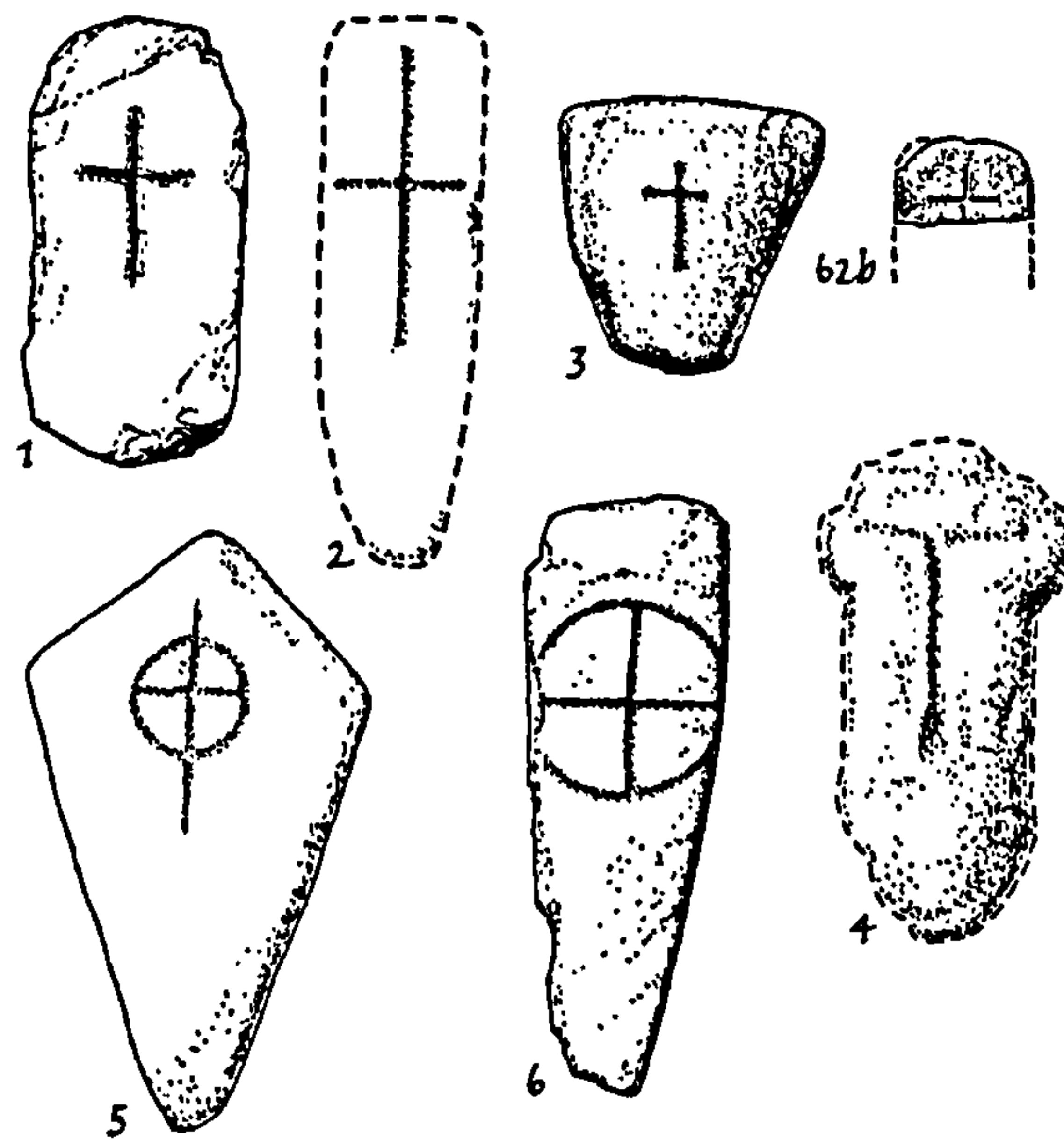


Fig. 3.12: Slabs from Iona, dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries (drawn to same scale - No.6 Height: .64m (RCAHMS 1982:180).

Such internal organisations would not be unusual and are comparable to concentric or other divisions of space within religious settlements such as Armagh patterned on the idealised layout of the City of Refuge (Doherty 1985: 57-60). By the end of the early medieval period, the primary monastic focus around Columba's grave became the centre of a grouping of outlying sacred spaces including burial grounds and satellite churches, comparable to Clonmacnoise or Glendalough in Ireland (O'Sullivan 1999: 200). Also within Barber's excavated area, lay the remains of a timber structure defined by a double arc of pits and post-holes, probably of 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century date (ibid.: 299 – 303). The size of this building, if it is a building, is twice that of comparable round-houses in Ireland (ibid.: 238). Interpretations of the structure include a large house for the community to a large pen for livestock (McCormick 1997: 53; O'Sullivan 1999: 238). The other possible early building is on Tórr an Aba, a rocky prominence just to the west of the Abbey buildings. The excavators of Tórr an Aba suggested that this building, with an odd table or bench-

like stone feature, could be equated with Columba's writing cell (Fowler and Fowler 1988: 199). There is, however, no archaeologically dated evidence to support this.

Turning from the most notable individual sites to regional concentrations of monuments, both the western coast of Tiree and the coastal areas around Loch Caolisport and Loch Sween stand out as areas where erecting carved stone monuments was most common. The area around Loch Sween and Loch Caolisport were discussed above and may be connected to the focal point around Cladh a'Bhile. Tiree was probably the location of an early monastery associated with St Columba called *Mag Luinge* whose prior at one time was Baithéne, a first cousin of Columba and the second abbot of Iona. Mag Luinge was not the only monastery on Tiree, and Adomnán mentions many brethren of these 'other monasteries of Tiree' dying of disease (*VC III.8*, Sharpe 1995: 212). These other monasteries are not located, but the presence of stone monuments of early date may indicate where they once stood.

### **Imported Pottery, Glass, and Fine Metalworking**

So far the only power centres identified in this analysis are of a more ecclesiastic nature although they were active in secular pursuits and may be physically linked with powerful secular sites. When other resource-intensive activities such as long distance trade and non-ferrous metalworking are brought into the picture, the secular centers are emphasised. The discovery of evidence of metalworking, the occurrence of metalwork as finds, and the presence of imported pottery are almost



completely reliant on the process of excavation. Excavations have been conducted to different extents and in different circumstances, making absolute comparisons between them difficult. These categories of material are more subject to change as new information emerges and excavation occurs and the samples are less likely to be representative of early medieval distributions than the sample of carved stones in Argyll. As discussed in Chapter Two, the analysis of these aspects of symbolic wealth is significant in identifying and understanding power centres in early medieval Scotland. Within this study of Argyll, they provide insight into the potential of secular power centres and structures in combination with the analysis of sculpted stones, rather than defining them on their own.

The distribution of imported pottery and glass in the British Isles was discussed and shown in maps in Chapter Two. Those maps showed Dunadd as one of the most

Site Name	Type	No. of vessels	Date
IONA	African Red Slip	1	6 <sup>th</sup> century
IONA	E ware	1	7 <sup>th</sup> century
DUNADD	Glass	7	7 <sup>th</sup> century?
DUNADD	D ware	1	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> century
DUNADD	E ware	26	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> century
DUNADD	F ware	1	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> century?
DUNADD	fabric A3	2	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> century?
DUNADD	fabric A4	1	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> century?
DUNOLLIE	Glass	1	7 <sup>th</sup> century?
DUNOLLIE	E ware	4	7 <sup>th</sup> century
KILDALLOIG DUN	E ware	1	7 <sup>th</sup> century
LOCH GLASHAN	E ware	5	7 <sup>th</sup> century
ARDIFUIR	E ware	1	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> century
CRUACH MHOR, ISLAY	Glass	1?	7 <sup>th</sup> century?
LITTLE DUNAGOIL	E ware	2	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> century
LITTLE DUNAGOIL	Glass	1	7 <sup>th</sup> century?
ST BLANE'S	Possible E ware	1	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> century

Table 3.1: Sites in Argyll and Bute with imported pottery and glass, 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century.



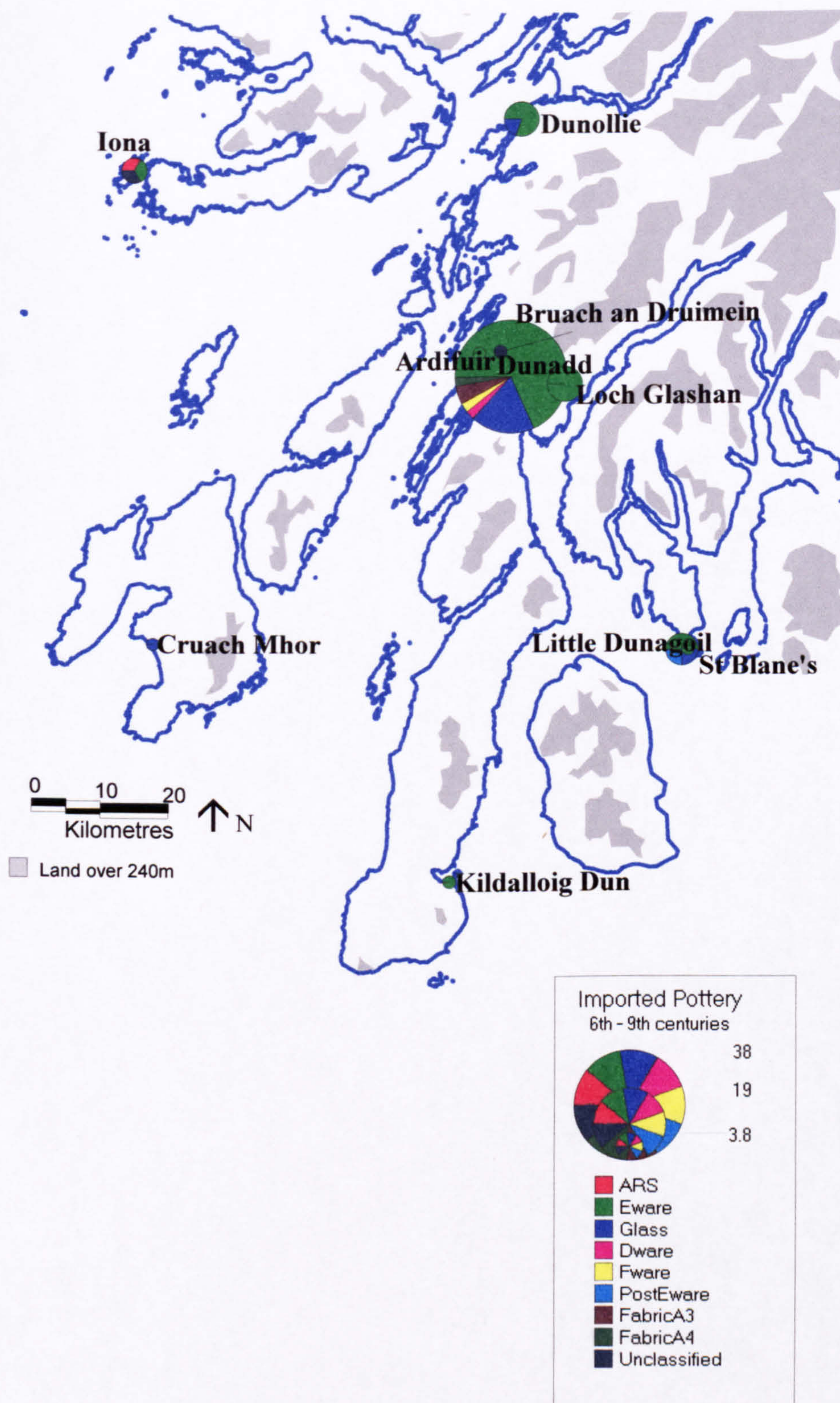


Fig. 3.13: Weighted map of imported pottery and Glass dating to the 6th - 9th centuries.

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significant sites in Britain in terms of the quantity of imported pottery recovered. The crannog at Loch Glashan and the fort at Dunollie produced sherds of E ware representing five and four vessels, respectively. There is also a possible E ware vessel from St Blane’s on Bute (Laing, Laing, and Longely 1998: 560). The possible piece of early medieval glass from Cruach Mhor, Islay is part of a general collection of ‘midden material’ including Viking period oval brooches and modern material (Gordon 1990). The excavations at Dunollie only explored 2% of the site (Alcock and Alcock 1987: 136). This and the potential damage to deposits from the later tower house may suggest the amount of pottery recovered from the site is not comparable to sites where excavation was more comprehensive. Although we have a limited sample of the assemblage from Dunollie, the variety of pottery types and quantities at Dunadd suggest that it was the main importation point in the region for continental ceramics and whatever they contained (Fig. 3.13; Campbell 1996b; Lane and Campbell 2000: 242-243).

Site	Classification	Number	Description
DUNADD	Moulds	55	Brooches, pins
DUNADD	Pieces	11	Mounts, pins
DUNOLLIE	Moulds	13	Brooches, pins, ingot
IONA	Moulds	3	Mounts
IONA	Piece	1	Bronze bell
ST COLUMBA’S CAVE	Moulds	5	Pins(?) and flat objects
KILDONAN	Piece	1	Penannular brooch
ACURRACH	Piece	1	Spiral ringed pin
ST BLANE’S	Mould	1	Ingot mould

Table 3.2 Metalwork in Argyll, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries

Dunadd also dominates discussions of metalworking activity in the region (Table 3.2; Fig. 3.14). Dunadd’s 7<sup>th</sup> century deposits have been the most comprehensive, but the limited excavations at Dunollie also uncovered moulds and crucibles dating



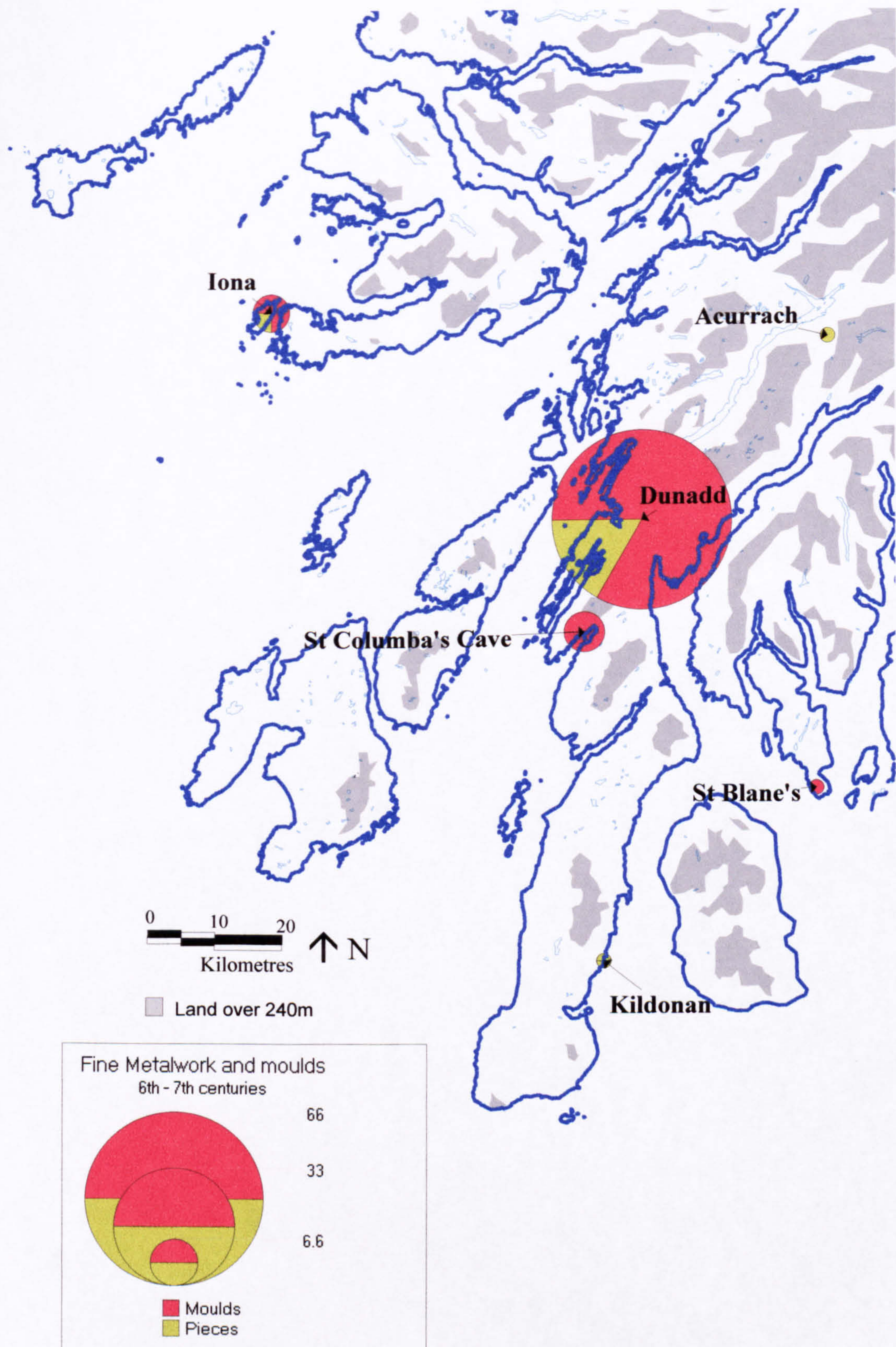


Fig 3.14: Fine metalwork and metalworking, 6th - 7th centuries.

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to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries (Alcock and Alcock 1987: 141; Lane and Campbell 2000: 106-147). Iona, St Blane's, and St Columba's Cave have also produced moulds suggesting that it was not only important secular sites in Argyll that had the resources to support metalworking (RCAHMS 1982: 14; Laing, Laing, and Longely 1998: 559; Tollin-Smith 2001:49 – 51). Such craftsmanship at monasteries is not unusual. Clonmacnoise produced evidence of on site metalworking as have other monasteries throughout Ireland and Britain such as Armagh and Hartlepool (Brown and Harper 1984; Cramp and Daniels 1987; King 1992). The presence of crucibles also indicates a level of metalwork manufacture. There are crucibles from Dunadd, Dunollie, Ardifuir, Iona, Loch Glashan, St Blane's, St Columba's Cave and the open site at Bruach an Drumein.

Dunadd is the first choice for any identification of the *caput regionis* where Columba met Gallic sailors mentioned by Adomnán in the *Life of Columba* (Anderson and Anderson 1961: 264; Campbell 1987: 64; *VC I.28* Sharpe 1995: 132; Lane and Campbell 2000: 39). Set in the archaeological landscape of the Kilmartin Valley, one of the most concentrated collections of prehistoric archaeology in Britain, Dunadd rises as a rocky lump out of the flat valley floor and the Crinan Moss. The hill itself is a volcanic plug, and its craggy appearance provides the summit and terraces for the hierarchical use of space that characterises the nuclear fort. Its history as an archaeological and antiquarian interest has been chronicled in the publication of the most recent excavations to take place on the site in 1980 – 81 by Alan Lane and Ewan Campbell (2000). The River Add, from which the fort gets its name, runs close to the base of the hill through the Crinan

Moss, a large area of mostly peat bog. The River probably also supplied access to the sea only 4km away at Loch Crinan and may have been the route plied by Gaelic merchants. However, only small boats could travel as far as Dunadd and any larger vessels would have had to stop in the Loch Crinan area (ibid.:3).

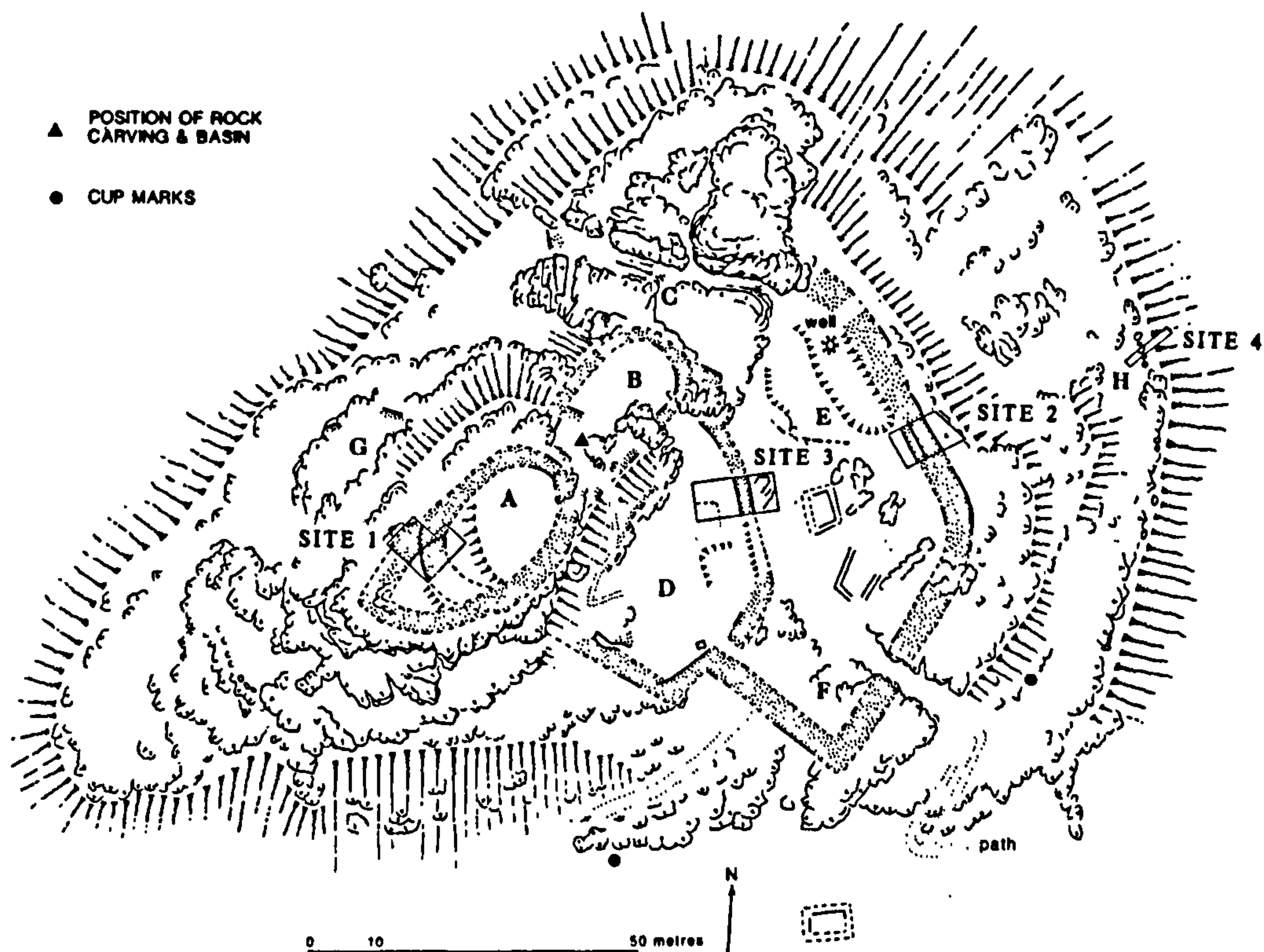


Fig. 3.15: Plan of Dunadd with defences and recent excavations noted (Lane and Campbell 2000:13)

The main plan of the hill (Fig. 3.15) shows how well the terraces were utilised both for accentuating the defenses of the hill and emphasising the division of space and hierarchy on the site. The citadel sits at the summit of the hill after a series of lower level terraces and fortifications are passed through, including a massive cleft in the rock through which access to the inner enclosures is gained. Most of the enclosing walls are a combination of natural rock outcrops with additional stone walling, now tumble or denuded, to accentuate the defensive nature of the fort.



The focal point of the fort appears to be the rock outcrop, located within enclosure 'B' on the plan, which contains a rock-cut basin, carved footprint, and ogham inscription. The site of this outcrop allows for views from the terrace below (enclosure 'D'). While the exact use, meaning, and date of these carvings in the rock are not known for certain, by comparison with similar footprint carvings and the importance of shoes in Ireland a link to the ceremony of inauguration can be argued (Lane and Campbell 2000; Campbell 2003).

The footprint may symbolise the marriage of the king to his land as he stands on the rock. At Dunadd, the king would not have faced the presumed crowds below him but rather would have been in profile to them and faced the mountains to the east, most notably the highest visible peak of Ben Cruachan. Another carved footprint in the south of Kintyre at Southend may be involved in a similar inaugural ritual. This time the king would have faced his presumed royal stronghold at Dunaverty, although Campbell has cautioned against this automatic link with inauguration (2003: 47). Finlaggan, on Islay, also has a square stone with a footprint in it and is considered the medieval inaugural site of the Macdonalds (Caldwell and Ewart 1993: 148 –149). FitzPatrick has discussed the significance of the single shod foot and kingship in Ireland (1997: 33-44). The symbol of the single shoe is a primary symbol of a king and kingship and its presence at Dunadd strongly links the site to inaugural ceremony (Campbell 2003).

The ogham on the summit of Dunadd has undergone a variety of readings. This inscription is incomplete and one line is still illegible. Although much worn and since 1978 covered over with a protective fibreglass cast, the most recent

interpretation by Katherine Forsyth of the ogham, which was written sometime before the late 8<sup>th</sup> century, reads FI(NN/RR)M(A/O)NA(CH/Q). This could either be ‘Finn the monk/monastic tenant’ or ‘Finn the skillful or trickster’ if *manach* is understood to describe his talents. Alternatively, *manach* may be connected to the *Fir Manach*, the people who eventually gave their name to the modern Northern Irish county of Fermanagh (Forsyth 2000: 270-1; Campbell 2003: 48). Why this appears on the outcrop coupled with the apparent ceremonial attributes of inauguration is open to interpretation.

The finds from Dunadd are particularly remarkable in their variety and sheer abundance. Table 3.3, although not confined to 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century materials, highlights the craft activity at the fort. In addition to this, the 54 rotary quernstones uncovered in the excavations suggests agricultural processing taking place on site. Perhaps the large number means there were many mouths to feed on Dunadd. Alternatively, the presence of so many quernstones could indicate that the inhabitants maintained a tight control on this aspect of agricultural production and that the collection or storing of these tools was involved in a display of prestige or part of the patron-client relationship.

Among the finds from Dunadd are two stone objects inscribed with Christian symbolism. One of these is a stone disc found in 1905 with the words ‘I(n) Nomine’ on it (Lane and Campbell 2000: 254). The other is a finely made quern stone with an incised Latin cross of a type found at Iona (Campbell 1987). In the vicinity of Dunadd, there is also a cross-marked stone at Barnakill (RCAHMS 1992:50-51). The presence of Christian symbolism and literacy at and around



Dunadd emphasises the symbiotic relationship between religious and secular spheres seen in the historical sources and at sites such as Clogher in County Tyrone and potentially Cladh a’ Bhile. The relationships between secular and religious sites are particularly visible in the sculpture of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.

	1904/5	1929	1980/1	Totals
<b>Iron</b>				
Knives	14	16	19	49
Weapons	5	5	3	13
Ferrules	2	16	7	25
Tools	16	12	24	52
Nails	1	27	39	67
Personal	0	14	20	34
Misc.	17	32	57	106
<b>Copper Alloy</b>				
	3	3	23	29
<b>Other metal</b>				
	1	4	5	10
<b>Ceramics</b>				
Pottery	15	51	38	104
Crucibles	2	63	188	253
Moulds	3	116	900	1019
<b>Glass</b>				
Beads	4	5	14	23
Other	1	7	9	17
<b>Bone</b>				
	25	1	2	28
<b>Stone</b>				
Querns	53	0	1	54
Ingot moulds	9	3	8	20
Jet/shale	7	8	13	28
Flint	0	9	234	243
<b>Area excavated (sq m)</b>	Unknown	c. 110m <sup>2</sup>	233m <sup>2</sup>	

Table 3.3 Finds from Dunadd (after Lane and Campbell 2000: 30).

### ARGYLL IN THE 8<sup>TH</sup> AND 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

One of the main themes of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century in Argyll appears to be political tension, growth, and fluidity culminating in the reign of Cináed mac Alpin (842 – 58) and the focusing of Dál Riata kings to the east. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century the political

balance of power shifted from Cenél nGabráin to Cenél Loairn hands, and while there were conflicts, the over-kingship of Dál Riata was relatively stable (Campbell 1999: 53). The eastward interest of the kings of Dál Riata began as early as 768 when Aed Find invaded Pictland (Bannerman 1999). This fluctuation in power between east and west appears to end by 849 when Cináed transferred Columba's relics from Iona to Dunkeld (ibid.:73; Broun 1999b: 99). The other major theme is the impact of the Vikings on the west coast and islands in particular. The attacks on Iona, in conjunction with political changes in Dál Riata, contributed to the removal of the administrative focus of the Columban family (Bannerman 1999:91). The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries are also a great period of investment in stone sculpture and Dunadd underwent a period of major rebuilding and expansion in these centuries (Lane and Campbell 2000: 262).

### **Monuments of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries**

The collection at Iona dwarfs all of the other sites when considering the amount of resources and number of stones being created and used in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. The burial ground at Cladh a'Bhile has almost disappeared in comparison. There is, however, still an emphasis on the Mid-Argyll region around Loch Sween in particular. Kilmory Knap on the opposite side of the peninsula from Cladh a'Bhile and Keills Chapel to the west are both centres of material investment (Fig. 3.16). The appearance of high or free-standing crosses at this time results in the dramatic increase in the amount of resources directed towards stone monuments.



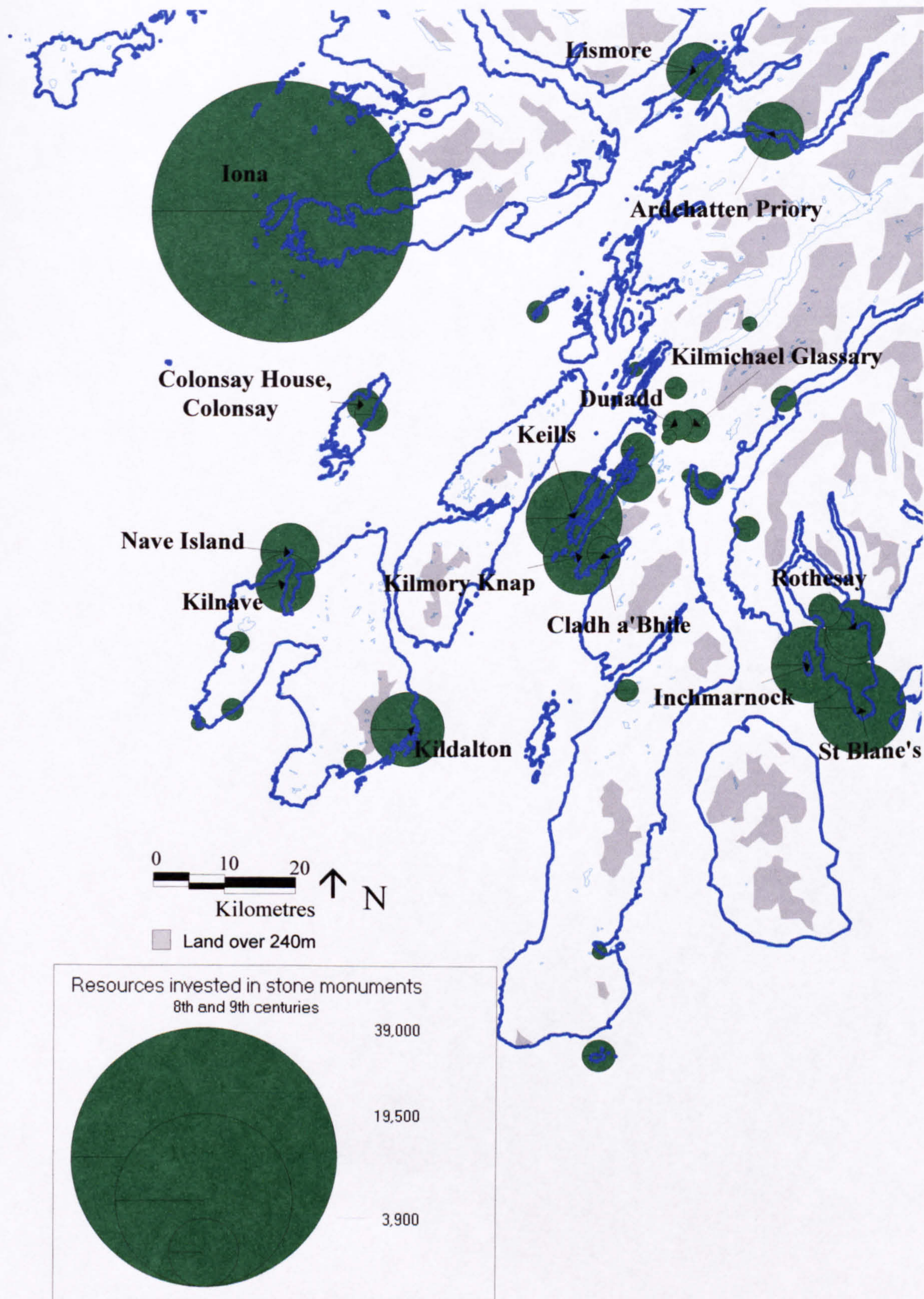


Fig 3.16: Resources invested in stone monuments, 8th and 9th centuries.

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During the 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries communities in Argyll were actively pursuing the display of wealth, status, power and political connections through the medium of stone sculpture. This is particularly evident at Iona where in addition to the free-standing crosses, there are a large number of less ornate monuments being set up and used on the island. The most common type of monument is a slab with an outline of a ringed cross. There are five stones with inscriptions, all of which take the form of a commemorative monument asking for prayers of viewers (Fisher 2001: 127 – 129). Another significant monument type represented in the collection at Iona is the composite shrine monument (RCAHMS 1982: 19, 216-218; Thomas 1998) of which the best surviving example is the St Andrews Sarcophagus in Fife (Foster 1998b). There are few of these types of monuments known from the west of Scotland in particular, and their presence is indicative of a foundation of significant status (Thomas 1988; Gondek and Jeffrey 2003).

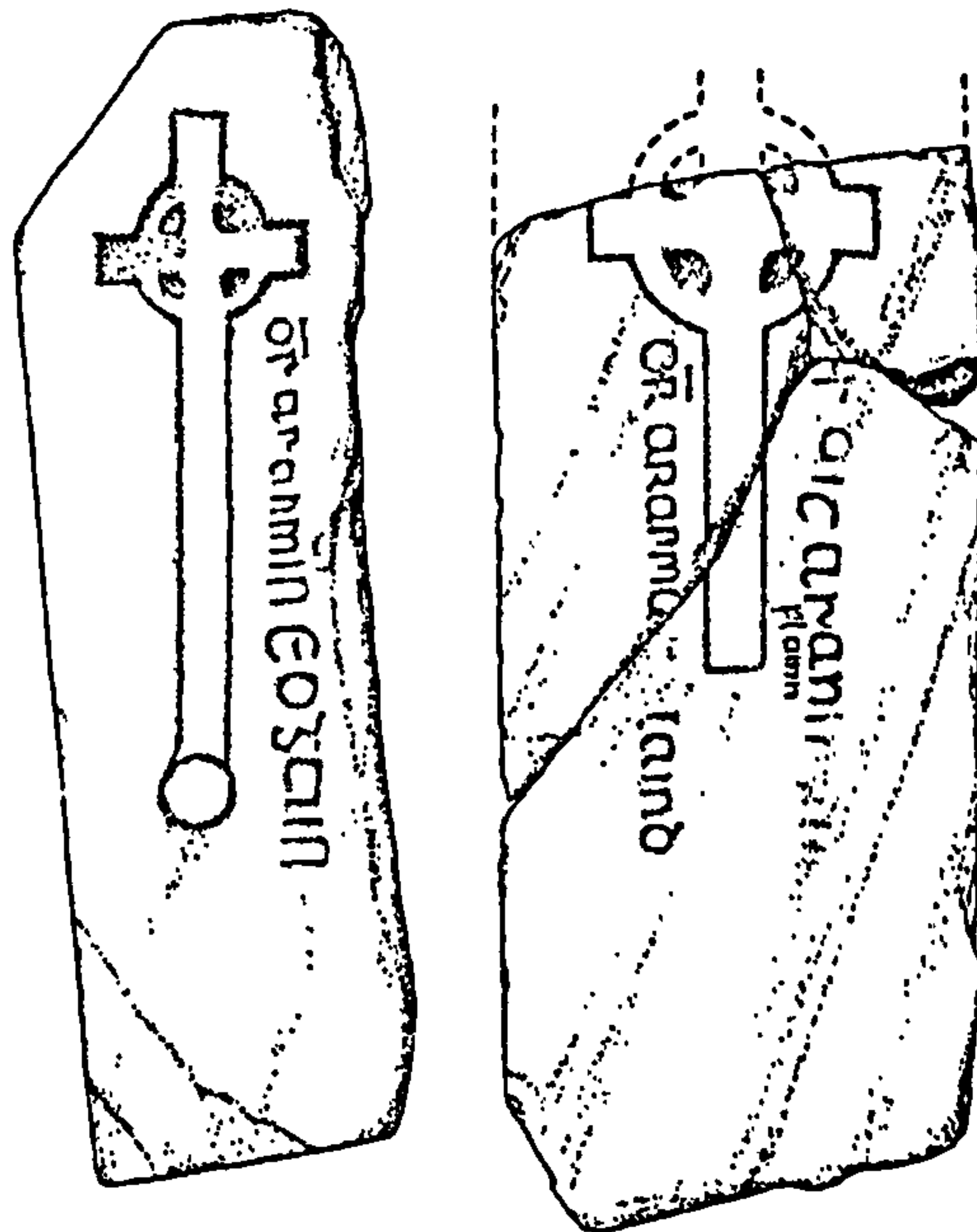


Fig. 3.17: Inscribed slabs with ringed crosses, Iona. Heights: 1.53m, 1.38m (RCAHMS 1982: 186).



There are 11 free-standing or fragments of free-standing crosses from Iona. St Oran's Cross, now broken, is a ringless cross of a flaggy mica-granulite (shaft) and garnetiferous mica-schist (transom and upper arm). Both stones are types or

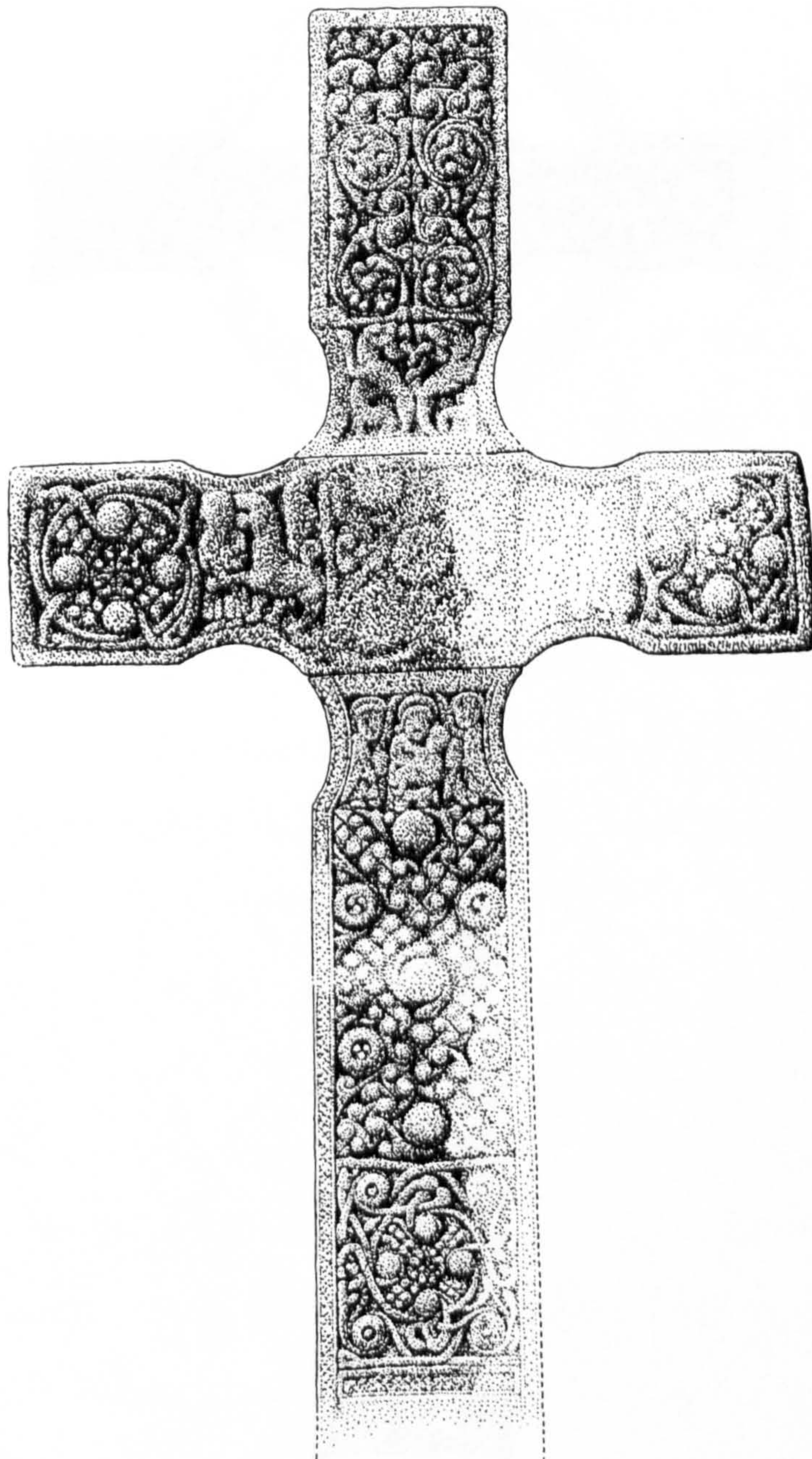


Fig. 3.18: St Oran's Cross, Iona 3.45m in visible height (RCAHMS 1982: 194).



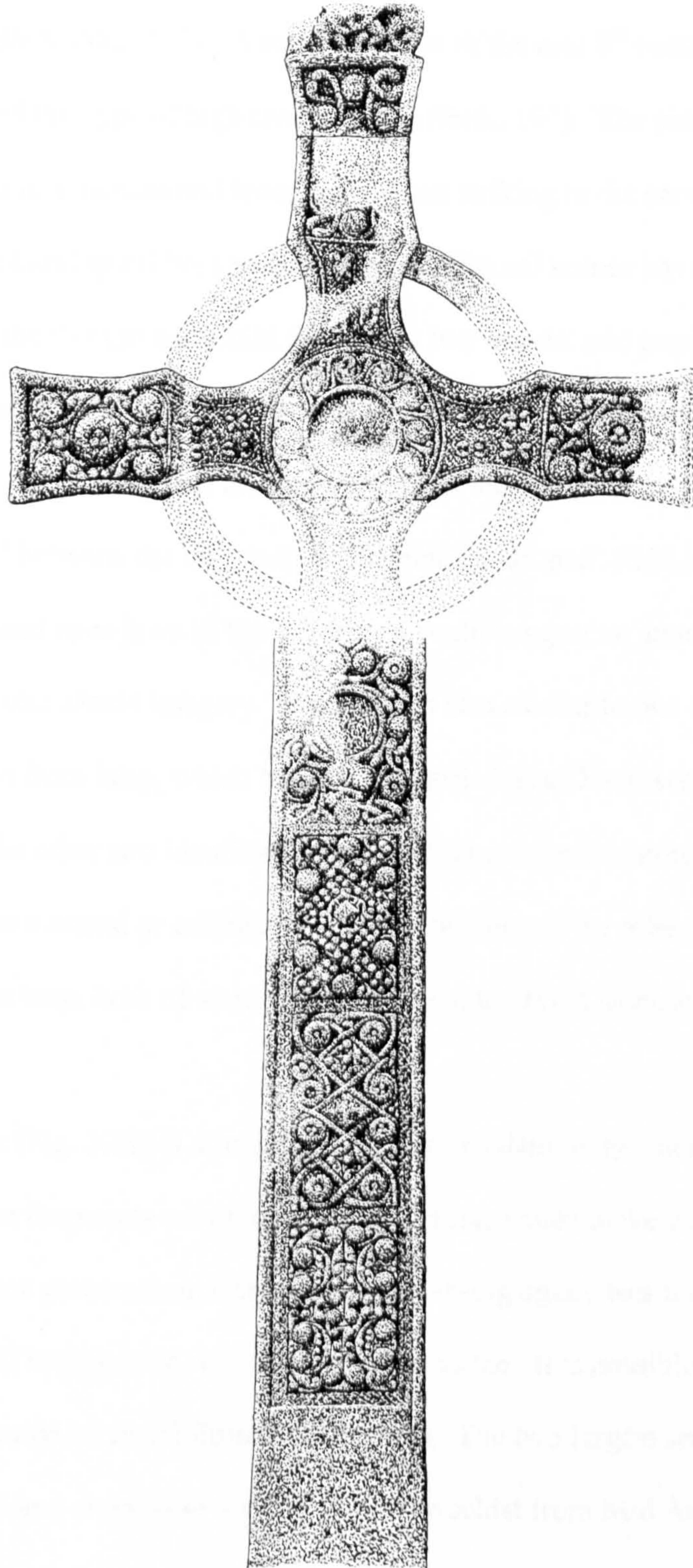


Fig. 3.19: St John's Cross, Iona. Height: estimated 5.3m (RCAHMS 1982:199).



metamorphic stone found in the Ross of Mull only a few kilometers away from the island (RCAHMS 1982: 192). A suggested date of the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century makes it the earliest of this type of high cross on Iona (ibid.: 197). The pieces of the cross fit together using a mortise and tenon joint. Most striking in the carving style is the use of a serpent and spiral boss motif. Surviving figural scenes have been interpreted as the 'Virgin and Child flanked by two angels' and possibly 'Daniel in the Lion's Den' (ibid.: 193). The RCAHMS do not believe that the latter scene is a representation of David killing the lion because of the apparent lack of 'confrontation' between the man and the 'leonine quadruped' (ibid.). However, the raised foreleg and open jaws of the quadruped could suggest an attacking pose, which does fit into David imagery. The scene is also similar to one on the Kildalton Cross from Islay, which has been identified as a David scene (RCAHMS 1984: 208). The other two identifiable figural scenes are much more worn. One appears to show a seated or enthroned figure in profile and the other is a cloaked figure playing a harp, both of which may be related to David iconography.

St John's Cross (Fig. 3.19) is also allocated a carving date in the later 8<sup>th</sup> century (ibid.:204). The fragments are of a ringed high cross, which make use of the mortise and tenon construction technique. The carving again uses the serpent and spiral boss motif interspersed with C-scrolls and peltae. It is possible the carving was also augmented by metal fittings (ibid.: 201). The two largest sections of the cross – the shaft and cross head – are of a chlorite schist from Mid Argyll. These were imported from the quarries at Doide on Loch Sween used for sculpture later in the medieval period (ibid.: 201; Collins 1977: 199). The other pieces appear to be



of a more local origin. The surviving central boss projects an impressive 95mm from the rest of the cross and is intricately carved with interlace. The crest at the top of the cross is damaged but may represent entwined figures whose legs and upper bodies can be seen.

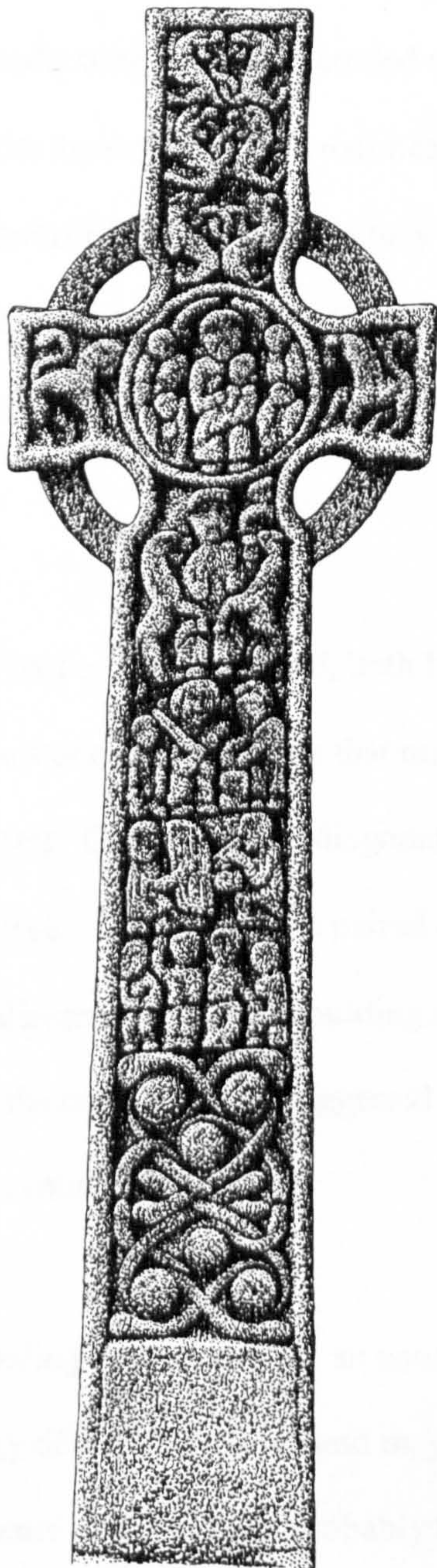


Fig. 3.20: St Martin's Cross, Iona Visible Height: 4.3m (RCAHMS 1982: 205).



St Martin's Cross (Fig. 3.20) has elaborate workings of the serpent and spiral boss motifs on one face and mostly figural scenes on the reverse. The cross is ringed with short side arms. The ends of these arms have vertical slots, possibly for wooden extensions or settings for decorative panels (ibid.: 205). The lowest panel on the West face is blank, indicating a possible eroded inscription (ibid.: 206). A 'Virgin and Child' scene fills the centre of the cross head. The other scenes on the shaft are not definitively identified but at least two may be connected to the David cycle, while the other two may be interpreted as 'The Sacrifice of Isaac' and 'Daniel in the lion's den' (ibid: 207). The dates for this cross also lie at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (ibid.).

Only a section of shaft and part of the cross head, both badly eroded, now remains of St Matthew's Cross. The stone is a sandstone that may have originated from the island of Colonsay (ibid.: 209). One face bears diagonal key pattern under a worn figural scene of Adam and Eve. The reverse has paired circular interlace under more figural scenes now indiscernible. Bead moulding and probably bosses are all that is left of decoration on the cross head. A suggested date for this cross places it in the 9<sup>th</sup> or even early 10<sup>th</sup> century (ibid.: 211).

Other fragments of free-standing crosses include an uncarved section of cross shaft that matches the morphology of St Oran's cross and may be similarly dated (ibid.: 197). There are four fragments of cross heads probably belonging to free-standing crosses of a smaller scale than those listed above (Nos. 85,86,87,87A, ibid.: 211). There are two fragments of a ringed cross which may date as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>

century or as late as the 12<sup>th</sup> century (No. 88, *ibid.*). Three shaft fragments and two arm fragments also come from free-standing crosses dating from the 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Cross bases at Iona also represent technical achievements. Some, such as that for St John's Cross, are of a box-like construction while others like the base of St Martin's Cross are of a massive monolith (*ibid.*: 213-216 for bases). Unlike many cross bases in Ireland, which may be elaborately carved, the Iona bases are not carved with figural scenes.

The bases of the crosses of Saints John, Martin, and Matthew lie in a rough East-West line not more than 10m apart from the other (Fig. 3.11 for plan). St John's cross sits closest to the chapel, which is presumed to be the earliest part of the abbey complex and reflects its early medieval importance. The grouping of these monuments close to the sacred core of the monastery invests them with an additional dimension of prestige and holiness. At Armagh the placement of a high cross at the entrance to the church precinct suggested the use of the monument to mark out and direct movement through the sacred space (Lynn and McDowell 1988, 58). At Iona, the monuments also appear to be directing movement towards the chapel, within the holiest precinct. The other free-standing crosses from Iona may have stood to direct movement or mark out boundaries or other sacred places or stations on the island.

There are three free-standing crosses from Islay, the region of Argyll allocated to the Cenél nOengusa. The most spectacular of these high crosses is at Kildalton on the southern coast (RCAHMS 1984: 208). The Kildalton Cross (Fig. 3.21) is a



ringed cross of a local stone. In shape it is similar to St John's Cross from Iona, although of a smaller stature. Snake and boss motif is used as well as peltae and spiral work. Prominent bosses accentuate the western face of the cross head, while the east face has a hollow central boss that has snakes or lizards rising out of the cross to grip onto it. The east face has several figural scenes confined to the cross



Fig. 3.21: Kildalton Cross, Islay. Height: 2.65m. (RCAHMS 1984:208).

arms and upper shaft. These include depictions of Abraham and Isaac, Cain and Abel, David killing the lion, and a version of the Virgin and Child. The Kilnave Cross is much worn, but has both spiral and key ornament. A roundel of curling



peltae and bosses fills the centre of the cross head. The cross from Nave Island is only represented from a small fragment of an arm. The fragment shows a lozenge shape and closely knitted interlace as well as some spiral ornament. The shape and size of the cross is probably similar to that of the cross from Kilnave. The stylistic similarities of the crosses with those on Iona suggest considerable contact between the two islands.

A single monolithic free-standing cross comes from the church at Keills (Kilvicocharmick) probably dedicated to the Leinster saint Abbán moccu Corbmaic (RCAHMS 1992:86; Fisher 2001: 145). The monuments of Keills also include cross slabs and are stored in the re-roofed small stone chapel. The free-standing cross once stood on a rise above the chapel building. Overlooking Loch Sween, Keills chapel and its associated free-standing cross would have been visible from boats on the water. The cross itself has squat arms and thick relief carving. A hollow central boss is similar to that on the Kildalton cross. Spirals, key pattern, and interlace occurs on the monument, which appears to have only one carved face. The figural scenes appear to be that of Daniel seated between two lions holding a book and an angel standing on a serpent. Keills is well placed to monitor activity on Loch Sween and its growth as a centre in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries may reflect the importance of this Loch as a route inland.

The free-standing cross from St Blane's at the southern end of the isle of Bute, reputedly founded by Blane in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The death of a bishop is recorded here in *AU* 660.1 *recte* 659 (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 133). The remains on the site include a 12<sup>th</sup> century chapel building and an upper and lower graveyard



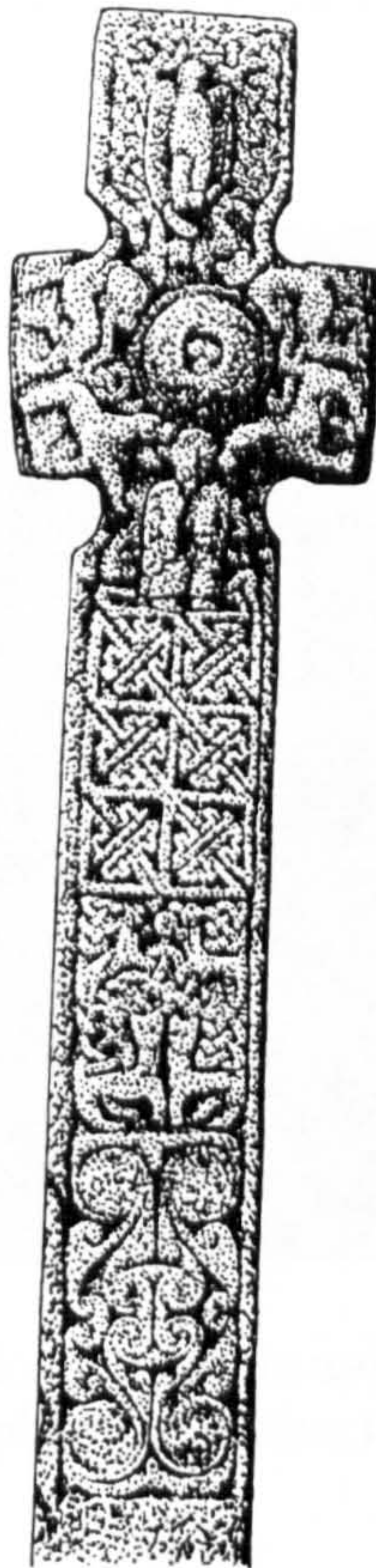


Fig.3.22: The Keills Cross, Visible height: 2.25m (RCAHMS 1992: 86).

both enclosed by walling. A massive drystone wall, restored in the late 19th century, encloses the entire site. Finds from the early medieval period concentrated in the structures to the south of the churchyard and included pottery, whetstones, incomplete shale rings, and ingot-mould, crucibles, and motif-pieces (Laing, Laing, and Longely 1998:73). A massive cross base sits just outside an entrance to the outer enclosing wall (Fig 3.23). There are several possible candidates for the cross it would have held. The best preserved is the shaft of a sandstone cross carved on one face and missing its cross head. At the base of the shaft is a scene with leaping animals. The geometric patterns are less ornate than those of the Iona or Islay



crosses and this cross may date to the later 9<sup>th</sup> or even possibly 10<sup>th</sup> century (Fisher 2001: 9, Fig 3.24).



Fig. 3.23: View of cross base looking towards upper graveyard at St Blane's, Bute (photo by author).

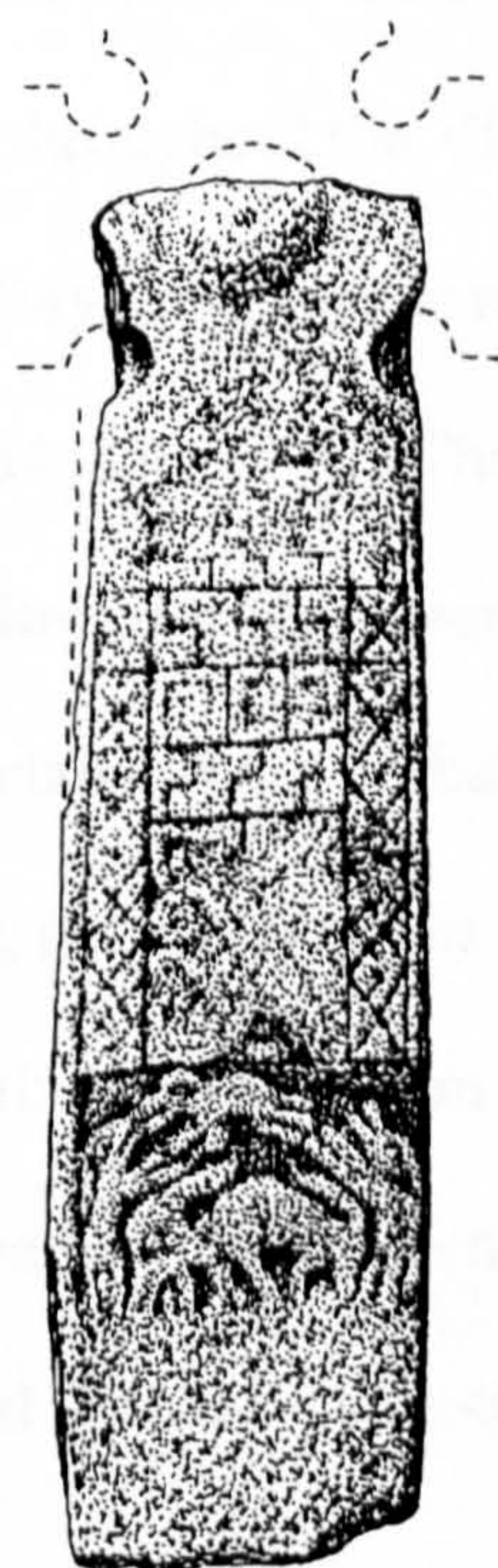


Fig. 3.24: Cross shaft from free-standing cross, St Blane's (Fisher 2001: 75).



## **Fine Metalwork and Imported Pottery**

Evidence for fine metalworking that securely dates to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries in the form of moulds and crucibles is not frequent in Argyll. Some of the production at Dunadd may be as late as the 8<sup>th</sup> century, but the main excavated metalworking deposits date to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries (Lane and Campbell 2000: 118). Motif pieces from the site may show designs for a penannular brooch datable to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century (ibid.: 211). Motif pieces of roofing slate at St Blane's may also date to this period (Laing, Laing, and Longley 1998: 559). Pieces of metalwork that date stylistically to this period are much more frequent than the previous period, although a few may be as late as the early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Several of these pieces attributed an 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century manufacturing date are from a Viking grave context. This phenomenon of Insular type metalwork found as Viking grave goods is common throughout the Viking world. Objects, as seen in two of the pieces from Kiloran Bay, may appear re-used, in this case as decoration for lead weights (RCAHMS 1984: 150-151). The lack of 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century production materials is directly linked to the absence of excavated deposits securely dated to the period. Metalworking probably continued at the power centres of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century, and excavations on other high status sites, such as Clatchard Craig, Fife, show continued production into the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (Close-Brooks 1986). An iron bell, of 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> century date comes from Kilmichael Glassary, only 2km from Dunadd (Bourke 1983:464; Campbell 1999: 58).



Site	No.	Classification	Description
CARN A'BHARRAICH, ORONSAY	1	Viking Grave Goods	book clasps (2)
CLACHAN, LOCH FYNE	1	Piece	penannular brooch
COLL	1	Piece	Penannular brooch
DUN BEAG, VAUL, TIREE	1	Piece	ring-headed pin
DUNADD	1	Mould	penannular brooch
IONA	1	Piece	Head shaped mount
KILORAN BAY, COLONSAY	5	Viking Grave Goods	Harness mounts, lead weight and mounts
LOCH GLASHAN	1	Piece	penannular brooch
MACHRINS, COLONSAY	2	Pieces	engraved plate, penannular brooch
MULL	1	Piece	Pseudo-Penannular brooch
SITHEAN MOR, GARVARD, COLONSAY	1	Piece	ringed pin
TRAIGH NAM BARC	1	Viking Grave Good	Pin
LITTLE DUNAGOIL	1	Piece	Book clasp

Table 3.4: Metalwork in Argyll, 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries.

There is also less imported pottery dated to this period than the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries (Table 3.5, Fig. 3.13). There is a sherd of 'post E-ware' of a 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century date from Little Dunagoil on Bute which also produced a book clasp of 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century date (Campbell 1991: 291; Laing, Laing, and Longley 1998: 557). The F ware and fabrics A3 and A4 from Dunadd may date as late as the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century (Campbell 1991: 194; Lane and Campbell 2000: 102-103), and there is an unclassified sherd of continental character from Bruach an Druimein (Campbell 1991:194).

Site Name	Type	No. of vessels	Date
DUNADD	F ware	1	7 <sup>th</sup> –9 <sup>th</sup> century?
DUNADD	fabric A3	2	7 <sup>th</sup> –9 <sup>th</sup> century?
DUNADD	fabric A4	1	7 <sup>th</sup> –9 <sup>th</sup> century?
LITTLE DUNAGOIL	Post E ware	1	8 <sup>th</sup> –10 <sup>th</sup> century
BRUACH AN DRUIMEIN	Unclassified	1	8 <sup>th</sup> –9 <sup>th</sup> century?

Table 3.5: Imported pottery possibly from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.



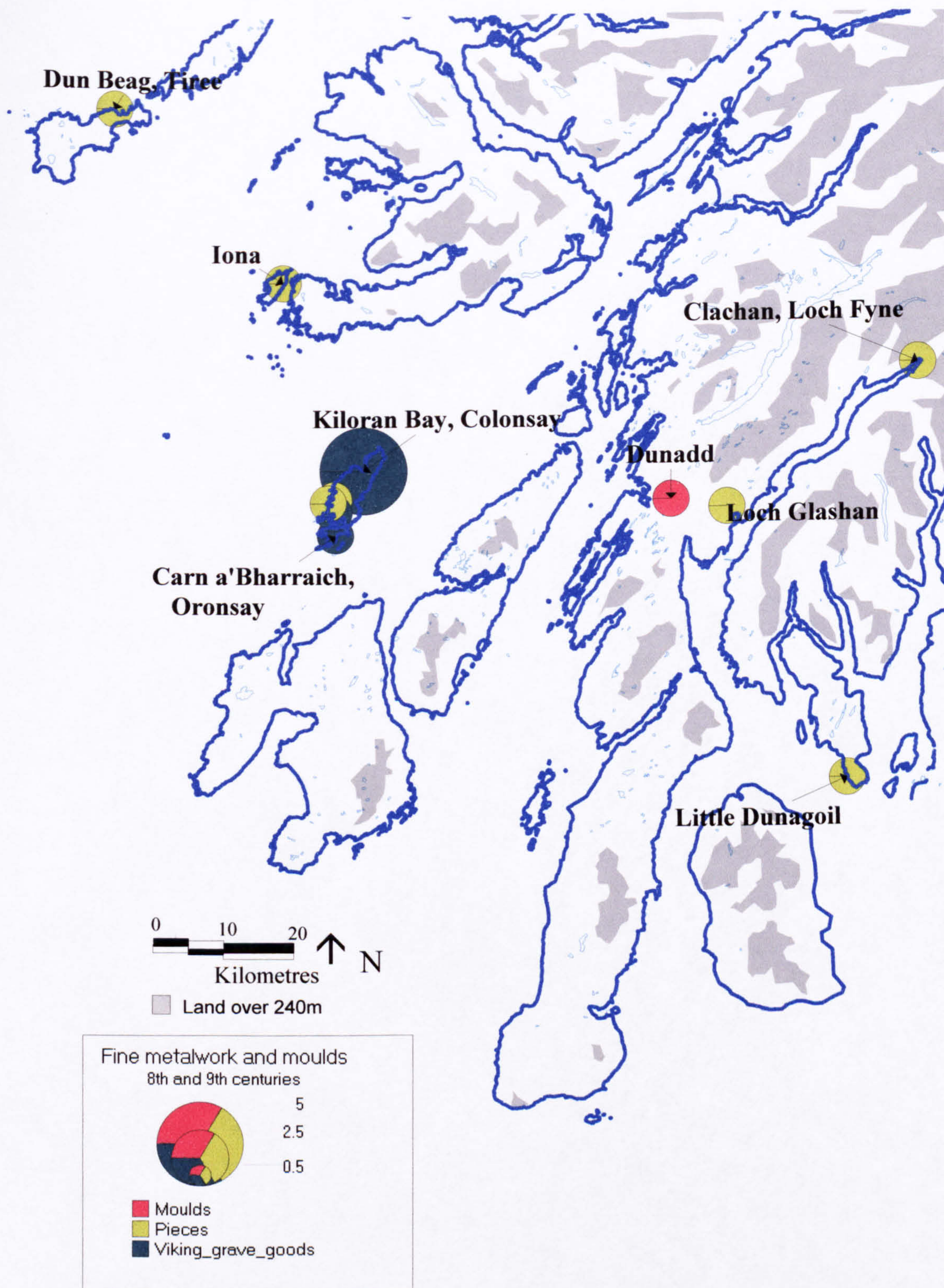


Fig. 3.25: Fine metalwork and metalworking, 8th and 9th centuries.

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This lack of conventional activities (fine metalworking and using imported pottery) and objects associated with power centers, combined with even fewer documentary references to Argyll means that the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries are often interpreted through pre 8<sup>th</sup> century evidence and dominated by the large events such as Viking raids and the removal of Columba's relics in the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century. Undoubtedly these events played an important part in the social and economic life in Dál Riata. This 'disruption' in traditional aspects of symbolic wealth is contrasted by the analysis of sculpture. A veritable 'boom' in monument construction, particularly at Iona, in the later 8<sup>th</sup> and into the 9<sup>th</sup> century shows that patrons of these monuments were actively pursuing using their economic power in this visible way. That the early Viking raids targeted centers at this time, in Iona's case repeatedly in *AU* 794.7, 802.9, 806.8, and 825.17, also attests to the continuing presence of movable wealth in the guise of ecclesiastic and other metalwork (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 251,259,263,283). Thus, despite repeated attacks and the threat of attack, there appears to be no decrease in the amount of resources available to the community, including secular patrons, at Iona or their desire to display their wealth through sculpted monuments. This suggests the Viking attacks were not having a particularly strong negative impact on the economy of Iona. From the amount of sculpture raised elsewhere in Argyll, this appears to be the case in much of the region. Certainly the attacks affected the Iona community, especially after the murder of 68 brethren in *AU* 806.8 (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 263). Overall it is likely to be the political changes in Dál Riata, especially in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, along with the Viking threat that was the impetus for the removal of the relics of Columba to Dunkeld and Kells and the decline in creating stone sculptures in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.



## ARGYLL IN THE 10<sup>TH</sup> AND 11<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

The later 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries in Argyll saw changes in the politics of the area as the focus of the kings of Dál Riata moved eastwards (Broun 1998; 1999b; Bannerman 1999). Dunadd appears to go out of use as a site of occupation by the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Lane and Campbell 2000: 97). Such abandonment may be attributable to the incoming Norse, but the archaeological evidence does not support a violent takeover by the Norse or even much settlement. Place-names with a Scandinavian character are most common in the islands, particularly Tiree and Islay (Nieke 1984: 371; Johnstone 1995). Norse settlement is not uniform throughout Argyll. Based on place-name evidence, some of the islands saw relatively extensive settlement, while other areas, particularly mainland Argyll, may have seen very little in the way of Norse settlement (Nicolaisen 1969; Nicolaisen, MacGregor, and Small 1996; Andersen 1991: 132). Interaction to some extent with the Norse was likely for coastal areas in Argyll as it lay on the route between Ireland, Orkney, and the North Sea.

Although the focus of the Columban family moved from Iona in the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century to Kells and Dunkeld, a community continued to live there and chroniclers continued to take an interest in the happenings there. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century Óláfr Sigtryggsson (at times king of Dublin and York) retired there after a defeat of his Dublin forces at the Battle of Tara in 980. He died a year later and was buried on the isle (*AFM*, 2 M 979.5 O'Donovan 1856: 711; Hudson 1994: 158). At the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Magnus Barelegs, King of Norway, conquered the Hebrides.

When he came to Iona, he reputedly showed great respect to the saintly isle before he left to burn Islay, which he obviously did not hold in as great regard (Jennings 1998:37). In 1098, Iona was among the lands ceded to Magnus and technically remained Norwegian territory until the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Monuments of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries**

The erection of carved stones decreases quite drastically in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. That Iona is still the most important site in the region is attested by the sculpture found there (Fig. 3.25). Of the 49 monuments attributed to this period, 10 are from Iona. There is a re-emphasis of island sites – Iona, St Blane's on Bute, Sanda, Gigha, Eilean Mór, Colonsay, and Tiree. The most dominant sites are Iona, St Blane's, Kilfinan, Kilmartin, and Eilean Mór. While there are earlier monuments at the other dominant sites of Kilfinan, Kilmartin, and Eilean Mór, many of the other concentrations have shifted to new locations. On Islay, for example, the cross slabs at Laggan, Gleann na Gaoith, Dóid Mháiri, and Cill Eileagain are at sites not particularly important in this regard in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. The high crosses and monuments of the earlier periods would, of course, still have been visible.



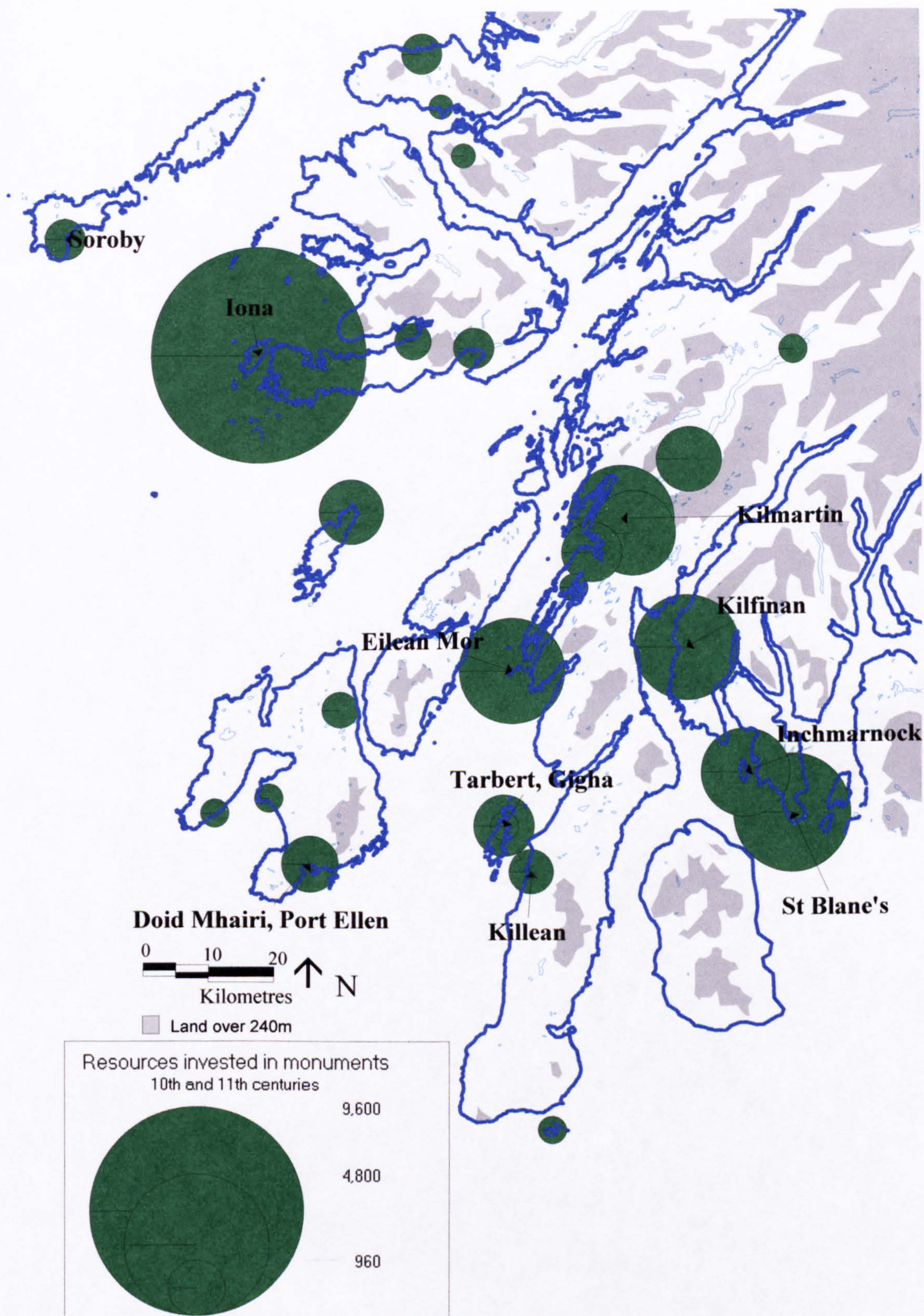


Fig. 3.26: Resources invested in stone monuments, 10th - 11th centuries.

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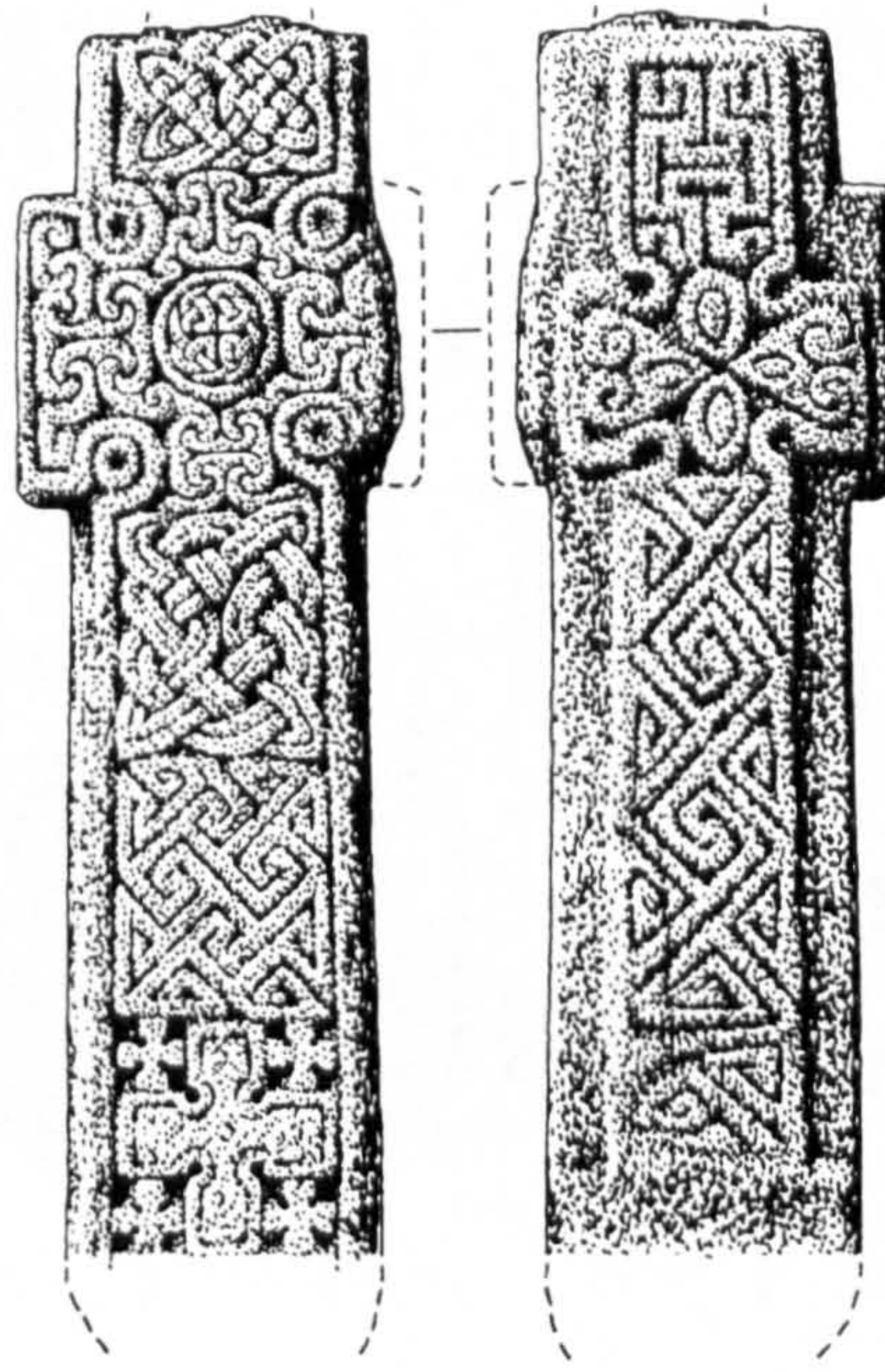


Fig. 3.27: Kilmartin Cross. Height: 1.55m (RCAHMS 1992:130).

There are eight upright crosses that date to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, but apart from Kilmartin, Eilean Mór, Rothesay, and fragments from St Blane's, the crosses do not replicate the highly decorated free-standing form of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries on a comparable scale. The most impressive of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century monuments account for the considerable resources directed to the sites at Kilfinan, Eilean Mór, and at Kilmartin (Fig. 3.26; 3.27). In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, it appears that although resource-intensive monuments were still important to erect, fewer of these, and fewer monuments in general were created. The movement of the political focus eastwards may be a factor in this reduction of monuments as the ruling élite undoubtedly were major patrons of these displays of prestige, power, and sacred commemoration.





Fig. 3.28: Coped recumbent monument, St Blane's, Bute (photo by author).

The hogback is a particular type of stone monument connected to Norse burial traditions in Insular contexts (Lang 1974; Crawford 1994b). A collection of hogbacks are among the substantial corpus of carved stone monuments of the later 9<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries at Govan, a major ecclesiastic site of the kingdom of Strathclyde. The only possible hogback-type monument from Argyll is a coped recumbent monument from St Blane's (Fig. 3.28). St Blane's in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries may be related more to the churches and the region of Strathclyde than Dál Riata and this connection may explain the appearance of this style of monument here (Laing, Laing, and Longley 1998: 554-5). The shape of the stone also recalls that of later medieval (12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> century) coped grave-covers seen at Iona (RCAHMS 1982: 219), however the triangular top could also be a variation of a house-shape and reminiscent of the St Leonard's School shrine from St Andrews (described in Henderson 1998: 167).



## Fine Metalwork and Hoards

Location	No.	Classification	Description
ARDSKENISH	1	Piece	Arm ring
BALLINABY GRAVES	5	Viking Grave Goods	Oval brooch pairs, pins, buckle
CRUACH MHOR, ISLAY	1	Viking Grave Good	Buckle
DRUIM ARSTAIL, ORONSAY	1	Viking Grave Good	Ringed pin
INVERARAY PARK	1	Piece	Oval brooch pair
KILORAN, COLONSAY	1	Piece	Pin
MACHRINS, COLONSAY	1	Piece	Oval brooch pair
NEWTON	1	Viking Grave Good	Ringed pin
RUADH SGEIR, SOUND OF JURA	1	Piece	Gold ring

Table 3.6: Metalwork in Argyll, 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The presence of the Norse in Argyll is seen more in an analysis of the metalwork and hoards dated to this period (Table 3.6; Fig. 3.29). Viking graves provide most of the evidence for metalwork. These include three graves at Ballinaby and one from Newton on Islay, one from Kiloran Bay and a possible burial from Ardskenish on Colonsay, Carn a'Bharraich and Druim Arstail on Oronsay, and a presumed women's burial from Cruach Mhor, Islay (RCAHMS 1984: 147-151, 153).

The presence of hoards in combination with other factors of symbolic wealth may illustrate changes in power centres and structures in Argyll even though the known distribution is only a partial sample of what likely existed in the early medieval period. Hoarding (Fig. 3.30) can be a sign of violence or unrest as the owner may be hiding goods away from robbers or raiders, usually the Vikings (but as discussed in Chapter Two, it may also be a method of storing valuables). All of the recorded hoards from Argyll have coins and may have been buried by 'Vikings'





Fig.3.29: Fine metalwork and metalworking, 10th - 11th centuries.  
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rather than victims (Graham-Campbell 1995). The 'hoard' from Kiloran Bay only consists of three coins all of later 9<sup>th</sup> century and or at the very latest the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. A single coin find of Hiberno-Norse date also comes from Iona, where a hoard of more than 360 coins, mostly Anglo-Saxon pennies from Athelstan to Ethelred II with some York minted coins, a piece of gold wire, a silver bar, and a silver and gold mount) was also found (RCAHMS 1982: 21). The rest of the hoards, apart from the now lost hoard from Kilmartin, are from the islands.

The distribution of hoards in Argyll suggests that they are related to ecclesiastic establishments - Tiree had several monasteries from the 6<sup>th</sup> century onwards, a chapel on Inch Kenneth (RCAHMS 1980: 138-142) has a 6<sup>th</sup> century foundation story, and Kilmartin also appears to have a long standing ecclesiastic community from the early carved stone in the churchyard (Graham-Campbell 1995: 97-98,100, 103, 104, 147,157). It is only the hoard from Machrie, on Islay, that stands out as not having ecclesiastic connections. This concentration does not suggest a trade or market context. These hoards may have been buried by those protecting their wealth from Vikings or even buried by Vikings themselves. Wealth in the form of coins may come to monasteries from other monasteries as gifts or payment and their circulation in Argyll for the most part may be limited to an ecclesiastic milieu thus explaining the correlation with church sites. This may be comparable to the use of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Saxon coins in Wales where the distribution was also dominated by ecclesiastical sites (Dolley and Knight 1971: 81-82).



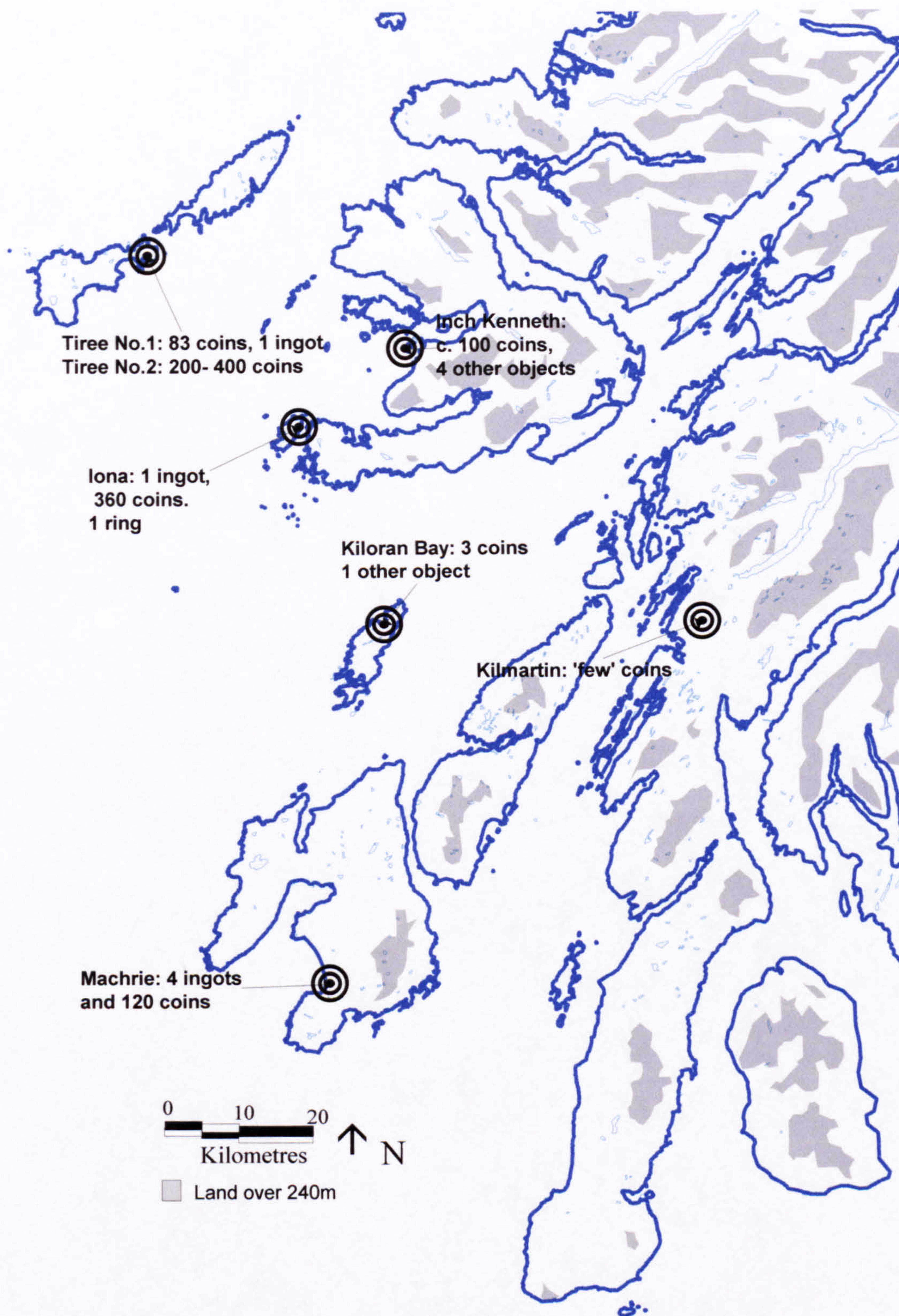


Fig. 3.30: Hoards in Argyll of 10th and 11th century dates.  
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## CONCLUSION: CHANGING POWER STRUCTURES IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ARGYLL

Power structures in Argyll remain fairly constant throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries even past the date of the first Viking attacks. The nature and display of power does change over time, with the most marked rise being in the display of investment in stone sculpture in the mid to late 8<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 3.31). The crescendo of economic activity, visible particularly through monuments in the 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, indicates an economic and political situation positive enough to allow resources to be expended in this way. Considering the fluctuating political and social scene during these centuries, including the political changes of the major Cenéla of Dál Riata (Duncan 1975: 42 – 46; Lane and Campbell 2000: 34), it is significant that surplus was created, maintained, and chosen to be invested in this medium. It also suggests a level of stability was maintained within political and economic structures through the changes in power. The rise of power at Iona seems to be coincident with a rise in power, exhibited in particular by structural changes during the 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, at Dunadd.

### Phase I

Although the main power centers such as Iona and Dunadd maintain their influence for the most part into the 10<sup>th</sup> century, there are some changes in the focus of power at other sites. In the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries there are three main centres of investment: Iona and Cladh a'Bhile in sculptural investment and Dunadd for



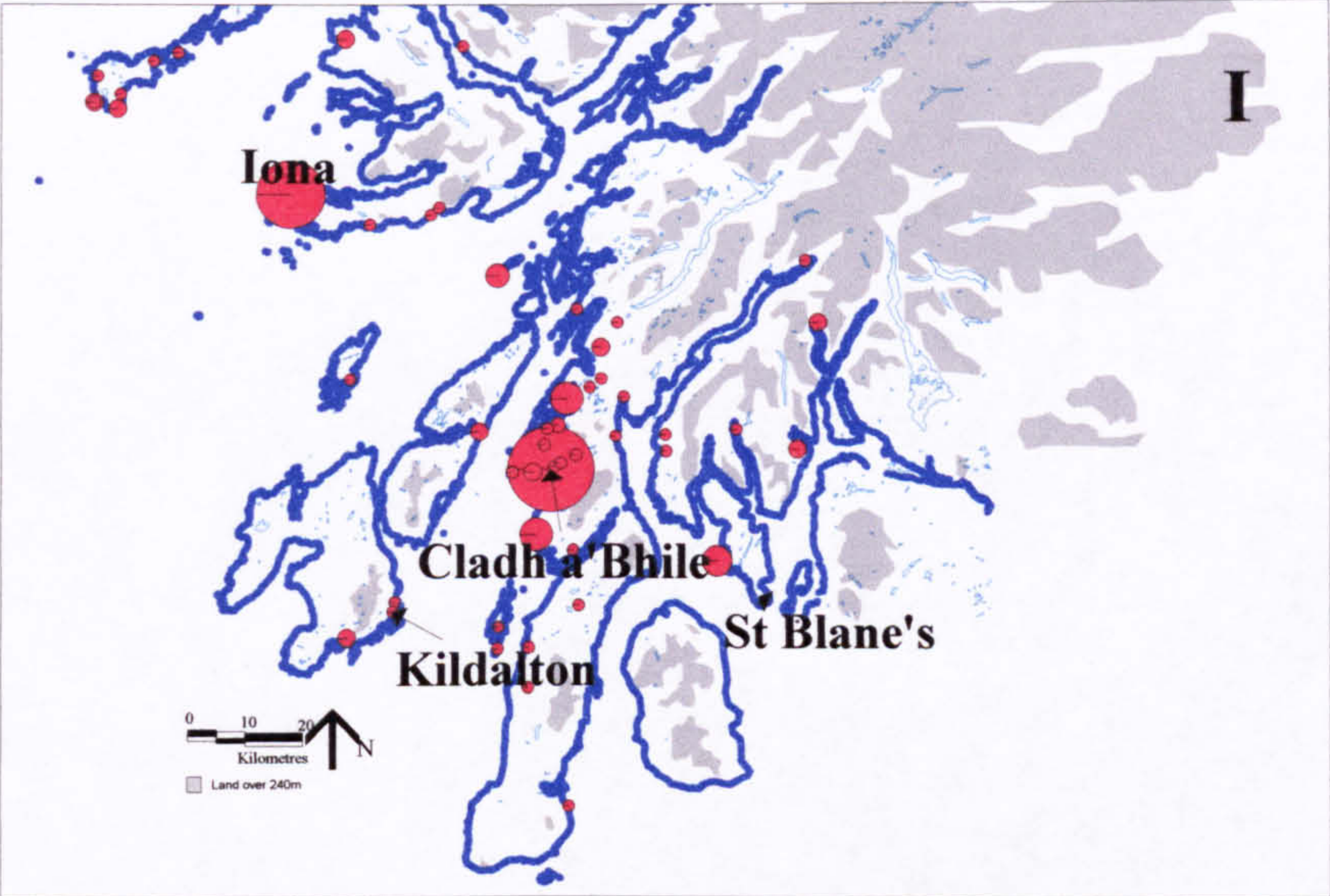


Fig 3.31: Resources in sculpture Phase I to III

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investment in other media, in particular, fine metalworking, acquiring imported ceramics, and construction of the settlement itself.

It is difficult to compare symbolic wealth at Dunadd and the two sculptural centres because of the different kinds of investment. In general terms, the evidence from the distribution of fine metalwork and metalworking, the use of imported goods, and the storing of material in hoards is less representative of general trends in economic and political change than the sample of sculpture because of its dependence on excavation or chance finds. It is however, the main source for symbolic wealth attached to secular sites. In particular, the significance of Dunadd in the analysis of these 'secular' aspects of symbolic wealth illustrates the symbiosis of secular and ecclesiastical power growth in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Sites with monumental sculpture, which is the main source of information here for change in power structures, are comparable. In Argyll, the investment in sculpture suggests a reconsideration of the status of Cladh a'Bhile and Iona in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Each site has a large collection (relative to the early phase under discussion here) of sculpted monuments, generally incised slabs. The prominence of one site over the other is not the critical factor in this comparison, but rather the prominence of these two sites over other sites with early carved stones. Sculptural evidence suggests that Iona and Cladh a'Bhile are relative equals in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, and that the physical distance between them may reflect regions of power or influence. Irregardless of the nature of Cladh a'Bhile – whether it is linked to an early inaugural landscape and the multi-phase fortification on the hill above, or



whether it is a lay cemetery or a cemetery with an as yet undiscovered associated site or church – it was acting as a draw for monumental investment in this region of southern Argyll on par to Columba's monastery to the north. The Columban link in the region of Cladh a'Bhile may have a late origin and the possibility is that southern Argyll was associated with another or other early saints, such as St Cormac at Keills and Eilean Mór, only later reduced in prominence by the growing popularity of the Columban cult particularly in the later 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. This early limited territorial influence of Iona in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries may also be indicated by the distribution of the motif of a simple incised cross with expanded terminals. Campbell's analysis of the distribution, which occurs most frequently at Iona but also on a cross-inscribed quern from Dunadd, suggests that Iona's influence at first falls within a restricted area of northern Argyll (1987: 110). It may be fitting to recall that Adomnán does not tell us that Columba arrived in Argyll specifically to convert the people of Dál Riata, rather we see him converting in Pictland. That Dál Riata or parts of it was to some degree already Christian might be inferred. The success of the Columban cult to dominate Christian tradition in the West after the 7<sup>th</sup> century is likely due to a combination of successful hagiography and cult building combined with advantageous relations with the kings of Dál Riata.

## **Phase II**

This growing popularity of the Columban cult is articulated by the rise of the centre at Iona as seen in the large amount of investment at the site centered on carved stones created during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is no other ecclesiastical site



in Argyll that rivals Iona in terms of sculptural investment indicating that the monastery was the principal ecclesiastic power in the region and that other sites were minor and some probably confederated to Iona. This may be seen in the transference of some stylistic features in stone sculpture such as the snake and boss motif on the Iona freestanding crosses that also appears on the cross from Kildalton, Islay. Such comprehensive domination of monumental investment at Iona appears to stem from two inter-related factors. The first is the spread of the Columban *paruchia* itself and the second is the patronage and support of secular leaders.

Historically the symbiotic relationship between secular leaders and the Columban church can be interpreted from the stories relating to kings in the *Life of Columba* (*VC*) as well as the founding of the monastery at Lindisfarne in conjunction with the Northumbrian king in 635 (Ritchie 1997: 62). In Argyll, there are established links between Dunadd and Iona shown by the orpiment found at Dunadd, which is used in the production of manuscripts, and the occurrence of the aforementioned cross-marked quern from Dunadd that shows stylistic affinities to crosses from Iona (Campbell 1987).

Columba's interaction and involvement with politics and kings is a particular feature of the *VC* and Adomnán was an equally active participant in political arenas (Sharpe 1995: 43-53). Adomnán's relationship with kings and his opinion of kingship play an important part in his writings. Many of the stories related about Columba in the *VC* have to do with prophecies about or interactions with kings. In 574, Áedán mac Gabráin became king of Dál Riata, but he was not Columba's first



choice for the position. Adomnán recorded a meeting between an angel and the saint where the angel ordered the saint to ordain Áedán, after which the ceremony was performed on Iona (*VC III.5*, Sharpe 1995: 208-209). The ideology behind the anecdote and not the historical veracity of the actual ordination ceremony is the important factor in this discussion. It implies that the Cenél nGabráin and the kingship of Dál Riata were intricately connected to the Columban family, Iona, and the kingship ideology they promoted.

It may also be that between secular and ecclesiastical leaders in Argyll there was a similar desire for a change in the way power was structured. The idea of an over kingship, particularly one that works in conjunction with the Columban church, was one of the causes championed by Adomnán in the later 7<sup>th</sup> century (Sharpe 1995:61 – 62). In Argyll, there are no royal inscriptions marking the high crosses as monuments of sacred kingship as there are in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century Ireland. These Irish inscribed crosses suggest that both secular and ecclesiastical rulers were promoting ideologies of consolidated kingships (Harbison 1992). In Ireland, the inscriptions from County Offaly that link the Uí Néill kingship with elaborate high crosses date to the mid to later 9<sup>th</sup> century and the early 10<sup>th</sup> century (Ó Floinn 1998). The Iona crosses, on art historical grounds, are earlier in date, dating to the later 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (RCAHMS 1982). It is possible that kings were not directly involved with the erection of the high crosses of Argyll, and that solely church tithes, tributes, and the wealth of Iona funded them or that high crosses were not used to convey these ideologies in Argyll. However, the use of David iconography, which represents salvation and prefigures Christ on the crosses of St



Oran, St Martin, Kildalton, and Ardchatten also articulates the ideology of the ideal king (Henderson 1986; 1994).

The interest in kings and clerical ordination showed by Adomnán indicated that by the mid and late 7<sup>th</sup> century this idea of a church authorised king, preferably overking, was an important part of combining political and religious authority (Herbert 2000). A two-pronged ideological focus on church appointed secular authority and kingship was actively being promoted in Ireland in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and visible in the inscribed high cross monuments. The high cross from the Columban foundation of Durrow, dating probably to the early 10<sup>th</sup> century is a particularly strong example of the promotion of this ideology (Henry 1967: 139; Richardson and Scarry 1990: 37-38). The cross bears an inscription naming the king of Tara, Maelsechnaill, a potentially secularised image of a lone horseman, and several depictions of King David. These images of David include the more common scenes of 'David playing the Harp' and 'David and the Lion,' and the powerful image of an enthroned 'David as King.' Durrow itself is located on the border between the territories of Mide and Leinster. This combination of imagery, inscription, and border location make the cross a strong statement of kingship and power. That such ideas could have been promoted in Argyll a century earlier is hardly surprising as it was the headquarters of the Iona community and Adomnán's local territory.

The appearance of free-standing crosses with David iconography at Columban churches, at least, is potentially related to the ideological push for kingship. This suggests the royal patronage of monuments such as the free-standing crosses in



Argyll is highly probable, despite a lack of inscriptions. The decline in the creation of free-standing crosses after the 9<sup>th</sup> century, when the political focus of the ruling élite of Dál Riata moved eastwards to Pictland suggests that royal secular patronage was an important factor in the erection of these monuments in Argyll.

The hierarchy of secular sites within 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century Argyll may also be altered in relation to the changing power structure of kingship. The fortification of Dunadd was expanded in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries and a greater focus directed to the inaugural outcrop on the summit (Lane and Campbell 2000: 97). More minor sites may have had deferential relationships to Dunadd such as that suggested between Loch Glashan crannog and Dunadd (*ibid.*: 256). Further interpretation of power structures in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries between secular sites is hampered by the lack of excavated evidence. Later medieval settlement at Dunollie, Dunaverty, and Tarbert as well as the dearth of excavations generally on duns and forts in Argyll leaves a considerable unknown factor in the relations between secular sites themselves. The development of the hill of Dunadd over the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries with the inclusion of lower terraces within enclosure walls maximised the use of space on the hill and imposed both the horizontal and vertical hierarchical use of space that characterises the nuclear fort plan. This expansion of the settlement suggests considerable ability for the inhabitants of Dunadd to acquire the labour necessary for building and in turn command a significant power base. The growth of the two main power centres, their established links, possible patronage, and similar interest in the structure of kingship suggests a symbiotic relationship between Dunadd and Iona in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is not possible to say



whether one site led the other in this growth, but their relationship shaped the structure of power in Argyll.

### Phase III

In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century, there was a decrease in the amount of investment directed towards new carved stone monuments. Additionally, the iconography behind the monuments erected appears to be less concerned with the ideals of kingship seen on the most resource intensive monuments of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. This decline in monument production generally must also be linked to a decline in secular patronage of the monasteries including Iona, from which the head of the Columban *paruchia* was moved in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century. In 849, the saint's relics were rehoused at Kells in Ireland and Dunkeld in the east of Scotland. However, scenes of a secular nature including warriors or huntsmen do continue to appear and can be seen on the crosses from Eilean Mór, Rothesay Churchyard, and St Blane's suggesting secular patronage continues into the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. These monuments perhaps relate to the remaining secular élite in Dál Riata – a group that is otherwise largely invisible in the archaeology of the secular sites.

The most striking change in the picture of secular power comes with the relative disuse of Dunadd, apparently by the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The characteristic nuclear fort layout of 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century Dunadd has gone by the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Lane and Campbell 2000, 95-97). Resources in the form of monuments and a hoard of coins of 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> century date (now lost) suggest that local power at least may shift towards Kilmartin (Graham-Campbell 1995: 103). The churchyard at Kilmartin continued to be a draw for resource-intensive stone monuments throughout the



medieval period as a collection of carved stones of the West Highland school from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries attests (Bannerman and Steer 1977: 52-53). Dunadd as a royal settlement may have become defunct, but it retained its status as a symbol of power. In 1506 the Earl of Argyll made an important proclamation here, although no high status residence of this date is known at the site (Lane and Campbell 2000: 262).

The occurrence of hoards deposited in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries along the coast and rivers of Argyll indicates a degree of wealth still existed in the region. This wealth in hoards was taken out of circulation (and eventually lost completely). It is wealth that is not being directed, for example, to the construction of new monumental sculpture. It may be a sign of wealth changing hands and a disruption of the power structures that had enabled the growth and predominance of places like Dunadd and Iona. The Vikings provide a simplistic historical explanation for disruption, but little is known about power structures in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century Argyll whether in Viking or vestigial Dál Riata hands.

This case study of the way resources were used and wealth was displayed in Argyll emphasises the synthesis of secular and ecclesiastic power. This is particularly visible in the pattern of investment in carved stone monuments. It is impossible to say whether it is the secular or ecclesiastical growth that spurred the other, and it is equally likely to be a complex symbiotic relationship between the two spheres that manifests itself in displays of symbolic wealth. The major changes in monumental investment reflects the growth and decline in power of both Iona and the kings of Dál Riata, presumably centered at Dunadd, as its patrons. Monumental and



symbolic messages of consolidation and kingship were emphasised at both of these sites in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. The dramatic rise in monumental investment and the Columban cult coincides with significant growth in the structures at Dunadd with the development of the nuclear fort plan in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. The drop in monument production and archaeologically visible manifestations of symbolic wealth in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries coincides with the movement of political ambition eastward.



## **Chapter Four: Symbolic wealth and changing power systems in Fife and Perthshire**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The second regional study in Scotland lies in the modern administrative districts of Perth and Kinross (referred to hereafter generally as Perthshire) and Fife. As modern districts, they include territory on the southern limits of 'Pictland.' Unlike Argyll, the region has no perceived continuity with a boundary relevant in the early medieval period. However, as an area on the southern fringe of Pictland, it offers the potential to look at the way symbolic wealth, and monuments in particular, were mobilised to articulate power and changes in power in a liminal region. There is also historical impetus to analyse this area. The region includes two significant sites for kingship in early medieval Scotland at Forteviot and Scone as well as prominent ecclesiastical sites at Dunkeld, the successor to Iona in Scotland, and at St Andrews. The change in political focus of the kings of Dál Riata in the 9<sup>th</sup> century was also centred on southern Perthshire; this area allows an opportunity to look at the way symbolic wealth was used in the face of these changes.

### **TOPOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT**

The region of Fife is comparatively flat with the only significant high ground being the Ochil Hills. The area also has some of the best agricultural land in Scotland. Analysis of the soils in Eastern Scotland shows a range of soil types over much of Fife with the capability of supporting a moderate to wide range of crops (McCauley Institute for Soil Research 1983). Perthshire soils can also support a moderate



range of crops away from the highest ground, with the alluvial soils in the Tay and Earn river valleys being some of the most fertile soils in all of Scotland (ibid.: 46). The River Tay is a major routeway in the region reaching from the Firth of Tay at the town of Perth into the Highlands. From here a route westwards through Glen Dochart and Strathfillan eventually leads to Loch Awe, Argyll, and the west coast.

## OVERVIEW OF EARLY MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT IN FIFE AND PERTH

The forms of settlement associated with early medieval Fife and Perth are similar to those for Argyll and carry the same difficulties of dating. The higher status sites such as forts, crannogs, the few duns, as well as unenclosed settlements all potentially have occupation periods from at least the Iron Age to early medieval period (RCAHMS 1990: 5; 1994: 51-57). In the early medieval period, parts of Pictland may have been organised in small kingdoms and shires or land divisions from which the shires developed (Barrow 1973:7-68). The land divisions may contain a major fortification, smaller portions of the estate might be reflected in the Pictish word *pett* (possibly farmsteads with associated fields), and there may also be a central meeting or ceremonial centre (Driscoll 1991: 99). The distribution of these high status sites avoids the highest ground while river valleys, lochs, the coast, and productive agricultural areas have a fairly even distribution of sites (Fig. 4.1). Excavations have uncovered early medieval occupation at two forts, Clatchard Craig in Fife and Dundurn in Perthshire. Of these, Dundurn appears in historical sources and was explored under Alcock's research plan on early historic



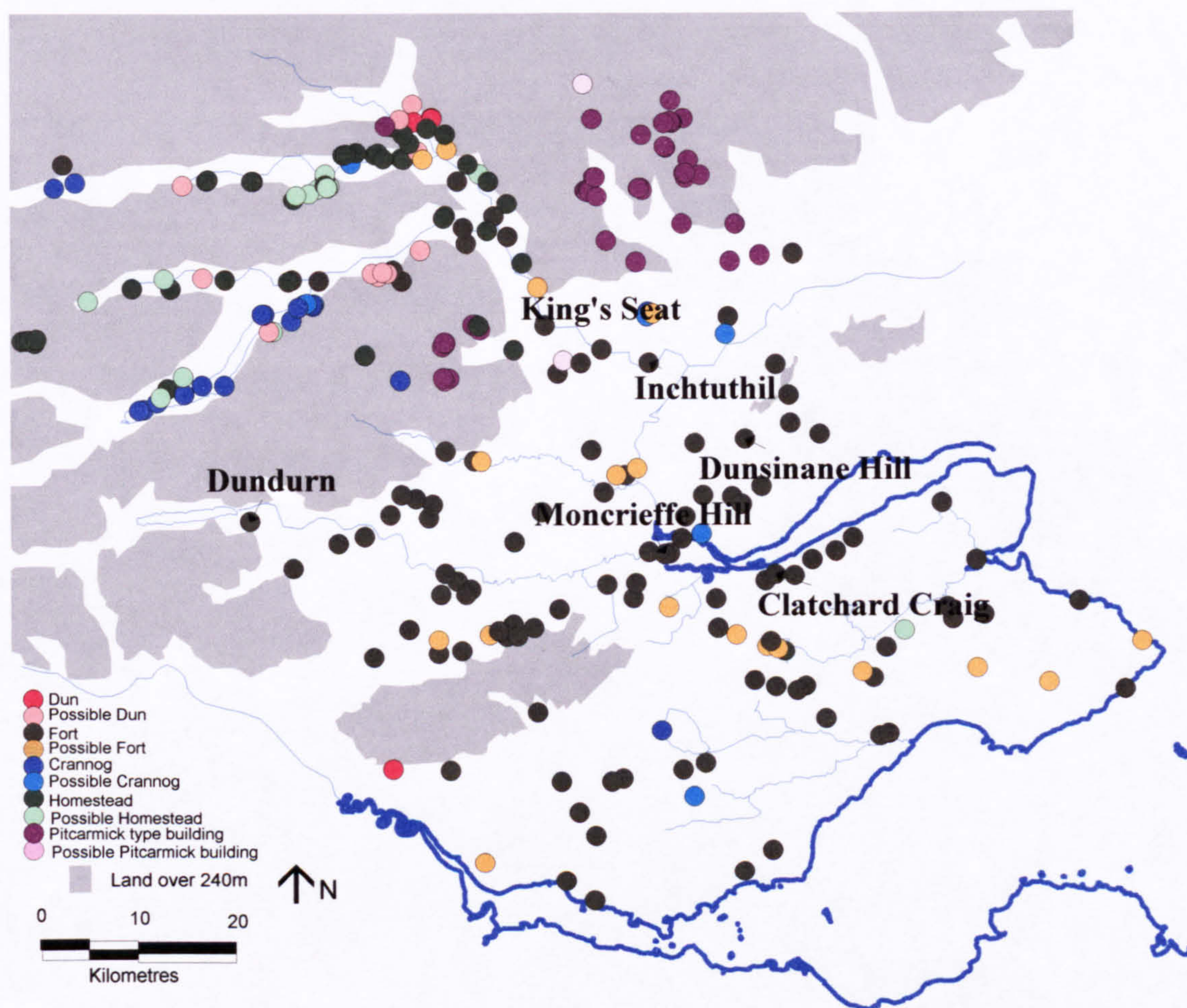


Fig. 4.1: Secular sites in Fife and Perth (information from CANMORE)

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fortifications (Alcock *et al.* 1989). Excavations on Clatchard Craig took place in the 1950s as a result of threat to the site from quarrying (Close-Brooks 1986). In addition to these, some single and multivallate forts, namely Inchtuthil, Dunsinane Hill, Moncrieffe Hill, and King's Seat near Dunkeld may have early medieval occupation periods (RCAHMS 1994: 57). The 'palace' at Forteviot, suggested by cropmark and textual evidence, was a major high status unenclosed settlement (Alcock and Alcock 1992: 218-222). Large timber halls envisioned as venues for lordly feasting may also be a part of high status secular settlement, however as the excavation of Balbridie, in Kincardineshire showed such forms may be as early as the Neolithic (Ralston 1997: 28).

Other settlement forms of enigmatic date that occur mainly in Perthshire are 'homesteads' or 'ringforts.' Northwest Perthshire has the largest concentration of these types of sites in Scotland, which are also seen to a lesser extent in Argyll and Wigtown in Galloway (Taylor 1990: 40; RCAHMS 1994: 51; 158; Hooper 2002: 261). These homesteads are characterised by a thick circular dry stone enclosure wall generally with a diameter of 15 – 30m (Taylor 1990:7). The Perthshire homesteads are also characterised by their locations at the edges of pastoral land and along communication routes (Taylor 1990: 41, 61; Hooper 2002: 265). Two excavated examples of homesteads at Litigan, Aberfeldy and at Queen's View, Loch Tummel were not definitive as to occupation dates, but a single radiocarbon date from Litigan and a typologically dated bead from Queen's View may indicate use in the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries (Taylor 1990: 17, 33). Iron working, agricultural - including a corn-drying kiln, and pastoral activities were associated with these examples (*ibid.*). Excavations at Aldclune near Blair Atholl of two similar



structures, but with earthwork enclosures and in hilltop positions, produced occupation dates within the Iron Age (Hingley *et al.* 1997). There may have been some early medieval reuse of the sites as most of the distinctive finds from Aldclune, including a penannular brooch from the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century, date to the early medieval period, but radiocarbon dates place the main occupation firmly in the later centuries of the first millennium BC and early centuries of the first millennium AD (ibid.: 436, 460). There is potential for an early medieval date for at least some homesteads, as suggested by the two excavated examples in Northwest Perthshire, but the general allocation of these structures to the early medieval period cannot be certain.

Another form of Perthshire settlement is the Pitcarmick type building (RCAHMS 1990: 12-13). Pitcarmick type buildings generally have curved or bowed sides, rounded ends, and a trapezoidal shape sometimes with annexes or sunken floors (ibid.). Essentially the buildings were longhouses with a byre at one end, a central hearth, and single door (Hooper 2002: 213). Two excavated examples of this type of building in North Pitcarmick showed a long varied structural history and reuse after a period of agricultural activity over the site. The reused phase of this site was associated with two stratified pottery sherds of 13<sup>th</sup> century date (Barrett and Downes 1994). The main occupation of the larger of the two buildings was dated by two radiocarbon samples from the hearth to the 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (AD 600-664, 666-852 at 2-sigma, Hooper 2002: 190). A smaller building gave a date of the later 9<sup>th</sup> to early 11<sup>th</sup> century AD (ibid.). The recognition of Pitcarmick type buildings and circular homesteads as part of the early medieval settlement pattern is a critical



step in recognising where and how people of a lower status lived, particularly in the upland areas of Perthshire.

Some lowland early medieval settlement has been revealed by aerial photographs, which showed solid subrectangular features in a fertile area of northeast Fife at Easter Kinnear and Hawkhill, about 10km northwest of St Andrews. At Easter Kinnear the main excavated feature was a scooped rectangular structure with stone-revetted walls dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD (Driscoll 1997: 84-89). This and other buildings on the site showed repeated reuse of the original scooped structure, possibly functioning as a type of underground storage space. The Hawkhill site contained five structures that changed form over time. The alteration on the original scooped structures included an additional stone-built structure over the scoop and finally a rectangular stone building (ibid.: 92). Both these sites suggest habitation belonging to the lower strata of society possibly working in conjunction with a larger *pett* or farmstead and estate system (Driscoll 1991: 95). A recent excavation of a cropmark enclosure at Upper Gothens, Meikleour, Perthshire assumed to be Neolithic in date provided instead an example of an early medieval enclosure. The dates for a possibly palisaded enclosure with a surrounding ditch range from the late 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century AD (Barclay 2001: 40). The use of multiple ditches and the evidence for iron working suggests this could be an élite site with ironworking activities. The variability of settlement across all levels of society is clear, as are the problems of identifying and dating these settlements without the benefit of excavation.



## FIFE AND PERTH IN THE 6<sup>TH</sup> AND 7<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

The Pictish king lists suggest stable political entities emerging as early as the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century and by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century the political entity or entities of Pictland were recognised by neighbouring groups, but this is largely all we know of the 6<sup>th</sup> century Picts as an historical group (Broun 1998; 1999a). In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Picts dealt with aggression from and had some beneficial alliances with all sides - the Angles and Britons from the South and the Scots to the west. Early in the 7<sup>th</sup> c. the Anglian king of Northumbria secured some control over the Pictish king and some of the lands of the southern Picts (Fraser 2002a: 17-32). It was during this time that the Northumbrians set up a bishopric at Abercorn on the southern shore of the Firth of Forth. Any political hegemony of the Northumbrian kingdom over Southern Pictland ended at the battle of Dunnichen in 685 (*HE* IV.26; McClure and Collins 1994: 221-222; Fraser 2002a) and Abercorn was also abandoned. Despite or even as a result of this Northumbrian intrusion, a trend of increasing centralisation of power appears to be happening in Pictland (Foster 1992: 219).

Secular politics of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries were matched in their significance by religious politics, which also feature significantly in the scant historical sources on Pictland at this time. The Synod of Whitby in 664, as recorded by Bede, marked the formal rejection of the old way of calculating the date of Easter, traditionally used by the Columban church, in favour of a shorter calculation table used in Rome and on the Continent (Cramp 1993; *HE*. III.25; McClure and Collins 1994: 153 – 159; Veitch 1997). King Oswiu called the synod at Whitby, a royally connected



community, where the decision went against the Columban method. This alienated some of the Columban family under Aidan at the monastery of Lindisfarne, an important Northumbrian monastery with links to Iona (Herbert 2001: 35). This synod and its aftermath have traditionally been interpreted as a sign of a decline in power for the Columban church not only in Northumbria, but also in Pictland in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, but Veitch's (1997) reconsideration of the event has shown that this was not necessarily the case. The political influence of Iona and Columban ideology continued to be a factor after the Synod of Whitby. This is indicated by the political support of the Columban family by the Pictish rulers in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century when the Pictish king Bruide son of Derili (d. 706) was a guarantor of the Law of Adomnán at the Synod of Birr in 697 (Ní Dhonnchadha 2001: 59). This suggests that the ideology behind some of the carved monuments may reflect that seen in monuments in Argyll (and in contemporary Ireland), where secular patrons and the church worked together to promote kingship and consolidate power.

### **Monuments: The Fife and Perthshire Carved Stones**

There are 248 recorded carved stone monuments from the Fife and Perthshire regions dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century. There is no relatively complete and recent inventory for either Fife or Perth, although two volumes for northeast and southeast Perth include the monuments within those regions (RCAHMS 1990, 1994). There is a gazetteer of stones with Pictish symbols (Fraser and Ritchie 1999), but cross slabs (Classes III and IV) and fragments of slabs have not been collected in one volume since *ECMS*. Spearman's unpublished list of monuments is the most complete collation of material (1997). This list includes the grid



references and an assessment of the current location of the stone in relation to its potential original site. This sample of 248 recorded monuments cannot be total due to loss and the chance of new discoveries. The sample however does appear to be representative of distribution and relative numbers of monuments of the early medieval period. The distribution of symbol stones in particular suggests the archaeological representivity of the monuments, with the relative dearth of symbol stones in southern Pictland reflecting different ideological statements and finding echoes in distributions of burial monuments and the spread of Christianity (Alcock 1991; Smith 1996: 27). As with Argyll, again we must acknowledge that models put forward here are based on the assumption that the sample of sculpted monuments is sufficiently representative of general patterns and clustering.

Eighteen of the 248 monuments are classified as 'Unknown' and not included in the analysis because they are lost, too fragmentary, or too ambiguous to assess. The majority of the monuments date to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries and the most common form is the cross slab, which appears in various guises from incised crosses to elaborate carved slabs. The two largest collections are at St Andrews and Meigle, with these two sites particularly dominant through the 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Monuments of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries**

There are 48 monuments attributed to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries within the boundaries of the study region. About half of these are simple cross slabs with incised crosses, Henderson's Class IV (1987). There are sixteen symbol stones ascribed to this



period as well. Symbol stones could date from the 5<sup>th</sup> century to the late 7<sup>th</sup> century, although for the most part they are seen as monuments of the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Foster 1992: 228-229). The most significant concentrations of symbol stones in Scotland occur north of Perthshire in Aberdeenshire and along eastern Scotland up to north of the Dornoch Firth (Henderson 1967: 110—111).

The largest concentrations of resources invested in 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century monuments in Fife and Perth are at Fortingall, Kerrowmore/Cladh Bhranno, and Balquhiddy (Fig. 4.2). None of these three sites have a symbol stone, but both Abernethy and Struan each have a symbol stone and a cross slab. The association of symbol stones with their current locations at churches is probably a factor of later collection or reuse, as the absence of Christian symbolism on symbol stones suggests a pagan environment (Foster 1996: 79). Although the Abernethy and Struan symbol stones were probably not erected at a church site originally, their original location if not the same in a non-Christian phase, was likely not far away (Alcock 1991: 9; Spearman 1997). The distribution of monuments from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries does suggest some regional clusters particularly in the centre of the Fife peninsula, by Glen Lyon and Loch Tummel, and a smaller grouping by Loch Earn.

Besides the cross slabs noted at Fortingall and Kerrowmore, the other monuments around Glen Lyon and Loch Tummel are incised crosses of simple form.

There is some variation into sunken or relief carving at Weem, Kerrowmore, Mains of Killiechangie, and on the Chapel stone at Tummel.



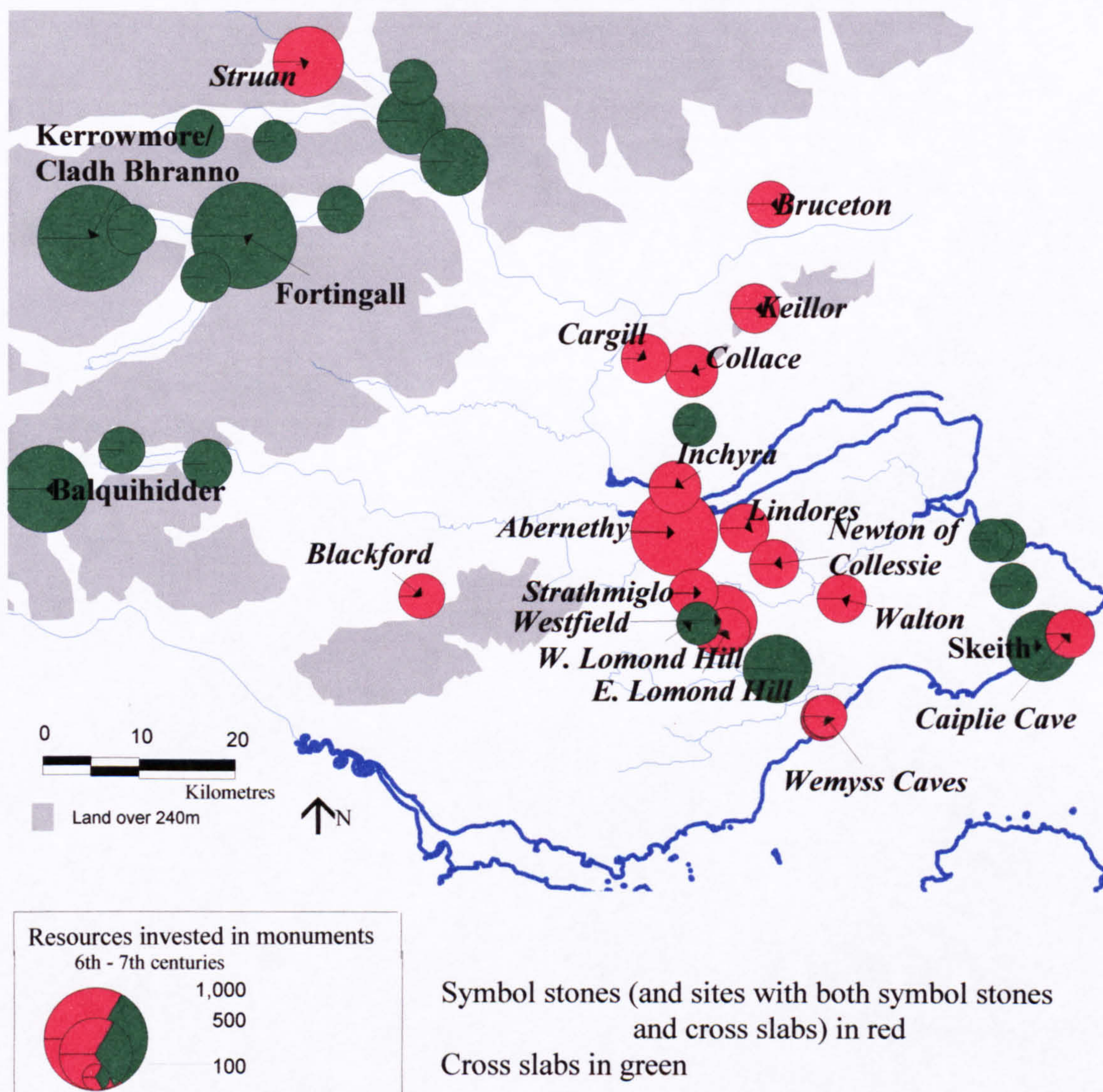


Fig. 4.2: Resources invested in monuments, 6th - 7th centuries.

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Fortingall is dedicated to St C  eti (Watson 1926: 314). In the churchyard at Fortingall is the Fortingall Yew, possibly the oldest tree in Europe, and it is possible that this tree is a *bile* (Robertson 1997: 136). Robertson suggested this *bile* is a Christianised pagan symbol because of Beltane traditions associated with the tree and the geographic proximity to standing stones and a cup marked stone buried in the churchyard (ibid.: 136). A bronze hand-bell, dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, also comes from Fortingall (Bourke 1983), and there is a massive font, in character somewhat similar to an Irish bullaun stone, the date of which is unknowable also in the churchyard (Robertson 1997: 136). There are cropmarks perhaps indicative of enclosures around the churchyard at both Fortingall and at Dull, which was reputed to be the burial place of Adomn  n (Smith 1996: 34-5; Hooper 2002: 270, 276).

The other sites, especially those of the more modest Loch Earn grouping, appear to be dedicated to Irish saints such as St Fillan, who is associated with Dundurn, and St Brendan at Cladh Bhrenno/Kerrowmore in Glen Lyon. The Loch Earn group strings out across the loch from Dundurn and St Fillan's to Balquhiddy. The slabs are all of simple cross forms with the potential for an early date. The stone from St Fillan's/Dundurn is an incised cross and a deeply incised cross appears westwards along the loch at Glenbeich Lodge. There are three cross slabs at Balquhiddy: two slabs each with a pecked cross and another with a partial relief cross. St Fillan appears to be particularly important in Glen Dochart, part of one of the major east-west routes from Strathearn to Argyll (Taylor 2001: 192). Taylor's study of the dedications and relics of the saint in Scotland showed that the cult of St Fillan



reached its height probably in the medieval period (ibid.: 194). The link between St Fillan and Dundurn then may be a medieval link rather than early medieval. However, the number and styles of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century sculpture on the banks of Loch Earn does suggest an important early church, possibly connected to the secular élite at Dundurn, in the region. The value of the rivers as a routeway both east to the Firth of Tay and westwards to Argyll, Strathclyde and eventually Ireland may be a significant factor in why these monuments occur here.

The final regional cluster through the centre of the Fife peninsula is characterised by several symbol stones, which were not common in the region south of the Tay or in Atholl. The symbol stones within the central area of the Fife peninsula are: East and West Lomond Hills (although the fish from West Lomond might be

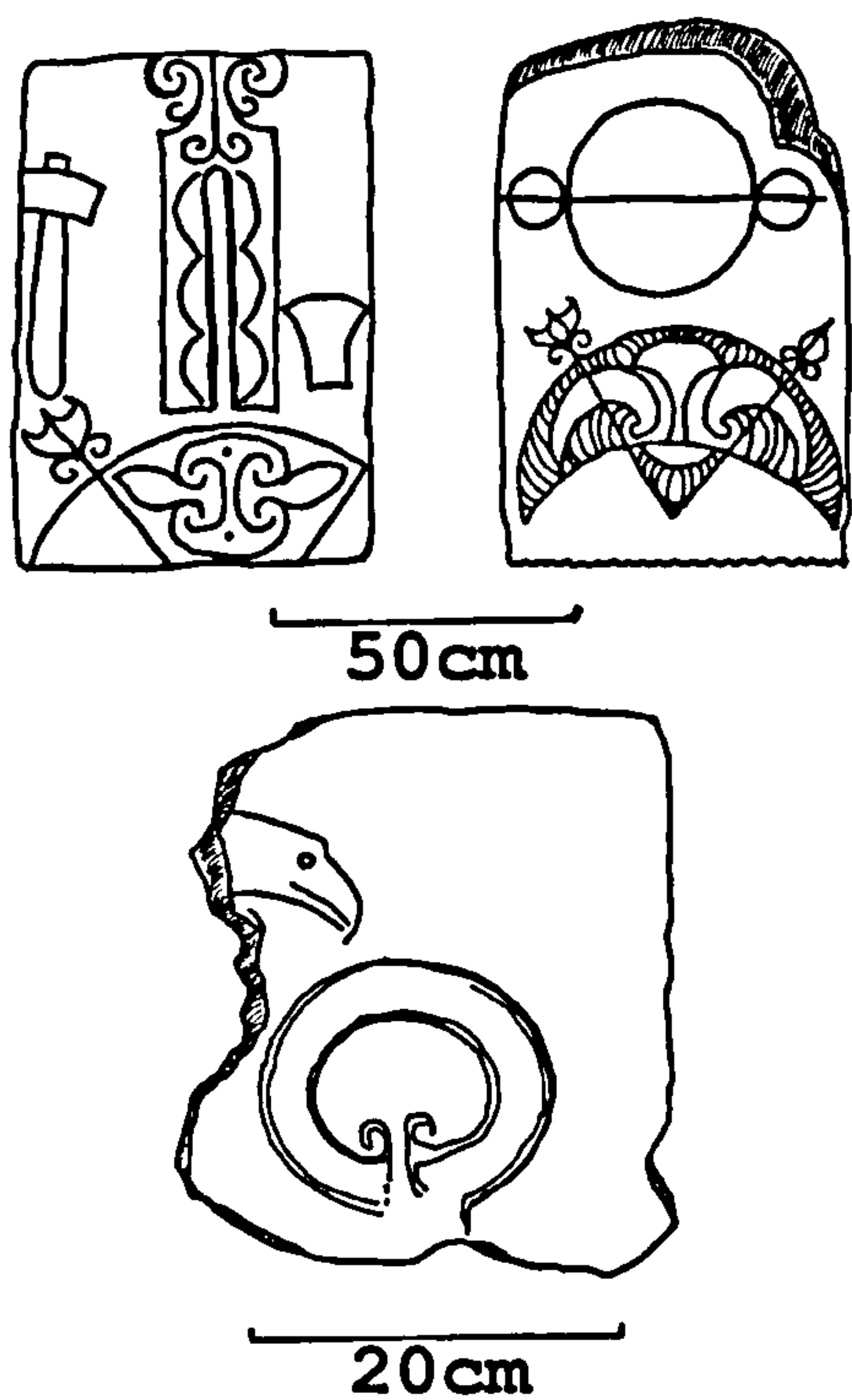


Fig. 4.3: Symbol stones from – Abernethy (top left), Lindores (right) and Walton (bottom) (after Allen and Anderson 1903: 282,344,345).



considered a Christian symbol and its antiquity is questionable), Lindores, Newton of Collessie, Strathmiglo, Walton, two at Westfield and one at Abernethy (Henderson and Robertson 1993, Fig. 4.2). Symbol stones may be monumental markers indicating links between prime agricultural land, the Pictish secular élite, and possibly burials (Whittington and Soulsby 1968; Cottam and Small 1974; Alcock 1991; Mack 2002). Driscoll has suggested these stones also help define large estates through linking individuals (possibly marking burials) with the landscape and that some of these early estates last into the 12<sup>th</sup> century when they may appear in early documentation (2000: 249). Any links to boundaries or land divisions is inherently reliant on later sources, but if this association is valid, then symbol stones may appear in liminal spaces such as boundaries or routeways (Smith 1996: 29).

The monuments in this central area of Fife appear to cling to the edges of raised ground, possibly marking off a corridor of lower level ground (Fig. 4.2). This corridor does coincide with the proposed boundary of an historic division of Fife and Fothrif, the west and east of Fife respectively, suggested by later medieval historical sources (Taylor 1995a:20-27). The proposed boundary between Fife and Fothrif comes only from later ecclesiastical sources, but follows parish and deanery boundaries that may reflect earlier divisions (*ibid.*). Geographical convenience may be the reason for this coincidence but this concentration of resources echoes nicely the idea that Pictish symbol stones were related to gaining and maintaining land control and resources. This coincidence may support the existence of an earlier liminal space through this landscape marked by symbol stones and possibly incorporating cross slabs.



Along this boundary, the most southern sites are the Wemyss Caves, which have a mixture of Christian and Pictish symbols (Ritchie and Stevenson 1993: 204). To the northwest across relatively gentle topography is Markinch, which has a cross slab carved with simple crosses on two faces that may be contemporary or slightly later than the symbol stones (RCAHMS 1933:210). To the east of Markinch is a place-name – the Starr of Markinch (Old Gaelic *Stair* – rough bridge or stepping stone) identified by Barrow as related to the crossing place over the bog (1992: 215). This may suggest a tradition of movement or travelling in this landscape. The start of the pass between the Lomond Hills is also marked by a place-name associated with travel as Little Ballo farm (*bealach*-pass) lies at one end of the pass (ibid.: 216). Barrow considered this Ballo to mark the east/west pass between West Lomond and Bishop Hill (ibid.), but it could equally mark the north/south route between the Lomonds now a minor road. Emerging from the Lomond Hills, Westfield, where two symbol stones were found reused in farm buildings might mark the other end of the pass.

The northern end of this concentration of symbol stones is at Abernethy. Abernethy's symbol stone has been trimmed and was found during digging in School Wynd near the church (Proudfoot 1997: 48). Proudfoot suggested the stone was trimmed for use as part of the post 7<sup>th</sup> century monastic enclosure (ibid.), but this is largely conjecture. As discussed earlier, the symbol stone was probably not originally linked with the church. The occurrence of symbol stones or fragments of symbol stones at church sites is not that uncommon (Alcock 1991: 9). Alcock's survey of symbol stones showed stones built into churches, walls, or now within



churchyards and cemeteries was a particular feature of the distribution of symbol stones in Badenoch, Strathspey and Moray perhaps suggesting a conscious siting of churches in the vicinity of pagan symbol stones (ibid.). While Abernethy's symbol stone is not represented on Alcock's map, the association with the later church may also reflect a deliberate effort to associate with a meaningful pre-Christian ideological message or location particularly given the tradition of royal foundation of the church here. In addition to the symbol stone there is also a relatively small slab bearing a rather rough undecorated relief cross that may be 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century in date (Proudfoot 1997: 51).

Abernethy overlooks the rivers Tay and Earn. The mouth of the Nethy Burn would have been wider in the past and offered a decent landing place for the boats going between Abernethy and St Madoes across the Forth (Taylor 1997). From here routes lead to Perth, Scone, and Meigle (ibid.). Taylor has pointed out the importance of this route from Abernethy across the Tay in the medieval period and its likely earlier significance considering the two important ecclesiastical sites at either end of the crossing - Abernethy and St Madoes (ibid.). Abernethy appears to thus have been in an ideal situation for controlling communication and access to some of the most important political and religious centres in southern Pictland.

It appears that a church existed here from at least the 6<sup>th</sup> century when a version of the Pictish king-list records that a Pictish king, either Gartnait or Nechtan, dedicated the site to St Bridget (Anderson 1922i:121; Proudfoot 1997:60; Fraser 2002a:54). This entry concerning the foundation of Abernethy may have been inserted between the 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries and may be a legend based more on the



politics of these centuries rather than the history of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Campbell 2003: 57). However, the appearance of the simple cross slab and perhaps the conscious association with the symbol stone at Abernethy may suggest it was an early foundation.

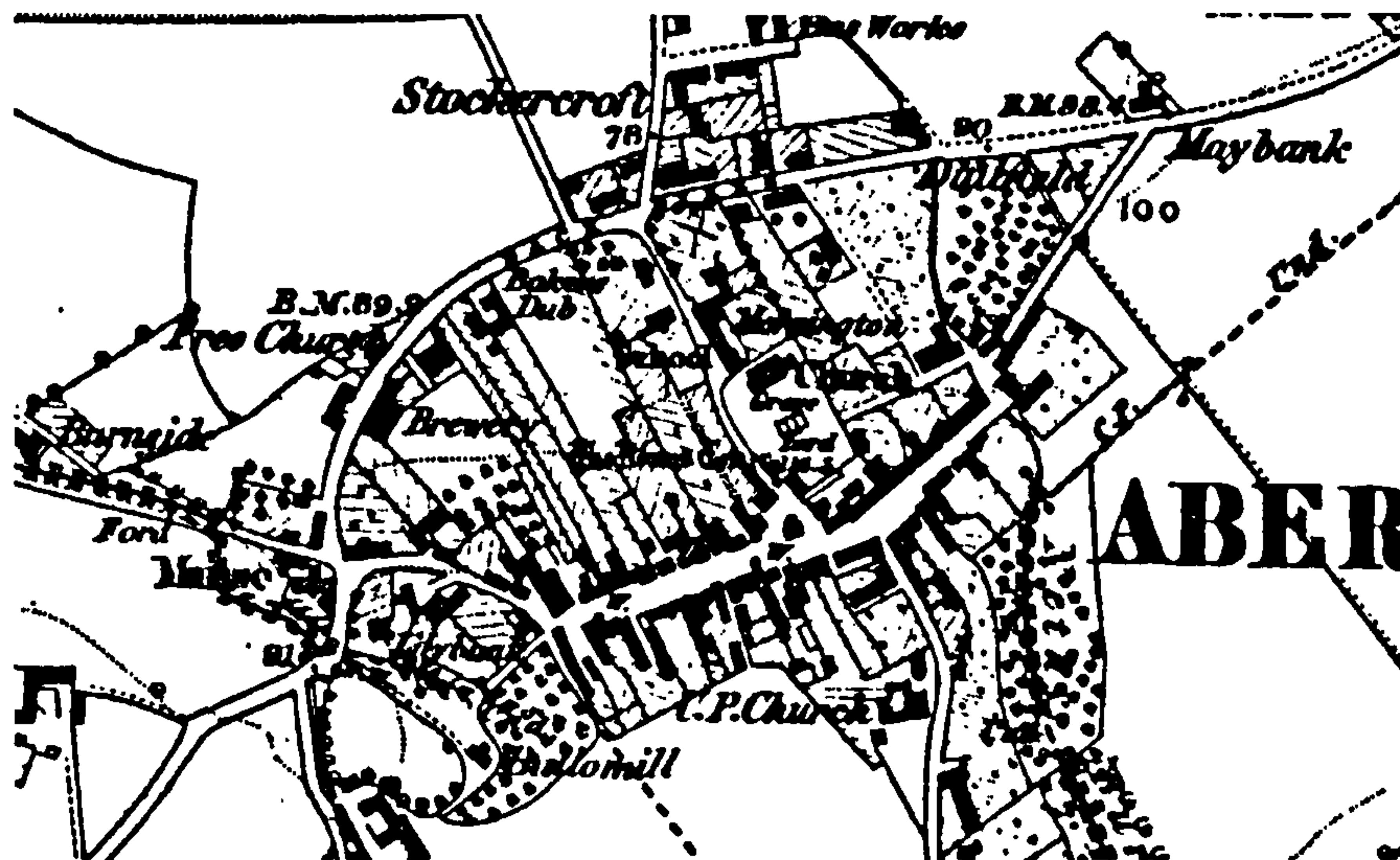
There is some slight evidence to suggest the modern street plans preserve, in part, an older curvilinear enclosure around the church (Fig.4.4). School Wynd bulges into a curve around the churchyard and the curve of Back Dykes may also suggest an earlier boundary. These vestigial traces, if indeed they can be assumed as such, suggest a concentric or curvilinear layout, but they are not enough to postulate the size of the establishment at Abernethy or any internal divisions.

The few opportunities for excavation in the town have not revealed or probed deep enough to uncover early medieval remains (Cachart 1993; 1995; 1996; Cox 1995; Cachart and Perry 1996; Strachan 1998; Dunbar 2001). However, across from the round tower on the opposite side of School Wynd, trial trenches brought up sherds of pre 15<sup>th</sup> c. pottery and human bone indicating the medieval graveyard was bigger than the one now preserved in the probably 19<sup>th</sup> century wall (Mackenzie 1994).

The deposit was only excavated to .5m and was not bottomed out so the possibility of early medieval deposits underneath is still there. Another excavation in advance of the building of a new school showed a collection of forty-nine pits and postholes including a possible structure and curved ditch feature (Halliday and Connolly 2001). The absence of artefacts made dating the site inconclusive, but environmental evidence suggested a Bronze or Iron Age date for one of the postholes, while medieval pottery was also encountered (ibid.). This site is a little



less than half a kilometre away from the church, so the absence of any early medieval artefacts could mean that the community did not extend this far.



**Fig. 4.4: Curved streets of Abernethy (1<sup>st</sup> edition OS).**

However, the early medieval deposits may also have been truncated by medieval activity.

The nature of the site, in the absence of archaeology from the early medieval period, must rely on evidence from the sculpture, place-names, and relationships with surrounding early medieval sites. The sculpture has already shown that Abernethy is a significant site even in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries and possibly the nodal point in routeways north to Scone, Perth, and Meigle, and on a boundary location between what became Fife and Fothrif. Taylor's (1997) analysis of the place-names of Abernethy parish also intimates its special status. There is an exceptional concentration of *Pit*-place-names around Abernethy, and Taylor interpreted these as relating to the church, effectively meaning 'estate or land of the



church.’ The high survival of this Pictish estate structure suggests Abernethy was an important centre, possibly a bishopric, in the Pictish period (ibid.). Other significant sites close to Abernethy are the medieval, possibly early medieval, residence of the king’s poet, who played a critical role in medieval inaugural rites, at Balvaird (*Bail’ an bhaird*) about 4km from Abernethy, and the site of the Roman fort at Carpow (Bannerman 1996; Taylor 1997; Driscoll forthcoming). Perhaps the most significant site near Abernethy is the fort at Clatchard Craig, 5.5km to the east, and its neighbouring long cist cemetery at Mare’s Craig (Close-Brooks 1986). The relationship between these two sites is unknown, but it is clear that they are both important centres in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Imported Pottery & Glass, Fine Metalworking and Hoards**

The known distribution of hoards, imported pottery and glass and the working of fine metal is relatively limited in Fife and Perthshire. As such, these aspects of material culture cannot alone articulate the structures of power in the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries and must be considered in relation to the investment in sculpture. A résumé of the evidence follows here and its significance for changes in power in southern Pictland will be discussed in the conclusion.

Clatchard Craig and Dundurn are the two excavated fortifications with early medieval occupation of higher status. They both produced sherds of E ware, and Dundurn also has a sherd of pottery of an unclassified type that may be as late as the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4.5, Close-Brooks 1986: 146; Alcock *et al.* 1989: 214;



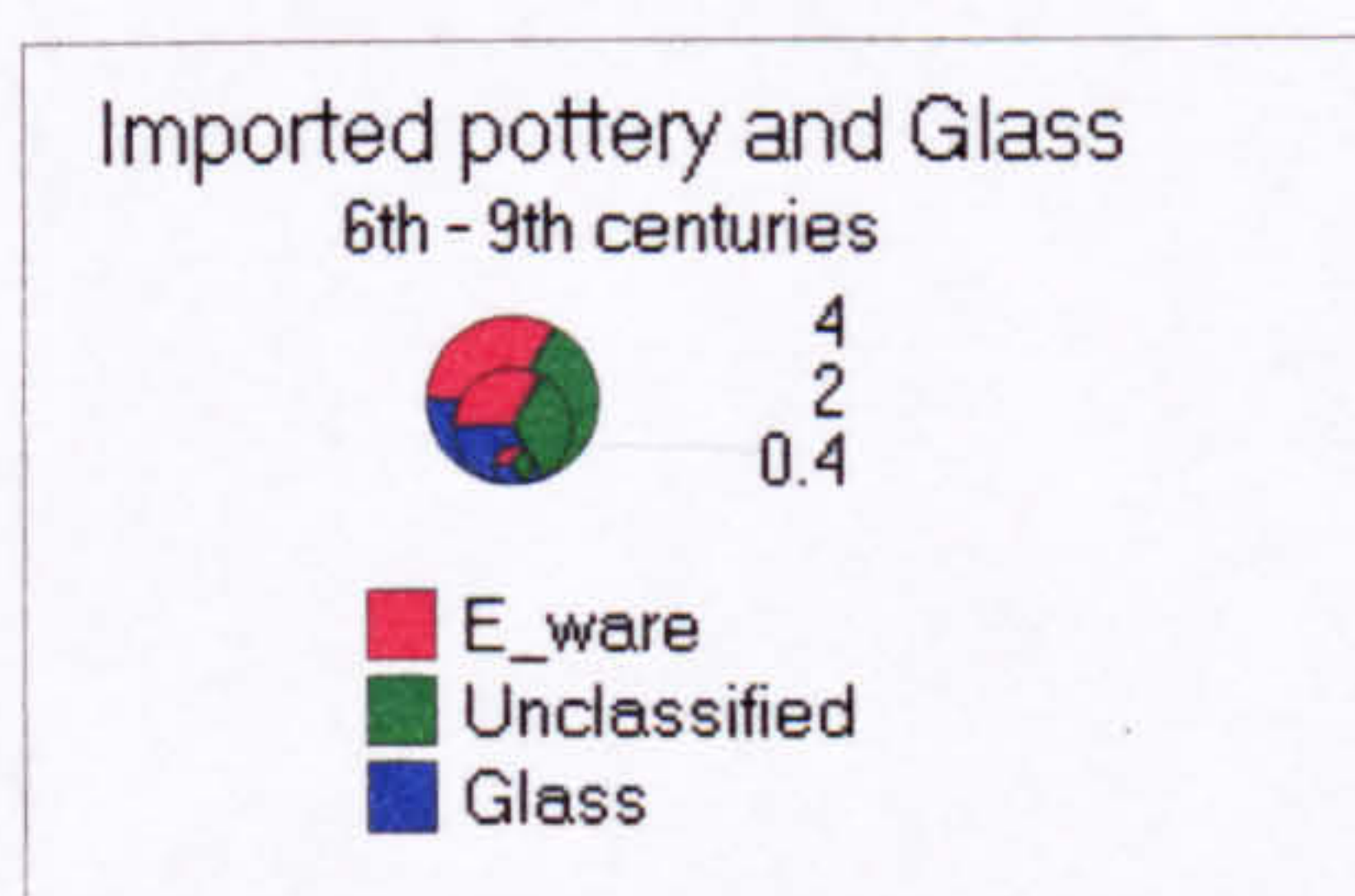
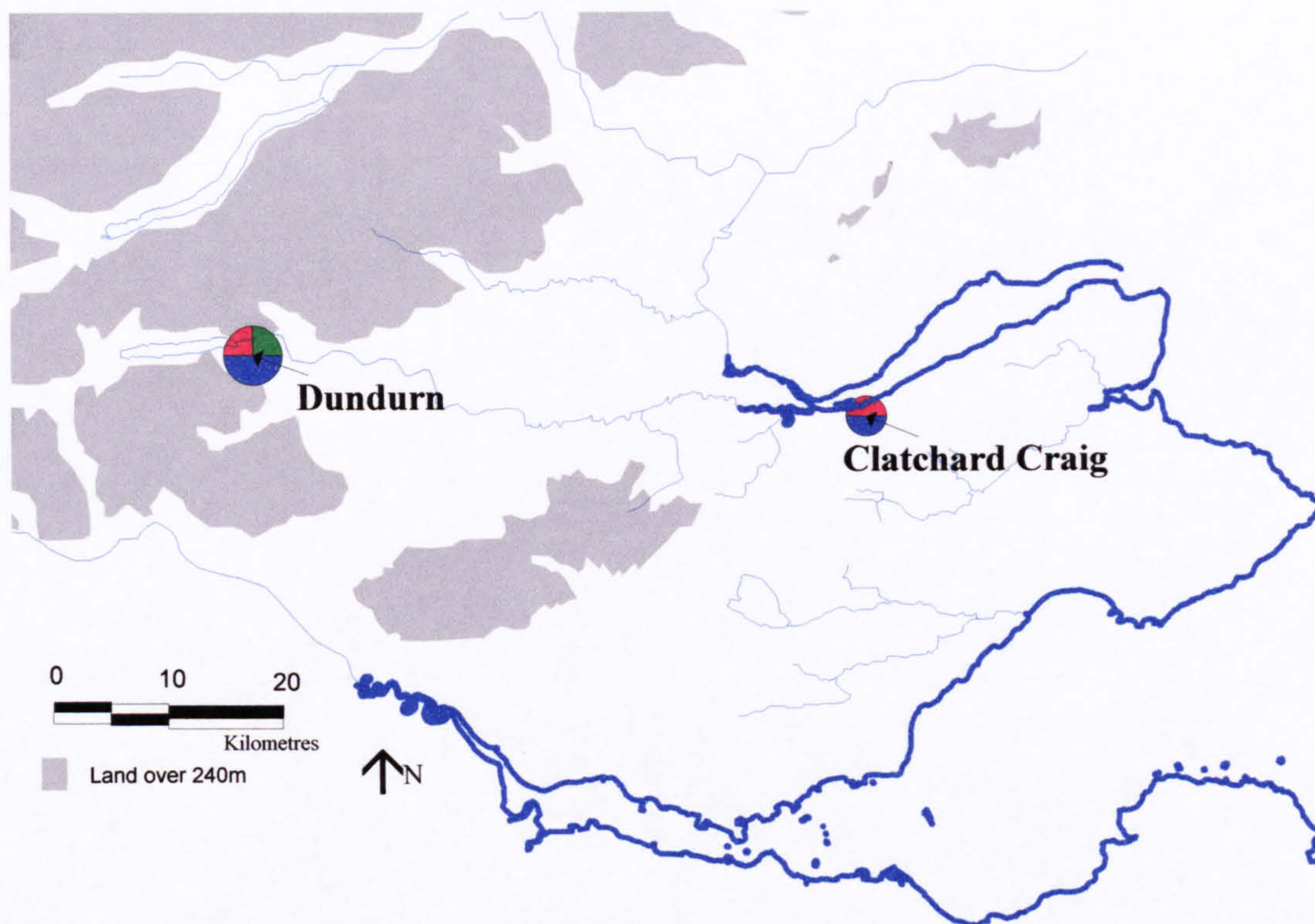


Fig. 4.5: Imported pottery and glass.

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Campbell 1991: 287-88, 296). There are also two sherds of glass from Dundurn and one from Clatchard Craig that likely date to the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

Site	Type	Number	Date
CLATCHARD CRAIG	Glass	1	7 <sup>th</sup> century?
CLATCHARD CRAIG	E ware	1	7 <sup>th</sup> century
DUNDURN	Glass	2	7 <sup>th</sup> century?
DUNDURN	E ware	1	7 <sup>th</sup> century

Table 4.1: Imported pottery and glass, 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, in Fife and Perth.

The presence of E ware and imported glass at Dundurn and Clatchard Craig has not been considered the result of direct trading links with the continent, but rather as products received via the west coast of Scotland where the distribution and number of these vessels is higher (Alcock *et al.* 1989: 215). Rather, these pieces of relative luxury ware and possibly whatever contained may have come via the previously mentioned routes through to Loch Tay and Earn from Argyll as gifts or traded items.

Fine metalworking is evident from the clay moulds and crucibles at Clatchard Craig although some of these may date to the early 8<sup>th</sup> century (Fig 4.6). There is also an ingot mould from the top of East Lomond Hill, Fife for casting small metal ingots, but this may be earlier than the 6<sup>th</sup> century (RCAHMS 1933: 143 - 144).

Site	Classification	#	Description
CLATCHARD CRAIG	Piece	2	Disc/Mount?, Ingot
CLATCHARD CRAIG	Moulds	14	Including penannular brooches
DUNDURN	Moulds	2	Stick pin, unidentified
DUNDURN	Piece	1	Buckle/dangle

Table 4.2: Metalwork in Fife and Perth, 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.



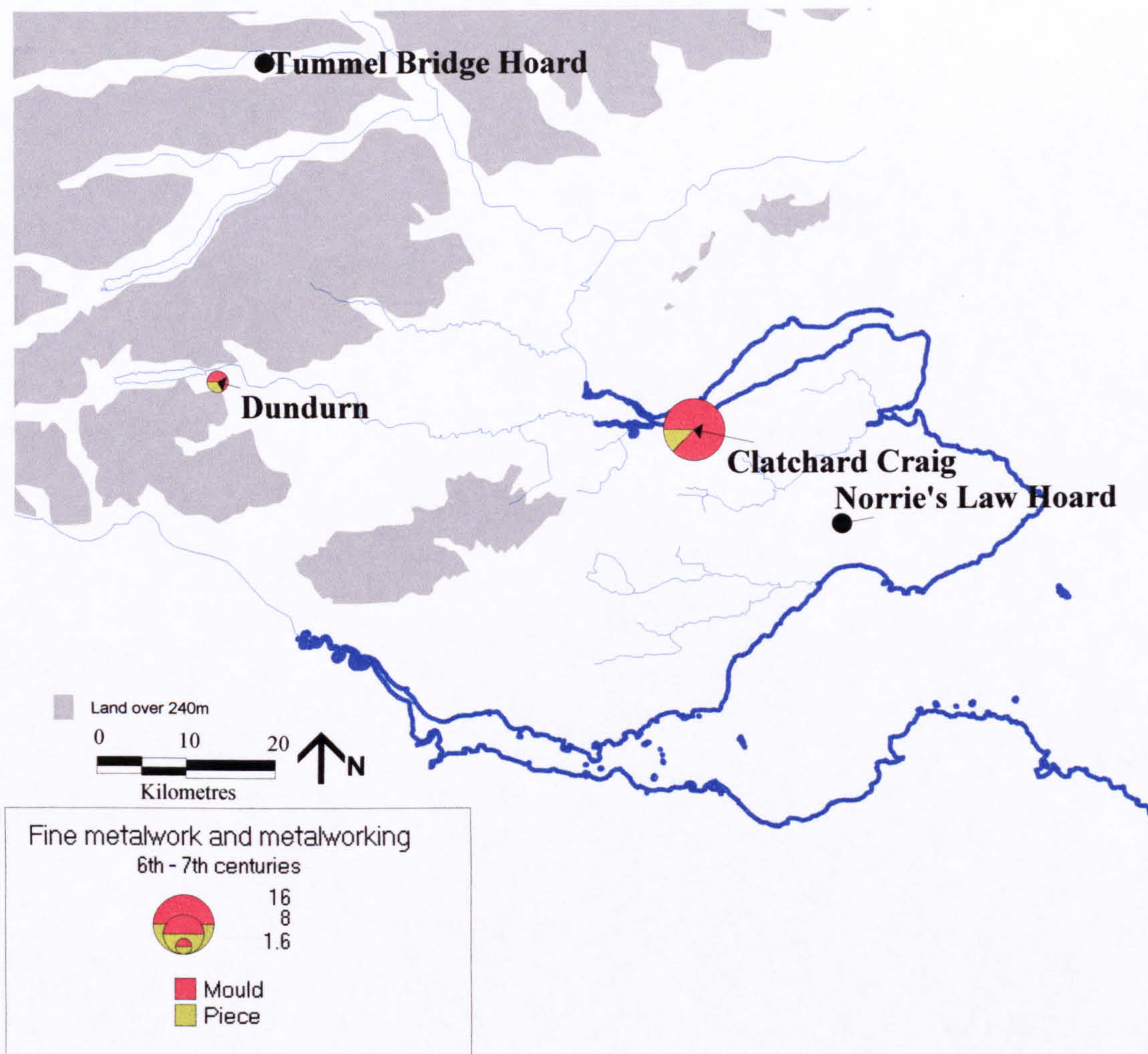


Fig. 4.6: Fine metalwork, metalworking, and hoards, 6th - 7th centuries

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The metalworking evidence from Dundurn also dates to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are 2 clay moulds from Dundurn that date to the 7<sup>th</sup> century or later. One of these may be the head of a stick pin and the other fragment is for an unidentifiable piece, but with evidence of use as a motif piece, and there are a few fragments of crucible for melting bronze (Alcock *et al.* 1989: 216 – 217). In addition to the evidence for metalworking, a silvered bronze dangle, which also dates to the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century emphasises the high status character of this site.

As part of the early historic fortifications research program, small-scale excavations took place on Dundurn in the late 1970s (Alcock *et al.* 1989). The site itself is a craggy lump in the narrowed valley floor overlooking the River Earn and less than 2km to the shore of Loch Earn. The hill consists of a summit boss with surrounding terraces and thus lends itself to the hierarchical use of space argued to be characteristic of early medieval royal centres or nuclear forts (Fig. 4.7, *ibid.*: 210 – 211). The excavations concentrated on the defences of the citadel and the walling of the upper terrace. The construction of the major defences began in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and ceased by the 10<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid.*: 198).

A series of defences of timber and stone were built on the summit and upper terrace. The initial defence was a timber stockade built in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century, which was dismantled or repaired in the later 6<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid.*: 200-201).





Fig. 4.7: Plan of Dundurn showing culmination of built defences from c. 700 – c. 900 (after Alcock *et al.* 1989: 205).

In the late 7<sup>th</sup> century the citadel was fortified by a timber defence using large iron nails, which was burned and destroyed. Later refortification of the citadel and upper terrace (and probably other terraces) took place sometime in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (ibid: 196 – 206). The imported pottery, glass, and fine metalworking evidence shows the upper strata of society occupied the fort at Dundurn. Other high status characteristics include the use of a large amount of iron nails in the citadel's timber defences, fragments of blue glass beads, and the presence of a highly decorated leather shoe (ibid.: 216 – 217). The site is mentioned twice in historical documents. *AU* 682.3 records the siege of Dunadd and Dundurn (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 149). The other reference is from an 11<sup>th</sup> century Scottish Regnal List and refers to Girg/Giric dying at Dundurn in AD 889 (Anderson 1922i:191, 364; Alcock *et al.*. 1989: 192-194).



The other excavated fort in the region is at Clatchard Craig (Fig. 4.8). The fort was multivallate and occupied through multiple periods, although all of the defences appear to belong to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (Close-Brooks 1986: 140). The site lies about 5.5km to the east of Abernethy. The fine metalworking evidence includes fragments of clay moulds representing at least 22 separate pieces, a piece of crucible and a silver ingot (*ibid.*: 145). While the majority of moulds are for objects of personal adornment, they are difficult to assign to a date. The brooch moulds have been assigned an 8<sup>th</sup> century date (*ibid.*: 146), but these may date to the later 7<sup>th</sup> century as well in comparison with moulds from Dunadd. Although

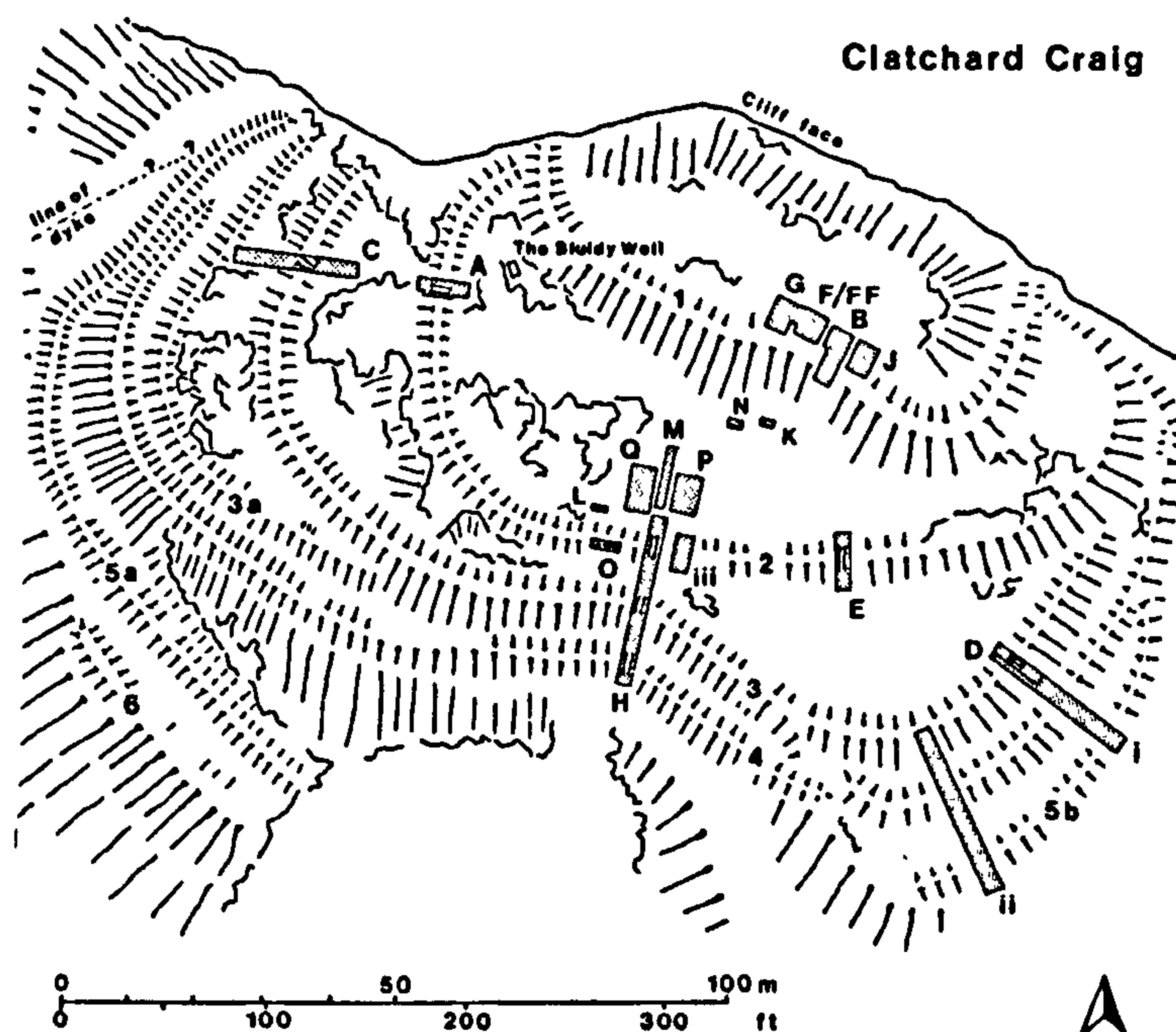


Fig. 4.8: Plan of Clatchard Craig showing excavated trenches (after Close-Brooks 1986: 121).

only a small area of the fort was excavated under difficult circumstances, the excavations do share characteristics with other excavated high status sites of the early medieval period.



A long cist cemetery was found on Mare's Craig across a burn about .5km east of the fort that may be contemporary with the early medieval occupation at Clatchard Craig. In addition to the long cists, an iron bell, probably of 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> century date came from the site (Bourke 1983: 467). Unfortunately, both of these sites are now quarried away removing the chance to explore another situation of an early medieval religious site in close geographical proximity to a high status secular site.

A hoard found at Tummel Bridge contained three silver penannular brooches and a hanging bowl escutcheon possibly dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Fowler 1963:142) has recently been considered to be as late as the 7<sup>th</sup> or even 8<sup>th</sup> century (Cessford 1999: 41). The only hoard to date definitively from the region is from the hill at Norrie's Law (Fig.4.6). Norrie's Law is a cairn at the summit of a ridge that when investigated in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century contained several stone cists and a small urn as well as a hoard of silver objects probably of 7<sup>th</sup> or at the latest early 8<sup>th</sup> century date (RCAHMS 1933:185-186; Youngs 1989: 26-27). The hoard was made up of finely engraved pieces of silver as well as silver that appeared to be for scrap purposes (Fig. 4.9). Originally supposed to have contained 153 objects the surviving contents only make up about 6% of the entire hoard (Graham-Campbell 1991: 246). The surviving contents include: two penannular brooches with spiralled hoops, two oval 'plaques' or 'dangles' with engraved Pictish symbols originally enhanced with a red enamel, three hand pins also originally enamelled, a fragment of a possible pin, a spiral finger ring and part of another ring, a disc with a raised border and central knob, remains of other discs, an incomplete thick sheet of spiral bosses, a crushed fragment of a 4<sup>th</sup> century inscribed Roman spoon, band-shaped mounts, arm band fragments, rod and chain fragments, and fragments of



thin plate (ibid). The great variety of items within this hoard in addition to the fragmentary nature of some of the contents may indicate that this was a metalworkers hoard filled with finished and in-progress materials as well as metal ready to be melted down for further use. However, it need not only be metalworkers themselves who gathered pieces of precious metal together. This hoard could be the collection of a local élite ruler gathering materials together for further working by a metalsmith or keeping them secure until such time as



Fig. 4.9: Engraved 'plaque' or 'dangle' from Norrie's Law (Allen and Anderson 1903: 369).

they might be gifted to clients or other élites. The association of the hoard with an earlier burial monument may be purely convenient, as the rubble of the cairn could have been shifted for the storage yet have deterred any thieves. The circumstances of the finding of the hoard preclude any analysis of the hoard as part of grave goods for the associated cist or cremation burials, but this is unlikely. Such burials are assumed to be prehistoric, but the 7<sup>th</sup> century hoarder must have been aware of the cairn structure and probably what lay underneath and this association with the burials may have been a conscious choice giving an already precious material



added significance by storing it with the bodies of ancestors. Even if we are to see this hoard as a measure of emergency safekeeping rather than storage, this association with the cairn may be significant as it could invoke the protection of the dead.

The power centres of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries in Fife and Perth include high status secular sites, the excavated sites at Dundurn and Clatchard Craig showing similar characteristics and material culture to contemporary sites in Argyll such as Dunollie and Dunadd. The nature of investment and the different forms and ideological messages of monumental sculpture of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century suggest a relatively dispersed distribution with individual sites subordinate to regional concentrations. This is markedly different than the evidence of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## FIFE AND PERTH IN THE 8<sup>TH</sup> AND 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

Historically the 8th and 9th centuries are overshadowed by two events: the account of King Nechtan's letter to Ceolfrid, abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, recorded by Bede and the movement of the kings of Dál Riata eastward and into the kingship of Pictland (Duncan 1975: 56-59; *EH V.21* McClure and Collins 1994: 276 ; Veitch 1997).

In the later 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century, the political trajectories of southern Pictland and Dál Riata were interwoven. There was a short lived mid 8<sup>th</sup> century Pictish overlordship over the Scots after the ravaging of Dál Riata by Custantín son of



Fergus (d.820) who conquered the Pictish area of Fortriu in 790 (*AU* 789.11, Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 245). There were three Dál Riata kings in the Pictish kingship before the kingship of Cinaed mac Alpín, the legendary first king of Picts and Scots (Broun 1994: 22-23). By c. 900, there was a change in the language used to describe the kingdom of Pictland. Broun (1994; 1999a) has argued this to be a conscious effort by the authors of the kinglist to create a new identity for the kingdom as Alba rather than Pictland in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, kingship in Pictland became dominated by a dynasty, and this trend was reflected in the ideology of kingship, which took on the character of overkingship of a unified area (Broun 1994: 25 – 27).

These political changes were entangled with politico-religious developments. In the years after the ascension of Cinaed in c. 842, Columba's relics were moved to Dunkeld c. 849 and a new church was built there cementing the Cenél nGabráin move east (Bannerman 1999: 73). The recording of the death of Tuathal son of Artgus who died in 864 as the premier bishop of *Fortriu* and abbot of Dunkeld indicates that Dunkeld gathered great importance soon after it became the head of the Columban church in Scotland (*AU* 865.6 Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 321). The patrons of Dunkeld came from the major controlling royal dynasty of Alba, the descendants of Cinaed mac Alpín (Broun 1999: 101-102). In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Cusantín mac Aeda (d. 952) patronised and established St Andrews as the premier church and bishopric of the kingdom (*ibid.*: 109).

The 9<sup>th</sup> century also saw the introduction of the religious reform movement, the *céli dé* (Clancy 1996). In 943, Cusantín mac Aeda retired to become the abbot of a *céli*



*dé* community at St Andrews and by the 12<sup>th</sup> century there were numerous communities throughout Scotland (ibid.: 111-112). The movement was not anchoritic, and was particularly interested in the rights and responsibilities of churches (ibid.: 118). Clancy noted the Pictish tradition of kings founding churches, such as at Abernethy, Dunkeld, and maybe St Andrews, Meigle, and Scone, showed a particularly Pictish royal involvement in church affairs (ibid.: 121) An early 10<sup>th</sup> century agreement between or proclamation by the bishop of St Andrews and Custantín (that same king who later retired to a *céli dé* community) at Scone illustrates the cooperation of the secular and religious powers (Anderson 1922i: 445; Clancy 1996:122; Charles-Edwards 1999: 60-61; Driscoll forthcoming). The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries are a period of great changes both ecclesiastically and politically. Despite the interruption in administration and leadership such changes involve, the general trend over the centuries is towards a concentration of power in both religious and secular sectors. This concentration of power reveals itself in physical form in the great and ambitious carved stone monuments of the time.

### **Monuments of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries**

This period is characterised by great collections of resource-intensive monuments as well as individual resource-intensive stones (Fig. 4.10). There is a dramatic increase in both the number and amount of resources invested in stone monuments erected in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. One of the most significant changes in decorative formats is the inclusion of Pictish symbols and Christian symbols on the same monument (Class II). Unsurprisingly, the places drawing the most resources



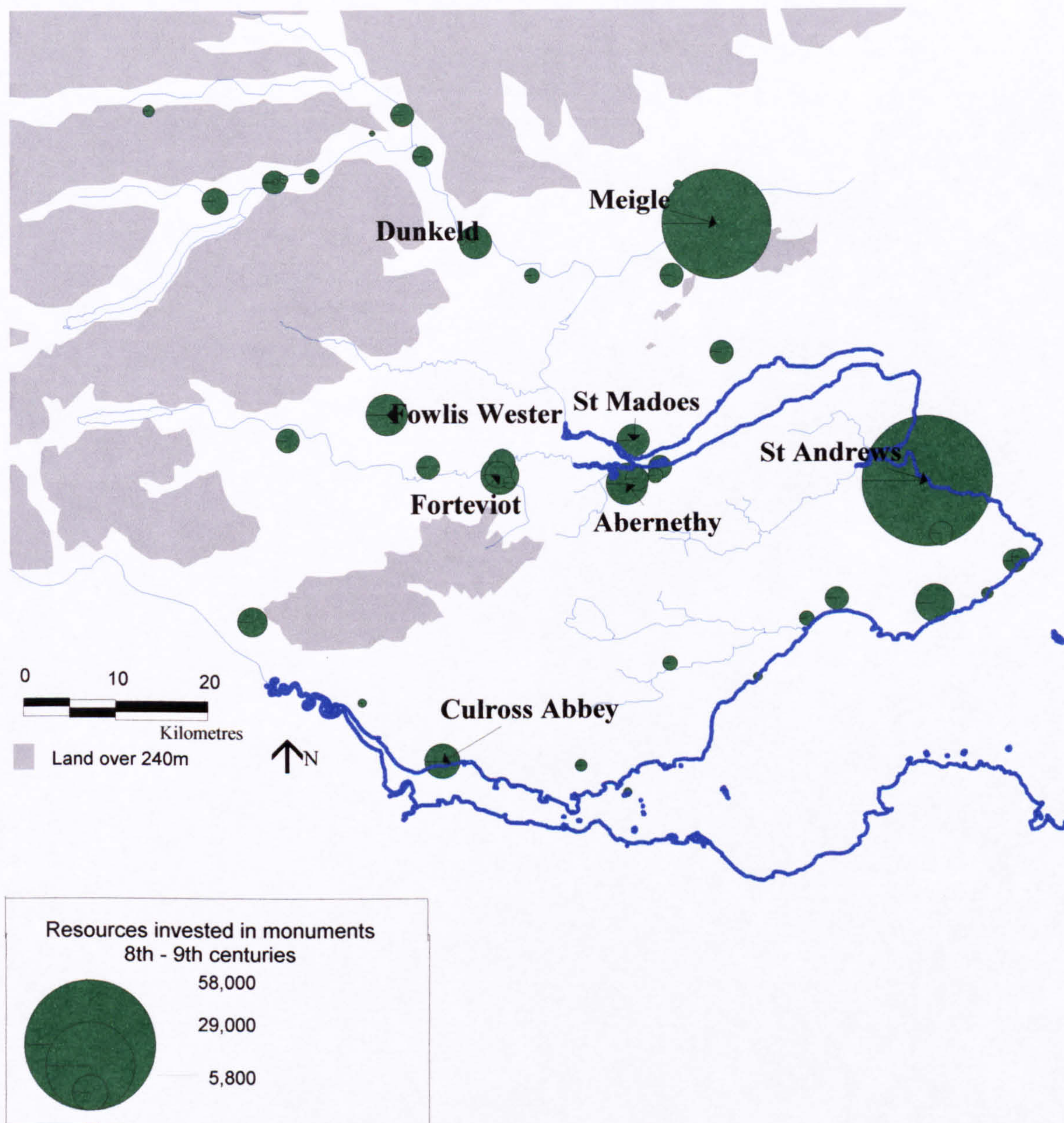


Fig. 4.10: Resources invested in monuments, 8th - 9th centuries

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in the form of stone monuments are ecclesiastic establishments of which St Andrews and Meigle are the most prominent. Of the 164 monuments allocated to this period, 57 are from St Andrews and 27 are from Meigle. There are 14 free-standing crosses or fragments of free-standing crosses and two cross bases allocated to this period. There is also a great variety in the types of stone monuments created in this period including the free-standing crosses, elaborate cross slabs, architectural pieces, shrines, and recumbent monuments.

By the 10<sup>th</sup> century, St Andrews was the ecclesiastic centre of Alba, perhaps replacing a bishopric at Abernethy, in 908 (Simpson and Stevenson 1981: 21). St Andrews first appears in the historical record as Kilrimont/Cennrigmonaid in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (*AU* 746.10, Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983: 203). The place-name means 'head of the king's mount' or 'church at the head of the king's mount' (Simpson and Stevenson 1981: 1). In the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, David I gave burgh status to St Andrews under Bishop Robert and the presumed location of this early burgh is on the headland between the sea and the Kinness burn (*ibid.*: 2). The site of the earliest ecclesiastic settlement is still unknown although the core was likely underneath where the ruined cathedral now lies. The pre-burghal settlement might survive in relic street plans and topographic features (Fig 4.11; Hall 1995: 26), but excavations to date have not provided any substantial evidence within the town for early medieval settlement (Rains and Hall 1997; Lewis 1996; Mills 2000; Cachart 2000). Early religious activity is attested by the nearby extensive long cist cemetery at Hallow Hill and a now lost *annat* placename (Proudfoot 1996). There is a late 11<sup>th</sup> to early 12<sup>th</sup> century date for early activity at the site of the St Nicholas



12<sup>th</sup> century leper hospital that suggests pre-hospital activity in the form of burials took place here in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Hall 1995: 52). A small cross incised boulder has also been found in association with the site (Yeoman 1996). The best evidence for this early medieval settlement, however, is the collection of sculpted stones now housed in the Cathedral Museum (Fleming 1931).

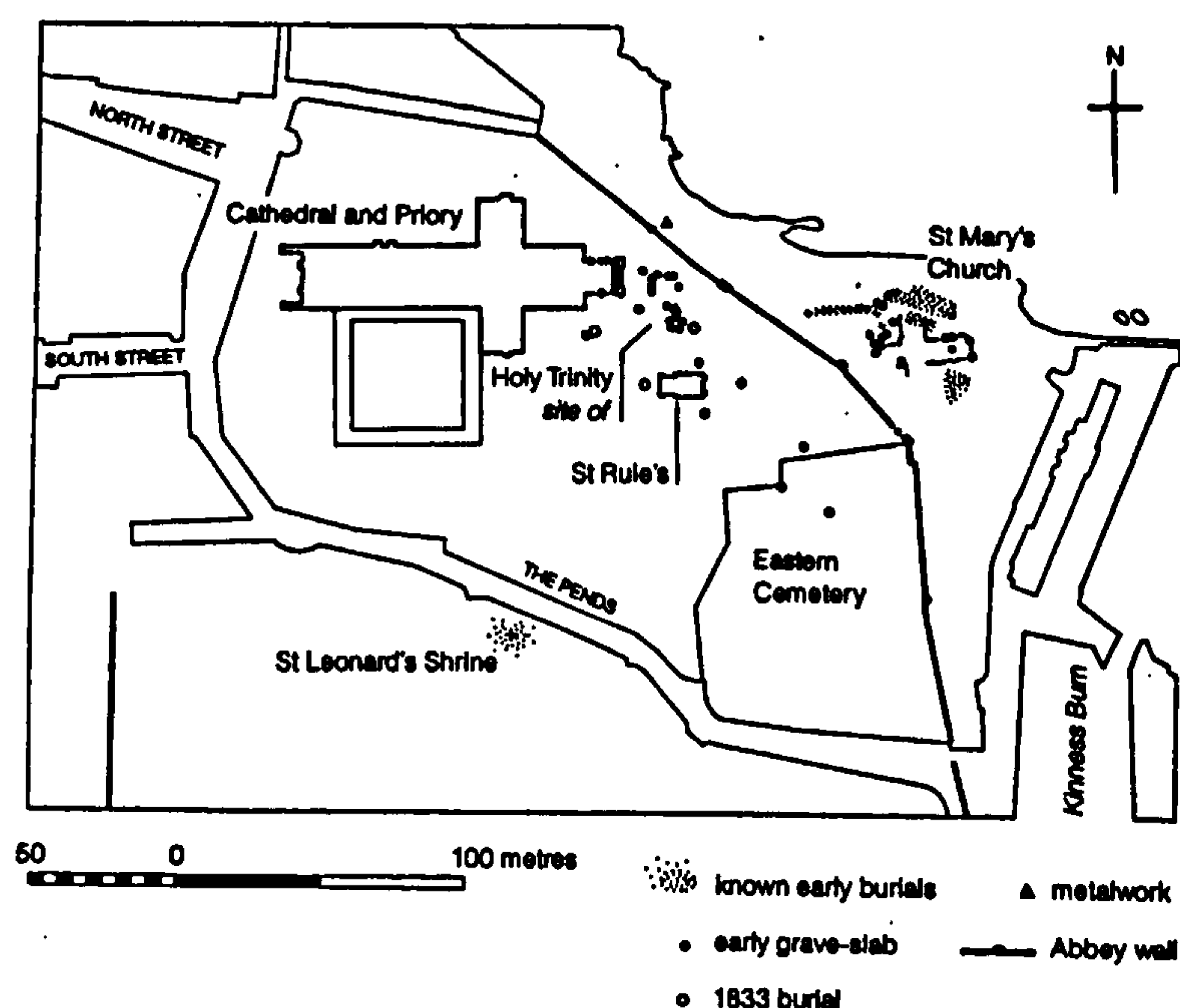


Fig. 4.11 St Andrews (after Foster 1998b:47).

The carved monuments from St Andrews are in a fairly mutilated condition with most of them found broken up within the churchyard or built into later buildings. Within the collection are a number of stones of similar design and morphology. They are generally carved on all four faces and are quite slender uprights. One side usually bears a Latin ringed cross with keyhole shaped armpits and while the other face bears a slimmer Latin cross with round 'bell-shaped' armpits. Both sides have decoration on the ring and in panels around the cross, but the cross itself is often



left plain. There are other versions of cross slabs at St Andrews, but the majority of fragments appear to come from slabs similar to this pattern. These slabs prompt the suggestion of a workshop here supplying cross slabs for the community (Fig. 4.12). The dates of the majority of the stones associated with this workshop style lie in the later 9<sup>th</sup> and even possibly in to the early 10<sup>th</sup> century (Fleming 1931). This intense period of stone production at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century coincides with the site's rise to premier ecclesiastic power under the patronage of King Custantín mac Aeda (Broun 1999b:109). The creation and display of these monuments would have had an active role in that rise and assertion of power and status.



Fig. 4.12 St Andrews 'workshop' slab (Henderson and Henderson 2004:183).

Besides these 'workshop' cross slabs and their close variations, St Andrews also has fragments of free-standing crosses including a complete shaft (Fleming's number 19), slabs with figural scenes such as Fleming's number 26, the monolithic St Leonard's Shrine, recumbent monuments, and the corner-slab shrine monument, the St Andrews Sarcophagus (Fig. 4.13). The technical and artistic achievements of the Sarcophagus have been discussed thoroughly elsewhere by experts in the field (Foster 1998; Henderson 1998). The Sarcophagus shows influences and uses



images and iconography that were part of the wider European corpus of Christian symbolism and shows how connected intellectually and culturally this area was with Europe and the Mediterranean (Henderson 1998: 98). In addition to the relatively complete shrine, there are also two fragments that may be parts of other composite shrines (Fleming's numbers 28 and 29, Thomas 1998).



Fig. 4.13 St Andrews Sarcophagus (Allen and Anderson 1903:352).

The place-name and foundation legends for St Andrews, which is dedicated to an apostle rather than an Irish or local saint, associate the settlement with Pictish royalty. The foundation legend does not survive from a contemporary source, but in two later versions (Broun 2000; Taylor 2000a). The earlier of the two versions, version A, dates to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and briefly recounts the arrival of Regulus with St Andrew's relics and the meeting of Regulus and the Pictish king 'Hungus' (Onuist who reigned 820-834) at Cennrígmonaid/St Andrews after which the king gives land for a church dedicated to the apostle there (Broun 2000: 108). Broun's analysis (ibid) of this text has shown its preoccupation with asserting St Andrews' claims as an archbishopric in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and version A is a preamble to that argument. It establishes St Andrews as the premier church in Scotland because it



has the relics of an apostle and has been important for a long time, i.e. since the Pictish king gave it such authority. The longer version of the legend (B) gives more background to the foundation and also dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Broun 1998: 80-81; 2000: 108; Taylor 2000a). In this version, three sons of Onuist met at Forteviot (Broun 1998: 81) before the grant of Cennrígmonaid was made.

The dates of the monuments, including the 'workshop' slabs, the free standing crosses, and the shrine concentrate in the later 9<sup>th</sup> century. The support of royal élite is evident as the patrons of these monuments, particularly in the David imagery on the Sarcophagus. St Andrews not only highlights the importance of stone monuments to accentuate the power, royal connections, and wealth of the centre, but also shows how these monuments might work to perpetuate that power and wealth. The shrine monuments in particular may play an important role in the cult of relics and possibly are the centrepieces of pilgrimage ceremonies. The power and political importance of St Andrews is realised with its attainment of chief church and bishopric status and is articulated through the creation, use, and display of stone monuments that surpasses any other site in the region.

The other dominant concentration of resources devoted to monuments is at Meigle. Little is known of the site historically except for the notice of a scribe working there at a *villa* in the 9<sup>th</sup> century contained in the St Andrews foundation legend (Anderson 1922i: 267; Ritchie 1995: 4). The reference includes the name of Thana, who was at the villa of Meigle during the reign of a king Pherath, 839-42 (Ritchie 1995: 4). The early church is assumed to lie underneath the current building and graveyard. There has been little opportunity for excavation at Meigle



so the potential for early medieval archaeological deposits surviving is unknown. The churchyard itself currently has a rounded wedge shape, which may be a relic of a curvilinear boundary of an early date (Fig. 4.14). Using the curved churchyard boundary, Ritchie estimated the original enclosure surrounding the church at Meigle would be about 100 metres across suggesting that Meigle was a site of some importance (1995: 3).

Unlike St Andrews, there are several Class II (slabs with crosses and Pictish symbols) at Meigle including numbers 1, 8, 7, 4, 5, 6, (RCAHMS 1994: 98-102). Figural scenes, both animal and human are also well represented. The human scenes are generally related to secular themes such as the hunt or warriors (Meigle

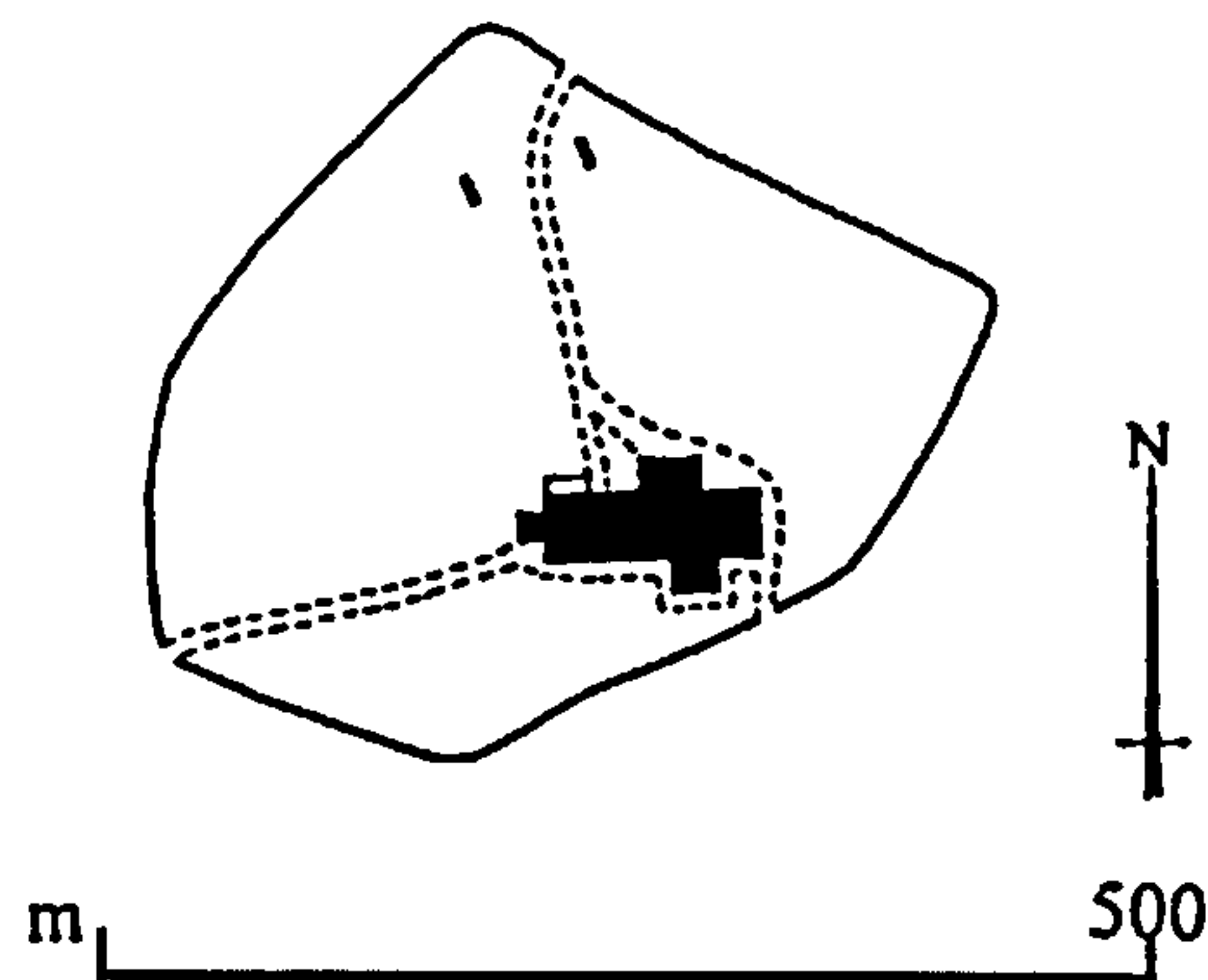


Fig. 4.14: Plan of Meigle churchyard (Ritchie 1995: 4).

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 26) or representations of ecclesiastics (Meigle 14, 29, 27). There is only one recognised Biblical scene, which is on Meigle no. 2, of Daniel in the Lions' Den (Fig. 4.15). The lack of religious iconography suggested to Ritchie the possibility that Meigle was a centre of lay, possibly royal, patronage in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries and following a pattern that may be visible in other Tayside sites such



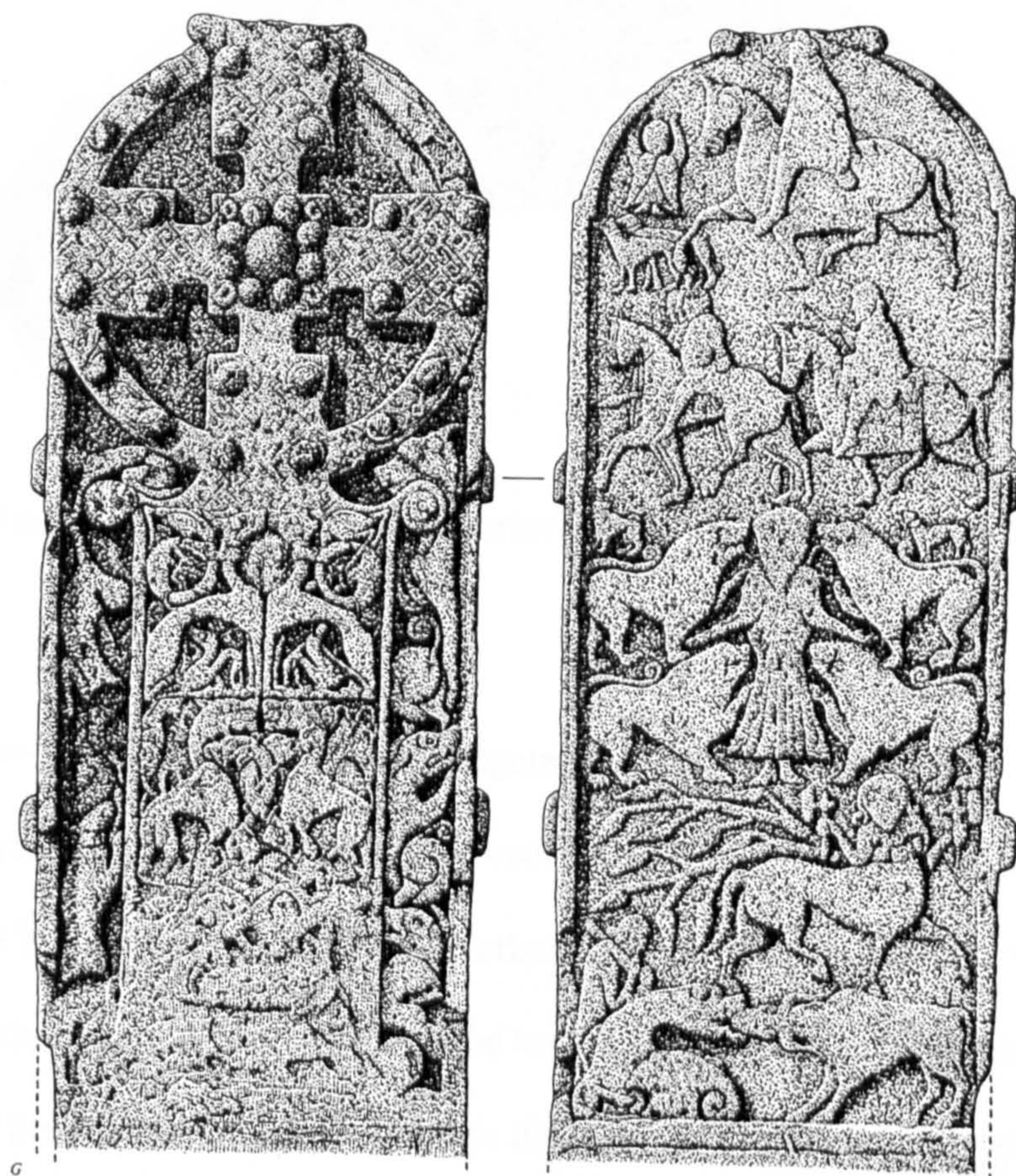


Fig. 4.15. Meigle no. 2 Height: 2.55m (RCHAMS 1994: 99).

as St Vigean's, Angus (Ritchie 1995: 8). Adding to the riddle of Meigle and its impressive collection of stones is the presence of 'architectural' sculpture. These include a possible string-course, shrine slab, and the large cross slab known as Meigle No. 2 (Fig. 4.15) which has two sets of small thin tenons protruding from its vertical sides. While lugs and tenons are a feature associated with the insertion of a slab into a base or collar stone, the location of these tenons so high up the monument might suggest it was inserted into some type of supporting structure in addition to a base.





Fig. 4.16: Carved stone arch from Forteviot, Length: 1.98m (Foster 1996: 49).

While there are scattered panels and fragments of carvings that may be architectural pieces dating to the early medieval period, the best evidence to date for a stone building comes from the riverbed near Forteviot. Unique in the Scottish corpus of carved stone monuments is the sandstone arch-shaped slab discovered in the bed of the Water of May, underneath the Haly Hill (Fig. 4.16; Alcock and Alcock 1992: 223). Although the ends of the arch are damaged, its size suggests it is for a doorway, possibly an inner door, rather than a window. Flanking a central cross are a series of animal and human figures.

The Alcocks suggested that the figures represent a king and his three companions linking the arch to the foundation legend of St Andrews version B that includes the Pictish king and his three sons (Alcock and Alcock 1992: 226; Broun 1998:81; Taylor 2000a). The iconographical message remains conjecture, but the presence of a stone building, probably a church, at Forteviot is the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century is relatively certain.



Forteviot lies about 15km to the west of Abernethy in lower Strathearn. Its location suggests it was part of the southern Pictish region of Fortriu, which played such a critical role in the political advancement of Dál Riata into Pictland. Situated along the banks of the Water of May, some of this proposed Pictish/Scottish 'palace' site might have been eroded away (Alcock and Alcock 1992: 220). This identification as a royal centre comes from textual references, written at least a century after, in the 'Chronicle of the Kings of Alba.' Cinaed mac Alpín reputedly died in *palacio Forthiurtabaicht* in 858 and during his successor's reign laws were made at Forteviot (Anderson 1922i: 288-289, 291; Alcock and Alcock 1992: 221). Other references come from a version of the king lists relating how Drust was killed by the Scots at either Forteviot or Scone, and the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Andrews foundation legend version B (Anderson 1922i: 266; Alcock and Alcock 1992: 221; Broun 1998: 80-81; Taylor 2000a).

Unfortunately, neither excavations nor the considerable amount of cropmark evidence from the area has shown any definite church structure or fortification. As part of the Early Historic fortification research agenda, Alcock and Alcock excavated two trenches on the northern and southern sides of the Haly Hill, long suspected as the site of the main palace (1992: 228-230). These trenches did not produce anything earlier than the later 18<sup>th</sup> century. The findspot of the carved arch, in the bed of the river below, and the presence of an earlier course of the river at the foot of the hill may mean that if the palace was located on the hill, very little of it may survive.



The RCAHMS aerial photograph collection shows intense activity in the fields surrounding the village of Forteviot (Alcock and Alcock 1992: 232). The cropmarks include possible cemeteries as well as Pictish type square barrows, pits, and a variety of enclosures (Fig. 4.17). Even if only a fraction of these cropmarks are datable as upstanding in the early medieval period, Forteviot and its environs has a tradition stretching back into prehistory of being an active monumental landscape. It appears, however, that stone may only be a significant material for monumental display in the early medieval period, particularly beginning in the 8<sup>th</sup> century as in the map for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries (Fig. 4.2) has a gap where Forteviot would lie. The majority of the prehistoric monuments were probably earthworks such as ditches and banks. This suggests that the addition of stone monuments to the landscape, and the possible stone building, was an important new aspect to the monumentality of the area at this time encompassing new ways of asserting and using economic and social power as well as altering the way in which Forteviot was perceived.

The features most likely to date from the early medieval period at Forteviot are the square ditched kerbed barrows with interruptions at the corners. Monuments like these were excavated at Garbeg and Whitebridge, Inverness-shire and dated to the early medieval period from the reuse of a symbol stone in a round burial structure that was part of the Garbeg cemetery (Ashmore 1980; Close-Brooks 1984:106).

Alcock and Alcock point to the use of both square and penannular ditched barrows together with the appearance of possible individual inhumation burials as evidence at Forteviot for a Pictish cemetery probably dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (1992:



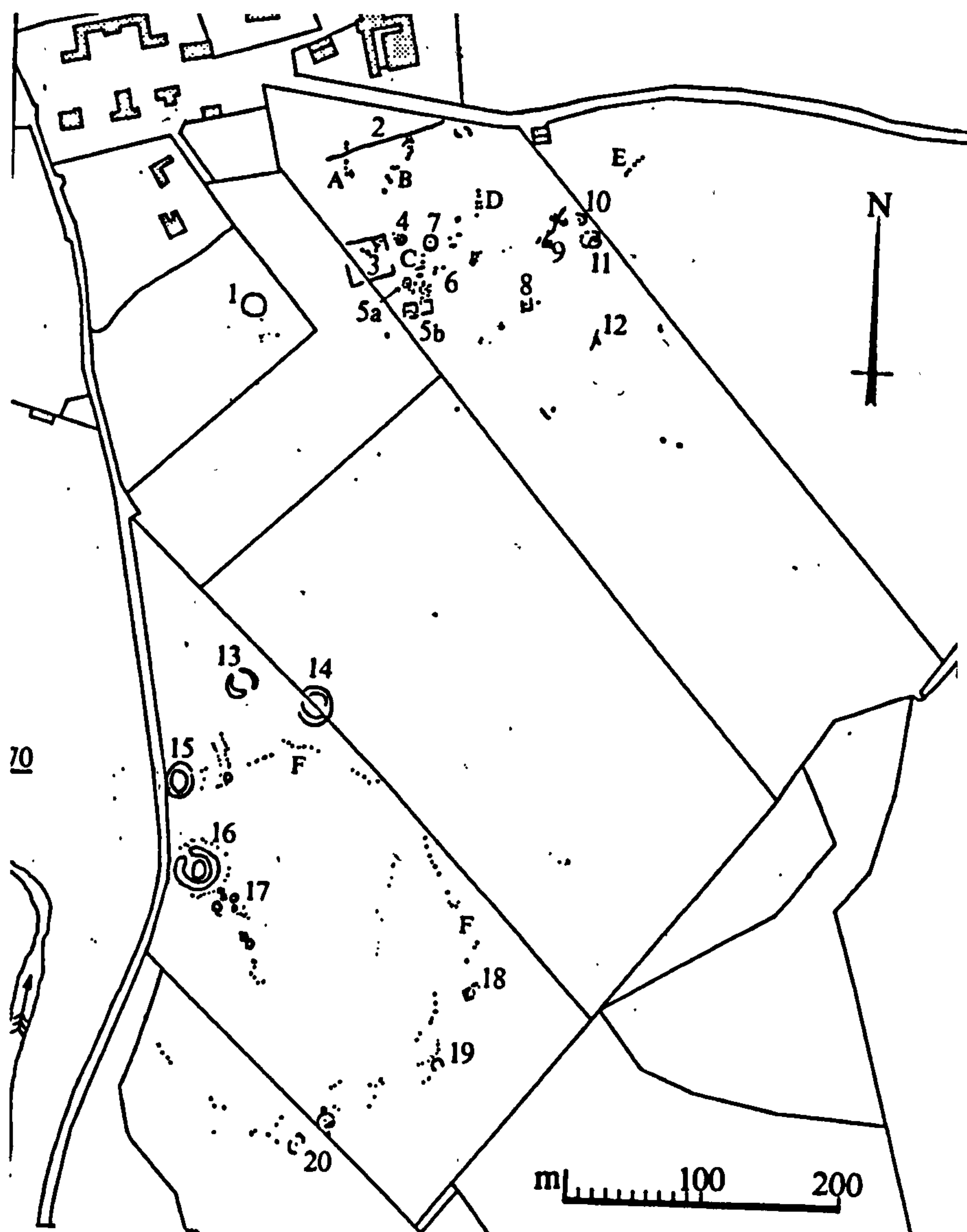


Fig. 4.17 Cropmarks at Forteviot by K.H. Macleod; (Alcock and Alcock 1992: 232).

234). As these features remain unexcavated, the chronological affiliations between them are unproven, but it is possible that they could be part of a burial complex. Smith (1996) showed the complementary distribution of square ditched barrows and symbol stones and emphasised the contrasting ideological message and belief system between these monuments and monuments of early Christianity. The appearance of a possibly pre(or non)-Christian Pictish burial complex and prehistoric ceremonial features such as enclosures and henges at Forteviot is



analogous to other royally connected sites such as Tara in Ireland that use and reuse a ceremonial landscape as a backdrop for rituals and assemblies (Bradley, R. 1993: 126; Newman 1997). The use of 'palace' to describe Forteviot in the 'Chronicle of the Kings of Alba' implies a royal residence and associated buildings (Alcock and Alcock 1992: 221). The prehistoric landscape that Forteviot was situated in lent authority and legitimacy to the early medieval kings (Bradley, R. 1993: 120, 125). By placing the palace within this monumental landscape of prehistoric earthworks, the élite of Forteviot gave their status the authority of the remote past (ibid.: 126). The addition of stone monuments to the monumental landscape in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, perpetuated the symbolic connections between the kings of Forteviot and the landscape, and 'the land' itself.

Unlike the ceremonial and largely non-residential royal centres of Ireland (e.g. Tara, Rathcroghan, Navan) with which Forteviot shares this characteristic of using prehistoric monumental landscapes, Forteviot is also a palace and active residence. The combination of ceremonial landscape and active royal residence may be a significant choice for the kings of Forteviot reflecting the emphasis given to political landscapes, defined in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries by the use of symbol stones. Incorporated into the monumental landscape around Forteviot are resource-intensive carved stone sculptures in the form of free-standing crosses at Dupplin and Invermay.

Until 1999, the Dupplin cross stood on the slope leading up from the river Earn to Forteviot about a kilometre and a half to the south. Excavations conducted when the cross was moved were inconclusive, although they confirmed the cross had



stood in that location since at least the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Radley and Dunn 1999). The cross is a free-standing ringless monolith of sandstone over 2.5m high (Fig. 4.18). The west face of the Dupplin cross contains an inscription seven lines long. It is much worn, but has been read as: the first line beginning CU and ending with N or H, the second line as FILIUSF[...], and the third line beginning with S (Forsyth 1995; Alcock and Alcock 1996: 455 – 457; Alcock and Alcock 1992: 283). The reading equates the inscription possibly with Cusantín son of Fergus.

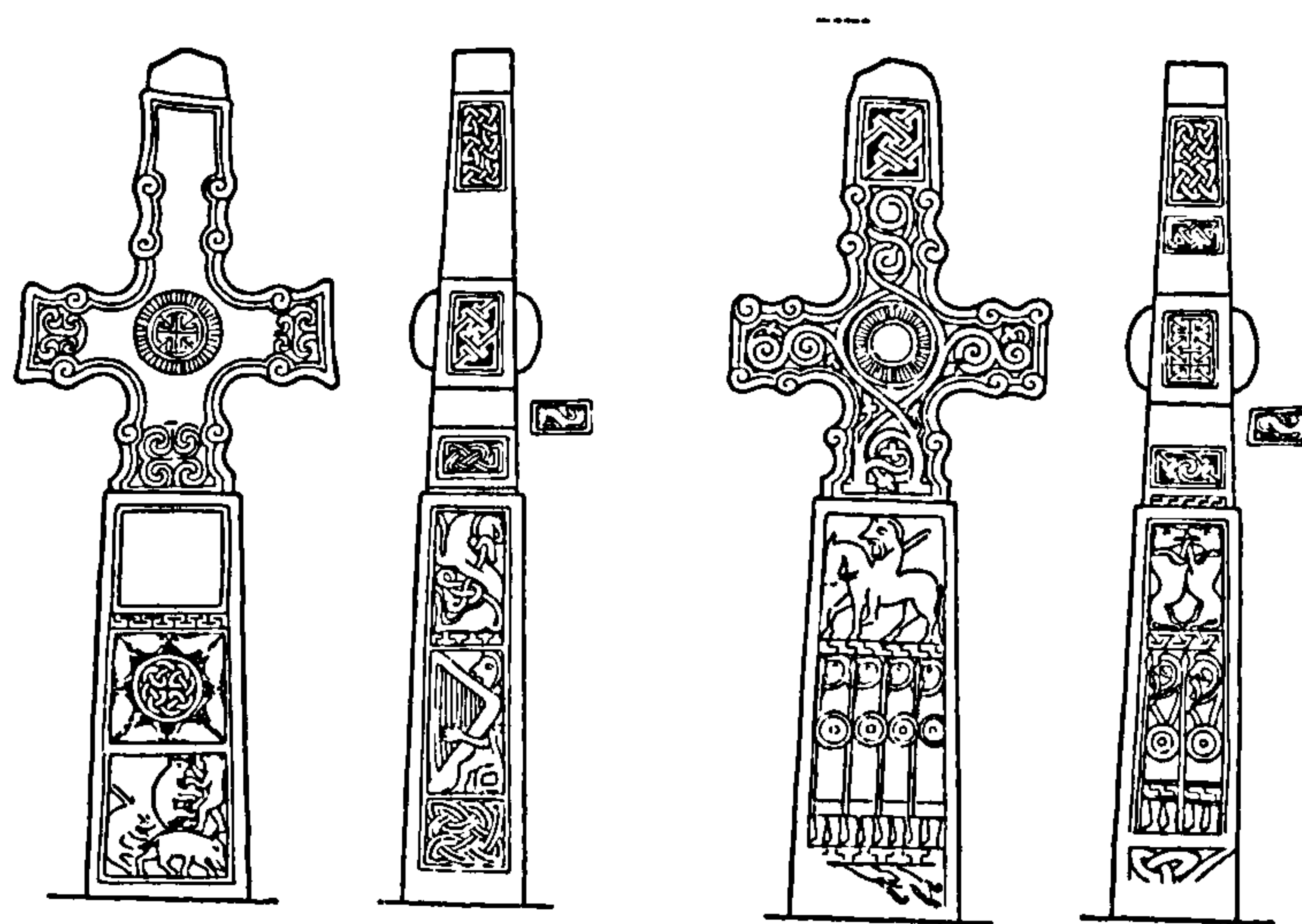


Fig. 4.18 The Dupplin Cross (Allen and Anderson 1903).

He was the first to hold concurrently the kingships of Pictland and Dál Riata. He became king of Pictland in 789 and king of Dál Riata by 811, and is thus a precursor to Cinaed I. It is difficult to say whether Cusantín was the patron of the cross as well as the dedicatee (Forsyth 1995: 243). An attractive proposed context for the cross might be as a symbol to legitimise the kingship of Cinaed I, which would suggest the cross predates the tradition of Irish high crosses of Máel Sechnaill in Offaly, which were also inscribed (*ibid.*). On the cross base in which the cross sits there is another inscription in ogham (*ibid.*: 231). The inscription is



too fragmentary to decipher, but its placement on a cross base is a unique feature (ibid.).

The cross is richly carved with both geometric and figural scenes (Henderson 1999). Alcock and Alcock have identified all of the figural scenes as statements about kingship, including scenes of David iconography (1992: 238). Other scenes show warriors or kings and a band of 'young clean-shaven warriors' making the monument a powerful secular statement as well as religious one (ibid.: 240).

Henderson has also shown the importance of the David imagery as both a prefiguration of Christ and as the ideal king and warrior on this monument (1999b: 175). The iconography and ornament portrays messages of church and 'state.' The vine scroll represents the Eucharist and salvation while David is both a symbol of Christ and the ideal ruler and warrior (ibid.: 176). The cross is thus a physical statement of the coming together of ideologies of kingship (influenced by the Columban *familia*) and the secular significance of the warrior so prevalent on Pictish Class II and III slabs.

Another cross near Forteviot is represented by a collection of very abused fragments. The Invermay cross stood to the southeast of Forteviot a little over a kilometre away. Also of sandstone, the only decorative elements known to have been incorporated on the monument are varieties of key pattern (Allen and Anderson 1903; 328). The collection of carved stones from Forteviot including the ones now housed within the village church may be considered as part of a wider monumental landscape incorporating the prehistoric monuments, the Pictish burial complex, the stone building (or buildings) and the high crosses to the north and



south at Dupplin and Invermay. If a stone building did exist at Forteviot, an additional element to monumental display is added here and equalling the investment allocated to places like St Andrews or Meigle.

The church at Forteviot was probably not the only stone building in these regions of Scotland. There are no surviving stone churches that date to this period, but the round tower at Abernethy may be 11<sup>th</sup> century (Ferne 1986). There are very few other possible architectural fragments that may point to stone buildings (Table 4.3). Apart from the Forteviot arch, the best evidence for stonework for a building comes from Meigle no. 22 (Fig. 4.19) in the form of a narrow panel carved with a merman flanked by two beasts. This panel has been identified as part of a decorative string-course or a horizontal band of decorative stonework (Ritchie 1995: 5). The large cross slab, Meigle no. 2, also has thin side tenons and might have been inserted into some upstanding structure although not necessarily a structural part of a building.

Monument type	Site of Monument
SHRINE PANEL? FRAGMENT	DULL
ARCH	FORTEVIOT
POSSIBLE SHRINE PANEL	GELLYBURN (MURTHLY)
SHRINE PANEL	MEIGLE
ARCHITECTURAL PIECE	MEIGLE
SHRINE FRAGMENTS	ST ANDREWS
SHRINE	ST ANDREWS
SARCOPHAGUS	ST ANDREWS
SHRINE PANEL?	DUNKELD

Table 4.3: Architectural fragments and church furniture in Fife and Perth.

Sculpture of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century also includes pieces of recognisable church furniture, particularly shrines or other composite monuments (Table 4.3).



The lost slab, Meigle no. 10 (Fig. 4.20), which had a scene of a chariot and animals, had evidently been trimmed and its final shape may be misleading. It

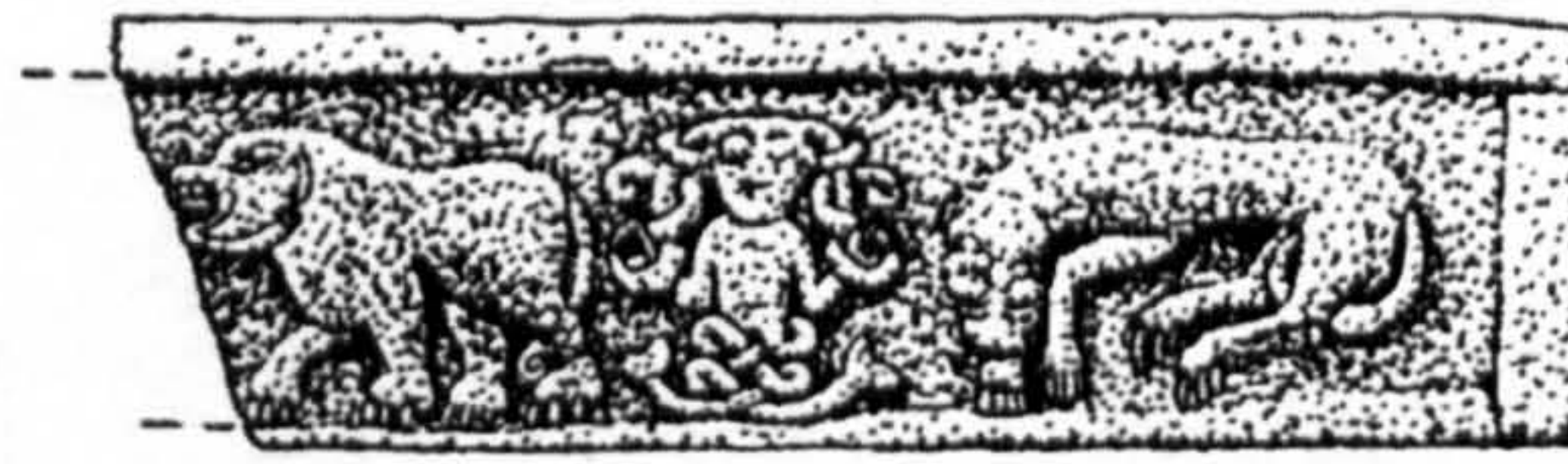


Fig. 4.19: Meigle no. 22, Length .82m (RCAHMS 1994: 102).

is possible that it originally formed part of a composite shrine like the St Andrews Sarcophagus (Thomas 1998). Another possibility for this and some of the other panels is that they are parts of composite cross bases like those seen on Iona, but the relative rarity of both types of these monuments does not allow for a certain identification. Other possible shrine panels come from Gellyburn and Dull (Thomas 1998; Hall *et al.* 1998). While the importance of shrine monuments is recognised, the way these monuments were used is still uncertain. They may have held the remains of saints or saintly rulers, which were displayed on special occasions and/or involved in pilgrimage rituals. Another possible use of these panels is in a composite altar. Regardless of their functions, these pieces of sculpture from church furniture are parts of sophisticated monuments and may indicate ecclesiastical centres of some importance.

The possible panel fragment from Dull depicts a horse and rider accompanied by warriors. The site at Dull is part of a concentration of dedications to St Adomnán and St Cói found near Glenlyon and Loch Tay, which was one of the areas where resources in monuments was concentrated in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. The shrine





Fig.4.20: Possible shrine panel, Meigle no.10, Length .91m (Ritchie 1995: 2).

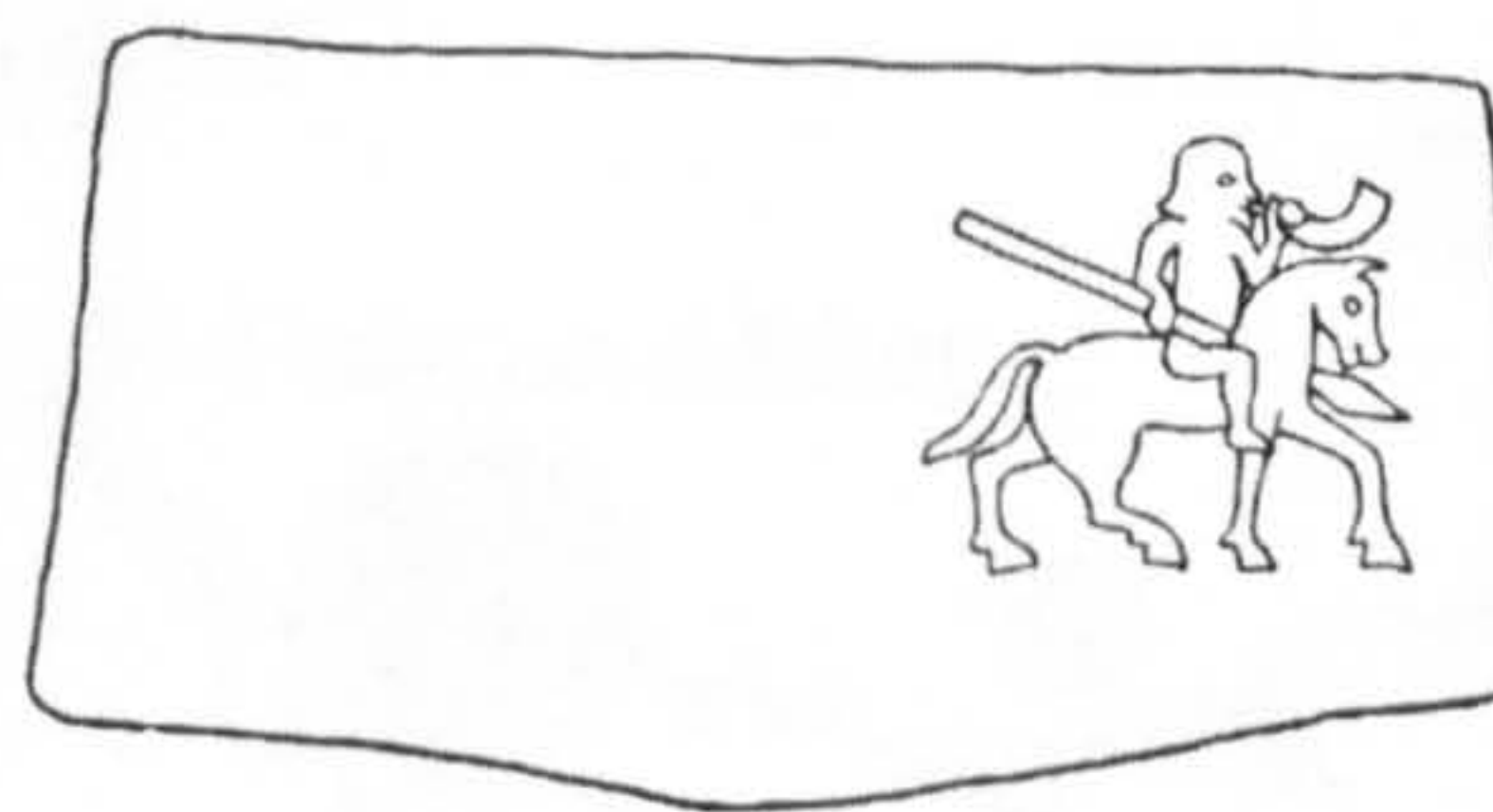


Fig. 4.21: Dunkeld no. 1, Length 1.1m (Allen and Anderson 1903).

or composite monument here may be connected to the veneration of these Columban saints, especially as Dull is the reputed burial place of Adomnán (Hooper 2002: 276). Another panel comes from Gellyburn, about 7km southeast of Dunkeld, which also has a possible shrine panel, no. 1 (Fig.4.21).

Putting St Andrews and Meigle to one side, the distribution and concentration of resources shows that there was significant investment in resources devoted to stone monuments around Forteviot, along upper Strath Tay from Dunkeld to Fortingall, around Abernethy, and along the southeast corner of the Fife peninsula around Abercrombie (Fig.4.22).



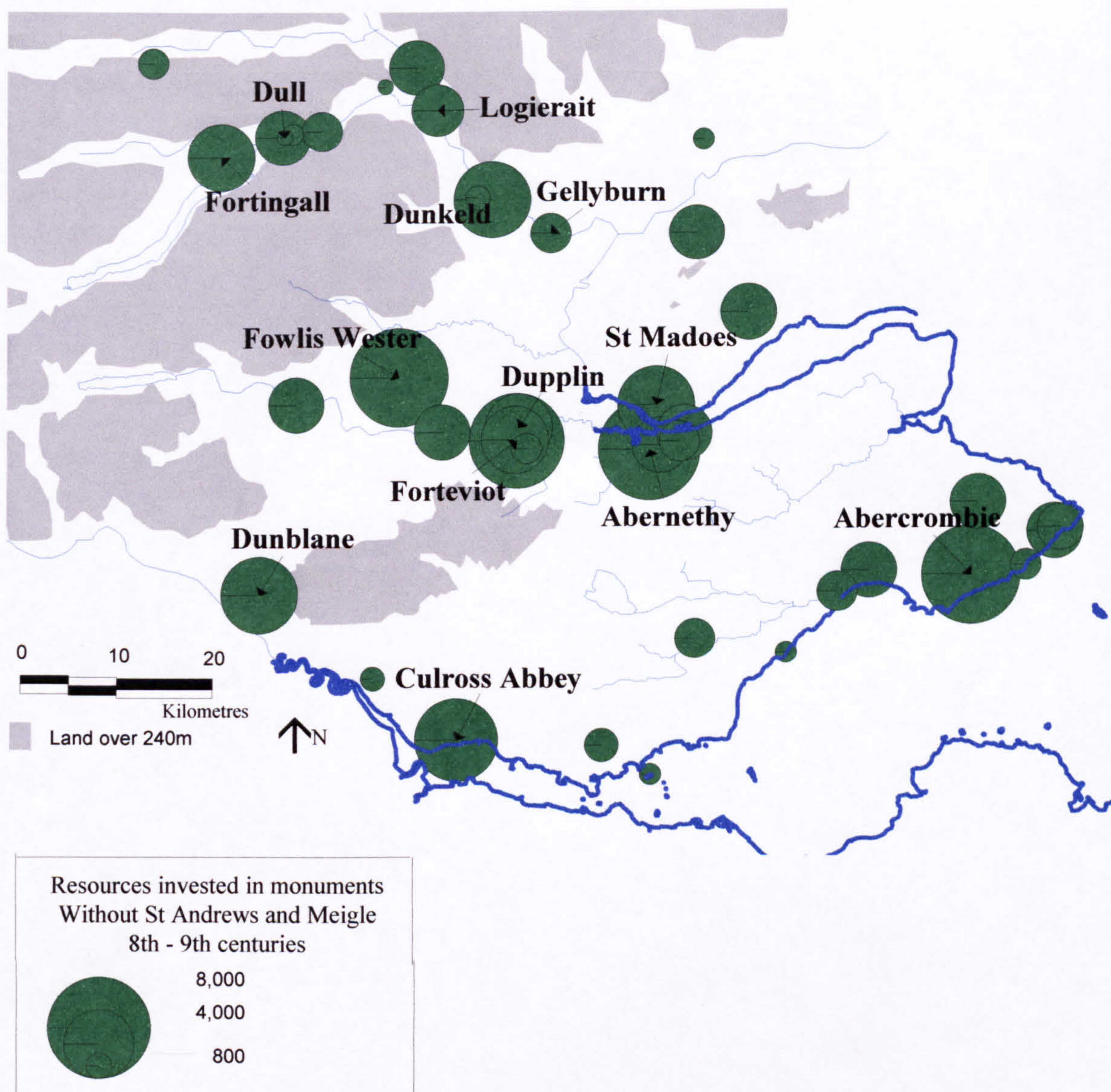


Fig. 4.22: Resources invested in monuments, 8th and 9th centuries excluding St Andrews and Meigle

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The sculpture from Dunkeld is quite fragmentary although there are fragments of large elaborate cross slabs, such as The Apostle's Stone (Dunkeld no. 2, Fig. 4.23) and the possible unfinished shrine panel (no. 1), which point to a generous amount of probably secular patronage (RCHAMS 1994: 96). Dunkeld was the chief Columban church in the kingdom after the relics of Columba were brought there c. 849 (Broun 1999b: 96). Broun has suggested a possible chronicle being kept at Dunkeld and a link to Armagh, which may have preserved some of the chronicle in its own records (ibid.: 96 – 101). Dunkeld also had a strong relationship with the Clann Cinaeda meic Alpín, who dominated the Pictish kingship in the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century and had a dynastic link to the Uí Néill in Ireland in the decades around c.900 (ibid.: 101-102, 109). Into the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when St Andrews was the principal church of Alba, the community at Dunkeld continued to play a role in politics with its abbots taking on increasingly secular characteristics including fighting in wars and marrying into the ruling dynasty (Hudson 1994: 164).

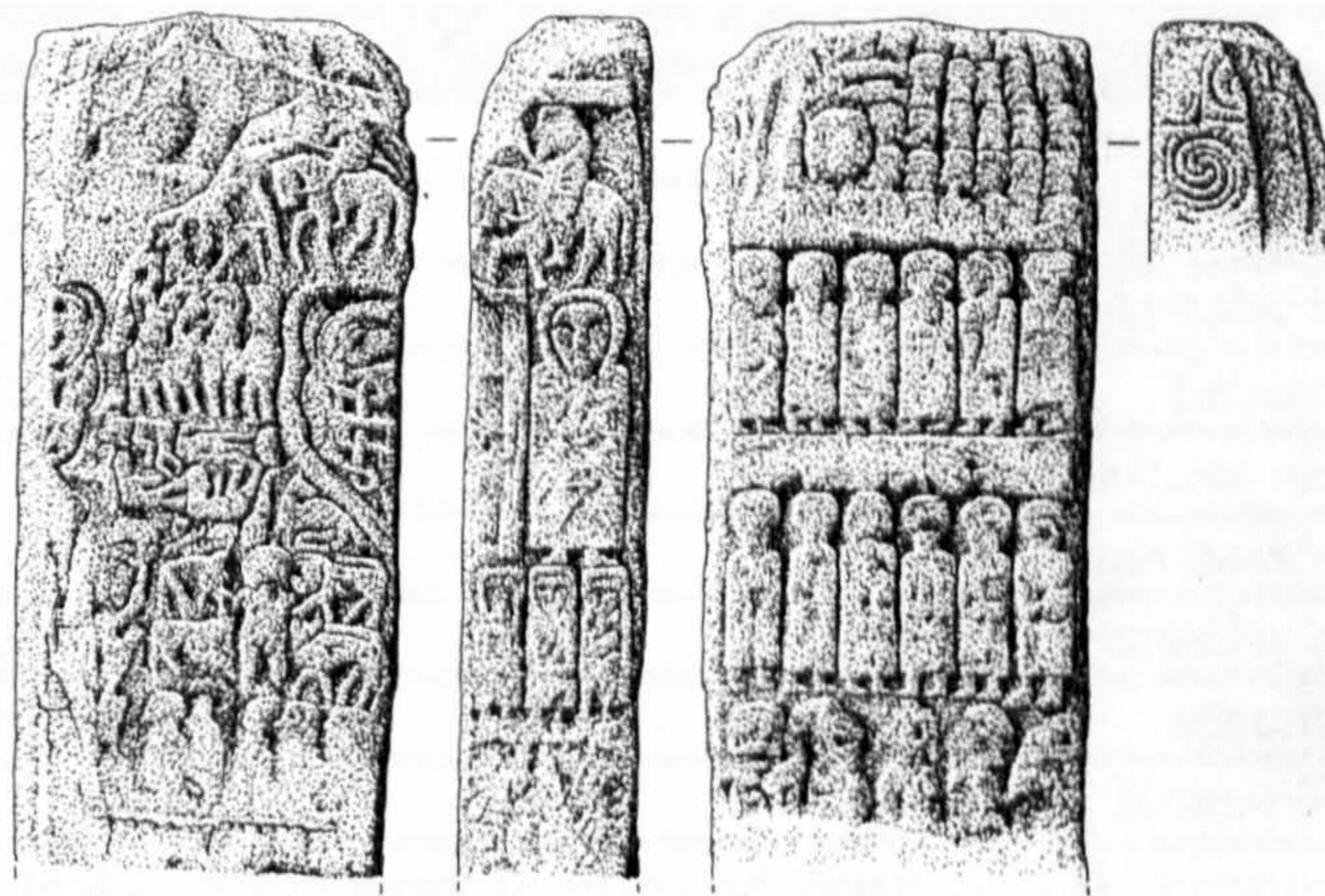


Fig. 4.23: Apostles' Stone (Dunkeld no.2), Height 1.47m (RCAHMS 1994:96).



Fine Metalwork and other Objects of Portable Wealth

There is only one piece of imported pottery that possibly dates to the 9<sup>th</sup> century from Dundurn (Fig. 4.6, Alcock *et al.* 1989: 215). Only one coin dating to the 9<sup>th</sup> century is found in Fife, and none in Perthshire (Fig. 4.24). The coin comes from a cemetery context from the Isle of May, off the coast of Fife, dedicated to the Pictish Saint Ethernan. The majority of structural evidence from the Isle of May is associated with the later Benedictine priory founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by King David I, but there are also early burials and possibly a 9<sup>th</sup> century burial chapel (James and Yeoman 1996; Yeoman 1999: 63). The coin is an Anglo-Saxon penny of King Burgred of Mercia (852 – 874). As a single coin find it is probably not an indicator of trading or exchange activities, but may be part of church dues or even a type of talisman or lost penny from a pilgrim, perhaps a hint of the pilgrimage that became common on the isle in the medieval period (Yeoman 1999: 62-64).

Location	Classification	No.	Description
ALDCLUNE	Piece	1	Penannular brooch
CLATCHARD CRAIG	Moulds	3	Unidentified
CLUNIE CASTLE	Piece	1	Penannular brooch
CRIEFF	Piece	1	Mount
CRIEFF (unlocated)	Pieces	2	Harness mounts
DUNDURN	Piece	1	Glass boss/mount
NEAR CLUNIE CASTLE	Piece	1	Penannular brooch
ST ANDREWS	Piece	1	Mount
BLACKHALL HOUSE	Piece	1	Bronze Pin

Table 4.4: Metalwork in Fife and Perth, 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The majority of metalworking related evidence comes in the form of actual pieces of fine metalwork (Fig. 4.24). The lack of production evidence, confined to the



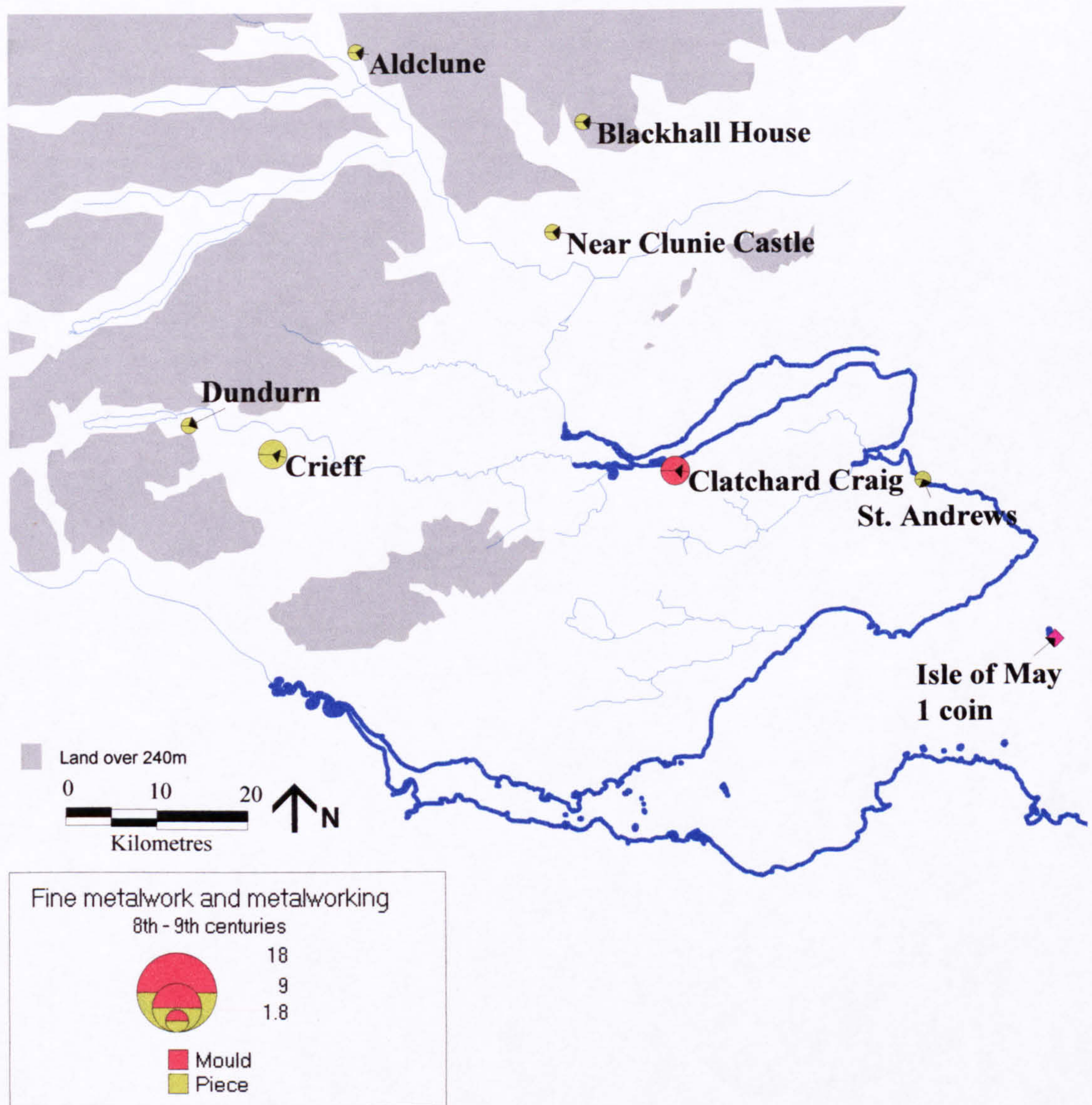


Fig. 4.24: Fine metalwork and metalworking, 8th - 9th centuries and the coin from the Isle of May.

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moulds from Clatchard Craig where many of the moulds may be 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century, and the crucibles from Dundurn is likely due to survival, limited excavation, or difficulties in dating moulds to this period. The distribution of single pieces of metalwork is less likely to indicate a ‘real’ concentration of metalwork in the past as the majority of examples do not come from excavated contexts but are stray finds or completely without provenance. This makes interpretations about power centres based on the appearance of pieces of fine metalwork rather tenuous. However, the metalwork evidence from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries continues to highlight the importance of the rivers as natural routes of communication. The general contexts of many of the pieces are at places of some secular or religious



Fig. 4.25: Glass boss or mount from Dundurn (Alcock and Alcock 1989:215).

importance such as at Dunkeld or at Clunie Castle, which although a later tower house and fortification, has an earthwork castle under the 13<sup>th</sup> century structure, or from a crannog in the Loch of Clunie (Dixon 1991: 23-24; RCAHMS 1994: 106).

Perhaps more indicative of important religious centres, at least those associated with the Columban church, is the distribution of iron and bronze hand bells. There are only 19 hand bells known to come from Scotland; 14 of which are iron and 5 are bronze (Bourke 1983:464). Bells are essential to the monastic tradition and Bourke attributes bells to a Columban church connection (ibid: 465 - 6). Scottish



iron bells probably date to the 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century, while the bronze ones may date to c. 900 on typological grounds (ibid: 466).

Location	Classification	Region
MARE’S CRAIG QUARRY	Iron bell	FIFE
BALNAHANNAIT	Iron bell	PERTH
FORTINGALL	Iron bell	PERTH
DERRIMORE	Iron bell	PERTH
STRUAN	Iron bell	PERTH
FORTEVIOT	Bronze bell	PERTH
LITTLE DUNKELD	Bronze bell	PERTH
STRATHFILLAN	Bronze bell	PERTH

Table 4.5: Hand bells in Fife and Perth (Bourke 1983: 467).

Many of the sites with hand bells are familiar from the discussion on carved stones, with a cluster of bells coming from the Glenlyon area with its links to Adomnán and Cói, and one from Forteviot and near Dunkeld (Table 4.5). Some hand bells in Ireland are associated with an establishment’s founding saint and are made into relics such as St Patrick’s bellshrine (O’Floinn 1994: 18-19, 34). A later fragment from Inchaffrey Abbey might represent one of these bell shrines that dates to the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century (Ford 1996: 504). These relics might also play a part in attracting pilgrims to a site and they also heighten the sanctity of the foundation that houses it. The cult of relics became increasingly important in the 8<sup>th</sup> –10<sup>th</sup> centuries and into the medieval period as a way for foundations to achieve renown and more importantly to augment their treasuries through pilgrimage (Yeoman 1999). The majority of archaeological evidence for pilgrimage comes from the medieval period (badges, buildings with architecture geared towards pilgrims), but the pilgrimage at some sites may stem from an early medieval tradition (ibid.: 11, 18, 35, 53).



## FIFE AND PERTH IN THE 10<sup>TH</sup> AND 11<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

The draw of St Andrews as a pilgrimage destination appears to grow in the 10<sup>th</sup> century attracting royal pilgrims. An Irish prince, a great grandson of Cinaed I, visited St Andrews in 965 (Yeoman 1999: 53). By the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, Queen Margaret established a free crossing of the Forth to encourage pilgrim travel to St Andrews (ibid.: 54). St Andrews in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century was also acquiring new lands and associated churches. In the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century the church and lands of St Serf at Loch Leven, associated with Culross, came under the power of the Bishop at St Andrews in return for providing the community with food and clothing (Hudson 1994: 166; Macquarrie 1993).

The 10<sup>th</sup> century in particular appears as a time when the kings actively worked to advance the power of the bishops by supporting them politically and economically (ibid.). In 906, Cusantín mac Aeda and Bishop Cellach held a meeting described in the ‘Chronicle of the Kings of Alba’ (Charles-Edwards 1999:60-61).

“And in his sixth year King Constantine and Bishop Cellach vowed together with the Gaels, to maintain the laws and disciplines of the faith and the rights of churches and of gospel-books on the Hill of Faith close to the royal *civitas* of Scone” (Charles-Edwards 1999: 60-61; Driscoll forthcoming; see also Anderson 1922,i: 445 for a different translation).



Charles-Edwards interpreted this meeting to be a proclamation of an ecclesiastical law which church and state were working together to maintain and administer (ibid.).

In the later 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> century, Vikings plundered Dunkeld and other areas of Fife and Perth quite severely until a successful battle against an incursion won by Cusantín mac Aeda (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998: 102; Broun 1999b: 109) Interaction with the Vikings was not all hostile, as there is some place-name evidence that at least a limited number of Vikings settled in the region, probably in small farmsteads. Taylor's survey shows very few names of Scandinavian derivation, although there is a group of three names near the island of Inchcolm where there is a Viking type hogback monument (Taylor 1995b: 145). The names may relate to some 10<sup>th</sup> century settlement, but could also be later introductions.

#### Monuments of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries



Fig. 4.26: Inchcolm hogback monument, Length 1.52m (Allen and Anderson 1903: 366).

By the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, the number of new monuments being erected was decreasing although the resources invested in those individual monuments often remained quite high. There are only 18 monuments attributed to being carved in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries and four of these are hogbacks (Fig. 4.27, Meigle,



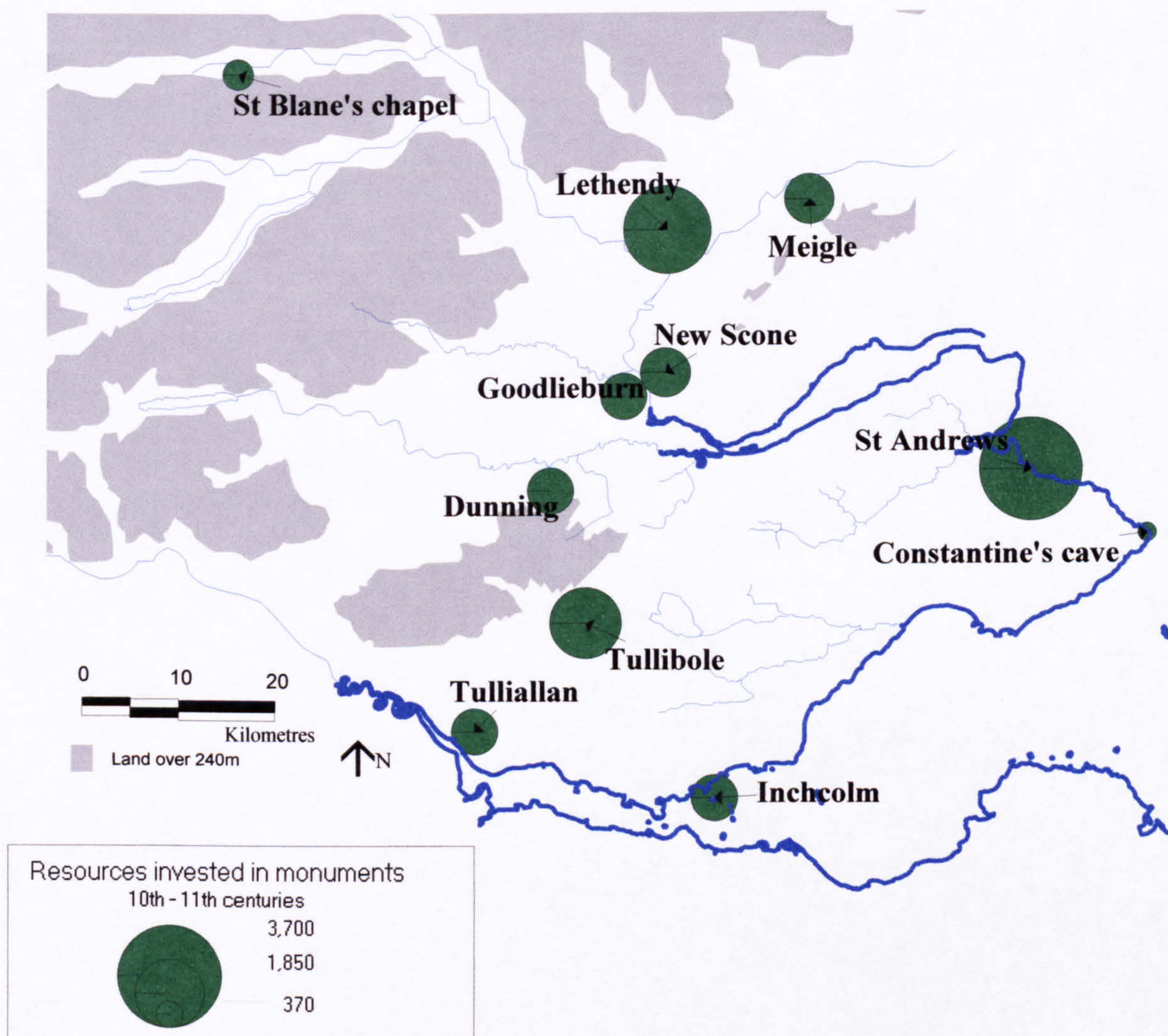


Fig. 4.27: Resources invested in monuments, 10th - 11th centuries

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Inchcolm, Tullibody, and Tulliallan). St Andrews and Tullibody are the only sites to have more than one monument carved in this period having six cross slabs and one hogback and a cross slab respectively. The only free standing monument ascribed to this period is the now lost cross from Goodlieburn, of which only the shaft survived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The shaft bore the lower portion of the figure of the crucified Christ in high relief (Stuart 1867: xlviii). Very little information survives about this monument, and it may be later than the 11<sup>th</sup> century based on what is known of its carved style and decoration. In regards to individual monuments, the most resource-intensive are the cross slab from Lethendy, which survived re-used as a door lintel in the tower house there, the hogbacks, and the cross slab from New Scone/Perth.

Not much is known about Lethendy in the early medieval period, and the original location of the monument, although presumably nearby, is not known. The part of the slab (Fig. 4.28) that survives carries figural scenes of a harpist (probably David) and two ecclesiastics one with a book satchel and the other with a staff and what looks like an angel over their heads (RCAHMS 1994: 94). The shape of the remaining stone suggests it is either part of a pillar or a cross shaft for a free standing monument, although it has been classed under the generic 'cross slab' category (ibid.: 161).

The hogback is a monument associated with Norse or Viking influence (Lang 1994). There are four within the current study region all from church sites. The



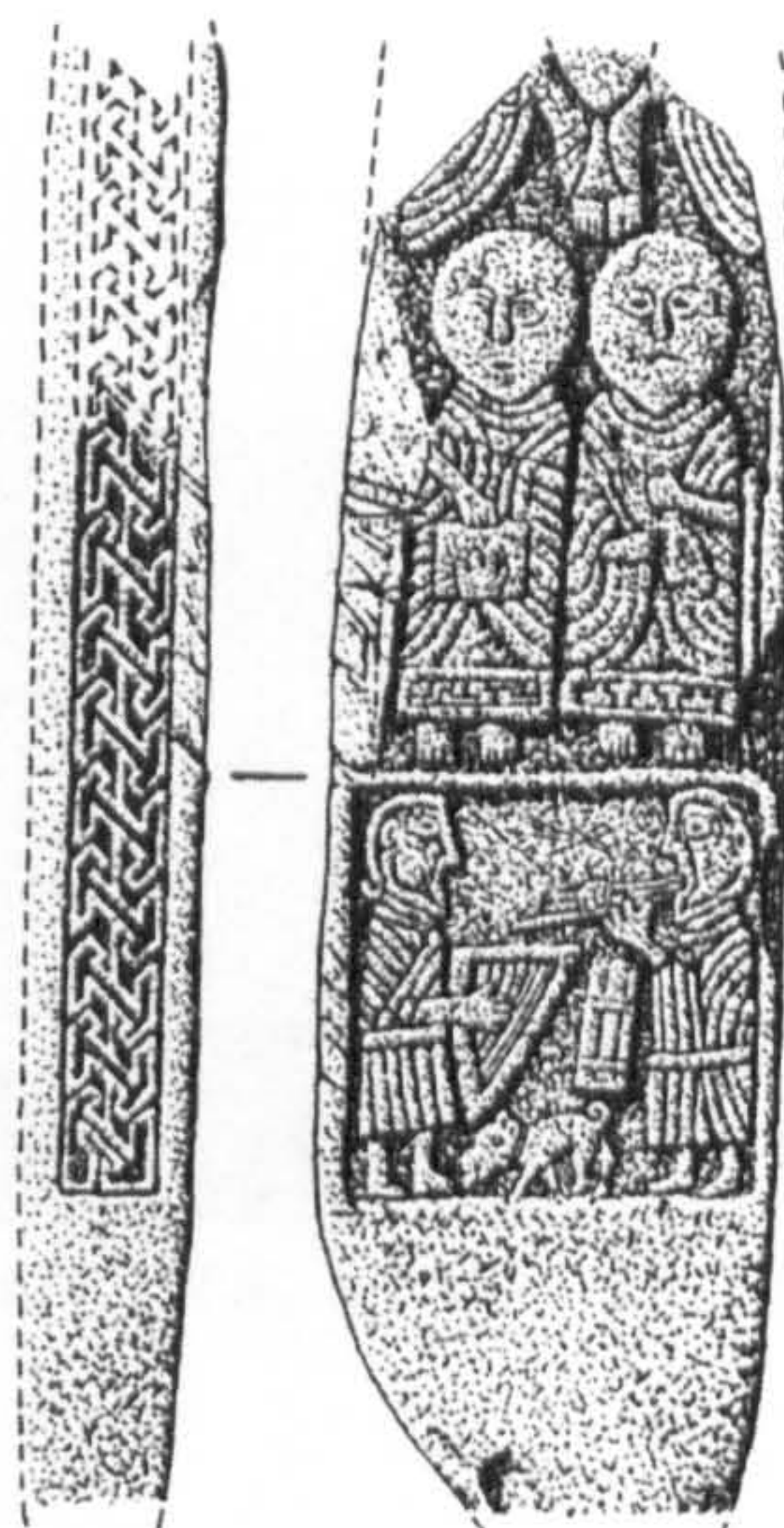


Fig. 4.28: Slab from Lethendy, Height 1.13m(RCAHMS 1994: 97).

hogback from Inchcolm has the zoomorphic ends and 'tiled' appearance of an upturned boat or roof of a building seen on other similar monuments and zoomorphic ends. There is also a worn *orans* figure on one side of the monument (Fig. 4.26). In the early 12<sup>th</sup> century King Alexander I founded an Augustinian priory here reportedly in thanks for shelter from the hermit on a passage from Queensferry to Fife (RCAHMS 1933: 14). The only remains of a pre 12<sup>th</sup> century foundation are the fragment of a 9<sup>th</sup> century cross slab and the 10<sup>th</sup> century hogback. Excavations around the immediate location of the hogback when it was moved indoors for protection did not reveal any features associated with the monument (Dalland 1993). The hogback at Tullibole is of similar design although it has been trimmed and is much worn (Robertson 1991). The Meikle hogback (Fig. 4.29) also has the tegulae or tiles and zoomorphic ends, but the shape is slightly different.



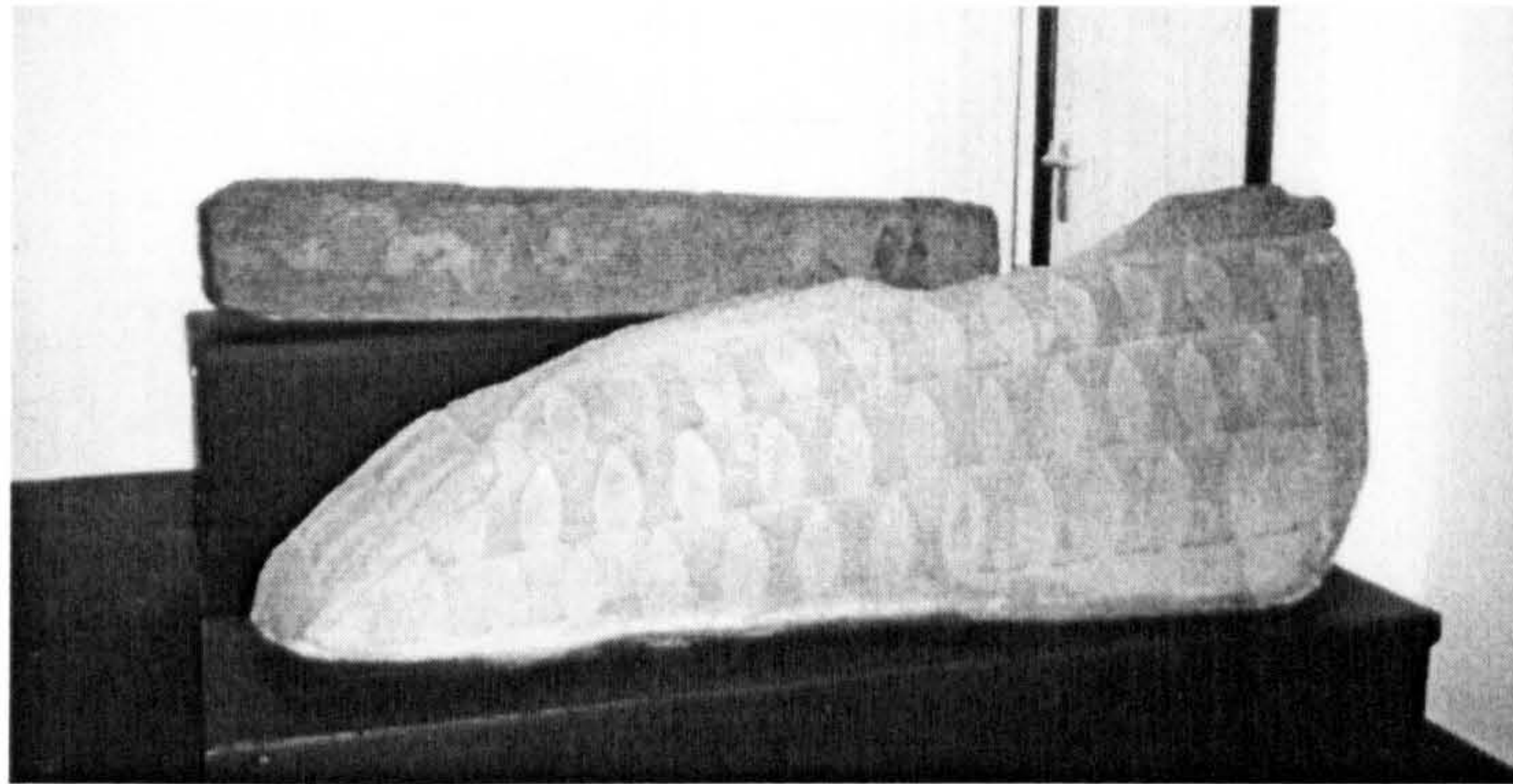


Fig. 4.29 Meigle hogback, Length 1.48m (photo by author).

The Viking presence as settlers might be seen in the hogbacks, influence on artistic styles, and possible burials indicated by the two unprovenanced oval brooches.

The excavations in the town of Perth uncovered a sword hilt, dated to the 10th century and another sword hilt that may be as early as the 9th century but these swords may be from burial rather than settlement sites (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998: 103).

The cross slab from New Scone (Fig. 4.30) has traditionally been given a date in the 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> centuries and it is similar in style to the ‘workshop’ stones from St Andrews although the crosses are without rings (RCAHMS 1994: 97). Although the stone was found in a garden in New Scone, which is adjacent to the important site at Scone Palace and Abbey, it is also thought to originally come from St John’s Kirk, in the town of Perth (ibid.:96). Whatever its exact original location, the stylistic connection with St Andrews complements the secular and religious power alliance seen in the proclamation at the Moot Hill at Scone in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century by Conastantine II and Bishop Cellach.



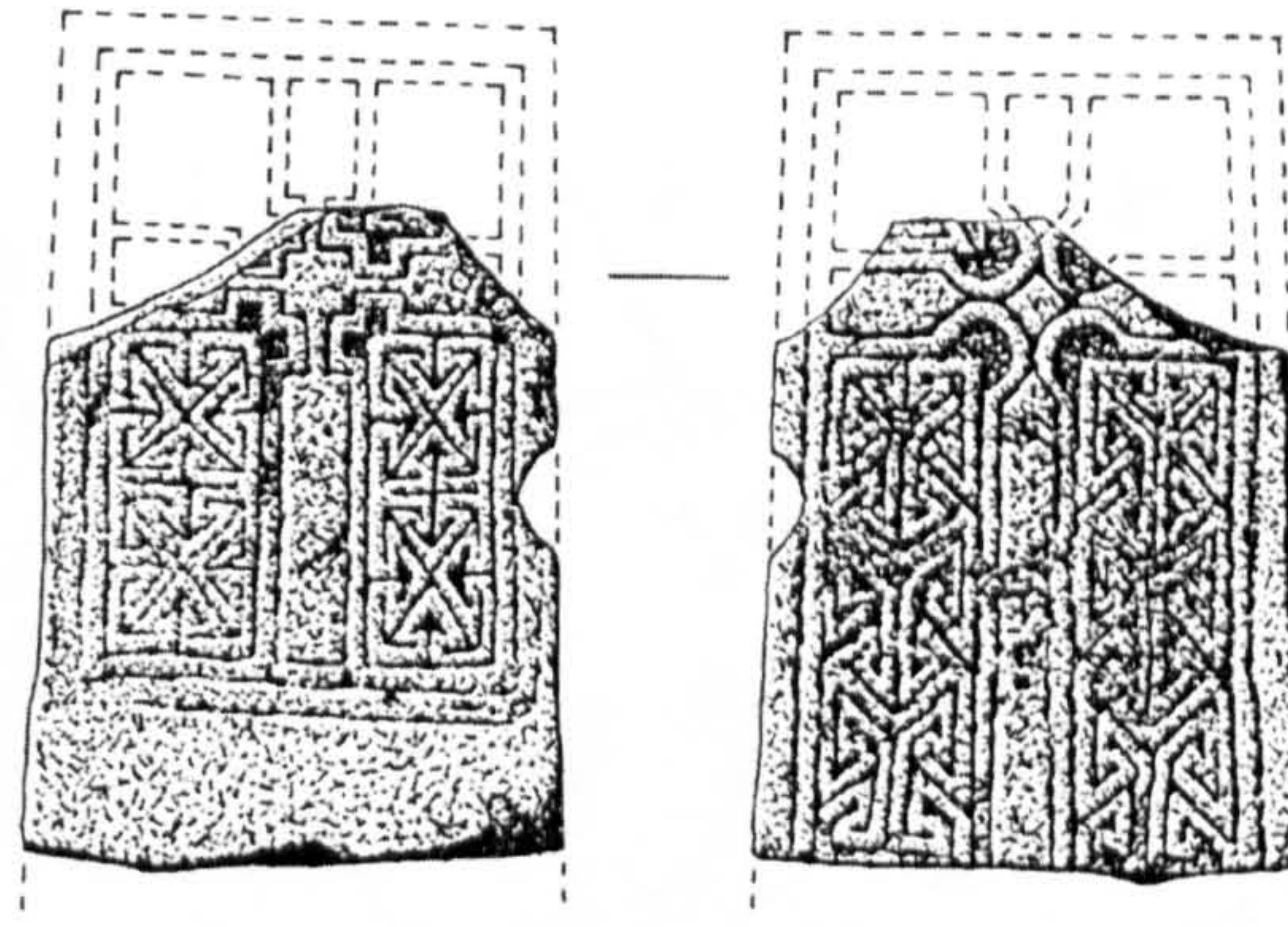


Fig. 4.30: Cross slab from New Scone, Height .49m (RCAHMS 1994: 97)

Scone is the site of a later palace and abbey, has a moot hill, or ceremonial mound where laws were proclaimed and probably kings inaugurated, and was the location of the Stone of Destiny before it was stolen and taken to England by Edward I in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the account of the proclamation by Constantine and Cellach, Scone is called '*regali civitate*' or royal *civitas* (Anderson 1922i, 445; Charles-Edwards 1999: 60-61). This is a rare example of the word *civitas* in Scottish contexts. However, its use here may reflect the assembly and administrative purposes of the site, similar to some instances of the use of the term in Irish texts (Etchingham 1999: 149). That there were both important aspects of secular and religious power at Scone can be assumed from at least the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards based on the joint proclamation by the king and bishop (Driscoll forthcoming). Associated settlement, if any, may have laid along the old road to New Scone (Fig. 4.31), where the cross slab was found, and where the remains of a now lost medieval village are thought to have been located (RCAHMS 1994: 126). The area today is a wet patch of landscaped garden within the lands of Scone Palace and Park and although there are some slight variations in the topography, no features are readily determined from looking at the ground surface.



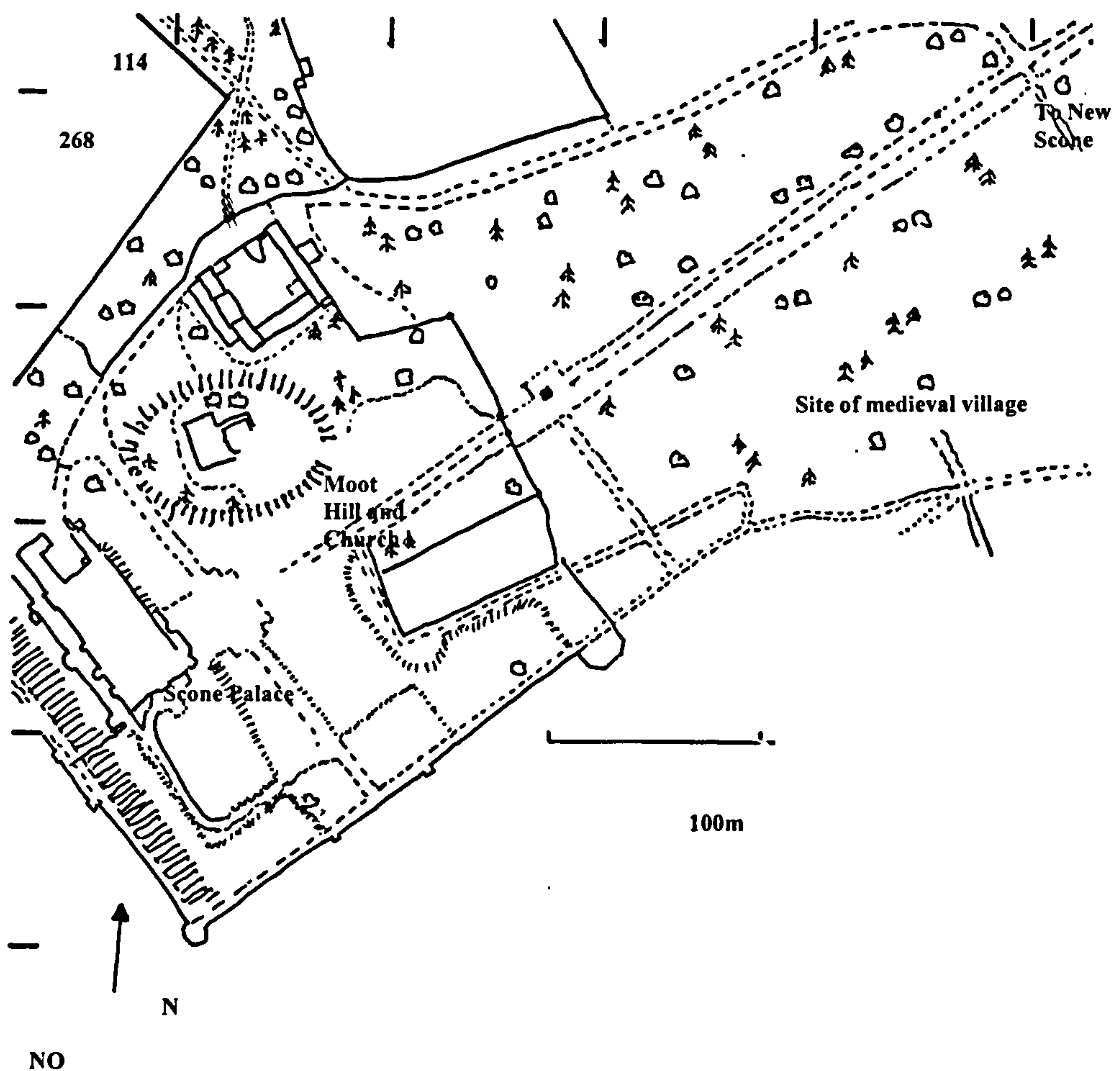


Fig. 4.31: Scone palace and the moot hill (after RCAHMS 1994:126).

A religious community associated with pre- 10<sup>th</sup> century Scone is attested by an *annat* place-name preserved in the Annaty Burn, which runs through new Scone and the old village of Scone (Clancy 1995: 91-115; Driscoll 2003; Driscoll forthcoming). Scone did not develop as a royal residence until after the foundation of the Augustinian abbey in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century (Driscoll 2003; forthcoming). Driscoll (forthcoming) has discussed the symbolic status of Scone and how its



identity as the new seat of kingship in Alba was constructed from the natural and archaeological landscape and the mythological past to legitimise and augment royal authority in much the same way as Forteviot or the royal centres of Ireland.

### Fine Metalwork, Hoards, and Coins

The distribution of fine metalwork dating to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries again suggests the importance of the waterways in the region (Fig. 4.32). The oval brooches from Errol have no provenance and may be part of a collection rather than from a local burial (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998: 104).

Location	Classification	No.	Description
BRIDGE OF EARN	Piece	1	‘Gotland style’ horse head brooch
DUNKELD	Piece	1	Cross brooch
DUNKELD	Piece	1	Headed ring pin
ERROL (OR LUNCARTHY)	Viking grave goods	2	Pair of oval brooches
INCHAFFRAY ABBEY	Piece	1	Fragment of bell shrine

Table 4.6 Metalwork in Fife and Perth, 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries

Most interesting is the fragment of a bell shrine from Inchaffray Abbey, which may once have housed a bell similar to those dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (Bourke 1983). In addition to these single objects, a, now lost, hoard came from Parkhill/Lindores in Fife (Fig. 4.32). The hoards’ contents are not exactly known but it was said to have contained a number of silver coins as well as gold chains and bracelets and had a deposition date in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998: 103). At least sixteen Hiberno-Norse coins were found



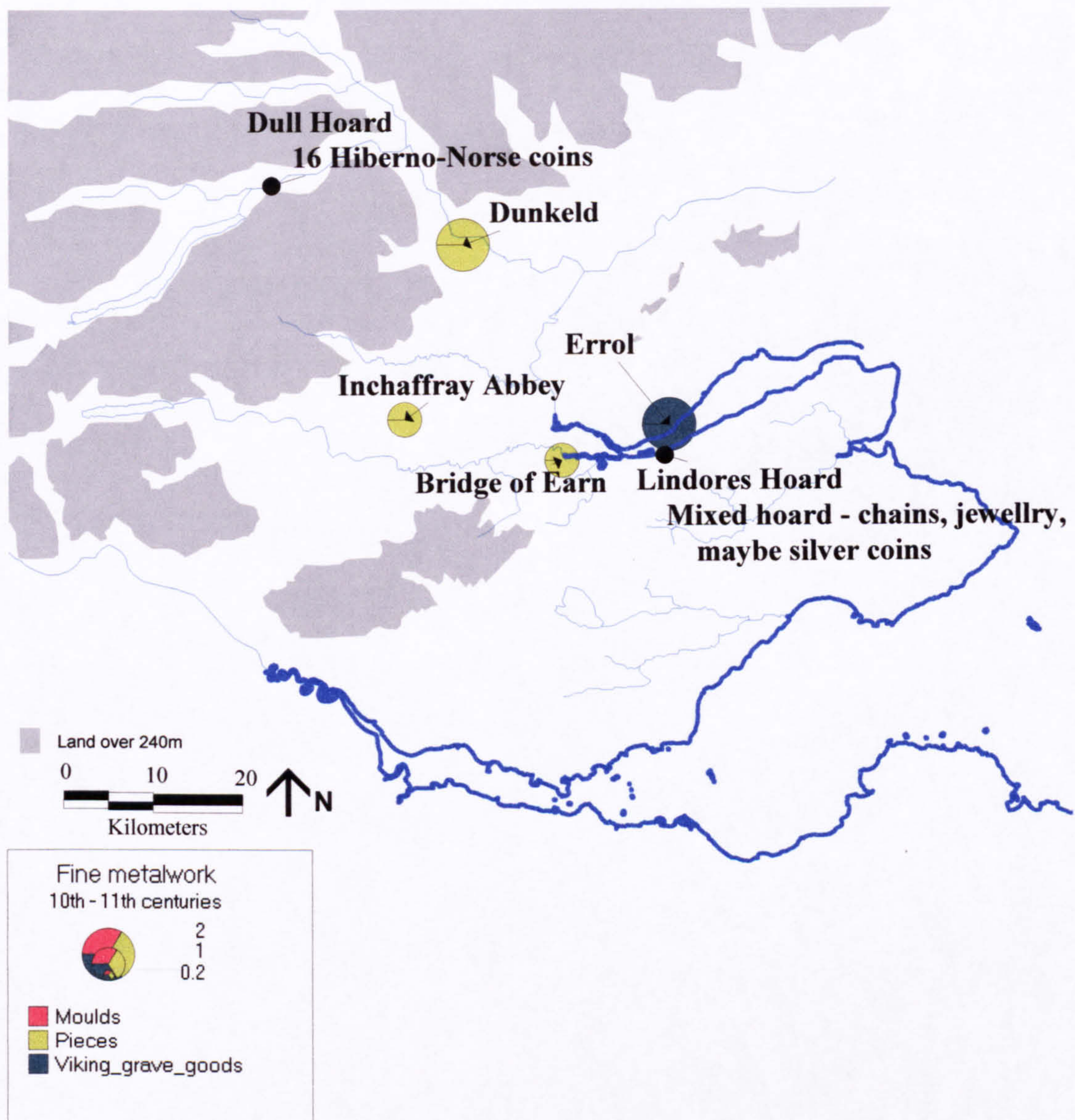


Fig.4.32: Fine metalwork from the 10th - 11th centuries and the locations of 10th - 11th century hoards.

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in a hoard deposited in Dull c.1025 (Bateson 1993). These coins along with the Parkhill/Lindores hoard and a possible lost associated find of that hoard, are the only known Hiberno-Norse coin finds from Fife and Perth (ibid. 214). The Dull coins came to light through metal detection in a ploughed field to the south of Dull village and they may have been contained in a textile or leather wrapping, possibly a purse (ibid. 213). Dull appears to be a relatively significant religious site throughout the 6th – 11th centuries and it is hoped that excavations currently underway there will help to give some context to the carved crosses and coin hoard (Will 2003).

#### CONCLUSION: CHANGING POWER STRUCTURES IN EARLY MEDIEVAL FIFE AND PERTH

Currently, sculpture is the best source of information for changes in power structures in early medieval Fife and Perthshire. Here sculpture was not only a manifestation of symbolic wealth and power, but also ideological change. Because of the different ideological messages conveyed by different types of monuments, namely symbol stones and cross-bearing monuments, some differences in the way symbolic wealth was used to articulate power are more defined. The different patterns of material investment are particularly pronounced for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century to 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century material (Fig 4.33). The incorporation of material investment in sculpture alongside other manifestations of symbolic wealth such as imports, metalworking and hoarding is necessary to develop patterns of change and use. Without the inclusion of investment in sculpture, there is not enough data concerning these other aspects of material culture to evoke patterns or identify power structures, they can only identify potential power centres.



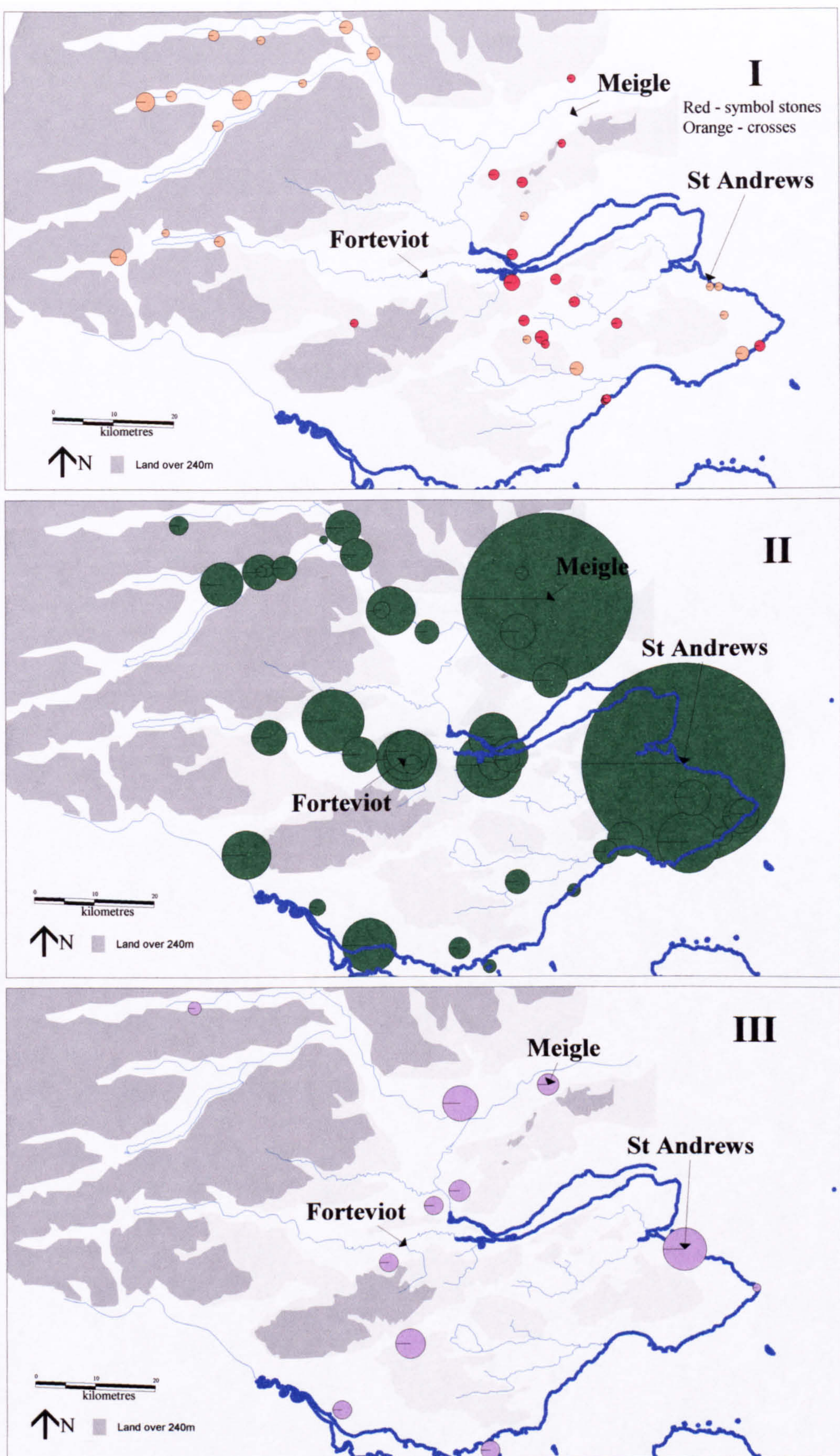


Fig. 4.33: Resources in sculpture Phase I to III  
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## Phase I

In the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, material investment in sculpture is not concentrated at particular sites but dispersed in regional clusters. These regional groupings delineate landscapes where symbolic wealth was invested in sculpture, and the types of monuments erected show a marked difference in distribution.

The relative dearth of symbol stones south of the Mounth has been noted previously (Alcock 1991). Individually, the symbol stones of the Fife peninsula do not often generate much comment. Alcock (1991: 19) considered the number of symbol stones on the Fife peninsula too small to be considered in her analysis. When analysed with other potentially contemporary monuments, these few stones show a marked difference in distribution. Looking at them in terms of material investment singly and as a distribution enhances the significance of this landscape in the centre of Fife. The distribution shows a remarkable parallel to later parish boundaries and the deanery boundary of St Andrews and possibly reflects a meaningful early medieval boundary between Fife and Fothrif.

There is a remarkable technical similarity between the symbol stones in this region, and arguably for most symbol stones. The technique of carving – incision – suggests that the actual act of carving would be comparatively equal. The tendency for pairs of symbols also suggests a similar amount of time invested in the act of carving. There are variations in stone type, size and elaboration that might suggest different levels of material investment focused on individual monuments or perhaps ‘hotspots’ along the line of monuments in Fife.



Abernethy and Lindores are both of igneous material and have more than two symbols implying more investment than the others (the Walton stone, for example). The significance of this boundary zone and the location of these more monumental stones may help to explain the significance of the fort at Clatchard Craig and the burial of the Norrie's Law Hoard. The manifestations of symbolic wealth in the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> century in this region mutually reinforce the significance of this location and these displays. This area of the northern Fife coast was a landscape of power with that power manifested in a variety of material culture and symbols.

In looking at the distribution of potentially early stones with crosses and no other ornament alongside symbol stones, there is very little 'mingling' between the two. These crosses, which may be of early date, form two regional groups. One region is to the east of the symbolic boundary in Fife and the other is in Atholl.

The mutually exclusive distribution of potentially early cross slabs and symbol stones in Fife strengthens the model put forth by Smith (1996: 27 - 29) that a monumental frontier ran through the centre of Fife between areas that held Pictish pagan beliefs and those that were Christian. This model was based on the distribution of long cist cemeteries and *eccles* place-names (Christian) and square-kerbed cairns and symbol stones (non-Christian). Carver (2001:12 and 2003:8) has furthered this model proposing a patchwork nature for the introduction and adoption of Christianity in Pictland over a relatively extended period of time. A similar patchwork theory is evidenced by the mutual exclusion of cross slabs and symbol stones in Atholl. This exclusion is even more apparent when the



distribution of symbol stone monuments in Tayside is also considered (Fraser and Ritchie 1999: 12).

This density of early cross slabs in Atholl may be associated with a group of *cill* place-names as identified by Taylor focusing on the Tay and Tummel rivers (1996: 101). This area lies within the region of Atholl, or ‘New Ireland.’ Logierait, later the caput of the kingdom of Atholl, was the chief church of Atholl probably by the early 8<sup>th</sup> century as it has links to St Cói, an abbot of Iona and contemporary of Adomnán, who died in 712 (ibid.: 102; Hooper 2002: 287). This may be visible in the monumental record from the presence of carved stones of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries here. The stones of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries may also be connected to the Columban church, with one incised cross slab from Camus Urachan/St Adamnan’s possibly prefiguring the importance of this saint in particular for the area in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Hooper’s recent study of the early medieval kingdom of Atholl built on Taylor’s (1996) place-name analysis and showed how crucial the link between the Columban church, particularly Adomnán, and Atholl was in creating and maintaining secular and religious authority (2002: 287-292). Although, as she notes (ibid.: 283-284), Atholl largely lacks the obviously high status monuments of Class II and Class III stones of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, the analysis of material investment devoted to sculpture suggests the regional importance of these sites was considerable throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is perhaps significant that Adomnán, one of the key promoters of ideal kingship, is directly related to the establishment of churches in Atholl. The major church of Atholl by the 9<sup>th</sup> century



was Dunkeld, which was closely associated with the kings of Pictland and later Alba as the head of the Columban federation (Broun 1999b).

The patchwork nature of the distribution of types of monuments (symbol stones and cross slabs) in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries not only points to a piecemeal and controlled adoption of Christianity perhaps along political and territorial lines, but also to the different versions of Christianity that could be adopted (Carver 2001:12, 17). In Atholl, there is the potential for an early link to the Columban centre at Iona. In eastern Fife, the Christian root may not be Columban, but possibly the other historic proselytiser of the Picts, St Ninian of Whithorn or some other perhaps native saint (*EH III.4* McClure and Collins 1994: 114). The material investment in sculpture and the nature and distribution of the monuments themselves suggest a political geography of smaller territorial units (or kingdoms) with independent political and ideological agendas.

If we look at other manifestations of symbolic wealth, the potential political centres of these territories emerge. Dundurn should be viewed in the first instance in its context as a local power centre, as its political affiliations are not clear from historical references or even geographic location. Situated as it was at the end point of eastward routes from Argyll, the Clyde valley, and the southern Highlands and on the edge of a fertile plain leading to the political southern Pictish heartland, the rulers of Dundurn were well positioned to exploit their geographic location and assert their power through the use and control of socially significant materials and activities. At the highest western tip of the summit there is a wide ledge carved into the rock. This might be a structural device shaped to accommodate timbers,



but is locally known as St Fillan's Chair (Alcock *et al* 1989: 198). Alcock *et al.* have suggested the chair, with its visibility of the valley below may be an inauguration seat for the rulers of Dundurn (ibid.). This position is particularly symbolic as it looks over the major routeway to the West. FitzPatrick has pointed out, however, that inaugural chairs in Ireland may be a medieval addition to inaugural furniture, even though the image of a seated and enthroned king was common in early medieval Europe (1997: 133-152).

Clatchard Craig in Fife is geographically associated with monumental sculpture, the location of a large silver hoard, and prehistoric and historic landscapes including the Roman fort at Carpow. That it held a degree of political hierarchy in Fife seems unquestionable, but like Dundurn its political territory is not certain. Although it lies adjacent to a potential monumental frontier or even political boundary, it is not clear where such a boundary could be drawn. Further analysis of the sculpture explores this point.

In Fife, the investment in early sculpture is comparable despite the differences in ideology behind their erection. In this small region, apart from the Skeith stone, there is little difference in the amount of technical investment in the potentially early cross slabs or the symbol stones. Monumentally speaking, it does not appear that one ideology was trying to 'outdo' the other. This may suggest that there was not a strong sense of tension or conflict politically behind the display of these different ideological messengers.



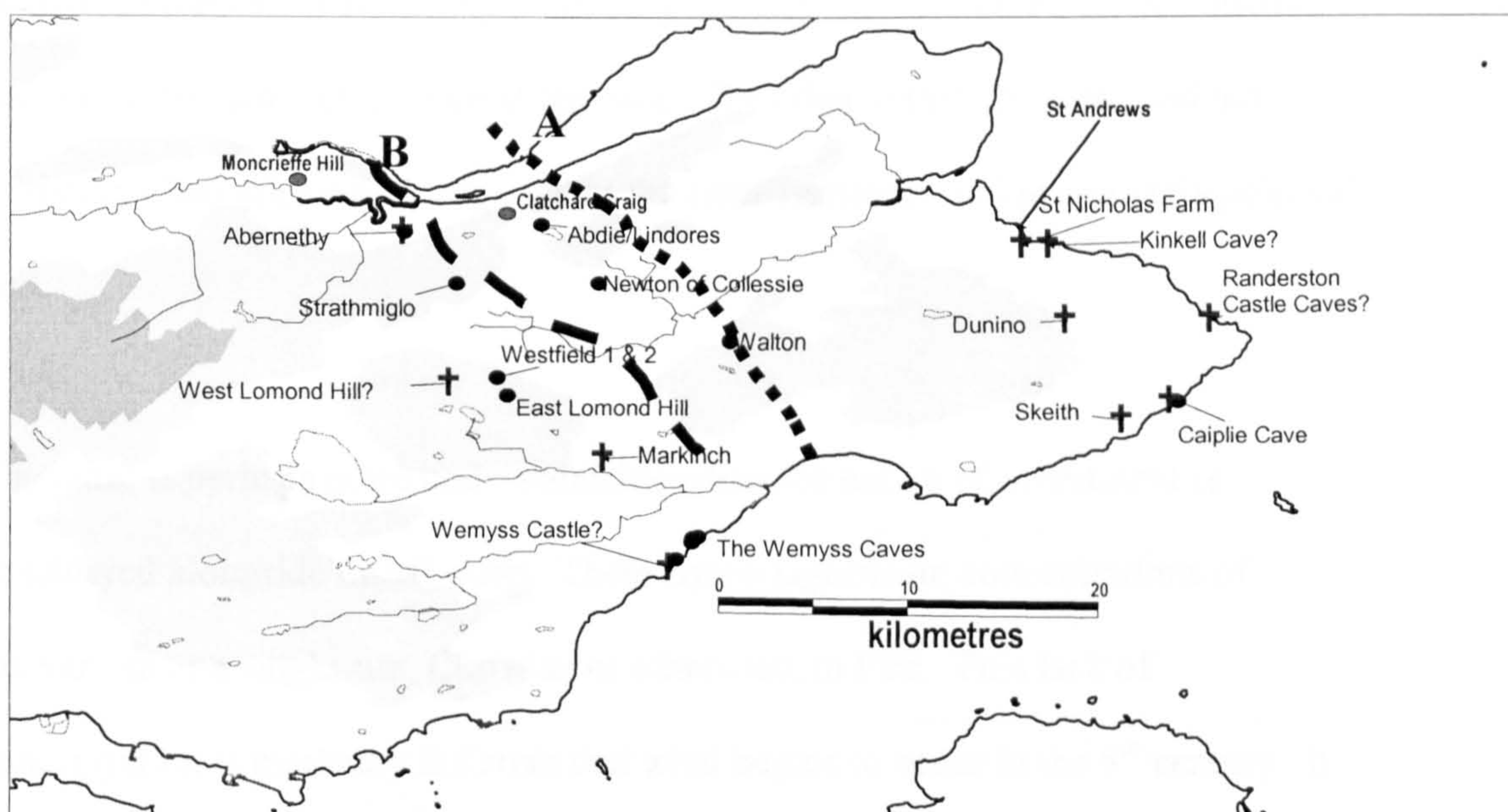


Fig. 4.34: Potential boundaries in the Fife peninsula. A: monumental frontier, B: reconstructed boundary of Fife-Fothrif.

Looking at the distribution of symbol stones there are two ‘lines’ running roughly north-south across the peninsula. These lines offer a choice of where to draw potential boundaries. One option would make the extreme eastern line part of the boundary and this would reflect Smith’s model of a monumental frontier between Christianity and non-Christian ideologies (A in Fig. 4.34, 1996: 29). However, following Taylor’s reconstructed boundary of the deanery of St Andrews, a line might be drawn between the two linear distributions of symbol stones (B in Fig. 4.34). The symbol stones might be sitting at the start of higher land as landmarks of entry into different territories. If we draw the line here, the monumental frontier is lost or at least more mixed as symbol stones could then be argued to occur at the edge of a territory that also uses cross-bearing monuments (east Fife).

The sculpture then offers at least two possible models for political and ideological structures in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century Fife. One follows on from Smith’s model that a



demarcation possibly reflecting political territories can be seen between Christian and non-Christian archaeological features. The other is that Christian and non-Christian ideologies could exist within the same territorial and presumably political unit.

The latter is perhaps more understandable when the nature of investment is considered alongside distribution. There are no significant concentrations of investment at a single site, Christian or otherwise, in Fife. This lack of concentration is markedly different that what begins to occur in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. It is also a marked difference from the way material investment in sculpture was used in the contemporary early phase in Argyll where significant concentrations occurred at both Iona and Cladh a'Bhile. The implications are that although Christianity established a foothold in certain regions of southern Pictland, the secular élite did not enthusiastically support it until the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries despite the likelihood that the original grants for land to Christian communities came from secular sources. Early Christianity might have been tolerated or even welcomed without full-scale adoption by the secular élite. This accounts for the lack in Fife of a clearly patronised ecclesiastical site in terms of monumental sculpture in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Christianity as a tolerated 'experiment' in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries is not a model that can be applied to all of Pictland as the independent entities suggested by manifestations of symbolic wealth would have dealt with this new ideology in different ways. Arguably, this model does not even apply to the other Christian territory around Atholl as Christian ideology, embodied in cross slabs, is more



dispersed within the region and this perhaps reflects a different initial influence (i.e. from Iona).

## **Phase II**

The patterns of material investment particularly in sculpture during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries are markedly different than phase one. In contrast to the dispersed regional clusters of investment, phase two shows concentrated centres of investment at St Andrews and Meigle. Sculpture has also changed as symbols now appear together with Christian motifs. Monuments bearing only Christian symbolism, elaborated cross slabs, also are more widespread and occur in clusters. These two factors – the importance of particular sites and the more widespread adoption of Christian symbolism – signifies the enthusiastic adaptation of sculpture for purposes of monumental display by ruling ecclesiastical and more particularly secular élites. This appears to be related to an increasing centralisation or desire for centralisation of power.

In comparison to Fife in phase one, the distribution and concentration of material investment in phase two Fife shows a distinct interest by secular élite in patronising ecclesiastical establishments and displaying those relationships of power in elaborate monuments. The iconography of the St Andrews Sarcophagus side panel, while including a Biblical scene, clearly has echoes of secular ideology and power. The classicised David killing the lion is echoed by the presumably local king or leader hunting on his horse accompanied by his groom and band of dogs. The local hunter is further paralleled to David in that he does not merely hunt the native deer,



but he is pictured killing an exotic lion in a symbolic link to the ideal warrior and king of the Old Testament. The nature of the iconography at Meigle and other Tayside centres outside this study, as noted by Ritchie, are strongly secularised suggesting patronage of élite, probably royal, lay people (1995:8).

Clancy (1996:121) has argued that Pictish rulers were active in the foundation and activities of churches in their territories. The sculpture shows that this was not necessarily as significant during phase one as it was in phase two when church and secular spheres were intimately connected. Historically this relationship is visible in the account of King Nechtan's letter to Ceolfrid in Northumbria (*EH V.21* McClure and Collins 1994: 276; Veitch 1997). This letter is a post Synod of Whitby political move asking for spiritual advice and masons skilled in the art of making stone buildings (*HE V.21*, McClure and Collins 1994: 276-286). Seven years later, the Columban family is 'expelled' from Pictland possibly representing a change in royal patronage or favoured status. A recent reassessment of these events and this period in Columban history (664 – 717) has challenged the view that this was a calamitous period for Iona and her daughter churches, a view that may be due in part to Bede's attitude towards the Columban church (Veitch 1997). The relationship between the Pictish rulers and the Columban *familia*, under the direction of Adomnán at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, does not necessarily indicate a decline. This period may be better considered as a period of change and redefinition of the involvement of the Columban *familia* within the local politics of the kingdoms of both Pictland and Northumbria (*ibid.*: 629). Dál Riata kings in the east were equally interested in ecclesiastical affairs. The transference of



Columba's relics to Dunkeld in 849 being a symbolic event of the transference of both secular and ecclesiastic power from the west to the east.

Iconography and the degree of material investment in sculpture indicate that power was being consolidated and created through church/secular relationships. While this iconography and investment cannot be pinpointed to a particular date, ideologically and politically speaking some change to investment in sculpture after the ascension of the Dál Riata dynasty of mac Alpín seems likely. It is, however, relatively impossible to discern what sculpture is 'pre or post 843.' The sculpture from Dunkeld may largely postdate 849 when Columba's relics were moved here, but this is assuming the historical date is a definite marker for patronage and display, which is not necessarily valid. The 'workshop slabs' from St Andrews may date art historically from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries suggesting perhaps a boom in patronage after the success of the Dál Riata kings and patronage of this Pictish establishment.

Limited excavation of secular high status sites shows a continued use and modification of the structures, but other manifestations of symbolic wealth such as the importation and use of ceramics and the sponsoring of metalworking are less archaeologically visible. These other manifestations of symbolic wealth cannot define power structures on their own and must be considered alongside the sculpture. There is very little in the sculpture or other forms of symbolic wealth dating to circa the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries that articulates drastic or decisive change from later 7<sup>th</sup> or earlier 8<sup>th</sup> century material. This may be because, initially, no great changes were defined or even existed. Cinead mac Alpín died at the Pictish



monumental site and palace of Forteviot. The adoption of Pictish power centres by an incoming ruling élite, rather than their destruction, may signify a degree of continuity or a desire to associate with the Pictish past and gain authority. Indeed, it seems most probable that the monumental landscape of Forteviot was expanded in the later 9<sup>th</sup> century by the Dál Riata kings with the addition of crosses.

It is these monuments that perhaps show the first political and ideological changes in the later 9<sup>th</sup> century in the absence of evidence for settlement destruction or changes in material culture (metalwork, for example). Both the Dupplin and Invermay crosses were free-standing. The free-standing cross was not the favoured monumental type of the majority of Pictish territories where the most common elaborately sculpted monument is the cross slab. The Dupplin cross is an amalgam of styles in true Insular fashion: in the domination of secular imagery it shares much with other 'Pictish' style sculpture, its basic concept as a free-standing cross form and perhaps its central boss is shared with monuments from Argyll and Ireland, and the shape of its head and use of vine scroll echo styles dominant in Northumbria. The combination of these stylistic features created a cosmopolitan and highly politicised monument – from its inscriptions to its secular and David imagery - placed within the political power landscape of the Pictish palace.

The inscription on the Dupplin cross directly links royal persons, and by extension the symbiotic nature of Dál Riata and Pictish kingship, with this resource-intensive monument (Forsyth 1996). As stated above, the free-standing cross is not the most popular monument form. There are very few free-standing crosses in 'Pictland'



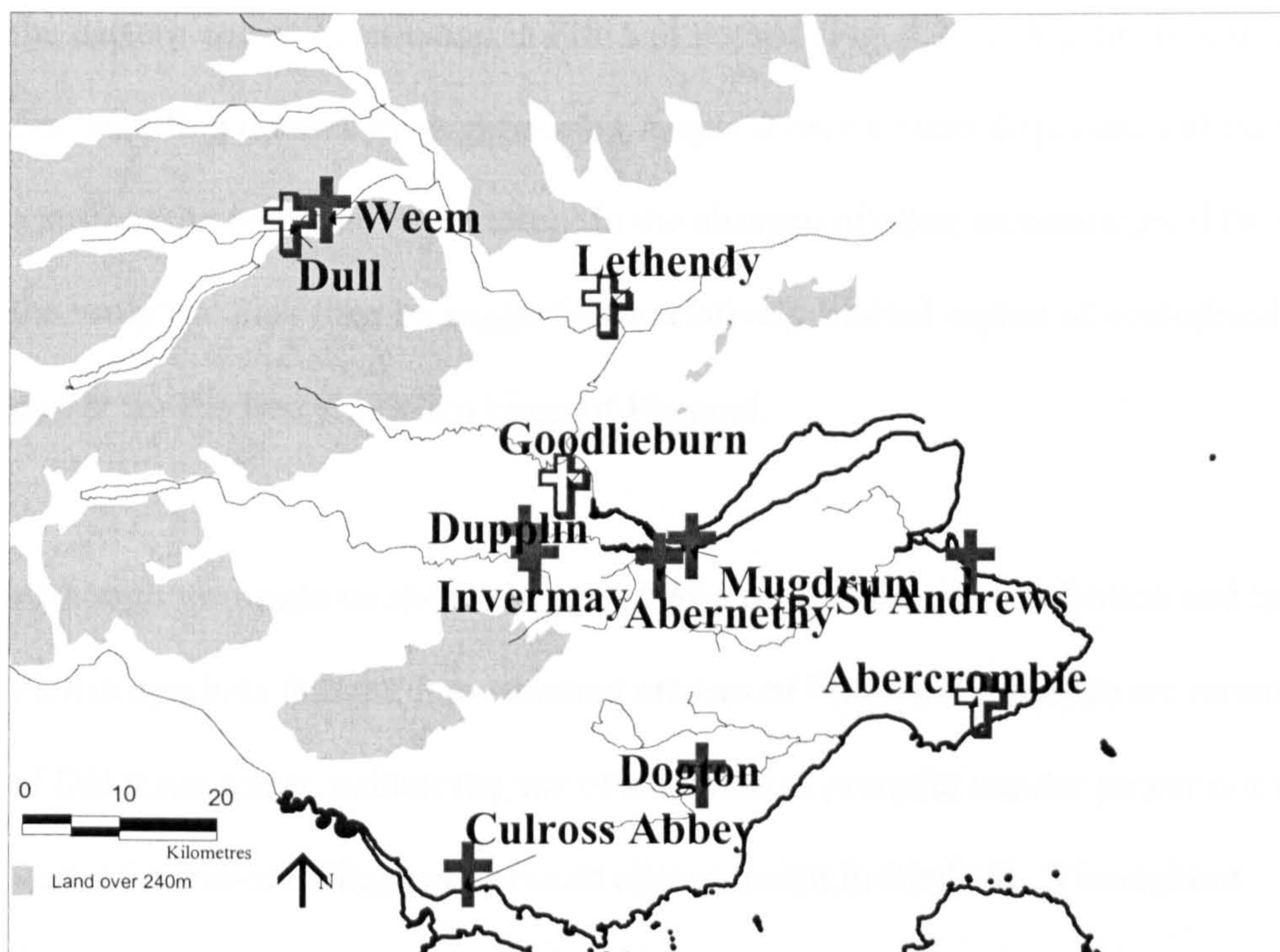


Fig. 4.35: Location of free standing (solid) and possible free standing (open) crosses.

and none of these bear Pictish symbols (Fraser and Ritchie 1999). Within the study region free-standing crosses or fragments of them are only found at Dupplin, Invermay, Abernethy, Culross, Dogton, Mugdrum, Weem, and St Andrews with a possible shaft from Abercrombie. There are other possible free-standing crosses of 10th or 11th century date from Lethendy and Goodlieburn while Dull has cruciform free-standing monuments with little to no elaboration in ornament. The free-standing cross, so well associated by textual inscriptions with particularly the Uí Néill kingship in Ireland and as a vehicle for kingship iconography in Ireland and Dál Riata, was a conduit for ideas about high kingship under the authority of God. The limited appearance of the free-standing cross as a monument type and the exclusion of Pictish symbols may suggest a political link to incoming Dál Riata secular patrons. Additionally their distribution in this study area concentrates on



the eastern end of Fortriu and in Fife and Fothrif (Fig. 4.35). A general search for free-standing crosses in neighbouring Angus shows a more dispersed pattern along a strip of the coastline (Canmore). In the absence of other archaeological factors, the sculpture may then be suggesting a relatively limited region of centralised power for the first Dál Riata kings of Pictland.

Although we might be able to suggest based on the limited distribution and lack of Pictish symbols that the free-standing crosses of Fife and Perthshire are monuments of Dál Riata kings, neither the use of sculpture to promote secular power nor the form of a free-standing cross was an alien concept in Pictland. Throughout Pictland secular themes occur on sculpture, arguably more so than it does on sculpture in Argyll, Ireland, or Northumbria. Themes of secular authority occur both with (Class II) and without (Class III) Pictish symbols.

The monument form of the free-standing cross was also used frequently on slab monuments. The Gaşk (or 'Bore') stone in Perthshire bears a much weathered ringed cross in very high relief on one side and a variety of scenes and symbols on the other (Fraser and Ritchie 1999: 38-39). The cross form is similar to what could be a free-standing cross. The high relief of the cross imparts an air of three-dimensionality and the armpits of the cross are even pierced. It is unlikely given the high quality of craftsmanship and artistry of carving in eastern Scotland that the lack of free-standing crosses was a factor of skill. The implication is that the choice of depicting a free-standing cross on a slab was made because the space around the cross and on the back of the slab whether it was filled with Pictish symbols, Biblical, or secular scenes was integral to the ideology and the message



being conveyed. Similarly, a place such as St Andrews that does not have monuments using Pictish symbols, reflects a choice by patrons to display power and ideological messages in a way different than its contemporary ecclesiastic sites to the north.

The elaborate Class II slabs, seen at Meigle, Dunfallandy, Fowlis Wester amongst others, might signify the bringing together of traditionally Pictish methods of asserting control and power over the land by the use of Pictish symbol monuments and the incorporation of Christian ideology. The great difference in the forms and the iconography of sculpture at the two largest concentrations of investment within the study area, at Meigle and St Andrews, may also suggest a limited degree of control exhibited by the ecclesiastical (and by extension political) centre of southern Pictland, whether under the control of Pictish or Dál Riata kings. The sculpture from St Andrews (barring the possibility of new finds) does not bear Pictish symbols and includes free-standing crosses. The sculpture from Meigle contains multiple examples of Pictish symbols and does not include free-standing crosses. The patchwork feel of southern Pictish Christianity of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century is still present in the different 'types' of Christianity suggested by the sculpture. Although the sculpture shows that Christianity was now more evenly dispersed, it also shows there were still independent Christian and probably political units operating outwith the control of a centralised bishopric such as St Andrews or outside of the attempted political over kingship of the Dál Riata kings.



### **Phase III**

At the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the division between the incoming Scots from Dál Riata and the existing Picts becomes erased in the documentary sources and a new term, 'Alba,' is used (Broun 1994; 1999a; 1999b; Herbert 2000: 70). This rebranding of the old Pictish kingship attempts to override the political and cultural divisions of the 9<sup>th</sup> century as evidenced in the differences in sculpture styles and distributions. There are changes in material investment and the use of symbolic wealth in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries characterised by a drop in the creation of new monuments and a change in political focus away from the hilltop fortifications like Clatchard Craig and Dundurn.

The amount of resources invested in carved stone monuments and evidence for other types of characteristic displays of wealth (imported pottery and glass and fine metalworking) declines. While the latter is partly due to lack of excavation and dated evidence, it might also be part of a trend for resources to be invested in other things such as buildings. Control of land and resources may no longer be attainable solely through the personal relationships so vital in the earlier centuries and marked by the exchange of significant materials and erection of carved monuments in the landscape. As both kingly and ecclesiastical power consolidated into the later 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, endowments of large monastic houses, the erection of large stone buildings, lowland royal complexes like Scone, and the establishment of the burghs displayed the power and control of land and resources.



Churchyards and boundaries were no longer needed as venues to display the images and monuments to budding centralisation of power and kingship through carved stones as it was in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The decline of some centres, such as Meigle or Dunkeld, may be a sign of the increasing power of the bishoprics, sited elsewhere, and also may influence the use of carved stone monuments at such centres. As they declined in political status, their effectiveness as venues for display waned. It was more politically beneficial for local élites to sponsor or donate to the major (possibly royal) churches or maintain their own estate churches rather than devote too much of their resources on carved monuments at older establishments. Although the majority of the early medieval power centres become less physically marked out as important by carved stones, they may retain their ceremonial or ideological significance. In 1071, Mael Coluim III (Malcolm Canmore) met and made peace with William the Conqueror at Abernethy (Duncan 1975: 119).

Scone, as a relatively 'new' royal seat of authority in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century was not using carved stone monuments to articulate that authority either at the site itself or in its immediate landscape. The lack of material investment in carved stones at Scone, which was coming to the height of its early medieval significance suggests that there was a change in Perthshire in the use of and perception of these types of monuments. Beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the secular and religious élite were taking advantage of other opportunities to display their power and wealth and create the social and economic bonds once materialised in carved stones. By the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, it is probably stone buildings such as the round tower from



Abernethy that took on the role of demarcating places monumentally. The importance of stone buildings as monuments are part of a development in the public display of kingship and power in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, which also sees purpose-built royal centres like Scone and Govan in Strathclyde becoming the symbols of royal authority (Driscoll 2003: 121). However, quite differently at Govan, monumental sculpture did play a great part in articulating power as evidenced by the collection of 48 carved stones of the 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries including free-standing crosses, hogbacks, and a monolithic sarcophagus, some bearing images of secular élite (Ritchie 1994; Driscoll 2003).

The establishment of Scone as the new seat of power for Alba marked a break from using the old Pictish power centres, such as Forteviot, which was adopted and then adapted by the first kings of the mac Alpín dynasty. However, this new seat did have a monumental ancestral connection. Driscoll (forthcoming) suggested in the context of Scone, that the landscape, which was crucial to the mytho-political legitimacy of the royal site, was itself an important part of the ceremony and experience of assemblies taking place there. As participants in assembly moved through surrounding landscapes they were enveloped in the memory of the past as they encountered ‘ancestral’ seats of power like Moncrieffe Hill or Forteviot and royal churches like Abernethy. The significance of moving through landscapes, especially monumentally loaded landscapes, has been shown to be important also in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries at Forteviot where prehistoric monuments were augmented by carved stones with royal imagery and the stone church building. In the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, we might also see the significance of movement connected to the symbol stones in particular on the boundary through the central Fife



peninsula. What is different about this monumental landscape around Scone is that there are no new carved stone monuments erected in it. If it references carved stones at all, it is those that are already standing and already have a meaning and a past.

Symbolic displays of wealth and power were in part now being directed towards structures. Buildings of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and later provided the opportunities for economic, political, and social relationships to be enacted and displayed at religious and secular sites. Foundations that evolved into parish churches might retain the public statements about land and secular élite made by the earlier cross slabs and crosses to some extent, but with the appearance of Augustinian and Benedictine style monastic houses the nature of public display changed. In some respects a grander statement or display is made as the buildings become larger or more ornate and costly to erect and then maintain. But the images of the secular élite presented directly on religious objects, such as hunting scenes or Pictish symbols on cross slabs, and the messages of political and religious ideology towards kingship are no longer being actively promoted.

Symbolic wealth in Fife and Perthshire, or the southern fringes of 'Pictland,' shows the complicated nature of early medieval power structures both secular and religious. The sculpture in particular highlights the uneven advance of Christianity and its relationship to political units. When Christianity becomes more widespread, it is still not uniform. In the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries sculpture became a conduit for display of wealth and the ideology of secular power. While the enthusiasm for such display was relatively widespread, certain centres of



investment, St Andrews and Meigle in this study area, stand out as particularly important nodes of display and in church/secular relationships. Enthusiasm may have been similar, but ideology expressed by the monuments including their form was not. The distributions of free-standing crosses and Class II slabs suggests that political consolidation either by the kings of Dál Riata in Pictland may not have been much more extensive than the areas of Fife, Fothrif, and Fortriu at least up to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is not just that carved stone monuments go out of fashion. Social and political objectives once articulated in sculpture changed and new outlets of display were found to secure bonds between powerful secular and ecclesiastic élite.



## Chapter Five: Symbolic wealth and changing power systems in Dumfries and Galloway

### INTRODUCTION

The third regional study covers the modern administrative districts of Dumfries and Galloway in Southwest Scotland. As the most southern region of the case studies, the cultural and political influences on Dumfries and Galloway came from all sides – Picts and Scots to the north, Anglians to the east, British to the south, and Irish and Hiberno-Norse to the west. The area is south of the Antonine wall, and Roman interaction, movement, and settlement was more significant here than in the other study regions (Fig. 5.1). The Romans arrived in Galloway in 82 AD meeting up with a British group they called the *Novantae*. This tribe is recorded on Ptolemy's map, which apart from the tribal name and a skewed version of Southwest's Scotland's topography, also records two place names – *Rerigonium* and *Loucopibia*, presumably important settlements (Duncan 1975: 22-23). By 200 AD, the Romans retreated behind the line of Hadrian's Wall though they probably retained some presence in the extra-mural area, and in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century the armies officially left the island.

### TOPOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

Dumfries and Galloway has an extensive coastline. Ireland and the Isle of Man are visible from several southwestern vantage points. The highest ground fringes the north of the region as part of the Southern Uplands. There is also a



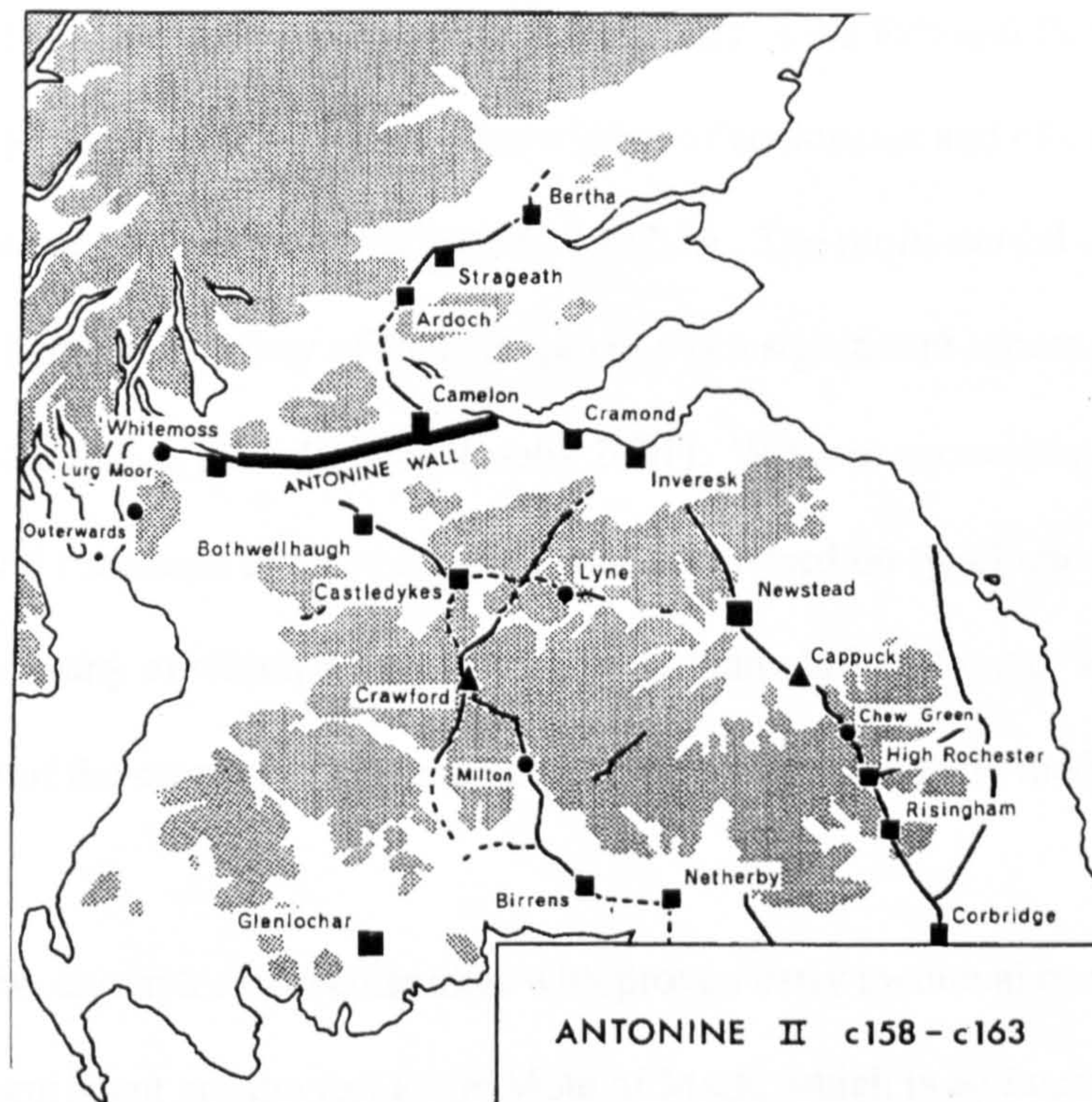


Fig. 5.1: Northern Britain in the second Antonine Period, c. 158-63 (Breeze 1982).

small area of higher ground in Galloway to the east of the Rhinns. The craggy character of the coastline lends itself to promontory fort construction, of which there are several examples. In the west, much of the land with moderate to good agricultural potential is concentrated in the Rhinns of Galloway, the Machars region (Whithorn's peninsula), and along the valleys of the Dee and Urr Rivers (Macaulay Institute for Soil Research 1983). To the east, both the Nithsdale and Annandale valleys have land with good arable potential (ibid.).

## OVERVIEW OF EARLY MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

The characteristic Iron Age and multi-period forts, crannogs, and duns show the importance of the coast and river valleys for settlement as well as a general



tendency for settlement in low-lying areas (Fig. 5.2). Like Fife and Perthshire, aerial photography has increased the knowledge of enclosures and other cropmark forms indicative of settlement (RCHAMS 1997: 8). The multi-period and multi-functional character of many of these cropmarks is a significant aspect of recent research in the region (Cowley and Brophy 2001). Without excavation, the dating, character, and functions of these sites are generally based on typological assumptions many of which are now outdated or being brought under scrutiny. Thus, many of the cropmark sites may potentially date to the early medieval period.

There are few examples of secular sites with proven early medieval occupation. The most significant are the fort at the Mote of Mark, which is an important site for early medieval non-ferrous metalworking, the fort at Trusty's Hill which has a 'Pictish' type symbol carved into an outcrop on the hill, and the promontory fort at the Isle of Whithorn. The Isle of Whithorn may be the source of a clay mould for casting an early medieval type pin found in excavations of the nearby chapel (Radford 1956: 169). At least one of the crannogs in Dowalton Loch, crannog no. 2, has post-Roman occupation including a brooch which has been classed as a Type G of 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century date, though recent work suggests it may be only loosely related to this group (Lane and Campbell 2000: 111) and is probably from the 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. Truckell has also suggested another crannog at Loch Maberry Castle may be early medieval (Laing 1993: 15-16; Truckell 1963: 92).

Excavations at Castle Haven uncovered both Iron Age and early medieval material



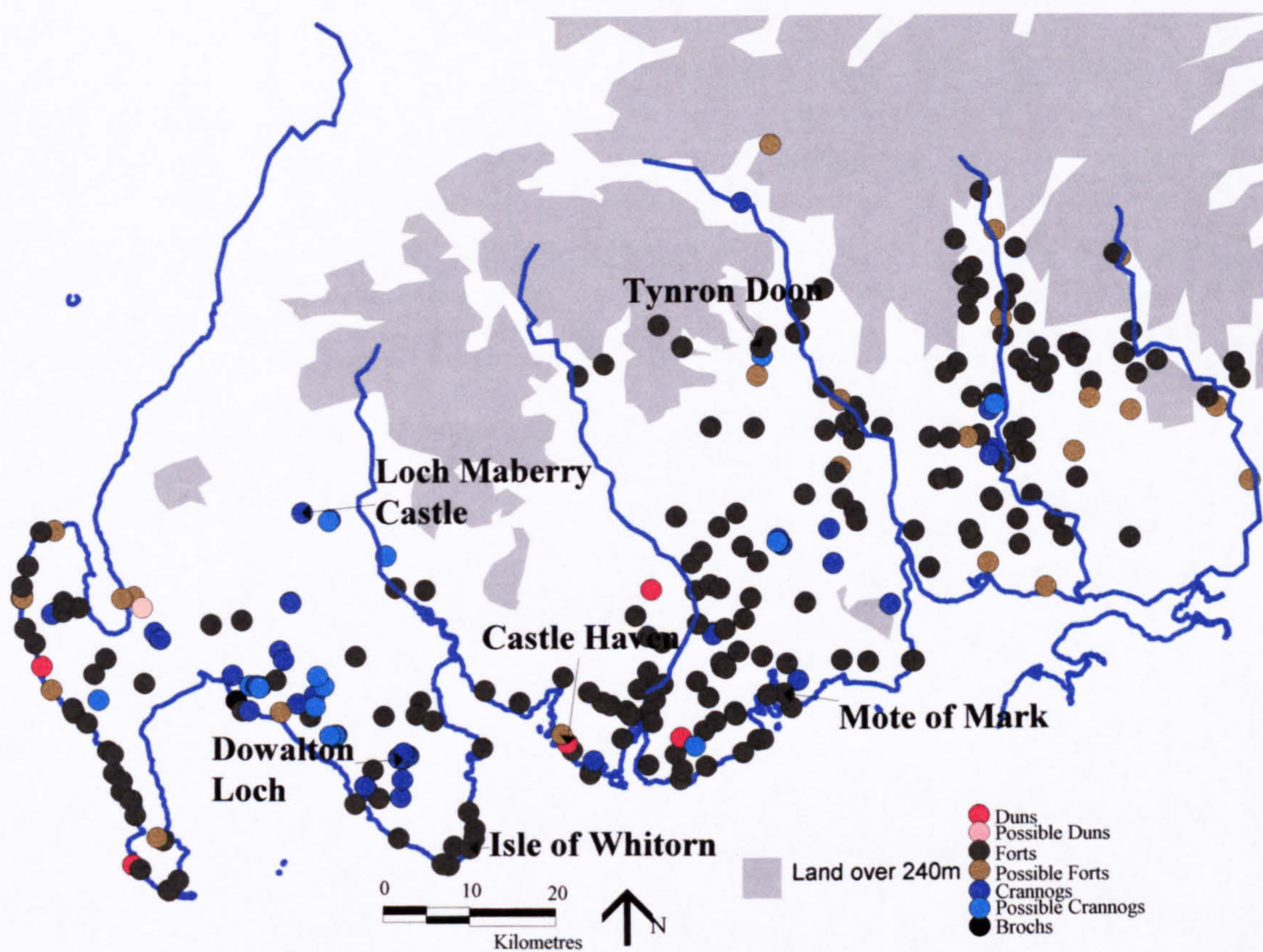


Fig. 5.2: Secular sites in Dumfries and Galloway (information from CANMORE).

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and a piece of metalwork from the fort at Tynron Doon is of Anglo-Saxon type and dates to the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Truckell 1963: 89, 94; Williams 1971:106). Fragments of bronze ornamental strips, possibly from a helmet or other object, may also be from the area around Tynron Doon (Laing 1975:33). The most extensive modern excavation to cover the early medieval period in this region has been the work done by Peter Hill on behalf of the Whithorn Trust in the area of the churchyard at Whithorn (Hill 1997a). The nature of the settlement at Whithorn, whether it is a mix of secular and religious and how it changes over time, will be dealt with over the following chapter.

## DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY IN THE 6<sup>TH</sup> AND 7<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

After the Romans left the region, the area traditionally saw conflict from both Irish and Pictish raiders for loot and slaves as they took advantage of the post-Roman power vacuum (Duncan 1975:28). The Pictish symbols at Trusty's Hill may be connected to these raids and the situation echoes that at Dunadd where a proposed 'Pictish' symbol is etched into the rock of a traditionally non-Pictish fort.

Despite the Pictish and Scottish raids, by the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century the British-held areas of Southern Scotland reconsolidated their regional dominance (ibid.:36). The British Kingdom of Rheged was possibly centred at Carlisle but extended to Dunragit near Glenluce in Wigtownshire. The Mote of Mark, a wealthy and well-connected site of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries would be within Rheged's proposed boundary. The mytho-historical king of Rheged, Urien, died c. 585. Urien reputedly besieged Theoderic, King of Bernicia, at Lindisfarne sometime between



572 – 579 AD (Radford 1950: 88-89; Duncan 1975: 60). Despite these historical and pseudo-historical teasers, it is difficult to incorporate the Kingdom of Rheged into the history and archaeology of the area.

The history of the region in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries is invariably entangled with the person of St Ninian (MacQueen 1960; 1961, 1991; Radford 1968; Brooke 1994; Clancy 2001; Fraser 2002b). Ninian is known from three key early texts – a brief reference in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, a probably 8<sup>th</sup> century poem, *Miracula Nynie*, and Ailred of Rievaulx's 12<sup>th</sup> century *Life* (MacQueen 1991; Clancy 2001). Clancy's (2001) recent study of St Ninian concluded that there was significant confusion between Ninian and Saint Finnian (or British Uinniau) of Moville. The confusion probably originated during the Northumbrian bishopric at Whithorn and may have come from scribal error in transmitting the name of Finnian (ibid). Finnian appears in several early dedications in the Rhinns of Galloway, The Machars, and Kirkudbright and is suggested to be the founder or an early bishop of Whithorn (ibid. 13-23). Finnian of Moville was also reputedly founder of several other monasteries in Southwest Scotland and Ireland, was a teacher of Columba, authored a penitential, and was a correspondent of Gildas (ibid.). Whether Ninian or Finnian, both figures represent potentially powerful leaders for 6<sup>th</sup> century Whithorn.

Northumbria appears to gain a political foothold in the later 7<sup>th</sup> century and maintains political authority until the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Brooke 1991; 1994: 34). Historically the apex of Northumbrian power in Dumfries and Galloway was in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries when the bishoprics of Whithorn are recorded.



Associations with Northumbria can be seen in the material culture of symbolic wealth including sculpture and styles of ornament.

### **Monuments: The Dumfries and Galloway carved stones**

There are 196 recorded carved stone monuments or possible monuments of early medieval date from Dumfries and Galloway of which fifteen examples are lost, of an indeterminate date, or too fragmentary to allow them to be included in the following analysis. As with the previous case studies, a degree of loss and destruction of the original corpus must be acknowledged. The occurrence of excavations may also have altered the record of surviving monuments. The interpretations put forward here assume that the patterns of investment and distribution do reflect early medieval patterns. Such analysis follows in the wake of Craig's research on the sculpture from the region, which also indicated the potential for meaningful analysis from the surviving corpus (Craig 1991).

Approximately a quarter of the known monuments are from the site at Whithorn. The early stones (6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries) are notable for the presence of inscriptions. In the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, aspects of typically Northumbrian styles in carving appear especially at the important monastic site at Hoddum. The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries saw an active stone carving school based at Whithorn producing disc-headed type pillars with interlace topped by crosses with rounded, bell or keyhole shaped armpits. The ornament of the stones has received scholarly attention particularly in isolating Northumbrian or Scandinavian characteristics (Collingwood 1925; 1927; Cramp 1960; Craig 1991).



### **Monuments of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries**

There are 34 examples of carved stone monuments dating to this early period (Fig. 5.3). The main sites for monument investment are at Whithorn, with its related site at St Ninian's Cave, and Kirkmadrine followed by Ardwall Island and Laggangarn. Most of the stones are variants of cross slabs, although there are also incised crosses on the walls and an incised boulder at St Ninian's Cave, as well as the Pictish symbols at Trusty's Hill.

The Pictish symbols are carved into an outcrop located near the entrance to the fort (Fig. 5.4). There are three symbols: a double disc and Z rod, another symbol interpreted as part of an 'S-dragon' and a smaller symbol interpreted variably as a sword, whetstone, or pin (Feachem 1950; Cessford 1994b: 81, 84). The other marking on the stone is of a little alien-looking 'horned' humanoid figure, which seems to have been modified, if not carved, in the modern period. The traditional interpretation of the presence of these Pictish symbols in a presumably non-Pictish fortification is that they are the marks of Pictish raiders to commemorate a victory or a fallen Pictish leader (Feachem 1950). Other interpretations are based on ideas of what the symbols mean and were used for – of the alternatives, the idea that they might have some link to marriage ties rather than violent actions is the most attractive if equally lacking support. The outcrop could have been used to mark the joining of a Pictish family with the rulers of Trusty's Hill or commemorate a similar family tie. The fort itself, excavated in 1960, produced no finds of the early medieval period (Thomas 1961: 38). These excavations concentrated mainly on



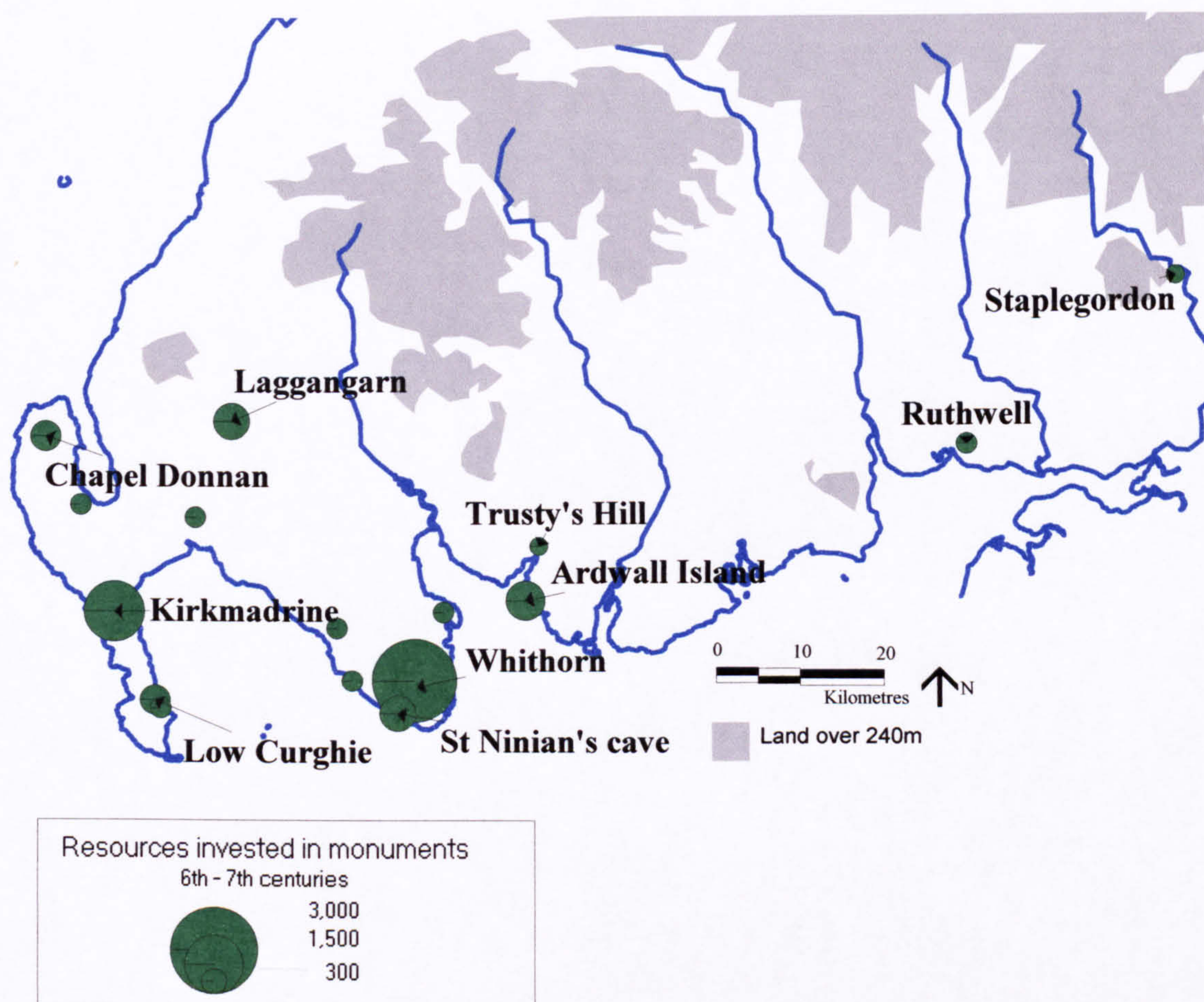


Fig. 5.3: Resources invested in monuments, 6th - 7th centuries.

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the defences and identified the main hillfort with the Iron age and the outer defences A, B and C on the plan with the early medieval period (ibid.: 67).

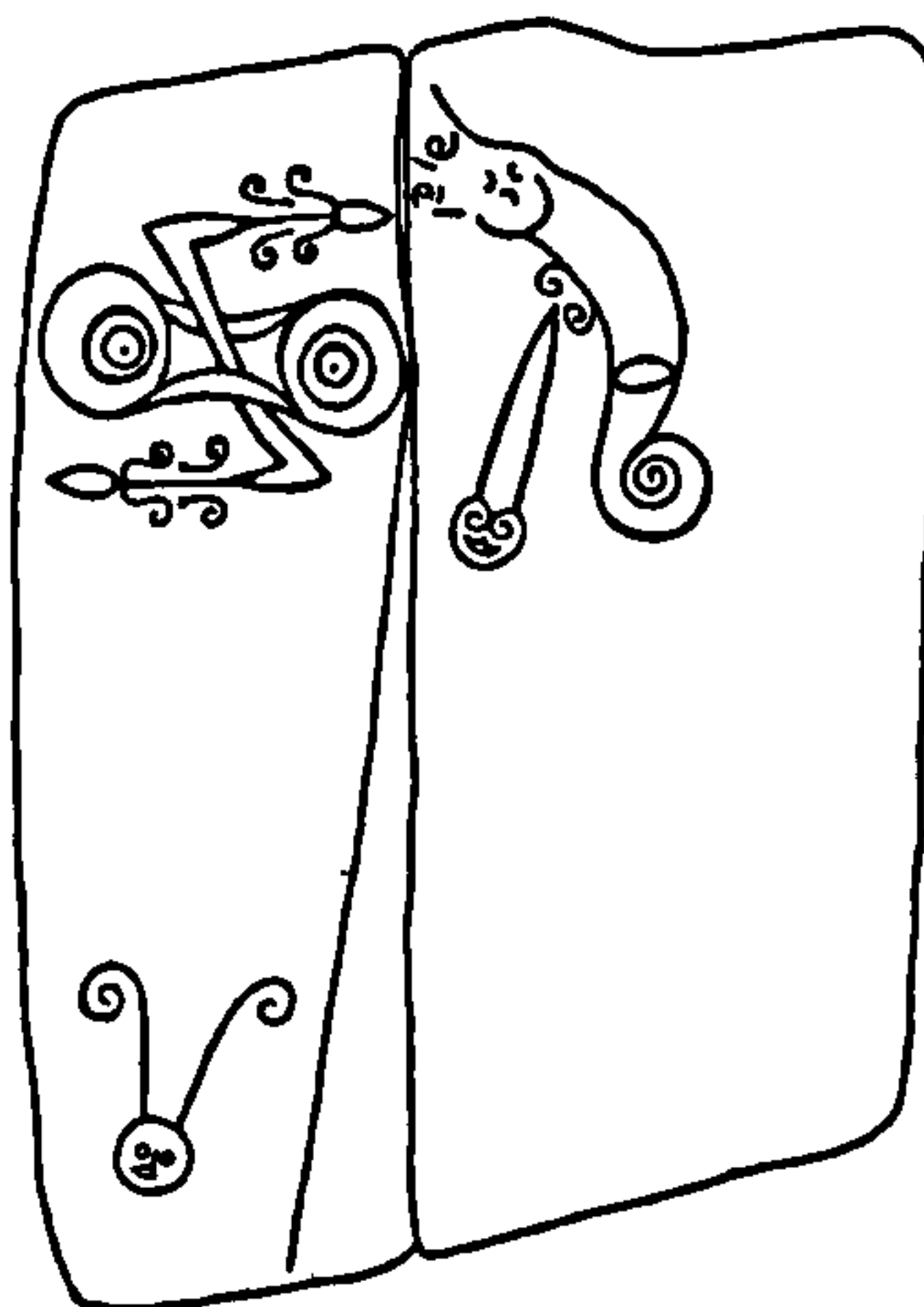
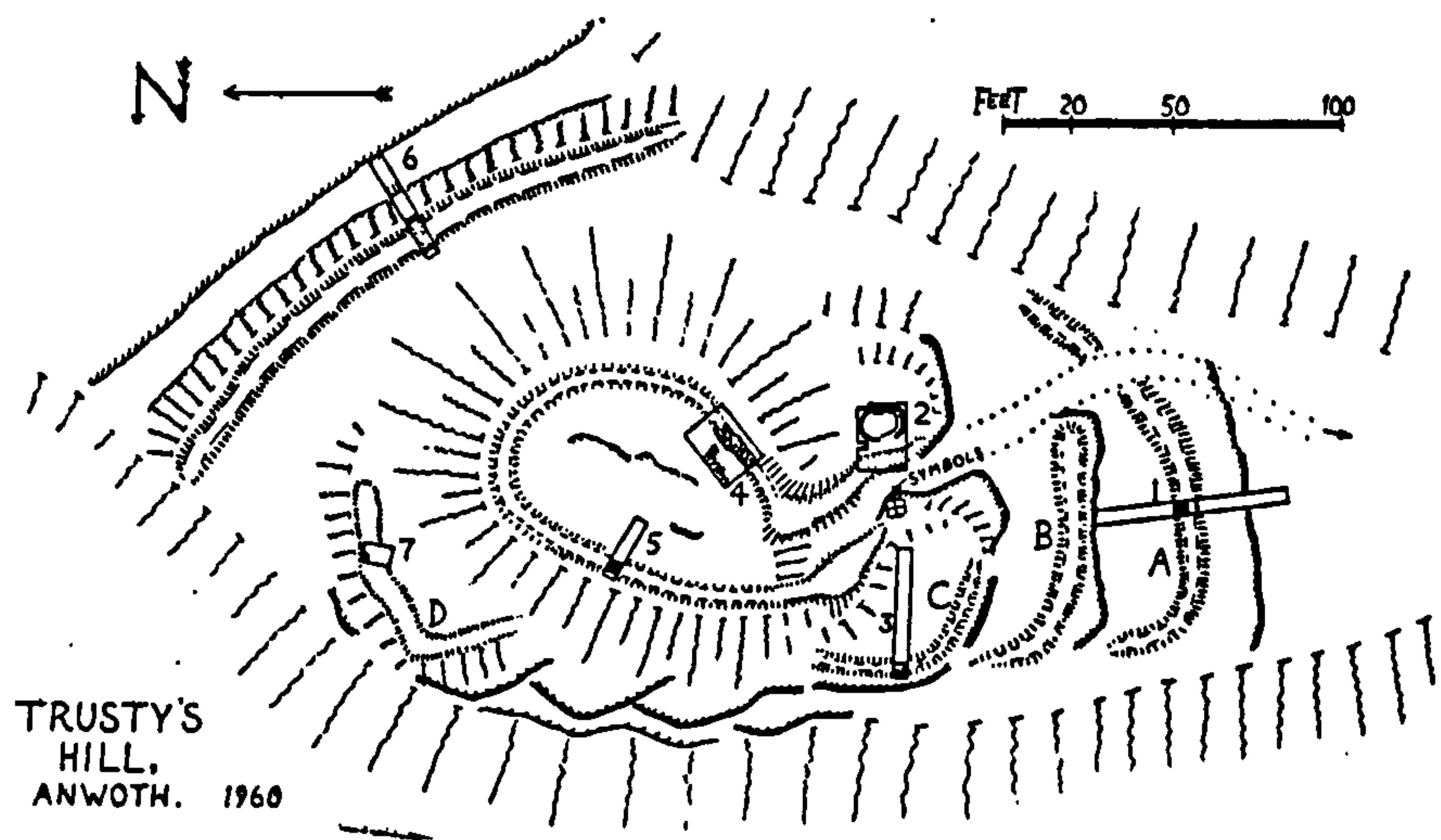


Fig. 5.4: Above: Plan of Trusty’s Hill (Thomas 1961:63). Below: Pictish symbols at Trusty’s Hill (Cessford 1994b:81).



As with the use of the symbols, territory and commemoration may also be factors involved with the stones at Laggangarn, where there is a carved pillar and a pair of standing stones reused as cross slabs. The place name Laggangarn (Gaelic *Lekkyngiorow* like the Welsh *llech-yn-gorau* or stones at the boundaries) implies a boundary and the marking of the standing stones with crosses may reflect that function in the early medieval period (Brooke 1991: 311). In the later medieval period, the Laggangarn stones were a station on the route to Whithorn where pilgrims to St Ninian would gather (Yeoman 1999: 37-38). Laggangarn is also near the Deil's Dyke, which is a long linear earthen bank boundary. The earthwork marks a division between more mountainous land and the fertile river valley lowland and is best preserved near the town of Kirkconnel in Nithsdale (Barber *et al.* 1982: 47). Although the earthwork itself is probably of later medieval date rather than from the period under discussion, it does incorporate earlier sites at some points along its length (Barber *et al.* 1999: 85).

Of a much different nature is the environment for the monuments at Ardwall Island, a tidal island close to the shore by the mouth of the Fleet River (Fig. 5.5). Excavations revealed a series of early buildings including two ecclesiastical buildings probably of early medieval date associated with burials and carved stones (Thomas 1961; 1966; 1968). Throughout the period under study, the community at Ardwall used carved stone monuments. The earliest stones are considered to be those that have incised crosses of simple Latin type. One of these (Thomas' no. 14) was found used or reused as part of the Phase III stone footed chapel, dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century (1968: 174).



The earliest feature under the chapel was that of a rock-cut hollow followed by a series of early burials (ibid.: 141). Paving slabs lined the base of the hollow and the structure may have served an ecclesiastical purpose such as the subterranean

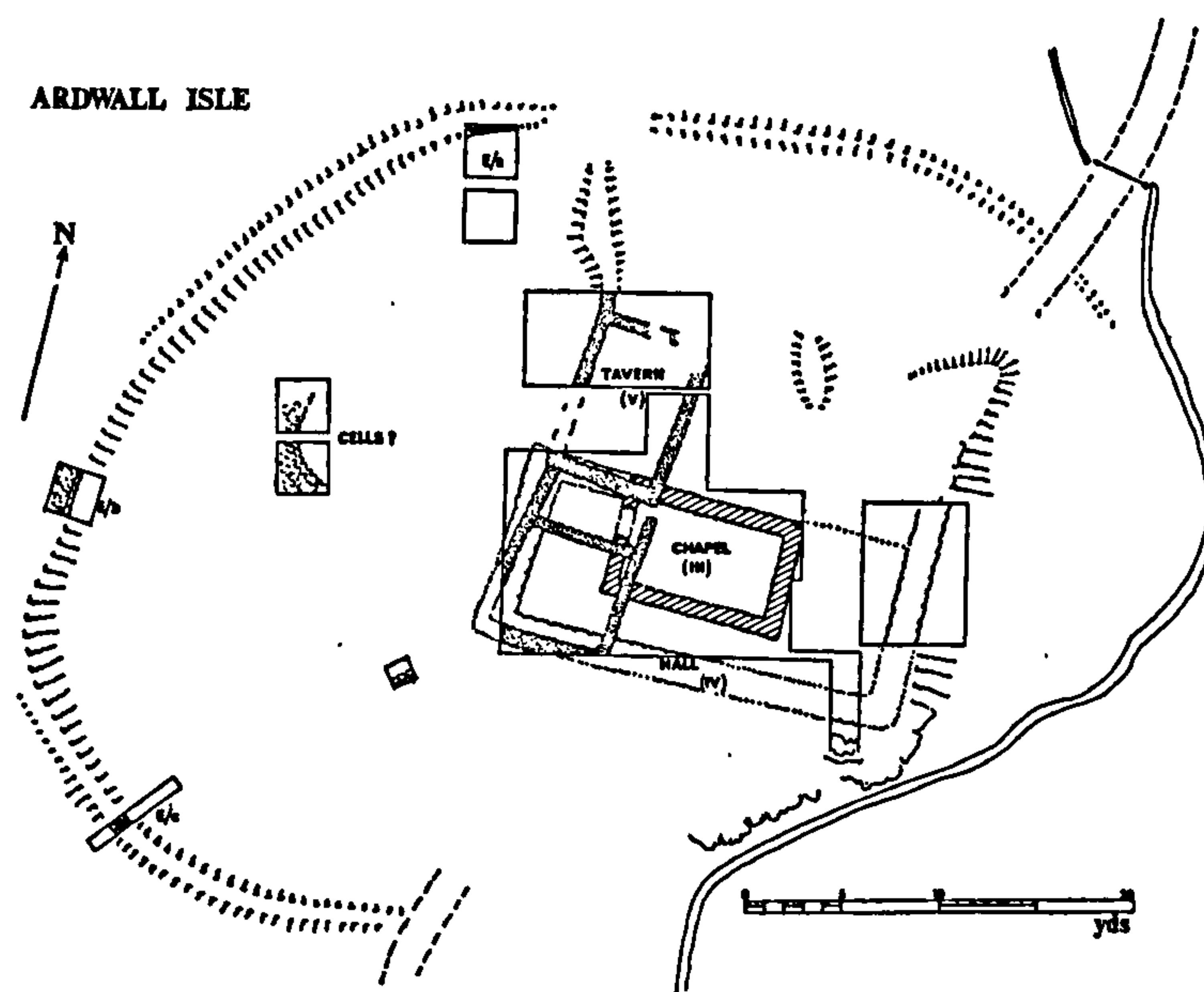


Fig. 5.5: Plan of Ardwall Island and excavations (Thomas 1968: 130).

part of a 'slab shrine' more common in parts of Ireland (ibid.). A timber structure and burials associated to it have been dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century largely on parallels drawn with early Irish oratories (ibid.: 139-141, 169-171). There is no exact dating evidence (coins, radiocarbon) for the early medieval sequence at Ardwall, but an inscribed stone dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries and the parallels with other early medieval sites, particularly in Ireland, offer a relatively secure early medieval date for this type of ecclesiastical settlement.

Of the two major concentrations of resources, Kirkmadrine is the more enigmatic as no excavation has been done here. There are two sites called Kirkmadrine in Galloway - one in the Machars that also has an early carved stone, and the other





Fig. 5.6: Inscribed stone from Kirkmadrine, Height 2.06m (Radford and Donaldson 1984:31).

(discussed here) in the Rhinns of Galloway. There are three inscribed stones from Kirkmadrine (Table 5.1, Fig.5.6). These stones have been the subject of considerable discussion due to the presumed early date of their inscriptions, which some have dated as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Radford and Donaldson 1984, Thomas 1992). Recent work, however, suggests a date in the 7<sup>th</sup> century is as likely (Forsyth, forthcoming).

Inscription	Cross ornament
<i>Initium et Finis</i>	Expanded terminals, encircled, <i>Chi Rho</i>
<i>Hic iacet s(an)c(t)i et praecipui sacerdotes ides [alt. id est] viventius et mavorius</i>	Expanded terminals, encircled, <i>Chi Rho</i> , <i>alpha and omega</i>
<i>...s et florentius</i>	Expanded terminals, encircled, <i>Chi Rho</i>

Table 5.1: Inscriptions from Kirkmadrine (Radford and Donaldson 1984; Thomas 1992).

Two of the early inscriptions, one from Kirkmadrine and the other from Low Curghie also in the Rhinns (“*Ventidivs(?)...(?)subdiaconvs(?)...*”), bear witness to elements of church administration in 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century Galloway as they refer to a



subdeacon and two 'chief priests' / *praecipui sacerdotes* (Radford and Donaldson 1984:27; Thomas 1992:2; Craig 1997a: 617-619). These monuments are important when considering the nature and extent of an early bishopric at Whithorn and its possible relationship with the little understood church at Kirkmadrine.

The dedication of the church at Kirkmadrine has come under some scrutiny. Watson considered the dedication to be to a little known Irish saint called Draigne or Drine with 'kirk' representing a version of the Irish *cill* for church (Watson 1926: 162-3). Daphne Brooke, however, has pointed out the possibility that the site was a pre-Christian holy place and the name may reflect the adaptation of the name of a mythological woman/goddess called Madrun (1999:8). The site is almost in the middle of the Rhinns with access to the coast on both sides, but not in a coastal location. There is a tradition of a well on site and there are other flowing springs and a river nearby. As a centre for pre-Christian activity, Kirkmadrine would complement the relatively substantial evidence around it for prehistoric ritual activity including cairns and standing stones (Fig. 5.7). The impact of these 7<sup>th</sup> century monuments at Kirkmadrine would be to assert the permanence and sovereignty of Christianity using the powerful symbols and literacy that was such a part of the faith. In this sense, although the inscribed stones may mark burials, they are also changing the landscape to one of Christian ritual.



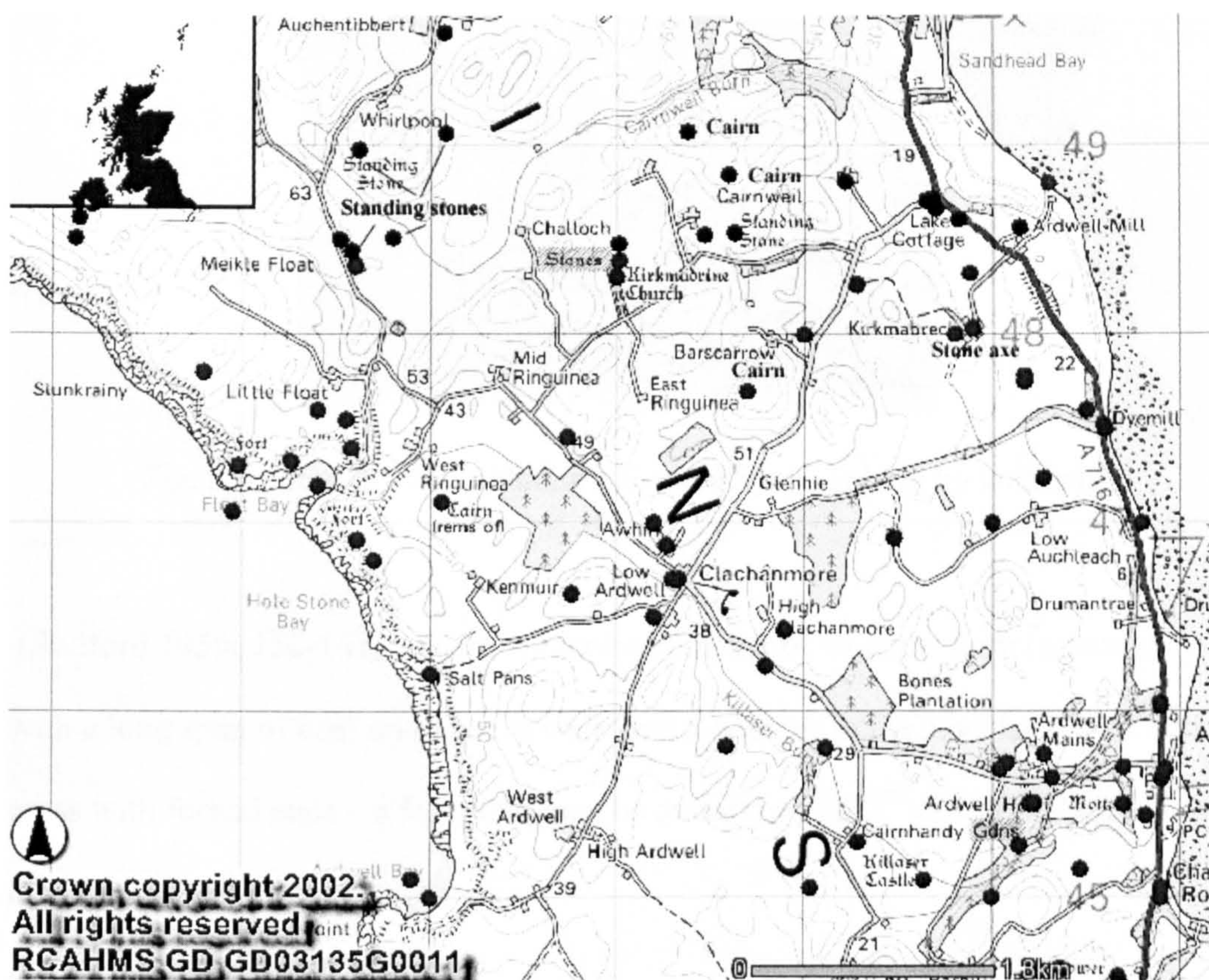


Fig. 5.7: Map of region and sites around Kirkmadrine, Rhinns. (after RCAHMS, Canmore).

The tip of the Machars peninsula is also a Christian landscape, focused on Whithorn. Although separated by almost 5km, the two sites of Whithorn and the beachside cave at Physgil dedicated to St Ninian are important to consider together as they likely acted as complementary sites. The cave (Fig. 5.8) reputedly was the hermitage of the Saint, where he could go to contemplate in solitude. The use of such cave sites is common and early cave sites have also been seen in Argyll (e.g. St Columba's Cave by Ellary) and Fife (the Wemyss Caves). St Ninian's Cave shows signs of use throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries including undated burials



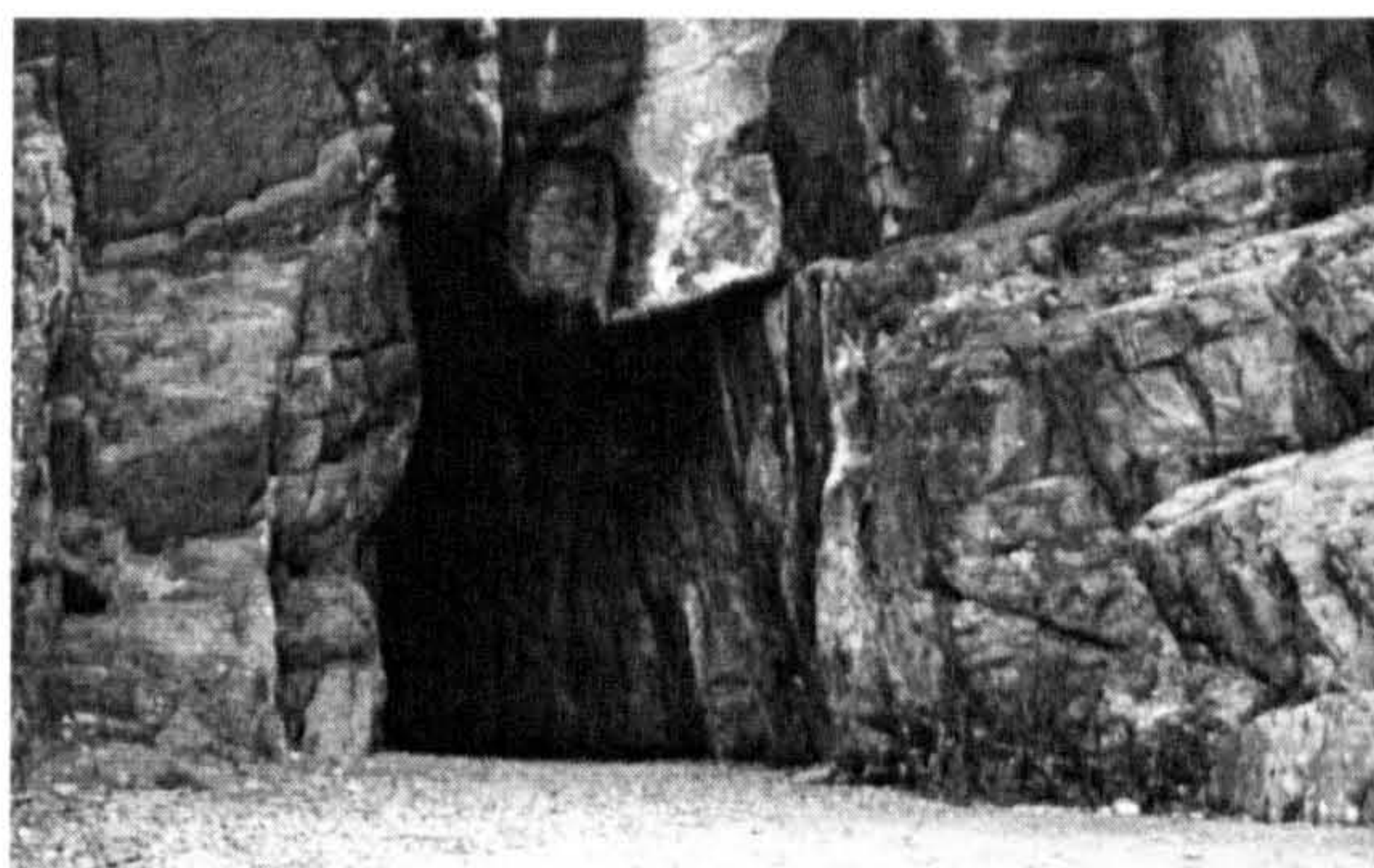


Fig. 5.8: Entrance to St Ninian's Cave, Physgil (photo by author).

(Radford 1956: 152-161). There are incised crosses of an early form (although with a long span of use) on the cave walls and a boulder in the cave has an incised cross with forked ends – a form that may be as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Radford and Donaldson 1984: 30).

Another site linked to Whithorn is the promontory known as the Isle of Whithorn, which lies just over 5km from Whithorn to the southeast. The promontory fort may have contemporary occupation with the early stages of Whithorn. The site also



Fig. 5.9: Banks of promontory fort at Isle of Whithorn and St Ninian's chapel in the foreground (photo by author).



provides the closest port to Whithorn, where the inhabitants used both ceramic and glass vessels from the continent in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries discussed in the following sections, and the Isle is the likely importation point for these objects. The promontory fort survives in a series of ditches and banks on its landward side (Fig. 5.9) and its location provides views across to the Isle of Man and Ireland as well as dominating access to one of the few easy harbours on the coast in the Machars. Also on the promontory is a chapel dedicated to St Ninian, probably connected to the medieval pilgrimage progression from the Isle to the inland site. The chapel was investigated by Radford and found to be most likely 13<sup>th</sup> century, with no indications of an earlier structure within the building (Radford 1956: 162 – 170). A clay mould fragment did come from clearance of the chapel, but from a later context (ibid.: 169). The fragment likely dates to the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries and suggests activity, possibly related to the promontory fort, on the Isle at this time.

Although no monuments are attributed to the Isle itself, the inscribed monument known as the Petrus stone (Fig. 5.10) may have stood on the route between the Isle



Fig. 5.10: The *Petrus* stone, Whithorn. Height: 1.22m (Radford and Donaldson 1984: 5).



and the monastery, less than a kilometre south of Whithorn (Fig. 5.11, Craig 1997a:616). This stone may have marked a part of a cemetery, a pilgrimage route linked to St Ninian, or may have been a type of ecclesiastic landmark or boundary marker for the lands around Whithorn (ibid.). The pillar has an incised cross or arcs with curved and expanded arms within a circle with an incised expanded shaft. The inscription reads, '*[l]oci petri apustoli*' or 'the place of Peter the Apostle (ibid.28).

The dedication of a place, possibly a chapel, shrine, or burial ground, to an apostle rather than a saint with more local connections is another aspect of the different

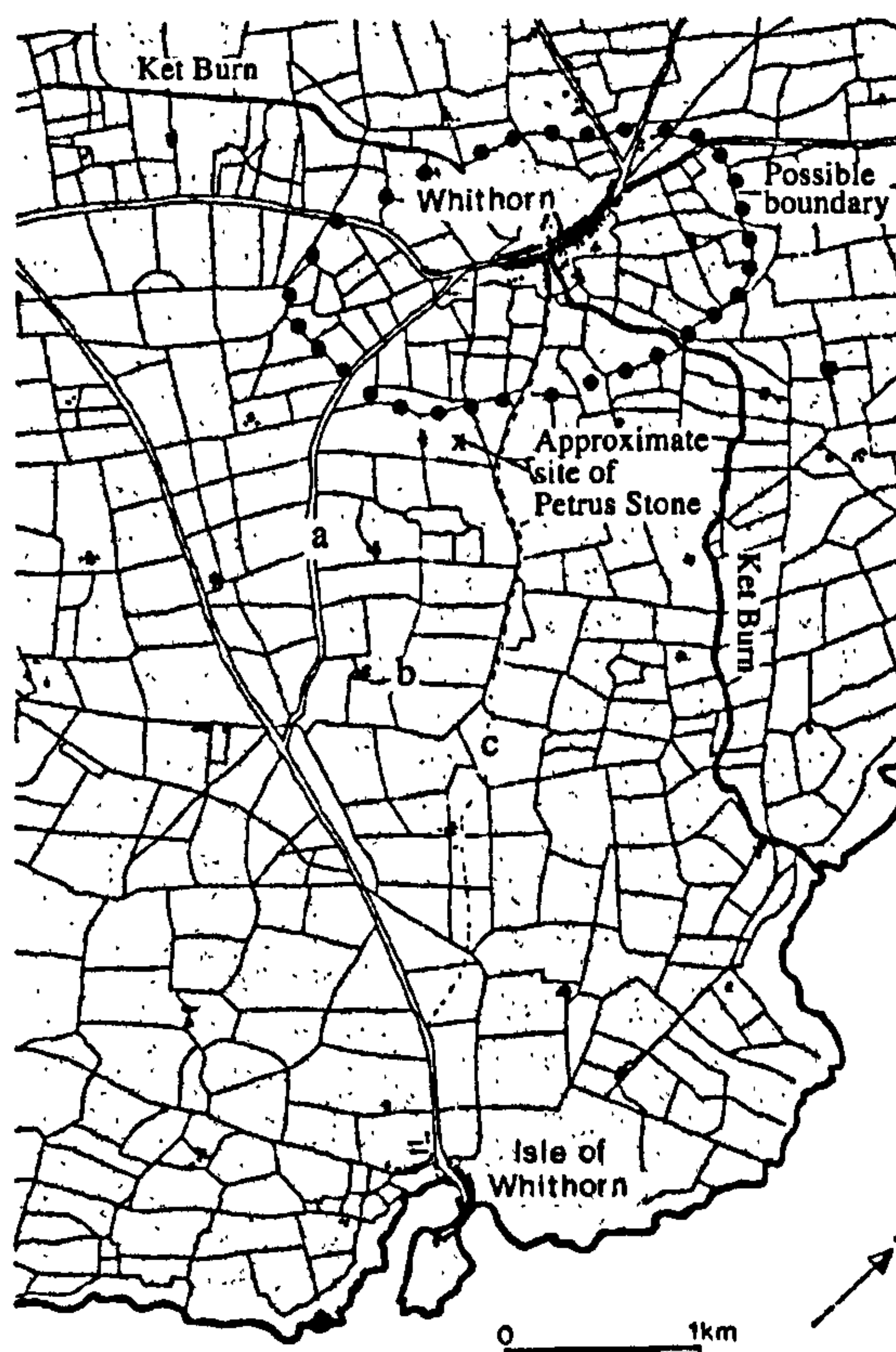


Fig. 5.11: Approximate location of Petrus stone (Hill 1997a:6).



influences and affiliations the site at Whithorn may have had in comparison to places in Argyll, Fife and Perthshire, and even the neighbouring site at Arwall Island which seems to have Irish characteristics. The inscriptions and the dedication of the church at Whithorn to St Martin of Tours suggest interaction with and influences, but not necessarily missionaries, from Gaul (Thomas 1992), which is hardly surprising as a significant amount of material culture found at the settlement also has a continental origin.

Another inscribed stone at Whithorn may have stood in the churchyard (Radford and Donaldson 1984: 27, Craig 1997a: 616). The 'Latinus' stone is an inscribed pillar without an accompanying cross, but does have a *Chi Rho* symbol of 'Constantinian' form (Craig 1997a: 615). The symbol relates to the inscription, which Craig identified as *'Te[domi]nu[.] lavdam[v.] Latinv[s] ann[or]v[.] xxxv e[t] filia sv[a] anni v[I] c[s]invm [fi]cervt n[I]pvs ba[r]rov[a]di'* translated as 'Thee Lord, we praise. Latinus, of years 35, and his daughter, of years 4, here a *sinus* (sign) made. Descendant of Barrovad(us)' (translation, Thomas 1998b: 106). With the re-identification of the *Chi Rho* symbol on the pillar, the memorial function of the pillar may be related to the erection of a structure (a building or shrine) rather than a burial monument (Craig 1997a: 616, Thomas 1998b:106).

The other early crosses from Whithorn come from the excavations and are found reused in later buildings and features. The motifs include incised crosses, both linear and outline, found reused as paving stones or building stones in the 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> centuries (Craig 1997b: 433-439). A fragment with an incised cross of arcs was reused in a 10<sup>th</sup> century building (ibid.: 438). The links between these early cross



forms and those found in St Ninian's Cave, presumably also of early date, has been made by Craig (ibid.: 440). Although the sculpture from this early period may not be on as grand a scale as later monuments, the crosses of arcs and other compass drawn motifs shows the competence of Whithorn carvers at this time. They have knowledge of motifs, writing, and trends in monuments associated with the wider Christian world, a connection that is also clearly seen in the results of the excavations of the site (Fig. 5.12).

The excavated evidence from Whithorn supports occupation at the site at least by the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. The quest for St Ninian's *Candida Casa* or 'Shining White House' of Bede's account prompted the excavation of the ruined abbey building in search of earlier structures. Raleigh Radford's excavations uncovered an earlier

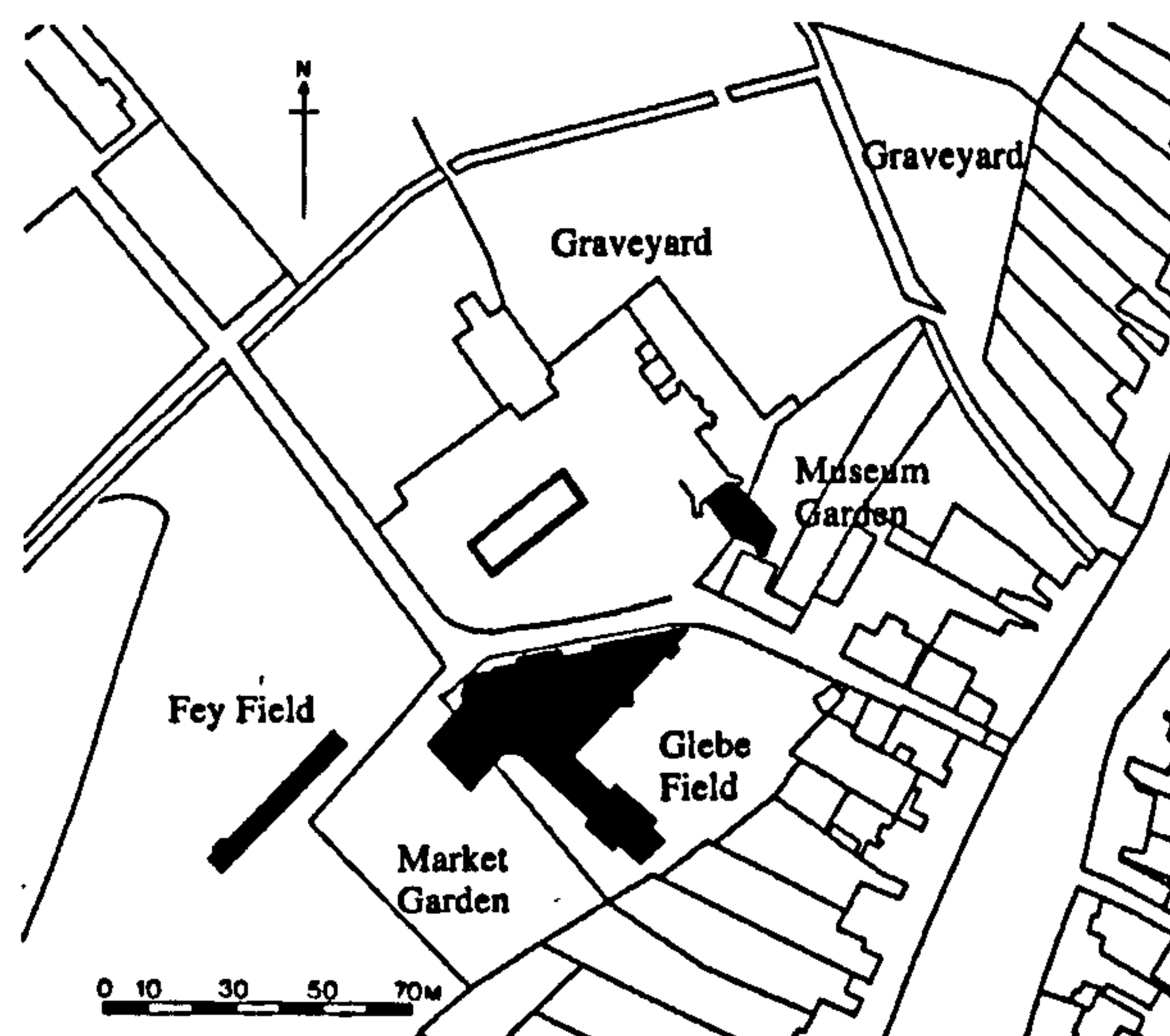


Fig. 5.12: General plan of Whithorn with 1984-1991 excavations (Hill 1997a:9).

structure where the walls were made of masonry set in clay with the outer face daubed and covered with a coarse cream mortar (1950:115). The mortar did not appear to serve any structural purpose, and may have been a type of whitewash to decorate the building, which the excavator likened to the descriptions of Ninian's



church (ibid.: 119). There is, however, no exact dating evidence for this as the 6<sup>th</sup> century church.

Excavations conducted through 1984-1991 under the auspices of the Whithorn trust (Fig. 5.12) concentrated on the area to the southeast of the church in the Glebe Field. The earliest datable phase of this area of the settlement is to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century.

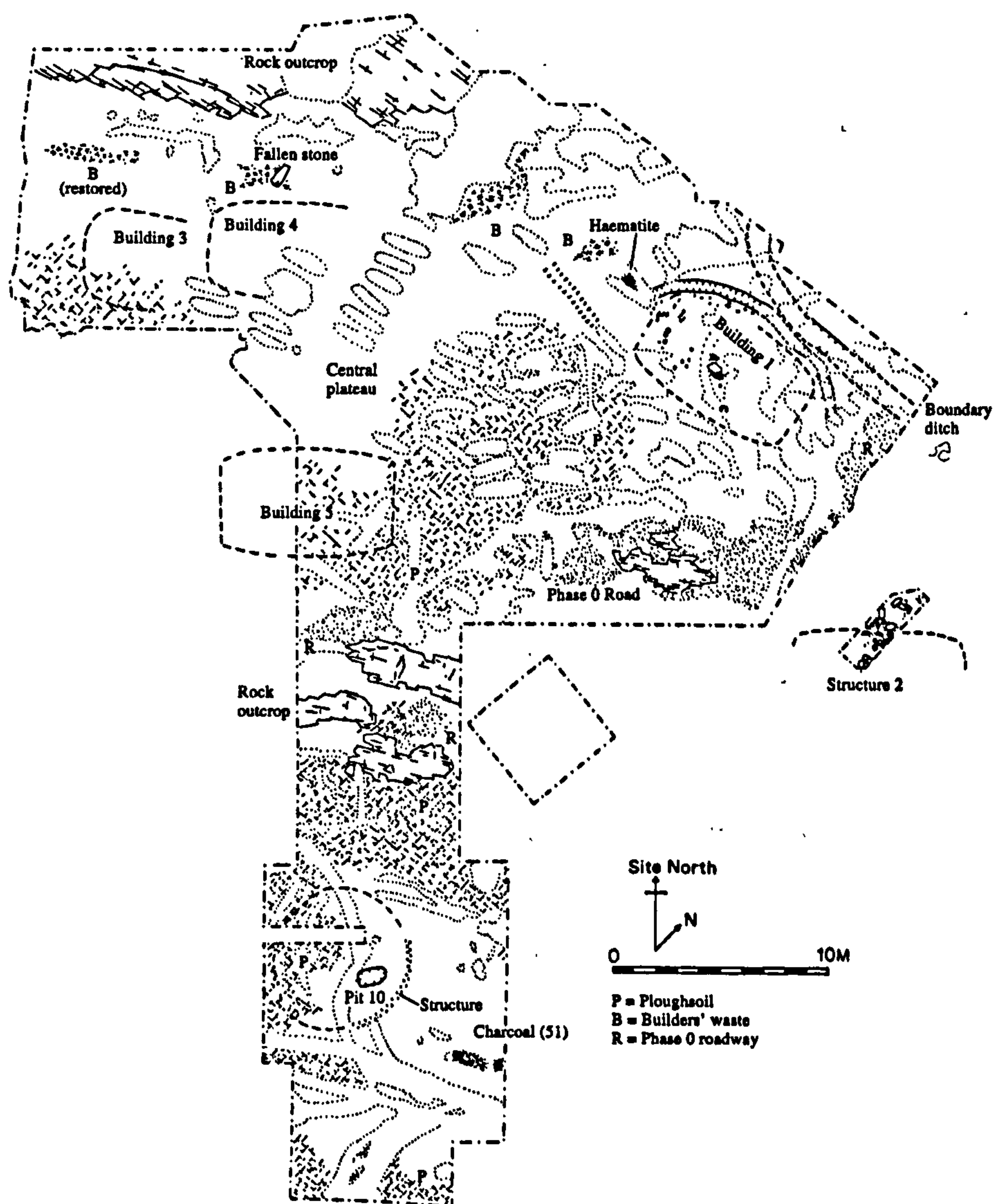


Fig. 5.13: Glebe field, Whithorn Period I/0 and I/1.1-.3, 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> c. (Hill 1997a: 76).



The earliest phase is characterised by a period of cultivation on land that then had a series of subrectangular buildings built on it (Fig. 5.13). The buildings were relatively insubstantial, generally built into shallow hollows cut into the topsoil and several seem to have internal partitions and a central hearth (Hill 1997a: 69). They were of varying construction with wattle walls (ibid.:70). Building 5 had a timber sill into which wands were set for wattle walls and had an associated deposit of domestic debris including sherds of glass both inside the building and just outside its eastern wall (ibid.: 83). The excavator's Building I, a stake-walled building, appears to be associated to a spread of haematite and rubbish containing glass and Bi amphora sherds (ibid.: 80). When this building goes out of use, graves are placed here and appear to focus on a special grave with a massive lintel later developed into what was interpreted as a type of 'shrine' by the excavator (ibid.: 91).

By the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century, this shrine area appears to be established and consists of a small round timber enclosure within a larger fenced-in enclosure. The 'special grave' lay between these two enclosures, being used for successive multiple burials (ibid.). In the early 7<sup>th</sup> century, the 'shrine' structure was no longer strictly respected with the digging of even more graves. The successive appearance of 'shrine' structures where buildings (1 and 9) previously stood may suggest that revered members of the community lived in these structures, as their associated assemblages suggest domestic use, and were later turned into special places to commemorate them after death (ibid.: 91). The allocation of a 'shrine' interpretation for this structure rests on its East-West orientation, its position underneath and influence on the later buildings built on top of it – interpreted as a



church, and because of the association of three 7<sup>th</sup> century carved monuments from this part of the site (ibid.: 103-104). These fragments were reused in later features and their size would not inhibit movement from another area of the site making their association with the supposed 'shrine' very tentative. Throughout the 7<sup>th</sup> century, burial activity continued to be a focus of the excavated area and another possible 'shrine' may belong to the later 7<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Imported Pottery and Glass**

There is a substantial amount of imported pottery and glass recorded from Dumfries and Galloway, but it comes mainly from two major excavated sites. The limitation of the sample is clear for interpreting patterns of these manifestations of symbolic wealth across a landscape. However, the benefit of including this material outweighs its limitations as it illustrates the nature of nodes of power in these structures. The material from Whithorn in particular offers an opportunity to examine the nature of settlement at one of these power centres. In the following discussion on imported pottery and glass the nature of the excavated evidence is examined as indicators of the activities and wealth of the sites. When this analysis is combined with the interpretation of material investment in sculpture a fuller picture of power centres and power structures can emerge.

The excavations at Whithorn produced one of the most abundant collections of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century pottery and glass of Continental and Mediterranean origin in the British Isles (Fig. 5.14). The minimum number of glass vessels from the entire site is estimated at about 80, which makes it the largest assemblage to date of glass



vessels in Britain (Campbell 1997a: 297). The distribution of glass and ceramics in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries concentrates around buildings (Fig.5.15, Campbell 1997a: 300 – 310).

Site	Type	No. of vessels	Date
WHITHORN	African Red Slip	4	6th century
WHITHORN	Bi Amphora	3	6th century
WHITHORN	Bii Amphora	3	6th century
WHITHORN	Biv Amphora	1	6th century
WHITHORN	Bv Amphora	1	6th century
WHITHORN	Bmisc Amphora	2	6th century
WHITHORN	D Ware	1	6th century
WHITHORN	E ware	16	7th century
WHITHORN	Anomalous vessels	2	6th century?
WHITHORN	Group A Glass: Mediterranean origin	8	6th - 7th century
WHITHORN	Group B Glass: Germanic or Anglo Saxon	9	6th - 7th century
WHITHORN	Group C Glass: Continental	Minimum of 32	6th - 7th century
WHITHORN	Group D Glass: Continental	Minimum of 16	6th - 7th century
WHITHORN	Group E Glass: Thick vessels with simple rims	Minimum of 15	6th - 7th century
MOTE OF MARK	Bi amphora	1	6 <sup>th</sup> century
MOTE OF MARK	D ware	1	6th century
MOTE OF MARK	E ware	12	7th century
MOTE OF MARK	Unclassified	1	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> century
MOTE OF MARK	Glass	18	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> century

Table 5.2: Imported pottery and glass 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The collection of ten vessels of B ware – amphorae that are of Mediterranean origin – is significant because it is the largest known occurrence in Scotland and indeed out of the southwest of England (Campbell 1997b: 316). The imported ceramic and glass evidence indicates sustained trading contacts for over a hundred years and more than a single event of importation or exchange. This exchange could have occurred directly at Whithorn, which seems most probable in the light of the later distribution of E ware and glass, or through a separate primary importation point elsewhere in Britain or Ireland.



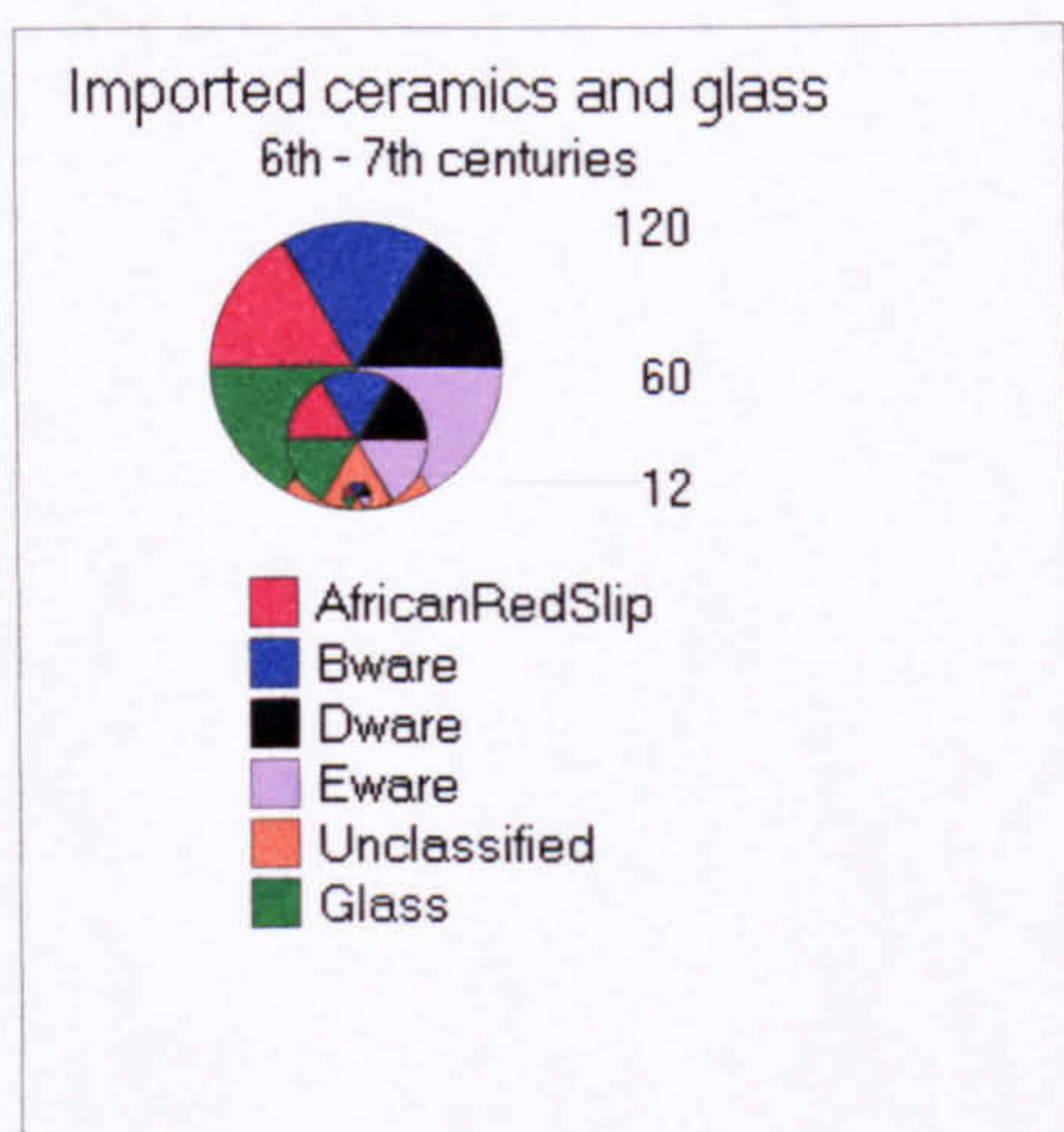
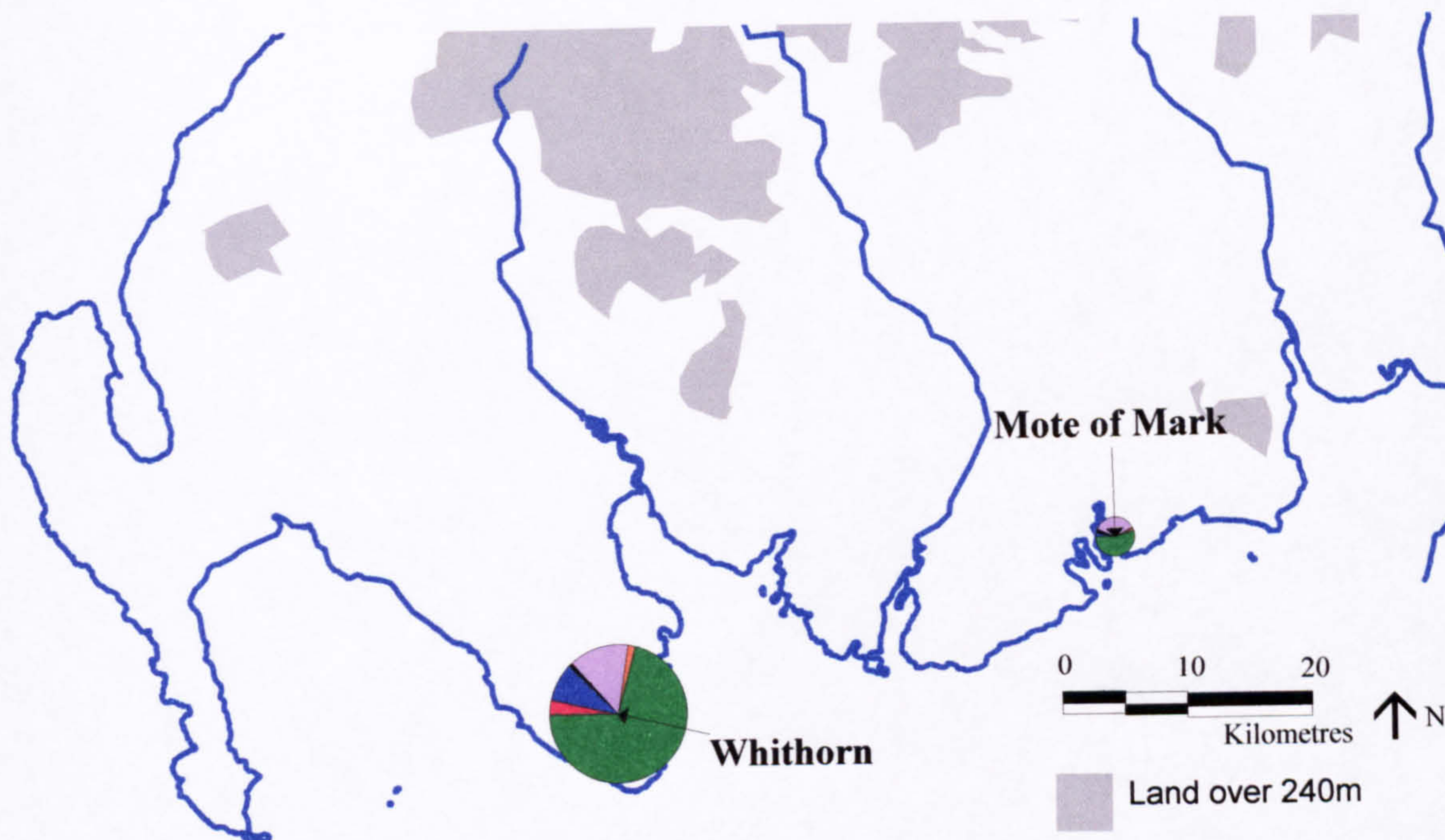


Fig. 5.14: Imported pottery and glass, 6th - 7th centuries.

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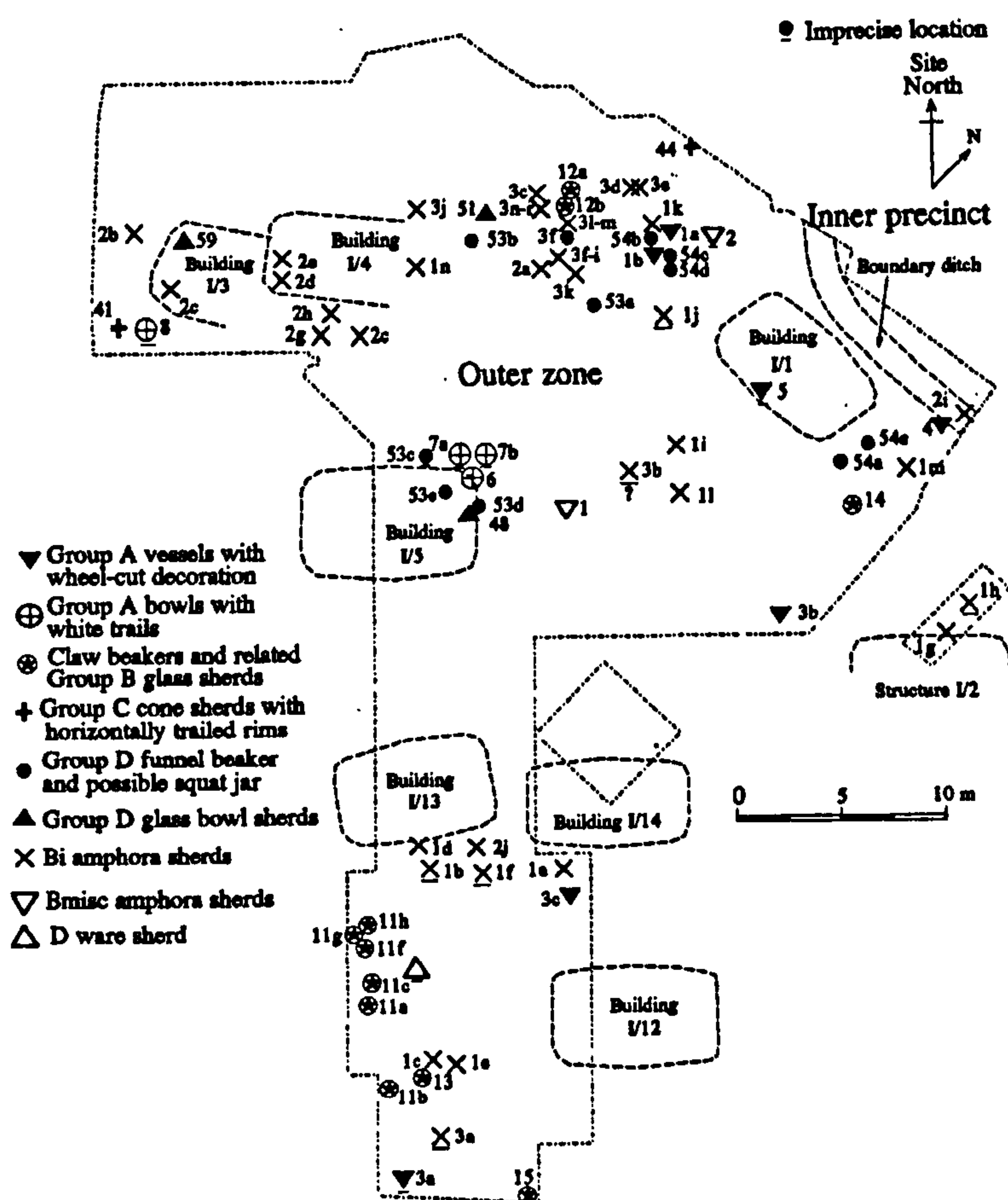


Fig. 5.15: Early medieval imported glass and ceramics, early 6<sup>th</sup> century (Hill 1997a: 323).

The distribution of the imported ceramics and glass (Figs. 5.15, 5.16) has led Hill (1997a: 323) to suggest that there was a division between inner and outer zones within the settlement, as fewer finds occur in the 'inner precinct.' A ditch in the northwest corner of the site originally marked the 'inner precinct' (Fig. 5.15). This ditch was, however, relatively short-lived (*ibid.*: 30), and was silted up, filled with a charcoal rich deposit, and graves and the enclosure of the first putative 'shrine' overlaid it (*ibid.*). With the disuse of the boundary, Hill proposed an expansion of



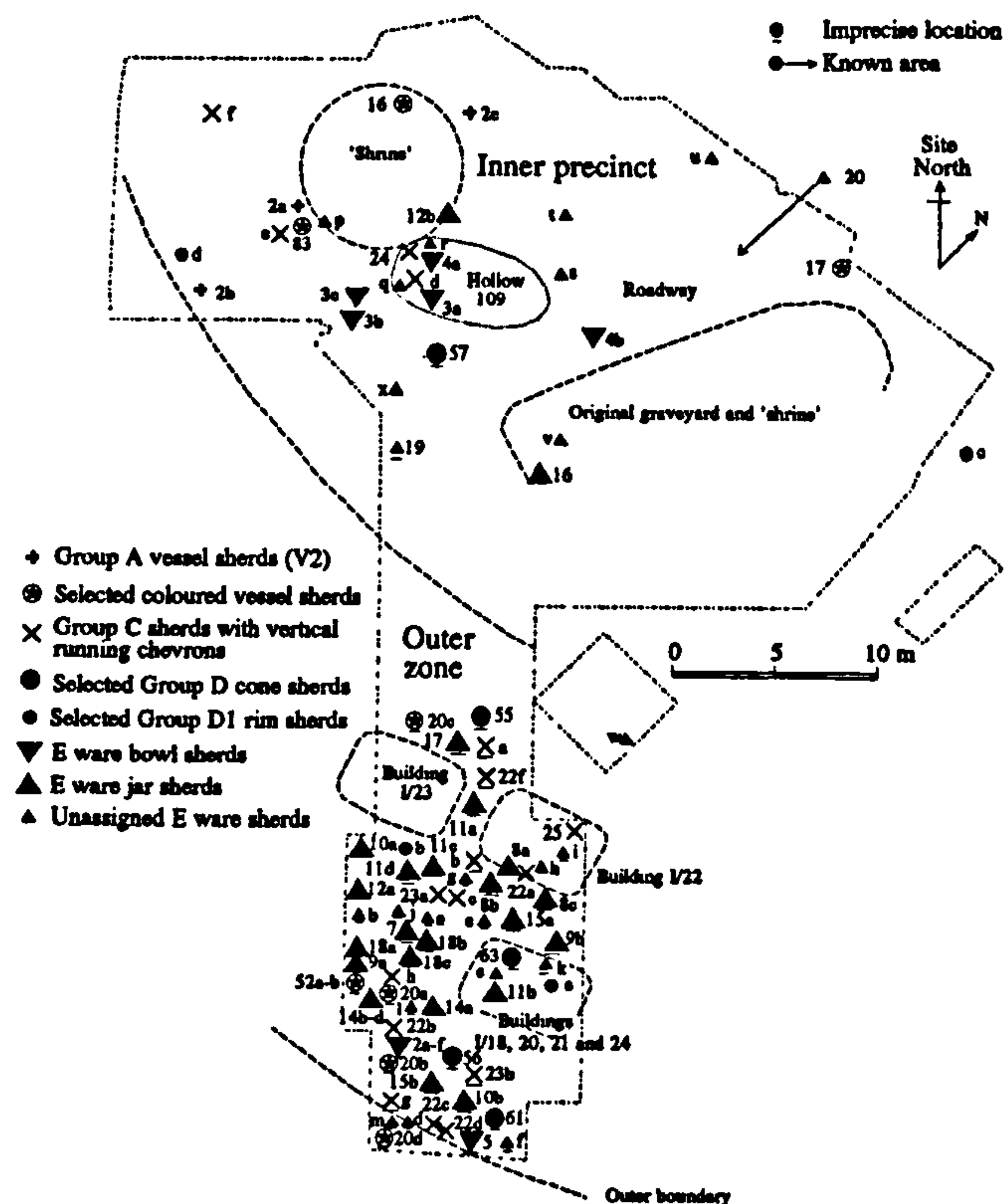


Fig. 5.16: Early medieval imported glass and ceramics, 7<sup>th</sup> century (Hill 1997a: 326).

the inner precinct (Fig. 5.16) to include the 'shrines' and graveyard (ibid.: 31). The inner/outer boundary was marked by a very shallow (.15m deep) ditch, possibly truncated by a Period II building (ibid.). Hill linked this shallow ditch to the circular boundary he extrapolated (ibid.:28, not excavated) from the curve of the first inner precinct boundary, but there is no indication if this is a valid connection of the dots. The outer boundary of this enlarged area appears later in Period I, phase 4 marked by an "insubstantial" line of stakes (ibid.:111), replaced by a band of stones without a superstructure (Fig. 5.17, ibid.:130). The southern area of the site is low lying and prone to flooding and a clayey silt was deposited on either side of these stones which were then covered over by a narrow shale path flanked by



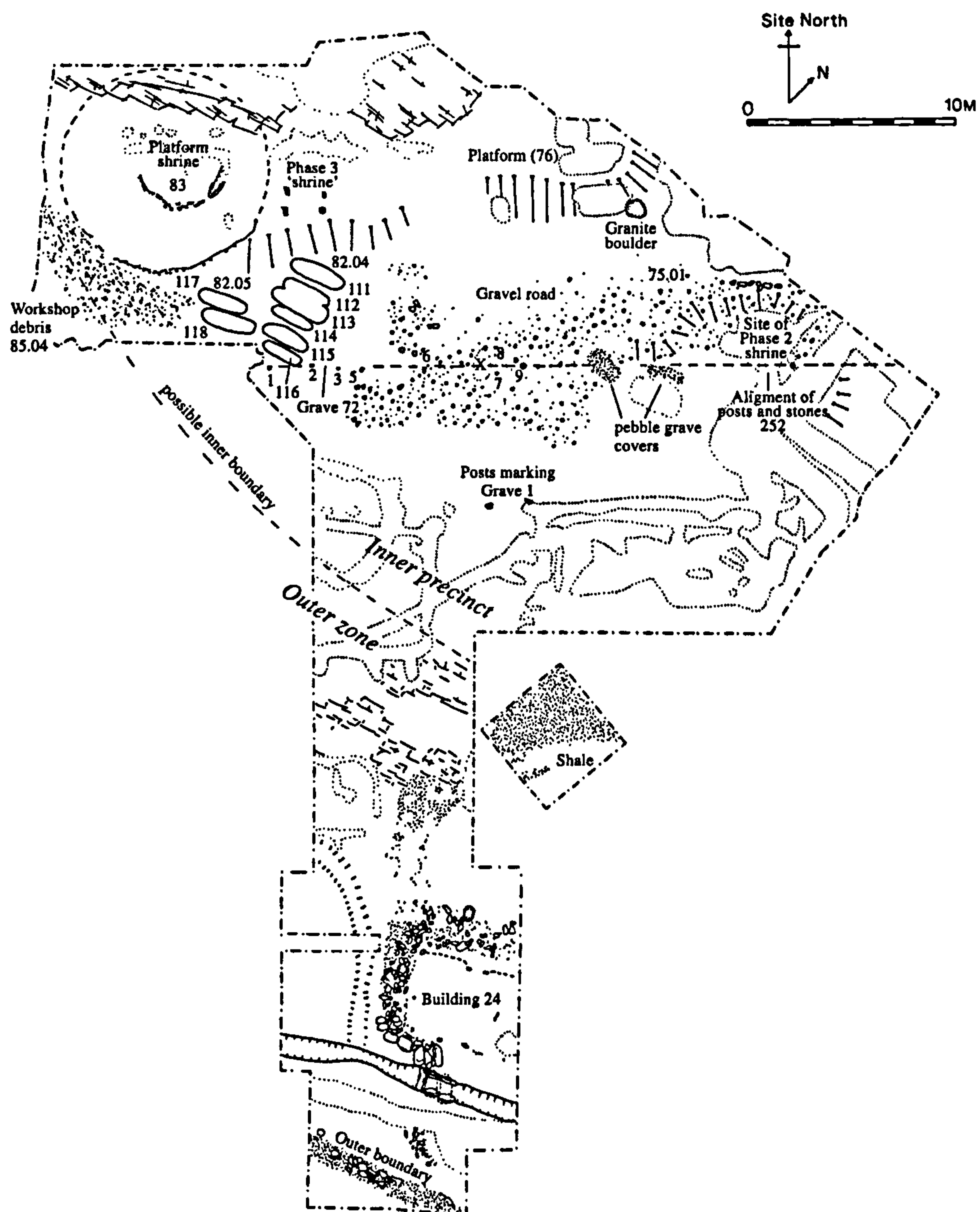


Fig. 5.17: Whithorn Period I.4, showing Hill's zoning (Hill 1997a: 111).

another shallow ditch (*ibid.*). The efforts in the southern sector, then, seem geared more towards managing the flooding and providing dry access over this southern sector rather than being a significant boundary for the settlement. Despite Hill's attempts to interpret a curvilinear monastic layout, the boundaries and zones do not seem substantial.



The other site with evidence of imported pottery and glass is the Mote of Mark, situated on the mouth of the Urr, and at a strategic position on the Solway Firth. The earliest excavations here were in 1913 under the auspices of Alexander Curle when the major deposit of metalworking debris was uncovered (Curle 1914). Excavations in the 1970s sought to answer questions concerning the stratigraphy and chronology of the site and its importance in discussions on the development of artistic styles. These excavations are as yet not fully available although interim statements have been published particularly in regards to the metalworking evidence (Laing 1975; Laing 1973a, 1973c; Longley 1982; Swindells and Laing 1980; Longley 2001). The fort is surrounded by a stone wall and sits atop a low level hill (Fig. 5.18). The ramparts displayed evidence of burning or vitrification in some places, and excavations also identified burnt timbers at the base of the ramparts (Longley 2001:78). The 1913 excavations revealed a concentration of

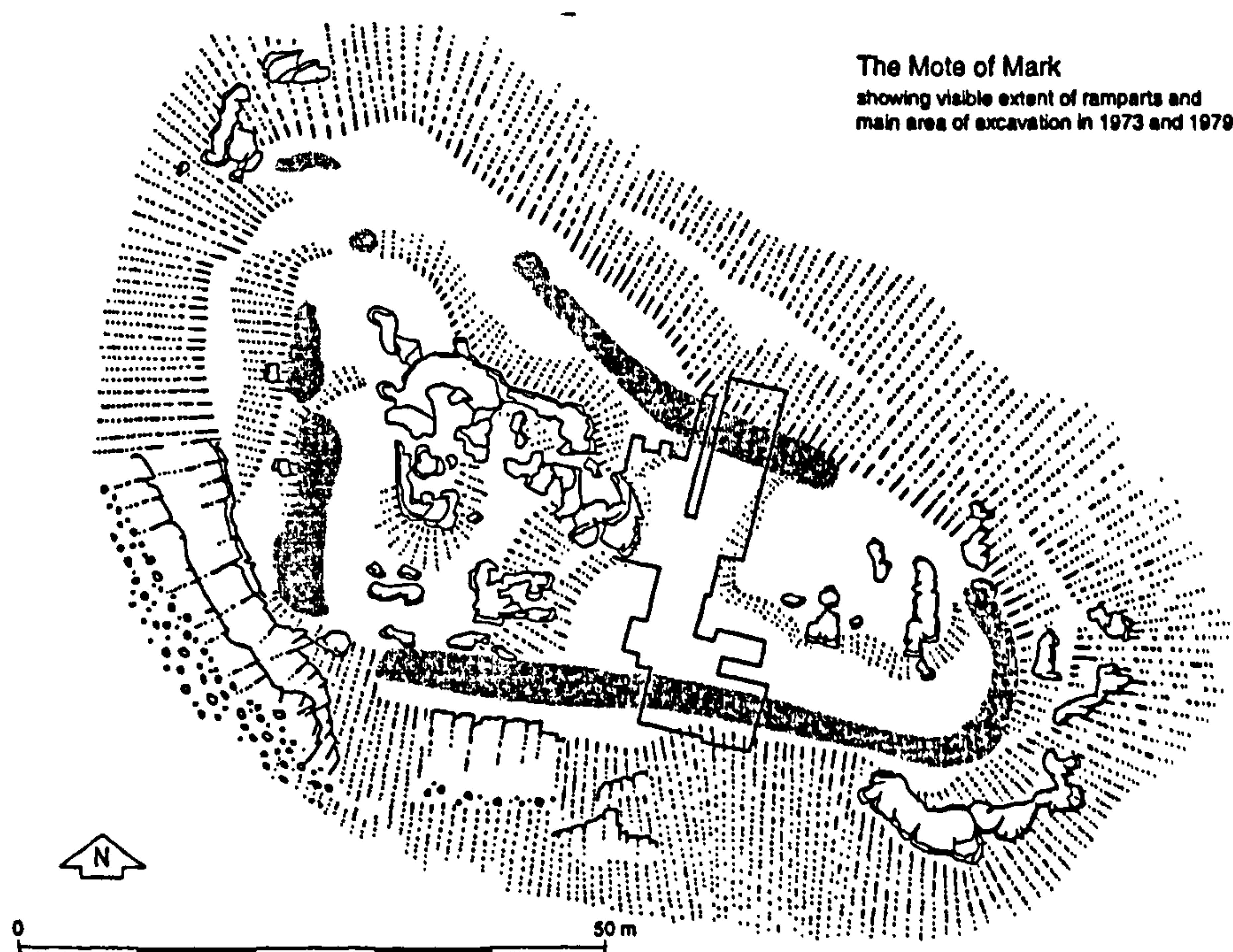


Fig. 5.18: Mote of Mark plan and location of excavations (Longley 2001: 76).



metalworking evidence associated with a hard packed clay surface and three-sided structure of stone (Curle 1914: 137-141). This structure has since been interpreted as a bench or revetment or wind-break for a hearth (Longley 2001: 79). The phasing for the site highlights the limited chronological span of occupation revealed by the excavations. Initial occupation, before the building of the rampart, occurred in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century when activities included metalworking, the deposition of animal bones, and use of Bi, D ware, and glass vessels. The rampart was built in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The use of E ware and glass vessels and non-ferrous metalworking continues during the building of the defenses up until around the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Destruction of the defences occurred in the later 7<sup>th</sup> century by means of fire after which the ramparts were deliberately demolished and occupation appears to have ceased (ibid.: 85).

The majority of imported vessel evidence at the Mote of Mark is from E ware (12 vessels) and glass sherds (minimum 18 vessels; Campbell forthcoming). Most of these sherds come from the 1913 excavations of the 'metalworking area' and of the 'three-sided structure' identified by Curle (1914: 138). The presence of imported ceramics and glass vessels suggests the fort was part of the Irish Sea trade in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries and that it was a centre for the British kingdom of Rheged whose territory it was within. The quantity of imported vessels and glass in comparison to Whithorn suggests a relationship between the two sites, but whether as equal participants in trading or as part of a redistributive system is difficult to discern (Campbell forthcoming). The evidence of imported ceramics and glass point to the domestic life of the inhabitants on the Mote - their access to long distance



commodities and the use of luxurious vessels - the main focus of the settlement here appears to be the production of fine metalworking.

Fine Metalworking and metalwork

As with imported pottery and glass, the evidence for fine metalworking and pieces of fine metalwork are limited to excavated sites and stray finds. The same limitations apply for understanding this material in terms of patterns or structures of power, as do the benefits for identifying power centres within that structure once different aspects of material investment and symbolic wealth are considered in relation to each other.

Site	Classification	No.	Descriptions
DOWALTON LOCH	Piece	1	Penannular brooch
DOWALTON LOCH BED	Pieces	2	Bronze bowls
LUCE SANDS	Pieces	4	Pin, penannular brooches
MOTE OF MARK	Moulds	Min. 207	Mostly personal adornment
TYNRON DOON	Piece	1	Bracteate pendant
WHITHORN	Moulds	12	Ingots, pins, brooches
WHITHORN	Pieces	17	Pins, buckles, binding strips
ISLE OF WHITHORN	Mould	1	Possibly pin

Table 5.3: Metalwork of the 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.

By far the largest collection of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century metalworking evidence in Dumfries and Galloway comes from the Mote of Mark (Fig. 5.19). There are 482 fragments of clay moulds from the excavations, of which 207 fragments have diagnostic features (ibid.: 79-80). The major types of metalwork represented among the moulds are penannular brooches, pins, buckles and strap fittings, studs, bosses, and decorative plates. As the bulk of the metalworking was uncovered in



the 1913 excavations, it is essentially unstratified and it is not clear how the deposit precisely fits into the stratified deposits recorded in the 1970s. However, enough stratified deposits remained on the site to ascertain their general relationships to the 1913 deposit and support the phasing for the site discussed above. Additionally, the association of imported E ware and glass with the metalworking deposit allows a date range for production in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The more recent excavations determined only one metalworking phase (Longley 2001: 85). The moulds have come under significant discussion within art historical and archaeological circles regarding the date of their ornament and the level of influence from Anglo-Saxon motifs and by extension, the presence of Anglo-Saxons at the Mote of Mark in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries (Laing 1975; Graham-Campbell and Close-Brooks 1976). There are characteristically Anglo-Saxon features or forms, in particular the segmented discs and 'axe-blade' plates (Longley 2001: 86). It is now no longer necessary to explain the presence of this type of motif or form as the result of Anglo-Saxons present on the Mote. Rather, the craftspeople would have been part of the circulation of ideas and artistic styles that occurred during these centuries (and can be related to similar fusing of styles and forms at Dunadd), whether they pledged allegiance to Northumbria or Rheged.

The Mote of Mark was a high status site that concentrated on the production of pieces of fine metalwork on a scale that suggests an aim of supplying these goods to others. The inhabitants of the Mote probably controlled the resources of their immediate hinterland, as well as controlling the movement of goods and people through the Solway Firth and up the River Urr. Such control could have allowed



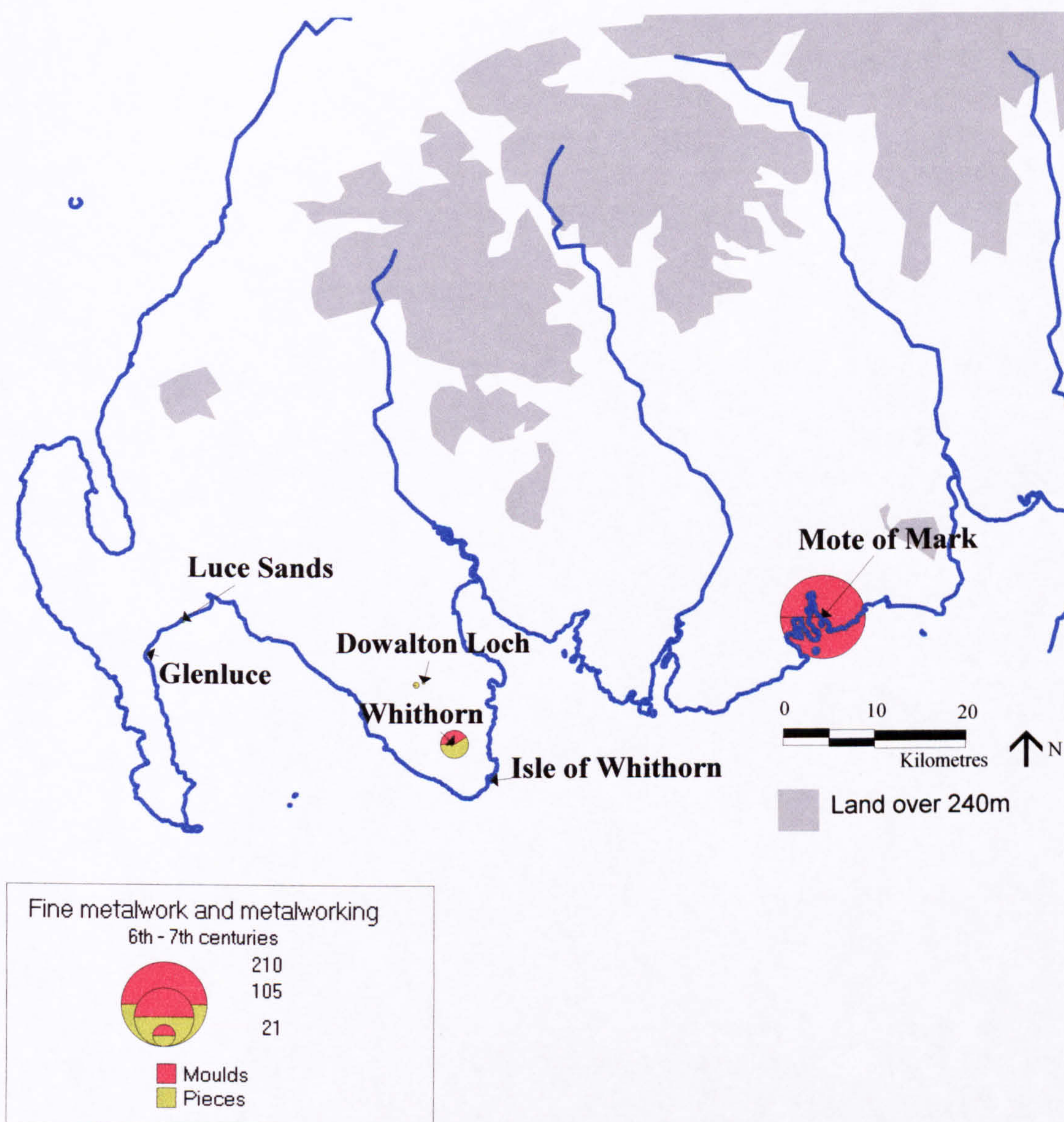


Fig. 5.19: Fine metalwork and metalworking, 6th - 7th centuries

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generally for personal adornment (multiple moulds for pins, possible penannular brooches), which are usually associated with high status secular sites like Dunadd and Clatchard Craig (Hill 1997a: 400-404). The lack of excavations of large ecclesiastical sites may mean that this apparent anomaly is not a real one.

However, excavations of the monastery at Hartlepool, Cleveland found metalworking evidence of crucibles and three moulds for intricate pieces, which were all probably destined to become mounts or finishings for ecclesiastic objects and not personal adornment (Cramp and Daniels 1987: 429-431). The corpus of metalworking evidence from secure monastic or ecclesiastic contexts is not yet large enough to ascertain whether Whithorn is a true anomaly, or indeed if such evidence at this stage might, as the ceramics and glass, point to a more secular interpretation of the settlement surrounding the early church.

A contemporary parallel to Whithorn, inferred from St Gregory's descriptions, may be Tours. An old Roman *civitas*, Gregory described the bishopric as having a *vicus christianorum* to the west of the ecclesiastical core from the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Galinie 1999: 98). Archaeology does not support such an early date for the *vicus*, and so the attached settlement may have been more a feature of Gregory's 6<sup>th</sup> century Tours (ibid.). In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, this *vicus* was a combination of sacred space centred on St Martin's grave and an area of the living. While a clerical community in the *vicus* is postulated at first, the *vicus* expanded and the archaeology suggests an integrated community of clerics and laypeople in the early medieval period (ibid.: 103).



At Whithorn, earlier 6<sup>th</sup> century metalworking finds are fairly spread out concentrating in the areas just outside Hill's first inner boundary ditch (thus in his first identified 'outer zone', Fig. 5.20). The distribution of scrap metal in the later

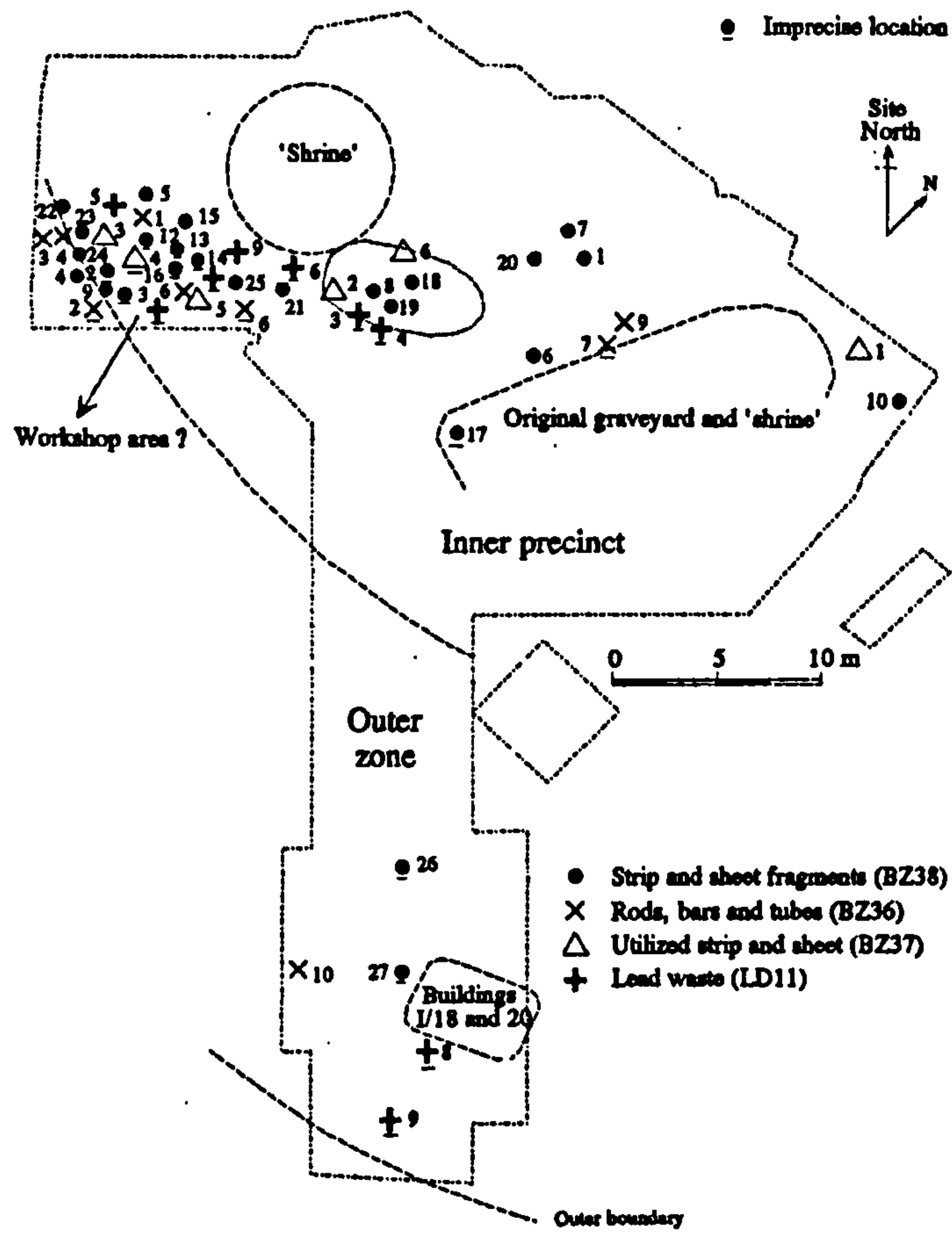


Fig.5.21: Distribution of scrap metal in 7<sup>th</sup> century (Hill 1997a: 385).

7<sup>th</sup> century (Fig.5.21) deposits shows a large concentration from a rubbish deposit within Hill's enlarged inner precinct and surrounding a 'shrine' structure. The deposit was described as a shallow bank abutting the shrine structure and was interpreted as the waste from a nearby workshop from the outer zone (Hill 1997a; 116-117). This apparent dumping of waste material in the more sacred inner



zone by the shrine also questions the validity of Hill's Period I inner and outer zoning of the settlement.

The other metalwork from Dumfries and Galloway are finished pieces and not evidence for on-site metalworking. From the bed of Dowalton Loch, where crannog no. 2 is associated with the early brooch, came two bronze bowls of early medieval date. One bowl, HU-3, is dated by typological parallels to the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century (Hunter 1994: 61). The other, HU-2, had an encrustation of soot on it radiocarbon dated to  $1245 \pm 60\text{bp}$  or 665-950AD, calibrated at 2 sigma (ibid.). Dowalton Loch has a history of votive deposition, and these vessels may be a continuation of the tradition even though they come from a Christian period (ibid.: 63-65). The bracteate pendant, possibly of 7<sup>th</sup> century date, from the fort at Tynron Doon came from a rabbit warren on the slope of the hill (Williams 1971:106; Laing 1973a:45). The fort itself is a multivallate hillfort probably of originally Iron Age construction, but with occupation in the early medieval and medieval periods as well as a tower house in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Williams 1971). Although there were two ribbed blue beads amongst the finds from the excavations that may complement the 7<sup>th</sup> century date ascribed to the bracteate pendant, the majority of finds were undatable or medieval. The mushroom headed pin from Luce Sands is one of a number of finds attributed to the dunes and is not able to be any more precisely provenanced. This type of pin was current in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, although this example may be from the later 6<sup>th</sup> century (Laing 1973b). At least three penannular brooches of H type with zoomorphic ornament are also among the collection from Luce Sands (Rynne 1965: 112; Laing 1973b: 53).



## DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY IN THE 8<sup>TH</sup> AND 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

The advent of Northumbrian secular and ecclesiastical power in the region has been seen as the impetus for a flowering of artistic effort particularly in carved stones (Brooke 1991: 36). The ecclesiastical links between Northumbria and Dumfries and Galloway were influential and may be seen in the use of characteristic 'Northumbrian' decorative motifs such as the inhabited vine scroll, and the occurrence of a scatter of Northumbrian minted coins in the region. Pecthelm and the other early Northumbrian bishops fostered the myth and cult of Whithorn's patron saint, under the name of Ninian (Clancy 2001:9). The promotion of cult and pilgrimage was an important tactic of the Northumbrian church. The cult of St Cuthbert, whose remains were translated at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, was a successful and lucrative way of extending both religious and economic influence. In the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, Cuthbert's relics were taken on a trip from Lindisfarne after Viking attacks on the holy island. During the trek, which later became part of a pilgrimage route, the saint's gospel book was supposed to have washed ashore at Whithorn, or within the diocese under Whithorn's direction (Brooke 1991: 63). The significance of the tale is the connection between Cuthbert and Ninian, which promoted the cult of both saints.

The names of Anglian bishops at Whithorn are regularly recorded from Pecthelm in 729/30 to the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, after which the sources go quiet. Although the ecclesiastical involvement of the Northumbrian-based church is relatively well represented, the amount of actual settlement within Dumfries and Galloway by



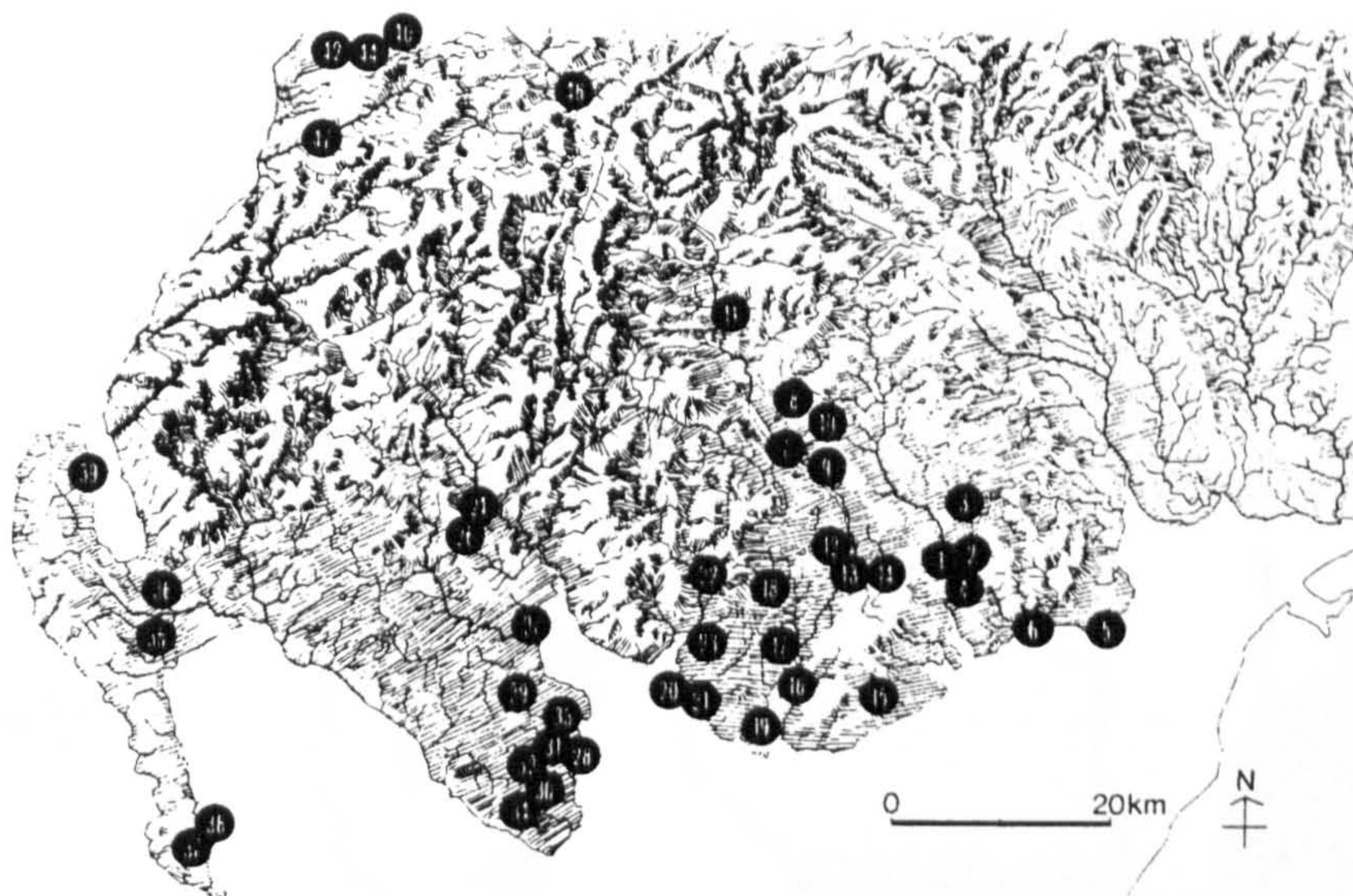


Fig. 5.22: Distribution of Anglian place-names (Brooke 1991: 297).

those coming from Northumbria is not as certain. The evidence rests mostly on the occurrence of Anglian place-names (Fig. 5.22). The majority of these names occur in the southern part of the region with concentrations in the Machars area around Whithorn and near the rivers Urr and Dee (Brooke 1991: 297). The interpretation of these Anglian derived place-names has ranged from evidence for limited and slight settlement (Duncan 1975:65) to a more balanced view of ‘considerable settlement’ in certain regions where the place-names cluster (Brooke 1991: 51).

### **Monuments of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries**

The monuments from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century show links with the sculptural traditions of Northumbria particularly in the use of inhabited vine scroll and cross forms. Of the 52 examples of sculptured stone monuments datable to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, 20 are associated with the monastic site at Hoddum (Fig. 5.23). The stones from Hoddum are found at several sites in the vicinity of the monastic center



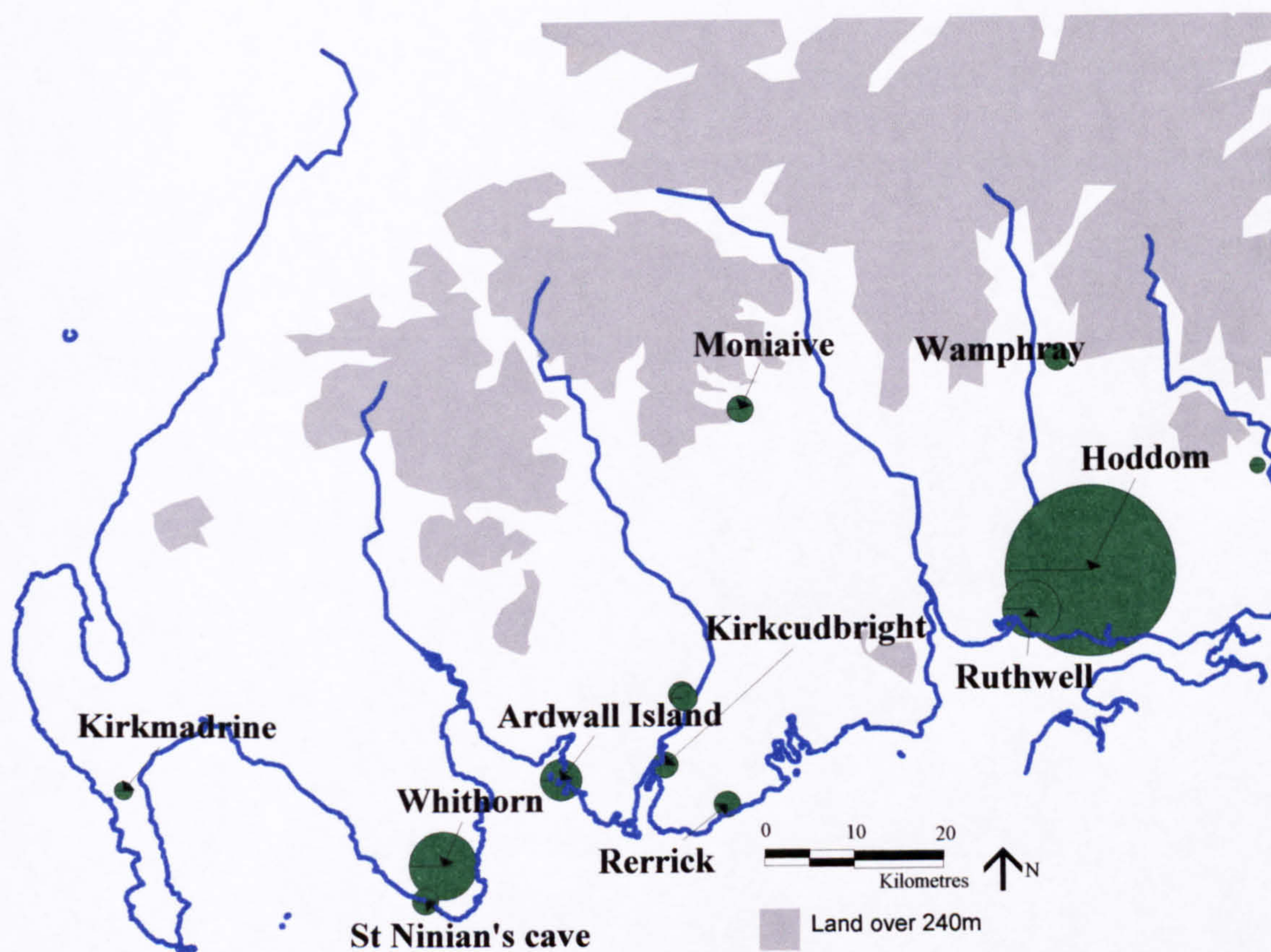


Fig. 5.23: Resources invested in monuments, 8th-9th centuries.

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– Hoddum Parish Church, the monastic site itself, and from the summerhouse at Knockhill where a collection of sculptures was on display until being dispersed to museums and other locations. Whithorn and the associated St Ninian's Cave is the next most intensive area for resource investment in carved stones, with the rest of the stones from the period being mainly single examples of relatively high investment. There is a great difference between Whithorn and Hoddum and the next two sites with significant investment in monuments. One of these is Ruthwell, which only has a single monument – The Ruthwell Cross – from this period. The other is Ardwall Island, which in contrast to Ruthwell has a group of less resource-intensive monuments that collectively make an impact.



Fig. 5.24: Small stone cross from Ardwall Island, Height: .43m (Thomas 1968: 156).

The collection of monuments at Ardwall dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries includes four examples of small shaped crosses (Fig. 5.24). These crosses were mostly



found in the rubble of the Phase 3 chapel (Thomas 1968: 155). Their size suggests they may have stood upright as grave markers. The stone-footed 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century chapel had an 'altar' structure in its east end and a series of burials in two rows aligned to the west of the building (ibid.: 137-138). Three slabs were associated, although not certainly in a primary context, with graves when excavated.

One stone (Fig. 5.25) associated with a grave has been described by Thomas as potentially a 'portable altar' like the wooden altar of St Cuthbert (ibid.: 161-162). The slate slab bears an incised design of a central linear cross covered or obscured by an incised 'S' flanked by four outline crosses and a fifth less well drawn outline cross. An inscribed pillar (no. 6) may mark another important burial. The pillar is on a tall rough block and bears a deeply pocked cross within a circle and letters

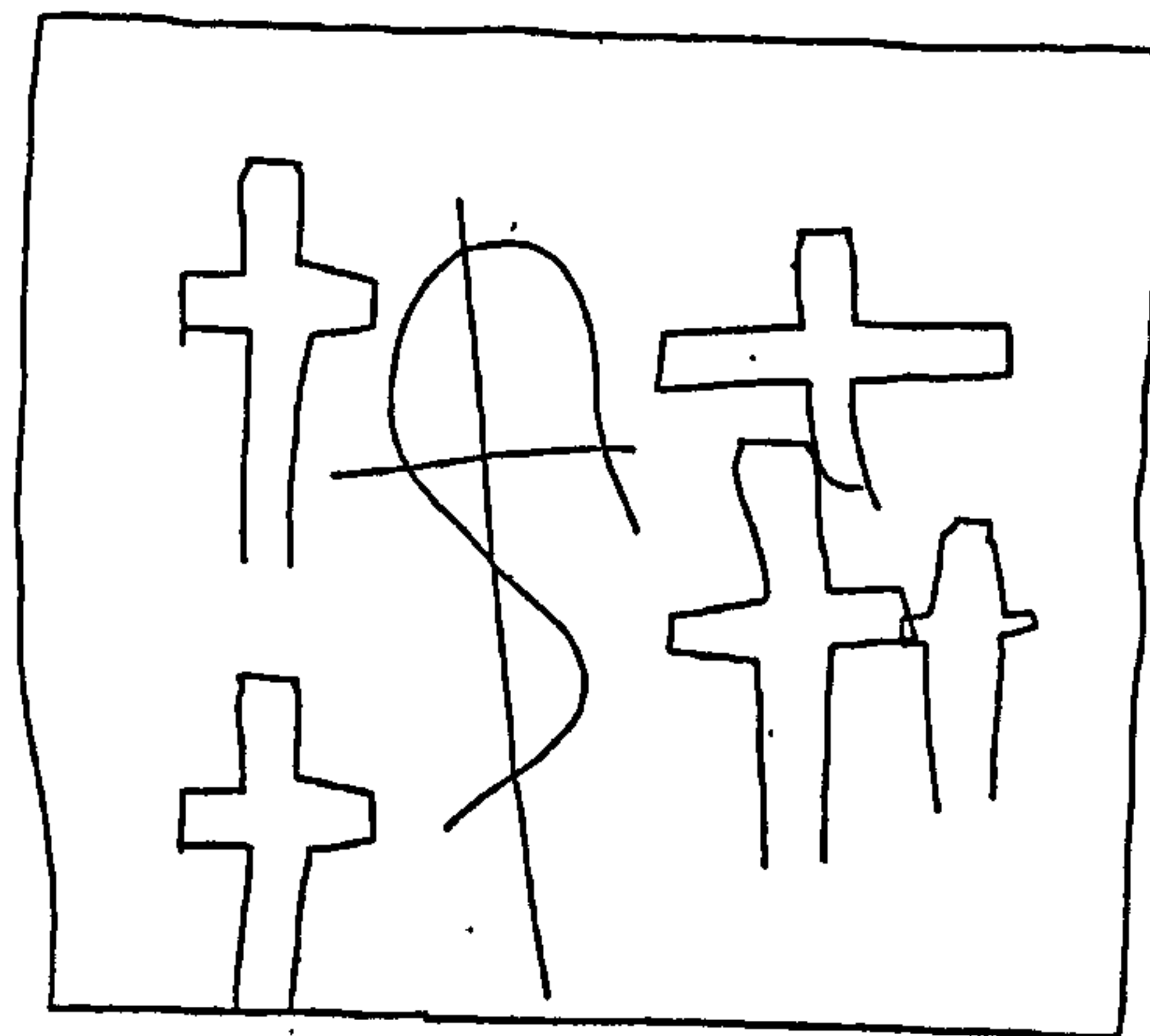


Fig. 5.25: Portable 'altar' from Ardwall Island. Height: .30m (Thomas 1968: 162).

reading '*CUDGAR*' as well as a more lightly incised name '*HUTHGA(R?)*' (ibid.: 153-54). The monuments from Ardwall suggest that they were mainly used for commemoration rather than grandiose display.



In contrast to Ardwall Island, there is only a single 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century monument known from Ruthwell, but it is arguably the finest piece of sculpture of this period from Southwest Scotland (Fig. 5.26). The Ruthwell cross has inspired a great corpus of academic literature from art historians, historians, philologists, and archaeologists (for a bibliography on the cross see Cassidy and Kiefer 1992). It is the great paradox of the corpus of ‘Anglo-Saxon’ sculpture in that it is the most sophisticated known monument, but it is located on the outskirts of the political centre of the Northumbrian kingdom (Ó Carragáin 1992: 191). The complex history of the cross began to be recorded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Mayvaert 1992: 95). Although the current display is a reconstruction not in its original location and with modern additions, the overall messages of the iconography do not seem to be greatly affected.

There is a lack of secular imagery on the cross. The cross bears both Anglian runes telling a shortened version of the crucifixion poem ‘The Dream of the Rood,’ and liturgical inscriptions in Latin that accompany the carved relief biblical scenes. The iconography of the cross is organised around important Christian events and sacraments including the miraculous birth of Christ, conversion/baptism, repentance/confession, and receiving the Eucharist (Ó Carragáin 1992: 200). The emphasis of these tenets of Christianity, which are concerned with the preparation for and reception of the Eucharist and hence salvation, suggests the monument is reinforcing the emphasis on conversion. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century this area is nominally Christian so the significance of conversion may be replicating a local custom or tradition rather than as a sign of new proselytising. The images are also, of course,



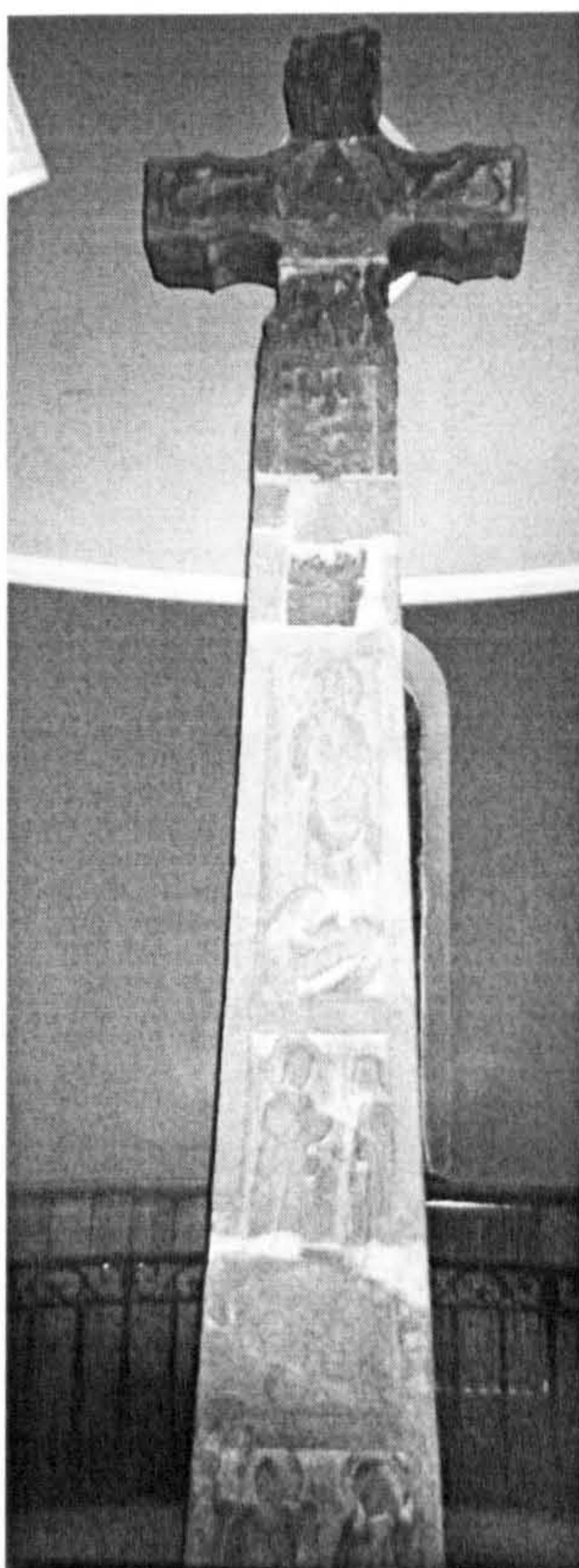


Fig. 5.26: Ruthwell Cross, Height: c. 5.2m (photo by author).



Fig. 5.27: Panel from the Ruthwell Cross – Jesus with the (hamster-like) beasts (Cassidy 1992: Plate 23).



pertinent to the community at Ruthwell. They served as a physical reminder of these rites of Christianity and perhaps as a focal point for individual contemplation. Ó Carragáin's picture of the monks of Ruthwell whose daily lives were absorbed by the liturgy exemplified by the images on the cross is the most empathic consideration of how the religious community lived with carved monuments (ibid.: 201). The images on the cross could be contemplated on or merely glanced at as one walked by – different scenes and details catching the eye in different lights. Thus, the cross provides a constant reminder and almost subliminal reinforcement of theological instruction for the community that lived with it as well as being a display for visitors and laypeople.

Limited excavation near the church at Ruthwell has not revealed contemporary activity. An enclosure rings the church area, but is of Iron Age date and associated with ironworking (Crowe 1987: 46). The church site may have reused the Iron Age enclosure as a monastic *vallum* or boundary, but there is as yet no evidence to suggest the enclosure was even visible in the early medieval period.

The enclosure boundary at Hoddum, seen as a cropmark, was one of the only visible vestiges of this once prestigious religious site. The monuments from Hoddum have been greatly abused by time. This has much to do with the history of the site, which never had a large monastic house erected upon it during the later medieval period and survived only as a parish church. A large group of the sculptural fragments from the site were collected by enthusiasts and broken up for



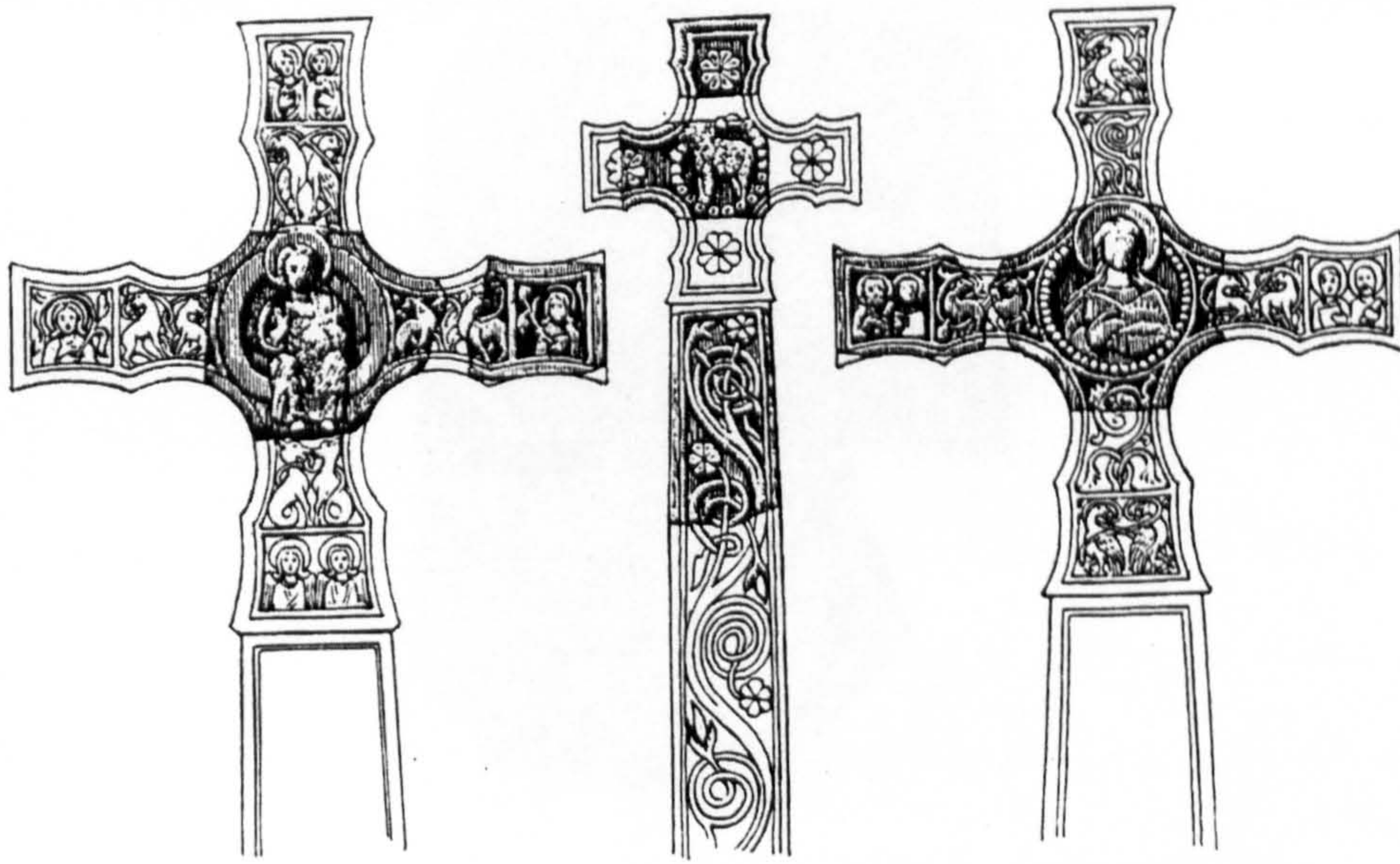


Fig. 5.28: Reconstruction of Hoddum monuments by Collingwood (Radford 1954: 185).

display in a summerhouse at Knockhill until taken to Hoddum Castle for 'safekeeping' where most of it was broken up further and used for hardcore during the 1940s. Stray finds of sculpture also come from local buildings, rubble and clearance of the parish church, and excavated contexts in advance of quarrying activity near the site.

There are fragments of up to ten possible free-standing crosses from the site, varying from plain to intricately decorated. The most intricate of these is now lost, but Collingwood attempted a reconstruction (Collingwood 1927; Radford 1954: 185, Fig. 5.28). The iconography includes depictions of Christ on the cross heads. The arms of the cross heads also contained figural biblical scenes. The shafts were decorated on all four faces with figural scenes and vine scroll. Even smaller monuments appear to echo the form of the free-standing crosses (Fig. 5.29).



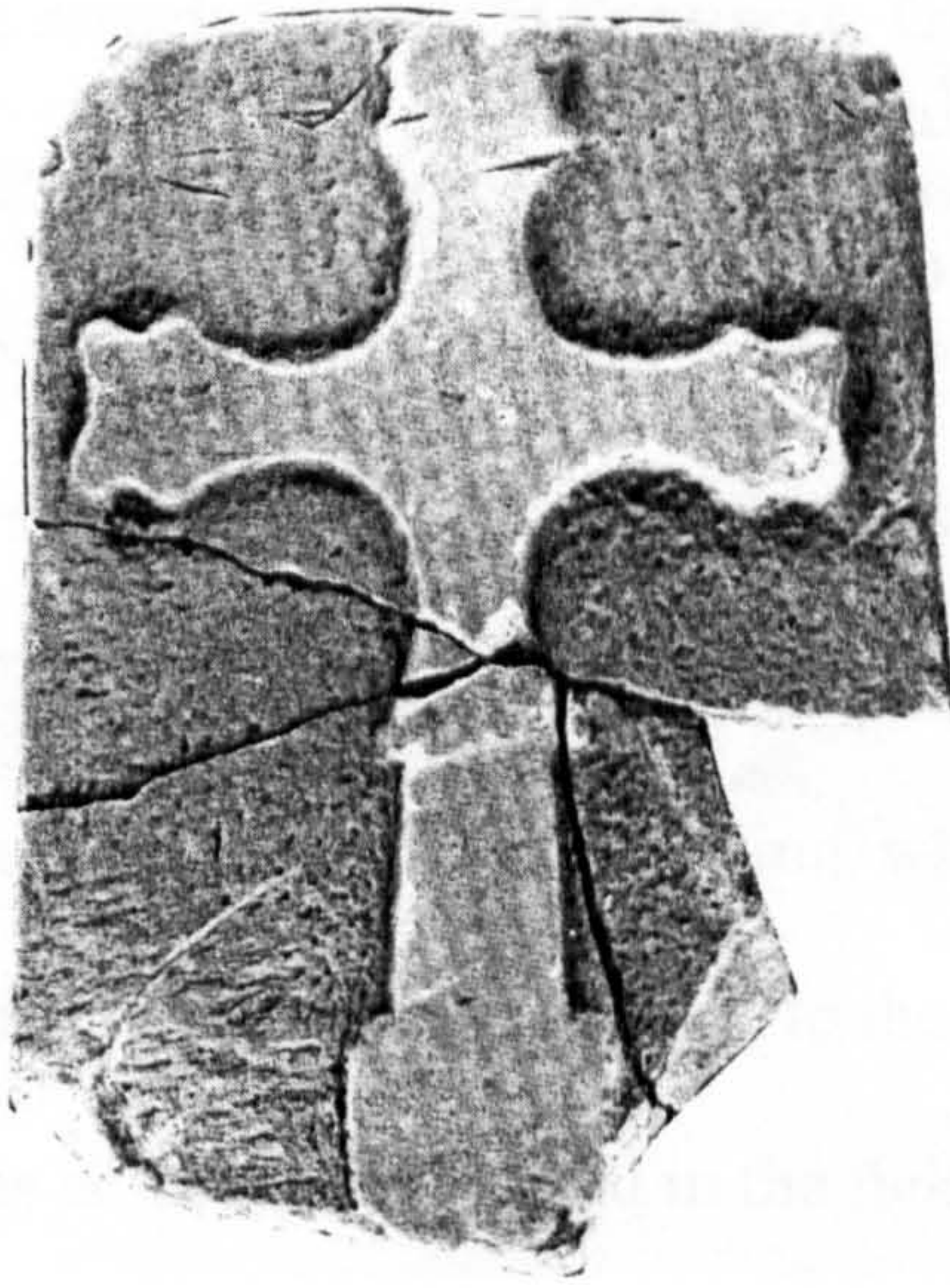


Fig. 5.29: Stone slab from Hoddum. Height: .55m (Lowe 1991: 28).

Like Ruthwell, the figural scenes and style of carving draws on a different set of influences and inspiration than the majority of monuments in Argyll or Fife and Perth. The sculpture alone may suggest significant contacts with, and monks from, Northumbria where these styles appear to originate (Cramp 1960: 13-14).

Although the sculpture from Hoddum has been described as ‘pure Northumbrian in style,’ the origins of the monastery lie before the advent of Northumbrian power in the area (Lowe 1991: 11). The excavations show that while Northumbrian cultural, religious, and political presence was at Hoddum in artistic influence and probably Northumbrian monks, there is no apparent eradication of the community or severe discontinuation with the community of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Any achievements of the monastery after the influx of Northumbrian power in the later 7<sup>th</sup> century should be considered as a culmination of years of mixing and change within the community as a whole.



The church at Hoddum is associated with St Kentigern, Glasgow's patron saint. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century *Life of Kentigern*, Hoddum is where the saint and King Rydderch ap Tudwal of Strathclyde held a meeting, although this account was written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and must be seen as an attempt to assert the rights of the bishop of Glasgow over Hoddum (Lowe 1991: 11). Radford ascribed an early 8<sup>th</sup> century date to the nave of the standing parish church building, which re-used Roman masonry, with the chancel and other sections dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> century or later (1954: 181). Excavations at Hoddum occurred in the fields to the north and east of the parish church. A large open area excavation over much of the site was complemented by keyhole areas and post-ploughing survey in another field adjacent to the parish church (Lowe 1991). The major features uncovered include a series of post-built timber buildings, an enclosure ditch and palisade, and two stone built or stone-footed buildings. Dates for the site mostly lie within the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The ditch encloses a relatively large area for an early monastic settlement, comparable to the enclosure at Iona (Lowe 1991: 14). The primary ditch fill is radiocarbon dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century (550±70 ad, AD 605-675; 1 sigma) and the secondary fill to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> (920±50 ad, AD 970-1030, 1 sigma) centuries suggesting that the boundary survived at least in parts for several centuries (ibid.: 14, 17; 1993: 90). A number of timber post-built rectangular buildings were built within the enclosure, which has been interpreted as part of the food processing and preparing area of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century monastery (Lowe 1993: 90-91). Post-



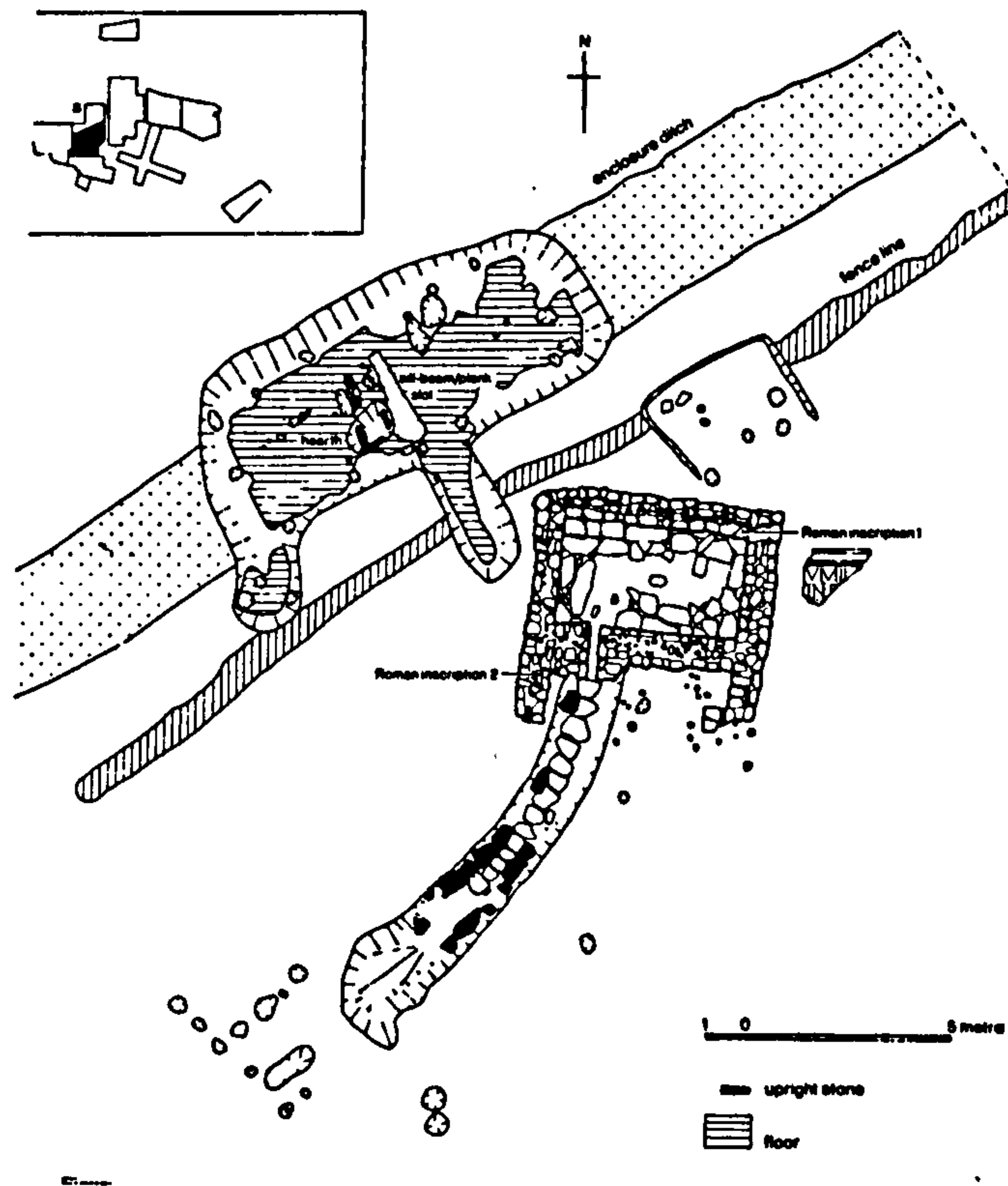


Fig. 5.30: 'Baptistry' building from Hoddom (Lowe 1991: 20).

enclosure activity on the site is in the form of a sunken floored building, similar to a *grubenhaus*, overlying the filled in ditch and associated with a deposit of smithing debris (Lowe 1991: 19). This activity must postdate the infilling of the ditch in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

There is also evidence on site for pre-enclosure activity. The enclosure bank deposits sealed the remains of a stone building with a possible timber superstructure and annexe (ibid.: 20-23). This small building was orientated east/west and built using reused Roman stone, including two fragments of inscription derived from the Roman fort at Birrens (ibid.). The layout of this building includes a subterranean curving passage leading away from the building that was paved with flat slabs for about half its length and possibly ended in a type



of timber structure (Fig. 5.30). The excavator has suggested the building acted as a baptistery with the subterranean passage acting as a well-kept drain (Lowe 1993: 92).

Such an elaborate building for baptism may mark the significance of the sacrament for the community and possibly its involvement in converting the region, and in particular powerful people in the region. The importance of conversion is also conveyed by the later 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century Ruthwell Cross, now situated about 8km away. Whether baptistry or not, the presence of such an elaborate building at such an early date in the site's development (the building must predate the enclosure bank so likely dates to the early years of the 7<sup>th</sup> century) shows the site was established and relatively important in the years before the Northumbrian advance into the region. Although the monastery appears to be important in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries mark the artistic *floruit* of the site in regards to sculptured stones, even surpassing the bishopric at Whithorn.



Fig. 5.31: Cross shaft from Whithorn showing two 'haloed' figures (photo by author).



Although not as great a concentration, there are several 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century stones from the site at Whithorn and its associated site at St Ninian's Cave. The sculpture from Whithorn represents at least two free-standing crosses, surviving as cross shafts, of a form seen elsewhere in the region such as Hoddom and at Ruthwell, influenced by sculptural tradition from Northumbria. One of these bears interlace, while the other (Fig. 5.31), bears a scene of figures possibly with halos (nos. 3 and 5 in Radford and Donaldson 1984: 28). A slab from the cemetery appears to have been trimmed at the base, but the scene is clearly that of the Crucifixion at Golgotha (Fig. 5.32, no 6 in *ibid.*). Two smaller crosses flank a large cross. These crosses may replicate jeweled metalwork crosses as the arms and centers are decorated as to represent *cloisonné* settings if the slab were painted (Bailey 1996: 15).



Fig. 5.32: Slab depicting Golgotha, Whithorn (photo by author).

Radford and Donaldson (1984: 28) considered the slab an architectural piece, but there is nothing in its form or decoration to warrant this interpretation.

Architectural and layout changes were a constant theme in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries in the settlement at Whithorn. The early 8<sup>th</sup> century at Whithorn lies at the end of the Period I phase of occupation identified by the excavator, which was



characterised by expansion of the ‘inner zone’ for burial and shrine/cult purposes and the presence of industrial and domestic debris in both zones indicative of high status contacts and activities, reminiscent of the *vicus christianorum* at Tours.

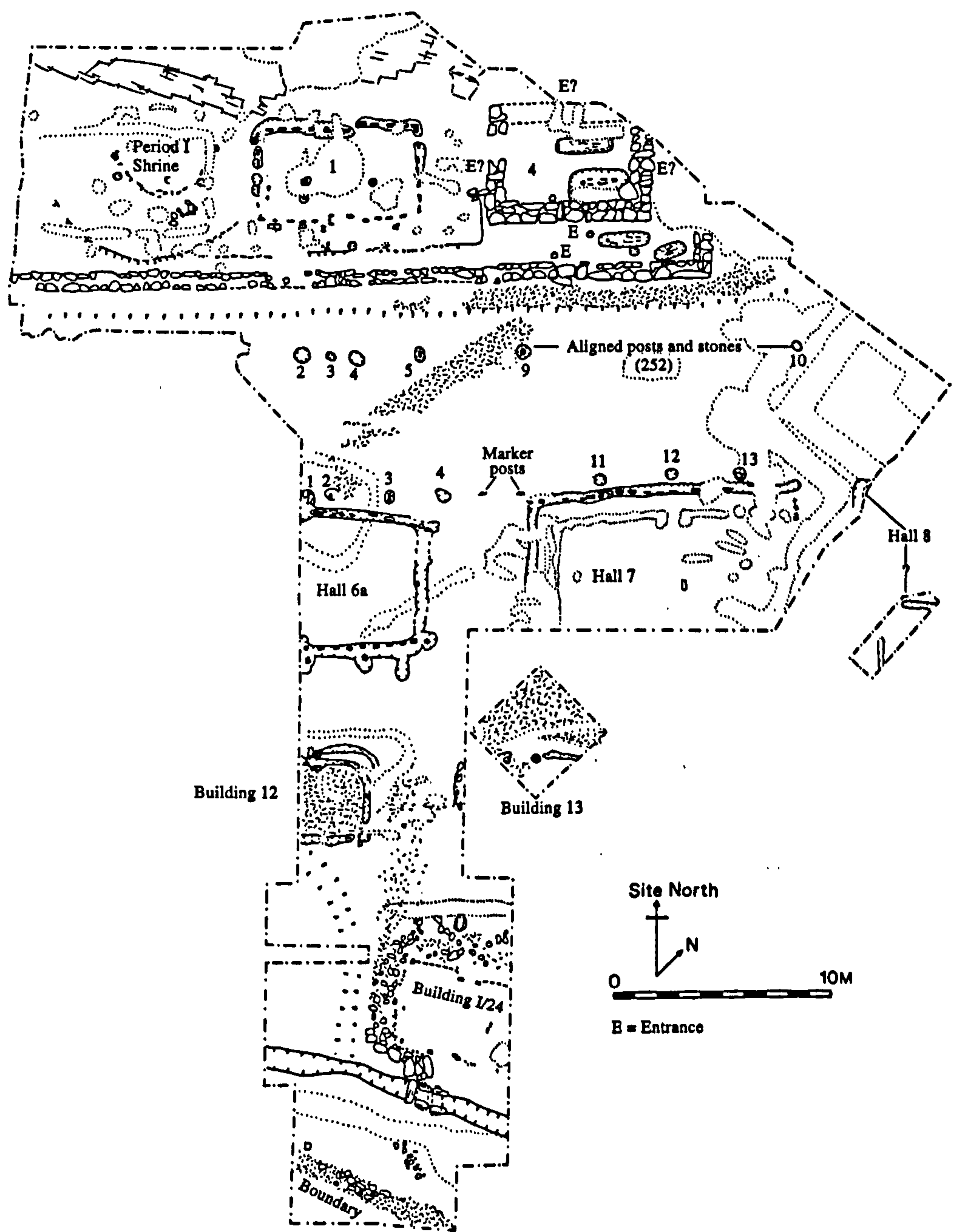


Fig. 5.33: Glebe field, Whithorn. Period II/1 features (Hill 1997a: 140).



Hill's Period II phase of occupation is more closely linked with the advent of Northumbrian bishops in control at Whithorn and is dated c. 730 – 845 AD (1997a: 134). The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the area in the Glebe field occupied by a series of constructions and reconstructions including a planned rectilinear settlement of three ranges of buildings (Fig. 5.33). These buildings were sub-rectangular and had opposed timber-framed doorways comparable to buildings from Hartlepool, Cleveland – a Northumbrian double monastery (ibid.: 37). The key set of buildings for this phase are the northern range, which evolve from single 'shrine' or chapel buildings to a large building interpreted as a church (Fig. 5.34; ibid.: 146-148) that overlay the earlier shrine.

Such an intense building program suggests the presence of a sizable skilled workforce at least for the major building projects (ibid.: 141). Apart from the expanded 'church' building, another ecclesiastic building, interpreted as a burial chapel or temporary *mortarium*, was built adjacent to the church and boundary to the inner zone. The stone footing and clay walls of the burial chapel point to the buildings' importance and status relative to the other buildings, which were timber-built, on site. Within the burial chapel were four or five coffin graves and a significant amount of window glass was found around the buildings walls (ibid.: 164-165). The existence of coloured glass windows, so far unique in Scottish archaeology but more common in Northumbria at places such as Wearmouth and Jarrow, again highlights the importance of this building and the site as a whole (Cramp 1970; 1997). By c. 760 the remodeling and reconstruction tapered off, and



was followed by a period of relative inactivity in building until the early 9<sup>th</sup> century (Hill 1997a: 157-8).

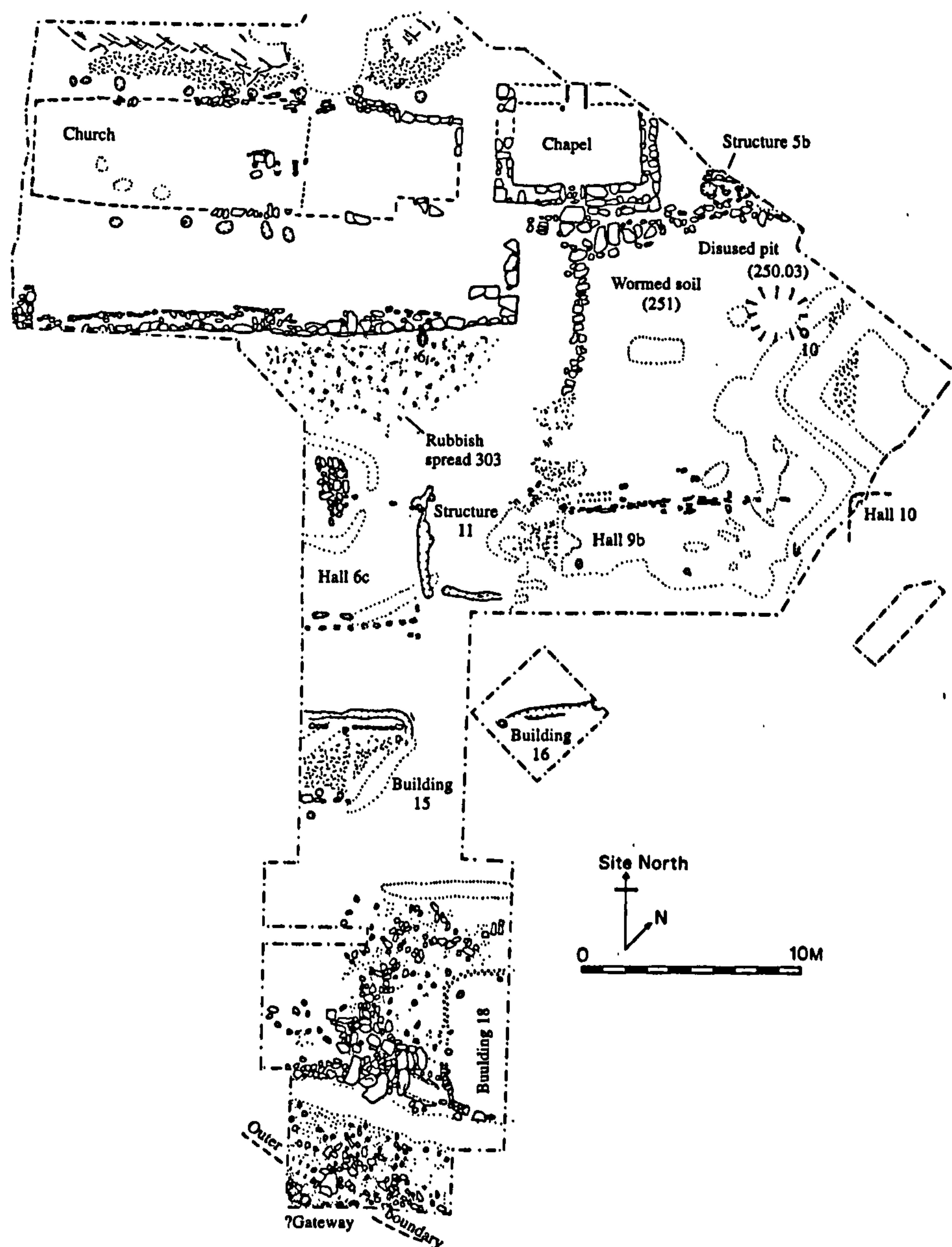


Fig. 5.34: Glebe Field, Whithorn. Period II, general plan of the early 9<sup>th</sup> century features (Hill 1997a: 156).

The end of the excavator's Period II comes in c. 845 with a phase of change marking a crisis and fire (ibid.: 162). The interpreted church building appears to change function as the presence of charred grain suggests the building became used



as a threshing area. The lower ground to the south flooded due to a lack of maintenance of the drainage systems in the area (ibid.). The end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century falls within the excavator's Period III (c. 845 – 1000 x 1050), when a building over the Period II 'church' was constructed and the burial chapel refurbished (Hill 1997a: 183 – 186). The assemblage of finds from within the building, which included metalworking debris (ibid.: 186), suggest it might have had a secular use rather than be a church. However, it does reflect the earlier 'church's' position, has stone foundations for the walls, and incorporates a stone with a cross of arcs or marigold design (ibid.: 187). These factors might suggest a building of special standing, but they do not positively identify the building as a church.

The finds from this phase concentrate most notably in the areas between the ecclesiastical buildings and the buildings towards the south. These included coins, personal items and metalworking debris, although this last has been interpreted as belonging to misplaced or mixed Period I (6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century) contexts (ibid.: 160-161).

The inner and outer zones of the settlement, as identified by Hill, no longer seem to be important in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries as the layout becomes aligned into three ranges of buildings (ibid.: 134), although the terraces may mark some kind of internal divisions (ibid.: 135). The only visible boundary remaining is the 'outer boundary' in the southern part of the site, now suggested as relating to drainage maintenance rather than (or perhaps in addition to) a boundary. A shallow ditch continued to exist here until the end of Period II when the southern sector became flooded (ibid.: 181-182). Before the area flooded, rough paving was set down



along the ditch with a flagstone bridging it suggesting a path may have run through the area (ibid.).

### Fine Metalworking and metalwork

The metalwork from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries shows a drop in evidence for production at the two power centres and outside of these centres the majority of pieces are the result of chance finds (Table 5.4, Fig. 5.35). A penannular brooch from Carronbridge is part of a trio of finds discovered during excavation of an Iron Age settlement (Johnston 1994). There was no stratigraphic relationship or any feature associated with the deposition of the brooch, sword, and sickle, which probably took place in the 9<sup>th</sup> or even early 10<sup>th</sup> century (Owen and Welander 1995: 768). The conditions of deposition do not suggest a casual loss, but rather purposeful placement of these objects here perhaps still on the wearer. The penannular brooch terminal from Skyreburn is lobed with a central blue glass setting surrounded by vine scroll (Hunter 1999:21). It was found by metal detectorists so nothing is known of its deposition, except that it was from near the mouth of the river. The Bishopburn mount, possibly a spiral-decorated harness fitting, was also a metal detector find (Hunter 2003).

Site	Classification	No.	Type
BISHOPBURN	Piece	1	Mount – harness fitting?
CARRONBRIDGE	Piece	1	Penannular brooch
'DUMFRIESSHIRE'	Pieces	Over 50	Collection of decorated strips
LUCE SANDS	Pieces	6	Strap ends
MONYBUIE	Piece	1	Bell casing (5th – 9th c.)
RERRICK CHURCH	Piece	1	Mount?
SKYREBURN	Piece	1	Penannular brooch terminal
WHITHORN	Pieces	24	Pins, mounts, ingot, rings

Table 5.4: Metalwork of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.



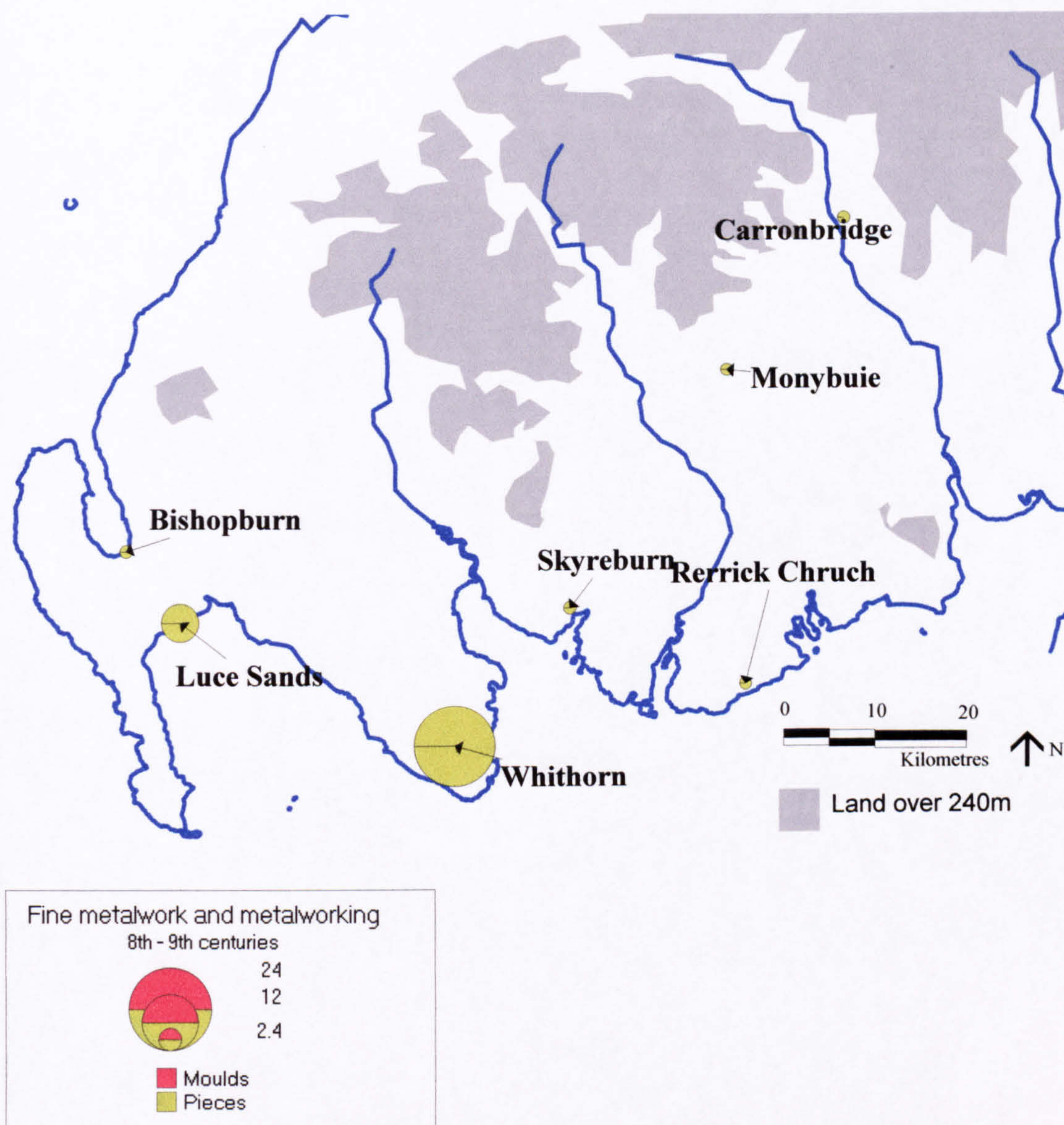


Fig. 5.35: Fine metalwork, 8th - 9th centuries

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The piece from Rerrick Church is a bronze mount probably dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> or late 7<sup>th</sup> century at the earliest (Whitfield and Graham-Campbell 1992:24). The design is of an intricately laced beast surrounded by a beaded border and similar to the type of motifs and design seen on the crosses of this period. The strap ends from Luce Sands might also be considered as part of decoration for an ecclesiastical object, or even as 'bookmarkers' (Laing 1973a: 47). Over 50 fragments of bronze repoussé strips and five bronze bosses come from somewhere in 'Dumfriesshire' perhaps related to the fort at Tynron Doon. The strips bear vine scroll motif characteristic of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. De Paor (1961) and Cessford (1994a) made the case for the fragments as parts of an elaborate helmet with varying dates from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, the five bosses suggests a cross motif and the pieces are most likely from a covering for a wooden ecclesiastical object such as a book shrine or portable altar (Webster and Backhouse 1991: 174). The final ecclesiastical piece of stray metalwork is the bronze casing of a handbell from Monybuie, which may be 8<sup>th</sup> century by comparison to other examples from Scotland (Eeles and Clouston 1967: 191). These stray finds suggest that metalwork was also affected by new stylistic influences. The evidence for metalworking activity is much less than the previous period. This suggests either the excavated sites stopped producing fine metalwork and the control of resources for production was directed to other sites, or that productive sites were reorganised and metalworking took place in currently unexcavated precincts within the sites.

The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century evidence from Whithorn differs from the earlier period in that debris from the production of fine metalworking is scarce although there is some evidence of copper working in the later 9th century (Hill 1997a: 403). The



majority of metalwork objects are for personal adornment – a variety of pins and finger rings indicating the status and economic state of some of the inhabitants or visitors to the settlement. The other objects could be associated with decorative metalwork for mounts or ornament for ecclesiastical objects. Of these objects two have cross motifs in their decoration – a decorated strip (find no BZ35.8 in Hill 1997a: 386) from the debris in the Period II ‘church’ and a strap end (no. BZ19a.4, *ibid.*: 373-374) with an incised Latin cross. The scant copper working evidence and the presence of a small gold ingot (no AU.1, *ibid.*: 398) does suggest a degree of control of the production of fine metalworking and the resources involved in the process. However, the excavations suggest that it is on a reduced scale from the previous period or that it had been moved to another section of the settlement. Preliminary work in the outer fields surrounding Whithorn churchyard has produced evidence of industrial activities dating to the mid 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (Lowe 2003).

### **Hoards and Coins**

The only hoard from the area is a mixed hoard of metalwork and coins found in peat at Talnotrie (Fig. 5.36). The metalwork in the hoard included a lead weight ornamented with a copper alloy disc of interlace, the hollow spherical decorated head of a pin, a silver strap-end with zoomorphic decoration, a pair of silver disc-headed pins and a gold finger ring. The other objects in the hoard were a cross shaped bronze piece, a glass setting, three claystone whorls, a piece of jet or lignite, an agate, and part of a cake of wax (Maxwell 1913: 12-16). The hoard also contained thirteen coins from a mix of origins. The coins comprise: four silver



pennies of Burgred of Mercia (852-74); copper-alloy pennies (stycas) of Ethelred II (841-4), Redwulf (844), Osbert (849-67), Archbishop Wulfhere (period 854-67) and two illegible; fragments of a denier of Louis the Pious (814-40) and of two 'Abbasid dirhams, one of al-Mutawakkil (AD 846/7-861/2), and one unknown (Webster and Bakehouse 1991:273). The reuse of a mount on a lead weight is a characteristic of Viking associated finds. This along with the presence of coins from the East may indicate a Viking association for the hoard, either deposited by a Norse trader or raider or by someone in contact with them.

The eclectic collection of coins from the Talnotrie hoard is not matched by other coin finds. The majority of the 65 coins come from the excavations at Whithorn and are dominated by Northumbrian issues. Only the general distribution and interpretation of the coins are dealt with within the current study. The full catalogue of coins and the issue dates are dealt with within the excavation monograph (Pirie 1997: 332-345, Hill 1997b: 351-357). The Whithorn coins cluster in the mid 8<sup>th</sup> – mid 9<sup>th</sup> century and with 27 of Eanred c. 810-841 and 15 of Aethelred II c. 841 – 849 (ibid). Most (29 coins) are from a rubbish deposit outside the revetment wall, Hill's Group 2 in the plan (Fig. 5.37, ibid.:332-345). The deposition of Group 2 within the rubbish spread suggests that the coins originally were dropped or deposited elsewhere and were carried along with other debris at the time of deposition of the rubbish spread. They appear to be casual losses or losses from within a metalworking area. Casual losses might be considered evidence of transactions involving coins (Metcalf 1988: 17), however at this stage the amount of coinage from the excavations at Whithorn does not allow for generalisations on monetary usage, unlike the numbers from



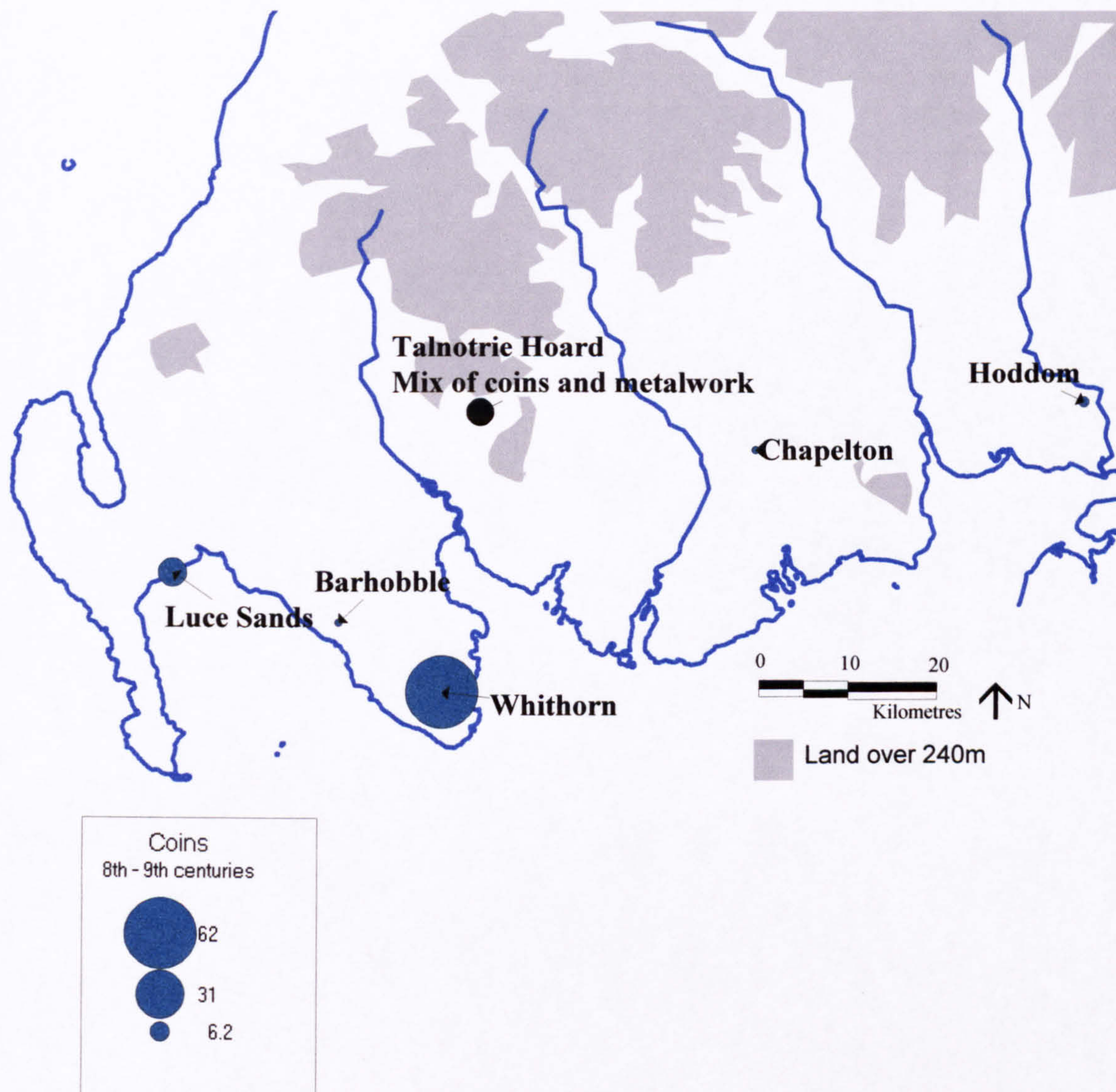


Fig. 5.36: Weighted distribution of coins and the location of the Talnotrie Hoard, 8th - 9th centuries

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Hamwic/Southampton, for example where a small percentage (5%) of the site produced four times as many coins (ibid.: 16).

Site	No.	Context	Comments
BARHOBBLE	1	excavations	sceat of Eadberht – c.737-758
CHAPELTON	1	excavations	Debased form of Northumbrian styca; copper alloy
HODDOM	2	ploughsoil survey	1 Carolingian denier of Louis the Pious and a styca of Aethelred II c. 841x4
LUCE SANDS	12(13)	sand dunes	Northumbrian stycas
WHITHORN	62	excavations	mostly Northumbrian, with little Southumbrian and East Anglian

Table 5.5: 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century coins.

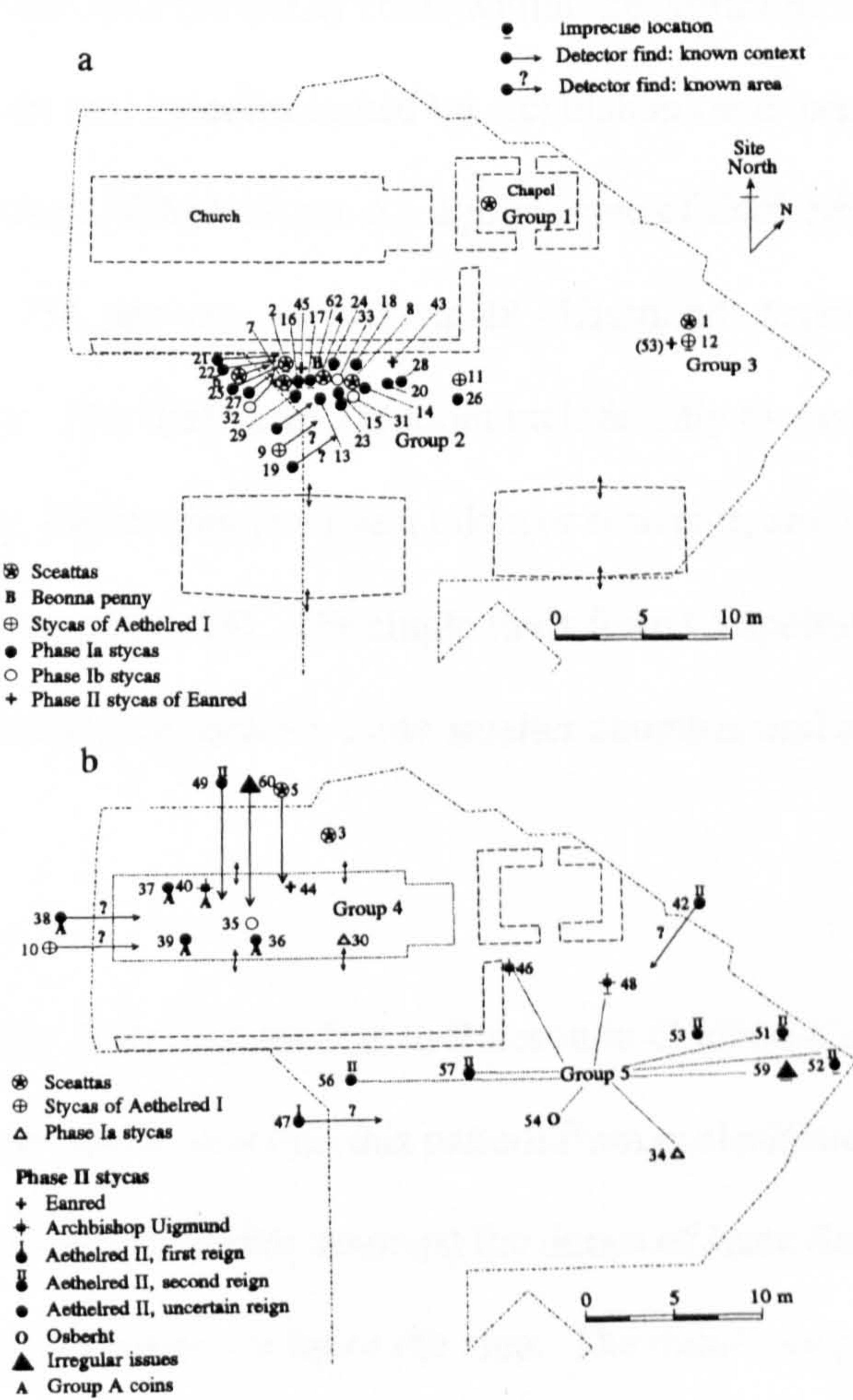


Fig. 5.37: Groups of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century coins (Hill 1997a: 353).



The Whithorn coins indicate an environment where coinage meaningfully existed, but not exactly what that meaning and context could be. The coins do not necessarily indicate trade or economic exchange in a currency capacity, but are probably related to Northumbrian administration or possibly pilgrimage activity. The other known coins from the period, with the exception of the Luce Sands collection, include Chapelton, Hoddum, and Barhobble, which are all related to early ecclesiastical foundations. These factors suggest the coins are derived from some church tax or grant directly from Northumbria rather than organic trade or exchange using currency in Dumfries and Galloway itself (cf Dolley and Knight 1971). The importance of the use of coins within the Northumbrian church environment is indicated by coins issued by archbishops and joint issues of archbishops and kings (Whithorn no. 6 – a joint issue of Eadberht and Archbishop Ecgberht c. 737 – 758, and nos. 40, 46, and 48 - Uigmund, Archbishop of York between 837-850). The finds from Hoddum include only two coins, one of Carolingian origin, which may even be a token or souvenir, and the other Northumbrian (Lowe 1991: 25). The single finds from Chapelton and Barhobble may indicate a relationship between these smaller churches and one of the larger centres.

The twelve coins (or thirteen according to Bateson in Graham-Campbell 1995: 87) from Luce Sands do not fit well into this pattern from ecclesiastical sites. There are no known early ecclesiastical sites amongst the dunes of Luce Sands, although Glenluce Church is at the eastern tip of the area. The dunes are productive for finds from many periods and types, but all largely unprovenanced. The area is currently used by the Ministry of Defense as a secure firing range and is generally



unavailable for survey and research. The combination of a significant number of coins, finds of brooches and metalwork of 'Irish type', and a beach location has prompted the suggestion that the Sands acted as a type of 'beach emporium' through the centuries of post-Roman Rheged and Northumbrian administration (Crowe 1998: 55; Hill 1997a:14). Places like Luce Sands might have acted as temporary foci for trading and exchange for short periods of time, perhaps in a seasonal cycle. The scatter of imported B ware, a comb, whetstones and other tools from Bantham Head, Devon is probably the most similar collection of finds to Luce Sands (Hodges 1982:67). No such beach markets have been proven to exist in Scotland, although besides the one at Luce Sands they have been suggested at Tarbat/Portmahomack and Stevenson Sands in Ayrshire (Harden 1995: 225, Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998:98). There has yet to be any imported ceramics attributed to Luce Sands and the other types of metalwork coming from the dunes are of personal adornment and potential ecclesiastical objects, which we have seen to be common at contemporary Whithorn. The potential for an undiscovered monastic establishment among the sands should be considered as realistic an option as the presence of a beach market at this stage of research within the area.

## DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY IN THE 10<sup>TH</sup> AND 11<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century the British kingdom of Strathclyde with its power base centred at Govan and Glasgow extended its territory into Dumfries taking advantage of the decline in Northumbrian power (Duncan 1975: 92-93). The annexed area included most of Eastern Dumfriesshire (RCAHMS 1997: 186). This means the bishopric at Glasgow absorbed most of the church lands in Eastern Dumfriesshire including



Hoddum, until the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century when significant amounts of church land passed into secular hands (ibid.: 243). By the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Scottish kingdom absorbed politically the kingdom of Strathclyde (ibid.: 187). The route to the Clyde and the border region with England became increasingly important in the medieval period. Royal policy in the region during the 12<sup>th</sup> century involved

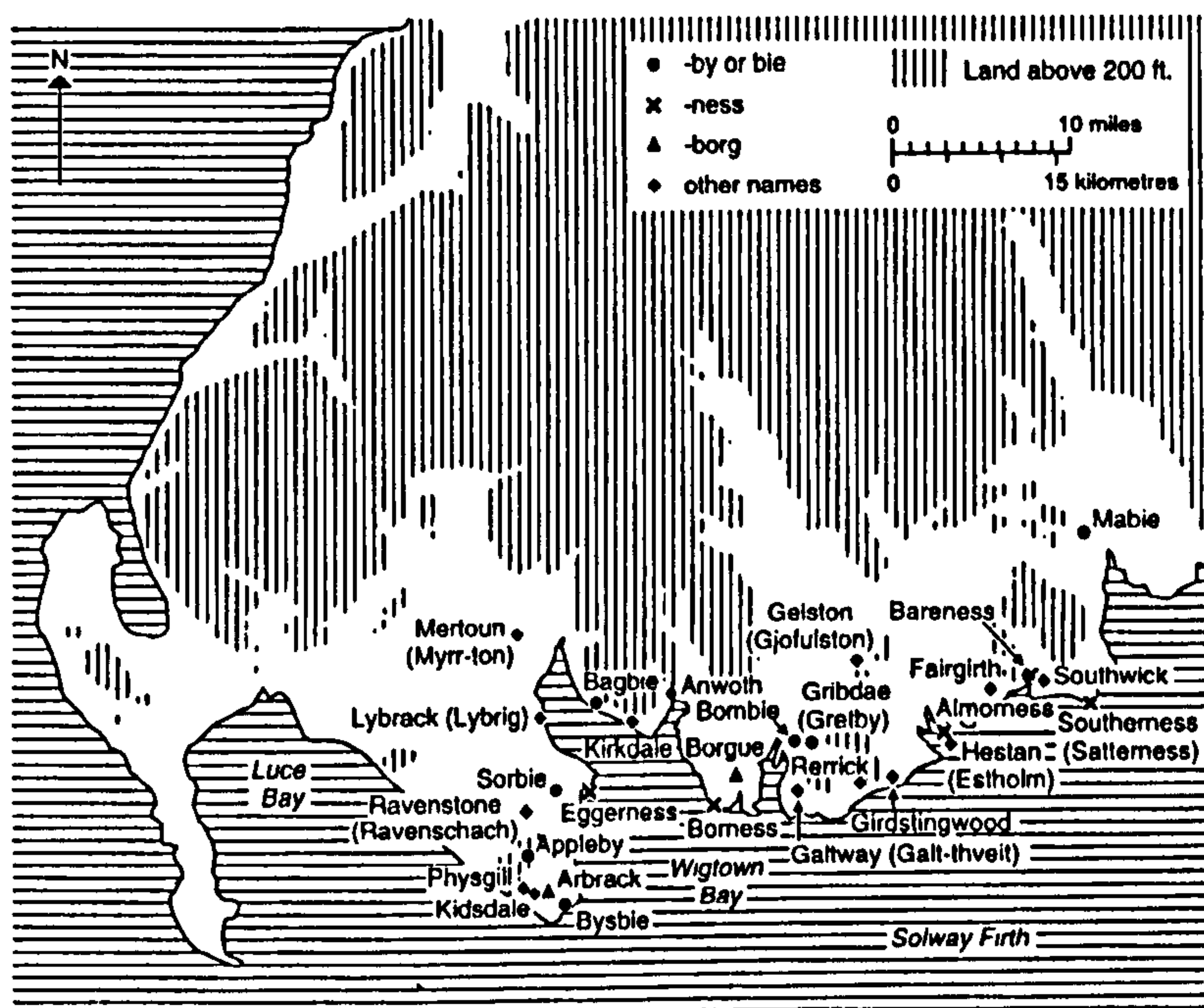


Fig. 5.38: Scandinavian place-names in Galloway (Oram 1995 : 129).

giving lands to Anglo-Norman nobles to quell disturbances and maintain control (ibid.: 188).

The evidence for Scandinavian settlement in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries is largely through place names (Fig. 5.38), which concentrate around Kirkcudbright and some around Whithorn (Cowan 1991, Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998: 106). The layers of place-names are difficult to separate and many of the Scandinavian



place-names may stem from 12<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Norman settlement (Oram 1995: 129). Oram has pointed to the limited amount of habitative Scandinavian name forms compared to other areas of Scotland such as the Northern and Western Isles, and the place-names are instead dominated by British, Gaelic, and Anglian names (ibid.: 129-130). There are few characteristically Scandinavian objects, like oval brooches, from the region. One possible Viking burial comes from St Cuthbert's in Kirkcudbright (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998:108). Apart from a Norse mythological scene on a cross slab from Kilmore and the single hogback (probably of late date) from Mossknowe, the sculpture and iconography do not appear to be particularly Norse influenced (Craig 1991: 51). Dumfries and Galloway sat in the middle of important Norse networks from Dublin and the Isle of Man east to York and North to the Hebrides and Orkney. The later period at Whithorn has been suggested to show some Hiberno-Norse characteristics including similar building types and antler workshops, which might imply some Hiberno-Norse settlement at the religious centre (Hill 1997a: 55).

Historically nothing is known of Whithorn until the 12<sup>th</sup> century and it is possible the bishopric suffered a hiatus. It is the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, however, which sees an era of stone-working at Whithorn resulting in a stylistic group of carvings known as the Whithorn school. Analysis of the distribution of these carvings indicates Whithorn was still the administrative centre for at least the Machars region (Craig 1991). This investment in stone monument production as well as the complexity and variety of the settlement itself has prompted the description of Whithorn in Period IV as Scotland's only 'monastic town' to date (Hill 1997a: 56).



## Monuments of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries

The majority of stones (95) from Dumfries and Galloway date to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Almost a third of these come from the site at Whithorn and a high proportion of the rest are from the immediate area of the Machars surrounding Whithorn (Fig. 5.39). Whithorn is also the most important site for resources in carved stone monuments of the period with St Ninian's Cave also acting as a significant draw for display. Of its neighbouring ecclesiastical establishments, the now deserted church at Barhobble ranks as the next most active place for monumental display after Whithorn. This may be due in part to the excavations at Barhobble, and it is highly likely that investigations at other Machars church sites will reveal similar amounts of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century sculpture. A concentration of resource-intensive monuments also clusters around Thornhill on the River Nith suggesting a local centre of some importance.

Thornhill itself has no outward indications of being an early medieval settlement (i.e. circular street plan, finds from excavation), although investigation around the churches may yet be productive. At Whithorn, for example, only tradition and carved stones hinted at the possibilities of early medieval settlement before excavation. The local area would probably have been under the political and ecclesiastic control of Strathclyde for much of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The cross shaft fragments that survive from Thornhill, Closeburn, and Penpont continue the earlier 'Anglian' tradition seen at Hoddum and Ruthwell, but date probably to the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Cramp 1960: 17 – 19). There is also a long Christian



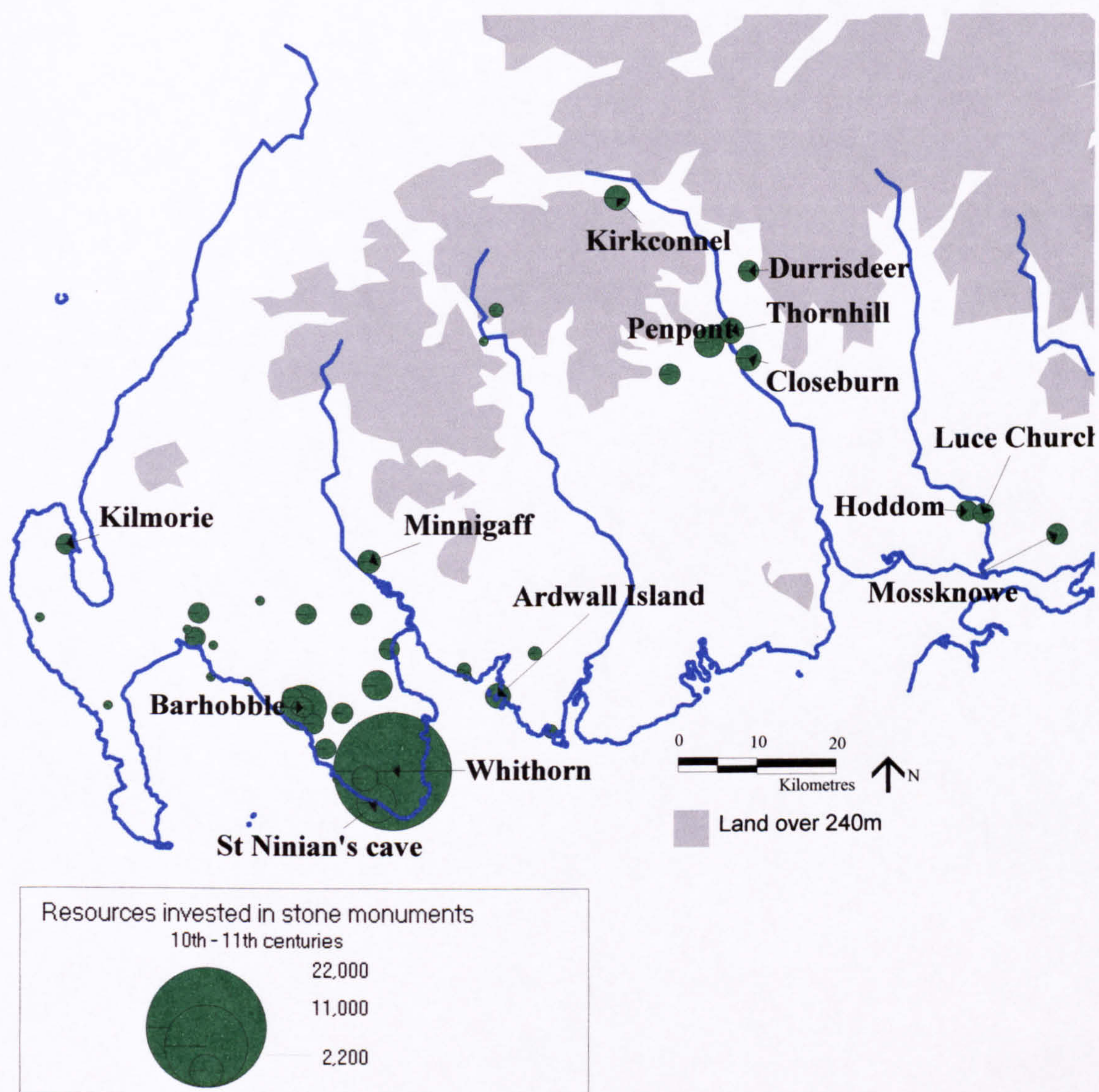


Fig. 5.39: Resources invested in monuments, 10th - 11th centuries.

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tradition in the region evident from the characteristically early name of Eccles to the northeast of Thornhill. Carronbridge, where a 9<sup>th</sup> century brooch was deposited, and Tynron Doon, which has evidence of early medieval occupation, are also nearby. These sites, along with Kirkconnel upriver, suggest the Nith was an important routeway particularly for access between the Solway and the heart of Strathclyde. This route would have been most significant during the 10<sup>th</sup> and early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries during British control of the region. The importance of the Nith suggests a major site may lie in the river valley perhaps near Thornhill itself. Crowe's examination of Penpont suggested the church may originally have been a fortification controlling fording points across the Scar River, which was then re-used as, or given over to, a monastic purpose (1998: 155). The sculpture and history of high status finds associated with the immediate area around Thornhill indicates that a regional power centre of religious and secular significance remains



Fig. 5.40: Monreith cross. Height: 1.98m (photo by author).



unidentified (although there are known candidates). The region should be considered a target for further study of both secular and ecclesiastic early medieval power networks.

The Whithorn School designates a style of monument found at the site, and at sites around it in the peninsula. The form of the cross is generally the same, although the scale may change, as seen from the exceptionally tall monument from Monreith (Fig. 5.40). The similarities between these stones has prompted Craig to remark on their 'standard formula' and almost 'mass produced' feel (1991: 53). Most of the single examples of Whithorn School stones are associated with church sites that later become medieval parish churches (ibid.). This indicates that although the bishopric is not recorded in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, at least a regional level of administration continued.

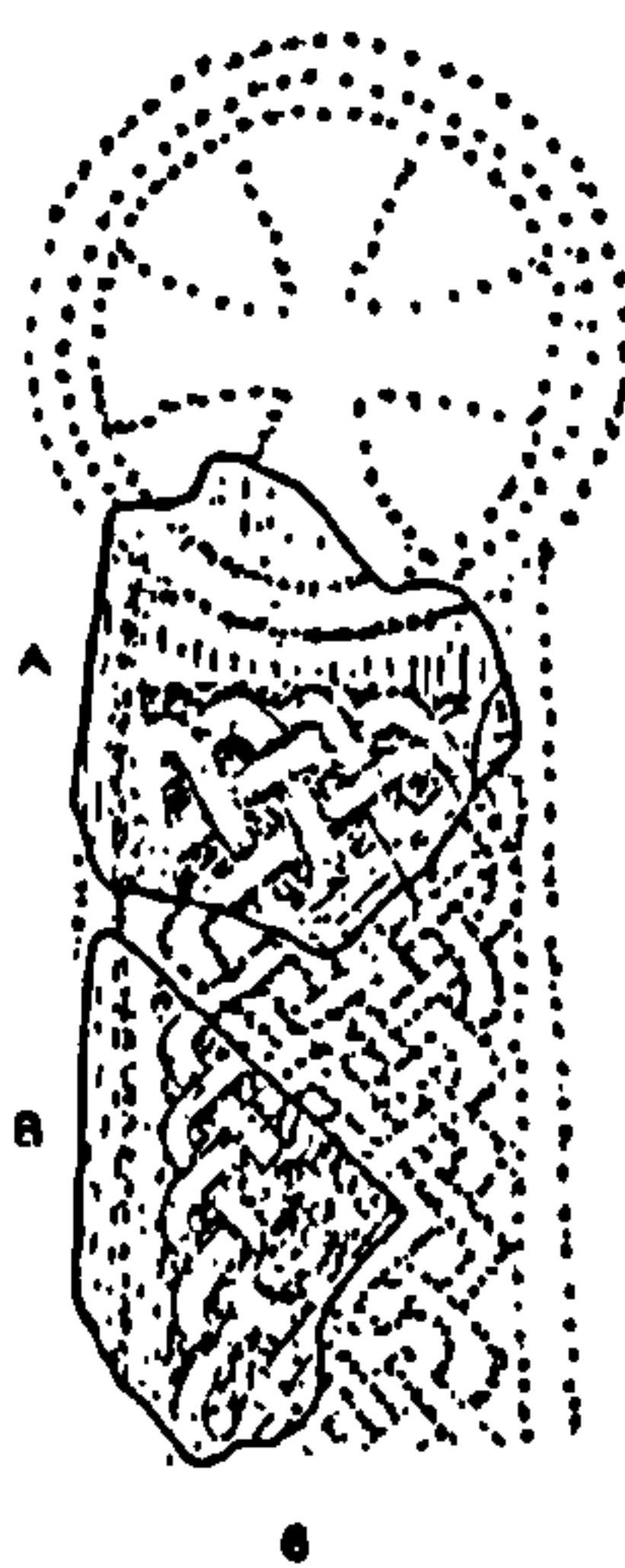


Fig. 5.41: Whithorn School sculpture, Barhobble, Height .32m (Cormack 1995: 62).

Barhobble provides an excavated example of the link between Whithorn and its dependant estates or churches. The excavations at Barhobble revealed a series of



buildings, at least two church structures, and several inhumations possibly contemporary to the sculpture dating from the mid 10<sup>th</sup> – early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries (Cormack 1995: 49). The single coin find, a Northumbrian coin from about 750 AD, came from disturbed soil. This coin may relate to the earliest phases of the site, which includes the enclosure wall but other evidence from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century is sparse (ibid.: 44, 49). There are fragments of sculpture of the Whithorn School from Barhobble, of which the best preserved is a monument in two fragments bearing interlace and the bottom of a disc headed cross (Fig. 5.41, Cormack 1995: 63).

The wall carvings at St Ninian's Cave were augmented by the erection of additional separate stone monuments in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, including Whithorn School monuments. Other monument forms include incised and relief crosses. The placing of monuments, particularly those of the Whithorn School, in the cave indicates the relationship between the cave/hermitage site and the main settlement remained important. The presence of votive crosses and more substantial memorials suggests that it was part of the pilgrimage rites associated with St Ninian possibly from the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Yeoman 1999: 33).

The height of the Whithorn carving school coincides with Period III (c.845-1000x1050AD) and the first phases of Period IV (c. 1000x1050 – 1250x1300AD) of Hill's excavations. In the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, the reconstructed stone-footed building (Hill's potential church) was demolished and replaced by a cluster of small buildings apparently deconsecrating the area (Hill 1997a: 194). There is some



continuity from the previous period in the form of the burial chapel as the cluster of buildings overlying the 'church' appeared to respect this small stone building until

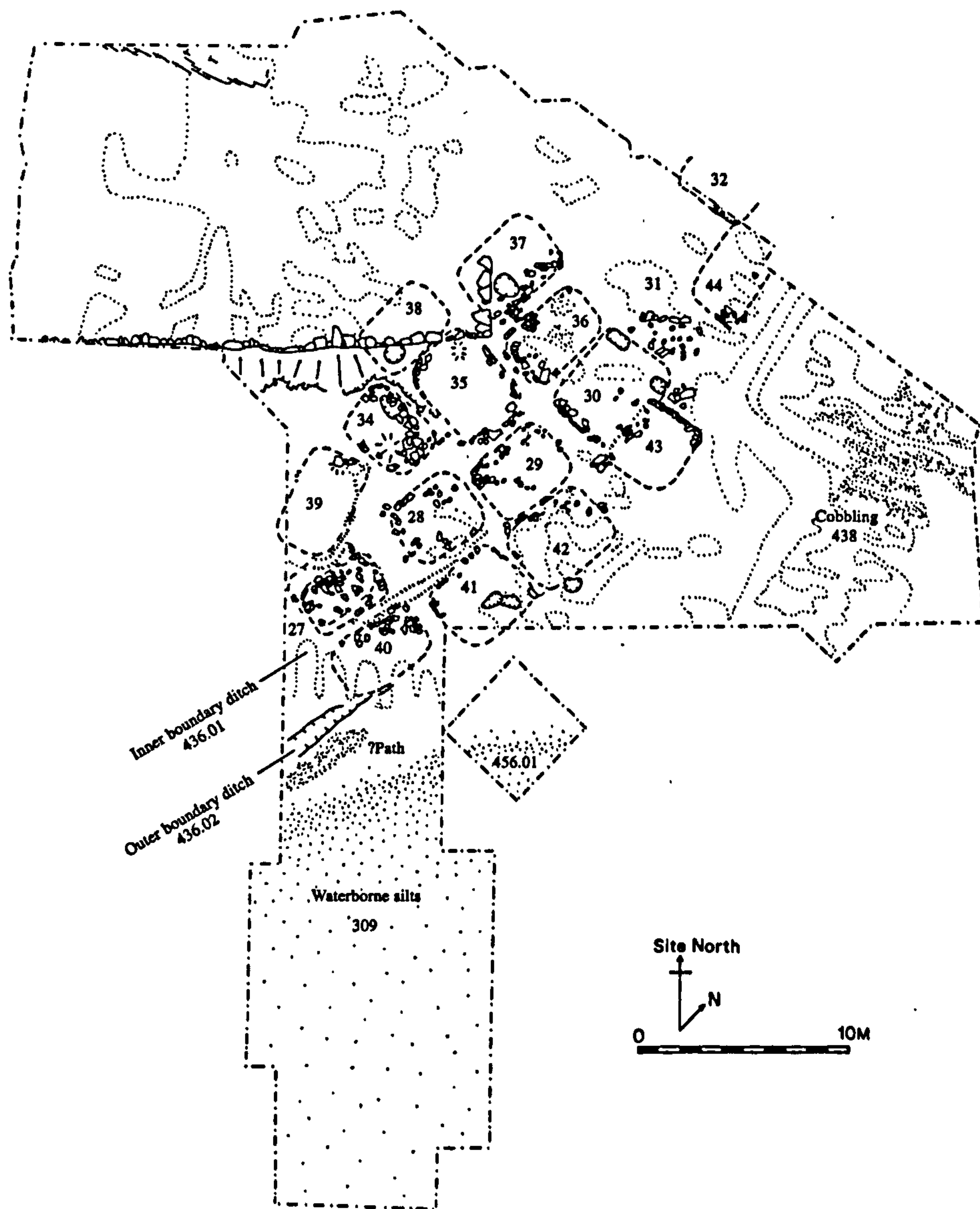


Fig. 5.42: Glebe field, Whithorn. Period III/3 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century (Hill 1997a: 202).

the late 10<sup>th</sup> century when it collapsed (ibid.: 198). The southern area of the excavation was flooded throughout Period III. The central area was under the plough in the late 9<sup>th</sup> or early 10<sup>th</sup> century for a brief period, and then saw a series of small buildings built upon it (Fig. 5.42). The buildings in the central sector were



aligned to each other and displayed similarities in structures and associated finds (ibid.: 200). These small buildings were sub-rectilinear and built in shallow hollows in the topsoil with deeper holes for wall supports. They had wattle or wicker walls and some had internal divisions marked by paved and unpaved floor surfaces (ibid.: 183. 185). Around this time the northern area, where much of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century building activity took place, went out of use and buildings were concentrated in the central sector.

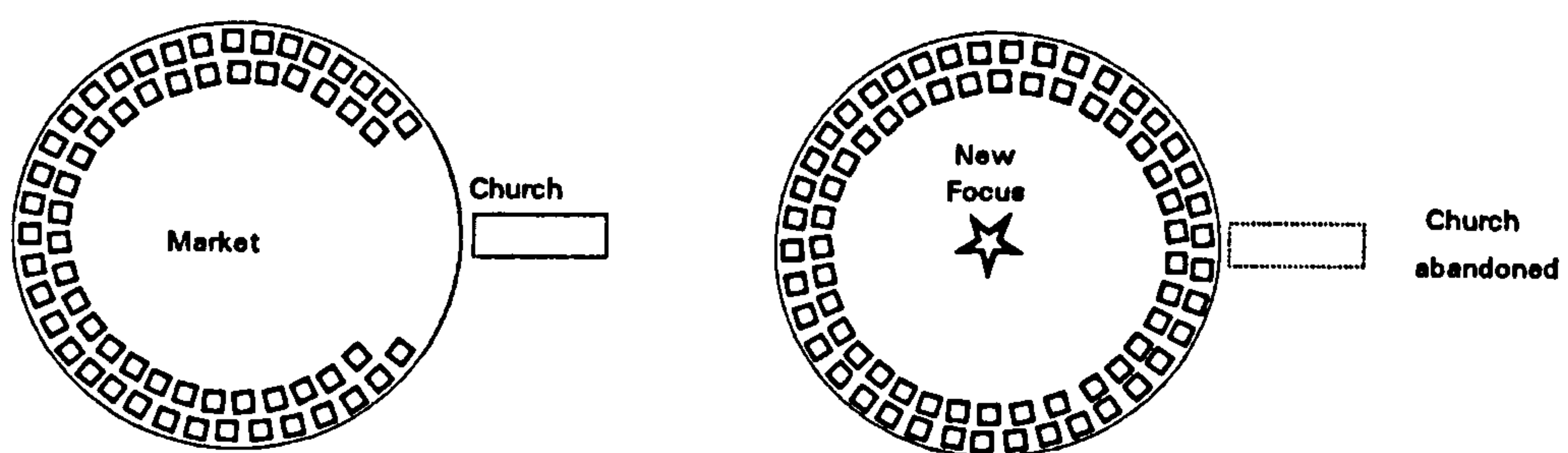


Fig. 5.43: Alternative models for Period III/3 (Hill 1997a:55).

For most of Period III, there is no inner boundary and the linear organisation of Period II continued until Period III, phase 3 (late 10<sup>th</sup> – early 11<sup>th</sup> century) when the cluster of buildings were built in the central sector (ibid.: 201). Hill not only interpreted a return to a curvilinear layout at this time but also a change in focus away from the main church on the hill to an area to the West (Fig. 5.43). Hill's argument relies on the alignment of the buildings and two "insubstantial, discontinuous ditches" marking the circular enclosures (marked on Fig. 5.42, ibid.). The ditches are slight enough to be interpreted as drainage ditches. Hill, however, saw the outer ditch as particularly important as it appeared to be respected until the 13<sup>th</sup> century (after which the focus returned to the church on the hill). There is, however, no reason why the 13<sup>th</sup> century buildings are following a curvilinear



layout as they align against a straight line as well as they do Hill's putative boundary (Fig. 5.44). With the validity of the ditches seriously questionable, there is no reason why the focus of the settlement on the whole should change in the 10<sup>th</sup>

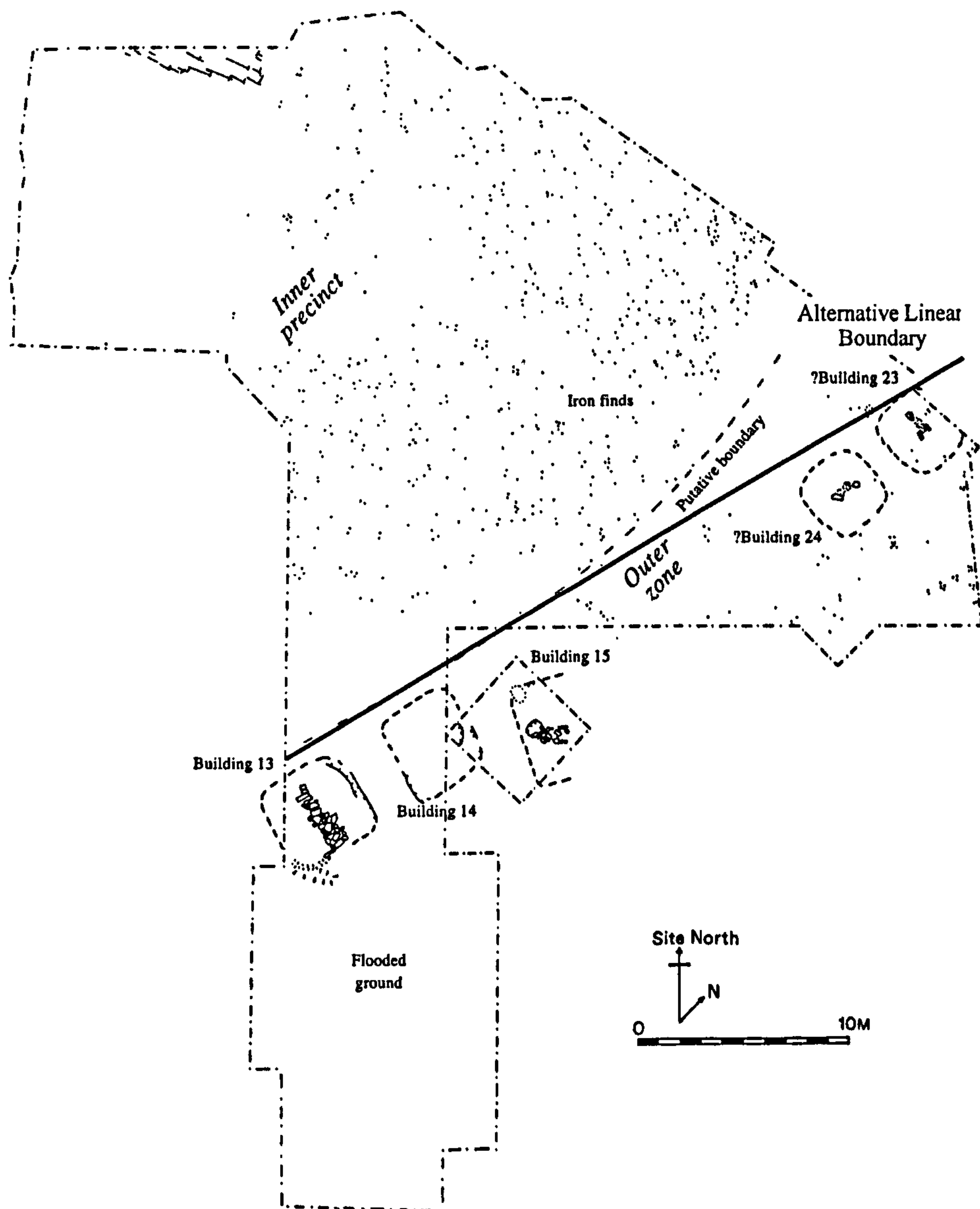


Fig. 5.44: General plan of Period IV/5 showing Hill's putative boundary and a suggested alternative linear organization (Hill 1997a:215).



and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The absence of a change in focus throws into doubt Hill's interpretation of this period as 'a rejection of the physical structure of the Northumbrian minster and a cult of St Nynia' (ibid.: 48).

Significant antler-working debris associated with this cluster of buildings points to the establishment of a comb-making industry, at the minimum to supply the needs of the community, but potentially for larger distribution in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Hill has pointed to this appearance of comb manufacture as an indication of economic and social developments within the settlement, seeing it as marking an important stage in the development of Whithorn as a 'monastic town' because of the presence of comb manufacturing on other 'urban sites' such as Dublin (ibid.: 48).

The 'Monastic Town,' Period IV, phase of the settlement was interpreted as c. 1000x1050 – 1250x1300 and began with the drainage and reclamation of the land in the southern sector (ibid.: 209). The northern area continued to be relatively clean of buildings and artefacts. Later, 13<sup>th</sup> coin evidence suggests the area may have been a market place from the 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, possibly surrounded by workshops and houses (ibid.: 232). Through Period IV the craft manufacturing evidence became more varied and included leather and hide working, as well as smithying, weaving and continued comb production (ibid.,: 211).

Whithorn in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries went through a substantial amount of reorganisation, expansion and contraction, and construction programmes. Although such constant change might be interpreted as a period of instability, the products of



the stone working school suggest the opposite and that the community was instead thriving and asserting its ecclesiastical control and organisation over the Machars area. Without Hill's re-focusing of the site away from the main church, there is no need to see the change in the excavated area as a drastic reorganisation, but rather it is more in keeping with the changes in layout and function that were evident over the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries within that part of the settlement.

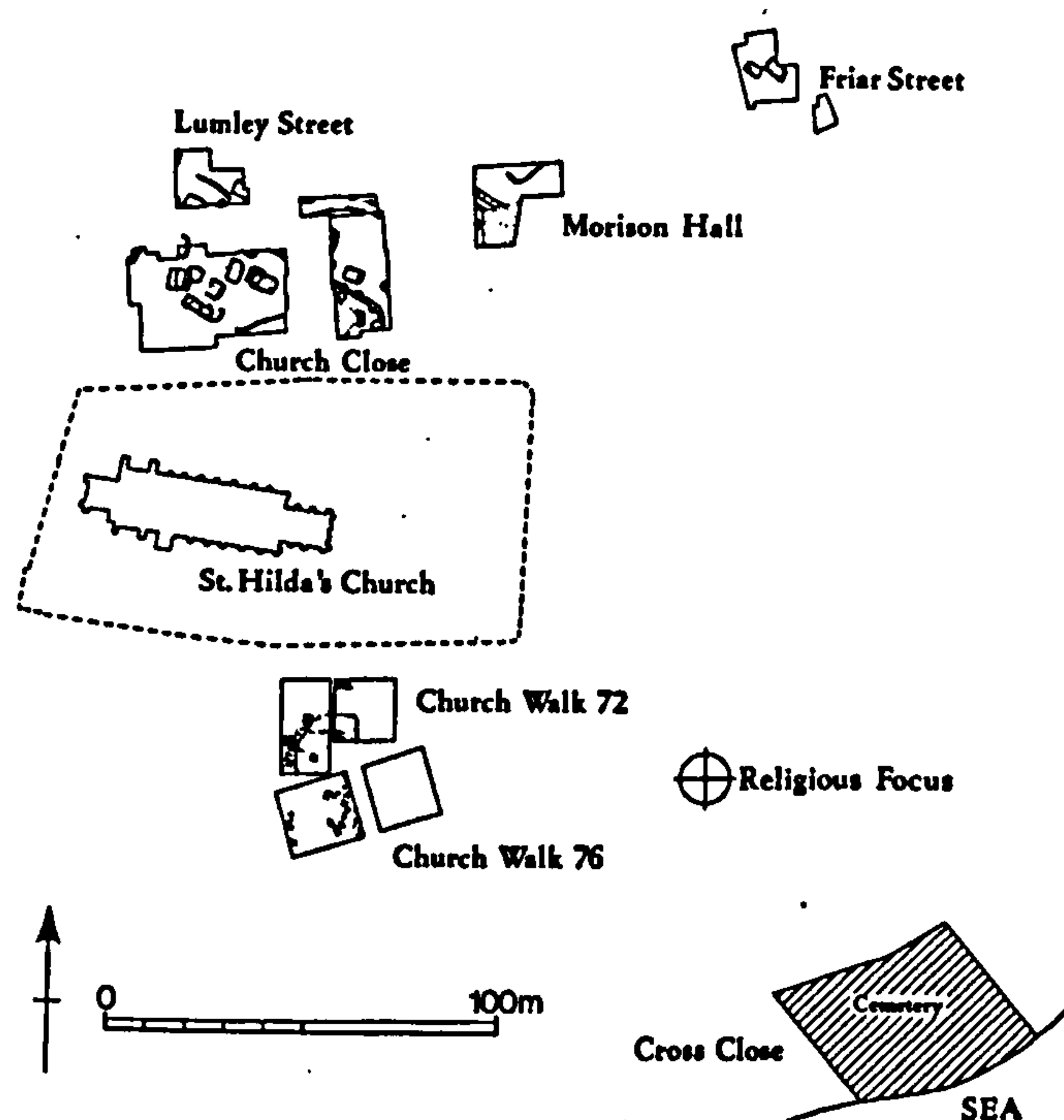


Fig. 5.45: Excavation and orientation of Hartlepool (Daniels 1999: 106).

This re-interpretation and largely the removal of Hill's inner and outer zoning at Whithorn, although not replicating an idealised monastic layout (Hill 1997a: 31-32), is not anomalous. Contemporary Anglo-Saxon monasteries, for example, do not appear to maintain a replicated pattern of monastic layout. Rosemary Cramp noted of both Whitby and Hartlepool, double houses linked to the royal line of Northumbria, that there seemed no fixed location for cemeteries within the layout



and that over time cemeteries were moved and built over (1993: 65). The changes in cemetery location at Whithorn may reflect a similar practice. Both Whitby and Hartlepool are double-house monasteries and it may be incongruous to compare their layout to the bishopric at Whithorn. However, all three sites have produced similar ranges of finds and were in use at the height of Northumbrian power. A recent evaluation of Hartlepool, Cleveland suggests that the monastery did have a central focus that was maintained even though the cemeteries moved about it (Fig. 5.45, Daniels 1999). This focus is not the modern church, but located to the east in an unexcavated region of the town where the early medieval church may have stood (*ibid.*: 106, 111-112). The focus remained constant, but its surroundings changed and a similar interpretation can be made for Whithorn.

The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century craft area appears to be related to the ‘green space’ or later marketplace area in the north of the excavated area, and not necessarily focusing on any missing church. Hill made the connection between comb-making and urban settings, particularly Dublin (1997a: 148). While comb-making does not necessarily act as a criteria of an urban setting, the excavated region appears to be a craft working area of the settlement – connected to the ecclesiastical settlement, and related to the potential marketplace.

### **Fine Metalwork and Coins**

Like the previous period, metalworking evidence for the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries relies on finished objects (Fig. 5.46). Objects of personal adornment, pins, rings, and buckles, are again the dominant feature of the metalwork from Whithorn.



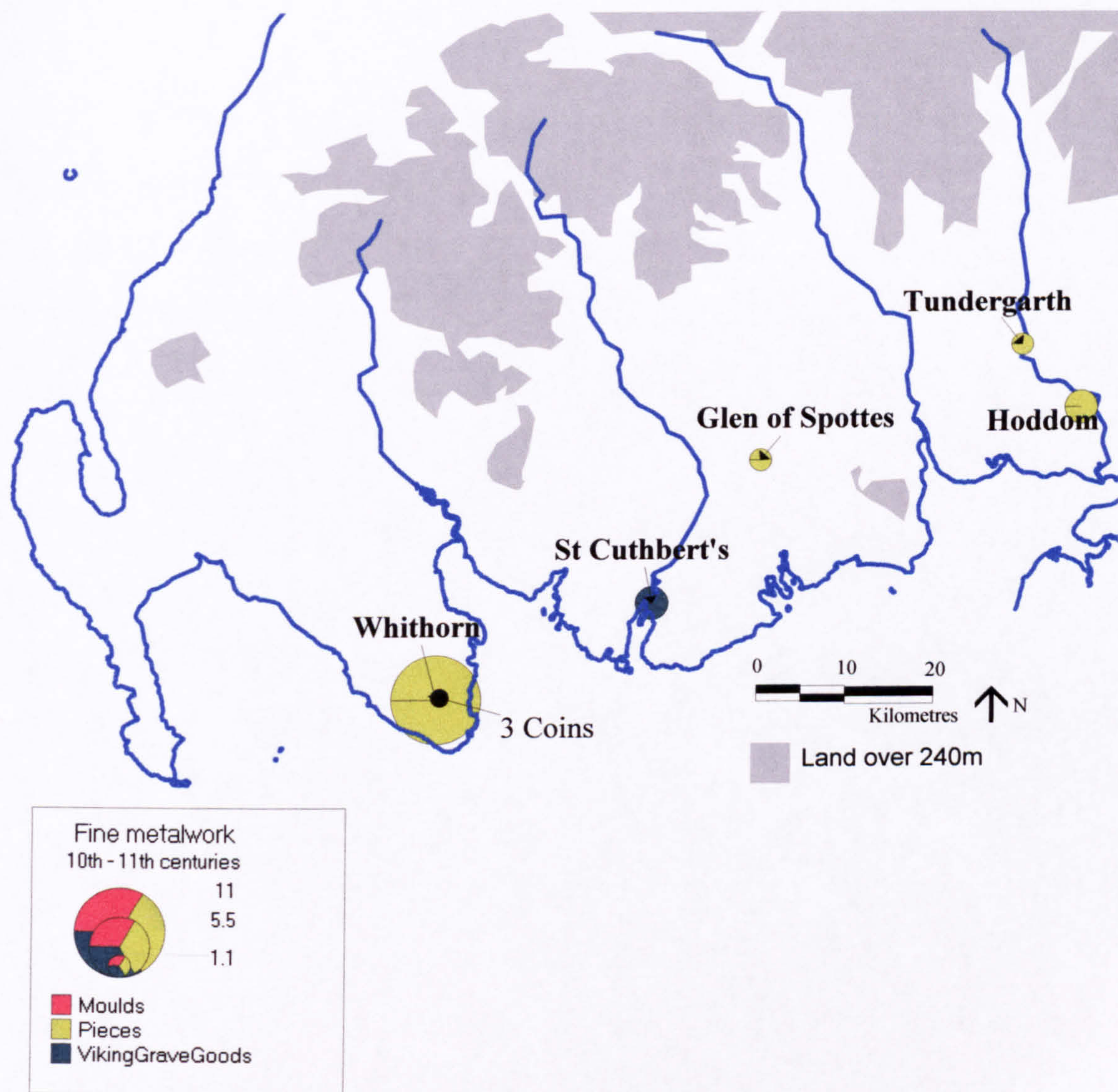


Fig.5.46: Fine metalwork, metalworking, and coins, 10th - 11th centuries.

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There is one decorative strip that may be a mount for an ecclesiastic object (BZ35.9, Hill 1997a:386). There were no significant concentrations or associations for the fine metalwork within the excavated contexts. The majority of metalwork finds relating to the ‘Hiberno-Norse’ stage of the site, characterised by stick pins, date from after the 11<sup>th</sup> century when there is also renewed evidence for metalwork production late in Period IV (ibid.: 404).

Site	Classification	No.	Description
GLEN OF SPOTTES	Piece	1	Flask
ST. CUTHBERT'S CHURCHYARD, KIRKCUDBRIGHT	Viking grave goods	2	Penannular brooch, arm ring in Viking grave?
HODDOM	Pieces	2	Crosier fragments
TUNDERGARTH	Piece	1	Gold finger ring
WHITHORN	Pieces	11	Pins, buckles, rings, strip

Table 5.6: Metalwork of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Outside of Whithorn there is a small collection of chance finds. A bronze flask, inlaid with interlace, possibly associated with a chapel context, came from the Glen of Spottes, near Dalbeattie (Truckell 1963: 91). There were also a drop and head from two crosiers found at Hoddom indicating the continued veneration of saints there (Michelli 1986). The other finds include a single gold ring dating from the later 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century from the region around Tundergarth (Graham-Campbell 1995:88) and a plain ringed-pin from St Cuthbert’s churchyard, Kirkcudbright. This pin may be part of one of very few potential Norse burials in Dumfries and Galloway (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998: 108). Other objects associated with the pin were a sword, bead, and part of a silver arm-ring (ibid.). Another silver arm-ring was found in the Solway Firth, near Gretna (ibid.: 109).



Coin finds are equally sparse from the period. The excavations at Whithorn provide the only 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century examples with three coins of English and Hiberno-Norse origin (Pirie 1997: 335-336). It may be significant that these three coins come from the presumed market area (Hill 1997b: 356). Such a small sample, however, does not paint a picture of a bustling currency economy.

#### CONCLUSION: CHANGING POWER STRUCTURES IN EARLY MEDIEVAL DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

The previous discussion concentrated on patterns of symbolic wealth seen in sculpture and on individual concentrations of symbolic wealth seen in other media such as metalwork, imported wares, and coins. Apart from the sculpture, the nature of the evidence including its reliance on excavation or chance finds and the different representative nature of the known samples means that imported wares, fine metalworking, hoarding or coinage cannot be used alone to determine patterns of power in the landscape. They can, however, determine nodes or power centres within those structures. They are critical to understanding the character of settlement, and this is nowhere clearer than in the case of Whithorn. The inclusion of sculpture as symbolic wealth offers a more representative example of investment in the landscape of early medieval Dumfries and Galloway. Although the corpus consists of what has survived down to us and even recorded individual pieces, such as at Hoddum, are now lost, the corpus retains the ability to inform models looking for patterns relevant to early medieval society (Fig. 5.47; Craig 1991). Examination of the sculpture alleviates some of the bias of excavation



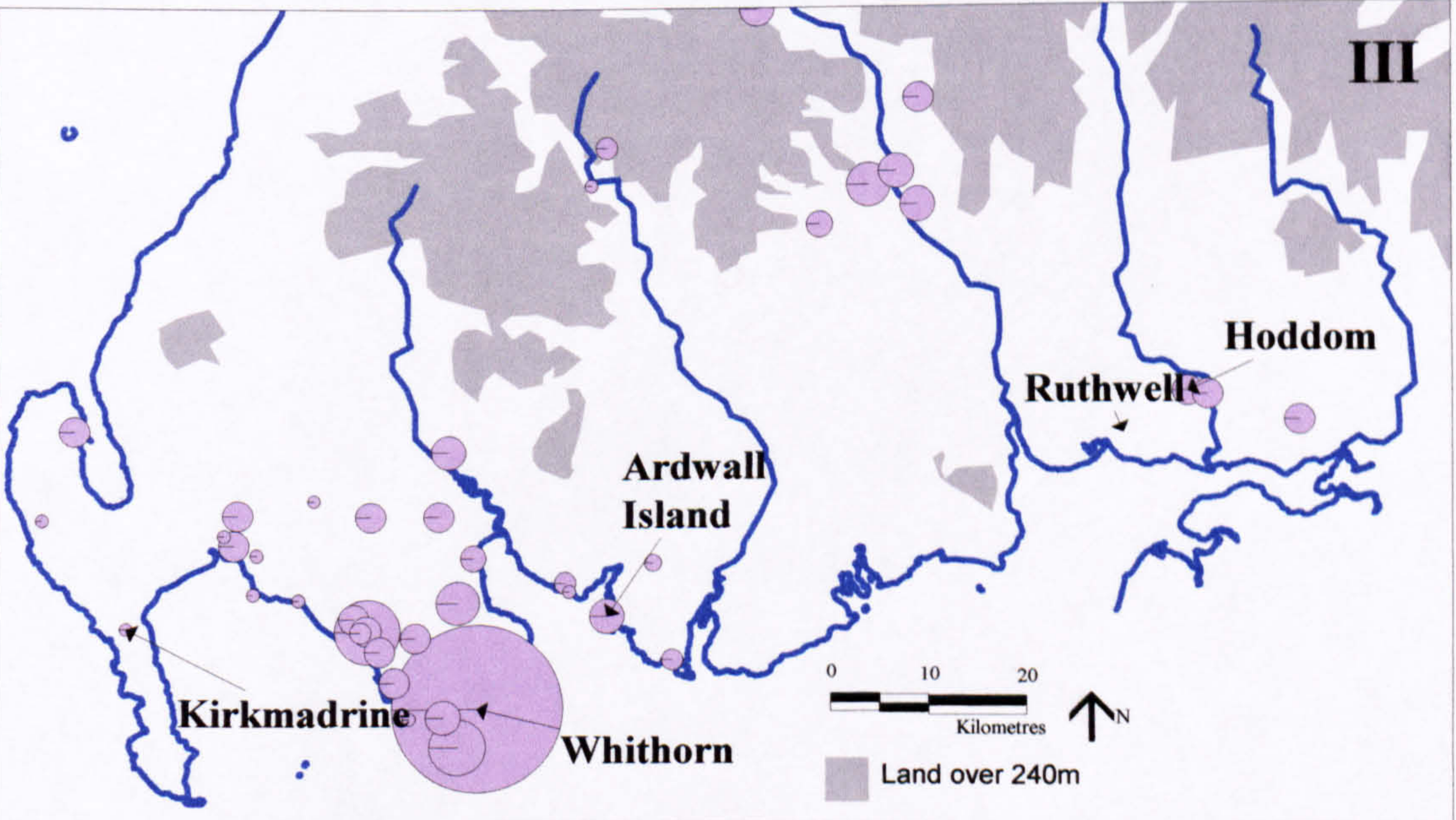
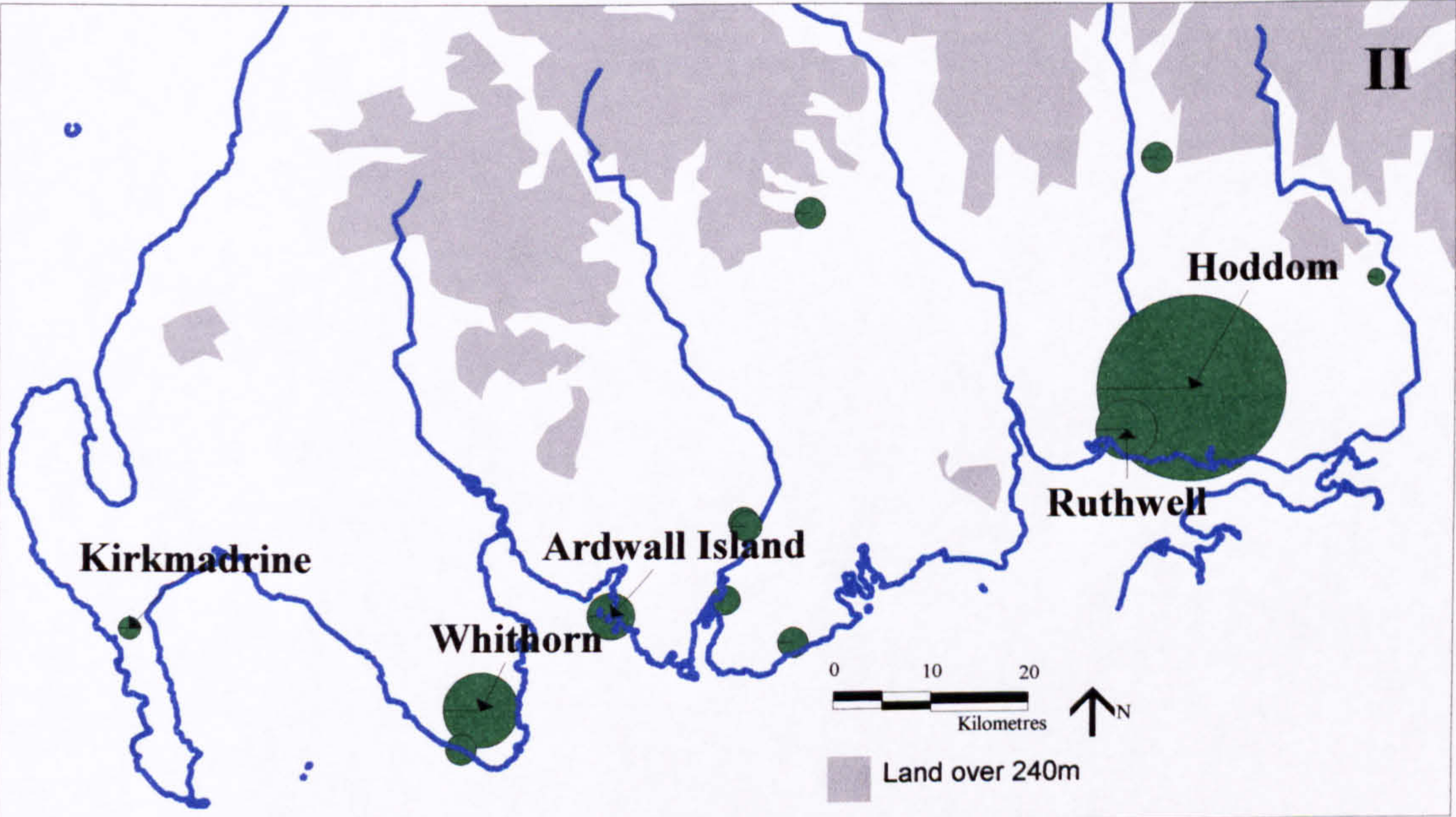
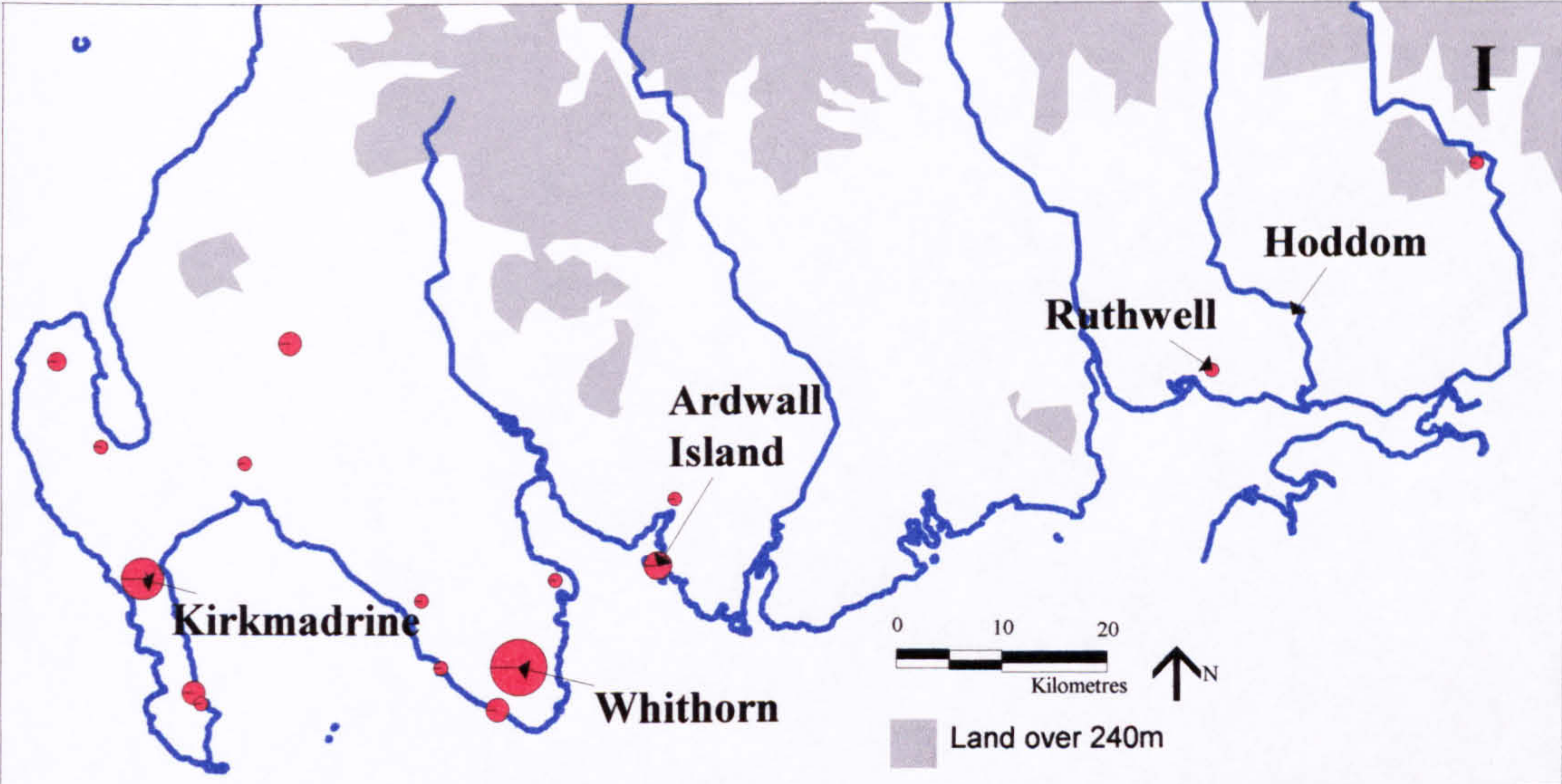


Fig. 5.47: Resources in sculpture Phase I to III  
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inherent in the other media of symbolic wealth, as it highlights patterns of power and places where significant resource investment was directed without having to know what is under the ground.

### **Phase I**

In looking at the centres of investment identified by excavated evidence of fine metalworking and imported wares, the different character of the two sites, Whithorn and the Mote of Mark, is notable. One is a lowland open site presumably an early monastery or church with some administrative function and the other is a strategic hilltop fortification. At this stage of excavation in the region, it is not possible to definitively state that these two power centres represent exclusive centres of power within their own territories. Hill proposed that Cruggleton is the most likely candidate for a contemporary secular companion to Whithorn for control of the Machars region (1997: 14). It is a possibility, but only further exploration will reveal if any of the crannogs, duns, or forts in the area have early medieval occupation. Trusty's Hill, for example, with its hierarchical use of space and display of Pictish symbols presumably had some role to play in early medieval secular power. It is relatively close to Whithorn, especially via water routes, and the two must have had some relationship. Its close proximity to Whithorn would suggest some participation in a redistribution network of imported wares, but there are no datable early medieval finds from Trusty's Hill to confirm this type of relationship.



The overwhelming evidence for imported vessels at Whithorn suggests that the general dominance of secular defended sites in discussions on imported ceramics and glass might be a function of excavation programmes. The number of vessels and prolonged use of vessels, supported by the strong stratigraphic chronology of the site, suggests that importation of these objects and the goods they contained was a deliberate activity and that the site acted as a main importation point in the later 6<sup>th</sup> century, like Dunadd, rather than a secondary site, such as Iona. Although not directly on the coast, the site's port at the Isle of Whithorn is included in the orbit of the Irish Sea Province that dominated most of the long-distance trade in Britain at this time. Excavations on the Mote of Mark have been relatively extensive and have not produced as much or as varied a collection of imported wares. A relationship between the two sites, both recipients of imported wares, must have existed. They may have been relative equals within the long distance trading network or they may have exhibited an import centre-redistribution relationship that has been postulated in Argyll for Dunadd and Iona (Campbell forthcoming).

The settlement at Whithorn has a particularly secular character in this early period based on the propensity of finds normally associated with high status secular activities such as using ceramics and glass, importing goods from the Continent, and fine metalworking (Campbell 1997b; Davies 1998). Whithorn's ability to exploit its location and participate in this orbit of exchange indicates a powerful community with powerful leaders during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. The control of long distance trading suggested by the quantity of imported ceramics and glass vessels in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries may also be a feature associated with secular



power, such as at Dunadd, Dumbarton Rock, and Dinas Powys in Wales (Campbell 1996b: 85-87). That ruling ecclesiastics were also high-ranking members of ruling dynasties, as Columba was, is a feature of early medieval religious politics, as is the partnerships formed by secular and religious élites to promote their respective powers. In the presence of such mixing and partnerships between these two spheres of influence, it should not be surprising to find a settlement such as Whithorn where it appears a secular settlement and an important church were attached (Davies 1998). Perhaps, as suggested by Ewan Campbell, we should see Whithorn, particularly in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, as an open high status settlement rather than categorising it into a simplified typology of religious/secular site-types (Campbell 1991: 172). Late 6<sup>th</sup> century Tours, a bishopric with associated *vicus* settlement, may provide a contemporary parallel.

The fine metalworking at Whithorn is predominantly for objects of personal adornment not specifically ecclesiastical objects and also shares more with secular fortified sites such as Dunadd, Clatchard Craig, and the Mote of Mark than it does with Iona or Hartlepool, for example. The excavated evidence for fine metalworking in the study area is however most concentrated at the Mote of Mark. The quantity and variety of objects made, including ‘Anglo-Saxon’ style pieces before the advent of Northumbrian power in the region, indicate that the site was a place where influences met and fused suggesting the power and social network or structure of which it was part extended well beyond its immediate landscape.

Turning to the interpretations of the material investment in sculpture, the landscapes and structures around these two centres becomes populated with wealth



and appears less static. The analysis of investment in sculpture revealed relatively dispersed centres of religious power (and wealth). Sculpture analysis revealed a potential power centre at Kirkmadrine in the Rhinns, perhaps using the prehistoric ceremonial landscape to legitimise and reinforce the sacred aspect of this site.

Whithorn in addition to its use of imported goods and craft activities sponsored a considerable amount of sculpture. This could include the satellite site at St Ninian's Cave and be marking off symbolic routeways or pilgrimage routes between the Isle of Whithorn, the Cave, and the church itself.

In addition to the two major centres, there are several other sites where minimal investment in sculpture occurred. There is a cluster of sites on the Machars peninsula that may be related to the centre at Whithorn, but there is nothing striking in the styles of the crosses to suggest a direct link. General distribution clusters in the far west of Galloway, an area that may have seen considerable contact or even settlement from Ireland in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (Thomas 1992: 18-19). Irish *cill* place-name elements may date to phase one and the associated foundations are characterised by enclosed burial-grounds and small churches, such as that found on Ardwall Island (Thomas 1960:79-82; 1967; 1992: 18).

The investment in sculpture with a minimum of concentrated centres is similar to phase one of Argyll, suggesting relatively small Christian communities dispersed across the region with perhaps some association with either of the two main centres. This may reinforce an 'Irish' influence on foundations and patterns in the region. What is unique so far in Scottish archaeology is the nature of the main centre of sculptural investment at Whithorn in that through excavation it has



proven to be a site that also is a centre for craft and trade activities on a large (even ‘international’) scale (Campbell 2000).

## **Phase II**

Investment in sculpture changes from a relatively dispersed pattern in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries to a dramatic increase in centres of investment in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries at Whithorn and even more so at Hoddum. The general distribution pattern of sculpture erected in this phase has also changed from a phase one clustering in the west to a strong coastal distribution stretching eastwards from Whithorn. This reflects a probable refocus eastwards and the political and ecclesiastical limits of Northumbrian power.

The stylistic changes in sculpture show clear influence from Northumbria, particularly the Hoddum and Ruthwell monuments (Cramp 1960). Although Whithorn is the Northumbrian Episcopal seat in the region, it is Hoddum that stands out in relation to resources invested in stone sculpture in the Northumbrian period of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. The iconography of the free-standing crosses from Hoddum, and at Ruthwell, does not display the overtly secular imagery of contemporary crosses from Pictland (the Dupplin cross, for example) and does not have the emphasis on kingship conveyed by David imagery as seen at Iona or in Pictland. The power being portrayed is that of God and the Church and secular links with either local or Northumbrian leaders are not overt. Patronage by secular élite must still have been a factor, however the ideological message is not of kingship but of faith and liturgy.



The excavated buildings from later 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century Hoddum are associated with agricultural and industrial activities as well as buildings for ritual. Few coins were found within the excavated area dating to this period (Lowe 1991). In comparison, Whithorn does not have the same amount of sculpture dated to this period, but has evidence for significant building projects and more coinage, although this is probably not related to commercial exchange. That the two sites served very different functions might be implied from these differences in the material culture. Although, excavations at both sites have not been all-inclusive, the sculpture in particular does suggest that the objectives of Whithorn and Hoddum were different. At Hoddum, the emphasis on Biblical imagery on the sculpture possibly built on a tradition of conversion and proselytizing embedded in the putative stone-footed baptistery of the later 6<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. This may be seen in conjunction with the strongly embedded liturgical messages of the Ruthwell monument nearby. Such messages of conversion do not seem to be purely pedagogic, as the area around Hoddum had known Christianity for several centuries before the Northumbrian interest in the site, and might rather be seen as celebratory images of the reputation of Hoddum as a place of conversion and promotion of Christianity. As defined by Bede, the Easter Controversy gave the Northumbrian church an identity of defenders of the 'proper' conduct of faith. In the aftermath of Whitby and the success of the Northumbrian debaters, this identity may have been used to augment the status of the bishops and abbots of Northumbria.

The embellishment of Hoddum, within a region once used by the Roman army and which symbolically re-used Roman masonry in a 7<sup>th</sup> century building, would have



been particularly attractive to a Northumbrian church that identified with the promotion and success of 'Roman' orthodoxy in Northern Britain and Scotland. The church building, parts of which were dated by Radford (1954:181) to the 8<sup>th</sup> century placing it within the Northumbrian period of influence, also re-used Roman masonry, including inscribed stones, and this might be seen as an attempt to emphasise the 'Roman' and orthodox legacy of the monastic site at Hoddum and its proper place under Northumbrian control (*cf* Bell 1998).

While it is apparent that the Northumbrian control in Dumfries and Galloway did use existing and new ecclesiastical sites to promote a Northumbrian ecclesiastical ideology, it is less clear what changes occurred to the secular power centres and structures. As discussed above, the site at the Mote of Mark does not continue into the Northumbrian period and was thus not taken over by secular authority wishing to integrate into existing power networks. Whether this was replaced with a new, or many new, centres of power in Dumfries is open to debate considering the lack of excavations in the region revealing early medieval material.

Whithorn, which was arguably a seat of both ecclesiastical and secular power in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century, becomes the Northumbrian bishopric and so does continue as a central node in the administration of power perhaps because it is in part an ecclesiastic site. Looking at the other aspects of material wealth, for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries namely coinage and pieces of fine metalworking, the site does not have the strong mixed character of phase one but does retain a distinctive character than that of Hoddum. Unlike phase one at Whithorn, there is a lack of evidence for onsite metalworking in the excavated areas, although a gold ingot and some copper



working debris suggests it did continue perhaps in another area of the site. With the lack of moulds, however, it is difficult to say whether the 'secular' nature of the objects being made (brooches and pins mostly) continued from phase one. The majority of the finds from phase two were of personal objects, but these could be lost by wealthy ecclesiastic or secular élite. Although the picture is by no means complete, these preliminary indications suggest that Northumbrian secular power centres were located at new places, rather than continue at those places of such significance in phase one, e.g. the Mote of Mark. Considering the close links between church and kings in Northumbria, the mechanism by which power was maintained in the region may have relied upon ideological and ecclesiastical structures of power and administration.

### **Phase III**

The ecclesiastical (and presumably secular to some degree) control during phase two which appeared to extend from the east out to a western extreme of the Machars is no longer visible in phase three. This deterioration of a more unified distribution of symbolic wealth in the landscape suggests a breakup of secular and religious power with one territory defined by the estates and Whithorn school monuments in the Machars and the other possibly on the southern edge the now expanded Strathclyde around Thornhill and maybe down to the area around Hoddum.

Unlike the previous two case studies, the majority of early medieval sculpture in Dumfries and Galloway dates to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. During these centuries,



Whithorn was the dominant site and used sculpture to define and reinforce its territorial jurisdiction in the Machars region. There is also a cluster of monuments around Thornhill-Closeburn-Penpont. This implies a regionally important ecclesiastical centre in this region probably patronised by local secular élite, whose importance in this area is otherwise largely invisible (i.e. through other forms of symbolic wealth).

Although further research in the region may reveal new power centres, this would hardly change the picture of Whithorn as a focus of wealth, ecclesiastical power and administration, trade and craft working. The design of the settlement at Whithorn changes significantly throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The site itself, consisting of at least one church by the 6<sup>th</sup> century with nucleated settlement probably of a mixed secular and religious nature and evidence for being an importation point, a manufacturing site, and place of monumental display, stands in contrast to known early medieval settlement in the region such as the crannogs in Dowalton Loch or the fort at Mote of Mark and suggest its contemporary perception as a different type of settlement. In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century, the appearance of the clustered group of buildings associated with (Hiberno-Norse) antler working and the open space, possibly a marketplace seems to reconfirm this mixed secular and ecclesiastic nature of the settlement.

That a local élite power existed and continued to support Whithorn to some extent seems necessary for the maintenance and recovery of the bishopric's administrative power after the departure of the Northumbrian structure in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Indeed, it is this period when Whithorn devotes significant resources to



continued building programmes and in developing its estate or parish system marked out by sculpture (Fig. 5.39). Perhaps also important is that the form of the Whithorn School crosses appears to be related to the cross of arcs, an early form (6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century) seen at Whithorn (Craig 1997a:440). If the cross of arcs was iconographically representative of Whithorn, its dissemination throughout the landscape directly links the places where it occurs to the site and may be considered as significant for ecclesiastical 'kingdom' building (i.e. the diocese) as secular imagery was for political kingdom building.

Whithorn has been suggested, based largely on the early inscriptions, to have links with ecclesiastical settlements in Gaul— particularly that of Tours, as Whithorn is dedicated to St Martin of Tours (Hill 1997a: 12, Thomas 1992). The date of the dedication to Martin is not known for certain. There is no way of discerning whether the Martin dedication was a Northumbrian invention or if it reflects an earlier dedication to the saint, who was popular in Ireland and throughout the Christian world (Clancy 2001: 8). Direct settlement from Gaul is not a requirement for the influences and connections with St Martin seen at Whithorn. In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, missionary activity at Tours was particularly active, so there is a context for the dissemination of Gallic ideas (Galinié 1999: 98). The material culture of Whithorn in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries also shows that there was contact with the Continent. By the later 6th century, Tours and Whithorn share characteristics of being bishoprics with an associated mixed settlement (Galinie 1999).



In addition to the trading contacts in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries and a dedication to St Martin in place at least from the 8<sup>th</sup> century when Bede was writing, Whithorn and Tours shared an emphasis on pilgrimage. The main enabler of the power and ability of Whithorn to control wealth and resources beyond its immediate region, which is the scale at which the Mote of Mark and Hoddum appear to have achieved control, is the draw of Whithorn as a pilgrimage centre.

The advent of concentrated pilgrimage to Whithorn cannot be certain. Ailred of Riveaulx, writing in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to promote the cult of Ninian, and claiming to be using an older source, mentions the miracles and the tradition of pilgrims at Whithorn in his *Life of St Ninian* (MacQueen 1961: 3). We can establish that by the 12<sup>th</sup> century there was a pilgrimage tradition and from the passage below it might be thought of as long-lived or at least in existence since the translation of Ninian's relics.

‘When the most blessed Ninian had been translated into the Heavens, the faithful people who had loved him, in life, frequented with the greatest devotion that which seemed to them all that was left of him, namely his most holy relics...’ (Ailred of Rievaulx, *Vita Niniani* Ch.12).

The story of St Cuthbert's book and journey of his remains to the Whithorn region may be part of an attempt to promote the cult of St Ninian by association with the great saint of Northumbria (or even vice versa). The *Miracula* was also most likely Northumbrian propaganda to promote the healing cult of the saint (Hill 1997: 2).



The cult of Ninian was not of nationwide importance until later in the medieval period, but it is possible that Whithorn became a focus for pilgrimage soon after Ninian's/Finnian's death in the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Yeoman 1999: 33). The votive crosses at St Ninian's Cave and the roadside location of the Petrus stone on the route from the Isle of Whithorn also suggest that as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century a tradition of pilgrimage existed in this triangular area around Whithorn. The excavated 'shrine' structures of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries might even be incorporated into pilgrimage rites. The Northumbrian church administrators were experts in promoting pilgrimage as can be seen by the quick exhumation and promotion of St Cuthbert in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. It is possible that they capitalised on, or were attracted by, the tradition of St Ninian, as noted by Bede, for pilgrimage purposes. Hill even postulated that the large timber halls from Period II, at the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, were guest accommodation for pilgrims (1997a: 42-43). The changes of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the creation of the market area and comb-making/antler-working industry might also be related to the degree of visitors or pilgrims to the site.

The significance of the pilgrim trade is difficult to gauge in the early medieval period as there are no badges, as with the later medieval period, to trace its popularity or records of pilgrim numbers. The importance of the cult of saints, the collection of relics, and the establishment of pilgrimage traditions is generally accepted to be an important factor in the growth and power of early medieval churches (Rollason 1987; Ó Floinn 1994). Possession of relics was important for the sanctity and status of a church. How pilgrimage rites are actually integrated



into the ecclesiastical economy and how profit is incurred from such rites remains to be fully understood. It is difficult to envisage how profit was gained from pilgrimage in an economy that did not generally use currency (Stopford 1994: 65). In 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century Whithorn, one might ask what significance an antler-working industry would have for proposed pilgrims to St Ninian.

The settlement at Whithorn in phase three is again of more 'mixed' secular and ecclesiastic character as compared to the evidence from phase two. This interpretation of the mixed nature at Whithorn, however, is different than that proposed by its excavator (Hill 1997a). This is significant because Hill's interpretation of a diminished ecclesiastical power when the focus of the settlement changes suggests a drastic shift in power structures within the region. The interpretation of the site at Whithorn put forward here shows that there was never any change in the focus of the settlement, and that the centre of the settlement was always the church on the hill. Thus the site always had a central ecclesiastic component and it was the nature of the secular component that perhaps diminished (or at the very least was reorganised spatially) in the Northumbrian period.

Throughout this case study, the sculpture has formed the spine of the interpretations of change and pattern in the landscapes of power while other forms of symbolic wealth have distinguished centres within those landscapes. Sculpture was a consistent choice for display in 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century Dumfries and Galloway. Motivation and power structures that enabled this display was not static. These transformations are visible in the archaeological record as the material investment



in sculpture, combined with other forms of symbolic wealth, defined and created different landscapes and strategies of power.



## **Chapter Six: Symbolic wealth and power in early medieval Scotland**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The analysis of relative investment (symbolic wealth) is a powerful tool to show the variety and dynamic nature of early medieval society and early medieval power.

Sculpture, in particular, as a form of symbolic wealth defines different landscapes of power and strategies for political control. Monument construction is one way of articulating social and political relationships and ideology. Identifying when and where dramatic increases or decreases in monument construction occur suggests significant political and social changes. This complements those structures defined by symbolic wealth in other media such as fine metalworking, imported goods, hoarding and the use of coinage, which due to their limited representative nature, can really only identify potential centres of power within structures rather than general patterns. In some cases these other forms of symbolic wealth, particularly that of imported goods, can transcend this limitation as in the case of 'nationally' or 'internationally' significant concentrations such as at Whithorn or Dunadd.

In this chapter the three case studies are considered in comparison to each other and observations made about the nature of power in early medieval Scotland. Each region developed different attitudes towards ideological and political changes that manifested in the use and creation of symbolic wealth and the structures of power.

While each of these trajectories of change is unique, there are some shared strategies and patterns between them. These similarities are not recognised as ideal-types or classifications of power structures, but as strategies manifested in the landscape of



power. Far from being an evolutionary scheme, these landscapes of power highlight the fluidity and variety of strategies chosen by those in power, whether their choices are made consciously or not.

## STORIES OF POWER

The changes in power structures for each region were discussed at the conclusion of each regional study, but a summary of the main elements of the stories here will enable comparisons between them.

Patterns of symbolic wealth and power in phase one in Argyll (Fig. 6.1) showed a tendency for dispersed centres with several smaller or minor sites in the landscape around them. This seems to be the case for both secular – Dunadd and environs, Dunollie and environs – and ecclesiastical centres – Iona and Cladh a'Bhile. There is an argument for Dunadd having the political edge in Dál Riata due the amount of metalworking and use of imported vessels here in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but this cannot be unequivocally substantiated due to the general lack of thoroughly excavated secular sites in Argyll. Dunadd does stand out in its inaugural function, and this may be the strongest argument for a less 'egalitarian' view of secular power centres in the region. Iona and Cladh a'Bhile do appear to be relative equals, monumentally speaking, for ecclesiastical power in phase one and their distance from each other may represent two zones of influence. The links between these ecclesiastical sites and secular sites is not clear. Adomnán tells us that Iona did have a political relationship with the kings of Dál Riata in Columba's time and there is the potential for a link between Cladh a'Bhile and A'Chrannag. Some degree of secular patronage and political links



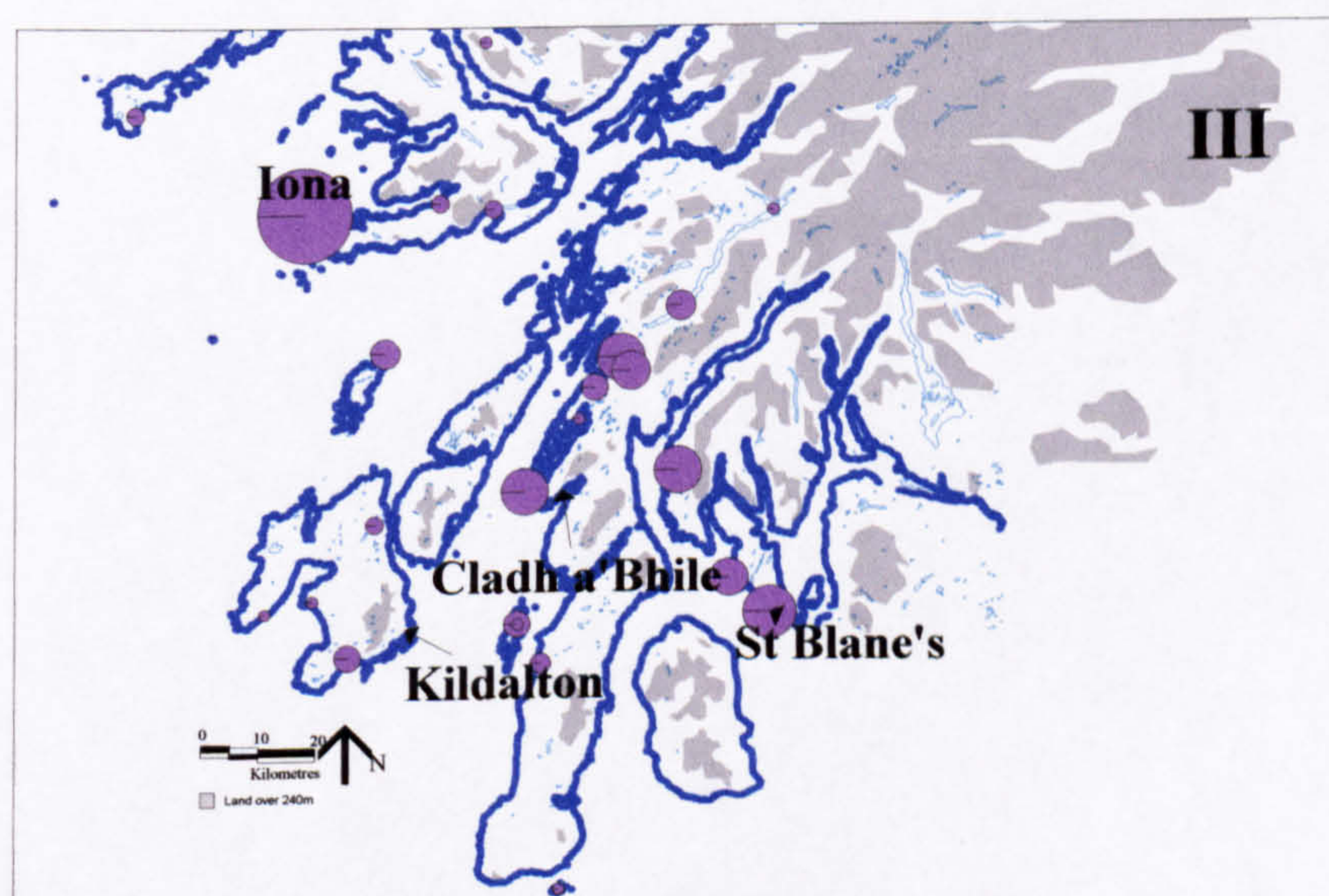
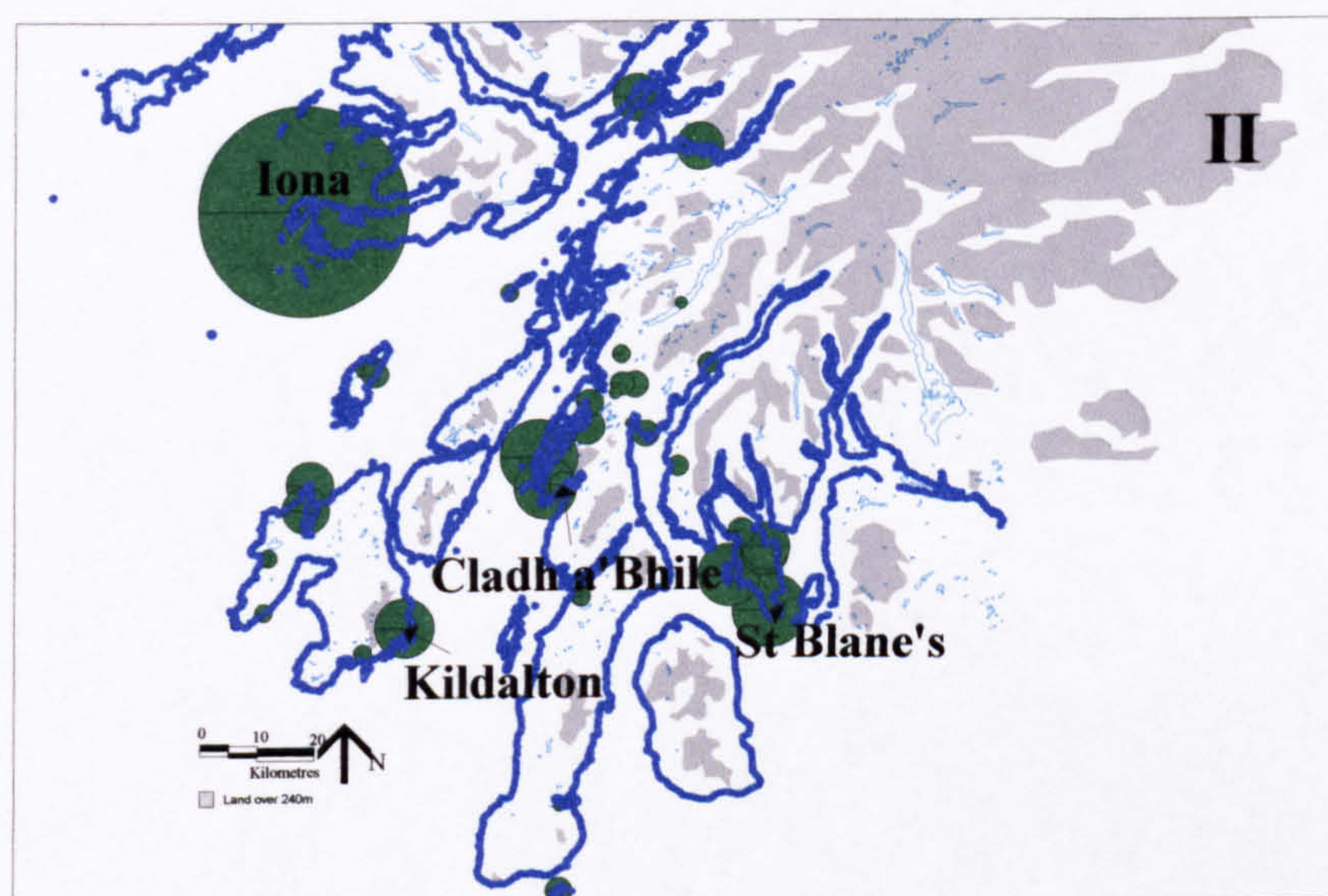
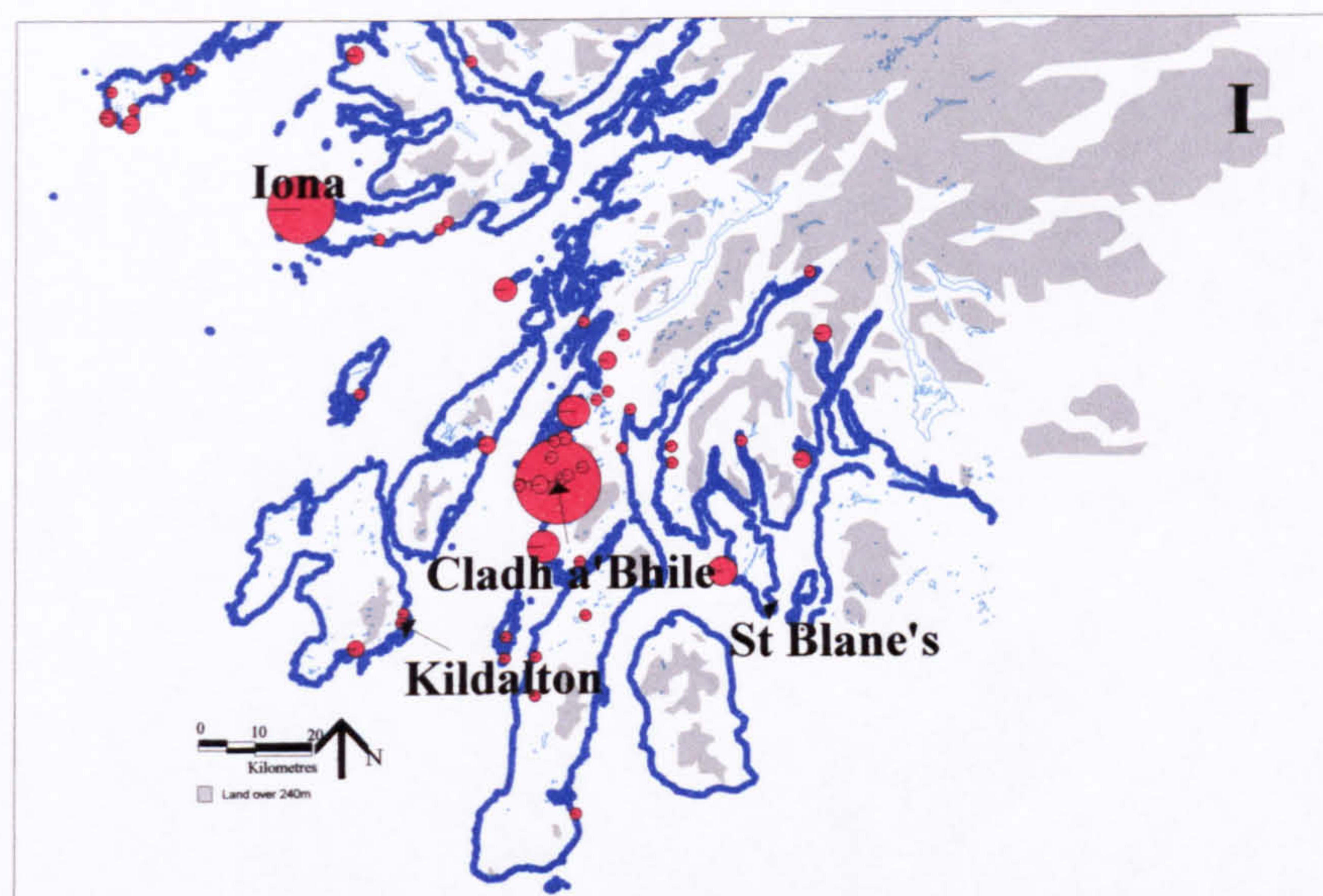


Fig 6.1: Resources in sculpture Phase I - III, Argyll

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between the two ecclesiastical centres and secular leaders is suggested by the dominant nature of these two sites in monumental terms, but these relationships did not have the same political weight as those that developed in phase two.

In phase two, a link between the rise of Iona and Dunadd was suggested. The two ideological and political centres joined forces to further the power of the Columban community and the overkingship of Dál Riata at least until the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century when political and ecclesiastical situations changed. This was particularly visible in the vast amount of patronage needed for the elaborate monuments at Iona, the iconography of kingship, and the archaeologically demonstrated links between the two centres. The landscape of power in phase two showed the rise of the central powers – Iona and Dunadd – and the subordination or dominant relationship of these sites with those around them.

The landscape of power changed again in the later 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century, in phase three. The domination of Iona and Dunadd was no longer apparent and there was again a more dispersed landscape of power. These more distributed and less grand manifestations of symbolic wealth possibly reflected the break-up or weakening of the kingdom of Dál Riata while showing a degree of secular control, much diminished and probably localised, still existed in Argyll. It is not clear who controlled these smaller landscapes of power in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century. The islands may have been under Norse control, as the presence of burials and hoards might suggest and the mainland of Argyll largely under those secular lords of Dál Riata that did not move east and the continued use of some resource-intensive sculpture may be their legacy.



Phase one in Fife and Perth (Fig. 6.2) was also characterised by a landscape of ideological and political units with relatively evenly dispersed manifestations of symbolic wealth in monumental sculpture. Unlike Argyll, however, there were no ecclesiastical centres where material investment concentrated. There were however at least two, Dundurn and Clatchard Craig, secular centres proven to be centres of symbolic wealth in metalworking, the use of imported goods, and in complex building programmes. The sculpture highlighted the regional differences and gaps in distribution of this phase unlike later phases and the potential for defining different political and ideological units within the case study area dealing with ideological issues, such as Christianity, in distinctively different ways.

The critical differences between phases one and two in Fife and Perthshire were the appearance of centres of concentrated investment in monumental displays of symbolic wealth (St Andrews, Meikle) and the more comprehensive adoption of Christian ideology in the region. There were no longer political units identifiable by their differences in pagan and Christian ideological messages, although the uneven distribution of Class II stones may be a continuation of earlier differences in ideology (e.g. the lack of symbols at St Andrews). The iconographical dominance of secular images both before and after the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century ascension of the Dál Riata dynasty to the Pictish kingship suggests an emphasis on the centralisation of secular power through ecclesiastical display by both Picts and later Scots. The use of the free-standing cross monument as a vehicle for display may be related to the new Scottish dynasty, particularly at Dupplin where the monument makes a strongly politicised statement through its inscription naming a king, its iconography, and location in the



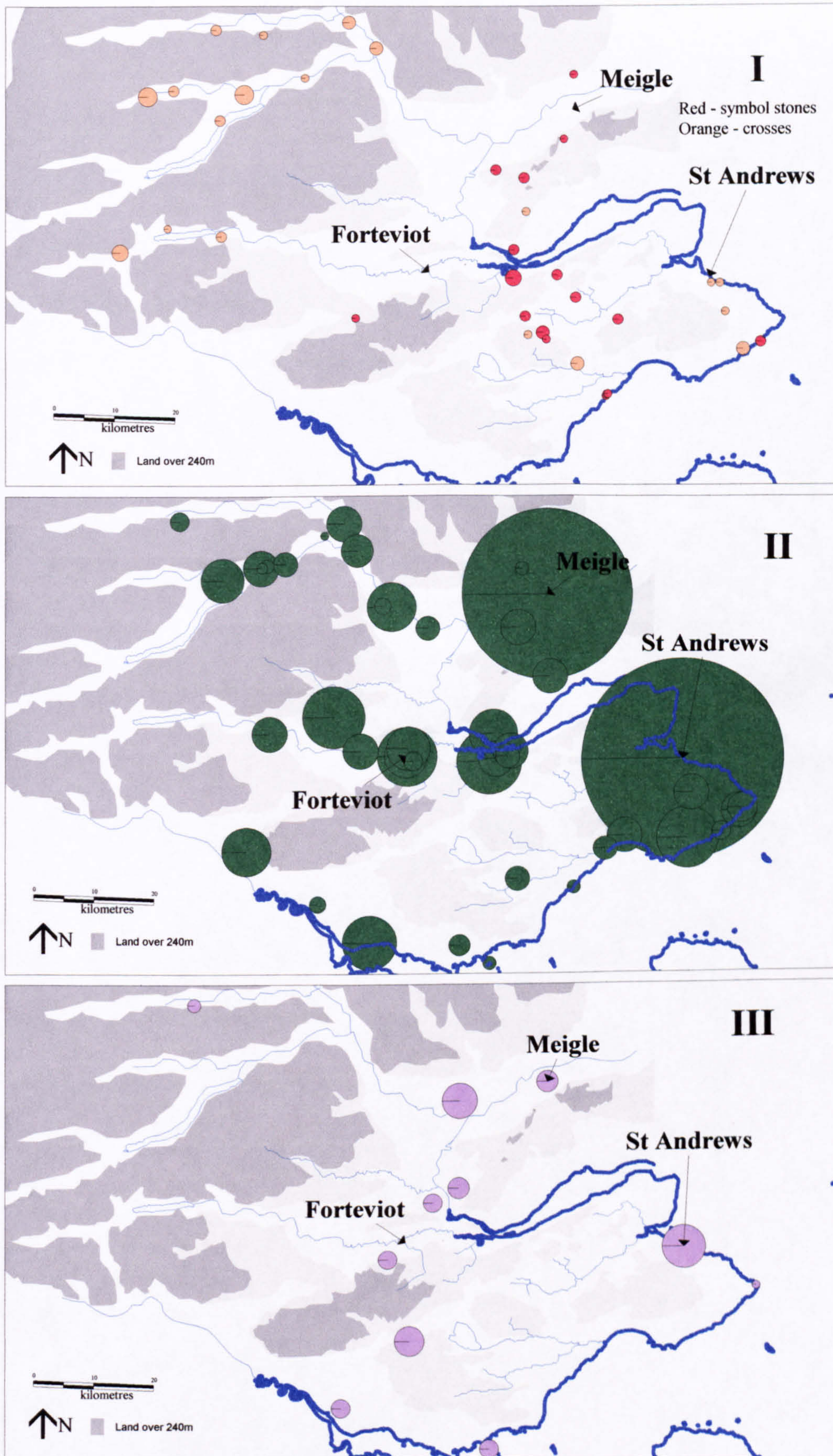


Fig. 6.2: Resources in sculpture Phase I - III, Fife and Perthshire

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landscape of the Pictish palace. By adopting the Pictish palace at Forteviot, the Scottish kings of Pictland embedded themselves in the existing Pictish power structure and the free-standing monuments of Dupplin and probably Invermay in the immediate landscape reflect the beginnings of change to that structure as their control intensified. The relatively limited use of the free-standing cross, however, has been interpreted here to reflect the growing but still limited secular power of the new Scottish dynasty largely to the areas of Fortriu, Fife and Fothrif, and perhaps to a lesser degree the coast of Tayside.

In phase three, the forms of symbolic wealth discussed in this thesis are no longer significant mechanisms for display and consolidation or articulation of power. There is not enough data on the non-sculptural forms of symbolic wealth to be of much use in interpretations of the patterns of power. In sculpture, a significant drop in the amount erected indicates patronage turned to other avenues for display, most likely stone buildings. The lack of carved stone monuments at Scone, the new ceremonial centre of Alba, is a clear break from phase two ceremonial centres like Forteviot. Carved stones were no longer the mechanisms for articulating the ideology of power or kingship. They are part of a glorious past and now part of the power landscape that could be referenced, like the great hillforts such as Moncrieffe Hill, as one encountered the landscape of Alba. Whereas the initial Scottish kings of Pictland adopted and then adapted Pictish power structures, the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a more conscious break with the past embodied in the rebranding of Pictland to Alba.

Phase one in Dumfries and Galloway (Fig 6.3) shares many similarities with phase one in Argyll and this may be due in part to similar Irish sea influences on the early



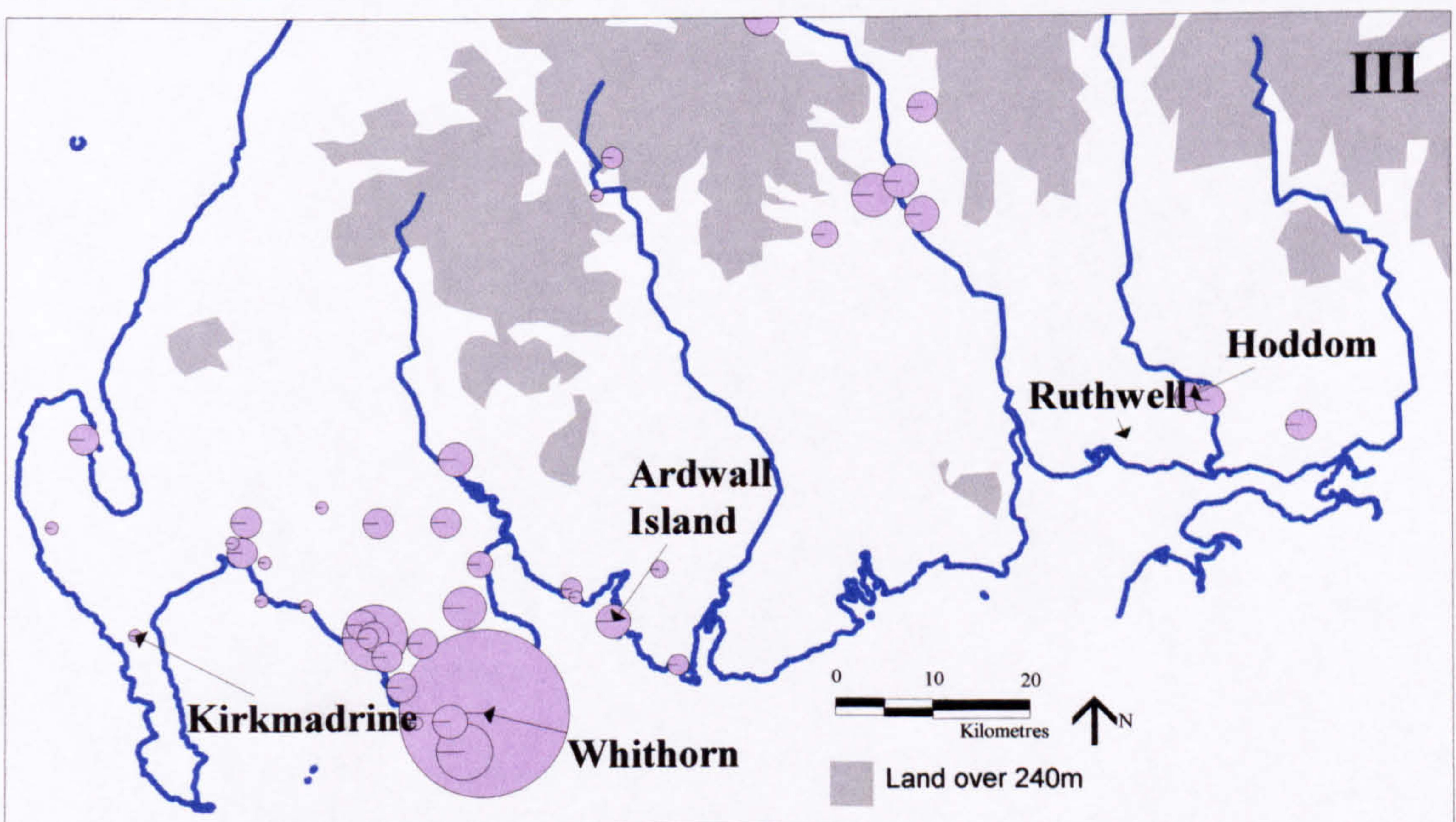
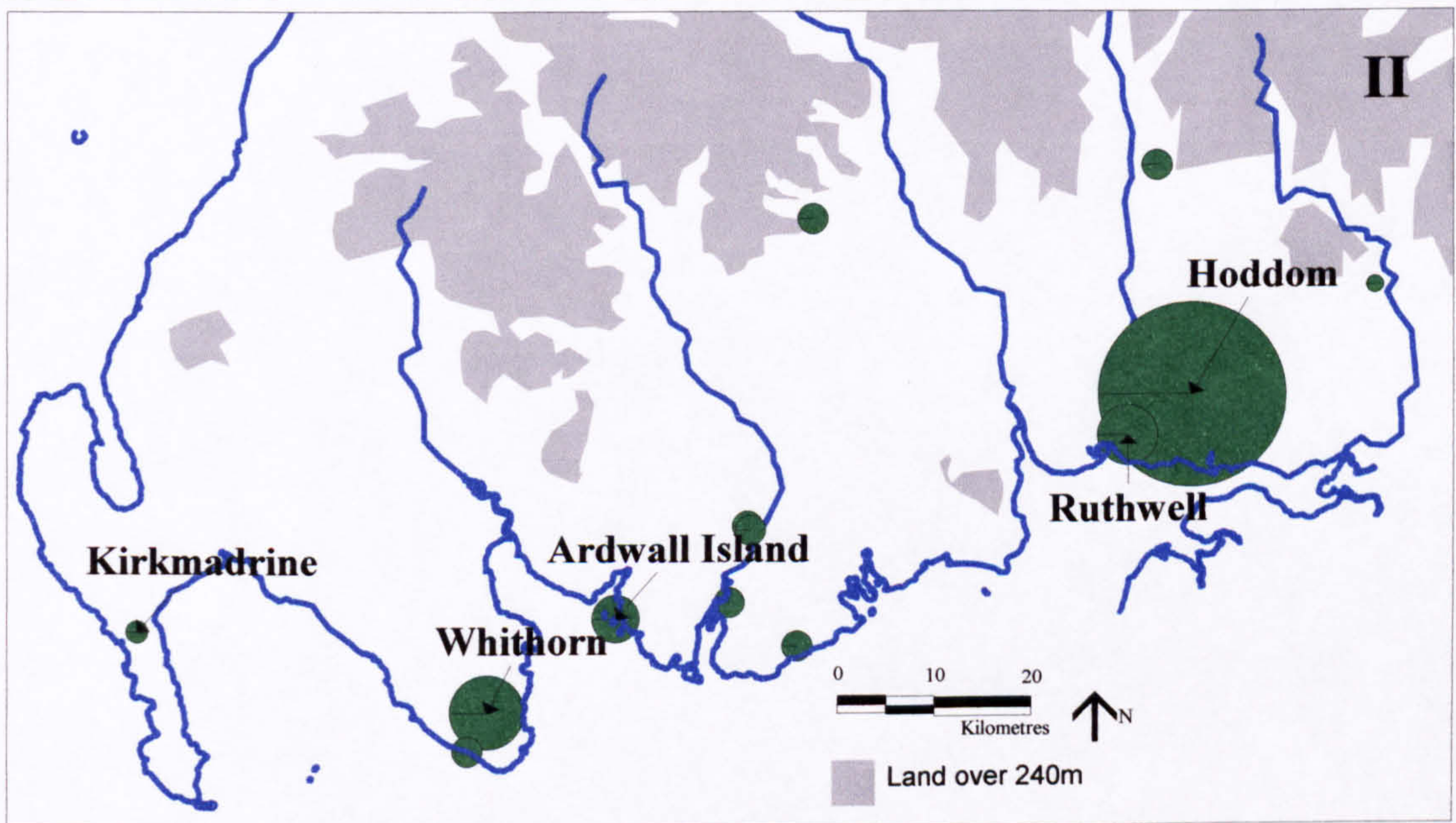
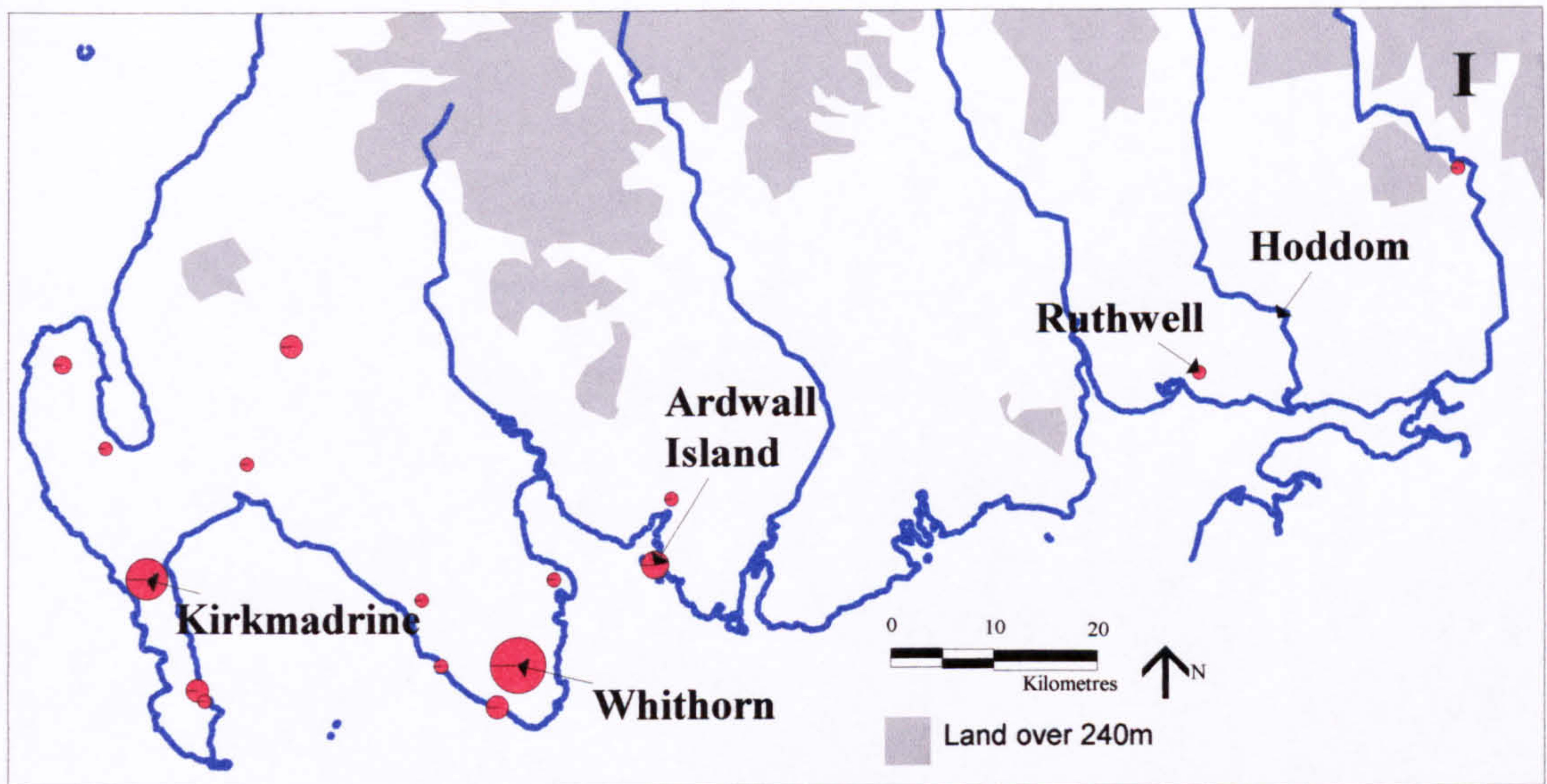


Fig. 6.3: Resources in sculpture Phase I - III, Dumfries and Galloway  
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religious establishments in the region. The sculpture indicated relatively dispersed Christian communities, probably quite small such as Ardwall Island, particularly in Galloway and the Rhinns. Within these small communities there were two centres that may have held more power at Whithorn and Kirkmadrine perhaps reflecting zones of influence for the two sites. Other aspects of symbolic wealth were dominated by the two excavated sites of the Mote of Mark and Whithorn, but the material highlighted the complicated or mixed nature of the settlement at Whithorn.

Phase two was characterised by the use of ideology and symbolic wealth to further the agenda (ecclesiastical and political) and consolidate the power of Northumbria in the region. The general distributions of aspects of symbolic wealth shifted focus to the east and the distribution of sculpture suggested a limit of Northumbrian power not much further west than the Machars peninsula. The iconography of the sculpture in phase two is not promoting ideals of kingship or secular power. This is significantly different to contemporary monuments in either Argyll or Fife and Perthshire and suggests that Northumbrian secular and church leaders did not choose or did not need to promote secular authority directly on religious monuments in Dumfries and Galloway. The use of symbolic wealth, in all media, during phase two suggests that Northumbrian control was articulated and administered largely through ecclesiastical networks. The perceived lack of secular fortifications (e.g. the disuse of the Mote of Mark) used during the Northumbrian period of control may support this interpretation, but in the face of such a large gap in archaeological exploration of early medieval secular sites this cannot be affirmed.



By the 10<sup>th</sup> century in phase three this landscape had broken up and the new structures again appear to be smaller territorial units. Two are potentially identifiable – the most secure being the episcopal landscape around Whithorn and the other around Thornhill on the River Nith. Unlike the other two case studies, phase three is not characterised by a drop in monumental displays of symbolic wealth. Phase three showed a relative increase in the numbers of monuments erected, particularly related to the demarcation of Whithorn's dependent parishes or estates, even though the relative investment may have not been as monumental as in phase two. These two identifiable landscapes of power in phase three may again reflect different zones of political influence. By the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the kingdom of Strathclyde stretched southwards to Hoddum incorporating the area around Thornhill and an estate subordinate to or associated with Strathclyde might be postulated. Whithorn and its landscape of power appears relatively contained to the Machars peninsula and the activities at the site itself – the Hiberno-Norse antler working and presumably pilgrimage, may suggest it looked seawards and maintained a relative degree of independence with its power centre, both secular and ecclesiastic, the site at Whithorn.

## SYMBOLIC WEALTH AND LANDSCAPES OF POWER

The stories of power described above are different for many reasons the most obvious of which is that they deal with three different and distinct geographical regions.

While these three regions would have been in contact with each other in the 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was no comprehensive early medieval blueprint for using and displaying symbolic wealth in any of the media discussed here. The dearth of documentary sources for the interpretation of early medieval society encourages a reliance on the idealised Irish law texts, hagiography, and later medieval sources. As



discussed in chapter one, these should not be used to create restrictive type-sites or models for early medieval society, economy, kingship or power structures. The archaeology of symbolic wealth shows that even though similar objects and ideas were in use across the Insular world, the way those objects were used was a feature of local to regional ideological strategies and that these changed greatly over time. Even when similar landscapes of power can be identified through the patterning and use of symbolic wealth, particularly in carved stone creation, the motivation behind the creation of that landscape might be different.

The landscapes of power as portrayed here by symbolic wealth include, but are not restricted to, smaller kingdoms/lordships, growing political units or over-kingship, and landscapes that use Christian networks in the consolidation (and possibly destabilisation in the case of phase one in Fife and Perthshire) of power.

By whatever technical term we wish to call them, smaller kingdoms or polities appear to have been a considerable feature of early medieval Scotland. The excavation of individual high status sites and the manifestations of symbolic wealth associated with those sites has led to the identification of small and multiple power centres, such as the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century hillfort fortifications of Dunadd, the Mote of Mark, Dundurn or Clatchard Craig. Similar small political units and an associated 'aristocracy' have been interpreted as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century in East Anglia based on the increasing hierarchy apparent in both burials and settlement (Caver 1992: 178). The archaeology of early medieval burial is not as advanced as in Anglo-Saxon England, but the Pictish square kerbed cairns and the degree of investment and display in the excavated secular centres may support a comparable growth in secular hierarchy.



Although individual high investment centres within polities were crucial for elite management and display of wealth and power, the links between power centres and the rituals and ideology of kingship were also features of these smaller political units. The relationship between the land and kingly power is shown by the prominence of natural features within inaugural rituals, rock-cut footprints, stone 'chairs', and inaugural trees relevant particularly in Ireland and Scotland. Dunadd, in addition to its use and creation of symbolic wealth, has clear links to inauguration and kingly ritual (Campbell 2003). Dundurn may also have kingly associations using the possible stone seat of St Fillan's chair, and the site at A'Chrannag/Cladh a'Bhile may also now be tentatively added to this small group of potential inaugural sites. We might also add Forteviot to this collection. Named in documents as a royal palace and set in a prehistoric ceremonial landscape, a feature shared with Dunadd, its inaugural character can only be inferred rather than proven. Such a site has not yet been identified in the Southwest of Scotland, but here work on early medieval secular sites is at an even more immature stage than in Argyll or the east.

Expanding the landscape of power and political ambition into greater territories was not only a factor of having strong and wealthy secular sites, even those associated with kingship. Those areas that showed the growth of political units (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century Fife and Perthshire, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century Dumfries and Galloway, and pre-840s Argyll) saw a variety of ideological and political strategies develop.

One, mentioned above, is the use of past power landscapes (prehistoric ceremonial sites) to legitimise and give authority to those in control. Prehistoric monumental



landscapes played a part in the ideology of power. In early medieval Ireland, the ideology of kingship promoted by the Uí Neill and the Church included significant centres of political power that were of prehistoric monumental importance, particularly the *oenach* sites and ideological 'royal centres' such as Tara, Co. Meath or Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon (Swift 2000:114). A similar awareness and use of prehistoric monuments may have been a part of the early medieval power landscapes around Dunadd, at Forteviot, and Scone (Driscoll forthcoming). At Forteviot, the prehistoric landscape was added to or reused in the early medieval period by the building of a 'palace' settlement, burials, and by the placement of highly resource-intensive free-standing crosses at Dupplin and Invermay. In addition to these two outlying monuments, the scattered fragments of stone sculpture from Forteviot church indicate other carved cross slabs augmented the monumental nature of the site itself perhaps as part of the surroundings of the stone church building, a highly monumental structure, represented by the carved arch.

'New' ideological constructs also played their part in the growth of political units. In addition to using the natural and prehistoric landscape as a symbol of power, images of secular elite and Biblical kings on carved stones placed within those landscapes promoted the political control and role of kings. Secular images were integral to sculpture in eastern Scotland ('Pictland') throughout the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century and have been interpreted as evidence of patronage by laypeople and, in the case of Meigle in Perthshire and St Vigean in Angus, by royalty (Ritchie 1995). Sculpture in these instances was used to create and proclaim political and ideological authority.



Although the direct presence of secular images or even the names or images of kings (Dupplin and the St Andrews Sarcophagus, for example) can be seen as the articulation of power strategies, sculpture did not always need secular themes to promote authority. In Northumbrian Dumfries and Galloway, sculpture did not carry secularised themes. Rather, sculpture bore Biblical imagery that reinforced and promoted Northumbrian ecclesiastical authority. Overall, in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century Southwest Scotland, the growing political 'lordship' or polity identifiable in the material culture is one that is not secular in nature but rather ecclesiastical. Some secular structure undoubtedly worked in conjunction with this ecclesiastical power structure, but the dominance of ecclesiastical power in the material culture is perhaps a sign of the high degree of symbiosis of church and secular power in Northumbria.

Changes in secular and ecclesiastical power structures can be seen both at high investment centres and across landscapes. Changing landscapes of power, particularly those centred on high investment sites, can be seen as changes in the way power was organised. An illustration of this is the conscious changing of the ceremonial landscape of power in Perthshire after the ascension of the Scottish dynasty to the Pictish kingship.

By the later 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, the power landscape around Forteviot shifted in focus to Scone only 8km away. The landscape around Scone includes Perth (just over a kilometre downriver), Moncrieffe Hill where an inter-Pictish skirmish took place in 728, and the possible site of Ráthinveramon at the old Roman fort of Bertha at the meeting place of the Tay and Almond rivers (Hall 2002). The only carved stones erected during this period in this region are the cross slab from New Scone/St John's,



Perth and the Goodlieburn free standing cross, which may be later. The erection of new carved stone monuments in Fife and Perth in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century does not appear to be a strategy used by the political secular elite to reinforce this power landscape around Scone. These monuments were now part of the past.

Movement through the landscape was an important part of the experience of assemblies such as fairs, wars, political meetings or religious feasts (Driscoll forthcoming). As people moved through the landscape towards a power centre such as Scone they encountered the past and present monumental landscapes that legitimised and proclaimed command and control of the land. Scone as the new ceremonial seat of Alba, broke down some of the older Pictish power structures (embodied by Forteviot, the erection of 'kingly' monuments, and 'Pictland'), but referenced these power structures as a mythical and glorious past to which the new dynasty and kingdom was heir.

Once a larger polity was achieved, it did not necessarily lead to 'state formation.' Although the heart of Alba could have been largely consolidated by the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it was still limited to a core around Fife, Fothrif, Fortriu, and perhaps areas adjacent to Tayside and the River Tay. In Dumfries and Galloway, the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a return to smaller polities as evidenced by the distribution and nature of the sculpture. These are not stalled states or regressions to a lesser degree of cultural complexity. They were instead different approaches and expressions of power that were constantly changing. It must be remembered that what we see as a 'decline' or 'growth' in power for one group or polity likely means the opposite for another that may be expressing their power in a different way.



## CONCLUSION

Only a contextual understanding of these stories of power can confront the question of why they are different. Interaction between ‘polities’ may be one element of change (Renfrew 1986). The factors involving change are numerous: heroes, settings, subplots, and catastrophes can all be detected in the early medieval period – kings and strong individuals, ceremonial and political centres, the interaction with the past, the introduction of Christianity and war. While some of these factors are not directly visible in the archaeological and documentary sources that survive down to us, they can be interpreted. Here it has been argued that symbolic wealth is one means of approaching those stories in the past. These actions and manifestations of power articulated ideological, economic, and socio-political structures and changes.

Alternative ideologies and strategies are visible through the analysis of surplus wealth. ‘Finding’ power in the early medieval period relies on the identification of objects and actions that embodied the relationships and ideologies that formed the basis of social interaction and hierarchy. In this study these included the manifestations and actions involved in the production or procurement of sculpture, fine metalwork, imported wares, settlement, and coinage. Although all of these categories of symbolic wealth were used across early medieval Scotland, the relative investment in them and the patterns in their distribution showed that attitudes towards them were not the same. These differences are the result of a variety of strategies and structures. Just as there was no blueprint for the use of symbolic wealth in early



medieval Scotland, there was no inevitable march towards the centralisation of power and the 'emergence of cultural complexity' (Renfrew 1986:1).

### **Avenues for future research**

The present study has been able to detect areas for future work and provide background from which to advance work without being able to investigate these areas themselves. There is great potential for future work to enhance, alter, and refine the understanding and importance of power centres and the way they interacted with each other and their landscapes. The project at Whithorn has shown how substantial excavation can radically alter the way a site is interpreted and perceived. Future excavation at other power centres, using a research agenda informed and attuned to the importance of power centres and their landscapes, could change the picture presented here. Of the identified power centres within these three regions of Scotland, directed and in-depth survey of the historical records, landscape, and surviving features is particularly needed at Meigle, Abernethy, Penpont-Closeburn-Thornhill, and at the suggested inaugural site at Cladh a'Bhile/A'Chrannag.

The potential power centres at Cladh a'Bhile and Penpont-Closeburn-Thornhill provide an almost blank slate from which to start investigation. Abernethy and Meigle are both mentioned in contemporary historical documents and have received scholarly attention, but this attention has largely come from the fields of history, place-name studies, and art history. Collaboration between these fields and archaeology will be essential in a regional, landscape-based study of these power



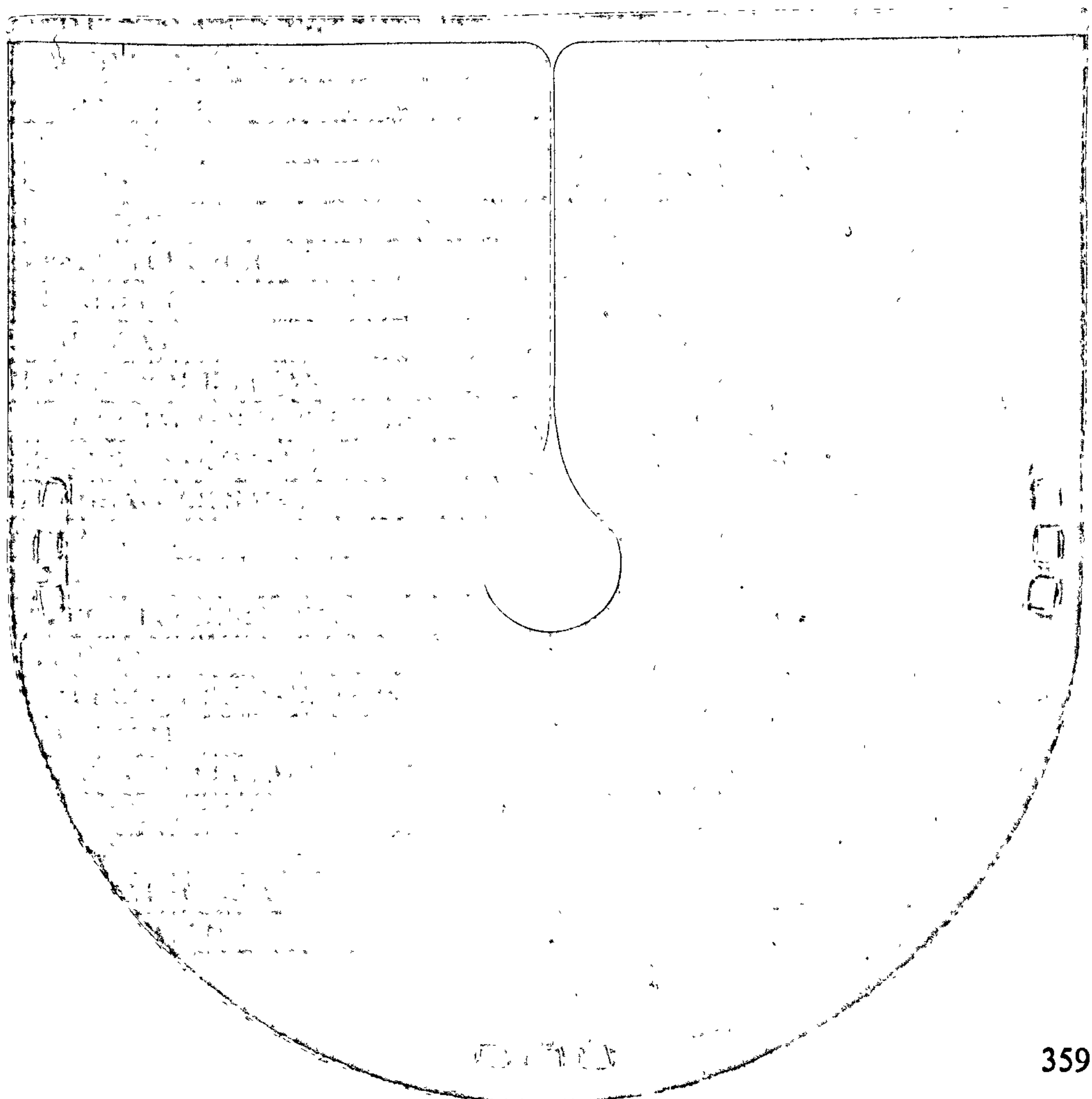
centres. Geological studies on carved stones and their potential points of origin could continue to enhance understanding of the economic and political relationships involved in the analysis of resources and the significance of the creation of carved stone monuments.

As with all theories, new data and concepts will call into question the assumptions and propositions offered here. The case studies have been over large geographic areas with the aim of testing the methodological approach to symbolic wealth, sculpture in particular. Over a hundred years after the great collation of Scottish sculpture in Allen and Anderson's (1903) *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, carved monuments are proven to still be one of the most valuable resources for early medieval society. Provided we continue to contextualise and ask new questions of them using contemporary archaeological and documentary theories and evidence, they will continue to allow new insights.



## Appendix One: The Database

A copy of the database is provided on CD-Rom. Further instructions for use can be found on the CD-Rom in the Word document 'Guidelines for use.' To access this document and the Microsoft Access database, insert the CD-Rom into the disc drive. Open 'My computer' or Windows Explorer and select the CD device to display the files on the CD. Double click on the file you would like to view. Viewing these files requires Microsoft Office products including Word and Access. There are three versions of the database provided, two versions in Access 8.0/2000 and one in Access 97. These are explained in the 'Guidelines for use.'





Appendix Two: Regional Summaries of Sculptural Investment

Argyll – 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries

Site	Easting	Northing	No. of stones	‘Points’ Total
BURIAL-GROUND, CLADH A'BHILE, ELLARY	173330	675600	26	7980
IONA	128000	724000	22	5410
BURIAL-GROUND, ACHADH NA CILLE, OIB	176180	688070	6	1570
KILBERRY	170850	664140	3	1380
ISLE OF INCHMARNOCK	202360	659630	4	1230
EILEACH AN NAOIMH, GARVELLACHS	164000	709700	3	760
ST.PATRICK'S,CEANN A'MHARA	093770	740130	3	690
PARISH CHURCH, LOCHGOILHEAD	219840	701450	2	540
CHAPEL, KILMORY KNAP	170260	675100	2	530
CALGARY, MULL	137500	751160	2	510
POLTALLOCH	182000	697100	1	500
KILLUNDINE/ CILL FHIONTAIN, MORVERN	157950	749870	2	490
CARRAGH CHALUIM BHAINN, TARBERT, JURA	160900	682200	1	480
CHAPEL AND BURIAL-GROUND, ARDNADAM	216330	679170	2	470
CLADH BEAG,HYNISH, TIREE	097820	739050	2	470
CNOC NA CILLE, ISLAY	137810	646250	1	460
DALTOTE COTTAGE	174620	683330	1	410
KIRKAPOLL, TIREE	104200	747410	2	420
CRAGANERVE MHOR	184860	701500	1	280
KILFINAN PARISH CHURCH	193400	678890	1	270
DUNANS, KNAPDALE	180120	690010	1	270
TRUDERNISH, ISLAY	146090	652520	1	270
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILLEAN	169510	644560	1	270
CHAPEL AND BURIAL-GROUND, LOCHEAD	177690	678160	1	270
BALARUMINMORE, COLONSAY	138420	691440	1	270
CILL AN AONGHAIS, KILNAISH	177300	661430	1	270
CNOC NA CARRAIGH	164260	648170	1	260
EILEAN MÓR	166600	675200	1	260
CHRIST CHURCH, LOCHGILPHEAD	185990	688370	1	260
INVERNEILL HOUSE	184640	681460	1	260
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILDALTON, ISLAY	145800	650810	1	260
KILLMALUAG FARM	169370	637650	1	260
ELLARY FARM (NOW AT CLADH A'BHILE)	174000	676100	1	260
LEAC AN DUINE CHÓIR, BARRACKAN	177870	703860	1	260
TOM NA CROISE	217560	712350	1	250
KILMICHAEL, BALLACHROY	178240	652000	1	250
KILBRIDE, LOCH SWEEN	172250	679870	1	250



Site	Easting	Northing	No. of stones	'Points' Total
ST. MARY'S, CARSAIG, MULL	153840	721710	1	240
CAOLAS, TIREE	108380	748880	1	240
CARA CHAPEL	164100	644320	1	240
PARISH CHURCH, KILMUN, HOLY LOCH	216570	782160	1	240
OLD PARISH CHURCH, SOROBY	098380	741650	1	240
DUNTAYNISH HOUSE	172750	682770	1	240
CHAPEL, ARDTARAIG	205660	682670	1	240
ST. CIARAN'S CAVE	176550	617070	1	220
KILKENNETH, TIREE	094320	744770	1	220
NUNS' CAVE, CARSIAG, MULL	152350	720410	1	210
EILEAN MÓR	166580	675040	1	210
ST. COLUMBA'S CAVE, COVE	175120	676790	1	210
BARNAKILL	182100	691580	1	210
AUCHNAHA	193290	681700	1	210
SCOOR, MULL	141790	718650	1	200

Argyll – 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries

Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' Total
IONA	128000	724000	68	37810
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KEILLS	169130	680540	6	6520
ST. BLANE'S, KINGARTH	209490	653430	26	6310
ISLE OF INCHMARNOCK	202360	659630	19	5620
CHAPEL, KILMORY KNAP	170260	675100	5	4420
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILDALTON, ISLAY	145800	650810	3	4240
ARDCHATTAN PRIORY	197130	734940	1	2820
CHAPEL, KILNAVE, ISLAY	128520	671510	1	2820
LISMORE	186090	743500	1	2820
NAVE ISLAND, ISLAY	129190	675860	1	2820
ROTHESAY CHURCHYARD	208600	663680	1	2820
ROTHESAY CASTLE	208780	664570	1	2790
PARISH CHURCH, KILMICHAEL OF INVERLUSSA	177520	685880	1	1590
PARISH CHURCH, KILMICHAEL GLASSARY	185880	693510	1	1060
ST. NINIAN'S CHAPEL, SANDA	172750	604570	1	1060
COLONSAY HOUSE, COLONSAY	139480	696780	1	960
KILMORY OIB	178080	690240	1	960
RIASG BUIDHE, COLONSAY (CHAPEL SITE)	140570	695440	1	960
ST. COLMAC	204520	667250	1	960
BURIAL-GROUND, CLADH A'BHILE, ELLARY	173330	675600	1	940
CASTLETON	187800	684700	1	940
DUNADD	183650	693560	1	840



Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' Total
KILLEVIN, CRARAE	198650	697220	2	740
KILFINAN PARISH CHURCH	193400	678890	1	580
PARISH CHURCH, CLACHAN	176420	656040	2	530
KILMARTIN PARISH CHURCH	183450	698840	2	510
BALINAKILL	176690	656120	1	480
EILEACH AN NAOIMH, GARVELLACHS	164000	709700	1	470
CHAPEL, KILBRIDE, ISLAY	138440	646480	1	460
GLEANN NA GAOITH', ISLAY	121160	653610	1	460
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILCHOMAN, ISLAY	121350	663010	1	450
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILCHOMAN, ISLAY	121970	663140	1	450
BARNAKILL	182480	691920	1	280
OLD PARISH CHRUCH, KILMARIE, CRAIGNISH	177820	701480	1	280
ARDRISHAIG	185300	686500	1	270
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILCHOMAN, ISLAY	121350	663010	1	270
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILCHOMAN, ISLAY	121970	663140	1	270
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILMARIE, CRAIGNISH	177820	701480	1	270
ORSAY, ISLAY	116400	651670	1	270
IONA- SITHEAN FARM	127000	723600	1	260
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILKERRAN	172830	619460	1	230
KILMAHA	193800	707810	1	220

Argyll – 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries

Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' Total
IONA	128000	724000	10	9510
ST. BLANE'S, KINGARTH	209490	653430	12	3360
EILEAN MÓR	166670	675280	1	2820
KILFINAN PARISH CHURCH	193400	678890	1	2820
KILMARTIN PARISH CHURCH	183450	698840	1	2820
ISLE OF INCHMARNOCK	202360	659630	3	1980
KILBRIDE, RHUDIL	185240	696500	1	1840
CILL CHAITRÌONA, BALNAHARD, COLONSAY	142160	699890	2	1200
KILMAHA	193800	707810	2	1160
TARBERT, GIGHA	165390	651610	1	1060
TARBERT, GIGHA	165410	651510	1	1060
KILMAHUMAIG	178930	693600	1	1000
DÒID MHÀIRI, PORT ELLEN, ISLAY	135700	645800	1	960
OLD PARISH CHURCH, KILLEAN	169510	644560	1	660
OLD PARISH CHURCH, SOROBY	098380	741650	1	560
CILL MHÀIRI, ARDNAMURCHAN	153120	769980	1	520
ST.KILDA'S CHRCH LOCHBUIE,MULL	160960	724870	1	520
CILL EILEAGAIN, MULREESH, ISLAY	140310	669480	1	470



Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' Total
PENNYGHAEL, MULL	151650	725950	1	440
ST. NINIAN'S CHAPEL, SANDA	172750	604570	1	290
BURIAL-GROUND, ACHADH NA CILLE, OIB	176180	688070	1	280
OLD PARISH CHURCH, INISHAIL	209800	724470	1	280
GLEANN NA GAOITH', ISLAY	121160	653610	1	270
LAGGAN, ISLAY	129420	655880	1	270
TARBERT, GIGHA	165390	651610	1	260
TARBERT, GIGHA	165410	651510	1	260
CROIS BHEINN, MORVERN	159450	754280	1	240
CAMAS NAN GEALL, ARDNAMURCHAN	156050	761840	1	220

**Fife and Perthshire – 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' total
FORTINGALL	274200	747100	4	1000
KERROWMORE/CLADH BHRENNO	258200	746800	3	1000
ABERNETHY	318900	716500	2	720
BALQUHIDDER	253600	720900	3	720
STRUAN	280900	765300	2	550
SKEITH	357080	704640	1	500
WESTFIELD	323840	707320	2	500
MAINS OF KILLIECHANGIE	296100	754700	1	480
STOB CROSS, MARKINCH	329600	702200	1	480
CHAPEL STONE/TUMMEL	291600	759000	1	470
COLLACE, FAIRYGREEN	320700	733200	1	290
INCHYRA	319000	721200	1	290
CARGILL/ BALHOMIE HOUSE	316000	734500	1	280
LINDORES	326200	716980	1	280
NEWTON OF COLLESSIE/HALHILL FARM	329270	713240	1	280
STRATHMIGLO	320900	710100	1	280
CAMUS URACHAN/ ST. ADAMNAN'S CROSS	262500	747700	1	270
DUNDURN/ ST.FILLAN'S	270400	723500	1	270
LAGFERN	270200	742800	1	270
ST. BLANE'S CHAPEL	269550	757730	1	270
WALTON	336300	709600	1	270
KEILLOR	327300	739700	1	260
BLACKFORD/ PETERHEAD FARM	292700	709800	1	250
BRUCETON	328900	750400	1	250
DUNINO	354100	710900	1	240
EAST LOMOND HILL	324400	706200	1	240
OLD FASKALLY KIRK	291800	763100	1	240



Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' total
WEEM	284290	749780	1	240
GLENBEICH LODGE	261500	724900	1	230
LADYWELL	321000	727600	1	210
ST NICHOLAS FARM	351800	715700	1	210
TOMBRECK	277400	756900	1	210
WEST LOMOND HILL	321370	706960	1	210
CAILPIE CAVE/ CHAPEL CAVE	359980	705830	1	200
COURT CAVE, WEMYSS	334270	696940	1	200
DOO CAVE, WEMYSS	334330	697200	1	200
JONATHAN'S CAVE, WEMYSS	334560	697230	1	200
KINKELL CAVE	353200	715700	1	200
SLOPING CAVE, WEMYSS	334610	697270	1	200

**Fife and Perthshire – 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' total
ST. ANDREWS	351500	716700	35	57350
MEIGLE	328700	744600	17	43040
ABERNETHY	318900	716500	7	7940
FOWLIS WESTER	292800	724000	3	7480
ABERCROMBIE	352300	703400	8	7244
FORTEVIOT	304900	717500	1	6950
FORTEVIOT	305100	717400	5	6950
CULROSS ABBEY	298800	686200	2	5640
DUNKELD	302500	742600	3	4820
ST. MADDOES	319600	721200	2	4720
DUNBLANE	278200	701400	2	4650
FORTINGALL	274200	747100	4	3860
DUPPLIN	305300	718800	1	3760
FORTEVIOT	304900	717500	1	3760
FORTEVIOT	305100	717400	5	3760
CARPOW	320000	717000	1	2820
CRAIL	361000	707900	1	2820
DULL	280630	749150	6	2820
DULL	280800	749200	1	2820
DUNFALLANDY	294600	756500	1	2820
GASK/BORE STONE	297300	718300	1	2820
KETTINS	323800	739100	1	2820
LARGO	341700	703900	1	2820
MUGDRUM	322500	718300	1	2820
ROSSIE PRIORY	329200	730800	1	2820
STROWAN NOW CRIEFF	282050	721190	1	2820



Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' total
DUNINO	353000	711000	1	2790
LOGIERAIT	296800	752000	2	2430
SAUCHOPE	361600	708300	1	1880
WEEM	284290	749780	1	1500
DOGTON	323600	696800	1	1470
GELLYBURN (MURTHLY)	308600	739050	1	1470
SCOONIE	338400	701700	1	1470
CLUNIE/EASTER CLUNIE	322000	717400	1	1440
DULOCK, INVERKEITHING	313900	685700	1	1060
INVERMAY	306100	716600	1	960
KILRENNY	358000	704400	1	960
INVERHADDEN	267000	757000	1	920
DUNKELD (HOUSE)	301000	742800	1	640
PARKMILL/HAWKHILL	290100	692600	1	640
ALYTH	324500	748900	1	580
CAMSERNEY	281700	749500	1	540
INCHCOLM	318970	682650	1	540
WEMYSS CASTLE/ WEST WEMYSS	333100	695300	1	470
DULL	280630	749150	6	280
DULL	280800	749200	1	280
TOM-NA-H'E AGLAIS, MILTON	291300	754500	1	270
GELLYBURN	309300	739200	1	

Fife and Perthshire – 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries

Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' total
ST. ANDREWS	351500	716700	6	3670
LETHENDY	314000	741500	1	2790
TULLIBOLE	305500	700800	2	2010
MEIGLE	328700	744600	1	1060
NEW SCONE	313800	726800	1	1040
GOODLIEBURN	309500	724310	1	980
INCHCOLM	318800	682600	1	980
TULLIALLAN	294040	689520	1	980
DUNNING	301900	714600	1	940
ST. BLANE'S CHAPEL	269550	757730	1	480
CONSTANTINE'S CAVE	363500	710100	1	200
PORTMOAK FARM	317300	700800	1	0

Dumfries and Galloway – 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries



Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' total
WHITHORN	244000	540000	8	1920
KIRKMADRINE	208000	548300	3	1640
ARDWALL ISLAND	257310	549570	3	720
LAGGANGARN	222000	571000	3	650
ST. NINIAN'S CAVE	242000	536000	3	640
WHITHORN	244310	539210	1	540
WHITHORN	244490	540280	1	520
LOW CURGHIE	212900	537600	1	500
CHAPEL DONNAN	199830	569190	2	480
MOCHRUM	234700	546300	1	280
DRUMMORE	213600	536600	1	270
LIDDESDALE	204000	561000	1	250
AIRYHEMMING	217700	559500	1	240
KIRKMADRINE	247500	548200	1	240
RUTHWELL MANSE	310100	568200	1	240
KIRKMAIDEN	236550	539970	1	230
TRUSTY HILL	258910	556030	1	210
STAPLEGORDON, OLD PARISH CHURCH	335210	587910	1	200

**Dumfries and Galloway – 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' total
HODDOM	316680	572680	15	16540
HODDOM (KNOCKHILL)	316680	572680	2	5380
WHITHORN	244000	540000	8	5260
RUTHWELL	310100	568400	1	3760
ARDWALL ISLAND	257310	549570	9	2260
HALLGUARDS/ HODDOM	316680	572680	1	1440
HODDOM PARISH CHURCH	317800	573500	1	1440
WAMPHRAY	313050	596460	1	980
ARGRENNAN	271200	558800	1	960
BARNCROSH	270900	559200	1	960
KIRKCUDBRIGHT	269030	551190	1	960
KIRKLANDS HOUSE/ HODDOM MANSE	318870	572290	1	960
MONIAIVE - STROANFREGGAN - HASTINGS HALL	277600	591100	1	960
RERRICK	276000	546700	1	960
ST. NINIAN'S CAVE	242000	536000	3	720
KIRKMADRINE	208000	548300	2	520
WAUCHOPE	335520	584090	1	440
ST. NINIAN'S CROSS	242000	536000	1	240
CLOSEBURN	289000	592000	1	0



Dumfries and Galloway – 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries

Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' total
WHITHORN	244000	540000	27	21710
BARHOBBLE	232700	548100	6	4140
ST. NINIAN'S CAVE	242000	536000	9	3080
KIRKINNER	242000	551000	2	1920
PENPONT	284000	594000	2	1860
ARDWALL ISLAND	257310	549570	6	1500
CLOSEBURN	289000	592000	1	1500
KIRKCONNEL, NITHSDALE	272400	612300	1	1500
NITH BRIDGE/THORNHILL CROSS	286800	595400	1	1500
CRAIGLEMINE	240500	539100	3	1450
MINNIGAFF	241000	566600	2	1230
KIRKLAND OF LONGCASTLE	237630	547400	1	1060
DURRISDEER	289000	603000	1	1040
MOSSKNOWE/MOSSKNOW	328100	569700	1	1040
KIRKCOLM/ KILMORIE / CORSEWELL HOUSE	202700	568700	1	1000
GLENLUCE CHURCH	219000	557000	1	980
MONREITH	235500	542800	1	980
AIRYLICK	231310	549390	1	960
ELRIG	232600	548200	1	960
GLENIRON SEVERAL, OLD LUCE	219400	560100	1	960
HODDOM	316680	572680	1	960
HODDOM (KNOCKHILL)	316680	572680	1	960
LUCE CHURCH	318740	572350	1	960
MOCHRUM	234000	546000	1	960
PENNINGHAME	240000	560000	1	960
WEST CROSHERIE	233000	560000	1	960
GLENCAIRN	279000	590000	1	940
WIGTOWN	243560	555620	1	940
ELRIG	232000	548000	1	560
HIGH AUCHENLARIE	253000	553000	2	560
BRIGHOUSE FARM	264000	545000	1	540
BRAIDENOCH HILL	257090	598030	2	530
KNOCK OF LUCE/LOCHINCH CASTLE	262000	555000	1	470
CRAIGNARGET	225600	551400	1	270
CRASSENDEOCH, BARLOCKHART	221300	556000	1	270
GLAIK	199400	559500	1	270
GLENLUCE ABBEY	218000	558000	1	270
HOLM OF DALTALLOCHAN	255500	594200	1	270
KIRKMADRINE	208000	548300	1	270
BARMORE	227200	561700	1	260



Site	Easting	Northing	No. of Stones	'Points' total
KIRKCLAUGH	253400	552100	1	260
KNOCK	237000	539000	1	240
SINNINESS	221000	552000	1	240
KIRKLAND	280900	590400	1	0



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