Shifting perspectives on 1st-millennia Scotland

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ABSTRACT

Underlying much research on Iron Age Scotland is a pervasive regionalism. This has led to the underplaying of cultural traits that are evident across the country. The examination of south-west Scotland, a region that does not have a distinctive later prehistoric character and which is often viewed as somewhat peripheral to understanding Iron Age Scotland, however, reveals underlying patterns of settlement and culture that are embedded across Scotland but markedly different to Iron Age societies to the south. Moreover, cultural traits apparent across Scotland but absent south of the border continued into the early medieval period, suggesting significant cultural divergences between 400 BC and AD 650.

INTRODUCTION

> Prehistory is no respecter of national borders.
> (Haselgrove 2015: 119)

This factoid begs the question why the distributions of crannogs, souterrains, brochs and duns reach their limits close to the Anglo-Scottish border (Illus 1).

Over the last 30 years, there has been a reluctance to examine this distinction and its potential significance in syntheses of later prehistoric Scotland or northern Britain (Hingley 1992; Armit & Ralston 1997; Harding 2004; Harding 2017). This might be due to the connotations of nationalism that it raises. The same reticence is not apparent, however, in attempts to forge some kind of cultural identity across central Britain, encompassing southern Scotland and northern England (Haselgrove 1999; Frodsham 2000; Haselgrove 2015; Crellin et al 2016: 13), a concept that has been used in an overtly political attempt to define a British 'Middleland' (Stewart

2017: 47–8). However, despite the perseverance of its adherents, the archaeological record does not bear this out. Indeed, regional syntheses paint northern England itself as a heterogeneous assemblage of cultures sharing no underlying settlement or material traits unique to the region (Harding & Johnston 2000; Frodsham 2000: 25; Bevan 2000: 142; Hodgson & Brennand 2006: 52, 55; Crellin et al 2016; Morris 2016).

This is not to deny any cross-border cultural traits. The contemporaneous large-scale clearance of woodland across Scotland and northern England from about 500 BC onwards (Tipping 2015: 111), for instance, indicates similar social and economic processes, and presumably motivations for, landscape transformation. Some forms of settlement, such as rectilinear settlement enclosures, to give another example, are spread across southern and eastern Scotland as well as northern England (Cowley 2000: 172–3).

Nor, it is important to stress, can regionality be dismissed from the settlement and material record of later prehistoric Scotland. This is clearly the case in terms of the variable

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ILLUS 1 Distribution maps of crannogs, souterrains, brochs and duns. (Contains OS data © Crown Copyright 2020, OS licence number 100050699)

preponderance of settlement types, architecture and material culture across the country. But the predominance accorded to regionalism in Iron Age studies in Scotland since the late 1950s and 1960s (RCAHMS 1956: 15–16; Piggott 1966: 4–5; Feachem 1966: 76–86) has resulted in a somewhat blinkered perspective that accentuates distinctions and overlooks similarities between different parts of the country. A pervasive framework of provinces and corresponding perspectives has persisted ever since (Armit & Ralston 1997: 169–71; Harding 2004: 6; Halliday & Ralston 2009: 460). Local and regional perspectives are commonly chosen to address the respective contexts of a site. National, supranational and chronological perspectives are rarely adopted. The effect of this is that the regional archaeologies of Scotland are often presented as possessing no more affinity with each other than with other regional archaeologies of Britain and Ireland (Bevan 1999; Harding & Johnston 2000; Armit 2015; Harding 2017).
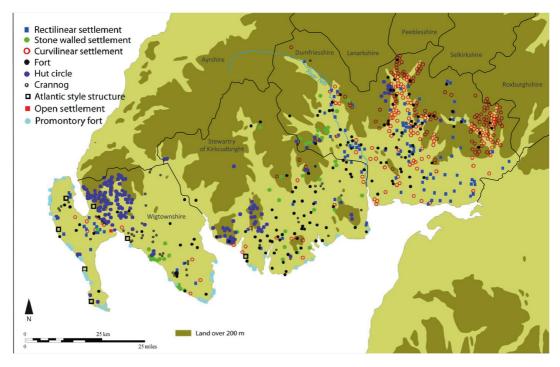
REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTH-WEST SCOTLAND

South-west Scotland is an example of one of the more archaeologically indistinct provinces of the Scottish Iron Age, certainly in comparison with the north-west and south-east. But if a regional archaeology cannot be defined here, distinguishing it from the rest of the country, logic dictates that the rest of Iron Age Scotland is not as disparate as the traditional narrative suggests. Moreover, the consideration of a longer timeline extending into the early medieval era, a period not approached using the same regionalised framework (Ralston & Armit 1997; Alcock 2003) but to which some of the same settlement forms such as forts, duns and crannogs belong (Alcock & Alcock 1987: 131; Crone 2012: 141–6; Harding 2017: 174), can test the validity of national patterns.

The relative preponderance in Galloway of promontory forts, crannogs, brochs and duns has often led to affinities being drawn with Atlantic Scotland (Cunliffe 1983: 86, 97; Cavers 2008: 16–23) and contrasts with south-east Scotland (Piggott 1966: 4–5; Feachem 1966: 76; Truckell 1984: 200; Harding 2004: 186). Regional syntheses have identified visibly different patterns of settlement apparent between Galloway and Dumfriesshire: small stone-walled settlements, crannogs, promontory forts, hut circles and Atlantic-style structures predominate in the former; hillforts and larger curvilinear and rectilinear settlements in the latter (Feachem 1966: 76; Cowley 2000: 168–74; Toolis 2015: 18; Illus 2). In other words, a potential microcosm of the distinctions between Atlantic and south-east Scotland; between a settlement pattern frequented by crannogs, duns and brochs and that of another dominated by hillforts and large settlements; between a society comprised solely of single-household settlements and that of a society composed of multiple-household settlements.

To begin with, it is important to recognise whether any of this differentiation reflects cultural reasons – the collective choices a human group made that were distinct from those of other human groups and which were not dictated solely by environmental factors. Settlement traits in Galloway such as the preponderance of crannogs and promontory forts may owe more to environmental conditions, for example the relative prevalence of lochs and a craggy coastline, than inherent cultural disparity (Toolis 2015: 19). As there are fewer lochs in Dumfriesshire, unsurprisingly there are fewer crannogs. As the Dumfriesshire coast lacks promontories, so promontory forts are absent too. Studied more closely, promontory forts exemplify the ephemeral basis for many site classifications. There is enormous variety among the Galloway promontory forts; they often lack defensive or maritime attributes, and their form and layout adhere to patterns apparent in inland settlements (Toolis 2003: 61–9). None of this is particularly distinctive to Galloway either. The role of topography might also explain the distinctions drawn between the different classes of settlement morphology apparent east and west of the Nith (Illus 2), the curvilinear settlements ubiquitous in Dumfriesshire simply masquerading as forts and stone-walled settlements in Galloway. The distinction drawn between the

ILLUS 2   Distribution of Iron Age Settlements across Dumfries and Galloway. (Contains OS data © Crown Copyright 2020, OS licence number 100050699)

occupation of crannogs and that of a variety of other single-household settlements – small stone-walled settlements (or duns) and brochs – is also questionable. While the affinity of these site types with those in Atlantic Scotland, where they are ubiquitous, is obvious, Galloway possesses no more significant numbers of brochs or other Atlantic-style structures than other parts of central and southern Scotland where equivalent spatial clusters survive (Illus 1); nor are brochs in Galloway significantly different in scale and architecture from most brochs in these other areas or indeed in Atlantic Scotland (Cavers 2008: 16).

An equivalence might be drawn between the scattered distribution of small stone-walled settlements across Galloway and that of the duns of western Scotland, especially given comparisons with the relatively larger size of settlements to the east of the Nith. This has previously been suggested as reflecting a less developed, more socially fractured society in Galloway (Piggott 1955: 149; Hanson & Maxwell 1983: 10). This

distinction ignores those settlement forms, such as rectilinear enclosed settlements, that are shared with south-east Scotland and northern England. Furthermore, the significant division between different sizes of settlements is not how much ground was enclosed but whether they represent single-household settlements or multiple-household settlements. For both forms of settlement are apparent both east and west of the Nith (Toolis 2015: 20–1) and indeed across Scotland too (Harding 2017: 175–83). The importance of this distinction is its intrinsic cultural nature. Permanently occupied multiple-household settlements boost opportunities for increased social interaction and reflect cultural practices for social cohesion different from those of single households (Roberts 1996: 36).

However, it is difficult to identify tangible archaeological evidence to demonstrate this. For instance, the recovery of rare bread wheat from the multiple-household settlement at Rispain Camp (Haggarty & Haggarty 1983: 37) was

previously considered to demonstrate the agricultural innovation of a multiple-household settlement (Toolis 2015: 21). This cereal species is now, though, apparent on a number of single-household settlements in Galloway from around this same time too, such as at Cults Loch and Fox Plantation (Robertson 2018: 83–4; MacGregor unpublished). The wide range of crops, including emmer and spelt wheat, barley and oats, recovered from the multiple-household settlement at Dunragit is not unique to large settlements during the later centuries BC and early 1st century AD (Toolis 2021: 350).

Extensive burning and heat-affected surfaces around a furnace within one of the roundhouses at Dunragit indicated in situ metalworking. However, botanical evidence revealed a hearth used for industrial *and* domestic purposes, while metalworking debris suggested only intermittent and small-scale blacksmithing and some non-ferrous metalworking (Alldritt 2021; Cruickshanks 2021).

Drawing comparisons, albeit much earlier and at a more impressive scale, the wide range of metalworking, pottery production and antler-working skills evident at the large multiple-household settlement at Broxmouth in East Lothian were also not considered as specialised to any significant degree (Armit & McKenzie 2013: 503–4). However, ironworking is only evident on 28% of excavated Iron Age settlement sites in East Lothian, and non-ferrous metalworking on 25% (Hunter 2009: 144). Across lowland Scotland, ironworking and non-ferrous metalworking is apparent on 23% of excavated Iron Age settlements (ibid). In Galloway, on only 12% of excavated Iron Age settlements is ironworking evident, and non-ferrous metalworking on 8% (Table 1).

Whether or not the inhabitants of multiple-household settlements such as Broxmouth or Dunragit pursued 'full-time' specialised occupations, even if this were possible within an Iron Age economy, the wide range of skills not common to single households may have distinguished these communities from neighbouring settlements in pre-Roman Iron Age Scotland.

In East Lothian, for instance, just over half of excavated settlements had access to a variable range of distinctive attributes, comprising exotica, ornamental metalwork, ironworking, shale working and non-ferrous metalworking (Hunter 2009: 150). However, only 15% of excavated settlements in East Lothian showed a broad range of three or more of these categories, and while Broxmouth exhibits all five, the only other such settlement, Traprain Law, towers above in terms of the quantity and wide range of its assemblage (Hunter 2009: 150–6). Likewise, in Galloway, of the 57% of excavated, or otherwise investigated, settlements that have yielded evidence for at least one of these attributes (Table 1), only 8% exhibited a broad range of three or more categories. Among these, only two sites share four or more of these attributes, and the multiple-household settlement at Dunragit is one of these, with evidence for exotic items (a Roman brooch), ornamental metalwork (a penannular brooch), ironworking and non-ferrous metalworking (Toolis 2021: 354). Only at Dowalton Loch are all five attributes apparent within the cluster of crannogs here, which may in effect have formed another multiple-household settlement (Hunter 1994: 52–4; Cavers & Crone 2018: 278). Nevertheless, that Dunragit and Rispain Camp can be distinguished thus from most of their contemporary settlements suggests that a wide range of activities was more likely to be practised in multiple-household settlements in Galloway.

Size differences between single-household settlements in different parts of the country are perhaps less significant culturally than the difference between a settlement pattern solely comprising individual farmsteads and that comprising villages, hamlets and farmsteads. This is because the economic and organisational basis of single-household settlements is significantly distinct from multiple-household settlements (Roberts 1996: 36), which is borne out by the evidence from both Galloway and East Lothian, where the relatively larger multiple-household settlements are proportionally more likely to possess the widest range of distinct attributes related to social networks and specialised skills

TABLE 1
Restricted activities by excavated (or otherwise investigated) site type in Galloway

Activities	Enclosed single-household settlements (n=19)	Enclosed multiple-household settlements (n=5)	Open single-household settlements (n=8)	Open multiple-household settlements (n=1)	Caves (n=2)	Crannogs (n=16)
Exotic items (incl Roman)	7	2	3	1	2	7
Ornamental metalwork	2	1	0	1	1	3
Ironworking	1	1	1	1	0	2
Shale working	0	0	1	0	0	3
Non-ferrous metalworking	1	0	0	1	0	2

(Table 1). Differing settlement patterns entail different cultural practices and economies and imply differing network complexities too.

But no such differing settlement pattern is apparent when comparing Iron Age Galloway to south-east Scotland. At first glance, Galloway might seem to lack a large hilltop enclosure of the kind evident elsewhere in southern Scotland. Its three largest hillforts, Dunguile, the Moyle and Barstobric Hill, all concentrated in the central Stewartry district, only range between 2.2 and 3.6ha. These are significantly smaller than the 16ha enclosed at Traprain Law in East Lothian and Eildon Hill North in the Scottish Borders, or the 7ha enclosed at Burnswark in Dumfriesshire (Hogg 1979: 131–3). Perhaps more significant than their specific size is that these are large regional landmarks. None of the Galloway hillforts occupies what might be considered a regional landmark, but then Galloway does not have such a hilltop to enclose. If there is a large regional landmark in Galloway it is not a hill but a mull, and recognisably so at least as early as Ptolemy's *Geography* of the early 2nd century AD (Ordnance Survey 1978: 15). The ramparts cutting across the Mull of Galloway enclose 40ha, which would make this the largest of all later prehistoric enclosed sites in Scotland (Ralston 2015: 207). Though dating evidence has not been recovered from the limited excavation of this site, it is difficult to imagine the morphology of its closely

spaced ramparts to be anything but later prehistoric in date (Strachan 2000). So, while the bulk of sites in Galloway lie below 0.7ha with only a handful above 1ha and none, apart from the Mull of Galloway, above 4ha (Hogg 1979: 126–34), this is not so different from Dumfriesshire or the eastern part of East Lothian, for instance, where the bulk of sites lie below 0.8ha, again with only a handful of larger sites, and just one site significantly larger than all the rest (Hogg 1979: 134–9; Reader & Armit 2013: 483). Although large, complex and well-preserved sites, such as Broxmouth in East Lothian and Castle O'er in Eskdale, are difficult to find comparisons with in Galloway, this is not because they are not there. Cairn Pat, Fell of Barhullion and Isle Head in Wigtownshire, as well as Dunguile, the Moyle and Barstobric Hill in the Stewartry, represent a region-wide distribution of large, potentially complex enclosed settlements. That none of these large forts west of the Nith has as yet been excavated to any significant degree is not reasonable grounds for supposing that they do not exist. Nor are hillforts absent from Atlantic Scotland in general, where there are several over 2.5ha in size (Armit & Ralston 1997: 181), including large enclosed landmarks such as the Sgurr of Eigg and Biruaslum on Vatersay. Only two hillforts in Atlantic Scotland, Balloch Hill in Argyll and Dun Deardail in Lochaber, have been subject to extensive excavations in modern times and

both yielded evidence of exotica, ironworking and non-ferrous metalworking (Peltenburg 1982: 192–5; Ritchie 2018: 40–1), while Dunagoil on Bute has yielded perhaps the richest assemblage per cubic metre examined of any hillfort in Scotland (Ralston 2015: 207).

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However, what is difficult to demonstrate at any of the multiple-household settlements excavated in Galloway is the hierarchical nature of these settlements, either between different households within or in contrast to households without. As in East Lothian, the majority of settlements possess at least one attribute of social status, social networks or specialised skills. The material culture revealed at Dunragit and Rispain Camp does not indicate that the inhabitants themselves were of a higher status than those of other contemporary households. Ornamental personal jewellery is apparent in a range of contemporary Iron Age settlements in Galloway (Cavers & Crone 2018: 277–80) and there is insufficient evidence to understand the nature and control of production. Given the significance of enclosing ramparts and ditches attributed to the potential status of Iron Age households and communities in south-west Scotland (Banks 2000: 276–7), the absence of such features at Dunragit hardly suggests a high status for the Iron Age settlement either. Within the Rhins of Galloway where Dunragit lies, excavation of a suite of neighbouring sites, including a palisaded settlement, crannog and promontory fort, revealed a dynamic and sequential settlement pattern between the mid-6th and 1st centuries BC rather than a hierarchical pattern of contemporary Iron Age settlements (Cavers & Crone 2018: 241, 245).

This same multitude of settlement forms accompanied by a lack of clear hierarchy is apparent elsewhere in Scotland. Across the Forth Valley, Perthshire and Angus a range of unenclosed and enclosed settlements of varying sizes occurs as well as clusters of contemporary substantial stone roundhouses – brochs, duns and homesteads (Davies 2007: 273, 281; Cook et al 2019: 90–2). Within what is perceived as a competitive non-hierarchical society, access to Roman imports during the early centuries AD may have provided temporary impetus to some of the substantial single households, but the full scale of architectural aggrandisement and variety originated prior to this (Cook et al 2019: 93–6). Whether the differential access to Roman goods was the result of Roman patronage, local rejection or archaeological preservation, even for a household with access to Roman imports, this process was not plain sailing or long-lasting, given the fiery demise of so many of the settlements in the Forth Valley (Cook et al 2019: 92), some perhaps the result of Roman aggression, as the heat-cracked catapult stone and ballista bolt at Leckie suggest, for instance (MacKie 2016: 15).

A variety of enclosed and unenclosed farmsteads and settlements are also apparent in East Lothian throughout this same period (Lelong 2007: 241–9). Though the enclosed settlements survive here in clusters too (Armit & McKenzie 2013: 482), there is little evidence of hierarchy until, again, the 1st century AD when, instead of substantial stone roundhouses, Traprain Law returns to hierarchical prominence (Armit 2019: 108–9). The preceding settlement pattern in East Lothian, as in central Scotland, appears consistent with an anarchic society composed of autonomous households and communities lacking institutionalised leadership, and this is envisaged for Atlantic Scotland too (Armit 2019: 106–7).

So too in south-west Scotland, where in comparison to the differential status of 5th- to 7th-century AD settlements, the earlier Iron Age settlement pattern appears far less tiered. There are no Iron Age settlements in Galloway that have produced evidence for gold and silver metalwork, the production of ornamental metalwork, international trade, royal inauguration rites or clear hierarchical relationships to each other. Comparison between contemporary Iron Age settlements in the South Machars such as Rispain Camp, Cruggleton Castle and Carghidown revealed no equivalent evidence to distinguish
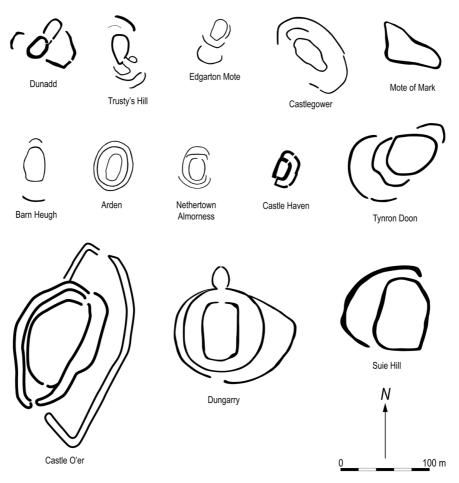
the hierarchical status of one settlement household over another (Toolis 2007: 305–8). Though the scale of the enclosing boundaries at Rispain Camp is much greater than at Carghidown, this may be simply due to the larger population of this multiple-household settlement. At neither site was the form of enclosing boundary especially complex. While the surviving material culture at Carghidown, Rispain Camp or Cruggleton Castle demonstrate access to high-status metalwork, differential access between the three settlements, much less actual production of ornamental metalwork, is not apparent. Indeed, structured social hierarchy across Iron Age Scotland in general, most clearly in the form of demonstrable evidence for a royal status to settlements, is not apparent until the 4th century AD at the earliest (Noble et al 2019b: 74) and not until the late 6th century in Galloway (Toolis & Bowles 2017: 141).

Foremost in the early medieval settlement pattern in Galloway is a cluster of vitrified and nucleated forts including Edgarton Mote, Castlegower, Barn Heugh and Nethertown of Almorness. All share a similar scale and morphology with Trusty's Hill (Illus 3) as well as a comparable pattern of vitrification, where it was only the summit rampart that was vitrified, indicating that timber-framed stone ramparts enclosed their crests. None, however, have yielded evidence for the gold, silver and bronze working and long-distance trade or the features such as rock-cut basins, Pictish carvings and formally demarcated entranceways that distinguish Trusty's Hill as a royal stronghold (Toolis & Bowles 2017: 135–41). A comparable material culture is evident only at the Mote of Mark, a vitrified and contemporaneous though less complex fort, interpreted by its excavators as a fortified workshop for the production of elite ornaments, in effect the currency of elite social networks during this period (Laing & Longley 2006: 174, 179). Further to the north, in Nithsdale, lies the fortified and vitrified peak of Tynron Doon, from which a gold filigree decorated panel of the 6th–8th centuries AD and comparable metalworking debris were recovered (Truckell 1963: 94; Williams 1971: 112–17). Altogether, these sites,

along with the contemporary crannogs at Milton and Barean lochs (Henderson 1998: 230) and the galleried dun at Castle Haven (Alcock et al 1989: 209; Laing & Longley 2006: 165), seem to represent the remnants of a hierarchy of early medieval settlements largely clustered within the Stewartry district of Galloway (Illus 4). There may also survive contemporaneous funerary sites, comprising the barrow cemeteries at Home Plantation overlooked by Tynron Doon, and Barwhill, a short distance to the north of Trusty's Hill and closely comparable with early medieval barrow cemeteries north of the Forth (Cowley et al 2019: 23). Coupled with these secular and funerary sites is a hierarchy of contemporaneous ecclesiastical settlements comprising Whithorn, Kirkmadrine and Ardwall Isle, the last visible from Trusty's Hill itself (Toolis & Bowles 2017: 143–5). Given the evidence for international trade at Whithorn, the Mote of Mark and Trusty's Hill in the form of E Ware vessels from south-west France (Illus 5), attributable to a precise timespan over the late 6th and early 7th centuries AD, it seems reasonable to envisage a redistributive system based around prominent secular defended centres in which high status ecclesiastical sites and many of the other less eminent secular settlements also participated, as proposed elsewhere in Britain and Ireland (Campbell 1996: 84–8).

This settlement pattern in 6th- to 7th-century AD Galloway appears to reflect a social hierarchy of royal households (Trusty's Hill), noble and high-status craft households (other nucleated forts, Mote of Mark, Castle Haven) and lesser status settlements (Milton and Barean lochs crannogs) contemporary with an ecclesiastical hierarchy of a prelate monastic settlement (Whithorn) and monastic settlements of lesser status (Kirkmadrine and Ardwall Isle). Other than the monastic settlement at Whithorn, perhaps, the early medieval settlement pattern in Galloway appears to be comprised solely of single-household settlements, a pattern evident across the rest of Scotland.
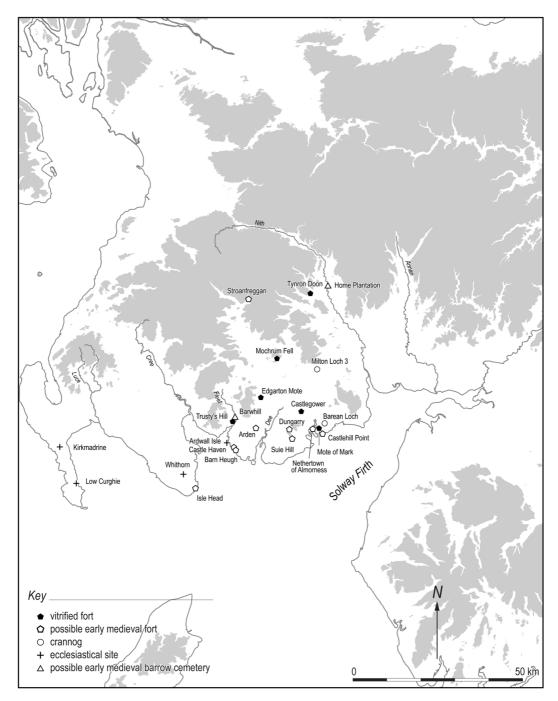
However, this raises the question of how early medieval settlement patterns in Galloway developed from preceding Iron Age settlement patterns. This is where the potential origins
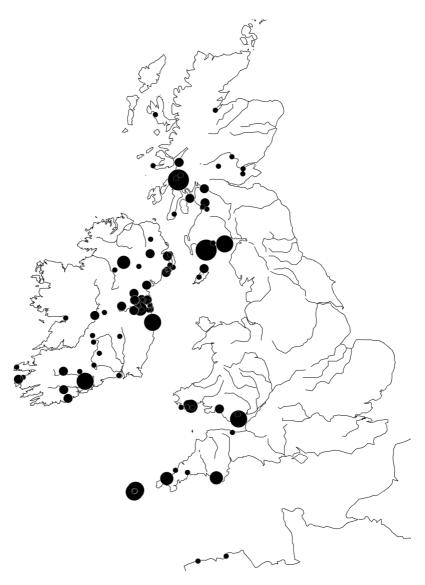
ILLUS 3   Comparative plans of late 6th- to early 7th-century Dunadd and nucleated, courtyard and other potential late Iron Age/early medieval forts in Galloway. (Prepared by Gillian Sneddon)

of the morphology of early medieval forts in Galloway can be examined. In essence, settlements in Galloway that have been securely dated to between the mid-1st millennium BC and early 1st millennium AD, such as Carghidown promontory fort (Toolis 2007: 301), Cults Loch 4 promontory fort (Cavers & Crone 2018: 141) and Cults Loch 5 palisaded settlement (ibid: 157), in common with other Iron Age settlements elsewhere in southern Scotland such as Woodend in Annandale (Banks 2000: 231), Braehead in Glasgow (Ellis 2007: 182) or Broxmouth in East Lothian (Armit & McKenzie 2013: 10), are enclosed with concentric arrangements of palisades, ramparts and/or ditches, whether contemporary or sequential. The nucleated forts in Galloway, on the other hand, in keeping with nucleated forts elsewhere in Scotland, such as Dunadd, comprise non-concentric arrangements of ramparts and ditches enclosing discrete areas of each hilltop (Illus 3). Whether these layouts arrived via sequential accretion or were planned as unitary systems, this differential arrangement within forts is potentially significant. Though the case for a hierarchical organisation of interior space is yet to be fully demonstrated (Lane & Campbell 2000: 231–6), these non-concentric layouts nevertheless demonstrate a divergent use of space, organisation of settlement and, by extension, way of life within at least some forms of

ILLUS 4 Map of 6th- and early 7th-century sites in Galloway. (Contains OS data © Crown Copyright 2020, OS licence number 100050699)

ILLUS 5   Distribution of E Ware in Britain and Ireland. (Size of symbol proportional to number of vessels; contains OS data © Crown Copyright 2020, OS licence number 100050699)

high-status settlement during the early medieval period, from that predominantly apparent during the earlier Iron Age period.

The use of space within the Iron Age single-household settlements is encapsulated by the internal layout of Carghidown, a Galloway promontory fort occupied some time between 360 BC and AD 60 (Toolis 2007: 301). This comprised a roofed zone (ring groove roundhouse) and an open zone (clay-surfaced yard), both enclosed by the same rampart and ditch. This 'house plus yard' layout is common to many Iron Age settlements across and outwith the region (Jobey 1983: 199). It is likely that the open cobbled yards within these settlements acted as animal holdings. While this is not always demonstrable (Banks 2002: 30; Toolis 2007: 302), where such evidence can be recovered, from Uppercleuch

and Woodend in Annandale for instance, live-stock were apparently kept within enclosed set-tlements (Terry 1993: 79; Banks 2000: 271–2).

The layout of the nucleated fort at Trusty's Hill, on the other hand, comprised a more com-plex arrangement of demarcated areas, where the interior was separated into a small domes-tic, presumably roofed, zone at the summit and a workshop along a lower-lying terrace (Toolis & Bowles 2017: 121). Both of these zones were enclosed by a timber-framed stone rampart and accessed from the south-east via a delineated and symbolically charged (because of the associated features) entranceway, beyond which lay a series of outer enclosures likely utilised for holding and displaying livestock (ibid: 109–11). While Trusty's Hill has probably the most complex layout of any nucleated fort in Galloway (Illus 3), the other nucleated forts in the region may like-wise exhibit separations of fortified domestic and industrial areas from outlying livestock en-closures. Furthermore, this cluster of forts found within a 700km^2 area of the Stewartry district of Galloway (Illus 4) may demonstrate the devel-opment of nucleated forts in the early medieval period from enclosing layouts that became in-creasingly non-concentric through the preceding centuries.

A hypothetical sequence of changing plans can be identified. The beginnings of this diver-gence from essentially concentric arrangements to the nucleated non-concentric layout might be apparent in local courtyard forts, such as Dungarry and Suie Hill, where dry-stone ram-parts form an oblong enclosure around each summit while lower-lying dry-stone outworks enclose at least one flank of each hill (Illus 3). While both sites are undated, a similar layout to Suie Hill, albeit on a much larger scale, is evi-dent at Castle O'er in Eskdale where a non-con-centric outer annexe along one side of this oval hillfort was radiocarbon dated to the same period as the site's defences and attributed to corralling livestock (RCAHMS 1997: 79–80). Castle O'er also includes an elaborate courtyard entrance-way demarcated by two horn-works somewhat like the courtyard entranceway to Dungarry.

Interestingly, the timber-framed stone fortifica-tions at Castle O'er may have been constructed in the 3rd or 4th century AD before being vitrified and destroyed at some point before the end of the 5th century (Mercer 2018: 225). This evidence, albeit from the radiocarbon dating of bulk sam-ples rather than single entities (ibid: 72), is po-tentially significant because it demonstrates that the development of a more complex non-concen-tric layout of timber-framed stone fortifications was occurring in south-west Scotland during the second quarter of the 1st millennium AD. It thus lends plausibility to the notion that the non-con-centric layout of Galloway forts such as Arden, Nethertown of Almorness, Castlegower, Barn Heugh and Edgarton Mote along with Trusty's Hill (Illus 3) might represent the emergence of increasingly complex nucleated forts over the subsequent course of the 1st millennium AD.

Of course, non-concentric arrangements of ramparts may owe more to the stepped topog-raphy of the hill on which they were set; the gradual accretion of outer earthworks on what was originally a small hilltop enclosure eventu-ally produces a plan directly related to the shape of the available terraces, as demonstrated at Dundurn and Dunadd (Alcock et al 1989: 210; Lane & Campbell 2000: 86–97). However, such a direct correlation with the geological form of the hill does not reflect the topography or scale of Castle O'er, where there is no natural impedi-ment to an alternative concentric arrangement of the outer enclosure (RCAHMS 1997: 78–9). Nor would the shapes of Suie Hill or Dungarry have prohibited the development of concentric rings of ramparts. Trusty's Hill, on the other, hand does inhibit concentric rings below the summit rampart, the eastern and western flanks of the hill being too steep to accommodate outer ramparts. Alternatively, it may be that these Galloway forts represent small enclosed settlements erected within much larger spaces defined by earlier ramparts. While this can only be determined by excavation and does not necessarily preclude the incorporation of old ramparts into a new layout (Alcock et al 1989: 210), this was emphatically not the case at Dundurn, Dunadd or Castle O'er,

where the available evidence indicates growth over time (Alcock et al 1989: 204–6; Lane & Campbell 2000: 86–97; Mercer 2018: 191–3).

The dating evidence from Trusty's Hill, the Mote of Mark, Tynron Doon and Castle O'er, for either the re-fortification of previously occupied hillforts or the fortification of new hilltop sites in Dumfries and Galloway, is comparable with the spate of hillforts that emerged in eastern and north-eastern Scotland between *c* AD 380 and AD 650 (Close-Brooks 1986: 176; Cook 2011: 216–18). These include a range of enclosed settlements, including nucleated forts such as Clatchard Craig, East Lomond, King's Seat Dunkeld and Mither Tap; hillforts such as Craig Phadrig and Hill of Barra; coastal promontory forts such as Burghead and Portknockie; ring-forts such as Maiden Castle and Cairnmore; and the palisaded and ditched enclosure at Rhynie (Small 1969: 67; Edwards & Ralston 1980: 207; Ralston 1980: 32; Alcock 1988: 26; Ralston & Armit 1997: 225; Foster 1998: 11; Atkinson 2007; Noble et al 2013: 1140–3; O'Grady & FitzPatrick 2017; Noble 2019: 41–9). These enclosed late Iron Age/early medieval settlements vary in terms of morphology and size and represent a mixture of entirely new sites and the reuse of older sites (Cook 2011: 214–16). The accumulation of evidence indicates a hierarchy of settlements, with the royal site of Rhynie distinguished from the rest near the beginning of this period, between the late 4th and mid-6th centuries AD, by its particularly rich material culture, access to long-distance trade networks, production of fine metalwork and ritualised entranceway (Noble et al 2013: 1142; Noble et al 2019b: 67–80), key factors comparable with other near contemporary royal sites elsewhere in Scotland (Table 2). The demise of Rhynie and many of the smaller sites in the 6th century AD while the occupation of larger and more prominent sites such as Mither Tap and Burghead continued into the following centuries (Noble et al 2013: 1143; Noble 2019: 50–1), emphasises the dynamic nature of this settlement pattern.

Though a wave of construction of new hill-forts and refurbishment of older hillforts is apparent across Scotland from the 3rd century AD

through to the 8th century AD (Alcock 2003: 179; Noble et al 2019a: 126–7), this evidence from north-east Scotland is especially pertinent to Galloway. It demonstrates not a widely and uniformly distributed pattern of settlements but rather a hierarchy of sites including a cluster of fortified settlements within a 700km^2 area of Strathdon with isolated outliers along the coast (Cook 2011: 210).

Similarly, the distribution of high-status fortified settlements from the post-Roman centuries in Dumfries and Galloway appears to be concentrated within a 700km^2 area of the Stewartry district of Galloway with potential outliers along the coast and to the north (Illus 4). The radiocarbon dates from Trusty's Hill demonstrate a sequence of re-occupation and fortification of the site over the course of the 6th century AD until its abrupt destruction in the early 7th century AD (Toolis & Bowles 2017: 105). The evidence from the Mote of Mark also demonstrates the construction of a *de novo* hillfort in the later 6th century AD and its destruction by the mid-7th century AD (Laing & Longley 2006: 24). While the radiocarbon dates from Castle O'er indicates that this process of fortification of new hilltop settlements had begun to develop in Dumfriesshire perhaps in the 3rd–4th centuries AD, and there may well be other forts in the Machars and Rhins of Galloway from around this period, the cluster of nucleated and vitrified forts within the Stewartry district of Galloway (Illus 4) is unmatched elsewhere in Wigtownshire or Dumfriesshire (RCAHMS 1912; RCAHMS 1920; RCAHMS 1955; RCAHMS 1985; RCAHMS 1987; RCAHMS 1997).
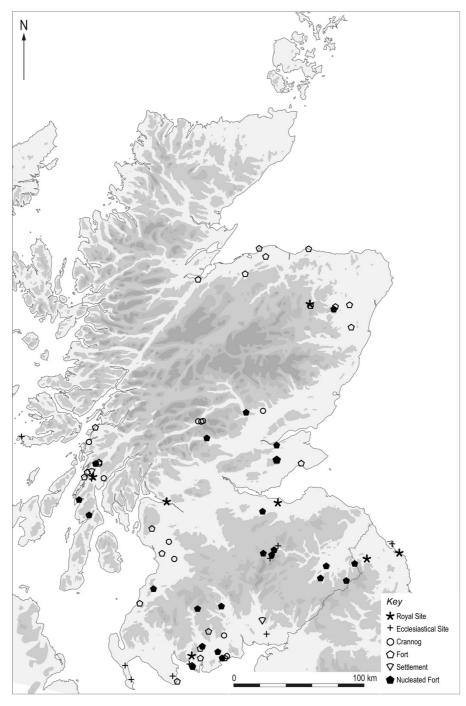
A comparable set of contemporary sites may be the group of small nucleated forts in Argyll, including Dunadd, Dun a' Chrannag, Dun a' Choin Dhuibh and Dun Chonallaich (Illus 6). Indeed, a striking density of early medieval fortified and unenclosed secular and ecclesiastical sites has been recognised in Mid Argyll, within a 400km^2 area centred upon Dunadd (Lane & Campbell 2000: 23–4, 255–8). These include Dun Chonallaich, the duns at Ardifuir and Eilean Righ, the craft workshop at Loch Glashan crannog, the open settlement at Bruach an Drumein

TABLE 2

Summary of key indicators of status of 5th- to 7th-century sites in Celtic Britain and Ireland (adapted and updated from Campbell 1996: 85). Cont = continental; Med = Mediterranean

Site	Imports (pottery/ glass)	Fortified/ enclosed	Gold/silver	Jewellery production	Weapons	Royal
Dumfries and Galloway						
Trusty's Hill	Cont	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Mote of Mark	Cont	▪	▪	▪	▪	
Tynron Doon		▪	▪			
Whithorn	Cont Med		▪			
Rest of Scotland						
Dunadd	Cont	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Dumbarton Rock	Cont Med	▪		▪	▪	▪
Edinburgh Castle Rock		▪			▪	▪
Rhynie	Cont Med	▪		▪		▪
Clatchard Craig	Cont	▪	▪	▪		
East Lomond	Cont	▪		▪	▪	
King's Seat Dunkeld	Cont	▪		▪	▪	
Dundurn	Cont	▪	▪	▪		
Buiston Crannog	Cont	▪	▪		▪	
Ireland						
Clogher	Cont Med	▪	▪	▪		▪
Lagore	Cont	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Garranes	Cont Med	▪		▪		▪
Garryduff	Cont	▪	▪	▪	▪	
Wales						
Dinas Powys	Cont Med	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Longbury	Cont Med		▪	▪		
SW England						
Cadbury Congresbury	Med	▪	▪	▪		
Cadbury Castle	Med	▪				
Tintagel	Med	▪				

and ecclesiastical site at Barnakill, all contemporary with the 7th-century royal stronghold on Dunadd itself (Alcock et al 1989: 209; Lane & Campbell 2000: 23–4, 255–8; Crone & Campbell 2005: 117–27).

Another small cluster of nucleated forts, including Rubers Law, which yielded Roman masonry suggesting a post-Roman date (Curle 1905: 225), Moat Knowe Buchtrig, Castle Hill Ancrum and Burnt Humbleton, lies within a 400km² area

ILLUS 6   Distribution of nucleated forts and contemporary settlements of 6th and 7th centuries AD. (Contains OS data © Crown Copyright 2020, OS licence number 100050699)

of Roxburghshire (RCAHMS 1956: 35). A sepa-rate small cluster of nucleated forts, comprising Cademuir Hill 2, Tinnis Castle and Wood Hill, is also found within a 100km² area of Peeblesshire, where it coincides with two Romano-British Christian monuments (RCAHMS 1967: 105, 144, 154, 176–7).

That such comparable clusters of nucleated forts are distributed discretely across Scotland suggests that this is not simply due to survey bias, especially as they are often accompanied by corresponding clusters of contemporary sites. However, this is not to say that early medieval nucleated forts only occur in clusters or that each of the clusters described above definitely contained a royal site. It remains to be demon-strated whether early medieval forts and set-tlements are clustered around other royal sites such as Dumbarton Rock and Edinburgh Castle Rock, but the 90km distance between these two prominent sites falls within the 40km and 100km distances that separate other clusters of nucle-ated forts (Illus 6). It is worth bearing in mind that the archaeological evidence that marks out Dunadd and Trusty's Hill as of royal character, and thus predominating over other forts in Argyll and Galloway respectively, rarely survives. Inauguration features within closely equivalent archaeological contexts are not known to survive at Dumbarton Rock or Edinburgh Castle Rock. But it may be that each of the clusters of nucle-ated forts across Scotland holds evidence such as complex layouts of non-concentric enclosed spaces around a fortified summit, access to in-ternational trade networks, material wealth and the means of production of that material wealth. These are the archaeologically recognisable traits by which specific households attained and con-solidated their pre-eminence among their peer groups, enabling some even to claim royal status.

It is not possible to identify royal sites within the settlement record in Scotland prior to the 4th century AD or indeed to identify complex site hi-erarchies during the late Iron Age comparable to the early medieval pattern of secular, religious and funerary sites (Halliday 2006a: 24). The only explicit Roman reference to royalty in Iron Age Scotland is the place-name Rerigonium, meaning 'very royal place' (Watson 1926: 34–5) recorded in Ptolemy's Geography of the early 2nd cen-tury AD and associated with Loch Ryan which may preserve its name (Ordnance Survey 1978: 15; Rivet & Smith 1981: 447). However, there is no credible archaeological evidence to bestow royal status upon any of the known later prehis-toric sites within this part of Galloway (contra McCarthy 2004: 125–8; Toolis & Bowles 2017: 141). Likewise, in north-east Scotland, radio-carbon dates of the 5th–6th centuries AD from recent excavations of high-status enclosed sites tally with the first documented references to Pictish kings (Noble 2016: 31). Interestingly, the place-name Rhynie shares the same roots as Rerigonium (Noble et al 2019b: 59). The development of more complex nucleated forts in association with an increasingly hierarchical settlement pattern therefore encapsulates a move away from the tribal structures of Iron Age soci-ety in Scotland to the confederated kingdoms of the early medieval period. Significantly, this was accompanied by the development of royal rituals and connections to European culture as integral elements of political authority as exemplified at Dunadd, Rhynie and Trusty's Hill (Lane & Campbell 2000: 262; Noble et al 2013: 1047; Toolis & Bowles 2017: 141).

A SUPRANATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The re-emergence of fortified high-status hilltop settlements in the late Roman and post-Roman centuries reflects wider social trends apparent across western Britain and indeed other areas pe-ripheral to the Roman Empire around the middle of the 1st millennium AD (Noble et al 2013: 1144–5). However, although nucleated fort lay-outs are perhaps apparent in northern Wales and continental Europe, there are none in England (Alcock et al 1989: 211–13).

Within Northumberland, the regionally prom-inent site at Bamburgh Castle seems an obvious contender given its perceived identity as the royal stronghold of the British/Anglian kingdom of Berneich/Bernicia in the 6th–7th centuries AD and the archaeological evidence for Iron Age and

subsequent early medieval occupation (Hope-Taylor 1977: 290–1, 370; Kirton & Young 2017: 148–9, 196–7). However, a nucleated layout at Bamburgh is yet to be demonstrated. Any ramparts that existed here have either been destroyed or obscured by the later castle. Nucleated layouts are not apparent in any of the numerous hillforts of Northumberland other than perhaps one, Humbleton Hill, though even this is questionable (Harding 2004: 209). Nor is a nucleated layout apparent at the Anglian settlements north of the border at Kirk Hill near St Abb's Head and Castle Park Dunbar (Alcock et al 1986: 273; Perry 2000: 21–50).

Likewise, none of the descriptions of Cumbrian hillforts conform to nucleated layouts (Lock & Ralston 2017), though the only Cumbrian upland hillfort to be radiocarbon dated, Castle Crag Shoulthwaite, yielded a 6th- to 7th-century AD date from the base of a rock-cut ditch, suggesting either construction or reuse at this time (Huckerby 1999; Newman & Brennand 2007: 92). There is no evidence of nucleated layouts within hillforts elsewhere in England either, whether in pre-Roman Iron Age or early medieval sites (Alcock et al 1989: 211).

The complex fort at Cronk Sumark on the Isle of Man has been mooted as a potential nucleated fort (Harding 2004: 209) but whether this is the case is unclear from the description of its layout and it is presently undated (Lock & Ralston 2017). There are possibly three sites in north Wales, Dinas Emrys, Castell Degannwy and Bryn Euryn, where the internal non-concentric subdivision of fortified hilltop settlements is apparent, though much simpler in layout than Scottish examples; dating evidence from the former two sites demonstrates occupation in the 6th century AD (Alcock et al 1989: 211–12). More generally across Wales, a diverse group of enclosed settlements, including re-occupied Iron Age hillforts and *de novo* forts of the 5th–7th centuries, are apparent, which along with evidence for hierarchical relationships between households of differing settlements (Seaman 2016: 41–3) is comparable with the contemporary settlement patterns in Scotland.

In Ireland where (unlike Scotland) sacral royal sites dating to the Iron Age can be identified (Raftery 1994: 64–81), only at Doonmore in north Antrim has a nucleated layout been postulated (Alcock 2003: 191; McSparron & Williams 2011: 156). While this appears to be part of a cluster of fortified outcrops in north Antrim that have been suggested as analogous to the early medieval duns of Argyll (McSparron & Williams 2011: 153–6), the plan of Doonmore is unconvincing and no corroborating evidence for material culture or date of occupation was recovered from its excavation (Childe 1938).

The evidence from Ireland highlights both similarities and contrasts with early medieval settlement patterns in Scotland. A comparable pattern of early medieval settlements, including ringforts (comprising raths and cashels), crannogs, promontory forts and monastic sites, is apparent in Ireland from about AD 600 onwards (Comber 2016: 4–5). The architecture, particularly the number of enclosing banks and ditches around the earthwork raths, may reflect the social ranking of the resident household (O'Sullivan 2016: 16). Some of the earthwork raths, such as Knowth in County Meath, and multivallate enclosures such as Garranes in County Cork, and crannogs such as Lagore in County Meath, have been identified as royal sites (O'Sullivan 2016: 17–18, 24). Perhaps reminiscent of the carefully demarcated entranceways to the summits of Dunadd and Trusty's Hill and the interior of Rhynie, the royal rath at Garranes appears to have been accessed through a complex series of gateways (O'Sullivan & Nicholl 2010: 67). However, an observed trend for pre-eminent households to construct larger and more heavily fortified dry-stone cashels does not appear to begin until the 9th century and is perceived, like the emergence of defended *burhs* in Wessex (Christie 2016: 52), as a response to Viking raids and increased militarisation of Irish society (Comber 2016: 12). This is in stark contrast to Scotland where, despite being subject to Viking raiding too, defended settlements became rarer during this time (Noble 2016: 27), suggesting that there is no straightforward correlation

between insecurity and the building of fortified settlements. Elsewhere in northern Europe, such as that part of Germany between the Elbe and Oder rivers, no forts or strongholds were constructed until after the middle of the 8th century (Biermann 2016: 85) and in Poland not until the middle of the 9th century (Urbańczyk 2016: 95).

Clearly, the archaeological record for early medieval settlement across Britain and Ireland undoubtedly reflects regionality, and not just in terms of architecture and morphology. Unlike other areas of Scotland, such as the north-east where a settlement pattern evolved from multiple small foci in the 5th–7th centuries AD into significantly fewer but larger fortified settlements in the 8th–9th centuries AD (Cook 2013: 345–6), the development of the settlement pattern in Galloway appears to have been arrested in the 7th century AD. The cluster of small fortified sites in the Stewartry, if adhering to the same chronological horizon encountered at Trusty's Hill and the Mote of Mark, were likely abandoned before the late 7th century AD (Toolis & Bowles 2017: 134; Laing & Longley 2006: 10, 22–4).

The evidence from Galloway also conforms to international trends, apparent in Ireland, southern Scandinavia and the north-western periphery of the Roman Empire, for the fortification of high-status settlements, particularly during the 5th–7th centuries AD, intrinsically related to the formation of new political hierarchies in the late Roman to early medieval period (Noble et al 2013: 1144–5). Close analogies have been drawn, for instance, between early medieval fortified royal sites in Scotland and contemporary high-status central places in Scandinavia where the roles of production, trade and ritual in cementing political authority are implicated in the transfer of authority from kin-groups to a monopoly of power by leading households (Noble et al 2013: 1146–7; Noble 2016: 34). It may be that the development of obligatory places of royal inauguration in Scotland, at fortified sites such as Dunadd and Trusty's Hill, foreshadowed by quite some time similar expressions of consolidating royal legitimacy, such as the fixing of the inauguration of German kings to Aachen from the 11th century onwards, based on its association with Charlemagne (Rollason 2016: 324–6). The association with a mythical past is what appeared to bestow legitimacy upon the Iron Age and early medieval royal inauguration rites at Tara in Ireland, for despite the bountiful written evidence for its association with kingship there is no firm archaeological evidence for anything there later than the early 5th century AD (Rollason 2016: 331–5). Given the effort to accommodate what survived from the past at Tara, some measure of the power of the kings of Tara was owed to that link with the past there (Bradley 2002: 145). An appropriation of an illustrious predecessor, that of Magnus Maximus, renamed Macsen Weldig, was also important to legitimising the power of numerous medieval Welsh dynasties who linked their genealogies with him (Bradley 2002: 120).

There is no evidence, however, to suggest any direct influence between royal rites in Scotland, Ireland or any of the other European countries. Nor is there any evidence that the apparently hierarchical division of early medieval fort-interiors on the Continent influenced the construction of nucleated forts in Scotland (Alcock et al 1989: 211–13; Alcock 2003: 191). Much like the matching traits for fortified royal sites apparent across Scotland (Toolis & Bowles 2017: 138), these are probably best considered as independent responses to analogous political circumstances using a related vocabulary. Similarly, the deliberate destruction of many of the early medieval royal strongholds in Scotland may correlate with the burning of a significant portion of Bronze Age hillforts in Ireland, where the punitive slighting of symbolic centres of power was intended as visible statements of victory over subjugated communities (O'Brien et al 2018: 75–7).

The equivalence that can be drawn between Trusty's Hill and other royal sites in Scotland that can also be dated to the 6th–7th centuries AD, in terms of material culture, architecture, layout and inauguration features (Toolis & Bowles 2017: 136–41), nevertheless implicitly suggests shared cultural traits across the country, regardless of the perceived ethnicity of the various regions occupied by Britons, Picts and Scots. This emphasises how the evidence in Galloway adheres

to national trends and not simply in relation to the chronology and clustered distributions of hierarchical settlements. That many of these cultural traits are unique to Scotland should also not be overlooked. For the distribution of nucleated forts across Scotland in contrast to England where these are absent (Illus 6) is by no means the only manifestation of early medieval culture specific to the peoples of Scotland. Pictish symbols, whether carved on stone or inscribed upon artefacts, are only found in Scotland (Illus 7). Significantly, while these are overwhelmingly concentrated north of the Forth, they are also encountered within non-Pictish contexts to the south and west specifically associated within the same royal contexts as nucleated forts (Toolis & Bowles 2017: 136–40). The direction of influence was not one-way, however. Silver chains, which are also unique to Scotland, are overwhelmingly concentrated in the south-east of the country, reflecting their cultural origin here, the result of the appropriation of Roman silver as a means of expressing status and power in an increasingly hierarchical society (Hunter 2013: 7). That silver chains are also found north of the Forth but not south of the Tweed or Solway demonstrates yet again mutual cultural values in the expression of power and prestige among the Britons of southern Scotland and the Picts of northern Scotland, but not apparent among the Britons, Angles and Saxons of England and Wales.

That is not to say that cultural values were not also shared between the peoples of Scotland and other parts of Britain and Ireland. For example, the series of 5th- and 6th-century Latin inscribed stones from Vindolanda, Maryport, Brougham and Old Carlisle (McCarthy 2002: 134–7) appear to belong to the distribution pattern of Latin inscribed stones across southern Scotland and therefore to be intrinsically part of the same Romano-British Christian culture, though their absence in north-east England emphasises the cultural nature of the divergence between Christian communities in the Celtic west and pagan communities in the Anglian east (Illus 7). The reuse and *de novo* construction of crannogs during the early medieval period is evident across Scotland but crannogs were also being constructed at this time
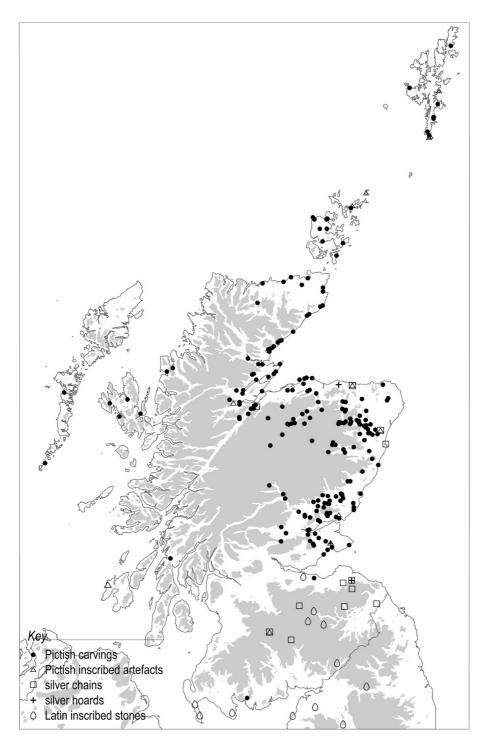
in Ireland too (Crone 2012: 150, 162). Indeed, the same broad attributes that distinguish royal sites from contemporary elite settlements during the 5th–7th centuries AD are apparent across Celtic Britain and Ireland (Table 2).

The shared cultural traits, such as the fortification of elite settlements where production, trade and ritual were used to consolidate political authority, that can be observed across Britain, Ireland and indeed many parts of northern Europe during this period, do not negate the significance of nucleated forts, Pictish symbols and silver chains in defining profound cultural expressions of power and prestige unique to Scotland. These archaeological manifestations distinguish the early medieval culture of Scotland from these other European cultures and demonstrate the evolution of analogous political cultures across north-western Europe.

A CHRONOLOGICAL AND SUPRANATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The validity of drawing comparisons between the early medieval and preceding Iron Age settlement patterns of Scotland is borne out by the evidence that some hillforts, such as Dunadd, Edinburgh Castle Rock and Traprain Law, continued to be inhabited in a largely unbroken sequence of occupation phases from the early centuries AD right through into the post-Roman period (Driscoll & Yeoman 1997: 26, 228; Lane & Campbell 2000: 97; Hunter 2013: 6–7). For the archaeological evidence demonstrates that Scotland's cultural divergence from the rest of Britain began much earlier in the Iron Age and continued thereafter. A swathe of architectural forms – brochs, crannogs, souterrains and duns – are absent south of the Anglo-Scottish border (Morrison 1985: 4; Armit 2003: 25; Dixon 2004: 26; Harding 2004: 199; Crone 2012: 140). Though the distribution of these architectural forms across Scotland is patchy, to ascribe this purely to regional or topographical diversity does not do justice to the evidence.

The underlying implication of the distribution patterns that do not extend south of the

ILLUS 7   Distribution of Pictish symbols, British silver chains and Romano-British Latin inscribed stones across Scotland and Northern England. (Contains OS data © Crown Copyright 2020, OS licence number 100050699)

Cheviots (Illus 1) is that Iron Age societies across Scotland were open to the building and occupation of brochs, crannogs, duns and souterrains but that Iron Age societies further south were not. Souterrains, for instance, though undoubtedly more common to the north of the Forth, are also present in southern Scotland and on the Atlantic seaboard too. Importantly, while the souterrains at Castlelaw in the Pentland Hills and at Newstead in the Scottish Borders may date to the late 2nd century AD (Childe 1933: 386; Halliday 2006b: 15), the souterrain at Cults Loch in Galloway originated in the last two centuries BC (Cavers & Crone 2018: 181). This demonstrates that the growing dataset of southern Scottish souterrains do not derive from a late spread emanating from the north-east but belong within the same chronological context and are part of a far wider distribution across Scotland than previously understood (Cavers & Crone 2018: 180–2). They are part of the same cultural and economic pattern of accruing food surplus stemming from the intensification of farming, a process that pollen analyses indicate began in the last centuries BC (Tipping 1997: 20). There are no environmental reasons, such as climate or ground conditions, why equivalent subterranean structures from this same period are not found to the south until Cornwall (Cripps 2007: 149), and even there its fogous may reflect more affinity with the other side of the Channel than with Scotland (Cunliffe 1991: 185). Souterrains are also found in Ireland but are predominantly much later (Armit 2007: 130; Cavers & Crone 2018: 180), suggesting that these are also an independent response to analogous circumstances.

There is also no environmental reason behind the absence of crannogs in England. The Lake District, actually visible from much of Galloway where crannogs are numerous, contains not one known example. There is a single crannog in Wales but this is early medieval and the result of Irish influence (Arnold & Davies 2000: 163–5). Ireland possesses numerous crannogs but the vast majority of these are much later than most Scottish crannogs (Armit 2007: 130), demonstrating that while equivalent these are not part of the same contemporary settlement pattern. While

material culture from the 2nd century BC onwards suggests seaborne contacts up and down the Irish Sea and tying in to north-east Scotland too (Hunter et al 2018: 216), the chronological variation between similar settlement types around varying parts of the Irish Sea disproves any cohesive Irish Sea culture or Atlantic identity.

If the Irish Sea was straddled by a coherent culture, one might reasonably expect brochs to occur outwith Scotland too. However, brochs are only found in Scotland. Though the origins of brochs undoubtedly stem from the development of complex Atlantic roundhouses in northern Scotland during the later centuries BC (Armit 2003: 51–4), assertions that southern brochs are very different in meaning and nature from brochs in northern Scotland are unconvincing (Harding 2017: 236). The brochs of southern Scotland, which date to the early centuries AD, are not a homogeneous group of sites distinct from the brochs of Atlantic Scotland (Macinnes 1984: 235–6). A similar and contemporary pattern of materially wealthy broch households is apparent in central and southern Scotland, at Torwoodlee, Leckie and Buchlyvie as in northern Scotland, at sites such as Scalloway and Dun Vulan (Piggott 1953: 105–8; MacKie 1982: 62–4; Main 1998: 320–401; Sharples 1998: 89–186; Parker Pearson & Sharples 1999; MacKie 2016: 73–117). Though barely scratched in comparison, Galloway brochs such as Teroy and Crammag Head have nevertheless also yielded some of the same attributes related to social networks and specialised skills (Table 1), such as access to Roman goods and ironworking (Hunter et al 2018: 216). There is also as much variety among the architecture of southern brochs as there is among northern brochs; idiosyncratic features within some of the Galloway brochs, for instance, such as double entrances and staircases and diminutive internal floor areas, are architecturally analogous with brochs in Atlantic Scotland (Cavers 2008: 16). While some lowland brochs, such as Edin's Hall and Torwoodlee perhaps, may have formed the nucleus of multiple-household settlements (Dunwell 1999: 351), comparable with (though not identical to) northern broch villages such as Gurness on Orkney (Armit 2003: 127) or Old

Scatness in Shetland (Dockrill et al 2015: 480), others are discrete single-household settlements, like the majority of Atlantic brochs. Even then brochs like Teroy and Bow Castle that occupy prominent enclosed hilltops seem hardly the same as Doon Castle and Stairhaven that cling to the Galloway coast on precariously overlooked locations. These latter sites, it might be observed, are little different from Galloway promontory forts like Carghidown, which may itself have contained a two-storey timber roundhouse (Toolis 2007: 302). The recognition that many brochs in the north were physical statements of identity and authority by locally prominent households (Harding 2017: 171) is equally applicable for brochs in southern Scotland.

The brochs of lowland Scotland reflect cultural choices consistent with settlement patterns elsewhere in the country (Romankiewicz 2016: 12) but not choices that were made elsewhere at the same time in Britain or Ireland. The same is apparent for crannogs, dating from around the middle of the 1st millennium BC across both northern and southern Scotland (Crone 2012: 140–9) but predominantly occurring much later in Ireland, a similar pattern to that observed between the souterrains of both countries. An equivalence can also be drawn between the scattered distribution of small stone-walled settlements across south-west Scotland, the homesteads of Perthshire, the ringforts of north-east Scotland and the duns of north-west Scotland (Cavers 2008: 18; Harding 2004: 238–40; Noble 2016: 29), but, again, it is not recorded south of the Tweed or Solway (Harding 2004: 29–53, 160–70; McCarthy 2000: 136–7). That it is often difficult to draw a line between brochs and duns, and between forts and duns too in Scotland (Halliday 2019: 39), accentuates the clarity of divergence between opposite sides of the border.

It is important to reiterate that cultural divergence in some aspects of Iron Age Scotland does not preclude cultural affinity in other aspects. As noted above, rectilinear settlement enclosures are spread across southern and eastern Scotland as well as northern England. The dense distribution of hillforts across the Scottish Borders does not halt at the border (Lock & Ralston 2017); it is

obvious that the hillforts of Northumberland are part of the same settlement pattern. The open multiple-household settlement at Dunragit itself may represent another aspect of cultural affinity to settlements such as East Brunton and West Brunton in Tyne and Wear (Hodgson 2017: 97) and Heslerton in the Vale of Pickering in eastern Yorkshire (Bevan 1997: 185), as well as the early Iron Age settlement at Douglasmuir in Angus (Kendrick 1995: 64) and East Barns in East Lothian (Dunbar 2017): that is, small agglomerated open settlements lying somewhere between single-household settlements and large enclosed multiple-household settlements. Their initial formation may have been the result of shared underlying cultural impulses seen across north-western Europe during the latter centuries BC, where the grouping of houses becomes more apparent (Webley 2007: 455–6; de Vries 2019: 125).

Furthermore, returning to northern Britain, the overlap of regional architectural and material culture often occurs only within some parts north and south of the border, such as the correlation of roundhouse architecture and pottery style of the Tyne–Forth zone (Armit & Ralston 1997: 179; Morris 2016). There is also clear regionality within Scotland, not just with the preponderance of settlement forms in some regions and the absence of those settlement types in other parts of the country, the dearth of brochs and duns in the archaeological record of north-east Scotland being an obvious example (Illus 1). Regional architectural traditions appear to stretch back into the Bronze Age (Pope 2015: 180), so it is no surprise that this continues into the Iron Age. Material culture is particularly diverse with a pottery-rich Atlantic zone and a pot-poor remainder (Hunter 2007: 287). Differential patterns of quern types and Iron Age hoarding are perceptible between northern and southern Scotland; and with northern England too (Hunter 1997: 110–15; Hunter 2007: 288). Regional variation of personal ornamentation is also apparent, such as the ring-headed and spiral finger rings common to the Atlantic zone but largely absent in Galloway (Hunter et al 2018: 210).
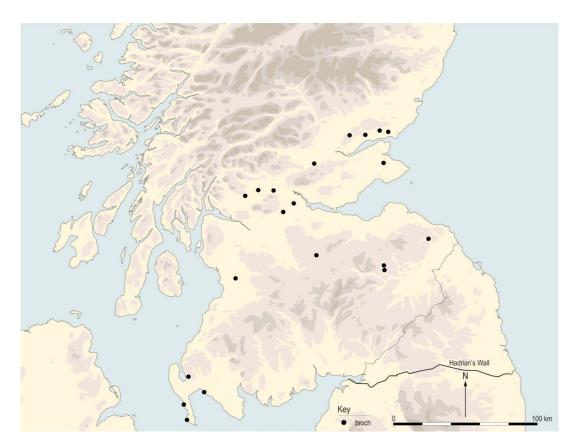
However, it is equally important to recognise that these examples of cultural affinity and

regional variation do not negate the cultural divergence apparent north and south of the border or the aspects of cultural affinity that the regions of Scotland uniquely share. Just as it is possible for local patterns to be distinguished from regional trends in Iron Age culture in Scotland (Hunter 2007: 287), so it is possible for national traits to co-exist too.

It is not simply the analogous divergence between a suite of Iron Age and early medieval settlement patterns north and south of the Anglo-Scottish border that a chronological perspective draws out. It can be observed that brochs in lowland Scotland, if not much of Atlantic Scotland (Illus 1), are predominantly distributed in clusters: within a 700km^2 area around the Forth Valley, a 600km^2 area around the Firth of Tay and a 400km^2 area in the Rhins of Galloway (Illus 8).

The brochs at Torwoodlee and Bow Castle in the Scottish Borders are separated by 40km from Edin's Hall and may constitute the remnants of another cluster. Each of these clusters is separated by distances of 70–160km. It could therefore be observed that these 1st- to 2nd-century AD clusters are markedly similar in scale to the 400–700km^2 clusters of elite settlements of the 6th and 7th centuries AD (Illus 6).

This is not to suggest that any of these brochs in lowland Scotland are directly related to or equivalent to nucleated forts. At no nucleated fort are the underlying remains of a broch apparent. Although wealthy assemblages of in situ material culture have been recovered from brochs such as Torwoodlee, Leckie and Buchlyvie, the combination at these sites of catastrophic destruction events and optimal preservation conditions

ILLUS 8   Map of brochs across lowland Scotland. (Contains OS data © Crown Copyright 2020, OS licence number 100050699)

undoubtedly lends a bias to comparisons with assemblages recovered from enclosed settlements such as Carghidown, Woodend and Braehead, for instance (Banks 2000: 257–63; Ellis 2007: 204–29; Toolis 2007: 282–91), where less optimal conditions for survival prevailed. Furthermore, comparable levels of material wealth may have been enjoyed by other nearby but less well-preserved duns and crannogs (Main 1998: 408) and by communities inhabiting multiple-household settlements such as Traprain Law, Burnswark and Dunagoil (Jobey 1978: 82–96; Harding 2004: 141–4; Hunter 2013: 6–7).

While prominent in the archaeological record, it is not evident that broch households held an equivalent status to that of nucleated forts and other early medieval elite sites during their respective periods. Indeed, it is doubtful that every broch, whether in the south or north, was of equally high status (Armit 1997; 2003: 81–5). Nonetheless, the archaeological evidence from Torwoodlee, Leckie, Buchlyvie and Edin's Hall suggests the presence of wealthy and prominent (if not necessarily pre-eminent) households during the early centuries AD, who chose to define their households with monumental architecture distinctive to Scotland. Nor were they generally alone among their neighbouring households in doing so. These cultural clusters of prominent households within 400–700km² areas during the first two centuries AD (Illus 8) may represent an Iron Age precursor to the comparably sized clusters of pre-eminent households that emerged in the 5th–7th centuries AD (Illus 6). It may be that the clusters of early medieval elite settlements reflect how society in Scotland was replicating a process of households accruing power and status that had been arrested in development (either because of Roman aggression or internal social upheaval) during the early centuries AD (Macinnes 1984: 244).

CONCLUSIONS

Fundamental to understanding the context of a site is a range of perspectives – local, regional, national and supranational; and a chronological perspective too to understand what came before and after. Examined from a variety of local, regional, national and chronological perspectives, the later prehistoric and early medieval settlement record of Galloway is embedded within core underlying patterns of settlement and culture in Scotland.

Furthermore, significant contrasts can be drawn between settlement and culture in Scotland and that of neighbouring countries. Expressions of power and prestige distinctive to early medieval Scotland suggest profound cultural divergence between peoples north and south of what later became the Anglo-Scottish border. It is important to note, though, that culture should not be conflated with identity; the peoples of what became Scotland may have separately identified as Britons, Picts and Scots but they nevertheless shared cultural traits unique to Scotland.

While it might be tempting to attribute this to a lasting effect of the Roman frontier defined by Hadrian's Wall, the archaeological record suggests that this divergence pre-dated the coming of the Romans. For, like nucleated forts, it is noteworthy that the array of earlier brochs, duns, crannogs and souterrains across Scotland was not chosen by Iron Age communities in northern England or further south, or partially taken up across the Irish Sea until much later. This divergence was the result of cultural choices taken by households and communities, not environmental constraints, and suggests that Iron Age societies north and south of the Tweed–Solway zone and east and west of the North Channel were perceptibly dissimilar. These distinctive differences in the archaeological record are especially significant because the construction of crannogs and souterrains during the 4th–2nd centuries BC demonstrates cultural divergence in the Iron Age long before the Roman frontier zone may have severed societies. The boundary of this cultural divergence does not equate with the line of Hadrian's Wall but more closely with the Anglo-Scottish border (Illus 1 & 6–8), suggesting that the Wall instead followed the best strategic course through a broader zone of cultural divergence.

The failure of the Roman Empire to consolidate its conquests of Scotland is often attributed in the main to the changing political and military priorities of Rome (Wacher 1978: 47–51; Breeze 1988: 20–1; Maxwell 1989: 36; Breeze 1996: 96–102; Bédoyère 1998: 12; Hodgson 2017: 78). However, the underlying reasons for the Roman Empire's failure to absorb the people here may owe more to the nature of Iron Age society in Scotland. Clear evidence for the adoption of Roman culture does not occur in Scotland until the 5th century AD, after Roman administration of the provinces of Britain had ceased, when secular as well as ecclesiastical Latin inscribed stones, bearing Latinised names of indigenous inhabitants and Christian terminology and symbols, were erected across southern Scotland (Illus 7). It is probably significant that this only occurred when Iron Age society here had moved from an anarchic nature to a more hierarchical character, but still demonstrating cultural expressions distinctive to Scotland. This implies that far from being passive participants in acculturation, it was only with their active participation and likely at their own instigation and on their own terms, that communities in Scotland truly adopted aspects of Roman culture. The archaeological evidence therefore suggests that Hadrian's Wall was not a cause but instead an effect of cultural divergence between the peoples of what later became Scotland and England.

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