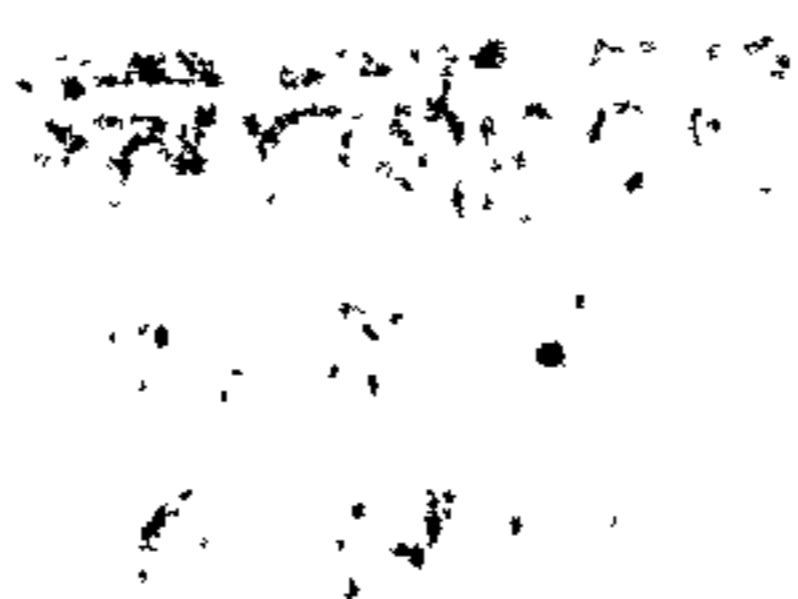


**DIALOGUES OF POWER:
EARLY CHRISTIAN MONUMENTALITY
AROUND THE NORTHERN IRISH SEA
AD 400 – 1000**

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ABSTRACT**DIALOGUES OF POWER: EARLY CHRISTIAN MONUMENTALITY
AROUND THE NORTHERN IRISH SEA AD 400 - 1000**

This thesis works from the premise that ideology forms an integral part of society, inextricably linked to economic, political and social conditions, to explore the way that variation in Christian monumentality can reveal changing political and ideological alignments within the northern Irish Sea region, c. AD 400 to 1000. A large, maritime area has been chosen for study, encompassing Dumfries and Galloway, Counties Down and Antrim, Cumbria and the Isle of Man.

A multidisciplinary approach is taken, and a range of material employed, including documentary sources, known and possible ecclesiastical sites, carved stone monuments, place-names, and evidence for imports and craftworking. Spatial and chronological variation in each form of investment is identified in turn, using a series of distribution maps, before being drawn together and discussed within a wider landscape context.

By using the patterns of ecclesiastical investment identified, and the available dating parameters, the ideological investment of Christian communities in neighbouring areas is compared and contrasted, to reveal something of the nature of interaction within this maritime zone. This is then used to present an 'alternative narrative' of ideological and political alignments within this region, which can be contrasted with the highly fragmented story provided by documentary sources alone.

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Unless otherwise stated, all photographs were taken by the author. All distribution maps were created using ArcView 3.1. Topographical data was obtained from Landmap (www.landmap.ac.uk). Digital data for boundaries, rivers and lakes were derived from the Bartholomew datasets, owned and supplied by HarperCollinsCartographic.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASSAH	Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History
AU	Annals of Ulster (MacAirt 1983)
CANMORE	RCAHMS database, accessed online at www.rcahms.gov.uk
CCCSMR	Cumbria County Council Sites and Monuments Record
CISP	Celtic Inscribed Stones Project, accessed online at www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp
<i>Confessio</i>	Saint Patrick's <i>Confessio</i> (Howlett 1994)
DGSMR	Dumfries and Galloway Sites and Monuments Record
<i>HE</i>	Bede's <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> (Colgrave and Mynors 1969)
JBAA	Journal of the British Archaeological Association
JMM	Journal of the Manx Museum
JRSAI	Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
LDSMR	Lake District Sites and Monuments Record
NISMR	Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record
OAN	Oxford Archaeology North
PIOMNHAS	Proceedings of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society
PNCu	<i>Place-names of Cumbria</i> (Armstrong 1950)
PRIA	Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy
PSAS	Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
RIB	Roman inscriptions of Britain (Collingwood and Wright 1995)
RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
RCHM	Royal Commission for Historic Monuments
TCWAAS	Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society
TDGNHAS	Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society
UJA	Ulster Journal of Archaeology
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vita Columbani</i> : Life of St Columba, Adomnan (Sharpe 1995)
<i>VW</i>	<i>Vita Wilfridi</i> : Life of St Wilfrid, Eddius Stephanus (Farmer 1998)

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CHAPTER ONE

DIALOGUES OF POWER: EARLY CHRISTIAN MONUMENTALITY AROUND THE NORTHERN IRISH SEA *c.* AD 400 – 1000

INTRODUCTION AND STUDY AREA

The introduction and spread of Christianity throughout Britain is one of the defining phenomena of the early medieval period, and the central role played by religion is reflected in the use of the term 'Early Christian' to describe the period chronologically (Mytum 1992; Charles Edwards 2000). From the fifth century onwards, Christianity grew from a small scale, elite religion, to a widely established institution, dominating the landscape through a network of ecclesiastical sites and monuments. The development of a Christian landscape was not, however, a uniform process, and this study aims to identify and interpret the range of strategies employed by societies in the adoption and implementation of Christian ideology.

This thesis is based on the premise that ideology forms an integral part of society, inextricably linked to politics, economics and social organisation. The creation of Christian sites and monuments would have involved economic input and political support, as well as the acceptance of ideological tenets (Chapter 2). As such, regional variation in Christianity can be used to discuss real differences within society (Carver 2001, 12), and is used in this thesis to consider the changing ideological and political landscape in a region of western Britain and Ireland where historical sources are inconsistent and often unreliable (Chapter 3).

Within western Britain, little is known of the political entities that made up the landscape, or how they changed over time. Apart from the comparatively well-documented kingdoms of Ireland, few polities can be located, or their histories charted, with any confidence. During the period of interest, between *c.*AD 400 to AD 1000, it can be assumed that the Irish Sea saw considerable interaction between existing polities, and incoming Anglian- or Scandinavian-influenced elites; the lack of documentation has, however, been seen as a significant obstacle to describing and explaining the dynamic and changing society that subsequently developed.

Rather than assume that early medieval ideological investment cannot be given a political context, the reverse approach is taken in this study. It is argued that regional strategies of investment in Christianity can provide an indication of the changing political landscape within this maritime zone.

THE IRISH SEA PROVINCE, THE CELTIC WEST, AND THE CELTIC CHURCH

Past studies, mapping archaeological attributes from prehistory into the early medieval period, have led to the recognition that maritime contact would have played a major role in the development of neighbouring communities (Davies 1946; Bowen 1970; Carver 1990; Cunliffe 2001a; 2001b). Commonalities and links within western Britain and the Irish Sea area have frequently led to a perceived cultural homogeneity, particularly within the early medieval 'Celtic West', leading to descriptions of a 'wide reaching Celtic thalassocracy extending from Dalriada to Brittany' (Bowen 1970, 13). Shared aspects of society and religion have formed the focus of numerous studies (Bowen 1944; Chadwick 1970), and are often contrasted with Germanic, Anglo-Saxon England to the east.

Christianity within this area has therefore frequently been placed under the descriptive umbrella of the 'Celtic church'. Like the generic labelling of the 'Celtic west', this term has come under considerable reassessment, criticised as a monolithic concept applied to an area where Christian practice, like the rest of society, was in fact highly varied (Hughes 1981; Davies 1982; 1983, 68; Edwards 1990, 100). Although there is a general consensus that the term is unhelpful, however, it is still frequently employed to distinguish between Anglo-Saxon Christianity, and ecclesiastical activity to the west.

The dichotomy between Celtic West and Anglo-Saxon East is oversimplistic, and some scholars have countered arguments over 'Celtic church' terminology by attempting to diminish differences between Christian practice in the west and east (Fletcher 1997, 92). Whilst breaking down arbitrary barriers, however, to take such a stance can be equally problematic, as it glosses over, rather than explains, variation in ecclesiastical practice. Western Britain comprised a patchwork of small polities or kingdoms in the early medieval period (Higham 1986, 235-256; 1992a, 218), and to assume that each would have adopted Christianity in the same way is to ignore the diverse nature of society at this time, and the range of political and ideological strategies that were possible (Carver 2003, 7). It is these differences that are sought in this thesis, focussing in particular on the northern Irish Sea region.

THE STUDY AREA

The study area encompasses four main regions: Counties Down and Antrim, Dumfries and Galloway, Cumbria and the Isle of Man (figure 1.1). As part of the 'Irish Sea province' these areas form a maritime zone, bounded by areas of higher land to the north and east, and by major waterways to the west.



Figure 1.1: The study area

Although some studies have approached the Irish Sea zone and the Celtic West as coherent entities (Bowen 1944; Alcock 1970; Moore 1970; Griffiths 1991), the four regions within the study area are more often considered as discrete areas, studied separately in county- or country-wide surveys. While comparison is often made between early medieval activity in Scotland, England and Ireland, much less attention has been paid to the actual levels and types of interaction that occurred between these areas, and so such 'zones of interaction' are not well understood. For this reason, a single contiguous area, albeit with a major maritime component, has been chosen for study.

If the landscape of this maritime region is considered, it can be seen that the natural topography results in a number of shared features and characteristics. The treatment of these regions as distinct entities appears, therefore, to be borne out of the divisions and 'land-based' perceptions of modern society, rather than inherent differences (Morrison 1991, 3).

The underlying geology of the region exhibits a strong northeast-southwest axis; the solid geology of Galloway is shared to a large extent by County Down and the Isle of Man, while the mudstones and sandstones of Cumbria and Dumfriesshire also follow the same alignment (figure 1.2).

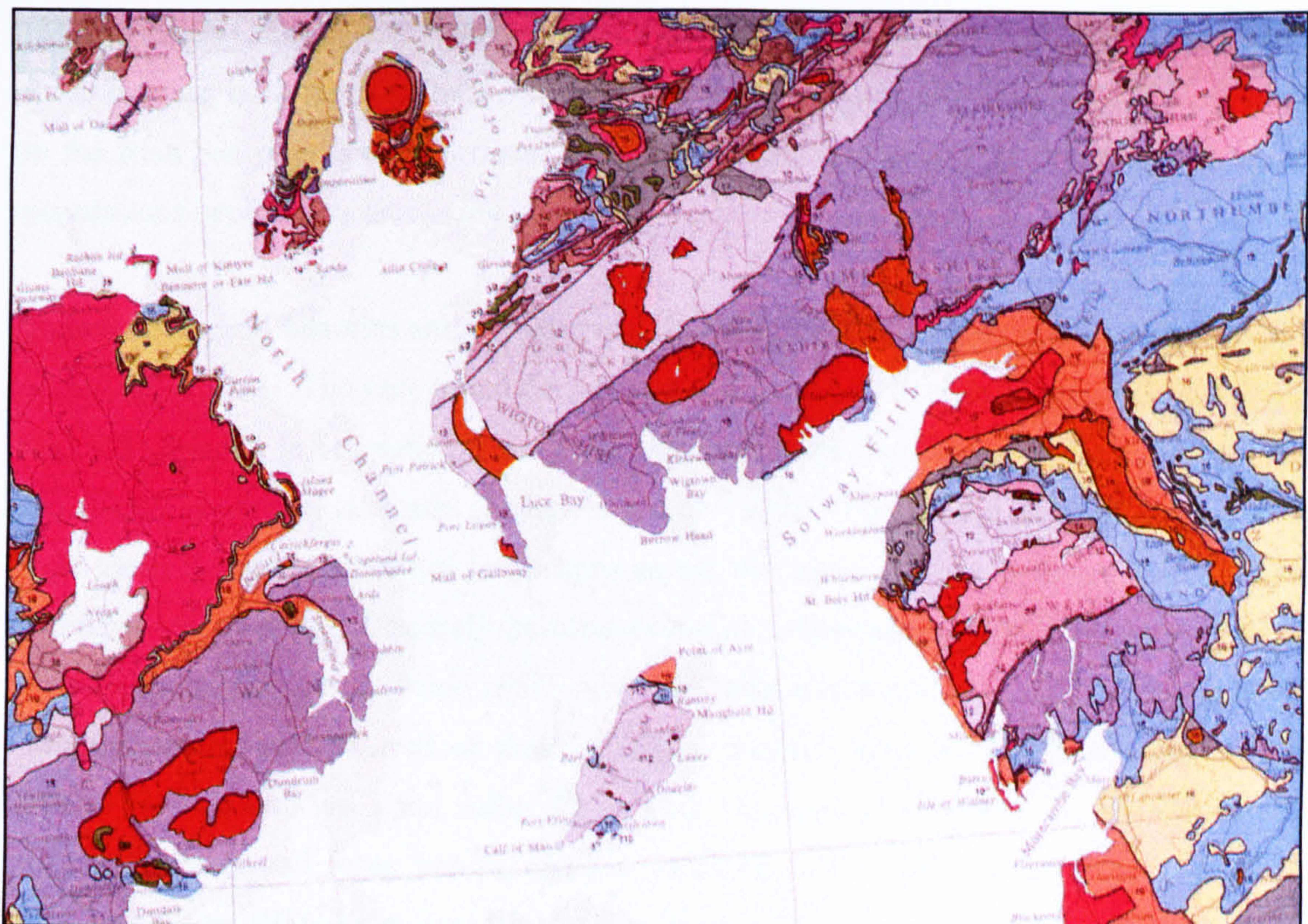


Figure 1.2: Geology of the study area (Geological Survey 1969)

Geological events and subsequent glaciations have resulted in similar characteristics across much of the area (Vincent 1985, 8; Aalen, Whelan and Stout 1997, 7; Dackombe and McCarroll 1990; McKerrow *et al* 2000; Chadwick *et al* 2001, 3). The Isle of Man, Cumbria and southwest Scotland are all characterised by a mountainous core, skirted by rolling hills and coastal lowlands; Counties Down and Antrim have coastal uplands (formed by later volcanic intrusions), surrounding central lowlands and loughs (figure 1.3). Frequently, these areas are intervisible. The distinctive profile of the Isle of Man can be recognised from Scotland, Ireland and England, whilst the proximity of southwest Scotland to Ireland means that the two coasts are clearly intervisible (weather permitting). The Cumbrian horizon, dominated by the central dome of the Lake District, can often be seen from the Isle of Man and southwest Scotland (*cf* Watson 2004). This intervisibility can contribute strongly to a sense of closeness, and a feeling of being within a maritime region.

Further shared attributes, in terms of topography, transport and land use, may have added to this perception. Similar glacial features occur across the whole area; deposits of glacial drift in the valleys and coastal plains have frequently been moulded into rounded hills or drumlins, which form a major feature of the landscape of County Down (Aalen 1978, 23; Aalen, Whelan and Stout 1997, 8), as well as being visible on the Manx Plain of Malew (McCarroll 1990, 43; Chiverrell 2002, 2) and in southwest Scotland, around Wigtownshire (Morrison 1991, 10). Such features, found on either side of the Irish Sea, would have made these familiar landscapes to those who travelled between them, providing a 'feeling of being in the Irish Sea province' (Morrison 1991, 10), further emphasised by the ease with which populations could move across the sea.

Shared geological histories and climates may have resulted in similar land use and economy within these areas. The very broad dating parameters applied to pollen diagrams, and strong regional variation in vegetation history and land use, make detailed description difficult, but broad statements can be made (Dumayne-Peaty 1999). The upland and generally poorer soils mean that early medieval landscapes across the study area are believed to have been characterised by a predominantly pastoral economy, allowing sustained clearance of large areas of woodland (McCormick 1983; Aalen, Whelan and Stout 1997, 26). Limited arable farming would have occurred on areas of higher quality, better-drained land, most notably around Carlisle and the Eden valley (Cumbria), Stranraer (Galloway), Lecale and Newry (County Down), and some limited areas of northern Antrim (McCarthy 2000, 131; 2002, 359, 367; Aalen 1978, 27; Aalen, Whelan and Stout 1997, 18).

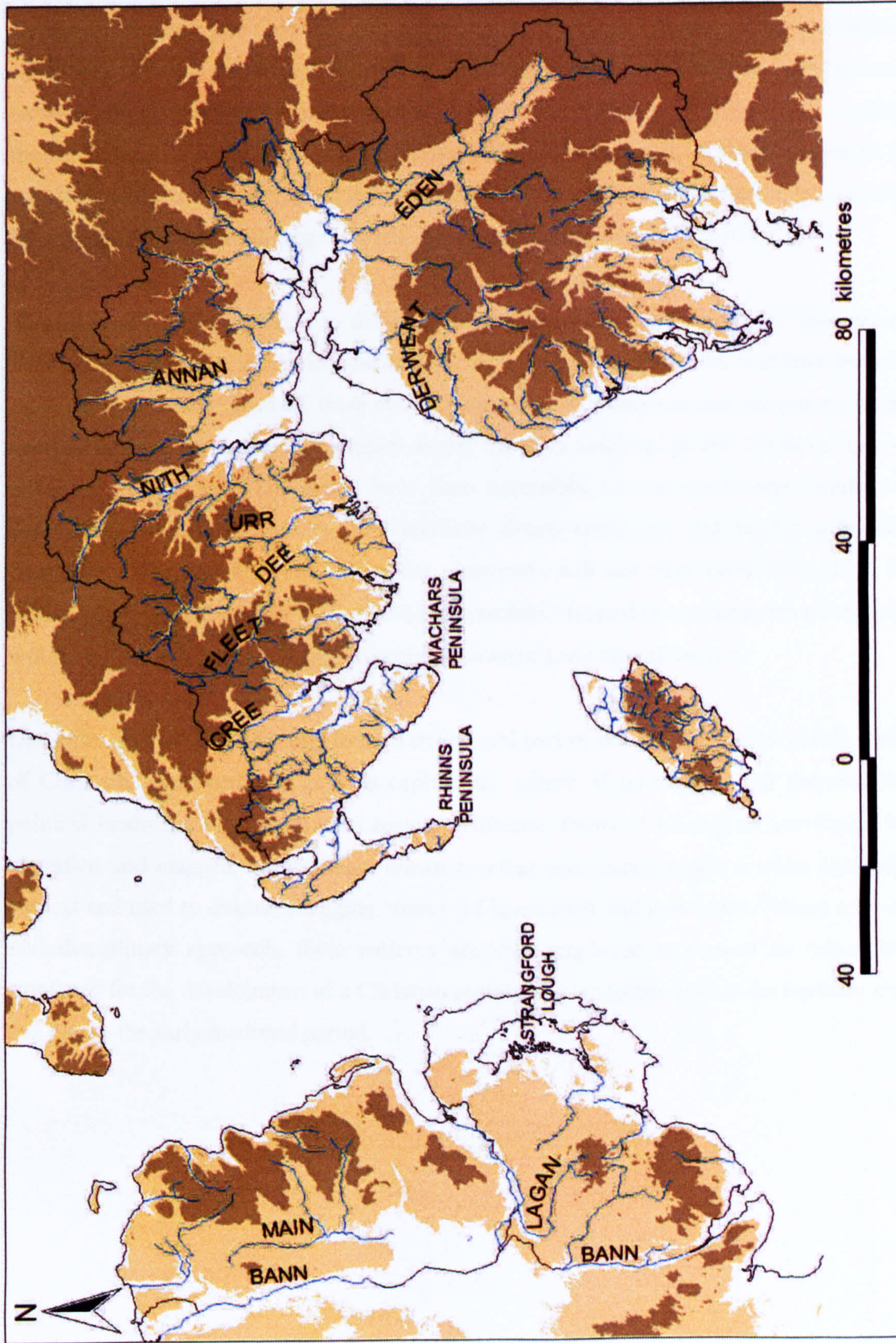


Figure 1.3: Simplified topography of the study area, with major rivers

Natural environment may also have affected the way that populations moved around this area. Although overland routes would have provided access through the uplands of southwest Scotland and Cumbria, and across much of Ireland (Warner 1976), transport by water was of prime importance to early medieval populations, and the time taken to travel between coastal locations by boat would often have made them significantly 'closer' to those the same distance away over land (*cf* Carver 1990). Documentary references attest to the importance of maritime transport; Adomnán and the Iona Annals, for example, refer to over 90 voyages made by sea during the sixth and seventh centuries (McCarthy 2002, 361).

This summary is not intended to demonstrate that the study area is a purely homogenous region; nor is it to take the environmentally determinist view that societies will have been the same across the area. Instead, these observations serve to emphasise that the sea would not necessarily have represented a boundary during the early medieval period; the landscapes on either side of the Irish Sea would have been accessible, and in many ways familiar, to populations throughout the area. Communities clearly could, and did interact with some frequency. The nature of this interaction, however, will not have been dictated by the landscape alone, and the degree to which communities invested in similar forms of ideology will have been affected by a range of social, economic and political factors.

Using the premise that ideology formed an integral part of society, the highly visible media of Christian investment are used to explore the nature of interaction, and the changing political landscape in this maritime region. Different forms of ideological investment are identified and mapped, before being drawn together and placed within a wider landscape context and used to discuss changing 'zones' of investment and interaction. Using a broad, multidisciplinary approach, these patterns are then employed to present an 'alternative narrative' for the development of a Christian society and landscape around the northern Irish Sea during the early medieval period.

CHAPTER TWO

DIALOGUES OF POWER: EARLY CHRISTIAN MONUMENTALITY AROUND THE NORTHERN IRISH SEA

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This thesis aims to identify regional variation in Christian investment, and to use this information to explore the changing political landscape of the northern Irish Sea region. In doing so, several theoretical strands are drawn together, which build on the study of religion from a range of perspectives. Firstly, studies of the nature of 'religion' or 'ideology' are considered, in order to understand the impact that the adoption and implementation of Christianity would have had on society as a whole. Secondly, the various means of expressing ideology through material culture, or the 'materialisation of ideology', are assessed, as these provide the physical evidence to be employed throughout this thesis. A highly varied set of data is drawn on for study, including historical sources, ecclesiastical sites, sculpture and place-names, and so the issues surrounding multidisciplinary approaches also have to be considered. Finally, the level of interpretation that can be applied to Christian monuments must be taken into account, with emphasis on the need to consider this material within its wider landscape context. In arguing that Christian monuments are more than a simple reflection of religious tenets, regional variation in ecclesiastical monumentality can be used to address issues of political and economic power, and the levels of interaction between different political entities.

RELIGION AND ITS ROLE WITHIN SOCIETY

Conversion to Christianity, and the development of ecclesiastical institutions, has been subject to scholarship within a wide range of disciplines. The approaches taken in history, archaeology, anthropology and sociology have been coloured not only by theoretical developments within each discipline, but also by contemporary perceptions of religion. A background to an archaeological study of early medieval Christianity must, therefore, consider changing attitudes to religion alongside developments in archaeological thought.

ANTIQUARIAN AND HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO CHRISTIANITY

Until the mid-twentieth century, the majority of studies of Christianity were undertaken from a western, Christian viewpoint, which had a considerable impact on the way that conversion was perceived (Hefner 1993, 6; Higham 1997, 3). The spread of Christianity was treated as an inevitable process, and such works often take the form of historical narratives, charting successful conversions across Europe using documentary sources and religious artefacts.

The victory of Christianity over the range of religious practices that preceded it has been attributed to the perceived dichotomy between 'world religions', such as Christianity and Islam, and more localised, polytheistic 'primitive religions'. The superiority of 'world religions' remained unquestioned; this was seen as evident in their success. Durkheim spoke of 'quotas of truth' within different religions, despite stating that all religions are equal in meeting societal needs; 'it is undeniably possible to arrange [religions] in a hierarchy. Some can be called superior to others, in the sense that they are richer in ideas and sentiments, that they contain fewer sensations and images, and that their arrangement is wiser' (Durkheim 1915, 2-3). The assumption that Christianity represents a more truthful and rational ideology than pre-existing native religions, and would naturally be recognised as such, was considered adequate explanation for widespread and continuing conversion (Higham 1997, 12, 26).

The gradual spread of Christianity throughout Europe during the first millennium has formed the basis of many archaeological studies. A 'culture historical' approach has been applied to much of the archaeological material, and the growth of the Christianity has been mapped through its material correlates, whether churches, lead tanks, inscriptions, or crosses (Thomas 1981, 137-8; *cf* Petts 2003a, 109), using what has been termed a 'checklist' approach (Lane 2001, 149). Many scholars have relied heavily on historical sources to provide a framework and chronology for Christian sites and monuments, which are then used to describe the gradual Christianisation of Britain and Ireland (Thompson 1958; Hughes 1966). Within these studies, the works of Radford (1971) and Thomas (1968; 1971; 1981; 1994a; 1994b) have been particularly influential in western Britain, and demonstrate two differing views on the origins of early medieval Christianity.

In discussing the origins of Christianity in Britain, Radford (1971, 1-12) expressed the view that there was a high level of discontinuity between Roman Christianity and that of the early medieval period. Whilst Christianity in Roman Britain was practiced initially at elite residences and later in churches, at sites such as Caerwent and Lullingstone, Radford observed that the later evidence for religious activity – inscribed stones and (in his opinion)

imported pottery – occurred at different locations and appeared to represent different traditions. Sub-Roman and early medieval Christianity was seen to have been directly imported from the Continent, and ‘in this field at least, Roman Britain made no significant contribution to the rise of insular churches in the fifth century’ (Radford 1971, 10-12). Frend (1982) similarly suggests a discontinuity between the episcopal Roman church, and the monastic church of the fifth and sixth centuries (Frend 1982, 11).

Scholars such as Jocelyn Toynbee (1953, 24), and Charles Thomas (1971, 10-48), on the other hand, have preferred to see a high degree of continuity between the Roman church and that of sub-Roman Britain. In 1953, Toynbee stated that ‘the so-called Celtic church surviving continually in the west and north, was thoroughly Roman in creed and origin: Roman, too, initially in its organisation and practice’ (Toynbee 1953, 24). Thomas described the organisation of the earliest church in northern Britain as diocesan, focussed around a number of bishoprics that formed the ecclesiastical focus for post-Roman kingdoms (Thomas 1971, 17-18; figure 2.1). Evidence for the episcopal status of saints such as Patrick and Ninian, and the use of terms denoting deacons and priests on inscriptions was seen to support continuity (Thomas 1971, 17-18). For the eastern part of the study area, Thomas suggested that bishops based at Carlisle and Whithorn would have served the kingdom of Rheged.

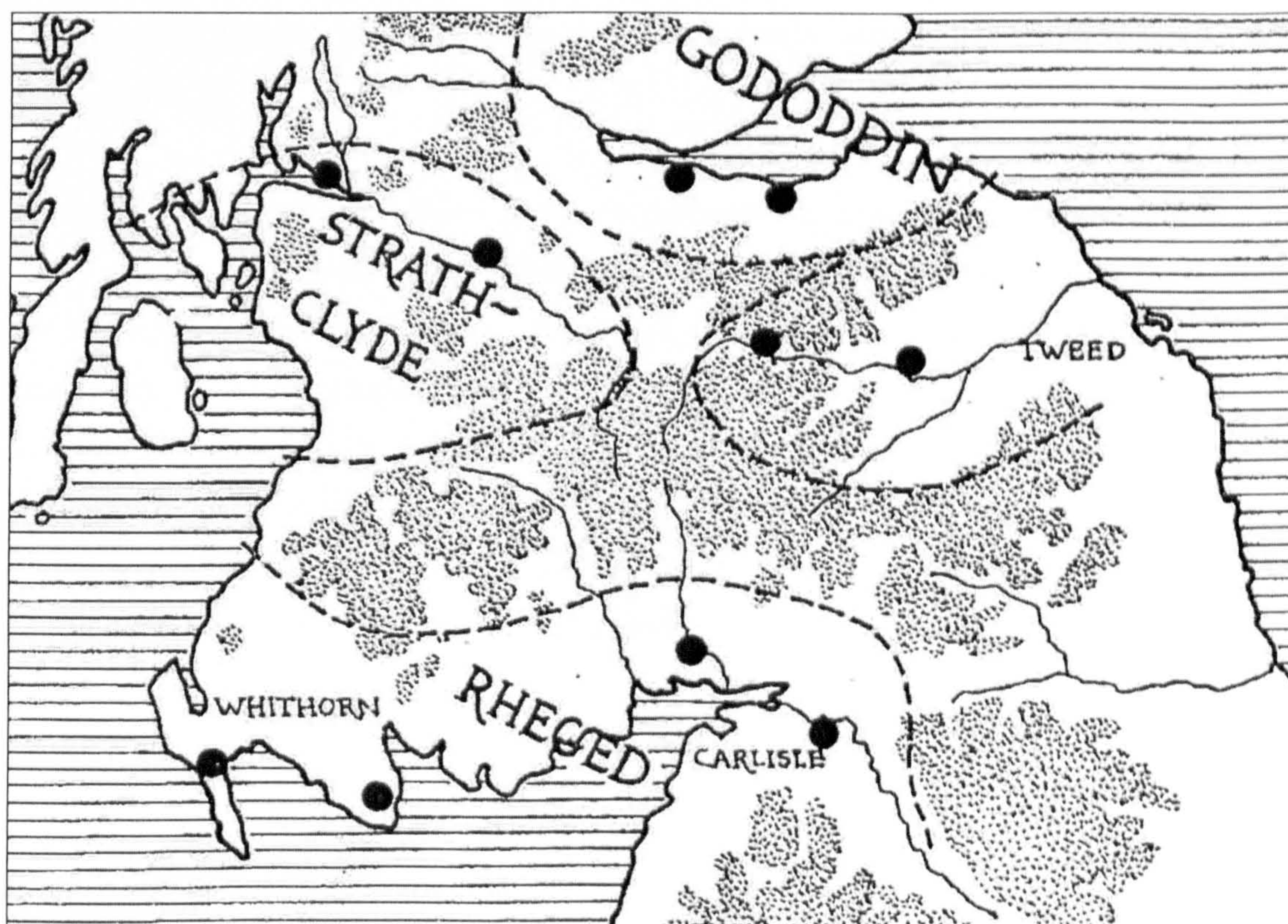


Figure 2.1: Tentative reconstruction of sub-Roman dioceses in Northern Britain

(Thomas 1971, 16)

This diocesan system is seen by Thomas to have survived into the sixth century, and only then did a major change in ecclesiastical structure occur, with the onset of 'organised monasticism' (Thomas 1971, 20). The monastic ideal is described as transmitted from the east, specifically the Mediterranean, to Ireland in the early sixth century; from Ireland to Irish settlements in the north-west in the later sixth century; and subsequently into Northumbria in the seventh (Thomas 1971, 22). In Ireland in particular, monasticism is seen to have flourished within the non-Romanised social organisation.

In contrast, in eastern England, the Germanic settlers had brought with them non-Christian beliefs and practices, which survived until Christianity was reintroduced by the Augustinian mission and influences from the Continent (Thomas 1971, 10, 20-1). Similarly, though less well recorded, pagan Viking incomers introduced non-Christian religious beliefs, but were soon integrated into the Christian society that surrounded them.

In narrating the spread of Christianity through these gradual conversions and 'reconversions', the stage has been populated using available historical sources, and frequently discussed in terms of the activities and influence of saints and missionaries (Bowen 1944; 1970). Historical characters and events are often used to 'explain' the spread of Christianity within particular areas; in the study area, the impact of saints such as St Ninian and St Patrick, in particular, has been treated as a cause of the spread of Christianity (see Chapter 3).

Frequently, therefore, conversion has been perceived as a unilinear process, described in terms of who was converted, at what point, and by whom. The history of Irish Christianity, for example, is described as 'one of gradual absorption of Mediterranean culture by an unsubdued Celtic community who yielded, not to Roman arms, but to Roman letters and religion' (De Paor and De Paor 1958, 29). In broader terms, Christianity has been seen as the diffusion of ideas from the eastern Empire, through Europe and into Britain and Ireland. Those who were converted, through the 'conquests' made by missionaries, have often been portrayed as passive recipients of a new wisdom.

COMPLEX DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION AND IDEOLOGY

During the latter part of the twentieth century, a move was made away from unilinear perceptions of conversion, and work undertaken to demonstrate the highly complex nature of religion. An evolutionary approach, resulting from 'wearing Christian-coloured spectacles for too long' (Solli 1996, 94), has been criticised, particularly within early medieval studies,

and the dichotomy between Christianity and 'primitive religions' has been disputed. In the case of Viking Age Scandinavia, for example:

'the monotheism of Christianity might be a theological fact, but the essential doctrine of the Trinity, the position of the Virgin Mary and the teachings of countless saints, may have made the new religion seem more polytheistic to the adherents of the Old Norse religion than the learned Christian clergy and the Pope actually appreciated' (Solli 1996, 94).

It is widely accepted that many aspects of pre-Christian religion were incorporated into Christian practice; this process is recorded in some contemporary sources (*HE* I:30), and the shared characteristics of pagan Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Christian symbolism and mythology is notable (Bailey 1985b, 59-61). In dismissing a clear-cut distinction between 'world' and 'primitive' religions, the natural superiority of Christianity can no longer be upheld as explanation of its success. Consequently, studies have turned to other reasons for conversion, and in doing so, have considered the nature of 'religion' itself, and the implications of ideological change. Often, faith is perceived as a personal conviction, but it is the collective nature of ideology that is central to its wider impact, and this has been considered from both sociological and archaeological perspectives (Southwold 1979).

Southwold concludes that religious tenets are 'empirically indeterminate, axiomatic, symbolic and collective' (Southwold 1979, 642-3), and it is the last two characteristics that are particularly pertinent in understanding the implication of conversion. Although individuals may perceive a particular ideology in different ways, religious tenets are learned from other members of society, rather than being created by the individual. Communally learned and shared ideas can be acted on collectively through ritual, forming part of the lives and landscapes of whole communities. As such, they come to adopt an 'aura of factuality', representing an existing world order (Southwold 1979, 642). 'Thus, symbolic truths become representative of membership of a group, a community, a church... [and become] emblematic of such membership' (Southwold 1979, 641). As archaeologists, it is the adherence to, and active participation in, a collective religion that is being studied; personal conviction remains largely inaccessible. This view has recently been emphasised in Abrams' study of early medieval Christianity. 'Religion (and therefore conversion) was not simply a personal concern, but an element of a group's identity – initially an aspect of authority and allegiance, rather than a spiritual conviction' (Abrams 2000, 137). To begin with, a new religion modifies public life, and only later affects the lives of society and individuals as a whole (Milis 1998, 11). Abrams (2000, 136) outlines the difference between the official

acceptance of a religion by an elite (conversion), and the gradual process whereby society took the new religion on board (Christianization), providing useful terminology that is followed in this thesis.

Religion can be seen to play a significant role in shaping cultural behaviour and interaction, an idea which is represented in a number of slightly different definitions presented in anthropological studies of the 1960s. Spiro (1966, 96), for example, describes religion as 'as institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction and culturally postulated superhuman beings', differentiated from other cultural institutions only by virtue of reference to these superhuman beings (Spiro 1966, 98). Geertz presents a different view, describing religion as 'a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions in such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic' (Geertz 1966, 4; cf Asad 1983). More recently, in a study of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, Higham offers a list of characteristics compatible with Spiro's definition, including an interest in god-like beings, regularised ritual and a dichotomy between sacred and profane (Higham 1997, 4). Durrans (2000, 59) offers a comparable definition, describing religion as 'a system of collective, public actions which conform to rules ("ritual") and usually express "beliefs" in the sense of a mixture of ideas and predispositions'. All of these definitions stress the important role of religion in patterning behaviour, often through ritualised activity. The introduction of Christian baptism, worship and burial, would have meant the repeated signalling of a newly established identity to the wider populace.

Christianity, like many religions, does not comprise a single, monolithic entity. Whilst Christian doctrines are well documented and have a universal foundation, the way that the religion was implemented, the nature of ritual engaged in, and the material culture created, could have many forms. Christianity has been described as a 'cultural package', encompassing 'literacy, books and the Latin language; Roman notions about law, authority, property and government; the habits of living in towns and using coin for exchange; Mediterranean tastes in food, drink and costume; new architectural and artistic conventions' (Fletcher 1997, 2). An elite could accept the wider concept of Christianity, but the individual components of this package could be changed, adapted or rejected; the resulting Christian practice is therefore likely to be shaped by dependent political, social and economic context (Higham 1997, 4). Christian thought did not begin as a single, unified doctrine; Tyson suggests that for the earliest centuries of Christianity, ideas cannot be simply described as 'Christian' but should be described using terms such as Gnostic, Pauline,

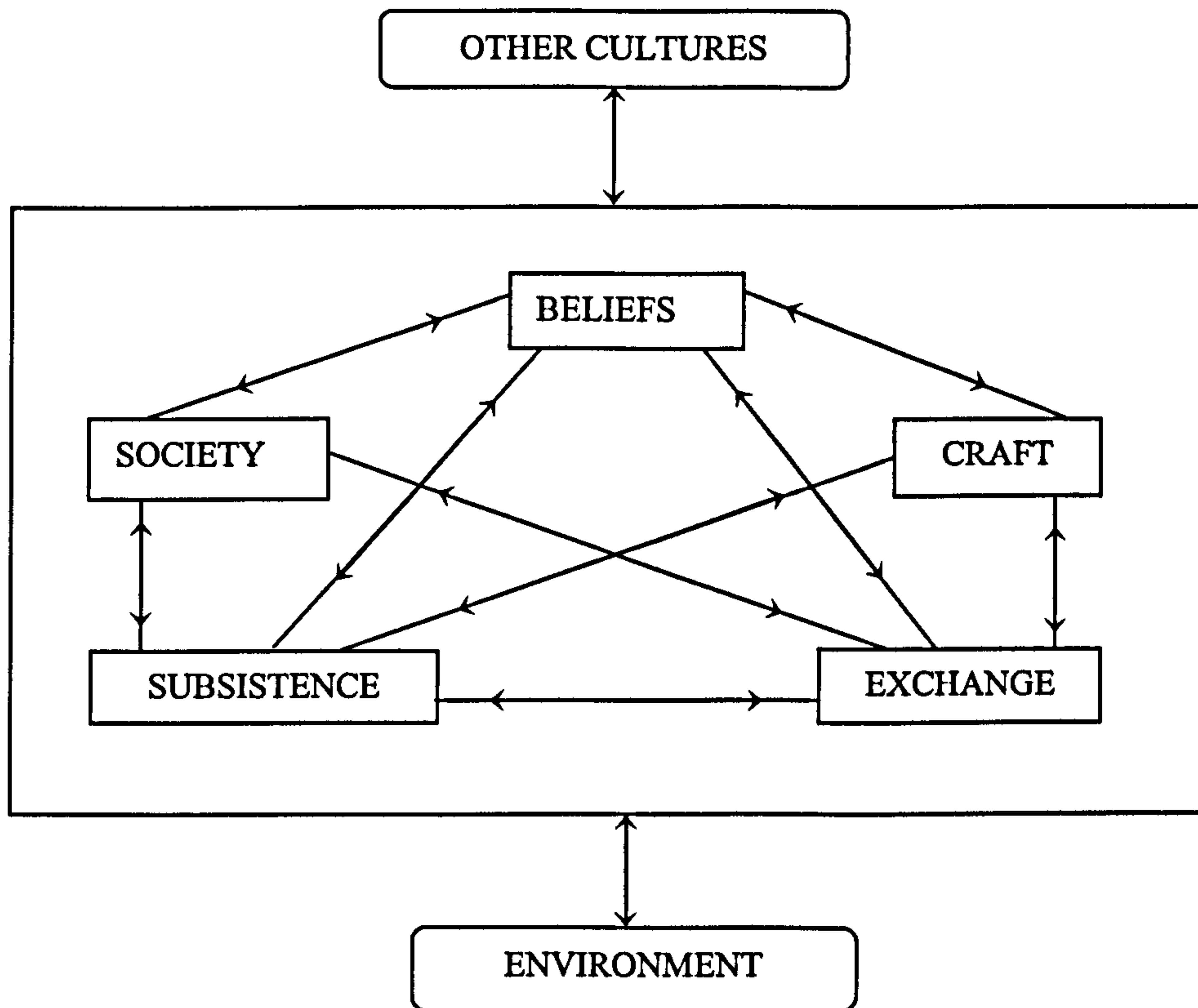
Johannine (Tyson 1973, 334; Pluskowski and Patrick 2003, 31). Differences in Christianity depended on pre-existing religions and socio-political contexts; the new religion was 'responsive to the challenges of changing times, diverse thinkers and cultural differences' (Tyson 1973, 334). Unfortunately, convenient labels do not exist for the religious practices of Christian communities within the study area from the fifth century onwards. In the literature produced, populations describe themselves as 'Christian'; only through the material culture can variations in practice be discerned. These debates do, however, pave the way for discussions of diversity of ecclesiastical practice, and recognise that these variations are meaningful. Conversion must be seen as a dialogue, rather than a conquest; the interface would have been managed by missionary but also, and sometimes primarily, by the recipient (Higham 1997, 4; Lane 2001, 156). Once adopted, Christianity was not a static institution; investment in ecclesiastical sites, and the role played by religion, changed over time, and so a chronological, as well as a spatial dimension, must be considered.

PROCESSUAL AND POST-PROCESSUAL APPROACHES TO CHRISTIANITY

By viewing religion as a cultural system, scholars have sought to apply processual approaches to early medieval Christianity (Mytum 1992). Religion, or 'belief' is thereby considered as one subsystem with society, closely linked to subsistence economy, social organisation, technology, craftworking, and exchange (Mytum 1992, 12, 268). By studying in detail the relationships between these subsystems, it is possible to demonstrate the complex interrelationships that existed within early medieval society, and to emphasise that changes in one subsystem would have had far reaching effects in other areas (figure 2.2). As such, conversion to Christianity cannot be regarded in isolation; changes in religious behaviour would have meant changes to the economy, to exchange and production networks, and to the wider political situation, leading to 'major irreversible structural changes to the system [early Christian Ireland]' (Mytum 1992, 15). The way that Christianity was adopted would be reliant on interrelationships with other subsystems within society. Levels of technology and craftworking, for example, would impact the way that Christianity was represented monumentally.

Scholars adopting a different theoretical stance have, however, suggested that the scientific rigour of processual archaeology does not represent the best approach for understanding ideology (Hodder 1986; Carver 1989a, 668; Whitley 1998, 3). Recent studies have demonstrated the highly varied nature of ecclesiastical organisation and investment (Carver (ed) 2003), and emphasise the role that human agency plays in such diversity, albeit affected by social and economic conditions. Although some scholars provide a role for the 'dynamic

individual' in social change, processual studies tend to disregard human agency in seeking wider trends within society. 'Christianity' is not a dynamic force within itself, but requires implementation and acceptance; the way that Christianity was adopted and expressed, would have involved conscious decisions by members of society.



*Figure 2.2: A model indicating the systems operating within early Christian Ireland
(after Mytum 1992, 13, figure 1.1)*

A systems approach assumes that 'ideology' or 'belief' can be studied as a distinct entity, albeit linked to other subsystems. Hodder (1982, 213) sees the subsystems used to study society as being 'of the analysts own making', arguing that ideology cannot be studied in isolation from other aspects of society. Likewise, Spiro stresses that 'it is virtually impossible to set any substantive boundary to religion, and, thus, to distinguish it from other socio-cultural phenomena' (Spiro 1966, 90). Religion cannot be compartmentalised, and frequently affects all aspects of life (Insoll 2001, 10). This is highlighted by the example of Late Iron Age Scandinavian society; no word existed for the present concept of 'religion' - the term used was *siðr* (*sed* or *skikka*), which is translated as 'custom'. No distinction existed within spheres of political, cultural or religious affairs; Old Norse religion constituted a way of life (Solli 1996, 95). Although early medieval Christianity is not necessarily directly comparable to Old Norse religion, it seems that to study it as a discrete entity is somewhat misleading; the perceived separation of church and state is much more modern

construct (Whitley 1998, 16). However, consideration of systems does provide a useful means of considering the complex interrelationships that existed within society (Mytum 1989, 341).

IDEOLOGY AS A SOURCE OF POWER

Recent studies have considered the role of ideology as a source of power, and in doing so combine elements of both processual and post-processual studies. The integral relationships between ideology and other aspects of society are stressed, and expressed in terms of the strategies consciously employed by elites.

Mann (1986) has identified ideology, with economy, politics and the military, as one of four sources of power drawn on by elites to establish and maintain social domination. Earle (1997) has built on this work, highlighting military dominance, ideology and economic control as the three 'primary' sources of power (Earle 1997, 3-6). These three elements are inextricably linked and interdependent, and again highlight that ideology needs to be considered in the context of other socio-cultural phenomena.

'[Ideology] establishes an authority structure and institutionalizes practices of rule. Ideologies present the code of order – how social and political organisations are structured; why specific rights and obligations exist' (Earle 1997, 8).

'Centralized control over ritual enables one faction to define reality in ways suiting their parochial interests thereby protecting, and possibly disguising, the allocative bases of power' (Urban and Schortman 1999, 126).

An elite within society can use religion as a political tool, by instigating an ideology that supports the legitimacy of their rule, and the way that surplus is extracted. The use of religion to present a social order as 'the way things are' is highlighted by Geertz (1966). In supporting the right of an individual or family to control populations, political or economic structures can be sustained. The maintenance of military dominance requires loyal subjects, and an ideological dimension to power legitimises and strengthens this power base.

As a source of political power in the past, Christianity could be used to support leadership, particularly kingship (Stevenson 1996, 173; Higham 1997). The church provided legitimisation through the development of concepts of 'divine kingship' (Nieke and Duncan

1988, 10); leading clerics could 'legitimise, sustain and enhance kingly power vis-à-vis rivals both at home and abroad' (Higham 1999, 95). Christianity provided a means of strengthening political powers, both vertically, by maintaining leadership within a kingdom, and horizontally, in its role in forging political alliances. The process of godparenthood, in the conversion of one elite by another, has been highlighted as an important way that alliances and relations between polities could be cemented (Lynch 1998).

In order to be effective as a source of power, ideology needs to be given material form (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996; Earle 1997, 10). The 'materialisation of ideology' represents a means of centrally manipulating religion, in order for it to be experienced by a wider audience. This can be undertaken through a variety of media, including monuments, ceremonies, artefacts and writing systems. The creation of monuments, in particular, emphasises links between ideological and economic power, and illustrates that wealth and surplus were required for the implementation of religious change and development (Brumfiel and Earle 1987, 9). 'Materialization...embeds ideology in the economic process of production, and gives it a central role in the competition for political power' (Earle 1997, 10).

MONUMENTALITY AND THE 'MATERIALIZATION OF IDEOLOGY'

The 'materialization of ideology' is discussed in detail by DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle (1996), who draw on a wide range of case studies, including the Inka of the Andes and the Thy of Denmark. Their observations highlight the many ways that religion can be made tangible and shared within society, and are highly applicable to a study of early medieval Christianity, forming the major theoretical paradigm on which this study is based. By considering the media of 'materialisation' in an early medieval context, it is possible to explore the way that Christianity was adopted by an elite, and manifested in the landscape of contemporary and later populations. It is the results of these strategies of 'monumentality' (Carver 2001) that are studied by archaeologists, and form the basis of this thesis; the processes behind their creation are important to understanding their significance.

Writing systems have been highlighted as evidence for ideological materialisation, and described as a 'technology of power' (Moreland 2001, 88). Christianity is a literate religion, and the creation of texts is a significant means of expressing ideology, and communicating ideas over wide areas, in a highly visible and prestigious manner. During the early medieval period, these texts took many forms, including manuscripts, inscribed stones, and inscriptions on more personal objects, and these different media could be used to tell stories,

legitimise claims, or transmit messages (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996, 19). Investment in manuscripts represented a major economic undertaking, illustrated by the frequently used example of the Codex Amiatinus, a manuscript calculated to have required the skins of 1545 calves in its production, therefore requiring significant control over the pastoral economy and resources of a particular area (Gameson 1992, 9). Dissemination of texts was therefore the preserve not only of an educated elite, but also those with economic power (Milis 1998, 10). Although modern perception tends to associate documents with reading, they would have formed an important part of the spoken and oral tradition of early medieval Christianity, and as such would have been a powerful tool in the hands of the elite. Often, the actual historical content of documents has overshadowed their role as material objects and politicised creations. This does not, however, mean that they are not useful sources, as they present a deliberate presentation of what a Christian elite wished to portray to the wider population (Chapter 3).

The creation of 'public monuments and landscapes' has also been highlighted as a major element in the materialisation of ideology (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996, 18-19). The establishment of Christian settlements, churches and burial grounds would have been a clear way of making a new or developing ideology visible, and part of the landscape of surrounding populations; a landscape with which they could actively engage. From an elite perspective, the patronage of ecclesiastical sites was a means of expressing Christian affiliation through economic investment. Highly varied evidence is available for early Christian sites in the study area; however, interpretation and dating is often difficult (Chapter 4).

Sculpture represents a more widespread form of evidence for early Christianity, and the most tangible form of early medieval 'materialisation' or 'monumentality'. These monuments represent the expression of Christian identity, and through iconography, form and location also incorporate statements of landownership and political and economic power (Handley 1998; Edwards 2001). Prominent and highly visible monuments within the landscape, whether erected at ecclesiastical sites or situated in more open land, would have been experienced and shared by a large number of people. Throughout the early medieval period, constantly changing levels of investment in sculpture, and the forms of monuments employed, provide a valuable insight into early medieval ideology (Chapter 5).

By endowing Christian sites with ecclesiastical place-names, they would have been further monumentalised within the lives and landscapes of contemporary and later populations. The changing forms of ecclesiastical place-names, and their distribution, allow an insight into the

different linguistic groups that invested in Christianity, and in some cases provide an indication of the chronological development of a Christian landscape (Chapter 6).

Ceremonial practice has been outlined as an important means of materialising ideology (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996, 18), and would have been a way for communities to actively participate in religion. Pilgrimage, for example, would have been a means of imposing aspects of Christian tradition or hagiography onto the landscape (Turner and Turner 1978; Harbison 1991). This could be further materialised as points along the route were marked with buildings or monuments, thus making them more tangible and somehow more 'real' (Edwards, N. 2002, 226). In a prehistoric context, Thomas (2000, 86) refers to such activities as 'inserting places into tradition'.

The imposition of an ideology through ceremony relies on repetition, which creates a communal memory of specific events, and institutionalises the ideas that they represent (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996, 18). Although early Christian ceremonies are not themselves visible, historical and archaeological evidence provides an insight into the nature of such events, and the material culture employed. Documentary references to liturgy, processions, baptisms, burials and pilgrimages, illustrate their importance; the ornate and sophisticated nature of the surviving artefacts, including reliquaries, patens and other metalwork, further demonstrates the wealth that was invested in such affairs (Chapter 7). The fact that these objects could be owned also rendered them useful as symbols of individual position and political power (Hodder 1982; DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996, 18). Their portable nature is significant, as these items could have been given or exchanged as a means of symbolic communication over wide areas. Networks of trade and exchange would therefore have become part of ideological activity. Affiliation between a polity and others further afield could be signalled through the appropriation of imported artefacts; the nature of production, trade and exchange can provide a valuable context for other elements of ideological investment (Chapter 7).

The process of materialisation, therefore, has resulted in a diverse corpus of material culture (including documents) that can be used to discuss early medieval ideology. These artefacts do not, however, passively 'reflect' Christian identity; recent studies have stressed the need to recognise that material culture was used as 'an instrument in creating meaning and order in the world, and not solely as the reflection of economics, social organisation or ideology' (Leone 1998, 50; Hodder 1982). Carver (2002a, 467) has noted the need to employ a variety of theoretical stances in the interpretation of different materials, stressing that archaeological material is not 'theoretically homogenous', and that

‘while a midden heap is suitable for processual analysis..., a furnished grave or an illuminated manuscript is clearly expressive and demands interpretation using structuralist principles: what did the burial party or the scriptorial authority intend by what they chose to highlight?’ (Carver 2002a, 467).

Consideration of ideology as a source of power suggests that Christian investment would have been an important means of expressing political, ideological and economic dominance. A range of strategies could be employed in harnessing this investment and implementing Christianity, reflecting the agendas of specific elites at specific times. Carver (1998; 2001) has highlighted three main choices available to early medieval communities, and argues that they reflect different economic strategies represented by episcopal, monastic, and private or secular churches. Discussion of these models, particularly the dichotomy between episcopal and monastic churches, has been central to interpretations of historical and archaeological evidence, and is covered in more detail in Chapter 3.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

The differing ways that ideology can be materialised have resulted in a disparate set of data which are represented in different ways in the archaeological record. The study of documentary sources, ecclesiastical centres, sculpture, place-names and craftworking all involve different specialist skills: historical, archaeological, art historical and linguistic. The level to which these sources can be integrated within a single study has formed the basis of debates for many years (Andrén 1998; Moreland 2001; Carver 2002a). The most polarised views focus on the relationship between archaeology and history, and as the study of historical periods, particularly medieval archaeology, has developed, the debate over the relationship between material evidence and documentary sources has increased.

Although archaeology has led research and dominated theory in the field of prehistory, the discipline has been perceived as somewhat superfluous to studies of historic periods (Austin 1990, 13). Archaeology has been considered as an inferior contributor, and the term ‘handmaiden to history’ has been recurrent in literature discussing the subject (Nöel Hume 1964; Gilchrist 1994, 8). Documentary sources have been used to lead archaeological research, identifying sites for investigation, and a providing a chronological framework for the results, whilst the role of archaeology has been to provide illustrative material for historical texts (Andrén 1998, 17). Historian, Peter Sawyer’s often-quoted statement that ‘archaeology is an expensive way of telling us what we already know’ exemplifies this stance (Hodges 1983, 24; Rahtz 1983, 15).

The physical nature of the evidence used by archaeologists and historians has been seen as the cause of strong divisions between the disciplines:

‘[T]he low esteem felt by classical philologists towards field archaeologists was a remnant of the mediaeval tradition by which those who dealt with the Dirt were felt to practice the mechanical arts, while those who deal in the Word belonged to the liberal arts. The liberal arts are still more highly prized in academic places than the mechanical arts, the Word is still felt to be more powerful than, as well as cleaner than, the Dirt’ (Vermeule 1996, 2).

However, as Moreland (2001) argues, the dichotomy between material culture and written words is due largely to post-medieval and modern preconceptions; our division of ‘the Voice, the Object and the Word’ is one that can be traced back only as far as the sixteenth century. In past societies, objects were imbued with easily understandable messages, as may be the case with ornate pieces of carved stone, or decorated reliquaries. Text, on the other hand, would have been more closely associated with listening, than a visual experience. These situations were dramatically altered with the advent of the printing press, and the changing attitude towards iconic symbols that was brought about during the Reformation (Moreland 2001). These changes led to the primacy of the written word over other forms of communication, and the relatively modern nature of this concept must be taken into account when interpreting both forms of evidence.

‘Just as people in the historical past did not rely totally on written sources in the construction of self and society, so we in the present do not have to privilege the written word in our attempts to access the meaningful worlds they constructed’ (Moreland 2001, 39-41).

The different subjects that can be addressed by documentary and archaeological evidence have also been stressed. Due to the nature of the material evidence, there has been an assumption that the study of artefacts can address only a limited number of issues. Politics, law and administration have been seen as the preserve of documents (Davies 1983, 70), whilst archaeology provides ‘practically no clues as to social structure’ and can tell us nothing of politics (Wilson 1976, 2-3). As such, historical archaeology has tended in the past to focus on aspects of technology, economy and social conditions (Moreland 2001, 15).

However, post-processual approaches have since demonstrated the active use of material culture in political, economic and ideological spheres (Hodder 1982; 1986), and there has

been a growing recognition of the contribution that archaeology can make to aspects of society both within and outside the scope of historical studies. However, despite the theoretical developments of the 1970s and 1980s within prehistoric archaeology, many scholars have lamented the fact that medieval archaeology has not developed at the same rate, remaining largely atheoretical (Arnold 1986, 3; Mytum 1989, 339). Historical approaches to the spread of Christianity provide such an example. This 'theorylessness' has been blamed in part on the presence of historical documents, which have served for a long time as a means of explaining material culture (Andrén 1998, 3). In response to this, archaeologists have called for reform in two ways. Philip Rahtz (1983, 12) sees the need for medieval archaeology to develop as an autonomous discipline, independent of history, whereas scholars such as Driscoll (1984; 1988a), Moreland (2001) and Carver (2002a) advocate a more integrated, interdisciplinary approach.

Rahtz (1983), with Binford (1983) and Clarke (1973), is of the opinion that archaeology and history should arrive at interpretations of the past independently, and that only at the level of synthesis should information be drawn together. In this way, archaeology can be used to test hypotheses developed in history, and *vice versa*. However, as Giles (2000, 3) states, this argument suggests 'not only that a qualitative judgement can be made between the empirical validity of archaeological versus historical interpretation, but that archaeological material [is] somehow more 'real' or objective than historical data'. This approach adheres to the premise that archaeological data is a physical record of the past, a past that can be revealed through rigorous scientific analysis (Giles 2000, 3). The idea that material culture passively reflects the past has been strongly contested by post-processual schools of thought, and is a concept not readily applicable to the forms of monuments to be studied in this thesis.

The argument that material culture was actively employed in creating identity and maintaining social relations places it in a similar light to text. Hodder (1986) sees material culture as analogous to text, in that it can be read, while Driscoll (1988a) and Moreland (2001) emphasise that texts are also artefacts, and therefore have no primacy over other forms of material culture. Andrén (1998, 4) is more cautious, and suggests that considering archaeology and history as the same thing makes problems less visible, but that they do not disappear. Within the vast range of evidence that comprises 'material culture', artefacts require different methods of analysis and varying levels of interpretation (Carver 2002a, 467), and this should be extended to historical documents. In trying to establish overarching rules governing the way that text and artefact should be interpreted, an oversimplified view is likely to develop, and the complex and diverse nature of the evidence not fully appreciated.

An integration of the available sources is therefore required, but each form of evidence should be examined in its own terms, using techniques developed with relevant disciplines. Specialist skills are required to analyse place-names, to identify pottery types, and to discuss motifs on sculpture. In this thesis, therefore, each form of evidence is studied in turn, drawing on specialist surveys and studies, before the conclusions are drawn together. Rather than fitting one interpretation to other forms of evidence, discrepancies in results are recognised as such, and explanations for these differences sought.

LANDSCAPE APPROACHES

This thesis therefore begins a consideration of each form of evidence in its own right (Chapters 3 to 7), before being drawn together to describe trajectories of ideological investment. Initially, this is undertaken in a site specific level, through consideration of the site of Whithorn (Chapter 8), before the ideological investment of the study area as a whole is drawn together in Chapter 9. In order to identify spatial patterns in the data for each chapter, information has been entered into a database (Appendix A), and distribution maps created. However, the value of using these maps alone has been questioned, and information on the location of sites and monuments within the natural and cultural landscape has been collected for each region (Appendix B), so that the trajectories outlined in Chapter 9 can be given more meaningful context.

An increased interest in the landscape has developed within archaeology, as a move has been made away from the 'alienated artefact', towards concern with social and spatial context (Thomas 1993, 19). Understanding the way that populations structured and perceived their landscapes is important to the interpretation of monumentality. If Christianity became an integral element of society, then it would have been integral to the landscapes in which people dwelt. Using the range of available sources, one aim of this thesis is to consider the impact of Christian monuments on the landscape, and the way that this might represent the Christianisation of society as a whole.

Landscape studies provide an ideal arena for the integration of the natural and the cultural; the modern landscape results from a continual discourse between humans and their surroundings (Bender 1993, 3, 9; Finlayson and Dennis 2002, 226). Thomas (1993, 44) emphasises the importance of recognising that there was a continuous human presence among the structures studied by archaeologists. By discussing Christian monumentality chronologically, in phases, it is necessary to remember that the attributes and characteristics of an early phase of activity did not disappear with the onset of a new form of investment,

nor were they established in an empty landscape. Populations would have engaged with, and been influenced by, pre-existing monumentality, and the reuse, appropriation or abandonment of earlier sites is often symbolic of the agendas of contemporary populations (Bradley 1987; 1988; Williams 1997; 1998).

As 'landscape archaeology' has become increasingly popular, a wealth of literature has accumulated (for example, Bender (ed.) 1993; Ucko and Layton (eds.) 1999; Hooke (ed.) 2000; Darvill and Godja 2001). Much discussion has focussed on definitions of the term 'landscape' and two main schools of thought on this matter have been outlined (Ucko and Layton 1999, 1-2). Landscape can be identified with the physical environment, the shape of the land, which provides a topographical setting and natural resources for human activity. Alternatively, landscape can be viewed as a cultural image or perception of the world by a particular individual or group. A primarily ecological approach often leads to explanation of human behaviour as a response to environmental causes (Fox 1952), whilst a cultural approach sees behaviour as more actively meaningful (Layton 1999, 2). This distinction does, however, appear to have been exaggerated. Adaptation to a natural environment also involves conscious choice, and the way that a population reacts to particular elements within the world can be seen as meaningful, rather than automatic. Ingold (1993) is of the opinion that the debate between naturalist and cultural approaches has become sterile, and calls for a 'dwelling perspective' (Ingold 1993, 152). Likewise, Bradley (2000, 2) sees the division between those who study the 'mental landscape' and those who study the 'material landscape' as damaging; no single approach can be applied to landscape studies. The relationship between communities and their surroundings is discursive, and cannot be explained in any one way. Cramp (1999a), for example, has stressed that while the landscape of early medieval Northumbria might have shaped behaviour, it did not dictate it; earlier activity, pre-existing monuments, and perceptions of the landscape, all contributed to the identity of the early medieval kingdom (Cramp 1999a, 11).

By studying monuments within their landscape context, their intervisibility with other sites, relationship to natural features, prominence within their local landscape, and accessibility, can all be considered (Tilley 1994). Tilley argues against the premise that past perceptions of the landscape are irrevocably lost; the places occupied by people and monuments take on sets of meanings that are at least partly accessible through archaeological research (Tilley 1994, 2). Phenomenological approaches allow for the function of particular monuments, and the choices made in their creation, to be explored through a study of their setting within the cultural and natural landscape.

In previous studies of the landscape location of early Christian sites and monuments, conclusions have been made concerning their function and role within society (Hurley 1982; Morris 1989; Blair 1992; Edwards 2001); such approaches emphasise the need to take a fully contextual approach to early Christian monumentality (Dierkens 1998, 50). The value of taking a broad brush, landscape approach to early medieval Christianity has been recognised in a number of recent studies, particularly in southwest Britain (Turner 2003a; 2003b) and Ireland (Ó'Carragáin 2003a; 2003b; 2004; 2005).

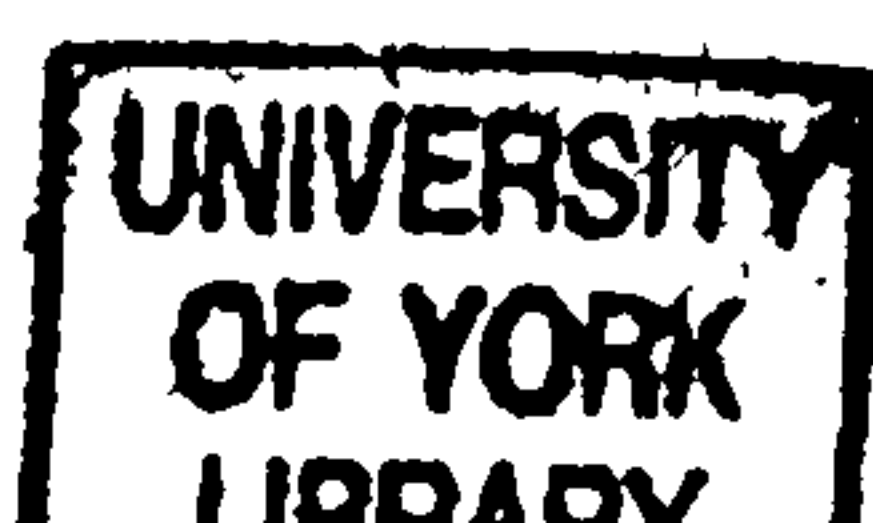
INTERPRETATION OF REGIONAL VARIATION IN MONUMENTALITY

So far, therefore, three main theoretical assumptions have been made. Firstly, that ideology, in this case Christianity, represents an integral element of society, linked to political power, economics and communal identity. Secondly, ideology has been materialised through a variety of media, and some of these (ecclesiastical centres, sculpture, place-names and portable artefacts) are available for study, representing the investment strategies of early medieval people. Finally, it is accepted that a range of monumental options was available to early medieval elites; the form that Christian monuments took, and the manifestation of Christianity in the landscape, reflect the conscious expressions of identity, economic wealth, and political affiliation.

Ideological investment therefore provides a means of exploring the way that political agendas and identity were actively expressed in the early medieval landscape. In order to use this information to discuss the changing political landscape of the northern Irish Sea, it is necessary to consider the way that spatial variation in material culture can be interpreted.

CORE AND PERIPHERY/ PEER POLITY INTERACTION

The available evidence for early medieval Christianity is used to highlight 'zones of investment', and how they changed over time (Chapter 9). In a culture historical approach, these zones might be described in homogenous terms; concepts such as the 'Celtic church' have developed in this way. However, the equation of cultural, ethnic, or political groups with forms of Christian investment would be oversimplistic; the study area is known to have comprised an ever-changing patchwork of small polities from beginning of the period of interest. Differences in monumentality must not be perceived as 'incurable ethnicity, but a different way of thinking, and a different approach to power' (Carver 2001, 20). As such, the reasons behind shared characteristics of monumentality have to be explored.



Often, the spread of attributes of material culture or social organisation is attributed to movement of ideas from a core to a periphery. The dissemination of information, technology, or artefacts is seen to have occurred from a central, developed polity, to a less developed, marginal periphery. However, such models are only of limited value to a study such as this. Whilst Ireland and western Britain might have been marginal when considered in a European perspective, this does not mean that early medieval elites in this area would have passively received goods and ideas from the rest of the world. Ideas appear to have been exchanged and spread through a variety of means within this insular maritime zone; no clear cores or peripheries emerge within western Britain, and therefore diffusionist ideas are problematic to apply. Although imported goods, and newly received ideas, represent the movement of ideas from one area to another, this cannot be considered as a one-way process. Urban and Schortman suggest that interpolity exchanges would have occurred on a relatively equal footing, and although one specific area, or core, may have had the honour of providing prestige items, this exchange 'may have stimulated economic development and associated political centralization processes in cores and peripheries alike' (Urban and Schortman 1999, 139-140). Alternatively, differential changes in cores and peripheries may reflect deliberate and active resistance within more marginal areas (Barrett *et al* 2000, 26).

Renfrew and Cherry (1986) have proposed a useful means of discussing the simultaneous emergence of socio-political systems or material culture across wide areas, in a model of 'peer polity interaction' (Renfrew 1986; 1996, 114). Rather than laying stress on the dominance of one group over another, this model attributes similar characteristics within large areas to a high level of interaction between autonomous polities of similar size and social complexity. Interaction is described as taking a number of forms, including imitation, emulation, competition, warfare, or an increased flow of goods or ideas (Renfrew 1996, 114). Where particularly high levels of interaction occur, described as 'spheres of interaction' or 'zones of interaction', similarities might be expected (figure 2.3).

The model proposed by Renfrew and Cherry (1986), provides a useful way to discuss the distribution patterns identified within the study area, and presents a selection of scenarios that might account for them. Hodges (1986) has stressed the value of this concept in the study of Anglo-Saxon England, and combines this with the three timescales of the *Annales* school. He argues that, in an historical period, sufficient data survives to reconstruct not only long term change, but the interaction and influence of individuals within a finer chronology (Hodges 1986); the western part of Britain should therefore be susceptible to the same level of study, at least in part. This approach has been applied to Christian interaction

between England and the Carolingian empire during the early medieval period (Hodges and Moreland 1988).

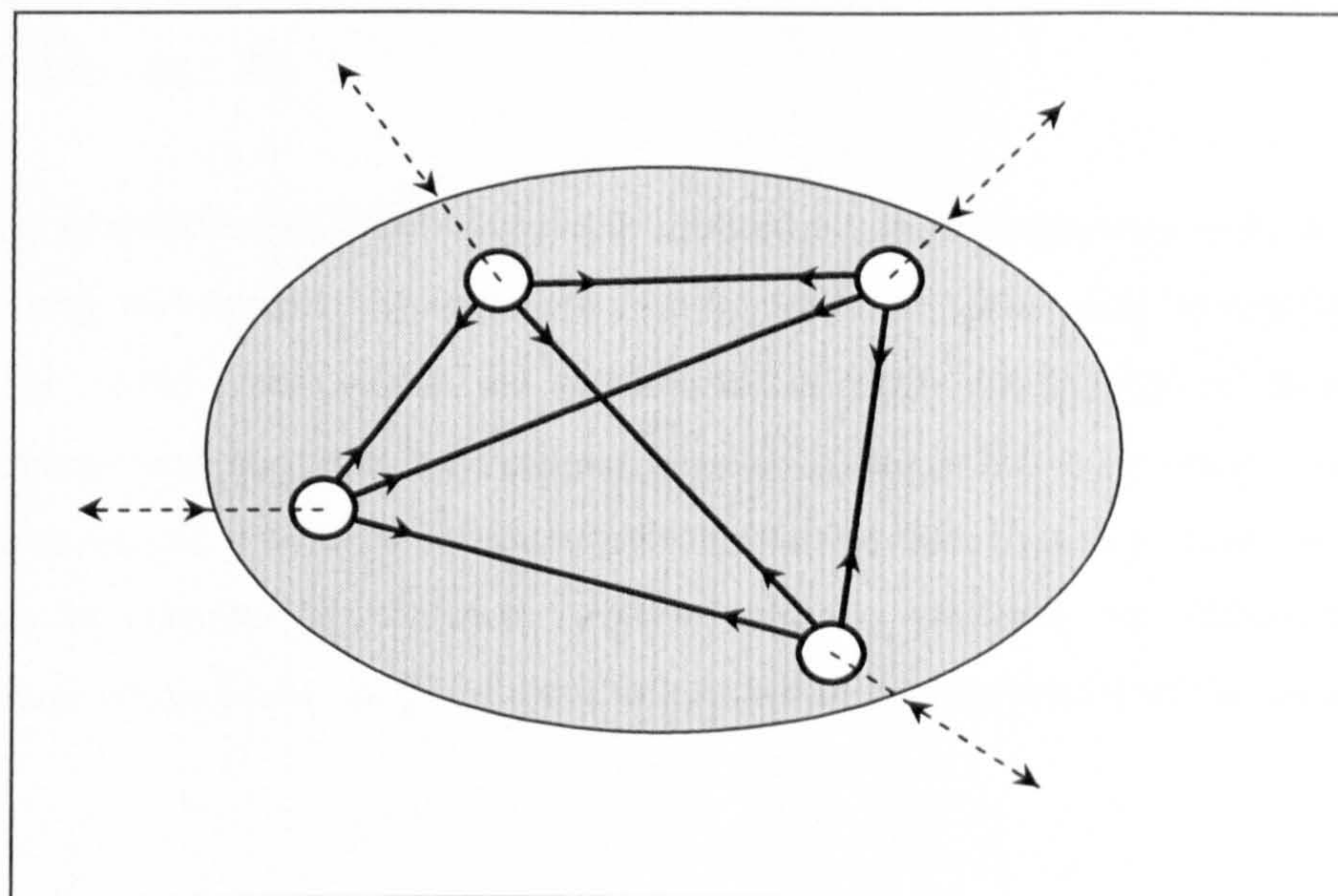


Figure 2.3: Peer polity interaction: Strong interaction between autonomous polities within the region is of more importance than external links, and a 'zone of interaction' develops (after Renfrew 1996, 123)

Peer polity interaction does, however, have limitations, and to a large extent serves as a descriptive, rather than an explanatory tool (Carver 1989b, 153; Mytum 1992, 19). Using archaeological material alone, it becomes difficult to distinguish between wider 'zones of interaction' and their component polities, or to properly identify the types of interaction that led to their creation (Carver 1989b, 153). It is also important to note the contrasts, as well as similarities, between areas. Although arguing from absence is necessarily tentative, the choice of communities *not* to invest in the same ecclesiastical monuments as their neighbours is likely to be equally significant in reconstructing past relationships. 'A statement of religious independence...is also a statement of political independence' (Stevenson 1996, 178). Hodder's study of the material culture of communities surrounding Lake Baringo led him to conclude that spatial variation in material culture 'can be related to conflict and competition over resources and the resulting need...to stress overtly clear, unambiguous identities' (Hodder 1982, 35). The clearest boundaries evident in material culture often represent the point at which interaction took place.

'Emulation, migration and trade might produce areas with seemingly homogenous elements...communities eager to assert their identities due to

competition, conflict of hostility with their neighbours, might produce more distinct culture boundaries...we cannot as prehistoric archaeologists assume that material culture "reflects" degrees of interaction because the nature of the interaction and the degree of competition between groups also plays a part' (Hodder 1982, 85).

Peer polity interaction deals primarily with similarities, and therefore provides a useful tool for discussing widespread occurrence of specific forms of ideological investment. When political or social context can be constructed through integration of historical and archaeological evidence, the implications of such patterns can be explored further, and explanations sought. Hodder's work also emphasises the need to look beyond these zones of interaction to consider the contrast *between* areas as evidence for different forms of interaction or competition. In doing so, it is hoped that a fuller picture of the study area will emerge.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL COMPLEXITY

Peer polity interaction relies on component polities being roughly similar in terms of size and social complexity. Whilst western Britain during the early medieval period is generally accepted as a 'patchwork of polities' it cannot be assumed that, within the study area, all areas were subject to the same degree of social stratification. Cumbria formed a part of militarised Roman Britain until the fourth century; in contrast, the kingdoms of Ireland had developed relatively uninterrupted from Iron Age roots (Wailes 1995). The effect of Roman occupation on Cumbria, as with the rest of Britain, is still debated, but it seems likely that social organisation in this area during the fifth century at least, would have differed from those across the Irish Sea. Interaction, therefore, may have occurred between societies that were organised in different ways.

It is possible that Christianity represents a means of exploring such differences, and also in exploring the chronological developments within certain areas. Levels of sophistication and specialisation evident in monumental investment can be used to draw general conclusions about social complexity (Brumfiel and Earle 1987); very different forms of investment may represent not only the choices of elites, but also the nature of societies that created them.

Discussions of social organisation in early medieval society are generally concerned with the development from chiefdoms to states. Most definitions of both chiefdoms and states include as key characteristics: centrally manipulated control of economy, military and

ideology, and increased specialisation (Earle 1987, 279; Brumfiel and Earle 1987). The main distinction between chiefdoms and states is generally held to be the presence of bureaucratic administration in the latter, which would have been used to maintain control over much wider areas.

Christianity is often considered to have played a significant role in the signalling and development of complex societies (Driscoll 1988b; 1991; 1998). Clearly, investment in monumentality is demonstrative of some aspects of social complexity. The patronage of ecclesiastical sites and monuments demonstrates centralised economic control, and access to specialist groups within society (metalworkers, sculptors). The introduction and development of Christianity also implies the existence of new specialist groups; monks, priests and bishops, would have required economic support. Carver (1989b, 151-2) notes in the case of East Anglia that it is difficult to conclude whether increased investment in Christian material culture can be seen as a cause of increased social stratification, or whether existing hierarchies were being signalled in a new way. The dating is 'too close to distinguish cause from effect' (Carver 1989b, 152); it may be a balance of both is evident, and that an ascending elite would have employed Christianity as a means of legitimising power and increasing influence (Urban and Schortman 1999, 126).

In the development of states, or state modules, the emergence of administrative institutions allowing control beyond an immediate kinship-based hierarchy is a defining characteristic (Driscoll 1988a, 219; 1991, 108; Heather 1994, 47). One of the major benefits of Christianity is that it provides an administrative structure that can be applied to much wider areas than traditional religions (Barrett and Foster 1991, 51-4; Urbańczyk 2003, 23). Increased and extensive control of land could have been implemented through the establishment of ecclesiastical sites and structures, and expressed through the erection of Christian monuments. Here, the reciprocal nature of ideological and political development is highlighted; Christianity required a powerful, stable society for effective implementation, but the religion could then be used to legitimise and extend political power (Stevenson 1996, 174). In Scandinavia, in particular, Christianisation has been linked to the process of state formation (Randsborg 1980, 3; Solli 1996, 95; Stevenson 1996, 174; Barrett *et al* 2000, 1). In acting as a medium for interaction and communication, Christianity clearly played a major role in changing political boundaries and relationships. Although the process of state formation is not necessarily discernible within the study area, these examples demonstrate that the implementation of a Christian ideology would have facilitated the control of large areas, and therefore acted as a significant tool in the changing political situation within the northern Irish Sea region.

CONCLUSION: STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Documentary evidence, ecclesiastical centres, Christian sculpture, religious place-names, imported goods and evidence for craftworking all provide evidence for ideological investment. The thesis is structured so that each form of evidence is considered independently; individual problems and advantages are taken into account, and the regional variation in each form of 'materialisation' is explored. The data for each form of evidence has been collected and an Access database created as a means of interrogating and mapping the evidence (Appendix A).

Subsequently, each form of evidence is considered in turn, and regional variations within each identified and discussed. Chapter 3 discusses the available historical evidence; Chapter 4 takes into account the material correlates for ecclesiastical sites (burials, churches and enclosures). Chapter 5 is a study of the carved stone monuments of the area, and Chapter 6 looks at the evidence for ecclesiastical place-names. Chapter 7 looks at evidence for imported goods and craftworking.

Within each of these forms of investment, regional variations are identified. It is recognised, however, that such distributions may be a factor of discovery and survival. As a control, and a means of testing the significance of these variations in investment, a study of the site of Whithorn is undertaken, which, as the best studied site within the region, allows a continuous sequence of ideological investment to be considered (Chapter 8). The study of Whithorn demonstrates that different forms of investment (imports, burial, craftworking, carved stone monuments, and enclosures), represent chronologically distinct strategies of investment, demonstrating that changes in monumentality represent real ideological choices and shifts in alignment. As published, interpretation of Whithorn is somewhat complex, and this study has allowed a revised sequence to be proposed.

Using the evidence drawn from Chapters 3 to 8, four key phases of activity are defined within the study area. A history of monumental investment has been written for each of the modern administrative regions forming the study area (County Down and Antrim; Dumfries and Galloway; Cumbria; Isle of Man), and is included in Appendix B. Drawing on these trajectories, and bringing together the themes identified in preceding chapters, Chapter 9 identifies patterns of investment, and 'zones of interaction' across the study area as a whole. Using the tools of peer polity interaction, and concepts of the 'materialisation of ideology', these zones are used to present an 'alternative narrative' for the area. This approach has been adopted effectively in other studies of Christianity, where an established, historically-

driven narrative is contrasted with an account drawing more heavily on material evidence (for example Solli 1996). The developments evident in early medieval monumentality within the study area are placed within as detailed a context as possible, and, using the theoretical assumptions outlined, are presented as an 'alternative narrative' to more traditional historical accounts. Rather than a definitive conclusion, this is intended to synthesise the evidence that is currently available, and provide a framework that can be disputed or supported by future fieldwork (Chapter 10).

Although the focus of this study is primarily archaeological, it cannot be ignored that this was an historic period, and that Christianity was a religion articulated through documents and the written word. To exclude historical documents from the study would be to overlook an important part of the culture of the early Christian church, and the multidisciplinary approach that has been advocated means that both texts and monuments must be considered. Available documentary sources are therefore reviewed in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

SAINTS, MONKS AND BISHOPS: HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR ECCLESIASTICAL INTERACTION AND IDEOLOGICAL INVESTMENT

Whilst some scholars have advocated that historians and archaeologists should deal only with documentary and physical evidence respectively, this study follows those who have convincingly argued for a multidisciplinary approach (Moreland 2001; Carver 2002a). The historical sources available for this period provide information valuable to this study in three key ways. Firstly, the texts provide background evidence, albeit fragmentary, about the different polities that occupied the study area. Secondly, when considered as objects of ideological investment, the texts demonstrate the agendas and ideals of individual communities, illustrating particularly by a study of the Saints' *Lives*. Finally, the historical sources provide an insight into the way that the church was organised during this period, with significant implications for the way that ecclesiastical sites are interpreted and described.

This documentary evidence must, however, be considered in a highly critical light, and unless the minutiae of translations and nuances of meaning are discussed, only the wider debates can be included (*cf* Binchy 1962, 22). The historical sources are diverse, and encompass a range of dates, styles and languages; without the linguistic skills to address primary sources, secondary works, such as those by Dumville (1993), Sharpe (1984a; 1992), Hughes (1966; 1972), Charles-Edwards (2000) and Etchingham (1999), have to be relied upon.

The available material is also highly uneven regarding coverage of the study area. Cumbria has produced no direct historical evidence dating to the period of interest, and occurs only in references in external, or much later, documents such as Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (*HE* II.5; II.9; IV.32), the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the *Historia Brittonum*, or later saint's *Lives* (O'Sullivan 1985, 17). Likewise, the Isle of Man is lacking in historical sources predating the twelfth century; much evidence is drawn from rare references in Irish hagiography (Hood 1978, 72-3), or much later sources such as the *Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles*

(Broderick 1979a), or the *Manx Traditional Ballad*. Scotland is better served, particularly with hagiographical sources; from the study area, works believed to have originated in Whithorn have been ascribed to the eighth century and later (*Miracula Sancti Nynie*; HE III.4). Ireland has a wealth of documentary sources, particularly from the seventh century onwards, including hagiography, penitentials, law tracts, annals and letters (Hughes 1972). Irish sources have often been used to provide a historical background for western Britain as a whole. However, although Irish sources doubtless provide valid *comparanda* for western British society, this study seeks to address regional variation, and as such, drawing hugely generalised conclusions will be avoided. It is recognised, therefore, that the sources provide an imbalanced view, focussed primarily on Ireland. It can be noted, however, that the uneven distribution of surviving documentation is in itself an indicator of differing intellectual development within the area being studied.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AREA

In using a geographical approach to archaeological material, there is a natural tendency to discuss distributions in relation to named communities and kingdoms, and as such, historical sources are often referred to. However, a brief overview of the available sources for the study area demonstrates that the political history is far from clear, and shows the need to explore all available forms of evidence.

As noted, Ireland is best documented within the study area and the available sources, particularly law tracts such as the *Crith Gablach*, reveal a fragmented, hierarchical society, in which the primary unit was the *túath*, loosely translated as ‘tribe’ (Edwards 1990, 8; Wailes 1995, 61). By the seventh century, these *túatha* were loosely grouped together, ruled by more or less stable overkings, who in turn came to recognise the authority of high kings (Wailes 1995, 61). Within the study area, key confederacies or kingdoms have been highlighted and located, most notably the *Dál Fiatach* (eastern County Down), the *Dál Riata* (northern Antrim), whose power base shifted to western Scotland (Bannerman 1968; 1974; Duncan 1975, 41-2), and the *Cruithni*, increasingly referred to as the *Dál nAraidi* (Charles-Edwards 2000, 54).

For the remainder of the area, however, kings and kingdoms are not so easily defined, despite the optimism of earlier scholars: ‘we know a good deal about the little courts and kingdoms of southern Scotland and Cumbria in the sixth and seventh centuries’ (Chadwick 1964, 157). It is widely accepted that, following the decline of Roman administration, the northern Britons formed warbands that eventually became small kingdoms (Cessford 1999,

150). Their leaders were referred to by the Welsh writers as the *Gwŷr y Gogledd*, or the 'Men of the North' (Chadwick 1949, 137); the limits of their territories, however, are not well known. For the study area, one of the key issues is the location and extent of the kingdom of Rheged, known to have been ruled in the later sixth century by Urien. Rheged has no annalistic, legal or ecclesiastical record, and no artistic legacy; the majority of sources that refer to this polity are much later, and generally unreliable (Dumville 1977). Most frequently, therefore, discussions of Rheged rely on a few key sources, primarily the poems of Taliesin, the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae* (Williams 1975; Whitelock 1955, 236-8).

The territory of Rheged is frequently located across large areas of Cumbria, and Dumfries and Galloway (for example, Smyth 1984, 21). This presumption relies on small pieces of evidence, and in particular on the use of the term *tra merin reget* in the Book of Taliesin, meaning 'beyond the sea of Rheged' (Williams 1975, *xli*). This phrase is traditionally equated with the Solway Firth, and has led to the widely held view that Rheged was focussed on Carlisle, and spanned large tracts of southwest Scotland and northwest England, to either side of the Solway (Williams 1951; Thomas 1971, 16). Other place-name associations have been used to support such an assumption; poems mention *Llwyfenydd*, which has been linked to the river name Lyvennet, near Crosby Ravensworth (Cumbria) (Hogg 1946), and the place-name Dunragit, in Galloway, has been translated as 'fort of Rheged' (MacQueen 2002, 92).

The idea that Rheged occupied such a large territory has, however, been disputed. McCarthy has observed that, if the traditional extent of the kingdom is accepted, it would have been notably larger the known extents of contemporary polities, and suggests a smaller territory should be sought (McCarthy 2002, 361). He suggests that *merin reget* might refer to Luce Bay, and uses the place-name Dunragit, the relatively rich prehistoric landscape, and extensive communication links of this area to suggest that Rheged can be located in western Galloway.

Phythian-Adams (1996, 49) has suggested a totally different location; he notes that sources refer to Urien as Prince of Catterick (*Catraeth*), and that the reference to Lyvennet is to a residence; he therefore suggests that Rheged was situated in a strategic location guarding the Stainmore pass and the approach route from Deira into Cumbria. This location has recently been supported, with the suggestion that the later diocesan boundaries of the area, in particular between Hexham and Lindisfarne, represent earlier kingdoms (Woolf 2006).

Such divergent accounts demonstrate the difficulty in proposing an early political history of the area based on documentary evidence alone. Hints at a second dynasty in the region are also noted: the *Annales Cambriae* record the death of King Dunod in AD 595, son of Pabo, who has loosely been associated with Papcastle in the Derwent valley (Phythian-Adams 1996, 49). This indicates the potential for more, undocumented polities within the area traditionally assigned to Rheged.

Later sources are slightly more illuminating, as Rheged came into the sphere of Northumbrian interest. Rhun, son of Urien, is recorded in the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae* to have been involved in the baptism of King Edwin in the early seventh century, contradicting Bede, who records only the involvement of bishop Paulinus. Less than a decade later, Riemmelth, granddaughter of Urien, is recorded in both the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Liber Vitae* as the first wife of King Oswy of Northumbria, a marriage which produced Ahlfrith, subking of Deira until AD 664 (McCarthy 2002, 370). From this point, historical references to Rheged cease, and the British kingdom is considered to have been subsumed into a wider Northumbria (MacQuarrie 1993, 17-8); the visit of St Cuthbert to Carlisle attests to communication within the wider network of churches in east and west in the latter part of the seventh century (*HE* IV.29). The date of such a takeover is still debated, ranging from the reign of Athelfrith (AD 592-616) to the early eighth century and the reign of Ecgfrith (AD 682-709); a more gradual, staged process, has also been advocated (Phythian-Adams 1996, 50-1). None of this discussion, however, leads closer to defining the boundaries of the British kingdoms, or the precise extent of Northumbrian power, before political upheavals caused by Scandinavian incursions in later centuries.

Despite much scholarship into the translation, authentication and interpretation of available resources (Jackson 1964), the picture that emerges is fragmentary; the Isle of Man, for example, is barely recorded at all, beyond fleeting references from a Northumbrian or Irish standpoint. No conveniently located political boundaries are available; archaeological evidence can therefore be used to lead a discussion of the political and ideological interaction surrounding the northern Irish Sea.

DOCUMENTS AS IDEOLOGICAL INVESTMENT

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

A large proportion of the historical evidence for the early medieval period is represented by hagiography, which has led to considerable focus on the lives of the saints in narrative

studies. Many publications on the early church start with chapters on saints, in which the activities of figures such as Ninian, Patrick or Columba are described, and used as an explanation for spread of Christianity within specific areas (Hughes 1966, 25f; Thomas 1971a, 78f). This has recently been observed as a trend in Scotland, where 'historians ...have been preoccupied with the seemingly fixed points of the saintly personalities' (Clancy 2001, 1). Much the same can be said of scholarship in Ireland, where documentary evidence is much more prolific than for Scotland (Sharpe 1992, 85). The historical approach has often set the agenda for research into Christianity, leading to a focus on *l'histoire événementielle*; developments in the church have been described as a series of events, attributed to the works of individuals, without considering the broader political and economic changes that provide a meaningful context for ecclesiastical development.

However, such approaches have been subject to recent criticism (Clancy 2001, 1). It has been recognised that the hagiographical sources relied on so heavily cannot be regarded as historical sources (Hughes 1972, 219; Edwards, N. 2002, 225), but should be seen as the 'fully realised literary artefacts of their times of composition' (Clancy 2001, 1).

'Hagiography is not history. The author is not concerned to establish a correct chronology...he is rather writing the panegyric of a saint, stressing in particular his holy way of life, the supernatural phenomena which attended it. Sometimes the aim is didactic, sometimes more crudely financial...Hagiography will therefore give reliable contemporary evidence about the aspirations and culture of a people' (Hughes 1972, 219).

Using these sources to create historical narrative, therefore, is problematic. However, if the texts are seen in a more politicised light, they provide valuable information about the agendas and ideals of the communities who created them. This is most evident if the key saints associated with the study area, St Patrick, St Ninian and St Columba are considered. The way that each individual is portrayed in hagiography results from specific political, ideological and social conditions; the textual evidence can therefore be treated initially as another means of 'materializing ideology'. Through these sources, the elite which controlled the literature, whether secular or ecclesiastical, was able to make a monumental statement of events as they would have them remembered, regardless of historicity. In this way, traditions could be created, and stakes could be claimed to land, ecclesiastical supremacy, or to financial dues.

The 'historical' value of hagiography does not necessarily lie in the specific facts regarding the life of the saints themselves, but in the more circumstantial evidence; the sites and individuals that were familiar to a particular hagiographer, practices, journeys and behaviour that were considered the norm. These glimpses can also add to our understanding of early Christian society at this time, and some of the circumstantial information provided, particularly in the Patrician sources, allows an understanding of some of the mechanisms of interaction between different communities at this time.

St Patrick

Unlike many of the early medieval saints, the life of St Patrick is partly recorded in his own words, in his 'Confession' (*Confessio*) and his 'Letter to the soldiers of Coroticus' (*Epistola ad milites Coroticus*) (Binchy 1962, 9). These sources described an individual born in Britain in the late fourth century (c.AD 390), whose ministry in Ireland had begun by the early fifth century (Hanson 1968, 171-188; Thompson 1985, 166-175; Dumville 1993a; Howlett 1994, 116-7; MacQuarrie 1997, 43).

Patrick provides basic facts about his life and travels, recounting his background in an aristocratic British family, who held ecclesiastical and secular offices (*Confessio* 23); his grandfather Potitus was a *presbyter*, whilst his father Calpornius was a *diaconus* and a *decurio*, responsible for tax collection (*Confessio* 1). Despite this, however, Patrick states that his upbringing was not deeply religious; 'I was ignorant of the true God...we did not keep watch over his precepts, and we were not obedient to our priests' (*Confessio* 1). The tone of these chapters has led to the suggestion that the Christian faith was observed only nominally, and ecclesiastical offices held alongside secular ones, possibly for the purpose of tax evasion (Howlett 1994, 116). These chapters are of particular significance in providing a rare glimpse of the character of Christianity in Britain in the fifth century; as later Chapters of this thesis demonstrate, the available evidence would otherwise seem to indicate an absence of Christian investment.

The later ministry of St Patrick, returning to Ireland after an escape from slavery, provides evidence for the way that Christianity was implemented (Charles-Edwards 2000, 217). The *Confessio* reveals close contacts with royalty, or the sons and daughters of royalty, whom he mentions as having converted, and who had become 'monks and virgins of Christ' (*Confessio* 41; *Epistola* 12; Howlett 1994, 81). Gifts were offered to kings so that they might receive him, to the sons of kings who accompanied him, and to the judges who facilitated his freedom of movement (Charles-Edwards 2000, 220; *Confessio* 52-3). Charles-Edwards suggests that these gifts, rather than constituting bribes, should be seen in the light

of the later documented importance of reciprocity and clientship in Irish society (Charles-Edwards 2000, 220; Gerriets 1983).

Patrick's own works therefore provide a valuable glimpse of contemporary conversion and Christianisation, also providing an indication of the literate background from which he came. Though Patrick himself is humble about the 'rusticity' of his grammar and education (Hood 1978, 18; Bieler 1949, 49; Bieler 1986), David Howlett's recent study has considered his work in the light of the Biblical tradition of constructing prose. Howlett argues that Patrick's work exhibits a high degree of sophistication that earlier scholars have simply been unable to understand (Howlett 1994), suggesting that he was a sophisticated author, to be regarded amongst a wider reaching intellectual elite of the period (Howlett 1994, 115; Charles-Edwards 1999, 231).

Patrick's subsequent emergence as the iconic figure of this period, however, is not entirely due to his own achievements, and can more accurately attributed to later hagiographers, particularly the seventh century writers Tírechán and Muirchú who promoted the cult of Patrick as a means of strengthening the political supremacy of Armagh (Dumville 1993b, 183; Bieler 1979; Charles-Edwards 2000, 11). The influence of these, and later authors, is emphasised when consideration is given to the contemporary or earlier figure, Palladius (Hughes 1972, 30-1). Having emerged initially in historical sources in relation to the Pelagian heresy, Palladius is recorded in AD 431 to have been 'ordained by the Pope Celestine, [and] sent, as their first bishop, to the Irish who believe in Christ' (Prosper of Aquitaine *Chronicle*; Mommsen 1981, 473; Charles-Edwards 1993, 1). The account demonstrates the relationship of Ireland to the wider Christian world, extolled, indirectly, by Pope Leo in AD 441, when he stressed that the Roman church had managed to exceed the authority of the Roman Empire at its height;

'having been made head of the whole world through the holy see of the blessed Peter, you [Rome] came to rule over a wider territory through the worship of God than by earthly domination...what the toils of war subjected to you in less than that which a Christian peace has made obedient' (Charles-Edwards 1993, 1).

Despite the clearly important role played by Palladius, however, the traditions and legends surrounding him did not survive, and the Irish Church chose not to invest in the Continental saints, but in the more insular figure of St Patrick. Some sources may even have sought to combine the identities of the two (discussed in detail by Binchy 1962; *Collectanea* 56, 2; Doherty 1991, 74). In doing so, the conscious alignment of Irish communities with certain

individuals, and their appropriation of specific cults, is revealed through the hagiographical sources.

Tírechán's text, written between *c.* AD 670 and 700, is geographical in structure, and uses alleged missionary journeys of St Patrick around western, eastern and northern Ireland, to create a far-reaching map of churches that were of Patrician foundation, and subsequently could be claimed under Armagh's jurisdiction. This work includes information on over eighty churches; their setting within a journey would have been understood in the seventh century as 'an expression of lordship, ecclesiastical as much as secular' (Charles-Edwards 2000, 10). Tírechán describes encountering monuments and relics associated with St Patrick, but above all he focuses on the churches founded by the saint, and his consecration of clergy and bishops (Doherty 1991, 60). Tírechán's account is highly detailed, describing foundations, records, and associated relics, 'for he was providing legal evidence, a pseudo-historical account of the membership of the *paruchia Patricii* which might serve as the title deeds of its *heres*' (Sharpe 1982a, 45). In 1966, Kathleen Hughes argued that Tírechán's work was an attempt to establish for Armagh a *paruchia* analogous to that of Iona, incorporating a large number of subservient churches, connected through the ties of overlordship and clientship that were inherent within contemporary society (Hughes 1966, 86-7; Gerriets 1983; Doherty 1991, 60). Within this wider *paruchia* were the County Down churches of Raholp and Saul, which formed a focal point to the south of Strangford Lough, bearing a closer relationship with Downpatrick. These churches, now within the study area, played an important role in Patrician hagiography, providing an indication of the complex relationships between the communities in this area, and increasingly powerful Armagh.

A major problem faced by Armagh, in trying to harness the cult of St Patrick, was the fact that Patrick's remains were not buried there. This embarrassment was dealt with in Muirchú's *Life of Patrick*, written some time after AD 688 (Doherty 1991, 82). Muirchú's narrative tells the story of Patrick's death; the saint had been told in a vision that he was to die, and he made immediate preparations to travel to Armagh 'which he loved above all places' (Sharpe 1982a, 40). However, he was prevented from doing so by the intervention of an angel, and returned to Saul (Co. Down) where he died after receiving the *viaticum* from Bishop Tassach (traditionally associated with the church at Raholp, Co Down). Further sources, including the earliest Life of Brigit, record that Patrick was later buried at *Dún Lethglaisse* (Downpatrick), recorded as a royal fort in the Annals of Ulster for AD 496 (AU 496.3). The church of Down, *Druim Lethglaisse*, occurring in the Annals of Ulster for AD 584 (AU 584.1), is thought to have increased in importance in the seventh and eighth centuries, when it became known by the name *Dún Lethglaisse*. This church was acquired by

the Uí Dichu, descendants of Díchu, a 'good pagan' occurring in Muirchú's *Life* and linked to Saul. It is suggested that the association of the church at Down with this dynasty would have provided a context for the translation of Patrick's relics from Saul to Down (Charles-Edwards 2000, 66). The authenticity of these references, and acceptance that the earliest focus of a cult of St Patrick would have been centred on Saul/Downpatrick, is based in part on the fact that those who recorded these facts would evidently have preferred them to be otherwise (Sharpe 1982a, 43). Muirchú's narrative is an attempt to reconcile the known facts; explaining away the fact that Armagh was claiming to be the prime centre of Patrician influence, whilst his relics lay elsewhere. Muirchú's version of events creates a more harmonious relationship between all of these sites, bringing the churches of Saul, Downpatrick and possibly Raholp into association with the see of Armagh. References of this type are numerous, and continue to be included in later Patrician hagiography. For example, according to the *Tripartite Life*, Mo Chae, the saint associated with Nendrum, Co. Down, was encountered by Patrick as a swineherd: Patrick tonsured him, gave him the necessary equipment to conduct Mass. The staff that he gave to Mo Chae is described as lying with its head in Patrick's lap, its foot in Mo Chae's lap. This is used to demonstrate that 'Mo Chae's church was united in wholly honourable and respectful subordination to Patrick' (Charles-Edwards 2000, 28).

In terms of ecclesiastical politics and investment, the works of Patrick, Tírechán and Muirchú suffice to demonstrate that these sources do not describe a biography as such, but rather political developments within an increasingly powerful and influential church. Clearly the church in County Down, and to some extent in Antrim, would have been influenced by the aspirations of Armagh, and it is within this context that investment in churches and monuments within the study are must be considered. Patrick was himself, in this case, exploited as a symbol of power, representing a monument to the influence of seventh-century Armagh.

St Ninian

The politicisation and appropriation of saintly figures through hagiography is even more evident in the case of St Ninian, an early saint traditionally linked with Whithorn in southwest Scotland (Hill 1997). The story of St Ninian is based on three sources; references in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (III.4), a poetic life known as *Miracula Nynie Episcopi*, and a twelfth century composition by Aelred of Rievaulx. Considerable work has been undertaken to detangle fact from legend within these works (Wade-Evans 1951; MacQueen 1990; 1991, 17; MacQuarrie 1997, 50-73; Clancy 2001, 3-5)

Together, the eighth-century sources of Bede (*HE* III.4) and the *Miracula* record a fifth-century saint who preached to the southern Picts, had been instructed in Roman, and who was bishop of *Candida Casa*, where he was buried. The information is long considered to have been based on primary information; Bede was in contact with Pecthelm, then bishop of Whithorn (MacQueen 1990, 7; 1991, 17), and it has been suggested that, at Pecthelm's bequest, a *Life* of the saint had been composed, and that this formed the original source for the *Miracula*, and (possibly indirectly) for Aelred's *Life* (MacQueen 1990, 1-11; Clancy 2001, 8).

Following a detailed reassessment of the available historical evidence, and for the cult of St Ninian within the wider landscape, Thomas Clancy has argued that Ninian was actually a creation of these later Northumbrian sources. No cult of St Ninian is evident in place-names or dedications, and no sources pre-dating the eighth century attest to his existence (Clancy 2001, 9-10, 12). This contrasts with a considerable amount of toponymic and dedicational evidence for the popularity of St Finnian, or St *Uinniau*, a British saint who has been equated with Finnian of Movilla, Finnian of Clonard, and is variously credited with a sixth century Penitential, identified as a correspondent of Gildas, and a teacher of Columba (Ó Riain 1981; 1984; Dumville 1984b; Sperber 1997).

Clancy's convincing hypothesis is that the cult of a sixth-century *Uin(n)iau* survived in manuscripts at Whithorn until the eighth century when, during the time of Pecthelm, a basic scribal error in mistaking a u- for an n- created the name *Ni(n)iau*, from which the subsequent literary tradition represented in the eighth- and twelfth-century sources derived (Clancy 2001, 23-4). The promulgation of this cult is considered to have been undertaken in a Northumbrian *milieu*, closely related to interests of Bishop Acca and the promotion of the Northumbrian, Roman church in southwest Scotland (Fraser 2002). The Northumbrian elite would have been keen to appropriate this cult as a means of expounding their influence in this area. In addition, the creation of a Northumbrian see would have assisted the archiepiscopal ambitions of the see of York, which required a network of further dioceses to achieve metropolitan status (Fraser 2002. 57-8).

If these politicised layers and divergences are stripped away, a much more 'rounded' historical saint is revealed, whose life demonstrates a high degree of interaction across the Irish Sea, via the channels represented by the church (Clancy 2001, 25). *Uinniau* becomes a sixth-century cleric who, after training at Whithorn, left for Ireland, where he played a role in monastic foundation. The ecclesiastical settlement at Movilla was founded, and later, a second monastery was established at Clonard, either by himself or followers of his tradition.

It is suggested to have been at Movilla that *Uinniau* met and taught the young St Columba, before he departed for Scotland and Iona in AD 563. This saint wrote to Gildas with his ecclesiastical concerns, and composed a penitential which formed the basis for that of St Columbanus, who knew of this text and of *Uinniau*'s correspondence with Gildas (Clancy 2001, 26). 'He died, it seems likely, in 579, a venerable old bishop' (Clancy 2001, 26). Subsequently, his cult spread in western Britain (Dumville 1984b) and around the Whithorn area (Clancy 2001, 9-12), but had been largely forgotten outside literary sources by the eighth century, when he was rediscovered as St Ninian. The cult of the saint also became increasingly popular in Ireland, where, by at least the ninth century, he had become an Irishman, 'or rather two Irishmen, with two localisations, two pedigrees, and therefore separate identities...' (Dumville 1993c, 140; 1997, 76).

The 'real' saint, it seems, was therefore a central figure within the area of interest, and his reconstructed biography supports close links between Britain and Ireland at this time, particularly western Scotland and Ireland. This is of particular interest, given the pattern of communication and strong links that are attested by other forms of evidence (see Chapter 10). Clancy notes the attractive possibility that it would not have been impossible for *Uinniau* to have been a bishop of both Whithorn and Movilla at the same time. St Ninian, on the other hand, belongs not in the sixth century, but emerges due to the aspirations of the Northumbrian church, and the promotion of a perceived local saint; the information provided by Bede and the *Miracula* shed light on eighth century Whithorn and its world (see Chapter 9). The disentangling of these sources demonstrates the problems with using hagiography as history, but highlights the value of these documents as indications of wider strategies of ideological and political investment.

St Columba

The possible role played by St Finnian/*Uinniau* in the education of St Columba also brings this major saint into the study area, highlighting further the high levels of interaction along the western seaboard at this time (Binchy 1962, 56; Sharpe 1991; 1995). Columba, whose *Life* is a much less overtly political creation than those of Ninian and Patrick, also forged an important link between Ireland and Scotland, in the foundation of Iona. Adomnán, writing about 100 years after Columba's death, records Columba's encounters with Conall mac Comgaill, king of the Dál Riata in Scotland (*VC* III.7), who is recorded in the annals to have granted the site of Iona for the foundation of a monastery (*AU* 574.2; MacQuarrie 1997, 76; Hughes 1972, 224; Clancy 1999, 43). This mirrors the evidence of St Patrick, in demonstrating the close links between secular and ecclesiastical power (MacQuarrie 1997,

76). Adomnán also highlights Columba's relationships with key ecclesiastical individuals, including Comgall of Bangor. Columba clearly dwelt within a political sphere which spanned the western coast of Britain, across to Ireland, and also to Northumbria, demonstrating the widespread links and concerns of the seventh century (Sharpe 1995, 22-3). Adomnán's *Life of St Columba* also forms part of a dialogue, responding to the ambitions of Armagh, evident in the Patrician hagiography, and the interests of Northumbria following the Synod of Whitby. The *Life* was written at a time when the Ionan federation would have been aware of an increasing threat from the expanding Armagh in Ireland, and challenges presented by a developing relationship between King Nechtán of the Picts and Ceolfrith of Monkwearmouth/Jarrow. The nuances of Adomnán's work, presenting a centrally important saint that could be venerated by Roman and Irish churches alike (Charles-Edwards 2000, 288), can therefore be perceived within this context, as 'a refutation of Armagh's claims, a defence of Columba against Ceolfrith's attacks, and a manifesto of Iona's proprietorial claims to Ireland and north Britain' (Veitch 1997, 634; cf Clancy 1999). Again, hagiography is being employed strategically, as a means of furthering the agendas of a particular community within its contemporary political context.

National and local saints

The cults described are those of saints of national, even international, significance. To Ninian, Patrick and Columba could be added Brigit of Kildare (Sharpe 1982b; McCone 1982; Connolly 1987), and St Kentigern, whose cult has been linked to the agendas of Glasgow and the kingdom of Strathclyde into the twelfth century (MacQuarrie 1993; Lowe 1991, 11; MacQuarrie 1997, 134, Clancy 2002, 404). In a similar way, the popularity of saints such as Cuthbert and Oswald in the west can be linked to the Northumbrian expansion beyond the Pennines (Tudor 1984; South 2002).

Investment in major cults has, therefore, tended to overshadow the activities of more local saints, whose lesser status in later centuries meant that they were not so well recorded, but who would have been important to communities on a much more local level (Thacker 2002, 1). During the early medieval period, the cults of martyrs and bishops developed throughout Europe; where communities lacked martyrs, relics could be imported, saints 'rediscovered' or created (Sharpe 2002, 152). The period of the late sixth century and early seventh century is seen as the height of such activity (Sharpe 2002, 148, 152). Many of these local saints, however, remain largely undocumented, and can only be discerned in short annalistic references, or hinted at in later sources.

A number of these less far-reaching cults can be identified within and around the study area, and further demonstrate the communication links that existed within the study area. Máel Rubha, for example, is known from annals to have come from the monastery of Bangor in AD 671, establishing a community at Applecross in AD 673, and eventually passing away in AD 722 (AU 671.5; 673.5; 722.1; MacQuarrie 1997, 165-7). The saint of Maughold, on the Isle of Man, has been identified in a story within Muirchú's *Life of St Patrick*. Maccuil is recorded in a confrontation with St Patrick, which caused him to take a penitential journey in a curragh, manacled, 'to the land assigned him by God' (Hood 1978, 72, 94). This has been seen as further attempts by Armagh to gain ascendancy over wide areas; the legend of the more local saint may not otherwise have been documented (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 30), and his cult only attested in place-names and dedications which link him both to Maughold and to Nendrum (Bowen 1972, 87-9). Thacker (2002, 35) has noted that Tírechán's claims of numerous churches for St Patrick may actually record the suppression of a number of local cults, whose saints are now forgotten.

As has been stressed, fragmentary references and later lives must be treated with caution, and attempts to place literary saints back into 'contemporary' contexts have been avoided. The problematic nature of sources is exemplified by the cult of St Bega, who gives her name to the site of St Bees, Cumbria (Todd 1980). A thirteenth-century *Life* records Bega as an Irish saint, who fled Ireland in the mid-seventh century to avoid marriage to a Viking prince. Aside from the obvious historical incongruity, it has been noted that certain elements of Bega's life appear to be lifted from those of *Begu*, a nun associated with Hild of Whitby and recorded by Bede. Moreover, it has been noted that *Sancta Bega* is 'good ecclesiastical Latin' for Anglo-Saxon *halgan beage*, or 'holy bracelet' (Todd 1980, 29). That Bega's relic is recorded to have been a bracelet or armlet appears more than suspicious; it has been suggested that the saint may be a 'mirage' created for an existing relic (Blair 2002, 514). Smyth (1979, 268-9) has taken a step further, linking the description of the bracelet and silver Norse arm rings, which were often given symbolic connotations as items on which oaths were sworn. It appears likely, therefore, that an historical figure developed at a site, possibly of pre-existing ecclesiastical significance (hinted at by the place-name *Kirkby Becok*), surrounding a precious artefact of some symbolic importance.

The lives of the saints, although problematic, provide a picture of fluid and continuing communication within the western seaways. The nature of this contact, and the way that ideas were exchanged, reveals something of the ways that Christian communities interacted and aligned themselves with each other. Charles-Edwards (2000, 290) has described the close communication networks of the wider church as two great circles; a clockwise route by

which books, men and ideas were transported from Roman Britain, to Ireland, then from Ireland to Irish communities in Scotland and England, and from there to the English. The second, anticlockwise movement, took Irishmen from Ireland to the Continent, and then the Irish monks and their pupils in Gaul back to England. Figure 3.1, though highly selective, demonstrates some of the communication links within the more immediate area, showing just some of the routes along which ideas, books and individuals could travel, and debates be carried out. The controversies of the late seventh century, between Roman orthodoxy and the traditions of the Irish, represent the highly dynamic nature of this communication.



Figure 3.1 Known movements of selected individuals

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR THE ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH

In addition to studying the lives of the saints, scholarly attention has focussed on the organisation of the church, and the terminology that can be applied to individual sites (Hughes 1966; Sharpe 1984a; Etchingam 1999). Much debate has rested on whether the early church can be described as episcopal, monastic or secular in character, and this has had considerable impact on both historical and archaeological study, heavily influencing the interpretation of archaeological sites. In attempting to resolve this question, the historical evidence, and particularly the terminology used, has been studied in great depth (Etchingam 1999). This problem has been the subject of much discussion since the 1840s (Sharpe 1992, 88), but from the 1980s, there has been a definite move away from the received wisdom that, in Ireland, a monastic church superseded a diocesan organisation of early date. Instead, a more balanced model has been proposed, describing a church that encompassed aspects of monastic, episcopal and secular elements throughout the early medieval period.

At the foundation of many early studies was the assumption that monasticism predominated during the early medieval period, and that the church comprised a series of monastic *paruchia* controlled by abbots (Kenney 1968, 291-2). In one of the seminal texts to address this period, Kathleen Hughes' *The church in early Irish Society* (1966), historical sources were used to propose a chronological model to chart this phenomenon. Hughes argued that an episcopal system was introduced to Ireland at its very earliest stage; territorial dioceses were established, and the church was controlled by bishops, in much the same way as is documented for the rest of Europe, and postulated for northern Britain (Hughes 1966, 33; Thomas 1971, 16-17). Relatively quickly, however, the Irish diocesan church gave way to a predominantly monastic organisation, based on large religious communities which formed the central *foci* for monastic *paruchia*, comprising confederations of linked churches. The traditional view endured, that the history of the Irish church in the first millennium 'was of the early triumph of monasticism over episcopal government, soon followed by a process of secularisation which, despite efforts to return to fundamentals, left the institution of the Viking Age characterised by its degeneracy and worldliness' (Etchingam 1999, 455). This change was frequently explained as due to the tribal and rural nature of Celtic society, which did not provide the administrative network required for an episcopal infrastructure (de Paor and de Paor 1958, 50; Binchy 1967, 219). Emphasis has continually been placed on the adaptation of the Irish church to the character of Irish society, to values of kinship, and clientship, and the fact that this resulted in a highly unique ecclesiastical organisation.

These views have, however, be disputed. In 1984, Richard Sharpe presented a series of arguments which threw into doubt much of the model presented by Hughes and others, highlighting that the division between episcopal and monastic systems is nowhere clear-cut. Sharpe uses numerous historical sources to emphasise that evidence exists neither for a purely episcopal church at an early date, nor for a wholly monastic church in subsequent centuries (Sharpe 1984, 231; 239, 249). Scholars such as Charles-Edwards (1992), Sharpe (1984; 1992) and Etchingham (1999) have reassessed the available documentary sources, using them to suggest that a more complex, diverse system was in place.

Instead of debating whether a church is 'monastic' or 'episcopal', Etchingham suggests that the distinction should be made between great centres, or chief churches, and the smaller, lesser foundations (Etchingham 1999, 457). A passage in the *Liber Angeli*, for example, suggests the presence of churches that enjoyed different histories and varying statuses, mentioning the presence of 'free churches' (*Liber Angeli* 21; Sharpe 1984, 255). The concept of a 'free church', demonstrates a hierarchy in which 'unfree' churches would have been a major feature. Unfree churches could have been under royal *census*, part of the *paruchia* of a powerful church, or in hereditary control of a family which had founded it (Sharpe 1984, 257-8). Sharpe notes a common denominator of the church in all of these definitions – the treatment of the church as property. '[A church] may be held as a family estate for several generations, or by another church, or a lord, but it is owned' (Sharpe 1984, 258). These churches would have formed the lesser tiers in the ecclesiastical hierarchies, and presumably would have been one of the most common features of the ecclesiastical landscape (Charles-Edwards 1992, 64). Each individual territory would have been served by a small church, which would have been reliant on a central church for staffing, training, organisational support (Sharpe 1992, 102).

The nature of these 'chief churches', and the fact that they house communities, has been confused by terminology, as in many cases they are referred to using a monastic vocabulary (Sharpe 1992, 101). However, this has been demonstrated as a misleading concept, and the problems with terminology have resonances with the literature surrounding the 'minster debate' in England, where the term 'minster' has been advocated (Blair 1988; Foot 1992; Cambridge and Rollason 1995). No such consensus has as yet been arrived at for Ireland and the west. Throughout this thesis, the term 'monastery' is used, but in a loose sense, to describe the large ecclesiastical communities that appear to have occupied major focal points within their respective areas, as centres for population, tribute, learning and communication. These may also have been centres from which pastoral care was administered, and an episcopal see overseen. 'It would be unsurprising to find the chief church of a *túath* to be

both episcopal and monastic and for the bishop to be head of the church, *princeps* and also, in relation to the monks, *abbas*' (Charles-Edwards 1992, 66).

The role of ecclesiastical communities as landowners and overlords, whatever form they took, meant that they could amass considerable amounts of wealth. This resulted in the development of the role of *coarb*, or governor of temporal affairs, and the expansion of the church from at least the eighth century was primarily in this direction (Etchingham 1999, 456-7). This eclipsed, to some extent, the role of the abbot as leader of the religious core of these centres. Only the abbots of the most influential centres were also bishops (Sharpe 1984, 266).

During its history, the church is considered to have undergone a 'secularisation', moving away from purely monastic ideals and become more involved in worldly affairs, one element of which was the increasing presence of lay monastic tenants. The secularisation of the church during the eighth to tenth century has often been viewed in terms of decline (Hughes 1966, 173). However, 'the tendency to see secularisation of ecclesiastical offices as an abuse has become part and parcel of an approach which prevents a proper understanding. It is a phenomenon of the eighth and ninth century, and is a critical step in the definition of the peculiar features of the Irish church' (Sharpe 1984, 266). By this period, if not before, the church had become fully integrated into Irish society, and clerical and lay society were closely enmeshed; a 'secularisation' would have been inevitable (Ó Corráin 1981, 327, 333).

During the later eighth and ninth century, attempts were made to revive monastic life in the activities of the *Céli Dé* (O'Dwyer 1984; Clancy 1996). Rather than instigating wholesale reform, the *Céli Dé* movement sought to invigorate the religious element within the church (O'Dwyer 1984; Etchingham 1999, 462-3). No attempt was made to reverse secularisation, and it was accepted that this process would continue; reformers simply wished to maintain the devotional life within these communities (Sharpe 1984, 267). The success of this revival is unclear, but it has been suggested no large-scale resurgence of regular monasticism followed. Sharpe (1992, 102) goes so far as to suggest that by the tenth century, whilst the church was still described in monastic terms, the whole structure had become more reminiscent of collegiate churches providing pastoral care, and that the leading of a regular monastic life was virtually non-existent.

The combined elements of episcopal, abbatial and 'coarbial' authority appear to have co-existed throughout the period, and the church is characterised by a large measure of continuity.

'This inclusive model comprehended a diversity of realities. Not all types of authority were necessarily represented in every individual church; alternatively, all three roles of authority might be exercised by separate individuals, or combined in one or two persons in variety of possible permutations' (Etchingham 1999, 456).

Bishops remained the ultimate leaders of the church, and in this way the Irish church did not differ from churches elsewhere. Instead, it is argued that the development of the role of *coarb* from the seventh century - the concept of a governor of temporalities, with interests in estates, tenants, revenues and political ambitions - is the most remarkable feature of the Irish church (Etchingham 1999, 457).

The overall image of an integrated church, in which ecclesiastical communities formed part of a wider hierarchy of churches providing pastoral care, has been compared to the organisation of the church in Gaul, to the Welsh church, and not least to the 'minster model' proposed for Anglo-Saxon England (Sharpe 1992, 101; Charles-Edwards 1992, 66; Blair 2005, 73). Whilst it is not argued that there was no distinction between the Irish church and that of Northumbria, it seems that the tendency to study the two in isolation has created something of a false divide. The 'minster hypothesis' (Blair 1988; Foot 1992; Blair and Sharpe 1992; Cambridge and Rollason 1995; Blair 2005) allows for the existence of non-monastic communities that would have provided pastoral care for surrounding territories. These territories were fragmented during the tenth century, as local churches developed within the landscape.

Problems with the minster hypothesis as proposed in the early 1990s have been highlighted, and the original hypothesis has been modified. In 1995, for example, Cambridge and Rollason noted that the model made no provision for churches staffed by a single priest, and excluded the episcopal hierarchy that must have ultimately been responsible for pastoral care (Cambridge and Rollason 1995, 90-1); these scholars also suggest that the territories considered to represent those of pre-Viking minsters may in fact have been later creations (Cambridge and Rollason 1995, 102-3). Blair (2005, 153-5), however, upholds an early date for minster territories, and maintains that, while smaller groups of priests may have served communities, the apparent lack of local churches is one of the idiosyncrasies of the English church, albeit a puzzling one (Blair 2005, 75). He stresses, however, the variety that would have existed within the church, stating that:

‘The ecclesiastical textures of the various regions of the British Isles were not imposed, but evolved: basic political, social and chronological conditions...were variables around which heterogeneous traditions grouped themselves in new combinations, and flourished if the contexts suited them’
(Blair 2005, 6)

The minster system as proposed could, and did, encompass both monastic and episcopal elements. The debate surrounding both the Irish and the English churches reflect a growing recognition that, in both areas of east and west, no single homogenous church system existed. Monastic life, episcopal hierarchies, pastoral provision and local churches could all coexist, dependant on local circumstances and political situations; the roles of bishop, abbot and priest were not mutually exclusive. It seems that to move away from the study of the church in east and west as two distinct constructs would be a valuable approach (Blair 2005, 5).

CONCLUSIONS

Together, therefore, the historical sources can be used in different ways to demonstrate the ways that communities invested in Christianity, and used ideology to their own political ends. Whilst it has been stressed that the development of the church cannot be described purely as a series of events and biographies, neither can this past be reconstructed without reference to the people involved. The spread of ideas would have been articulated through human contact; Patrick’s writings hint at how such relationships could have been forged at the highest levels of society, through social mechanisms already in place. Columba, too, is known to have been linked with royalty in the foundation of Iona, and as such, the close relationship between secular and ecclesiastical power is demonstrated.

The facts regarding the lives of these individuals, however, are potentially less informative than the way that their cults formed a focus for investment in later centuries. Christian communities, such as Armagh or the see at Whithorn, used documents as a means to justify their positions, to claim land, and to exert influence over wide areas, as well as for spiritual and didactic matters. At this point, Christian centres had become powerful entities in themselves, albeit inextricably linked to the secular politics of the time. It has to be remembered that ‘the cults of saints were promoted by individuals with widely differing and conflicting attitudes and agendas, and that what might look like a single process is the combination of innumerable forces’ (Wood 2002, 161).

By considering the way that both texts and monumentality reflect political and ideological strategies, the contrast between the documentary model and the archaeological evidence is diminished; it can no longer be considered the case that one reports aspirations, and the others demonstrate reality. Both forms of evidence present aspirations *and* facts, emphasising the need to bring similar source criticism to archaeological evidence as has been applied to the historical sources (Carver 2002a).

The debates surrounding the organisation of the church is also informative when considering the way that ideological investment would have been articulated within the landscape. Carver (1998; 2001, 12-14) proposed that early Christianity communities would, in theory, have had a choice of how to organise and fund Christianity, highlighting them as three distinct economic strategies. An episcopal system would have operated as an hierarchical infrastructure of taxation, and tribute would have been exacted from the laity through a system of tithes and dues (Carver 2001, 12). Investment in monastic centres would have entailed a less integrated, more autonomous form of Christianity, but also provided a means for the appropriation of land and territory through overt ecclesiastical investment (Carver 2001, 13). Finally, the establishment of proprietary, or secular, churches would have meant that ecclesiastical investment remained in secular hands, and the economic basis of the church would have been integrated with the revenue of a secular estate (Carver 2001, 14). Such a system would be attractive to a secular power, resistant to institutions and external influence.

However, a reconsideration of the organisation of the church, and whether it was episcopal, monastic or secular, has led to a consensus the period can only be characterised by diversity (Etchingham 1999). The traditional roles of bishops, abbots and secular ecclesiastical leaders are essentially different, but, as Etchingham has demonstrated, could be combined and integrated. Emphasis has been placed on the endowment and the accumulation of territory that would have made ecclesiastical centres economically autonomous; an episcopal system is not, however, precluded. As such, individual communities could adapt ecclesiastical organisation to their own economic, political and ideological situations. The main difference between sites, as Etchingham suggests (1999. 457), is between major centres and lesser churches. This provides a much more useful distinction when considering sites archaeologically; the physical indicators of monasticism versus secular churches have long been an issue for debate (see Chapter 4).

The debates surrounding the organisation of the church in Ireland have, as noted, resonances in the debate regarding the minsters of England (Blair 2005). The model of the minster

churches, operating within large territories, also appears characterised by diversity, particularly in terms of personnel; the lack of evidence for a purely episcopal system is contrasted with that of 'monastic networks, over which bishops, among others, exercised lordship' (Blair 2005, 73). In some respects, therefore, documentary studies highlight slight variation in structure and organisation, in what can be perceived as a largely homogenous, longer term development, characterised by subtle diversity. It remains to be seen whether the variations identified can be used to adequately explain the diversity of Christian monumentality, discussion of which begins with a consideration of ecclesiastical sites (Chapter 4).

CHAPTER FOUR

CHRISTIAN SITES AROUND THE NORTHERN IRISH SEA: PROBLEMS OF IDENTIFICATION, DATING AND INTERPRETATION

As Christianity was adopted and implemented throughout Britain and Ireland, the landscape was endowed with sites and monuments, used to proclaim and actively participate in the Christian faith. As will be seen, a characteristic of these sites and monuments is their great diversity. As populations became more involved in Christianity, through baptism, the sacraments and burial, so a communal Christian identity would have developed and been strengthened; the landscape would have been altered and interpreted accordingly (Bitel 1990, 17; Howe 1997, 63-78; Edwards, N. 2002, 226; cf Markus 1994). Theoretically, the nature of the sites established, and their chronological development, should reveal more about the way that Christianity was organised in different areas, and the role that it played within society. The starting point for consideration of regional variation in ideological investment, therefore, is the nature of ecclesiastical sites that were established within the study area.

Historical sources describe a diverse range of episcopal centres, monasteries, chapels, hermitages, shrines, and holy wells, which would have served very different roles within the Christian landscape. Inevitably, however, the archaeological material does not fit into such neat groups. The available material is often fragmentary, and the layout and development of sites inaccessible. Frequently, therefore, archaeologists have turned to overarching models for the interpretation of ecclesiastical remains, the most influential of which was proposed by Charles Thomas in his seminal work *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain* (1971). More recently, however, both the scope and the chronology of this model have been called into doubt, and as such, many of the assumptions made about the development of the early Christian landscape within the study area must be reconsidered.

ENCLOSED CEMETERIES AND DEVELOPED CEMETERIES

Thomas's (1971) study encompasses two aspects: the introduction of monasticism, and the development of ecclesiastical centres within the wider landscape. His work charts the spread

of monasticism from the Mediterranean into western Britain in the late fifth to sixth century, spreading to Ireland in the early sixth century, to the Irish settlements of western Britain in the later sixth, and into Northumbria in the seventh century (Thomas 1971, 22; Chapter 2 above). The ecclesiastical settlements that were established are described as comprising a large monastic enclosure, or *vallum*, ecclesiastical buildings, occupation areas and Christian monuments (Thomas 1971, 28-9). The onset of monasticism is thought to have been a pivotal point in Christianisation, as monasteries 'replace[d] the older territorial diocese as the dominant unit in insular Christianity' (Thomas 1971, 47). As this change took place, Thomas envisaged a proliferation of 'developed cemeteries', which 'may have borne something of the relationship to major monasteries that parish churches did to the Cathedrals in the full Middle Ages' (Thomas 1971, 47). The model provided for the evolution of these 'developed cemeteries' has been one of the most influential in the interpretation of early medieval Christian remains in this western area.

The trajectory proposed begins with the rural burial grounds of late and sub-Roman Britain. The earliest are considered to be the large, unenclosed rural cemeteries, containing 'normal' Christian burials - extended inhumations, oriented west-east, without grave-goods (Thomas 1971, 48-9). Such cemeteries contained dug graves, for example at Cannington (Somerset); stone lined graves, as at Parkburn (Lothian), and Hallow Hill (Fife)(Proudfoot 1998); or both, with other coffin forms, as at Poundbury (Farwell and Molleson 1993). Alongside these unenclosed burial grounds were enclosed cemeteries, bounded by stone or earth-built walls, or placed within pre-existing fortifications (Thomas 1971, 50-1). Thomas observed 'growing evidence that these cemeteries, in particular the enclosed ones, antedate any other form of Christian structure in the countryside of post-Roman Britain, and can thus be viewed as the primary field-monuments of insular Christianity' (Thomas 1971, 50).

Subsequently, a large number of enclosed cemeteries are thought to have been 'developed', through the addition of oratories, chapels, living quarters and internal divisions. In particular, the adornment of a 'special grave' with a shrine or structures was seen to represent an important development (Thomas 1971, 141-144). Small timber chapels were erected within enclosed cemeteries as early as the late sixth or seventh centuries, and by the seventh or eighth centuries were thought to have been replaced in stone, accompanied by the construction of living quarters of 'those who staffed these, by now permanent, centres of worship' (Thomas 1971, 67-68). A distinction is drawn between these developed cemeteries, many of which represent the precursors to parish churches, and eremitic sites, which constituted satellites of larger monasteries, established during the seventh century.

Thomas claimed the distinction would be found in the populations of cemeteries; only the former would contain the inhumations of women and children.

Thomas's model demonstrates a desire, still evident today, to trace the origins of extant archaeological remains to the earliest phases of Christianity, providing a setting for the shadowy saints that emerge from the historical sources. Much of the chronology draws on existing assumptions and historical traditions, many associated with St Patrick. Within the study area, a typical 'developed cemetery' at Ardwall Isle is described. Excavations on the site in the 1960s revealed three early medieval phases of activity: Phase I represented by the underground element of a (possibly fifth-century) slab shrine with associated inhumations, Phase II marked by the construction of a timber oratory or chapel, and a possible 'corner-post' shrine, and Phase III, dated to the eighth century, saw the replacement of the timber church with a stone structure (Thomas 1967; figures 4.1 and 4.2). These finds are seen to reflect a significant Irish influence in Galloway (Thomas 1967, 127). Subsequently, a similar chronology has been applied to many of the ecclesiastical remains of western Britain, in particular the small chapels or *keeills* that are prevalent on the Isle of Man (Cubbon 1982; Lowe 1987, 229-232).

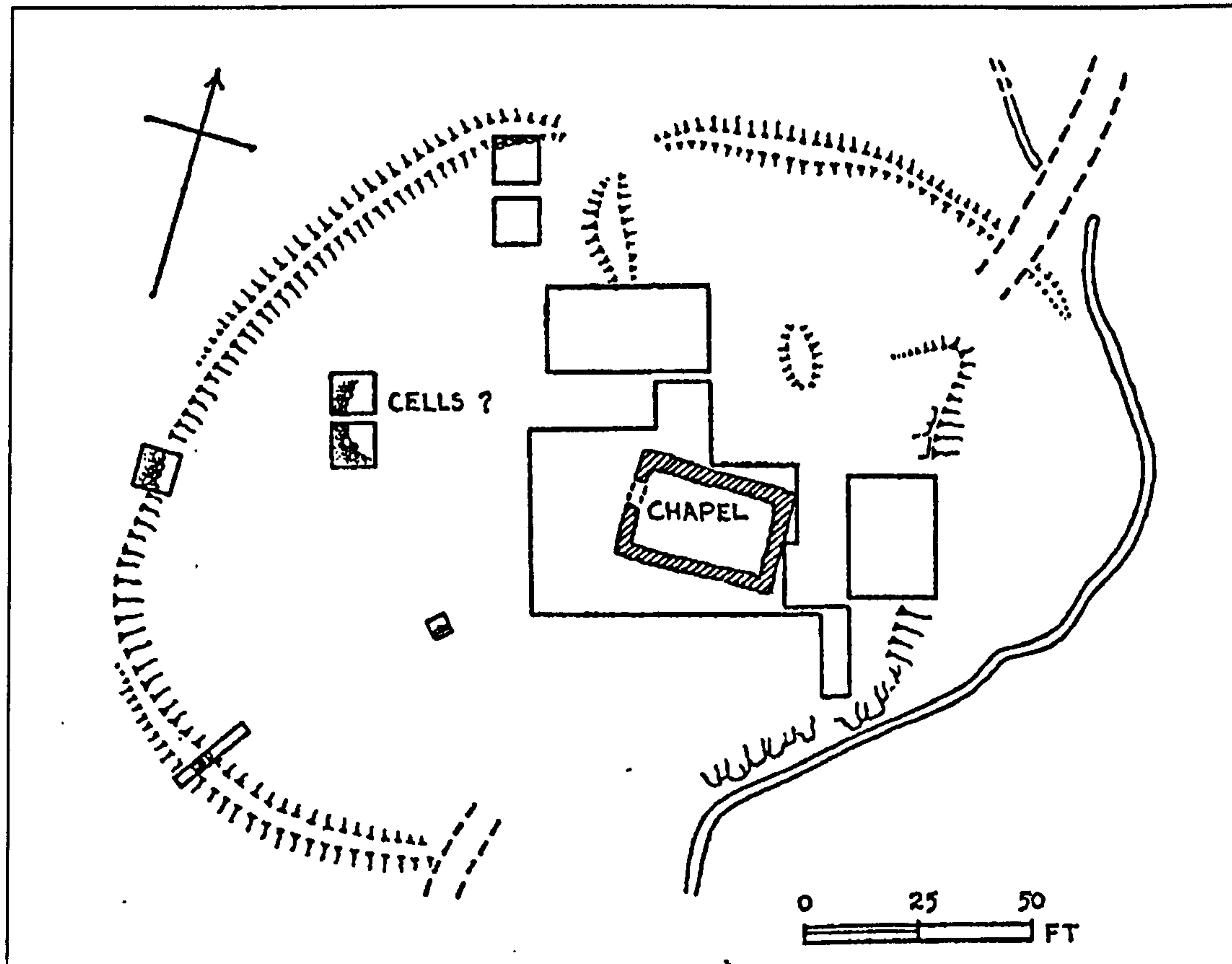


Figure 4.1: Plan of the site at Ardwall Isle (after Thomas 1971, 83)

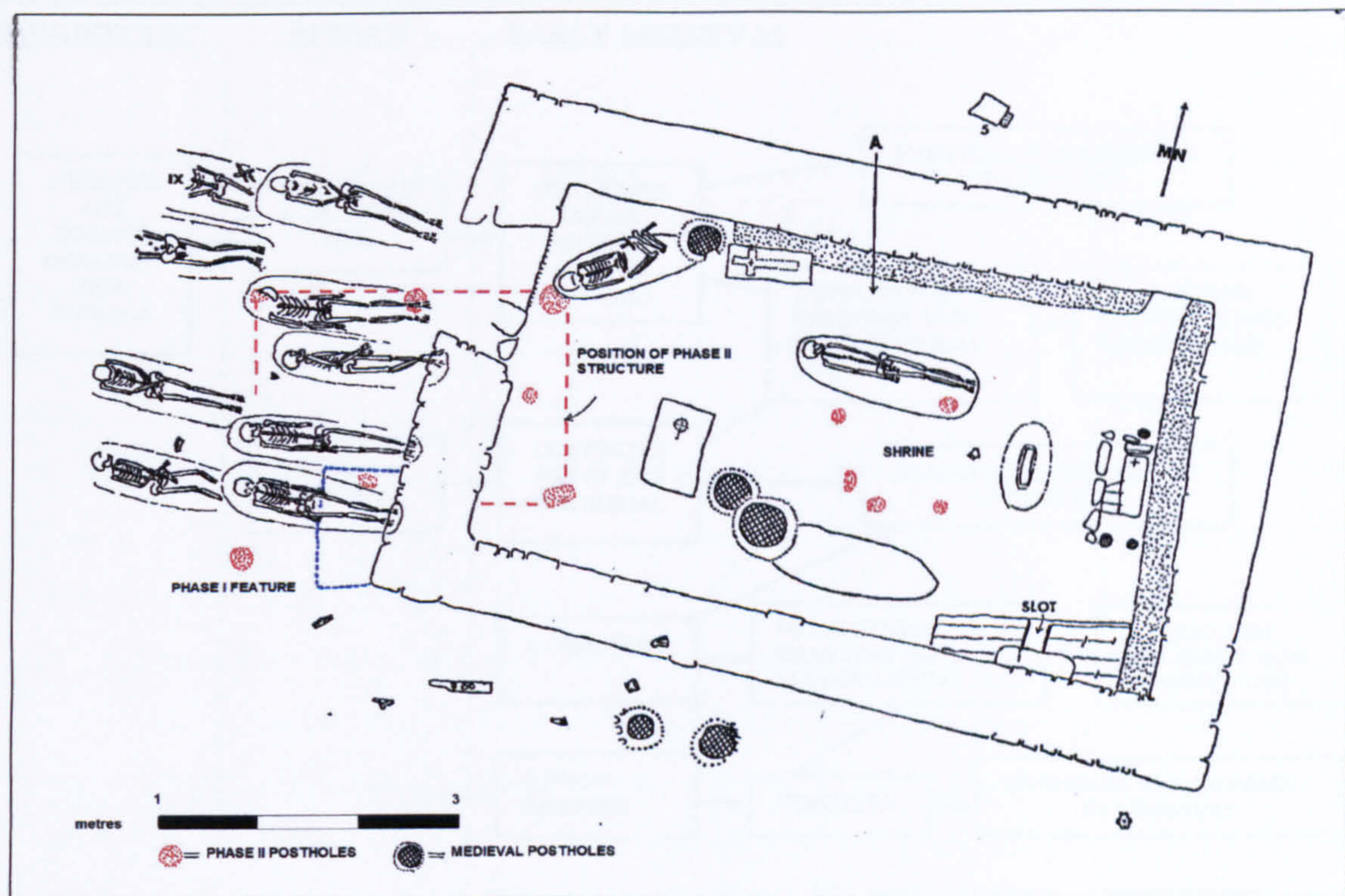


Figure 4.2: Phases of activity at Ardwall Isle (after Thomas 1967, 132)

Thomas's model has also led to widespread assumptions concerning the antiquity of curvilinear enclosures (O'Sullivan 1980a, 242-253; 1980b; 1985, 31; Thomas 1989, 24): the imprint of a circular or sub-circular enclosure has often been used to suggest an early origin for the ecclesiastical site (Preston-Jones 1992).

In more recent years, however, many questions have arisen concerning the unilinearity of Thomas's model, and its chronological implications. It is becoming increasingly clear that such an overarching paradigm cannot be applied to such a diverse range of sites, that would have developed in a range of ways, depending on local context.

Edwards and Lane (1992, 10) have highlighted nine possible models for the development of early medieval sites in Wales (figure 4.3). Not all of the proposed trajectories are applicable to all parts of the study area, but these suggestions serve to highlight the diverse ways that ecclesiastical sites could evolve. Christian centres would have been established within a range of political and economic contexts; to suggest that a single trajectory is applicable to western Britain and Ireland is to dismiss potential diversities that would have existed (Edwards, N. 2002, 227-8).

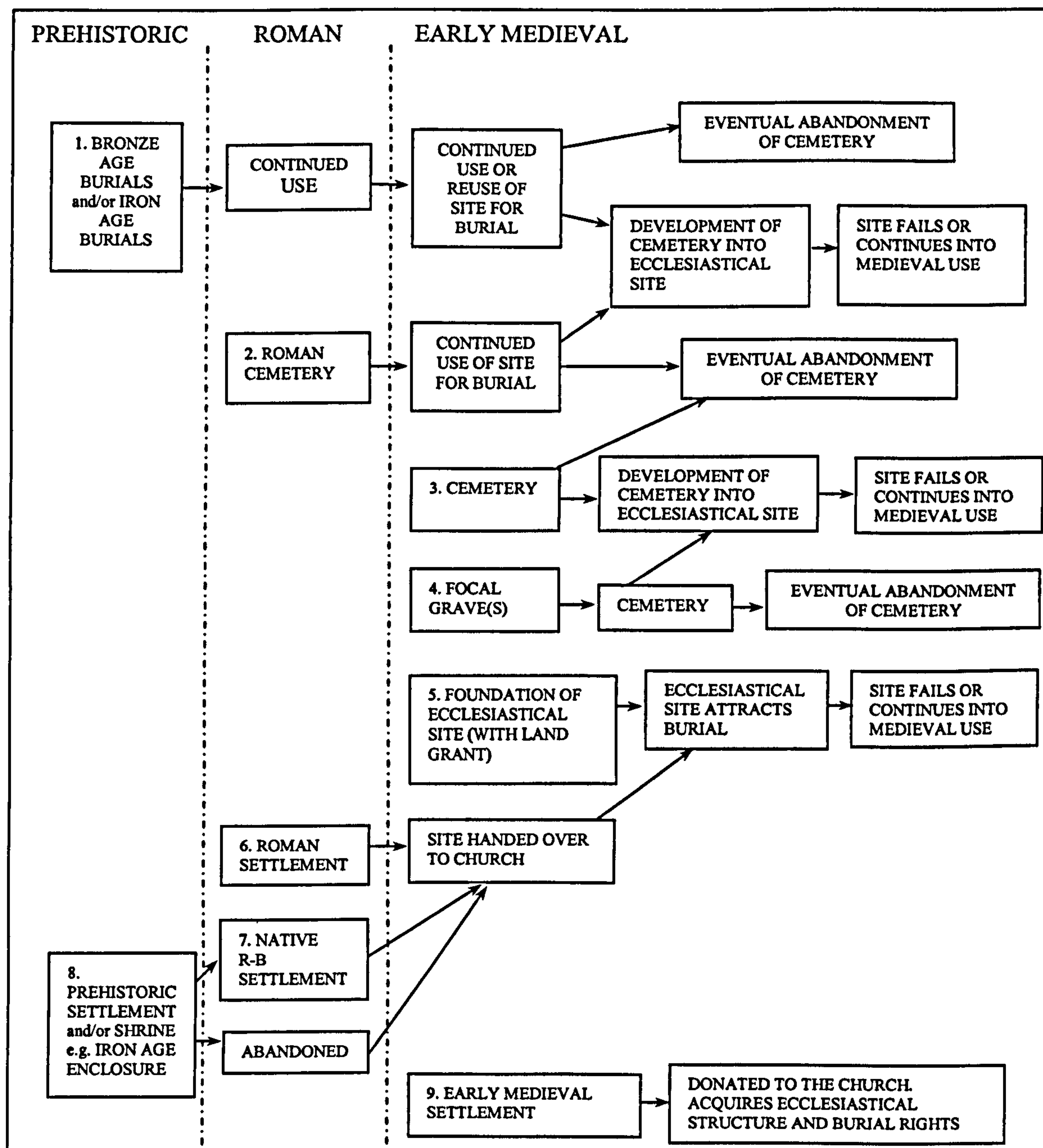


Figure 4.3: Models for the origin and initial development of early Christian sites in Wales (after Edwards and Lane 1992, 10)

Recent studies have also cast doubt on the chronology proposed by Charles Thomas, and the very early origins suggested for many of the monuments are no longer fully accepted. It has been noted that, while many cemeteries in the west continued, unenclosed, as late as the eleventh century, there is virtually no evidence that enclosed cemeteries can be attributed to the fifth or sixth centuries. Thomas has himself more recently allowed that little evidence survives for fifth-century examples, and suggests that developed cemeteries form a secondary feature of a primary phase of Christianity, dating to the sixth or seventh century, with some examples created into the ninth or tenth centuries (Thomas 1994a, 22-3). David

Petts (2002a, 24-46) has argued that no evidence survives to support the widespread enclosure of cemeteries prior to the eighth century. Evidence from Welsh sites such as Capel Maelog, Powys, for example, suggests that the cemetery was not enclosed and 'developed' until the tenth century; likewise, sites of Bangor, Gwynedd, and the Priory of St John and St Tuelyddog, Carmathen, do not appear to have been enclosed until after the eighth century (Petts 2002a, 31-2). These trends are reflected at a number of sites, and Petts suggests that during the fifth to eighth centuries, unenclosed cemeteries would have been the norm in much of western Britain (Petts 2002a, 35-9). A recent study of the development of Christian landscapes in southwest Britain also reached similar conclusions (Turner 2003a; 2003b). Turner (2003b, 20, 274-5) has suggested that the establishment of local churches within enclosed burial grounds cannot be placed much before the tenth century, and would therefore have formed one of the later elements of the Christian landscape, rather than one of the earliest. A similar case can be argued for the Isle of Man; whilst several Manx *keills* do appear to have originated as cemeteries, the chapels that were subsequently established are more likely to date to the ninth or tenth century date (Johnson 2004). For England and Wales more generally, Lucy and Reynolds (2002) have proposed three classes of cemetery, which reflect a similar chronology. They describe *archaic* cemeteries, which represent unenclosed cemeteries associated with rural settlement; *adaptive* cemeteries, identical to archaic cemeteries prior to the addition of a chapel or church in the tenth century, and *pioneer* cemeteries, which were established as newly developed estate churches during a fragmentation of the landscape in the tenth century (Lucy and Reynolds 2002, 20-1).

This is not, however, to entirely dismiss the presence of enclosed cemeteries and churches at an earlier date. Enclosed cemeteries are evidenced from an early date in Ireland, in both archaeological and historical sources, although they need not have evolved as 'developed cemeteries'. Tírechán's late seventh-century *Collectanea* appears to describe one such site:

'And the days of mourning for the king's daughter came to an end, and they buried them beside the wall of Clebach, and they made a round ditch after the manner of a *ferta* because this is what the heathen Irish used to do, but we call it *relic*' (Bieler 1979, 144-145)

Rather than developing as the satellites of major monastic centres, Tírechán's writings suggest a continuation of burial practices from a pre-Christian period. It has been noted from archaeological evidence that pagan burial practices appear to have continued into the seventh century (Edwards, N. 1990, 129; Wailes 1995, 59) and historical sources suggests that the Irish church did not begin to actively encourage burial in Christian cemeteries until

the eighth century (Petts 2002a, 44; O'Brien 1999, 186). Similarly, in England, legislation over burial location and churchyard consecration begins only in the tenth century (Hadley 2000, 224), although as Hadley notes, legislation need not mark the onset of new traditions, but would represent a response to developments that were underway (Hadley 2000, 224).

Several small, enclosed ecclesiastical sites in Ireland would, superficially, appear to represent the plan of 'developed cemeteries' but have been shown to have originated in different ways. The enclosed church and burial ground at Caherlehillian, dated by imported pottery and radiocarbon dates to the fifth to eighth century, is thought to have originated as a planned, enclosed church (Sheehan 2004). In contrast, the site at Reask, County Kerry (Fanning 1981), which has also produced pre-eighth century evidence for enclosure, is thought to have originated as a settlement, rather than a burial ground: ecclesiastical sites in the west of Ireland 'were from the outset...settlements, rather than cemeteries, with quite modest areas being set aside for burial' (Ó'Carragáin 2003a, 147; Mytum 1992, 63).

This reconsideration demonstrates that the layout of sites – enclosures, burials and churches – cannot be used to assign dates to sites, or to infer anything of their development. Instead, it becomes necessary to consider evidence on a more localised, even site-by-site, basis. The data examined for this chapter has therefore been treated sceptically; evidence for dating identified where possible, and real variations sought in evidence that can reasonably be considered early medieval. It soon becomes evident, however, that seeking regionalities in terms of overall 'sites' is highly problematic, due to the fragmentary and difficult nature of the evidence.

IDENTIFICATION OF CHRISTIAN SITES

The study of ecclesiastical sites in general is challenging, in terms of initial identification, dating and interpretation (Thomas 1986; Hamlin 1992). Ecclesiastical sites may be considered in two groups: those that have been abandoned and those that have continued in use. The locations of the former, once their significance has been lost and material remains decayed, are often forgotten and very little remains to identify them. At the latter, subsequent phases of rebuilding and burial have often all but obliterated evidence of earlier activity. The initial indications that a site was used for religious activity during the early medieval period therefore rely on a number of attributes that are still accessible, despite the later fate of the sites (Table 4.1). These include upstanding remains, artefacts, monuments, documentary/linguistic evidence, as well as below ground discoveries encountered during excavation or groundworks.

Physical indicators	Below ground remains	Burials
		Church foundations
	Above ground remains, finds	Upstanding church remains
		Carved stone monument
		Curvilinear enclosure
		Ecclesiastical artefacts (reliquary, crozier)
	Non-physical indicators	Historical reference
Ecclesiastical place-name		
Dedication to an early saint		
Local tradition		

Table 4.1: Attributes used to suggest the presence of early medieval ecclesiastical sites

Clearly, some attributes provide more useful indicators than others, particularly when archaeological comparisons are being made. Attributes that occur below ground rely on chance discovery, and are therefore not a consistent source, but, like upstanding remains, provide reliable evidence that can be pinpointed to a particular location. In contrast, portable items, such as ecclesiastical artefacts, and, to a lesser extent, stone monuments, need not have originated in the location at which they were found (see Chapter 5). For this study, the evidence of small, portable objects alone is not considered evidence for ecclesiastical foundations (except where they represent grave goods; see below), while the more static stone monuments have been employed as a major indicator. The linking of ecclesiastical centres with specific historical references is often tentative (for example, Barnwell *et al* 2003), and a bias is created in favour of the historically richer areas of Ireland. However, such sources do provide an indication of the type of site that would have been present, and have been initially included in the database of sites. Church dedications provide an attractive indication of early medieval Christianity, but although earlier scholars used church dedications to demonstrate the travels and foundations of saints themselves (Bowen 1944), such an approach is not now considered reliable. The long survival of many cults means such indicators lack chronological precision, and as such have not been included. Ecclesiastical names provide a valuable indication of regional activity, and so are considered within this thesis (Chapter 6), but also have not been used to identify sites on the ground. The remainder of the sites have been identified through antiquarian reports, and local traditions, which, as will be noted, are of limited value beyond the initial identification of a potential ecclesiastical site.

The attributes listed provide an initial indication of the existence of an ecclesiastical site, but due to their inconsistent nature, are not used to make further conclusions about their type or date. Instead, the actual physical evidence for early medieval activity has been gathered and databased, in order to identify any possible patterns in the establishment and development of ecclesiastical sites.

The data for each area is drawn from relevant sites and monuments records (Canmore; DGSMR; NISMR; CCCSMR; LDSMR) and use has been made of valuable syntheses of available evidence for Northern Ireland (Jope 1966; Hamlin 1976), Cumbria (O'Sullivan 1980a), Dumfries and Galloway (Craig 1992; Crowe 1998) and the Isle of Man (Kermode 1909; 1911; 1915; 1935; Bruce 1968; Lowe 1987). Details of data sources, databases and analysis are outlined in Appendix A.

EARLY MEDIEVAL ECCLESIASTICAL SITES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE ECCLESIASTICAL SITES

Using the sources of data noted, an initial corpus of 454 potential early medieval ecclesiastical sites was compiled. The overall distribution of sites appears promising, covering most of the study area (figure 4.4). However, once the evidence available for the nature of activity at these sites is considered in more detail, it becomes clear that few have surviving remains that can be attributed, even tentatively, to the early medieval period, and still less can be used to discuss the chronological development of ecclesiastical sites over time. As has previously been noted for the north, 'the discrepancy between actual and presumptive sites...remains striking' (Clack and Gosling 1976, 45).

Of the 454 sites identified as possible ecclesiastical sites, 59 (13%) have no identifiable physical remains of possible early medieval date. These examples, the majority of which are located on the Isle of Man, were identified on the basis of local traditions of *keeills* (Manx chapels) at specific sites, either remembered in local knowledge or from reports of remains that have since been removed. Many similarly ambiguous traditions and reports survive in southwest Scotland (McClellan 1997); at the Well o' the Rees, for example, the extant 'bee-hive' structures over three wells are thought to have been constructed from a pre-existing chapel of Kilgallioch (Canmore NX27SW 2)(figure 4.5). Without further investigation, the inclusions of such remains is risky. Although many such sites provide fascinating avenues for further research, and a proportion are quite likely to be the sites of early ecclesiastical

foci, little more can be said of them at this stage, and no assumptions can be made of their date or function.

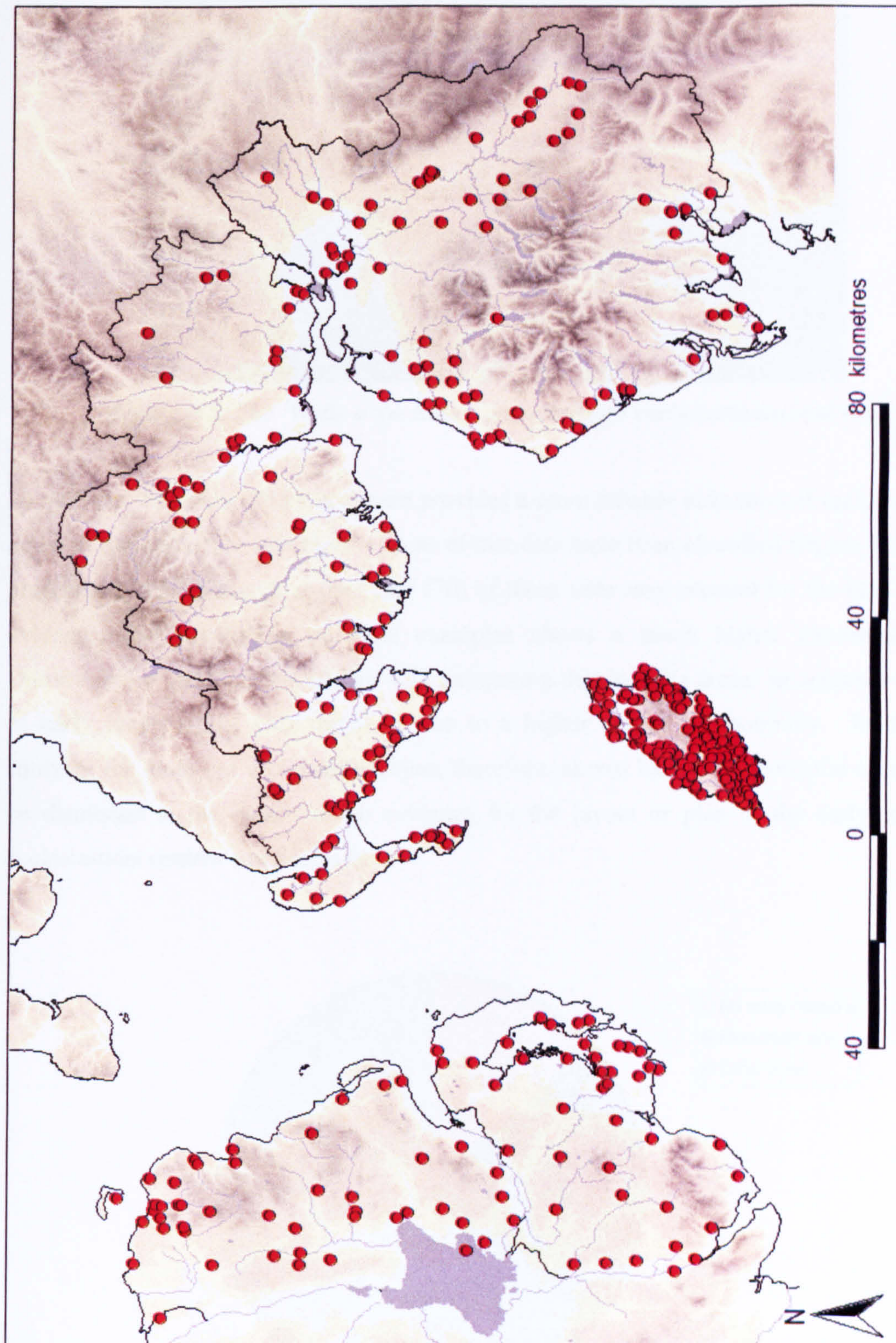


Figure 4.4: Possible early medieval ecclesiastical sites within the study area



Figure 4.5: The 'Wells o'the Rees': potentially an early ecclesiastical site

At a further 133 sites (30%), sculpture provides a more reliable indication of early medieval activity, but no further structural remains of that date have been identified (figure 4.6). The presence of a later church at over half (70) of these sites may account for the lack of such evidence; the distribution of these examples shows a much higher concentration in Dumfriesshire and Cumbria (figure 4.7), suggesting that in these areas, an apparent scarcity of early ecclesiastical sites might be due to a higher degree of continuity. In terms of studying the nature of ecclesiastical sites, therefore, almost half of the potential sites had to be dismissed at the outset, as no evidence for the layout or plan of the early medieval ecclesiastical centres was accessible.

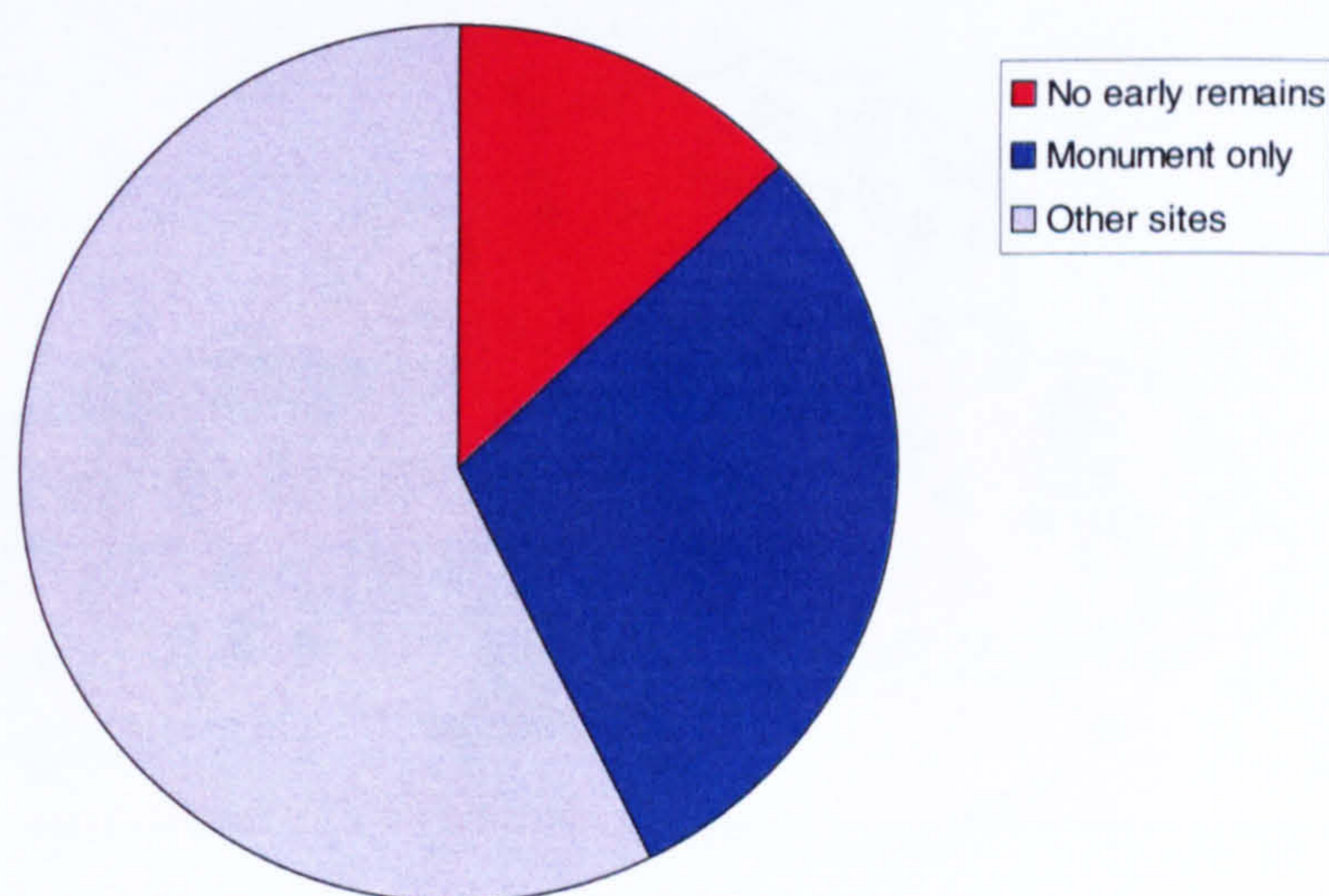


Figure 4.6: Proportion of sites with no surviving structural remains of early Christian date

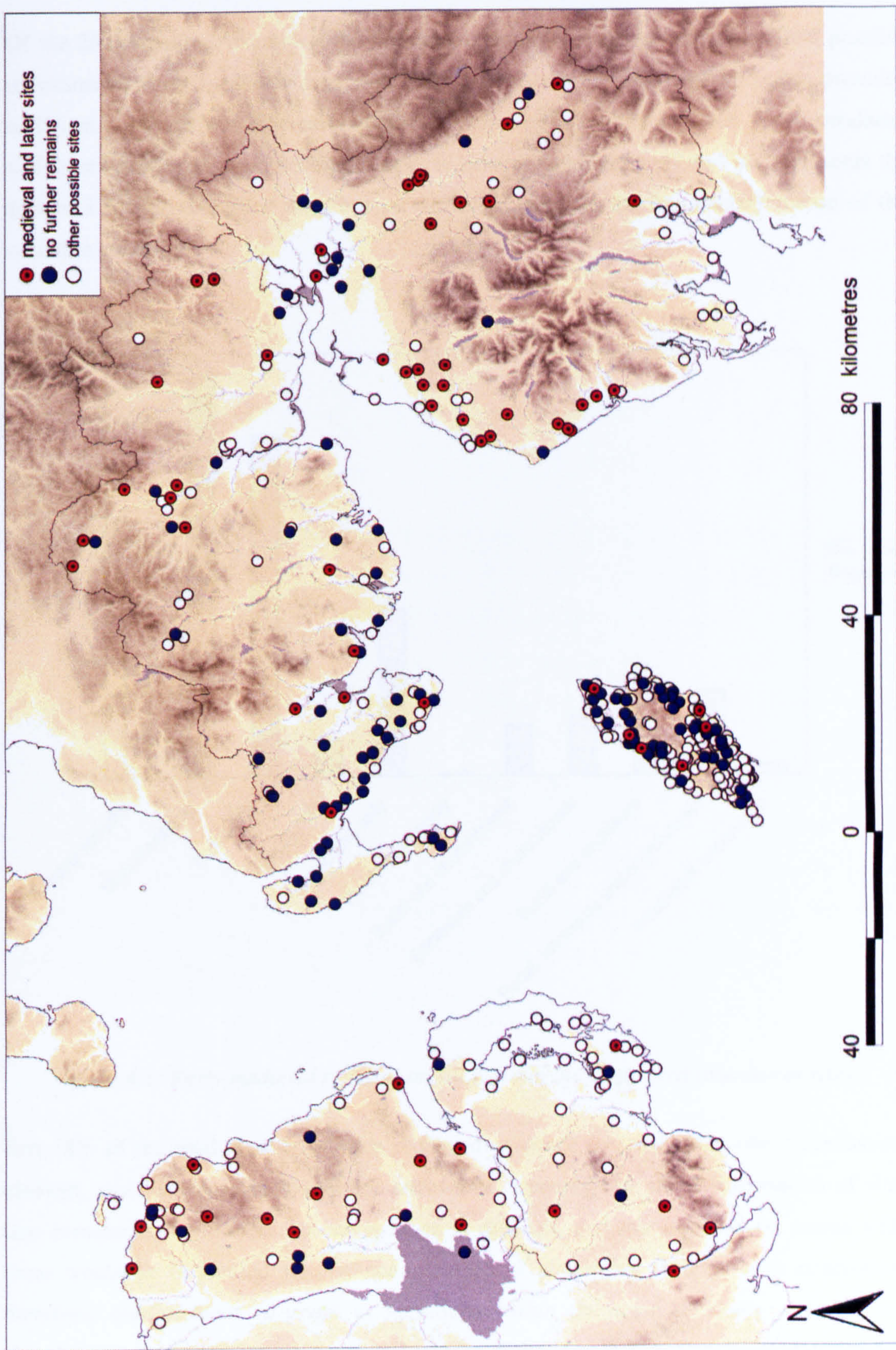


Figure 4.7: Possible early medieval ecclesiastical sites, those with no further remains, and those with later churches

INTERPRETATION OF POSSIBLE ECCLESIASTICAL SITES

Of the 262 remaining examples, the presence of burials, churches, enclosures and possible structures of early medieval date were noted, and soon revealed that very few provided sufficient evidence for their early medieval plans to be recreated. Even fewer produced sufficient remains for their development over time to be charted. Figure 4.8 represents the data in a highly simplified way, but serves to demonstrate the fragmentary nature of the available evidence.

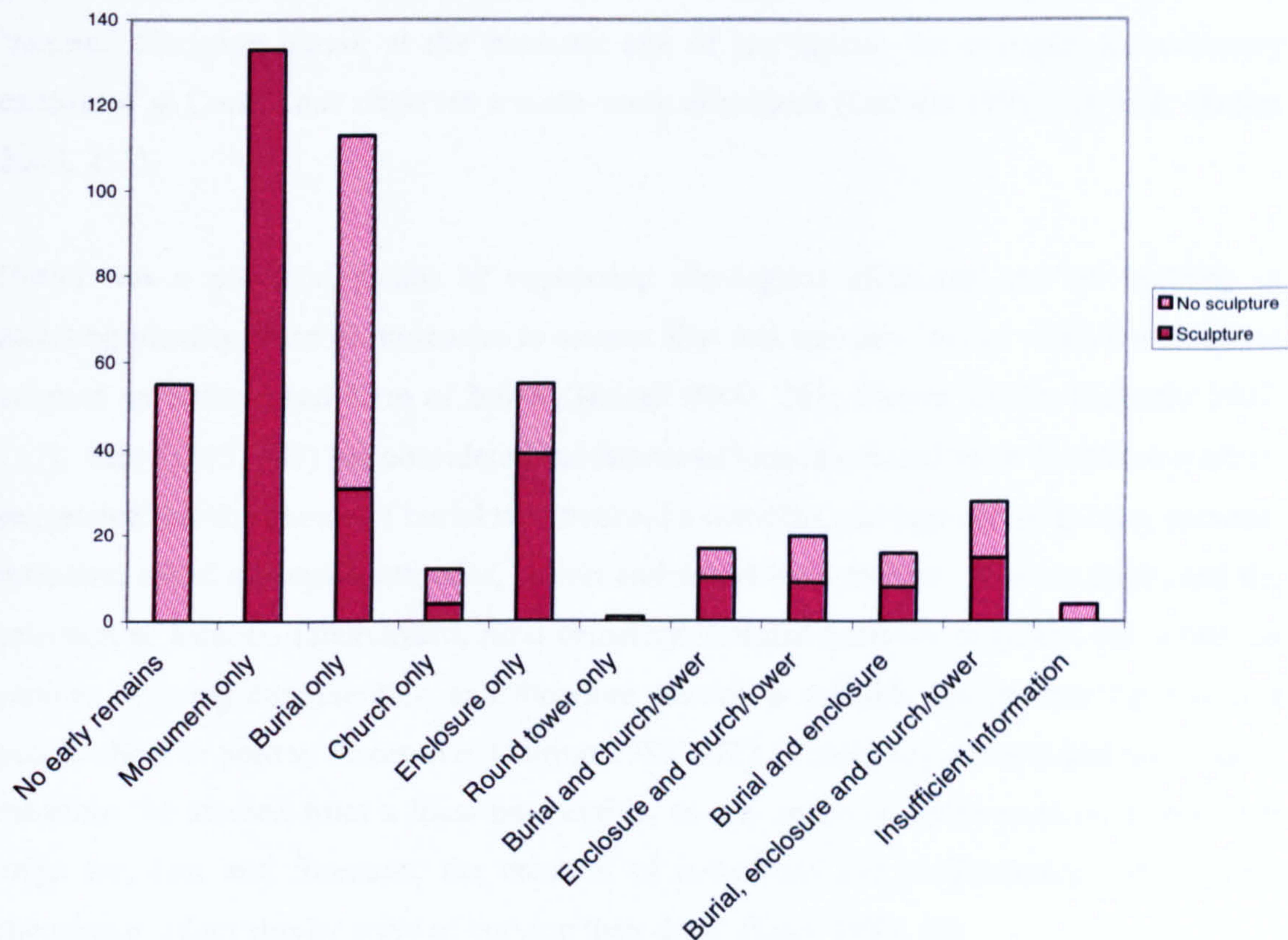


Figure 4.8: Early medieval remains on sites within the study area (number of sites)

Just 18% of the total number of sites produced evidence for more than one ecclesiastical element, whether churches, burials or enclosures, meaning that the categorisation of sites into cemeteries, hermitages, or monasteries is difficult, and that comparison across wide areas would be of limited significance. Instead of attempting to draw such conclusion, therefore, consideration is given to variations *within* the main elements – burial and churches- to reveal any possible regional trends. Following this, a more general discussion considers the types of sites that may be represented.

BURIAL RITES AND CEMETERIES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

Burial has often been used as an indicator of conversion and Christian activity, and unfurnished, east-west inhumations have been viewed as a widespread development that occurred once communities turned to Christianity. As such, the church is often assumed to have intervened directly in burial rights, and a simple equation between Christianity and extended, oriented burial has often been made (Lucy and Reynolds 2002, 3). However, passive acceptance of Christianity has long been challenged, and a switch to a Christian form of burial upon conversion represents an oversimplification of the situation. Even at documented ecclesiastical centres, burial rites diverge from what might be considered 'normal' Christian burial; at the monastic site of Hartlepool, for example, the cemetery excavated at Cross Lane observes a north-south alignment (Daniels 1999, 110-111; Hadley 2000, 213).

Burial was a powerful means of expressing ideological affiliation and for creating or asserting identity; there is no reason to assume that this was any less so when communities adopted an unfurnished form of burial (Halsall 2000, 261; Carver 2002b; Richards 2002, 157). Carr (1995, 189) has considered the factors influencing burial in an American context, suggesting that the choice of burial rite involved a complex combination of factors: personal intention, social strategies, attitudes, beliefs and world view themes. The rite itself, and the selection of location (churchyard, rural cemetery, isolated barrow), represent the deliberate choices of living communities, and therefore provide a valuable insight into the way that people chose to portray themselves (Barrett 1987, 472). Trends regarding burial rites should therefore 'be studied from a local perspective, as any spatial patterns seen on distribution maps are, first and foremost, the creation of individual and neighbouring communities choosing to adopt similar ways of burying their dead' (Lucy 1999, 16).

Burials of early medieval or possible early medieval date were identified at 174 sites (38% of total), and at 80 sites provided the only potential early medieval features. Notable amongst this corpus, as with much of western Britain, is the variation that is evident (Alcock 1992, 125; table 4.2; figure 4.9). Burials of a traditional 'pagan' nature, including furnished burials, burials with boats, and cremations, have also been incorporated into this study. The furnishing of a grave is not necessarily indicative of a non-Christian ideology, and diversity in burial rites can demonstrate areas where interaction and tension between communities was most intense (Halsall 2000, 265-6).

Burial type	Description
Dug graves	Inhumations within simple, excavated hollows in the ground
Stone-lined graves	Burials in stone lined graves (long-cists), some with slabbed covers (lintel graves). The group also includes those with stone settings around the head
Stone shrine	Slab built shrines, which would have stood above ground
Timber graves	Burials within timber structures – log coffins, timber coffins, timber lintel graves
Furnished burials (no barrow)	Evidence for furnished burials, occasionally attested only by finds of ‘grave-goods’ in churchyards
Barrow burial	Burials found with evidence for a monumental mound erected over the grave, or prehistoric burial mounds into which an early medieval burial has been inserted
Boat burial	Burials with evidence indicating burial with a boat (or ship)
Unknown	Reported burials where the rite has not been specified, or is uncertain

Table 4.2: Burial types identified within the study area (see figure 4.9; 4.10)

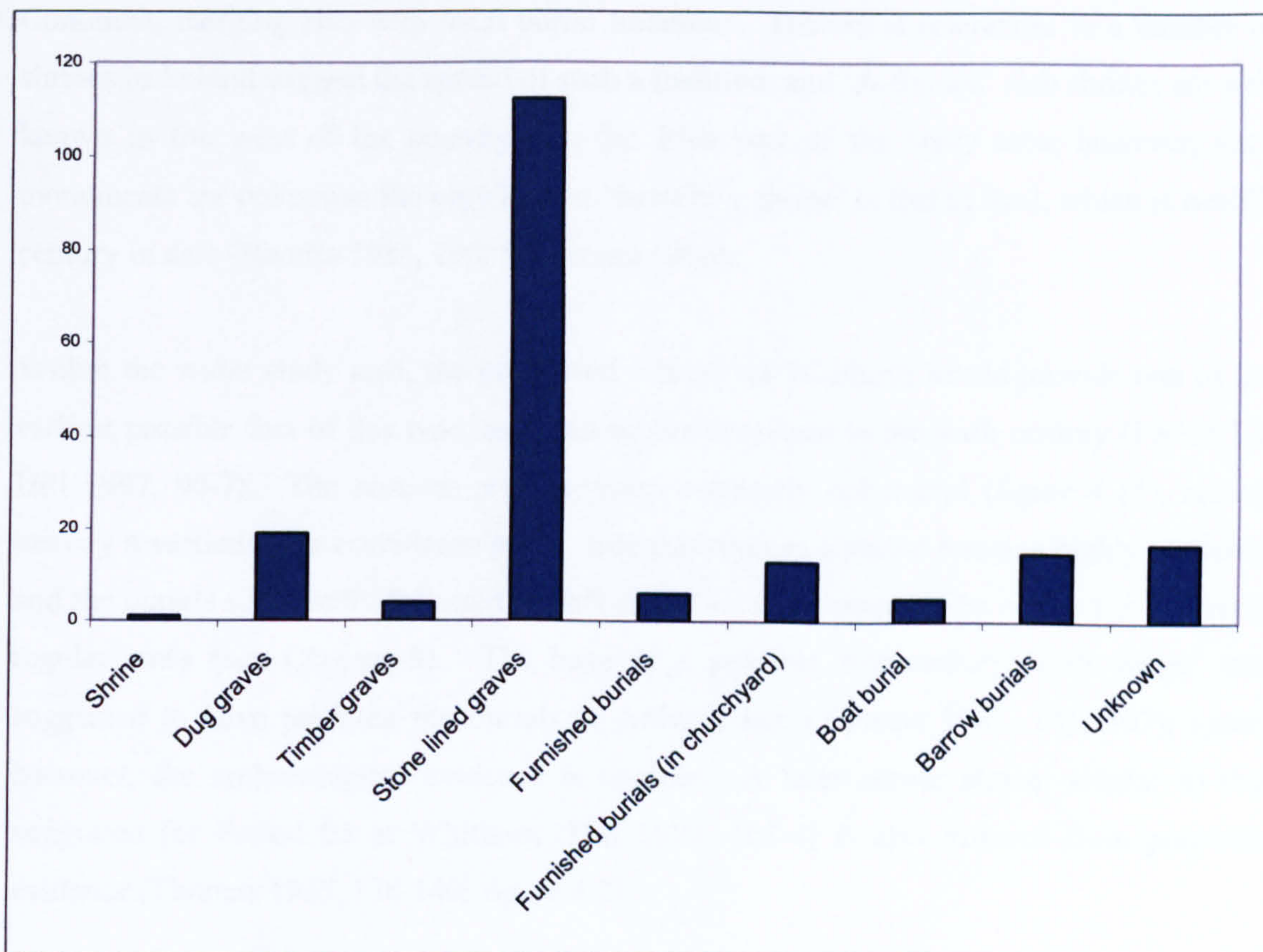


Figure 4.9: Frequency of different burial types in the study area (number of sites on which each type occurs)

An initial distribution map of these sites suggested regional variation both in frequency and in the type of burials that are evidenced within the study area (figure 4.10). A large number are evidenced on the Isle of Man, potentially attributable to the comprehensive survey and excavation work of the Manx Archaeological Survey (Kermode 1909; 1911; 1915; 1935; Bruce 1968). However, spatial variation is initially identifiable in the types of burial evidenced; those in Cumbria and the east tend to be the furnished barrow burials and churchyard burials, whilst lintel graves predominate in Ireland and Man. As such, these appear to represent real variations, and merit further consideration.

STONE SHRINES

'Special graves' or shrines are considered to have been one of the earliest foci of ecclesiastical sites within western Britain, and much of Europe (Thomas 1971, 50-1; Hamlin 1985, 295). Traditions are thought to have begun with the *martyria* that developed on the Continent, merging also with local burial traditions. Historical references to a number of shrines in Ireland suggest the spread of such a tradition, and 'A-framed' slab shrines are well known in the west of the country. In the Irish part of the study area, however, such monuments are unknown; the only known 'founder's shrine' is that at Saul, which is twelfth century in date (Hamlin 1985, 296; Waterman 1960).

Within the wider study area, the postulated 'shrine' at Whithorn would provide one of the earliest possible foci of this type, assigned by the excavator to the sixth century (Period I.2; Hill 1997, 90-7). The remains are, however, extremely ephemeral (figure 4.11), resting heavily a sections of a curvilinear gully. Interpretation as a shrine remains highly tentative, and the burials supposedly focussed on this shrine actually appear to be ordered in relatively regular rows (see Chapter 8). The base of a possible fifth-century 'slab shrine' was suggested to have predated the burials at Ardwall Isle (Thomas 1967, 141, 167); again, however, the archaeological evidence is unclear. A later corner shrine, similar to that suggested for Period I.3 at Whithorn (Hill 1997, 103-4) is also inferred from post-hole evidence (Thomas 1967, 138-140; figure 4.2).

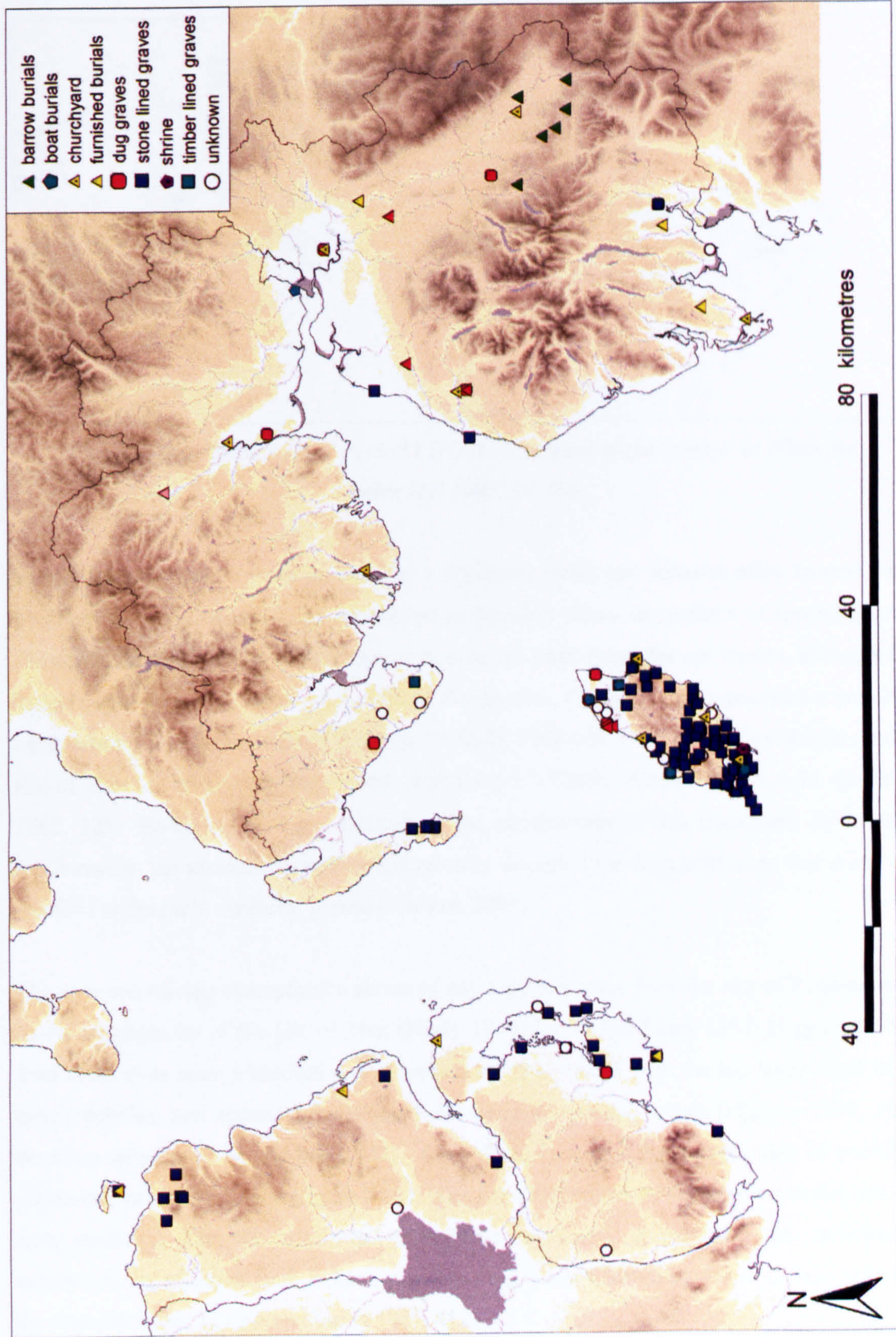


Figure 4.10: Distribution of burial types within the study area

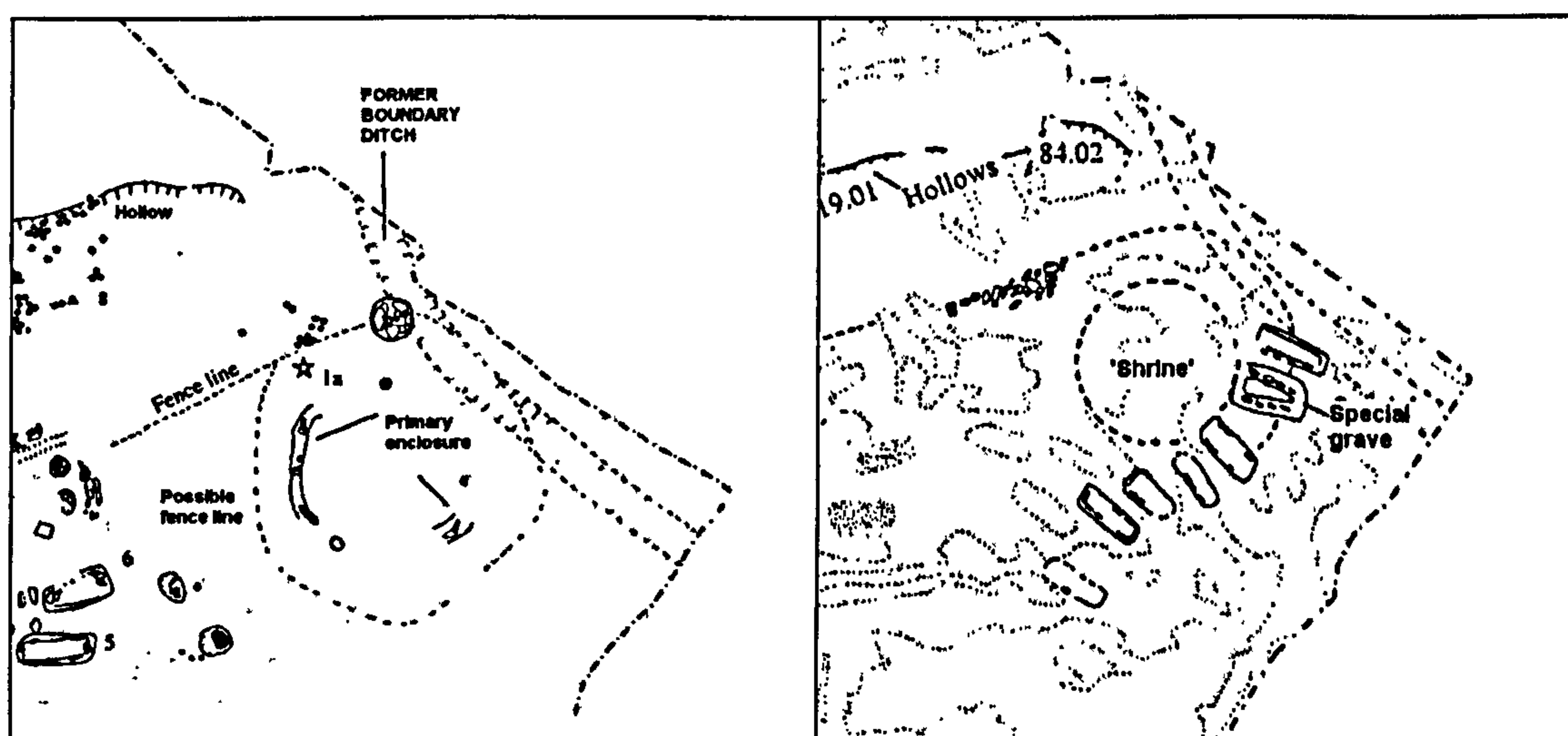


Figure 4.11: Period I.1 and Period I.2/1: development of the 'shrine' at Whithorn
(after Hill 1997, 86, 90)

In Ireland, structures known as *leachta*, - drystone, rectilinear features often topped with boulders or carved stones - are considered as possible altars, or markers of special graves (Edwards, N. 1990, 119). Within the study area, no Irish examples are known, although an historical reference to 'altars' at the site of Turraloskin, County Antrim, provides a possible candidate for lost monuments of this type (NISMAR ANT 008:010). A single example on the Isle of Man has been often noted, at St Patrick's Chair, Marown (figure 4.12; Radford 1962, 12). However, evidence relating to the construction of this monument by a local landowner in the nineteenth century has recently dispelled the long held view that it can be ascribed to the early medieval period (Johnson 2004).

The only convincing example of a shrine of any type has come from the site of Ronaldsway, on the southern tip of the Isle of Man (Neely 1940; Laing and Laing 1987; Higgins 1999). Two stone cists were identified and described as 'two-storey' with the top layer filled with quartz pebbles, and appeared to form a focal point for several burials (Higgins 1999, 141, detailing an account by Cubbon 1937). One of the cists included a cross slab of possible eighth or ninth-century date (figure 4.13). The site of Ronaldsway represents a settlement of early medieval date; the artefactual assemblage recovered, in particular the metalwork, exhibits strong affinities with Ireland, possibly suggesting where the communication links of the population lay (Laing and Laing 1987, 412).



Figure 4.12: St Patrick's Chair, Marown: a modern 'leacht'



Figure 4.13: Possible shrine at Ronaldsway (Neely 1940, plate IX.1)

DUG GRAVES

Dug graves represent the simplest, and least diagnostic, form of burial identified within the study area, and present considerable difficulty in assigning affiliation and date. The low numbers of sites which have revealed early medieval dug graves can be attributed to

problems of recognition, preservation and dating (figure 4.14). Whilst stone-lined graves are easily recognised, even without skeletal material, and tend to be automatically placed within the early medieval period, dug graves range in date from the Roman period to the modern day, and once the skeletal material has decayed, the burials are vulnerable to ploughing and destruction without note.

The problems with ascribing dates to these burials have been noted by O'Sullivan, using examples identified in Cumbria (1980a, 225-23). Stratigraphy can provide broad dating parameters, as at Caldergate, Carlisle, where Roman deposits and a twelfth-century street provided a broad idea of chronology (Hogg 1961 in O'Sullivan 1980a, 226-227). More recent excavations to the west of the cathedral produced evidence for three phases of burial associated with Anglian and tenth-century metalwork (Keevill 1989). At Heversham, a burial identified during construction in the graveyard was found to be on a different alignment to the more recent burials, and as such, was assumed to belong to earlier phases of activity. No examples have produced secure scientific dates.

The context of dug graves provides very limited evidence for their significance. Of nineteen sites, four have produced no further evidence for early medieval activity, and no evidence to refine dating. As such, they remain 'possible early medieval cemeteries' and little more can be deduced from them. Others, such as Heversham, occur at known monastic sites, although there is insufficient evidence to link them specifically with this early medieval foundation.

The site of Camp Hill, Trohoughton, Dumfriesshire, is one of the more diagnostic, and better excavated, examples of a dug grave cemetery. Some 60, east-west aligned burials were identified within a hillfort, of which 12 were excavated (Simpson and Scott-Elliot 1964). The reuse of prehistoric monuments for burial is a well-attested phenomenon (Williams 1997; 1998), and in establishing an apparently Christian burial ground in a prominent monument such as this, an overt statement of land ownership or appropriation might have been made. Reuse of monuments could be used to create a sense of legitimisation, to appropriate the power associated with a particular monument, and to claim ownership of territory (Williams 1997, 26). The situation of the site, on the Nith Valley and adjacent to a Roman road, might have further emphasised this point.

At 11 sites in the study area, dug graves were found on the same site as stone built chapels, though often stratigraphically earlier than the church structures, as at Ballacorris *keill* (Lowe 1987, 81-2) and Sulbrick *keill* (Kermode 1935, 21-3). Notably, both of these graves were covered with white quartz pebbles, a recurrent feature in ecclesiastical contexts on the

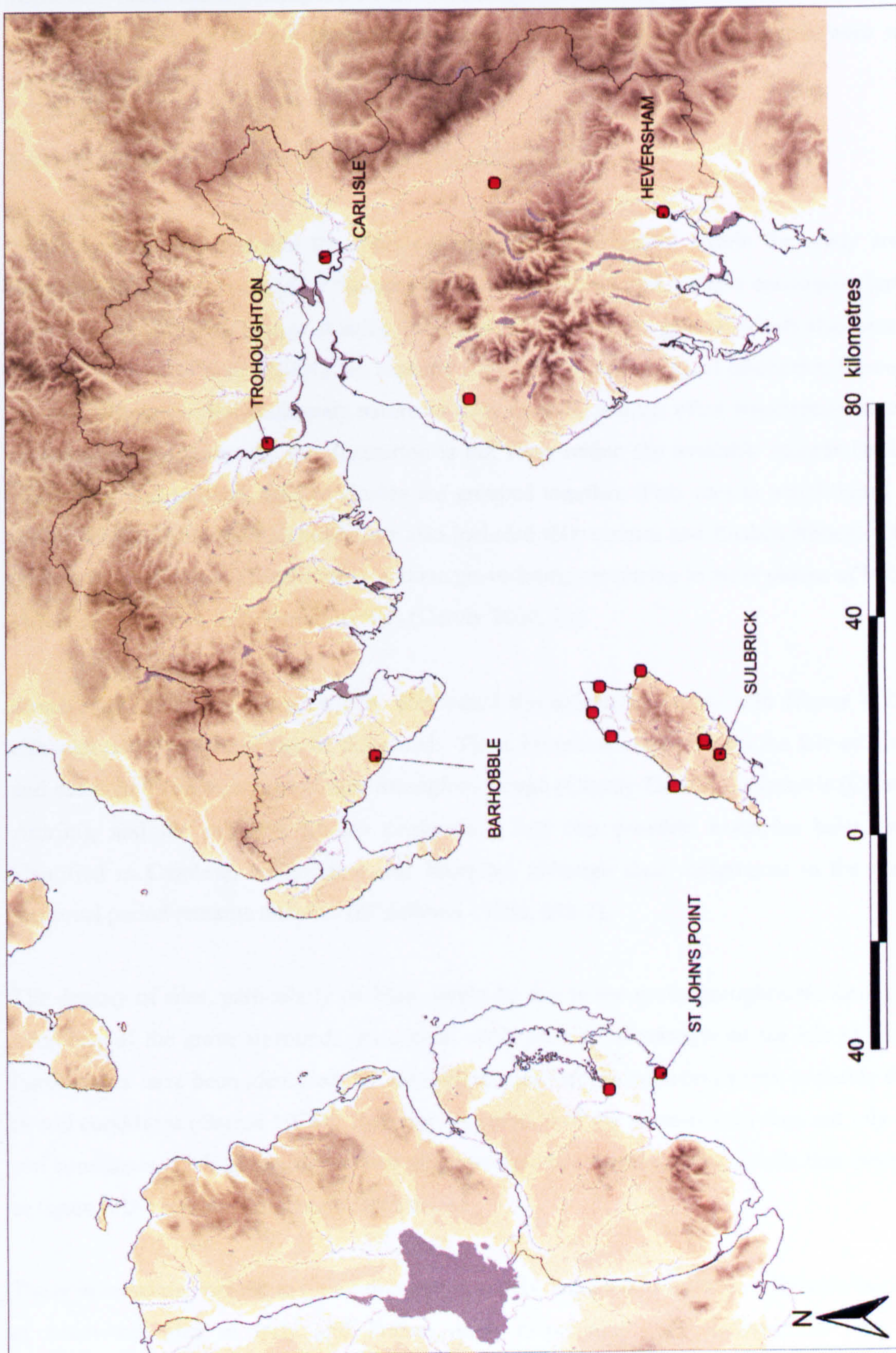


Figure 4.14: Dug grave sites within the study area

Isle of Man (Lowe 1987, Appendix 6). The distribution of dug graves reveals little of regionality; they feature in dispersed contexts throughout the study area, and their occurrence on the same site as stone-lined graves suggests that the two forms of burial were not mutually exclusive.

LINTEL GRAVES, LONG CISTS AND HEAD SETTINGS

Stone-lined graves represent the most common group of burials within the study area, occurring at almost a quarter of the potential early medieval sites. These encompass long-cists (graves with slab linings at sides, head and feet), and lintel graves (which also have a stone capping). O'Brien (2004) has recently suggested a chronological distinction between the two. However, the inadequate nature of early records, and the often fragmentary nature of the remains, means that the distinction is not clear within the available records for the study area, and as such, the two classes are grouped together. Two sites at which head- or pillow-settings have been identified are also included (Heversham and Rushen Abbey), as it appears to represent a different form of stone grave-lining, occurring in early phases of burial sequences at known early medieval sites (Carver 2004, 11).

Stone-lined graves are found widely distributed throughout the study area (figure 4.15), although notable patterns can be discerned. These burials are common on the Isle of Man, and occur in distinct clusters around Strangford Lough (County Down), Ballycastle (County Antrim), and the southern Rhinns peninsula. Just two possible examples have been identified in Cumbria, at Beckfoot and Moresby, although their assignment to the early medieval period remains tentative (O'Sullivan 1980a, 232-7).

The density of sites, particularly on Man, might be due to the easily recognisable form and durability of the grave surround. At several sites, such as Glentraugh on the Isle of Man, lintel graves have been identified, but no skeletal material has been recovered, probably due to soil conditions (Garrad 1978). However, as survival of the stone linings does not rely on soil conditions, the high rate of survival might be used to suggest that the distribution evident in figure 4.15 represents real regional variation.

These inhumations belong to a tradition that is widely accepted to represent Christian burial; at excavated sites in Italy and France, their association with ecclesiastical sites is uncontroversial. At S. Maria, Castel Seprio in Northern Italy, for example, a series of stone-lined graves, of varying sophistication, was investigated archaeologically, and shown to represent a sequence dating from c.AD 800 to 1200 (Carver 1987, 322-3). Despite these

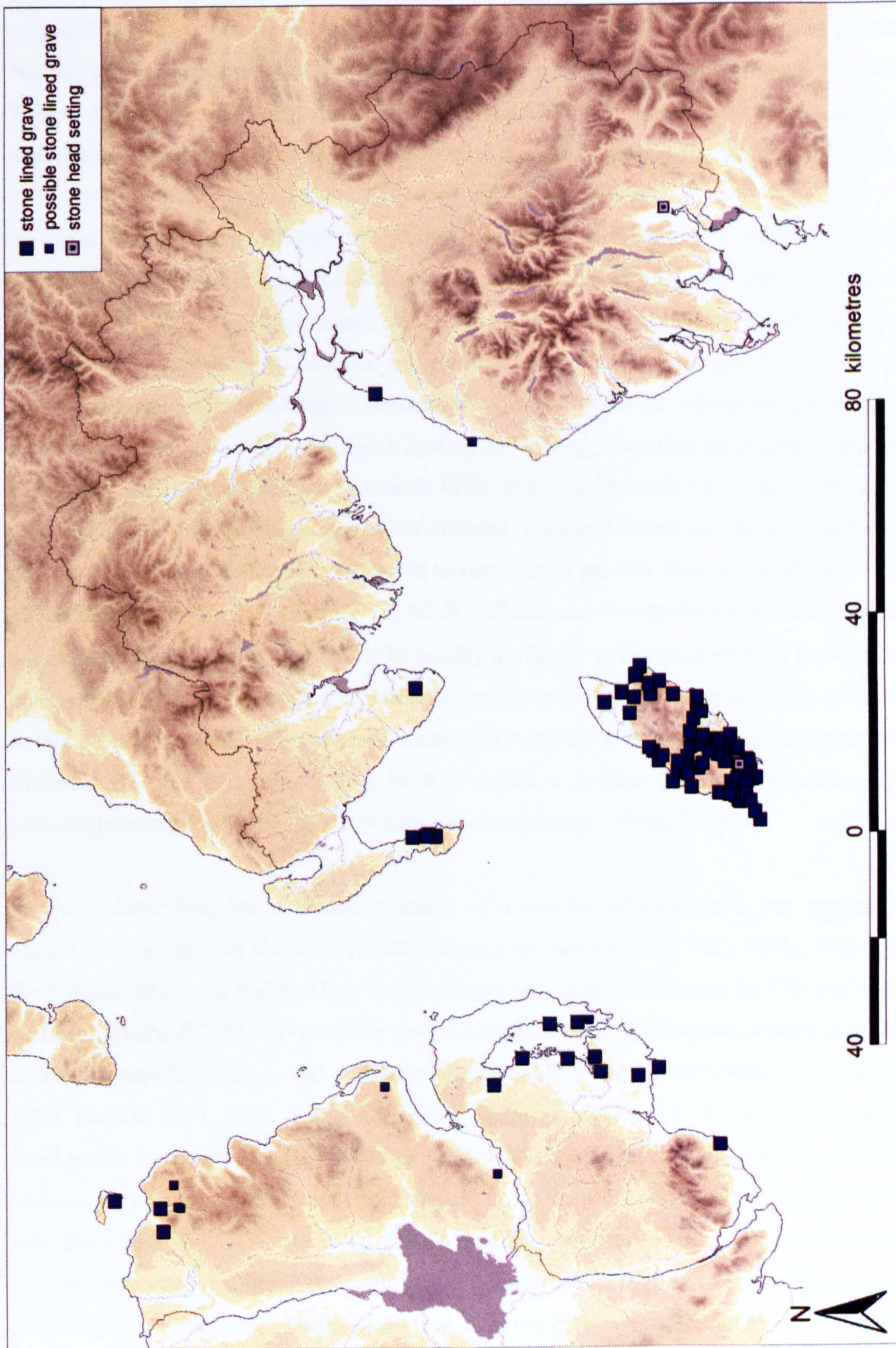


Figure 4.15: Stone-lined graves within the study area

widespread sites, however, lintel and long-cist graves are regarded as a specifically insular practice; Petts (2004) has stressed the need to see these forms of 'protected' burial, whether enclosed by tegulae, stone or other materials, as part of a much wider, European practice. Neither are they restricted to western Britain; examples are known from much of eastern Britain dating from the fifth to seventh centuries, and Anglian metalwork within some cists suggests continuation of these burials into at least the eighth century (Loveluck 2002, 135).

In terms of date, it is difficult to ascribe parameters to these forms of burial without considering individual cases. One of the first such burials to be excavated within Britain was the site of the Catstane (Midlothian), where burials were associated with an early medieval inscribed stone, assumed to have formed the focal point of the cemetery (Cowie 1977-8). However, it has been noted that several of the burials appear to radiate around the stone (which need not be Christian in origin), leading to the suggestion that the origins of the long cist burials may be pre-Christian (Henshall 1958, 268; Alcock 1992, 127). At the site of the Hallow Hill, two cists contained a number of metal, glass and bone artefacts, some of Roman date, and have been tentatively suggested to represent a pre-Christian focus (Alcock 1992, 127; Proudfoot 1996; Proudfoot 1998, 62-4). If this can be considered a trend, then the adoption of stone-lined graves cannot be wholly attributed to Christian origins; these burials could represent an amalgamation of incoming traditions and pre-existing practices, occurring within a Christianising, early medieval context (*cf* Ashmore 1980). In Ireland, a pre-existing tradition of stone cist burials may have provided a similar phenomenon, although of prehistoric examples within the study area, all are short-cists (Waddell 1970).

At the Hallow Hill, the radiocarbon-dating of a number of individuals has produced a combined date range of the sixth to tenth century (Proudfoot 1996, 422), whilst those from the Catstane and Long Niddry (East Lothian) have been dated to between the fifth and eighth centuries (Dalland 1993, 343). At the site of Avonmill Road, Linlithgow, radiocarbon dates at the 2 sigma (95%) level produced dates of AD 400-615 and AD 345-600 (GU-3098; GU-3099; Dalland 1993, 341). Dalland notes an emerging pattern in Lothian, where very few lintel graves have produced dates prior to AD 400 and none appear to be later than the eighth century, supporting earlier assumptions regarding the date of these burials (Henshall 1958, 269; Dalland 1993, 343). O'Brien (2004) recently proposed a chronological distinction between long cists and lintel graves in Ireland. Long cists, found in isolated locations, and sometimes on prehistoric burial sites, are suggested to occur from the fifth century, influenced by burials in western Britain, and adopted as a high status burial rite, possibly used to appropriate land. Lintel graves, however, are considered to have been later, dating from the seventh century onwards, occurring more frequently in cemeteries, often with dug

graves. As noted, however, the distinction is often difficult to draw within the study area; the majority do seem to form part of larger cemeteries and as such, may date from the seventh century onwards.

It seems, however, that to ascribe the same date range to burials throughout the study area would be to dismiss the regional variation that is being sought. Within this region, the few sites that have been dated exemplify this point. Lintel graves from Whithorn have been dated stratigraphically to the seventh century (Hill 1997, 103), which would fit with Dalland's observations from areas to the east. On the site of Balladoole, (Isle of Man), the lintel grave cemetery (within an Iron Age enclosure) was found to have been disturbed by a late ninth to tenth-century ship burial, providing a *terminus ante quem*. The burials appear to have been articulated at the time of disturbance, indicating that such graves were relatively recent (Cubbon 1983, 18). However, at St Patrick's Isle, Peel, lintel graves have been assigned to pre-tenth-century, tenth-century and twelfth-century phases (Freke 2002, 58-82). Dating evidence from typology alone, therefore, whilst relatively secure within the early medieval period, cannot be used to infer more detailed chronology without consideration of the context of individual sites.

It can be argued from the archaeological evidence available from stone-lined grave sites on the Isle of Man and in Ireland, that lintel graves would have formed the earliest ecclesiastical activity at a number of sites. Although lintel graves form the only possible early medieval activity at 63 sites, at a number of sites with ecclesiastical structures, stone-lined graves are found to be stratigraphically early. Examples occur in Ireland, at St John's Point, County Down (Brannon 1980, 60), Derry, County Down (Waterman 1967), and at the Manx *keeills* of Balladoole, Keeill Vael (Barony), Keeill Woirrey, Keeill Pherick a Dromma, Ballameanagh, Sulbrick and Upper Sulby (Kermode 1935; Bruce 1968). The presence of a timber church at Derry (Waterman 1967, 67) may, however, suggest an original architectural feature that may not have been detected at other sites.

Overall, therefore, it seems that the adoption of stone-lined graves represents adherence to a Europe-wide tradition of burial, which was keenly adopted in Scotland, Ireland and western Britain, possibly due to its affinity with pre-existing burial traditions within these areas. Potential dates range from the fifth century into the twelfth, and as such cover the whole period of interest. In southwest Scotland, evidence from Whithorn suggests the adoption of the burial rite as early as the seventh century, and a similarly early date is widely accepted for Ireland. In these areas, the cemeteries appear confined to specific locations, clustering around Strangford Lough, the Rhinns and the Glenshesk valley. On the Isle of Man,

however, it is possible that stone-lined graves were constructed over a much longer period, accounting for a more widespread, dense distribution.

TIMBER-LINED GRAVES

Graves in which the structure was constructed from timber, rather than stone, might be seen to belong the same tradition, simply employing different materials (Hill 1997, 73). Just four examples are known from the study area, representing log coffins, and timber 'lintel graves', and occur in no distinct pattern. The survival of these materials, and their recognition, is likely to be much rarer than their stone counterparts, but it seems from the evidence at Whithorn that they would have occurred in the same contexts. These include a log coffin at Whithorn; with examples from Quernmore (Lancashire), and Armagh and Dunmisk, Hill (1997, 26) suggests that these may belong to a wider Irish Sea tradition.

FURNISHED GRAVES, BARROWS AND BOAT BURIALS

Alongside the dug graves and stone-lined inhumations which form the predominant burial rites in these areas (Thomas 1968, 107-8), data was also collected for burials which might traditionally have been described as 'pagan'. These include inhumations and cremations with weaponry and jewellery, some of which occur beneath barrows, others within a churchyard context. These burials have previously been assigned to two distinct chronological phases: the seventh century (O'Sullivan 1996), and the ninth to tenth centuries (Halsall 2000; Richards 1991, 142; 2002, 156). More recently, however, doubt has been cast on the dating evidence for the earlier, Anglian group (Richards 2004, 99).

Although these burials, which often occur in isolated locations within the landscape, do not represent specifically ecclesiastical sites, they provide an added dimension to the ideological landscape. A move has been made away from viewing furnished burials as a simple mirror of social structure, or ethnicity, and more ideological and political agendas have been sought (Arnold 1982; Lucy 1999; Carver 2002b). By considering where and when such burials occurred in the study area, some indication can be derived of ideological investment strategies of different segments of society at this time, as a reaction to changing socio-political situations.

Possible Anglian period barrows

O'Sullivan (1980a, 169; 1985, 24-5; 1996) has drawn attention to a small group of burials which have been interpreted as representing an intrusive Anglo-Saxon burial rite in the upper reaches on the Eden Valley (figure 4.16). These sites, at Crosby Garrett, Asby, Brigg Flatt, Kirkby Stephen, Warcop and Orton, have all provided evidence for furnished burial, apparently beneath mounds.

The burial at Crosby Garrett, located on open moorland at the limit of modern farmland, was identified in the 1870s by Canon Greenwell, whose accounts describe a 'burnt body' within a mound, 'undoubtedly that of an Angle, as is shown by the iron knife, buckle, shears and bridle bit which accompanied the interment' (Greenwell 1877, 385). The burial is considered secondary, as prehistoric remains were also encountered (O'Sullivan 1996, 16). O'Sullivan has used the assemblage of grave goods to suggest that, 'it can now be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that the burial at Crosby Garrett is indeed that of an Anglo-Saxon warrior of the seventh century' (O'Sullivan 1996, 15). Confused accounts dating to the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries appear to describe two further burials on Asby Winderwath Common, one with a sword and one with a knife; O'Sullivan allows that the finds could equally belong to the Viking period (Greenwell 1877, 386; O'Sullivan 1996, 18). The find of a bronze ferrule in a tumulus at Brigg Flatt, now lost, has been tentatively placed in the Anglian period; again, however, a Viking date is not ruled out. A second barrow explored by Greenwell at Kirkby Stephen, and was found to mark a cremation deposit beneath the centre of the mound, which had subsequently been cut by a 'hollow' with a wooden coffin (O'Sullivan 1996, 18). A bronze bowl was recovered, with a bluish glass bead, 'thickly splashed with red and yellow' (Greenwell 1877, 384-5). The finds could date to the Roman, Anglian or Viking periods; unfortunately the records are poor and the items remain unlocated (O'Sullivan 1996, 18-19). A cairn at Orton, again just above the contour marking the limit of modern farming, was found to contain a primary crouched burial, and three secondary inhumations; the lack of associated artefacts suggests that these could equally represent prehistoric burials (O'Sullivan 1996, 19). An ambiguous account of eighteenth-century investigations at Warcop suggest the presence of weaponry, including a helmet, associated with a secondary burial in a prehistoric mound. Again, the finds do not survive; their poor state at the time suggests they may no longer exist (O'Sullivan 1996, 19-20). The possibility remains that this burial represents a warrior of Anglian or Viking date, although the presence of a helmet 'makes a date within [the Anglo-Saxon] period unlikely' (O'Sullivan 1996, 20). O'Sullivan also suggests that the stray finds of ornamental mounts

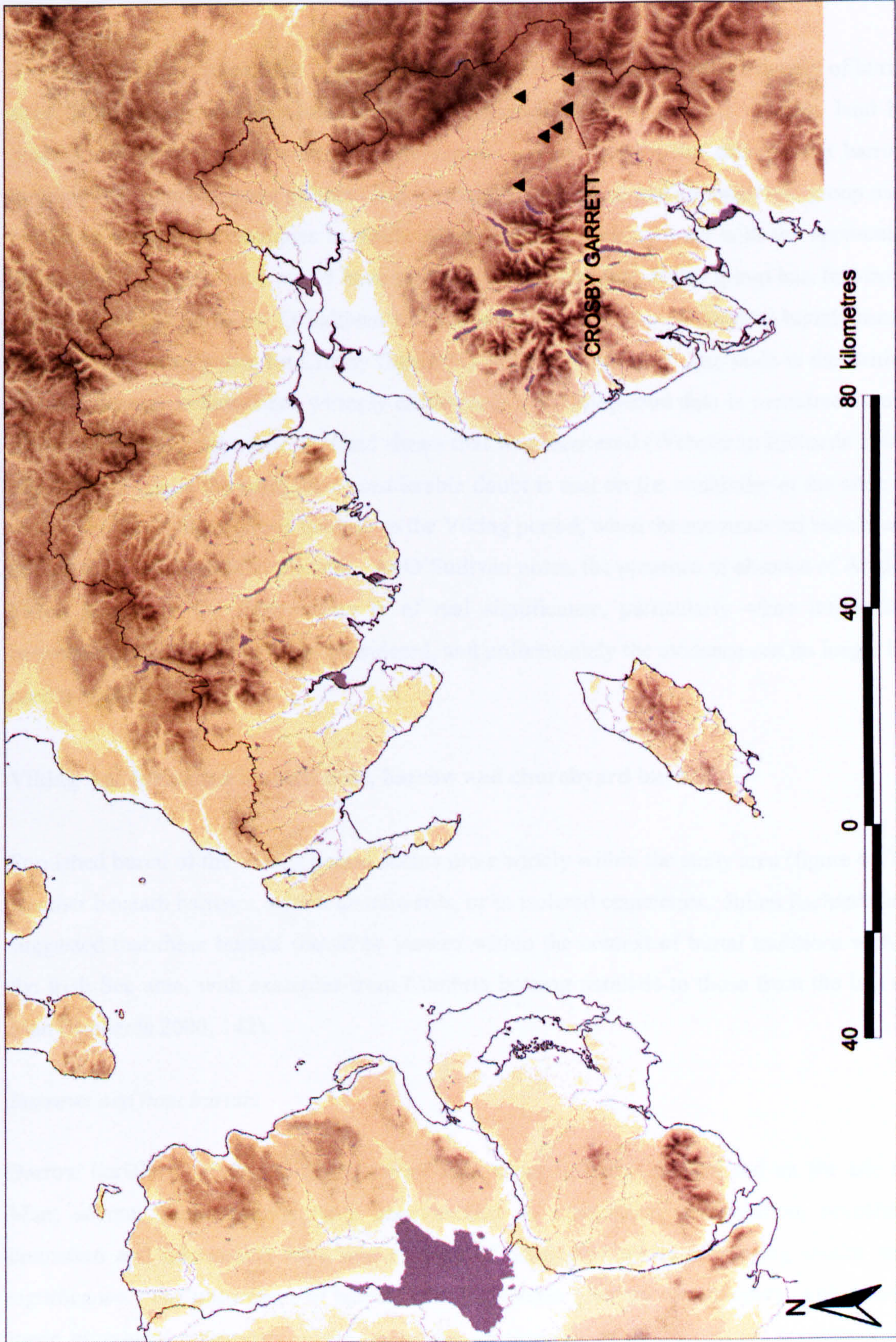


Figure 4.16: Possible Anglian-period furnished graves in Cumbria (after O'Sullivan 1980; 1996)

from Crosthwaite (O'Sullivan 1990) and a horn sword handle, 'from Cumberland', may also have derived from burial contexts (O'Sullivan 1996, 20).

The Eden Valley is one of the more fertile areas of Cumbria, and the establishment of burial sites in its upper reaches would represent a strategic appropriation of valuable land by incomers from the eastern side of the Pennines. Carver (2002b) has stressed that barrow building represents a strong political and ideological statement, and although this group may not be as wealthy as examples in southeastern England, their contrast with the apparently unadorned dug grave sites would have set them apart. The date of this group has, however, been called into question. O'Sullivan's identification of a cluster of Anglian burials hangs on a seventh-century date for Crosby Garrett (O'Sullivan 1996, 15). The finds in the British Museum appear to have been wrongly catalogued; a Viking period date is considered more likely, particularly for a pair of inlaid shears that was recovered (Webster in Richards 2004, 99, 108). If this is the case, then considerable doubt is cast on the remainder of the sites; it seems possible that the group belongs to the Viking period, when the monumental burials are known to have occurred in the area. As O'Sullivan notes, the presence or absence of Anglo-Saxon burials in the Eden valley is of real significance, particularly when interaction between different areas is being considered, and unfortunately the evidence can no longer be used to uphold the former.

Viking Age furnished burials: boat, barrow and churchyard burials

Furnished burial of the Viking period occurs more widely within the study area (figure 4.17), whether beneath barrows, within churchyards, or in isolated cemeteries. Julian Richards has suggested that these burials should be viewed within the context of burial traditions within the Irish Sea area, with examples from Cumbria bearing parallels to those from the Isle of Man (Richards 2000, 142).

Barrows and boat burials

Barrow burials of ninth and tenth-century date occur in both Cumbria and on the Isle of Man; several such mounds have been subject to antiquarian investigation, revealing cremation and inhumation rites, and a range of associated goods of varying wealth and significance. The occurrence of barrow burials, whether primary or secondary, would have made prominent statements in the landscape, particularly in an area where contemporary burial practices appear to have been less visible. Halsall's suggestion that the occurrence of barrow burials in Cumbria would have been directly influenced by a pre-existing Anglian

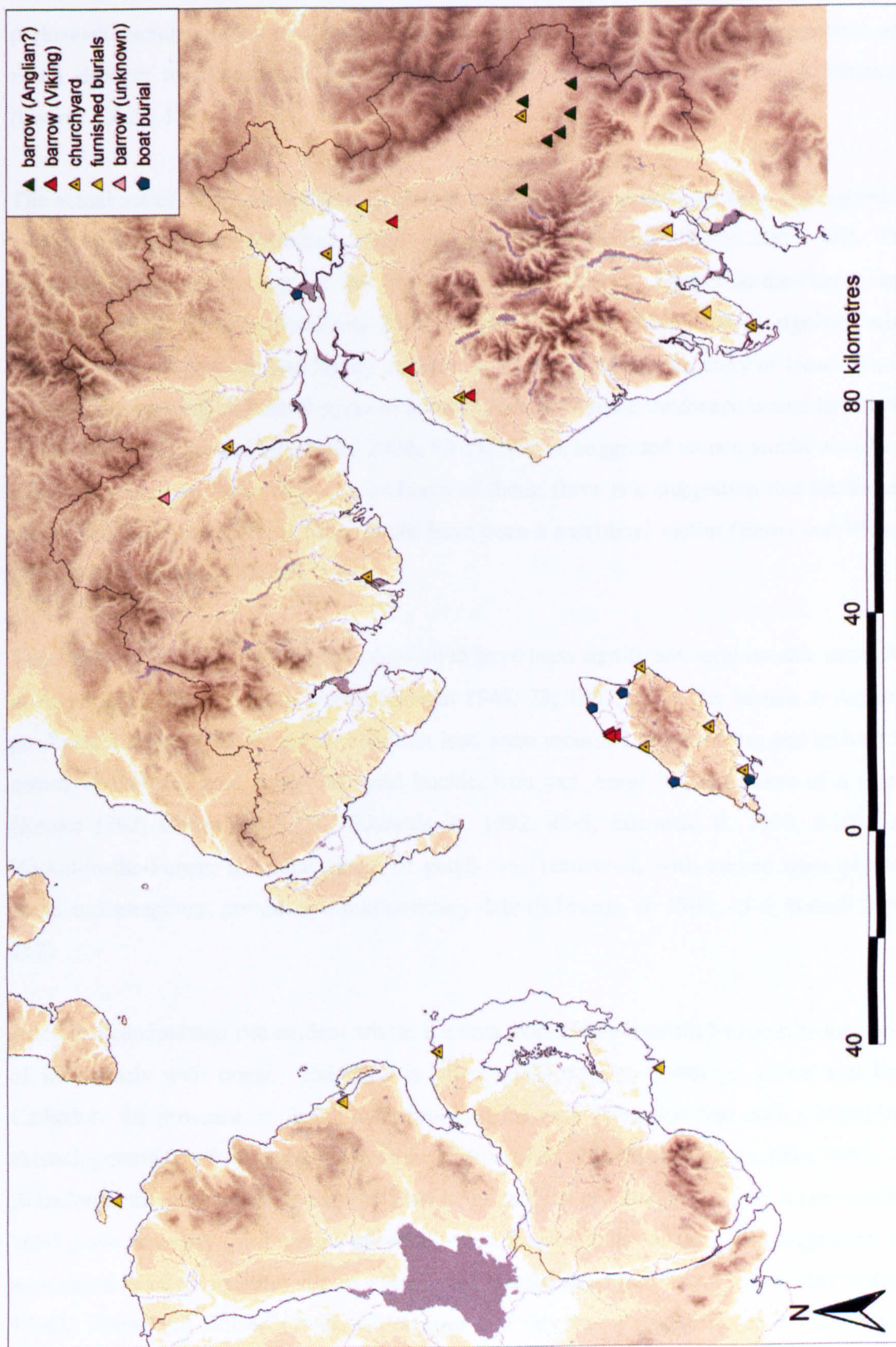


Figure 4.17: Furnished burials in the study area

tradition needs reassessment in the light of disputed dating (O'Sullivan 1996; Halsall 1998, 335-6; 2000, 265). The Scandinavian-influenced elite may instead have been drawing on prehistoric monumentality as a means of expressing ideology and identity; the presence of a much stronger tradition of mound burial in Scandinavia would also have been influential (Carver 2002b, 134).

The actual act of burial, rather than the artefacts employed, has recently been highlighted as a way that local communities could actively assert identity (Lucy 2002, 86). The identification of cremations at the sites of Crosby Garrett, Hesket-on-the-Forest, and potentially Kirk Andreas (Richards 2004, 98-99; Bornholdt 2004, 104-5) signifies what would have been an overt and highly visible rite; as noted for the cemetery of Heath Wood, Ingleby, the burning of funeral pyres at specific locations in the landscape would have been visible for miles around (Richards 2004, 90-2). Other suggested rituals would also have made an impact on those who saw or heard of them: there is a suggestion that the female interred at Ballateare, Isle of Man, might have been a sacrificial victim (Bersu and Wilson 1966, 90-1; Cubbon 1983, 16).

The wealth invested in these burials appears to have been significant, with notable examples at Aspatria and Hesket-in-the-Forest (Cowan 1948, 73; 1967, 31). The barrow at Aspatria produced a range of finds which, although lost, were recorded in a drawing and included a sword, spearhead, gold strap-end, gold buckle, iron axe, horse bit and traces of a shield (Rooke 1792; Cowan 1948, 74; Edwards, B. 1992, 43-5; Edwards, B. 1998, 8-10). At Hesket-in-the-Forest, a similar range of goods was recovered, with carved bone objects, spurs and weaponry, providing a tenth-century date (Edwards, B. 1992, 45-6; Halsall 2000, 262).

Another Scandinavian rite evident within the area, sometimes beneath barrows, is the burial of individuals with boats. Evidence is often ephemeral; at Cronk yn Howe and Peel Cathedral, the presence of clench nails provided the only indication that such a burial had existed; potentially these could have come from coffins (Bornholdt-Collins 2004, 104). At Balladoole, the boat burial appears to have been deliberately juxtaposed over a pre-existing lintel grave cemetery (providing a pre-tenth century date for the former), and suggesting the appropriation of an existing site of some local ideological significance (Bersu and Wilson 1966). Bersu and Wilson (1966, 13) suggest that this was a symbolic act of domination; although others suggest that the site was chosen for its prominent location (Megaw and Megaw 1950, 146-7; Bornholdt-Collins 2004, 108). To suggest the two criteria are distinct, however, is misleading; prominence within the landscape could signal dominance over

territory or populations. Similarly, at Knock y Doonee, the boat burial excavated by Kermodé in 1927 revealed a well-furnished grave, accompanied by a horse (Kermodé 1930). The use of ships in burial is attested in Britain prior to the Viking period, but occurs in a distinct area of the southeast, and must be viewed within a specific political and ideological context (Carver 1995). It has been suggested, however, that these burials reflect a strong statement of power and identity, and this can be applied to the burials in the Irish Sea area. They form part of a wider tradition which harks back to Scandinavia, and can be seen as cultural conservatism as a means of making a strong statement of identity through burial. Ships could have many meanings, and not necessarily pagan (Thye 1995); for a seafaring community, they would have formed a natural focus of veneration and source of symbolism.

The wealth, and labour, invested in these burials suggest that strong ideological statements were being made, and similar conclusions can be drawn from their landscape contexts. The majority occupy prominent locations on relatively high land; the coastal ridge on which the church of Jurby stands seems to have been a particular focal point, dominating the immediate landscape and commanding views of the coasts of Ireland, Scotland and England. Mound burials also occur in the east-west valley of the River Derwent, and the wide Eden valley, which would have formed main areas for settlement. Their position is seen to reflect 'uncontrolled, isolated burial away from churchyards and outside of authority' (Richards 2002, 159), and signals ideological and political tensions. 'Adoption of barrow burial may have signalled a change in the relations of power, and of social organisation, reflecting the need for a newly formed upper class to promote its rank' (Carver 2002b, 135), and in doing so, the vocabulary of the landscape was changed, and those who created these monuments themselves became part of the *long durée* (Carver 2002b, 135).

Churchyard burials

The prominent isolated barrows present a contrast to those burials which appear to represent interment in pre-existing churchyards (though combined in the possible barrow within the churchyard at Jurby). These 'churchyard' burials are often represented only by grave-goods, recovered during grave-digging and therefore rarely in a secure context. It is widely assumed, however, that these items represent furnished graves that would have existed on the site, either prior to the presence of a church, or inserted into an existing churchyard (Edwards, B.1992, 48).

The most extensive group of burials that can be placed within this group are those discovered during excavations at Carlisle Cathedral between 1985 and 1988 (Keevill 1989). 41 burials

and three 'empty' graves were identified, and assigned to three phases between the ninth and tenth centuries. Gravegoods were found with a number of graves, including one burial which contained an iron knife, a copper alloy buckle, a silver wire loop and a silver-capped pendant whetstone (Keevill 1989, 17). That these burials were within a churchyard is suggested by the tentative interpretation of two post-Roman timber buildings as belonging to a church complex, the presence of eighth and ninth-century carved stones from the area, and the continued religious focus represented by the cathedral.

'Churchyard burials' represented only by grave goods have been identified at Kirkcudbright, Ramside (Cumbria), Brigham (Cumbria), St Quintin's Church (Dumfries and Galloway), Ormside (Cumbria), West Seaton (Cumbria), and also near the churches of St John's Point (County Down) and Rathlin Island (Cowan 1948, 74, 75). On the Isle of Man, weapons found in the churchyards of Jurby, Kirk Michael, St John's German, Braddan, Malew and Maughold may all be part of the same tradition (Megaw 1937; Wilson 1974, 45). At Kirkcudbright, Brigham, St John's Point and many of the Manx sites, archaeological, sculptural and toponymic evidence suggest that such burials would have occurred within the context of existing ecclesiastical centres. At Eaglesfield, although archaeological evidence is poorly recorded, the presence of dug graves may suggest a pre-existing cemetery, although these burials have also been suggested to post-date the furnished grave (Cowan 1948, 74; O'Sullivan 1980a, 229-230; Edwards, B. 1992, 48). As a 'pagan' statement, these furnished burials could be seen as the taking over of Christian burial grounds, representing conflict between religious ideals. However, it is often stressed that the church did not directly oppose burial with grave-goods; if Christian burial and furnished burial do not have to be perceived as polar opposites, then interpretation as a statements of identity and ideological affiliation are more tenable (Graham-Campbell 1980, 379; Halsall 2000, 261-6). Burial within existing churchyards represents an alternative strategy to barrow burials, and would have been a different, but equally pronounced, statement of authority. The church would have been recognised as a strong political tool at this time; by integrating existing symbols of power with their own traditions, a new elite could legitimise and establish claims to land or influence. Richards (2000, 155) has noted that in areas where Anglo-Saxon and Viking cultures came into contact, new identities were forged, and in the northwest 'these comprised the maintenance, and even development, of a distinctive Viking identity'.

Furnished graves with no further context known

The final group of burials, those accompanied by grave-goods, but with no known ecclesiastical context or burial mound, represent the third class of the 'Viking' burials.

These occur in the coastal locations of Ballyholme (County Down), Larne (County Antrim) and possibly at sites at Pennington (Cumbria) (Fanning 1970; Edwards, B. 1992, 49; Newman 2004, 15). These sites, where isolated burials occur on extreme coastal locations, are paralleled in Wales (Edwards, N. 1985a) and elsewhere in Ireland (Raftery 1961); such remains are seen, not as the settlements of permanent communities, but as evidence for more 'casual contact' (Edwards, N. 1986, 39). Such an interpretation may be suggested for the possible burial, represented by a sword, at St John's Point (County Down). Harrison (2001, 66) suggests the possibility that a group of seven northeastern Irish burials may represent more permanent settlement, although there is little evidence to support this. These graves show no evidence of mounds or other monumentality. The multiple burials at Rathlin Island may, however, be indicative of more prolonged influence, and the strategic location of this landfall within the western seaways would provide a context for such activity. In Ireland, where the majority of burials occur within five kilometres of Dublin, the examples at Larne, Ballyholme, and Rathlin Island, with the possible example at St John's Point are noted to 'have as much in common with the western Isle of Scotland as the rest of Ireland' (Harrison 2001, 63-6).

The finds from Pennington, comprising bones and a sword encountered during the construction of a house in the mid-nineteenth century, suggest a possible burial at this site, whilst the find of swords at Whitbarrow Scar (Cumbria), and a number of Manx sites are included only on very tentative grounds as a burial site (Edwards, B. 1992, 48; Newman 2004, 15). In contrast, a more significant group of Viking age burials has been identified at Cumwhitton, Cumbria, lying within the Eden valley, southeast of Carlisle. Six inhumations were excavated, the majority of which were richly furnished with weaponry, jewellery, beads and dress fittings. The burials represent an interesting amalgam of attributes: east-west dug graves, with the fittings traditionally associated with 'pagan' rites (OAN 2004). The monumentality associated with this burial ground has been suggested to represent 'a conscious display of conservatism designed to establish a presence in the landscape of Norse dominated territories, from which a fast changing cultural admixture amongst the living population could derive a sense of the historical legitimacy of their leader's power' (Griffiths 2004, 127; Newman 2004, 15).

These burials provide an insight into cultural contact, and provide a valuable, ninth to tenth-century dimension to the distribution map of ideological investment. Barrow burials were confined to Cumbria and Man, where they appear to have been used to make overt political statements of dominance within local landscapes. In Ireland, however, the burials appear less monumental, potentially indicative of less intense contact (with the exception of Rathlin

Island). Where graves occur within churchyards, a different statement appears to have been made. This amalgamation of traditions may tentatively be suggested to post-date the erection of barrows, as Christianity came to be recognised as a powerful arena for investment.

CHURCHES AND CHAPELS

Possible churches occur at 70 sites (15%), and at the majority of these, evidence for an early medieval date is highly subjective. A strong clustering of sites on the Isle of Man would seem to show evidence for real spatial variation (figure 4.18), although it is unlikely that the scarcity of church sites in the remainder of the study area can be considered representative of the original sample. Nonetheless, the available evidence provides an indication of the types of structures that were being constructed during this period, and therefore an idea of the types of buildings that existed on other sites.

CHURCHES: IDENTIFICATION

The presence of a church, with or without an associated Christian burial ground, has been used as one of the main indicators of an ecclesiastical focus at a particular site (Hamlin 1992, 142). The decision to construct a church would have been a major one, and although by modern standards, many of these early structures are simple or even primitive, they would have made a considerable visual impact within contemporary landscapes. Early medieval churches have been identified within this region from standing walls, below ground remains, and also contemporary documentary references. The nature of this evidence is, however, extremely uneven, both chronologically and spatially.

Churches are known from historical sources, and to a lesser extent from archaeological remains, to have been constructed from stone, clay, earth, wood, wattles and rods, and the differential survival of these materials means that the map of surviving remains is likely to be skewed, largely towards those built in stone. Only five timber churches have been identified within the study area, compared to over 70 possible examples constructed in stone. This factor illustrates that timber churches are likely to represent only a minimal percentage of their original number. Documentary evidence can redress this balance slightly, but as the sources add a bias of their own towards the historically rich Irish areas, there still remains an uneven source of evidence.

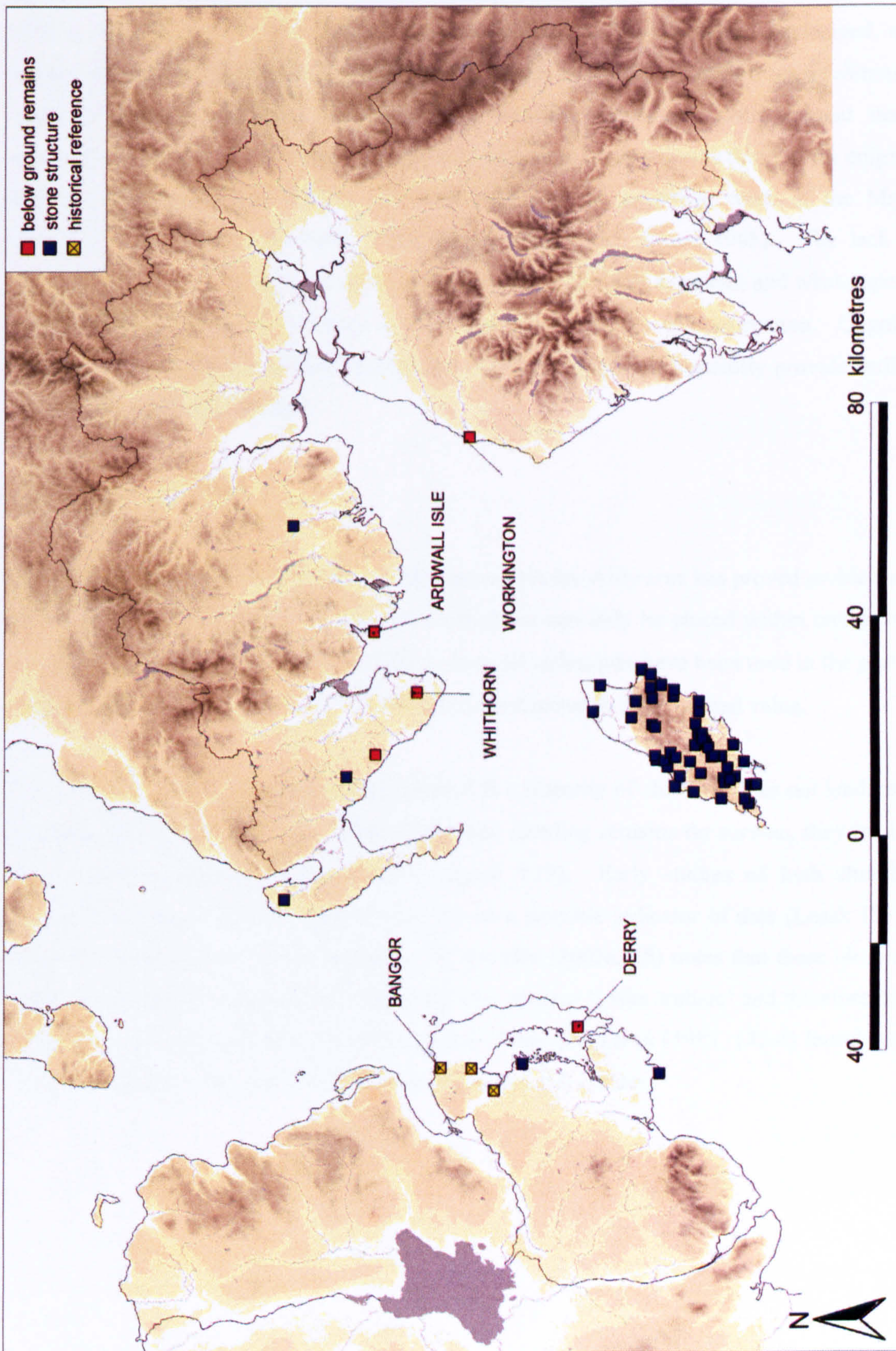


Figure 4.18: Possible early medieval churches within the study area

The survival or recognition of early churches is deeply affected by the later history of particular sites. Early medieval churches that retained their importance as ecclesiastical centres, in some cases to the modern day, are unlikely to have remained unchanged, and subsequent rebuilding has often eradicated all traces of earlier churches. A preliminary study of possible examples demonstrates a striking distribution, with a great many concentrated on the Isle of Man. The density of Manx *keills* is something of an enigma, although likely to be at least in part attributable to the extensive work of the Manx Archaeological Survey (Kermode 1909; 1911; 1915; 1935; Bruce 1968). The lack of chronological definition means that their significance is difficult to assess, and what appears to be a dense distribution is likely to represent several phases of construction. Ongoing research in the Centre for Manx Studies and Manx Heritage will hopefully provide further information for future research.

CHURCHES: DATING

Ascribing specific dates to the known churches within the study area has proved problematic and despite modern studies, the best-dated examples can only be placed within one or two centuries (Lowe 1987; Ó'Carragáin 2003a). Several techniques have been used in the past to elucidate the chronology of these churches, but most prove to be of limited value.

The simple, single cell rectilinear plan adopted at a majority of churches does not lend itself to typological dating, and even where substantial standing remains do survive, they tend to lack chronologically diagnostic features (figure 4.19). Early studies of Irish churches identified the length:breadth ratio of churches as a possible indicator of date (Leask 1955), but this has since been widely disputed. Ó'Carragáin (2003a, 48) notes that these ideas are based on presumption, largely relying on the idea of what 'looks archaic' and therefore does not accept such measures as a useful dating tool. Similarly, Lowe (1987, 142-4) found that a study of dimension ratios proved inconclusive for the Isle of Man.

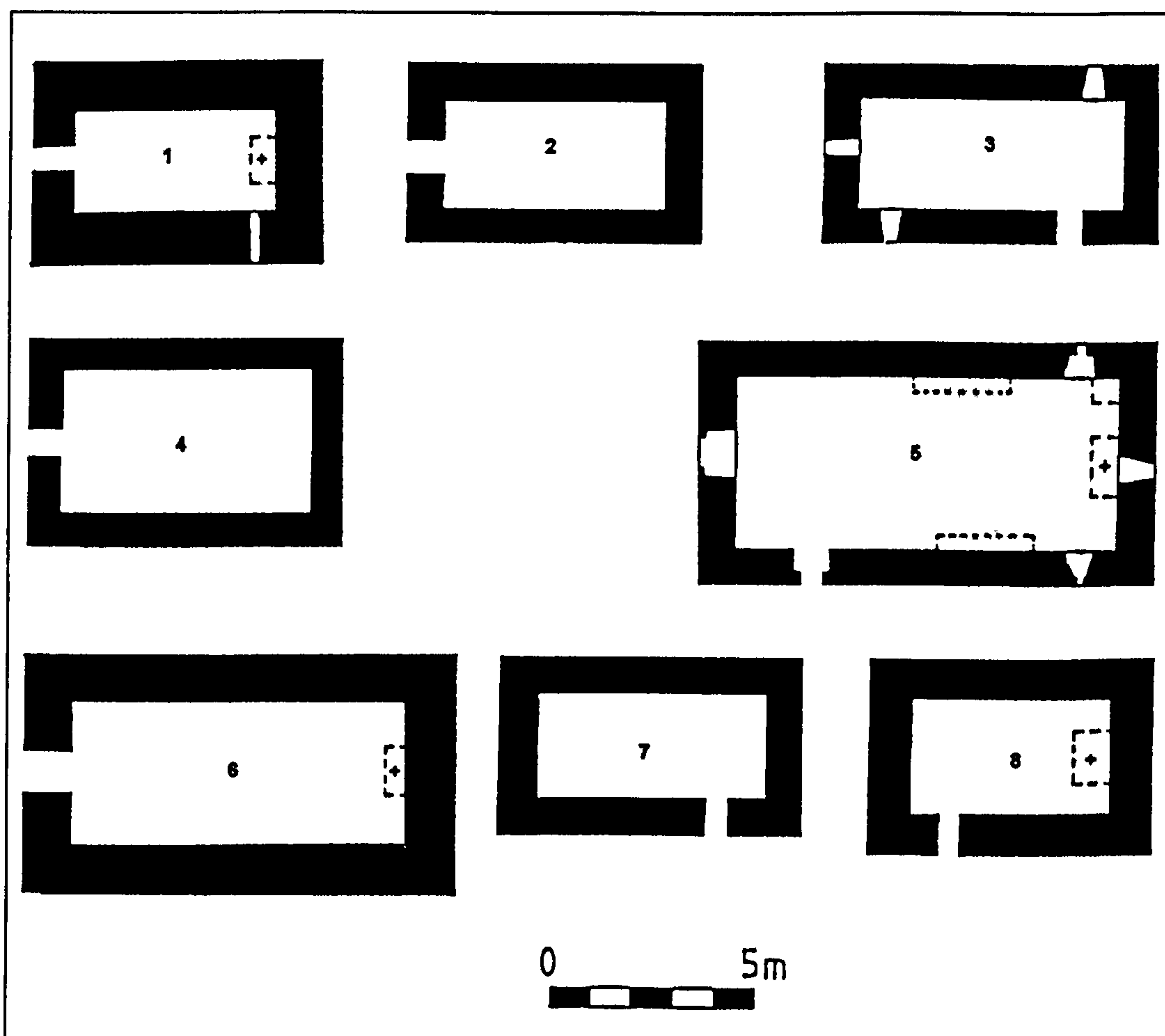


Figure 4.19: Selection of schematic plans of Manx keeills (after Lowe 1987, 289)

1: Sulbrick, 2: Renshent, 3: Ballakilley, 4: Keeill Unjin, 5: St Michael's Chapel

6: Ronaldsway I, 7: Cabbal Dreem Ruy, 8: Balladoole

The majority of churches have not been subject to modern excavation, and of the few that have, very little material has been produced that can confidently be used to date them. Whithorn is something of an exception, where the supposed timber church and clay-bonded burial chapel have been allocated to a stratigraphic horizon between c. AD 730 and AD 845 (Hill 1997, 144f). Tenth or eleventh-century carved stone monuments found within the walls of several of the Manx *keeills* has been used to suggest a *terminus post quem* of the eleventh century, but such dating mechanisms are imprecise, and are based largely on the equally debatable dates of carved stone monuments (Chapter 5). At other sites, the position of a timber church beneath a stone-built successor has supported the long held view that the earliest Christian churches would have been constructed in wood, but this can not be used to provide absolute dates. The sequence of a timber church beneath a stone chapel at Ardwall Isle was given date brackets of the fifth to the eighth centuries, but this was based largely on

Thomas's model of developed cemeteries, and not on external dating mechanisms (Thomas 1967; *cf* Petts 2002a).

Scientific methods have also been found lacking in this context. Attempts have been made to radiocarbon date the small fragments of charcoal found within the mortar of stone churches in Ireland (Berger 1992); the results only provided dates to within three centuries, rendering such methods disproportionately expensive, and therefore of limited value (Ó'Carragáin 2003a, 38).

Preoccupation with Patrician sources and traditions has, in the past, led scholars to integrate historical and archaeological sources by fitting church remains to a timescale between the fifth and eighth centuries, or the 'Age of Saints' (Petrie 1845 in Ó'Carragáin 2003a, 32; *cf* Thomas 1967; Ardwall Isle). Lowe has highlighted this as a problem on the Isle of Man in particular, where the small *keeill* sites were thought at one time to have dated from the sixth or seventh centuries, but where associations with the Patrician church were not documented until the twelfth (Lowe 1987, 50). More recently, however, documentary sources have been subject to more systematic consideration, and have proved to be of value in the dating of general trends in church construction (Manning 2000).

It has long been recognised that the Irish Annals refer to churches using different terminology for structures made from wood (most commonly *dairthech*) and from stone (*damliac*) (Petrie 1845 in Raleigh Radford 1977, 1-2). At the most basic level, these references have provided evidence that churches existed at particular locations (Hamlin 1984, 117). Manning (2000) has taken this further, by collecting references to church structures from all of the Irish annalistic sources, and considering them in terms of chronology. He has shown that references to timber churches occur in annal entries on 45 occasions between AD 762 to 1167, evenly spread over this timespan (Manning 2000, 38). Reference to stone churches, using the term *damliac*, began in AD 840 with mention of a stone church at Armagh (AU 840.3), which may have been the same structure as that mentioned as an *oratorium lapidem* in AD 789 (AU 789.8; 840.3). Although this might suggest an early date for the onset of stone architecture, the next reference to a *damliac* occurs in AD 909, and all but three of the known references to this type of church are confined to a period between AD 909 and 1129 (Manning 2000, 38). This indicates that, whilst the stone church was introduced as early as the ninth century, the timber church seems to have predominated into the tenth. The majority of churches in the Irish and Manx parts of the study area are now accepted by scholars as belonging to this later period (Johnson 2004), and it seems likely that known churches in the remainder of the study area might also be of

this date, possibly even the chapel at Ardwall Isle which has been previously ascribed to the eighth century.

Unfortunately, documentary sources cannot provide the same coverage for the remainder of the study area. The Isle of Man lacks sources predating the twelfth century, and reference to these centuries in southwest Scotland and Cumbria have tended to be from eastern, Northumbrian sources, and provide only fleeting references to specific sites, and not much detail as to specific structures.

TIMBER CHURCHES

The suggestion that the earliest churches in Ireland were constructed from wood is borne out by excavated examples of such structures beneath stone churches, as at Reask, Church Island, Inishcaltra, Carnsmore and Ardagh (Harbison 1982, 626-7). Within the study area, examples occur at Whithorn (Hill 1997, 139-155), Derry (County Down), Ballaquayle (Man), Ardwall Isle (Dumfries and Galloway) and Workington (Cumbria). At a general level, this would indicate that churches were constructed in wood throughout the study area, as part of a widespread, and seemingly long-lived tradition in the west. Manning's (2000) study demonstrates that construction of churches in wood continued in Ireland, and possibly in other areas of the Irish Sea, for much longer than previously thought.

Ann Hamlin (1984, 122) has noted that if communities in Ireland continued to build their churches in wood, this is likely to represent a deliberate choice rather than a lack of expertise or technological ability. Stone churches were known in eastern England and the Continent from an early date, and Christian communities within the study area would, in all likelihood, have known of such structures. Bede (*HE* III:25) refers to construction in wood as building 'in the Irish manner', and this is echoed as late as the twelfth century, when St Bernard's *Life of St Malachy* describes the construction of a timber church at Bangor. This might suggest that the churches constructed in Ireland reflected a deliberate decision *not* to build in the style of Christian communities in southern England and the Continent.

The organic nature of timber churches means that their archaeological identification is primarily through the excavation of a series of postholes, used to describe the layout of the structure. Our knowledge of these sites depends on their survival, and subsequent careful excavation. In areas like the Isle of Man, where a large number of chapel sites were subject to some form of excavation in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries (Kermode 1909; 1911; 1915; 1935; Bruce 1968), such features are likely to have been overlooked or

destroyed in the search for stone built foundations. These factors are likely to contribute to the very low number of known timber churches identified within the study area.

The date of these buildings is typically difficult to ascertain. At Derry and at Ballaquayle, the post-built structures were identified beneath tenth or eleventh-century churches, and at Workington, the postholes were found beneath the twelfth-century tower of the church, providing broad dating parameters. Finds from Derry were found to date from the eighth century onwards, but this material could not be directly linked to the timber framed building on stone foundations, and the structure could equally be much later than this material (Waterman 1967; Hamlin 1984, 128). The larger scale excavations at Whithorn revealed a complex series of timber built structures, comprising two rectilinear 'oratories', dated to Period II (c. AD 730 – 845), which were subsequently amalgamated to form a large timber church, reminiscent of the hall structures of Yeavering and other Northumbrian sites (Hill 1997, 45).

With such a small sample, and a lack of complete plans, it is difficult to discuss the chronology and typology of these structures, or to identify regional trends in church construction. Documentary sources can provide a fuller picture for Ireland, suggesting that there was a focus for church investment along the western shore of Strangford Lough, and highlighting the lack of churches in County Antrim, but this information cannot be applied to the rest of the study area (see figure 4.18).

STONE CHURCHES

The evidence for stone-built structures is far more prevalent in the archaeological record. The distribution of stone churches throughout the study area is striking, and suggests that the Isle of Man was subject to different levels of investment than surrounding areas. Small *keeills* are a well-known phenomenon within the Manx landscape, and, considering the size of the island, occupy a remarkably large number of sites. Traditionally, the Manx *keeills* are thought to number over 170, although many site identifications are based on folk tradition, or on the presence of burials. Figure 4.19 does not include these less certain examples, but the density on the island remains significant.

Typologies and building plans

Before considering the implication of this distribution, attention must be given to the typologies that have been applied to the churches represented on these maps. This approach

has formed the basis of Ó'Carragáin's (2003a) recent thesis on the pre-Romanesque churches of Ireland, and he has successfully identified four zones of investment based on a classification initially outlined by Harbison (1982, 618-619). Types 1 (rectangular oratories built in a corbelling technique) and 4 (churches with a rectangular nave and smaller chancel) occupy specific and localised zones of investment outside the study area, but Types 2 and 3 are of relevance to this study. Harbison (1982, 618) identifies Type 2 as simple, rectangular structures with vertical walls, and Type 3 as simple, rectangular structures with *antae*, a term applied to buildings where the north and south walls extend beyond the gable. These types have been identified to categorise the corpus of Irish churches, but these simple groups can be used throughout the study area (Lowe 1987, 142). A single anomalous outlier occurs at Morland, Cumbria, where the tower of the parish church is considered to be late Anglo-Saxon (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 446-8). The date range applied may fall outside the period of interest, however, and as a single example reveals little of regional variation. As Newman (2004, 11) notes, this may be an exception that proves a rule; early medieval stone architecture is generally absent from the churchyards of Cumbria.

Type 2 churches

Type 2 churches, or simple, rectilinear structures, would seem to best characterise the Manx *keeills* (Lowe 1987, 142; see figure 4.19), and those chapel sites where foundations are identifiable, although of uncertain date, in southwest Scotland. Ó'Carragáin has noted that Type 2 churches are confined largely to the western part of Ireland, and as rectilinear plans could have originated in any number of areas, there need not be a direct link between the Irish examples and the Manx *keeills*. This does, however, provide a useful distinction from the Type 3 churches.

In many of the Manx *keeills*, Lowe (1987, 116-118) has identified small cavities near the altars, which he suggests may have housed relics or other sacred items that formed the focus of veneration by the local community. The need of local churches to hold sacred relics has been attested in documentary evidence for Ireland (Ó'Carragáin 2003b, 142-3); this may reflect this practice architecturally. Otherwise, however, the chapels are simple structures, with little evidence of ornament (figure 4.20).



Figure 4.20: Manx keeills (clockwise from top left: Maughold, Cabbal Pherick, Lag ny Keeillee, Corrody Keeill)

Type 3 churches

In Counties Down and Antrim, the churches of Nendrum, St John's Point, and Derry (figure 4.21) belong to the large, eastern group of Type 3 churches, examples of which occur at only three locations outside the country, at St Patrick's Isle, Peel (Isle of Man), Iona and possibly at Glastonbury (Ó'Carragáin 2003a, 76). It seems, therefore, that this type is likely to have some regional significance.



Figure 4.21: Type 3 churches (left: St John's Point, right: Derry)

The most widely accepted explanation for this design is that these churches are skeuomorphs of wooden structures, with the *antae* imitating either vertical corner timbers or horizontal wall timbers extending out to facilitate easier joinery. Ó'Carragáin is of the opinion that this church form is used to represent construction in 'an Irish manner' reflecting the wooden churches that were preferred in previous centuries; this might have been a means of reinventing or reaffirming a specifically Irish tradition. In this capacity, the distribution of Type 3 within the study area reflects a link between Ireland and St Patrick's Isle, Peel, which is also reflected by the presence of a round tower.

The distribution of church types, therefore, suggests two distinct architectural zones within the study area: County Down shares a common form of architecture with most of eastern Ireland, which can also be seen at the possibly monastic centre of St Patrick's Isle, whilst the remainder of the Isle of Man, and possibly southwest Scotland invested in the more simple churches. The distinction is simplistic, but can be used to suggest a definite Irish influence at the possibly monastic centre of St Patrick's Isle, an influence that is not evident in the architecture of the monastic site at Maughold (Freke 2002).

ROUND TOWERS

A final architectural feature that deserves consideration in this context is the round tower, one of the archetypal features of Irish ecclesiastical sites, and one which is believed to have occurred at the end of the period of interest, from the tenth century onwards (McDonnell 1994, 76; Herity 1995a, 32). A total of 65 surviving examples is known from Ireland, although few survive to full height. Seven extant examples are known from the study area, and apart from a single example on St Patrick's Isle, Isle of Man, are confined to Ireland (figure 4.22). A further example is recorded to have existed at Downpatrick until the nineteenth century, when it was demolished (Swan 1985, 97; Harbison 1991, 173 with illustration), whilst earthworks at Trummery are thought to represent a collapsed round tower (Hamlin 1976).

The Irish term for these structures, *cloicthech*, means bell house, providing an indication of their main function (Barrow 1979, 39; Edwards, N. 1990, 128). Annal entries also suggest that they may have been used as repositories for relics, books, and also served as places of refuge (Henry 1967, 52; Edwards, N. 1990, 128).

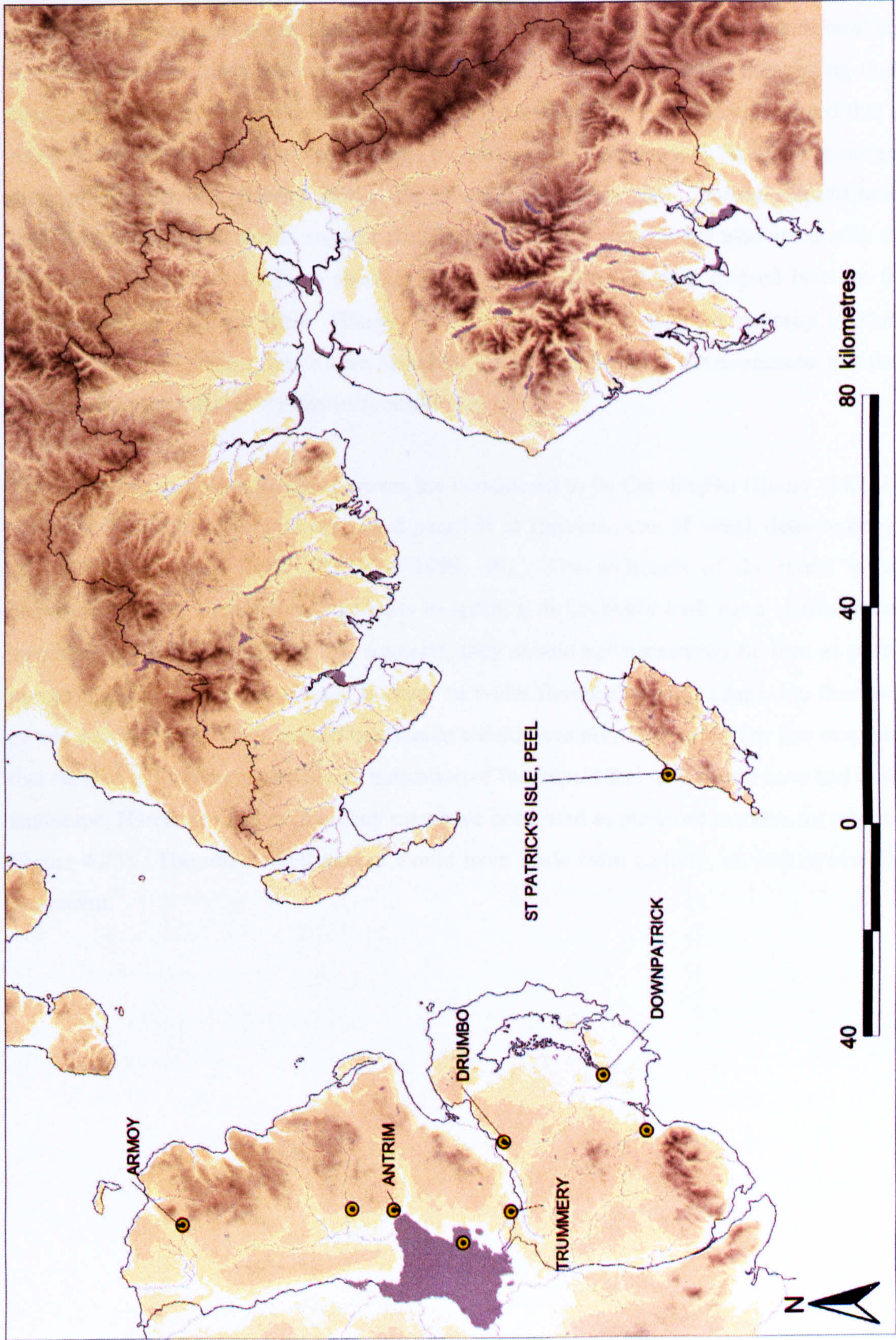


Figure 4.22: Distribution of round towers within the study area

Much controversy has surrounded the dating of these monuments, and as with many features, attempts were made to assign them to the earlier phases of monasticism in Ireland, specifically the sixth or seventh centuries (Barrow 1979, 37). However, the architectural and historical evidence does not support such a date. The first annal entry mentioning these structures occurs in the mid-tenth century, when Annals of the Four Masters record that in AD 948, 'the *cloitech* of Slane was burned by Foreigners (Vikings) with its full of relics and distinguished persons' (Herity 1995a, 32; Edwards, N. 1990, 128). Barrow himself notes that 'references in the annals suggest that the *cloig-theach* was always associated with the *damliag* and it is reasonable to assume that no great period of time elapsed between the erection of one and the other' (Barrow 1979, 37). The fact that the majority of stone churches are now place in much later centuries would further add to the impression that they are a tenth to twelfth century phenomenon (Lalor 1999).

The influences indicated by these towers are considered to be Carolingian (Henry 1967, 53; Edwards, N. 1990, 128), with suggested parallels at Ravenna, one of which dates to before AD 878 (McDonnell 1994, 76; Lalor 1999, 49). The architects of the round towers employed varying architectural traditions to create a distinctively Irish form of monument; however, as McDonnell (1994, 79) suggests, they should not necessarily be seen as purely indigenous, but more as an attempt to draw on wider European trends, adapted to their own means and methods. Their overall impression would have been dramatic. The few examples that survive to full height provide an indication of the impact that they would have had in the landscape; Harbison suggests that they may have been used as guidance markers for pilgrims (figure 4.23). The role as bell towers would have made them audibly, as well as visually, prominent.



Figure 4.23: Drumbo round tower

ENCLOSURES, AND THE LAYOUT OF SITES

Enclosures have been recorded at 119 sites in total, comprising 45% of those sites with identifiable early remains (26% of total sites). These enclosures are identified through a variety of means, whether cropmarks, earthworks or traced in the extant field boundaries or road systems surrounding a church (Norman and St Joseph 1969, 90-121; Hamlin 1977; O'Sullivan 1980b; Swan 1983; 1985; Yates 1983; Ivens 1984; 1987; Hill 1997; Crowe 2002). However, the recording of these features is unlikely to have been consistent throughout the study area, and as all sites have not been visited to identify upstanding enclosures, a full distribution map has not been created. Nor can it be assumed that these boundaries can be ascribed any particular date; they merely represent a possible boundary for the early medieval remains they surround.

There is no doubt, however, that early ecclesiastical centres were enclosed. Ditches, stone- and earth-built structures are all attested archaeologically, whilst the historical sources also suggest the presence of hedges, or wattle structures surrounding churches and monasteries. The boundaries need not, therefore, have been purely functional or defensive; whilst some

would have offered protection, the need for a symbolic division between a sacred space and the surrounding landscape would have been equally significant (*cf* Bowden and McOmish 1986).

From the outset, a distinction must be made between the enclosures surrounding churches and graveyards, and those delimiting the land surrounding a major monastery or ecclesiastical centre. The two groups would have been served slightly different functions and been created in different contexts, and as such, require separate consideration; the tendency to group the two has tended to 'muddy the waters' (Petts 2002a, 26). Although no strict formula can be applied to divide these two types, a clear distinction can be drawn between those that would have surrounded a church and burial ground, or a small hermitage, and those that would have encircled a major settlement with extensive activities. Also relevant in this respect is the organisation of space within enclosures, as this, too, provides an indication of the way that different sites might have functioned.

LARGE MONASTIC ENCLOSURES

Historical sources relating to the monastic centres of early medieval Britain reveal that communities found it necessary to delimit the space that they occupied. Adomnán's *Life of St Columba* mentions the *vallum monasterii* at Clonmacnois, whilst the *Rule of Columbanus* mentions penance due for monks who went *extra vallum* without permission (Thomas 1971, 33; Hamlin 1985, 280). In a study of the terminology used in early medieval documents in Ireland, Swift (1998, 112-119) concludes that major centres, both ecclesiastical and secular, would have been organised, at least conceptually, with the most prestigious structures (church or leader's residence) at the centre surrounded by an area occupied by subordinates, ancillary buildings and agricultural units. The boundaries surrounding monastic centres would have made a statement to the wider populations: 'the monastery's walls and markers sent out a message across the Christian landscape: the saints dwell here with the monks' (Bitel 1990, 57).

Not all boundaries need have been walls or continuous enclosures, and the use of crosses or cross-marked stones to delimit territorial divisions has often been noted (Swift 1998, 118; Ó'Carragáin 2003b). Surviving, upstanding enclosures survive at only a limited number of ecclesiastical sites. At Nendrum, the triple cashel enclosure represents the use of a contemporary secular type of structure for ecclesiastical use (Lawlor 1925, 1-2). The triple cashel would have made a statement of status, whilst the concentric enclosures delimited areas of increasing sanctity as they drew inwards (Hamlin 1985, 297; Swift 1998, 118-9;

figure 4.24). At Maughold, the substantial nature of the surrounding wall has been suggested to have been constructed in the same tradition of the Irish cashels, and an early medieval date is therefore possible (Johnson 2004).



Figure 4.24: The inner and central cashel walls at Nendrum

Excavated examples of early medieval enclosures are recorded at a number of sites in Ireland and Scotland. At Tullylish, a substantial boundary, 120m in diameter, was sampled, revealing two successive ditches, up to 4m and 2.5m in depth, which provided evidence for seventh- to ninth-century activity at the site (Ivens 1987). Whether these represent a pre-existing enclosure given over to ecclesiastical use, or a newly constructed boundary, remains unclear (Ivens 1987, 112). Excavations at Hoddom also sampled the enclosure ditch, which encloses an eight hectare area, and revealed a feature up to 1m in depth (Lowe 1991, 14; 1993). Radiocarbon dates from the primary fills of the ditch produced a series of dates in the seventh century (Lowe 1991, 17). At Whithorn, the excavations of the 1980s revealed a length of ditch, 0.50m deep and 1.0m wide, which was projected to suggest a full circular boundary surrounding an 'inner precinct' (Hill 1997, 77); a more ephemeral ditch 0.80m wide and 0.15m deep was thought to represent a later outer boundary (Hill 1997, 90-1). These reconstructions demonstrate the pervading influence of the 'typical' Irish monastic

layout: the projection remains highly tentative and based on very little evidence. It has been suggested that the earliest phases of settlement at Whithorn should be regarded as open high status settlement (Campbell 1991, 172; Gondek 2003, 326); the imposition of a 'typical' monastic layout to the site may be misleading (see Chapter 9). As Dark notes, secular centres could have churches, burials, monuments and resident ecclesiastics, and 'consequently, a secular fort might theoretically be confused with a monastery almost identical to it, because each was a product of similar groups within the same society' (Dark 1994, 39). For Ireland the similarities apparent between major secular and ecclesiastical centres have also been stressed (Hamlin and Lynn 1988; Swift 1998, 114-5); nowhere does Bede refer to Whithorn as a monastery.

Doherty (1985, 54) has suggested that the seventh and eighth centuries saw a reorganisation of ecclesiastical centres, and the imposition of a more standardised layout. Structures were replaced, special graves elaborated, and the monastic *vallum*, if not previously in existence, was extended; the dated enclosures within the study area might fit within this context. Swift has, however, noted that the dating evidence for examples quoted is often inconclusive (Swift 1998, 115). Occasionally, surviving enclosures predate the ecclesiastical activity by a number of centuries, as at Iona (Fisher 1996), Downpatrick (Proudfoot 1956), and Ruthwell (Crowe 1987). The reuse of existing structures for the placement of monastic centres is known from archaeological sources, and the granting of abandoned sites to ecclesiastical communities, which this might represent, is well documented.

Earthen banks survive in part around a number of sites, and have been used to reconstruct boundaries; at Dacre, for example, earthworks have been used to trace the boundary of the monastic site mentioned by Bede (Leech 1982; Leech and Newman 1985), and similar boundaries are postulated for Holywood (Crowe 2002) and Urswick (Dickinson 2002). The cropmarks surrounding the potentially early site of Ninekirks Brougham provide an indication of its earlier extent, although the date of such activity remains uncertain (Bouch 1950; Simpson 1959; Bailey 1977; Higham 1986, 276; Loveluck 2002, 144)

Frequently, however, the evidence for monastic enclosures is preserved only in the alignments followed by fields, boundaries and roads, and is therefore undatable (Norman and St Joseph 1969; Swan 1985). At Downpatrick, for example, an enclosure surrounding the presumed centre of the ecclesiastical and secular power base can be traced in field boundaries, delimiting an area roughly 400m in diameter (c. 12 hectares; Swan 1985, 97). Early Ordnance Survey editions reveal the presence of an equally large enclosure surrounding the medieval site at Movilla; excavations within this area provided evidence for

early medieval craftworking and industry (Yates 1983; see Chapter 7). Hamlin (1977) also identified an enclosure surrounding the site at Inch.

There is, however, a tendency to trace enclosures where they are expected, or desired, but where evidence is only tenuous, many must remain uncertain. Petts (2002a, 28-9) has noted that in Wales, a system of land division where fields were arranged radially around churchyards (*tir corddlan*) could often result in an apparent curvilinear enclosure around an ecclesiastical centre. Most of the examples within the study areas have the advantage of being documented monastic sites, or sites producing considerable quantities of ecclesiastical monuments. Other reasons behind large enclosures surrounding less certain sites should be considered; they cannot be automatically considered early or monastic (Swan 1983, 273).

MONASTIC LAYOUTS

Within these enclosures, scholars have drawn together numerous case studies to identify recurring patterns in the layout of early Irish monastic sites (Herity 1983; 1984; 1995a; Doherty 1985). Herity (1995a) has considered the distribution of key focal features of early monastic sites, particularly the burial ground, oratory (or major church), focal grave and cross slab or high cross. At sites such as Reask, County Kerry, these features are found in the eastern part of the site, disposed to the west, north and south respectively, and divided from domestic structures by a central, open space and a low dividing wall (Herity 1995a, 30-6). At larger sites, Herity suggests the same key grouping of features at the centre of larger, eastern sites. At Nendrum, the church, burials, and possibly the cross slabs (which are *ex situ*) were sited within the inner cashel, whilst buildings interpreted as domestic structures, craftworking centres and school are located within the second enclosure, to the west of the site (figure 4.25; Lawlor 1925; Herity 1995a, 31).

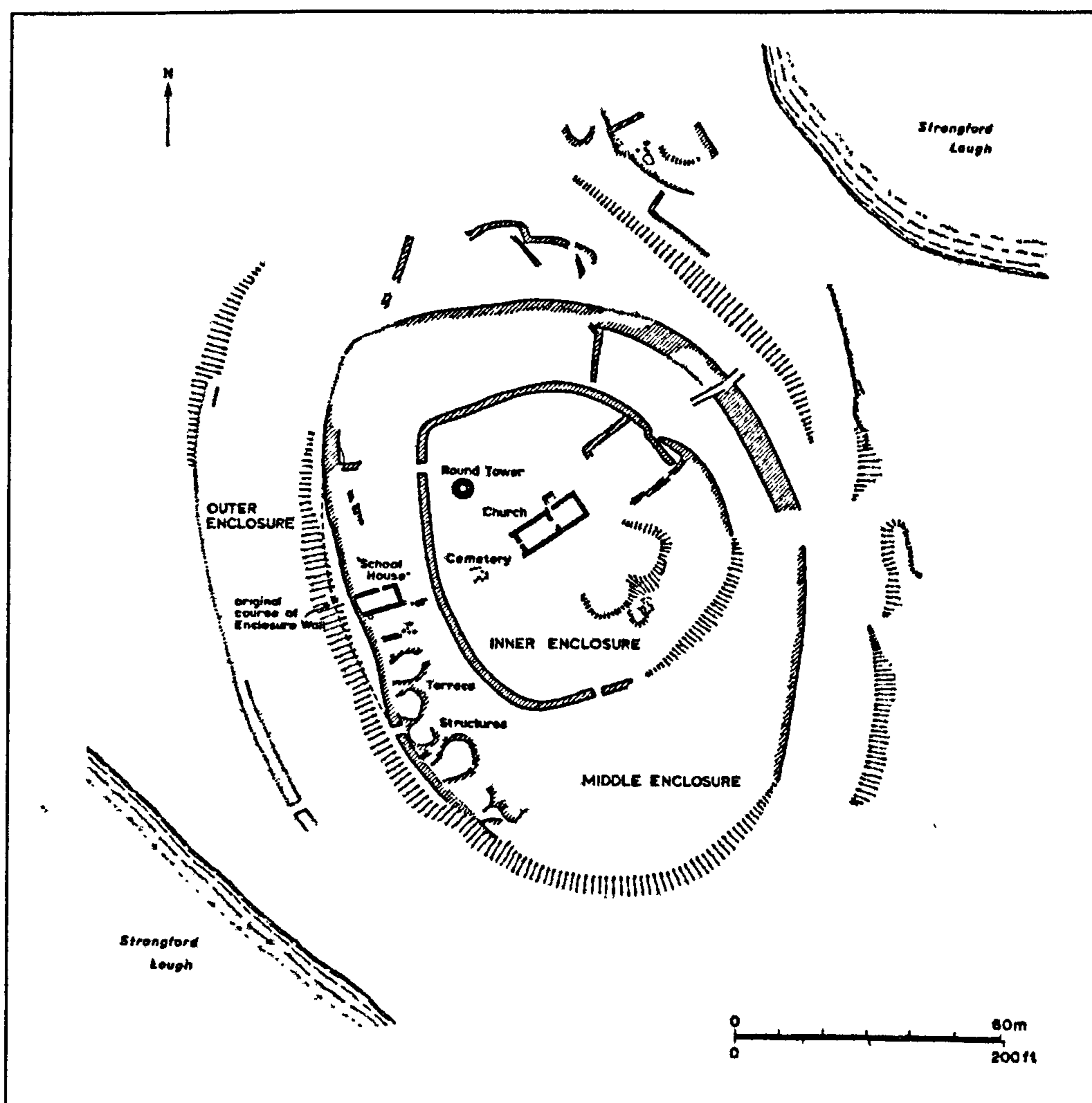


Figure 4.25: Nendrum monastic site (Edwards, N. 1990, 108)

As Irish monastic sites developed, particularly around the tenth century, they adopted the structures that have come to symbolise early Irish monasteries. Round towers were erected, often to the west of the site, and high crosses occurred in the east (Swan 1985, 99-100). This would correlate with the period when the majority of stone churches were built, and Doherty (1980, 81; 1985, 60-4) suggests that there would have been a major growth of markets at these centres, a development that began in the eighth century. It must be remembered that these features belong to the latter part of the first millennium; monastic centres are too often viewed as static entities, and their eighth, ninth or tenth century forms are considered representative of their earliest functions (Hamlin 1985). All too often, very little is known of their sixth and seventh century layouts, which may have been very different.

Multiple churches are a common feature of early medieval sites, exemplified by the site at Maughold, where five *keeills* occur within the enclosure. Historical references to the 'oratories' of Movilla in 823 suggest more than one church at the site (Hamlin 1985, 283). Recently, Turner and Petts (2004) have suggested that while Anglo-Saxon churches were

endowed with transepts and chancels as their roles developed, new altars and chapels would have been housed in separate locations in the west; this may represent a western British or Irish phenomenon.

Few sites have been excavated, and so suggestions regarding the nature of activity at sites, their development and their organisation, can only be general. Even where extensive work has been carried out, stratigraphy and results are often poorly recorded and difficult to interpret (Lawlor 1925; Jope 1966, 93). Craftworking is attested at a number of sites, and appears to occur in specific locations away from the central ecclesiastical focus at sites such as at Nendrum (Lawlor 1925), Movilla (Yates 1983), Whithorn (Hill 1997) and Tullylish (Ivens 1987). Evidence for grain processing is hinted at by recent excavations at Whithorn (Lowe 2003), and is attested by the corn dryer at Hoddom (Lowe forthcoming). Further agricultural evidence has been provided by the seventh-century water mill recently identified at Nendrum (McErlean and Crothers 2002). Mills have long been recognised as important features from the seventh century onwards, and laws distinguish between those belonging to the church and those associated with secular populations (Hamlin 1985, 289; Rynne 1998). Evidence for early medieval occupation, both artefactual and structural, has been recorded at the sites of Whithorn, Antrim, Dacre, Nendrum, Maghera and Connor. Although their plans and layouts remain poorly recorded, such evidence provides supporting evidence that these particular sites would have formed centres of population and domestic activity, as well as ecclesiastical foci.

SMALLER ECCLESIASTICAL ENCLOSURES

The large enclosures, used for a wide range of structures and activities, contrast with the much smaller boundaries that have been identified surrounding the majority of churches and cemeteries within the wider landscape. Such sites may represent local churches, hermitages, or a mixture of both (Edwards, N. 1990, 114). The distinction between the enclosure sizes is evident; where the large monastic enclosures encompass areas of eight or twelve hectares, the average size of enclosures in Cumbria is noted to have been 0.15 to 0.35 hectares, whilst those in the Isle of Man are even smaller, with over 70% measuring between 0.02 and 0.08 hectares (O'Sullivan 1980a, 247; 1980b, 4; Lowe 1987, 157-8)

These are therefore more likely to represent the enclosure of an ecclesiastical nucleus, rather than encircling centres of population or craftworking, borne out by the investigation of a large number of *keill* sites on the Isle of Man throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Kermode 1919; Bruce 1968). Chapel, burial ground and enclosure, in a number of

configurations, occurs most frequently on the Isle of Man, at the many *keeill* sites. Similar layouts have been identified in the plans that have been constructed for sites such as Ardwall Isle, and Barhobble (Galloway). At Barhobble, Cormack (1995) identified a curvilinear 'cashel' enclosure, surrounding a chapel and cemetery. An eighth-century coin, and a possibly early incised stone, led to the suggestion that the enclosure belonged to an early, eighth-century phase of activity, with which some of the burials could be associated. Whilst earlier activity cannot be discounted, the available evidence suggests that the main period of activity can be placed in subsequent centuries. Similarly, at the excavated site of Chapel Finnian, whilst no remains have been dated prior to the twelfth century, it was suggested by the excavator that the surrounding wall could be as early as sixth century in date (Radford 1951a, 29). Again, the ideas behind Thomas's model of developed cemeteries have strongly influenced interpretation.

Some sites have also produced evidence for additional structures, which have been taken to represent cells of priests or hermits. At Lag ny Keeillee, for example, a single cell was identified on the western side of the site, with a possible terrace or garden plot identified to the south (Thomas 1971, 82-3). Dry stone structures were also identified at the *keeill* sites of Cabbal Dreem Ruy, Cabbal Pherick and Ballaqueeny. Potential cells were identified at Ardwall Isle, and Thomas (1971, 84) published a plan of possible 'living cells' at Kirkmaiden (Galloway). Similarly, at Derry, a circular timber structure was identified during excavations, subsequently rebuilt in stone, which was used to suggest some form of occupation at the site (Waterman 1967, 67). These structures could have served as permanent or temporary residences, or some form of liturgical function. In terms of plan, they can tentatively be compared to the smaller hermitages of Ireland (Herity 1995a; Herity 1995b), and the locations of examples such as Kirkmaiden, or Lag ny Keeillee might also compare with these more isolated sites. However, without further investigation, more cannot be concluded.

The majority of the surviving remains, therefore, would seem to represent small churches, some enclosed and some with burial grounds. These have widely been interpreted as serving surrounding communities (supported by mixed populations with cemeteries), but beyond this, few conclusions can be drawn about their chronological or regional significance. Of the few enclosed cemeteries and churches where dating evidence is available, a date towards the end of the first millennium, rather than in the sixth or seventh century, seems more likely. Some examples are doubtless of much earlier date, but the proliferation of local ecclesiastical centres prior to the eighth century cannot be supported for any part of the study area. To assign a single purpose to such sites is also inadvisable; from superficial plans

alone it is difficult to see how they might have functioned, and much more work is required before overarching conclusions can be drawn.

DISCUSSION

Of around 450 potential early medieval ecclesiastical sites within the study area, only a handful can be securely assigned to a particular period, and these tend to be those sites that have been subject to archaeological investigation. The best material has been provided by excavation of the larger monastic enclosures, where evidence for occupation and craftworking has revealed the diverse roles played by these major centres. Such sites have dominated discussion, and much more research is needed on the smaller sites that would have been more representative of Christianity for the majority of the population.

Where reassessment of dates has been possible, it is suggested that many, though certainly not all, of the smaller cemeteries and chapels, would have developed towards the latter centuries of the first millennium, rather than the sixth or seventh centuries as previously assumed. Such hints, however, require further substantiation. The inadequate and fragmentary nature of the archaeological remains does not allow for widespread conclusions about regional practice to be identified. Burial provides the best indicator of this type, as a number of regional patterns emerge. Other evidence, such as churches and enclosures, are not sufficiently diagnostic for any meaningful variations to be identified. The maps really present sites which deserve more research; few overarching conclusions can be drawn about spatial or temporal development throughout the area.

This overview highlights the need for more widespread, datable forms of evidence to be taken into consideration in order to identify meaningful patterns of ideological investment. To reveal and discuss the layout of monasteries and churches meaningfully, they must be examined on a large scale, rather than tested through small-scale interventions (Swift 1998, 118; *cf* Carver 2004). In the absence of such work, however, some of the 'indicators' of ecclesiastical activity are turned to, to attempt to identify regional variations in investment. Most particularly, carved stone monuments and ecclesiastical place-names are drawn upon. By observing regional and chronological variations within these forms of investment, the churches, cemeteries and monasteries that have been identified can be placed into a more meaningful context.

CHAPTER FIVE

CARVED STONE MONUMENTS: CLASSIFICATION, FUNCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

The erection of stone monuments within the landscape represents a powerful and effective means of demonstrating ideological affiliation, political influence and economic control (Driscoll 2000; Carver 2003, 11; Carver forthcoming). Through the patronage of sculpture and inscriptions, elites could transmit ideas and show status to a wide audience, making their own statements part of a permanent and public landscape (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996, 18-19; Carver 2001). As such, the form of monument selected, the designs and motifs employed, and location in the landscape, can reveal something of the agendas and ideologies of those who created them (Henderson 2000, 35). Although dating mechanisms are frequently debated, sculpture has the added benefit of chronological depth, allowing changes over time to be considered (Knight 1992; Dark 1992a; Handley 2001). Contextual studies have demonstrated the value of approaching early medieval sculpture within a broader social and landscape setting, taking into account the changing function served by monuments, and their lasting impact (Carver 2001; Edwards 2001; Handley 2001; Petts 2003b; Ó'Carragáin 2003b). In doing so, shifts in allegiance and influence can be traced both spatially and temporally (Bailey 1985a).

Within the study area, 822 fragments of sculpture have been recovered from a total of 272 widely distributed sites (figure 5.1). As such, these monuments provide a valuable tool for studying the distribution of early medieval Christian ideas across this area. However, before seeking regional variations within the dataset, consideration must be given to the way that the material has been identified, recorded and dated, and therefore any inherent inconsistencies that may have an adverse affect on the results.

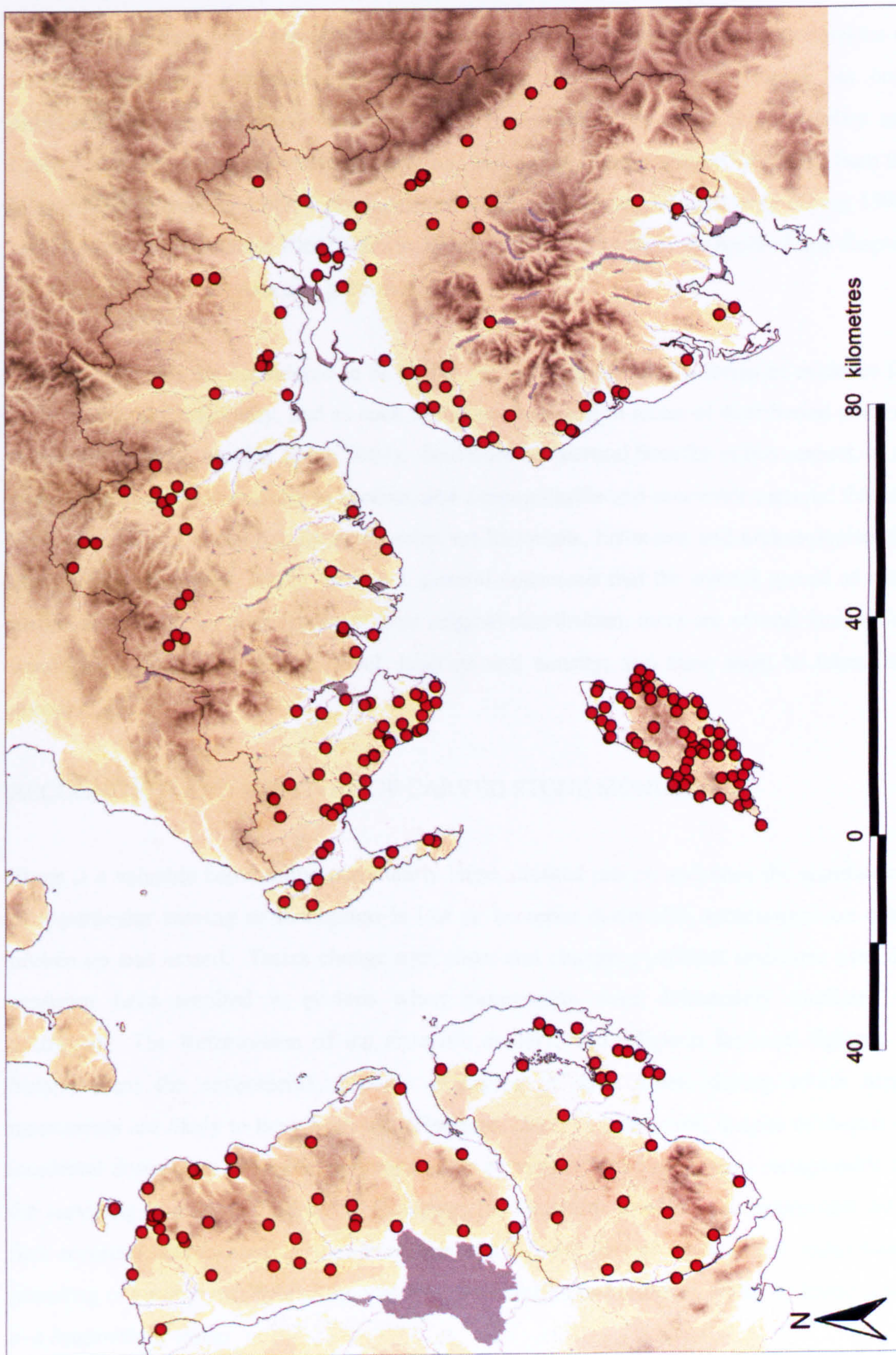


Figure 5.1: Sites producing early medieval sculpture within the study area

DISTRIBUTION, SURVIVAL AND RECORDING OF STONE MONUMENTS

Over the past decades, a move has been made towards assembling complete *corpora* of known monuments within specific areas. Within the study area, a *Corpus* has been published for Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire-north-of-the Sands (Bailey and Cramp 1988), and comprehensive publications and theses have catalogued the finds from the Isle of Man (Kermode 1907; Trench-Jellicoe 1985), Dumfries and Galloway (Craig 1992) and Northern Ireland (Jope 1966; Hamlin 1976). These works form the basis of this chapter, supplemented by SMR data and published accounts.

Stone monuments are considered to be one of the most representative forms of evidence for early medieval Christianity, and as such are often discussed in terms of distribution patterns (Craig 1991; 1992; Stocker 2000; 2001). Sculpture has several benefits in this respect, as an enduring material that is likely to survive, and a recognisable and accessible material that has been studied, and preserved, by antiquaries, art historians, historians and archaeologists for many years. However, whilst there is a general consensus that the overall spread of early medieval monuments does represent their original distribution, there are several factors that would have influenced their survival, location and density, and these must be taken into account.

RECOGNITION AND SURVIVAL OF CARVED STONE MONUMENTS

Stone is a valuable commodity, particularly large, dressed pieces, and once the significance of a particular carving or inscription is lost or becomes distasteful, monuments are often broken up and reused. Tastes change over time, and changing political situations over the centuries have resulted in periods when monuments were deliberately mutilated or destroyed. The Reformation of the sixteenth century, and religious factional fighting in Ireland from the seventeenth, provide examples of such times, during which many monuments are likely to have been lost (Harbison 1992, 4). However, despite deliberate or incidental destruction of whole monuments, the carving itself often remains recognizable on the surviving fragments. Figure 5.2 illustrates the situations in which the monuments were first recorded, demonstrating that very few were found in use as complete monuments (standing or recumbent), whilst the majority were reused in buildings, walls, or found loose in a fragmentary form.

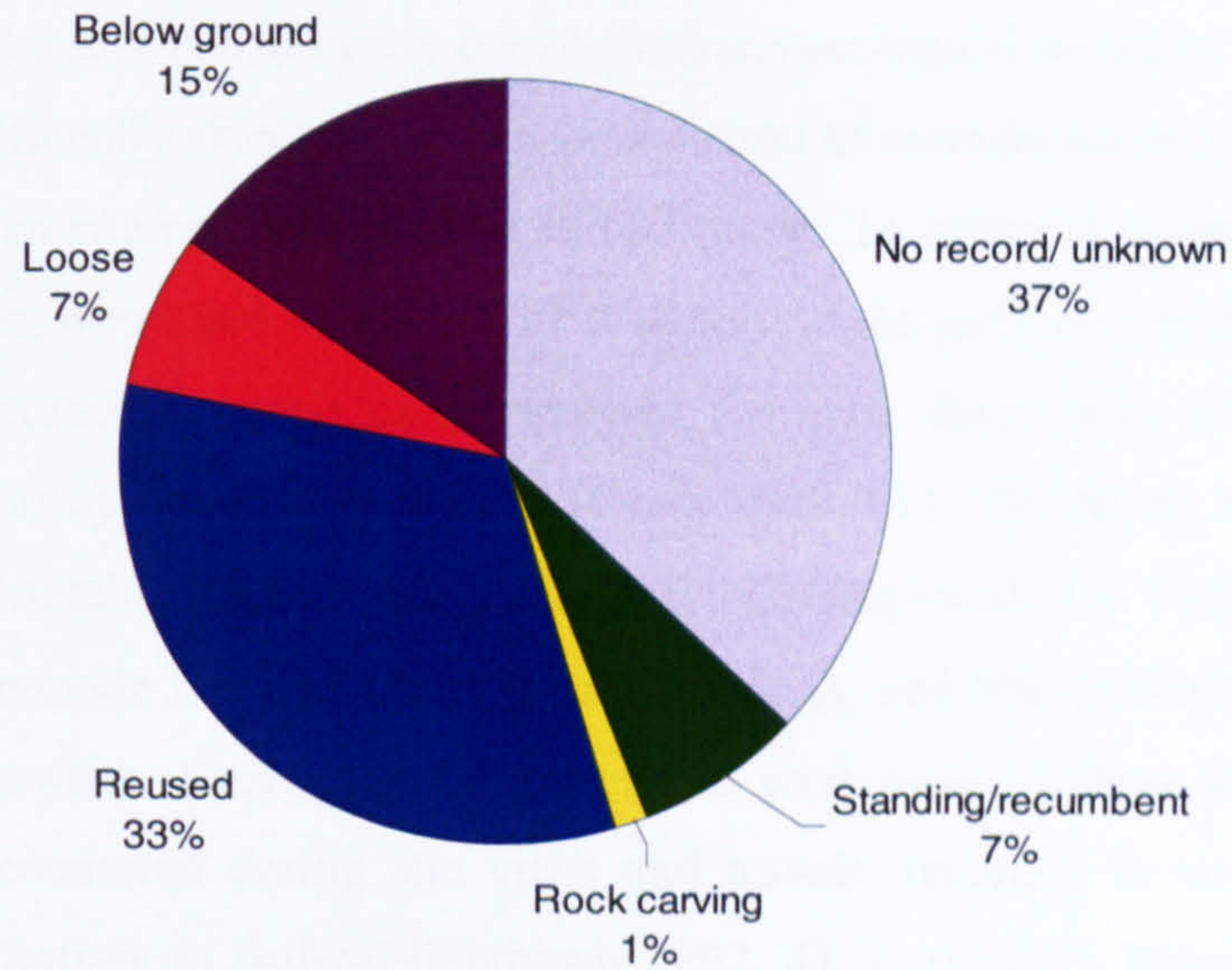


Figure 5.2: Situation/use in which monuments were first recorded

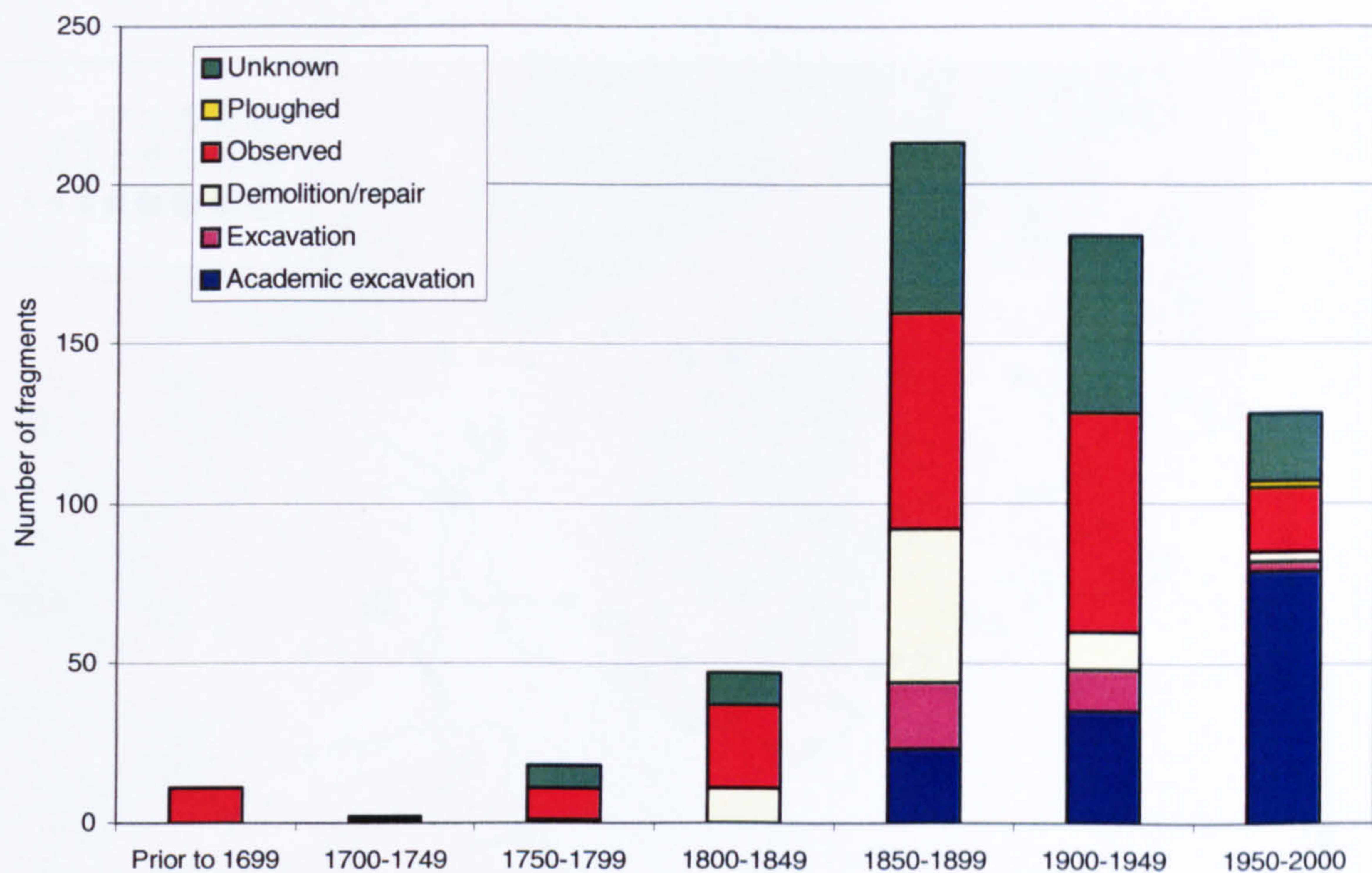
Some 33% were first recorded as being reused, whether observed in a visible location, or revealed during demolition. A further 15% were revealed below ground, during grave digging, ground works or archaeological excavation, and 7% were first recorded loose in churchyards. It seems, therefore, that despite having fallen out of use, the carving on these stones remained a recognizable feature that was noted and recorded when encountered. This supports the assertion that the number of monuments identified at particular sites bears a strong relation to the number of sites that would originally have been present (Stocker 2000, 180-2). However, the *types* of monument identified, and their distribution, may have been affected by a number of factors, including the areas in which particular antiquaries operated, and the circumstances that led to the discovery of the monuments.

ANTIQUARIAN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF MONUMENTS

Although stone monuments have a high rate of survival, the circumstances of their discovery must also to be taken into account, as this might affect regional distribution, and the frequency of monuments known from individual sites. The catalogues produced by Trench-Jellicoe (1985), Bailey and Cramp (1988) and Craig (1992), have traced the first recorded location of many stone monuments, as far as is allowed by antiquarian sources, providing valuable information on the contexts in which they were first found.

It seems that much of the initial recovery and recording of sculptured monuments can be attributed to the activities of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century antiquaries, who published their results in the journals of newly established archaeological societies. In doing so, individuals could significantly affect the known distribution of monuments in a particular area. Derek Craig notes an example of this type in Galloway: the personal interest of one Reverend R.G.S. Anderson, who lived on the Isle of Whithorn in the early twentieth century, led to the discovery of numerous stone monuments in the area, discoveries that ceased abruptly when he moved away from the peninsula (Craig 1992, 81). However, it must be noted that the work of notable individuals such as W.G. Collingwood, C. Parker, W.S. Calverley, and P.M.C. Kermodé covered much broader regions, and this is likely to have redressed the balance somewhat. During this time, attempts were made by these antiquaries to list all monuments encountered during site visits and travels, resulting in volumes by Petrie and the Ordnance Survey in Ireland (Harbison 1992, 4), Kermodé's *Manx Crosses* (1907), and a great many publications in the *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society*, by Collingwood and Calverley (see bibliography). In 1903, Allen and Anderson published the *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, which included all of the stones known at the time in the Scottish part of the study area. These publications demonstrate that, although based in specific regions, the interests of these prolific individuals would have extended to a regional scale, and far from adversely influencing the known distribution of monuments, are more likely to have created a fuller picture.

Figure 5.3 illustrates the circumstance which led to the recognition or recording of monuments, and how this has changed over time. The considerable rise in the recording of early medieval stone monuments in the late nineteenth century can doubtless be attributed to the activities of antiquaries, and building works carried out at numerous ecclesiastical sites. Widespread programmes of church reparation undertaken by the Victorians brought a great many stones to light, and this is reflected in the large proportion of stones found during 'demolition and repair'. Such reparations occurred on a wide scale during this period, suggesting that they would have had, if anything, a relatively uniform effect on the distribution, at least for stones represented at parish church sites.



*Figure 5.3: The circumstances in which monuments were first recorded
(NB 'excavation' refers to gravedigging or groundworks)*

From the late nineteenth century, a considerable rise can be seen in the number of monuments recovered through archaeological investigations. This is likely to have had a large effect on the known quantities of monuments on individual sites, but seems unlikely to have affected the general distribution. If the overall frequency of monuments on each site is compared with the number revealed through archaeological excavation, the maps clearly demonstrates that the sites to have produced the highest quantities of monuments are those that have been excavated (figure 5.4; figure 5.5).

This would initially suggest that sites to have produced a large amount of sculpture through excavation should not be regarded as unusual, but simply the product of differential levels of recovery. However, if the *types* of monuments recovered are considered, it seems that this is an oversimplification. Although a majority of monuments at Whithorn were recovered through excavations over the years, many have been recorded reused in the surrounding area, loose in the churchyard or of unknown provenance, suggesting that the known quantity of monuments from the site would have been comparatively high without excavation (Craig 1992; Hill 1997). Similarly, at Hoddum, a majority of the monuments were recovered from several sites in the vicinity, often reused, and not from the recent extensive excavations (Craig 1992; Lowe forthcoming).

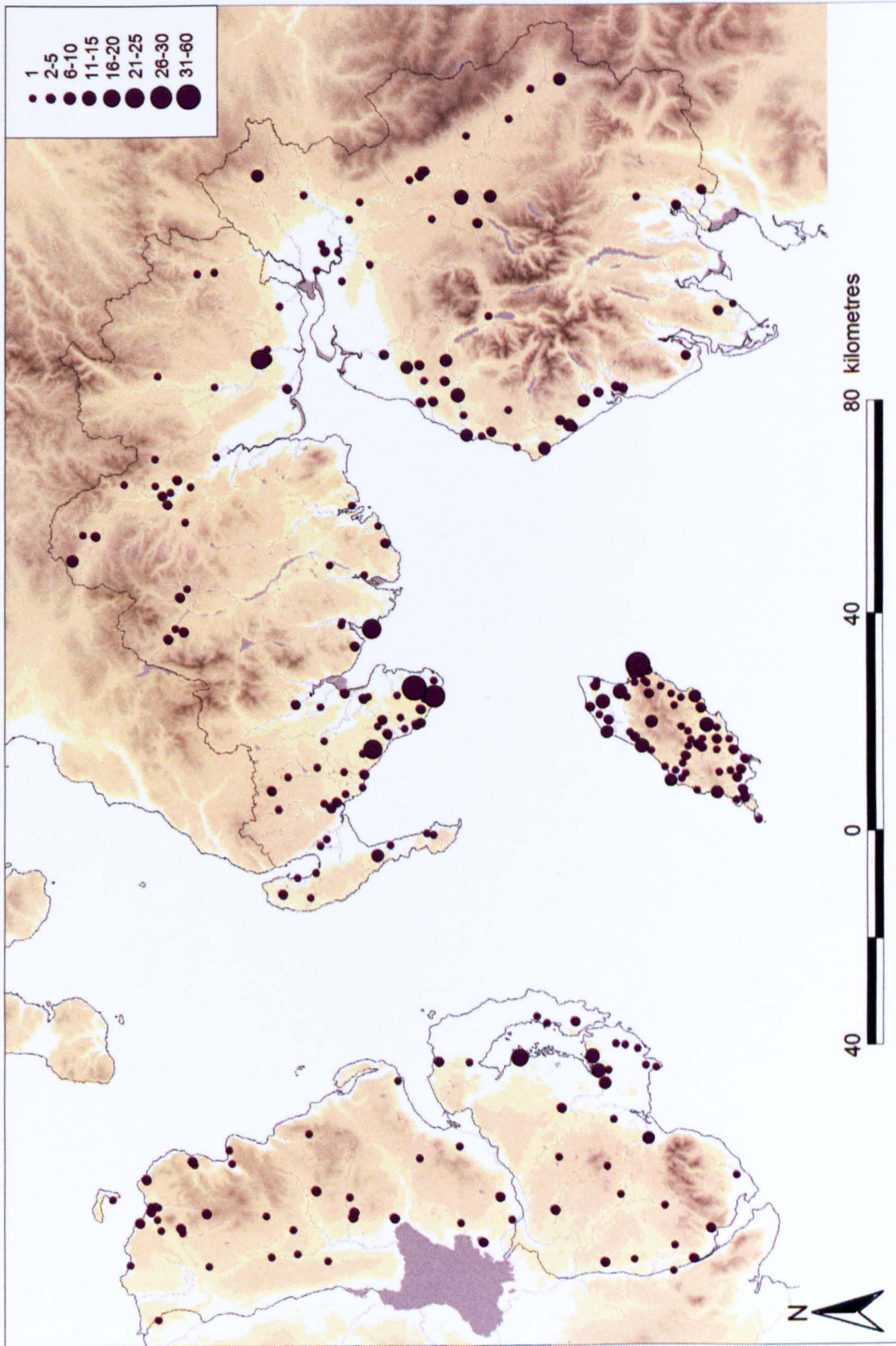


Figure 5.4: Frequency of monuments on sites within the study area

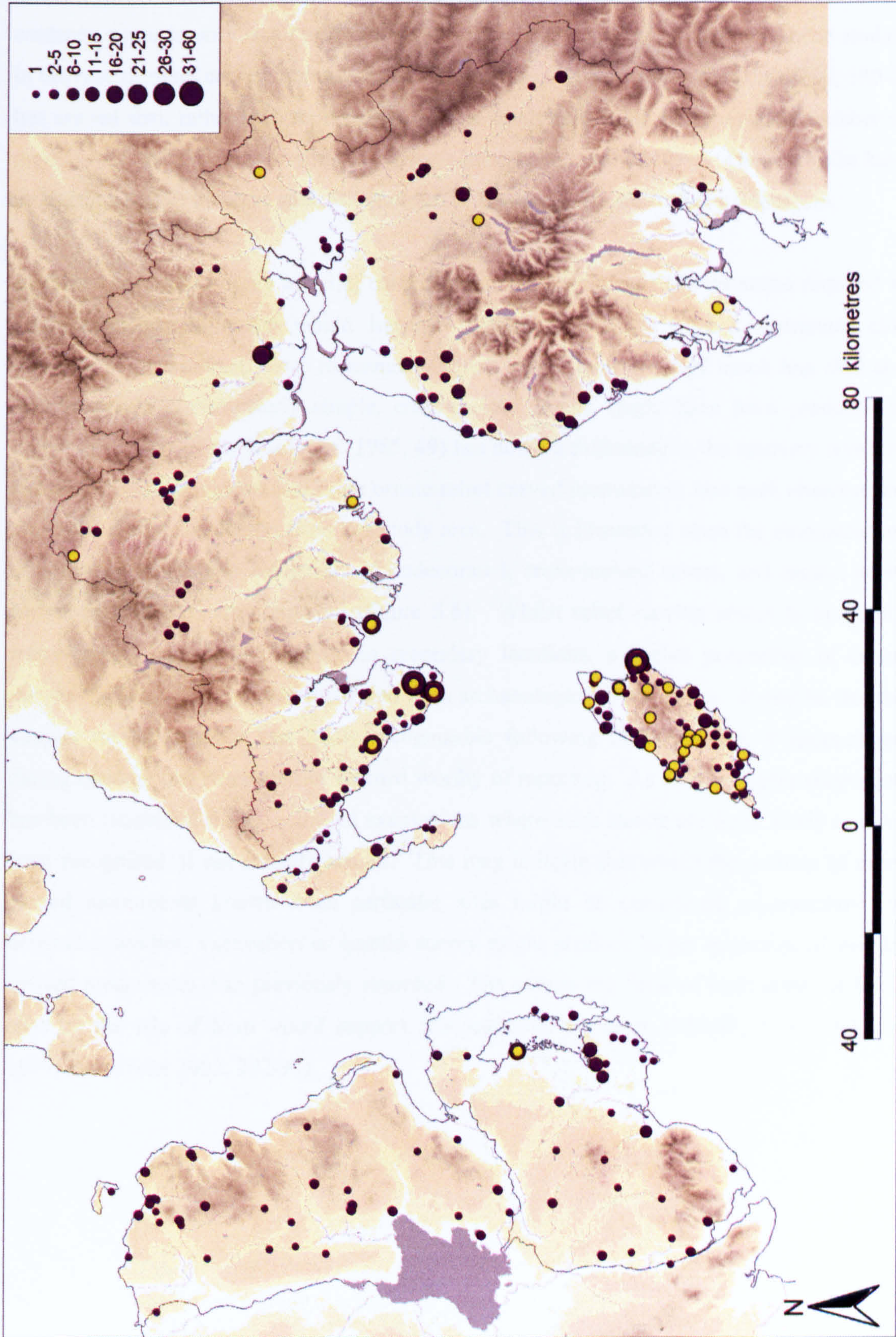


Figure 5.5: Frequency of monuments on each site. Sites where monuments have been found archaeologically are marked in yellow

The difference seems to lie in the types of monument being discussed. Relief carved monuments, whether recovered through archaeological excavation, or noted in reused contexts, occur in only small numbers on specific sites. This phenomenon has been studied in the case of relief carved monuments in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Stocker (2000, 180-2) has argued that, rather than representing only a small proportion of the original number of monuments, these figures would have always have been relatively low. Those sites to have produced a higher number, such as Whithorn or Hoddom, require further explanation.

Stocker's arguments apply to relief carved monuments only, and the resources required to produce such monuments would logically suggest that they were a restricted, elite investment. In contrast, those monuments which would have required much less skill and time to produce, particularly simple, cross-incised stones, might have been produced in higher quantities. Trench Jellicoe (1985, 49) has noted a difference in the recovery levels of simple incised monuments and more ornate relief carved monuments, and such observations are borne out by the dataset from this study area. This is illustrated when the circumstances of recovery of the two categories of undecorated, cross-incised stones, and ornate, relief carved monuments, are compared (figure 5.6). Whilst relief carving seems to be highly recognisable, frequently observed in secondary locations, a higher proportion of cross-incised monuments have been recovered from archaeological excavations. It may be that the simpler monuments are less easily recognisable following reuse, or that, if encountered during construction, they are not deemed worthy of reporting. As such, a higher proportion has been recovered from controlled excavations where such stones are more likely to have been recognised, if not actively sought. This may indicate that whilst the number of relief carved monuments known from particular sites might be considered representative of original quantities, excavation or careful survey might produce larger quantities of simple, incised monuments than previously recorded. The continuing finds of such stones at *keeill* sites on the Isle of Man would support this assertion (Johnson 1989-97; Trench-Jellicoe 1999, 183; Freke 2002, 282-91).

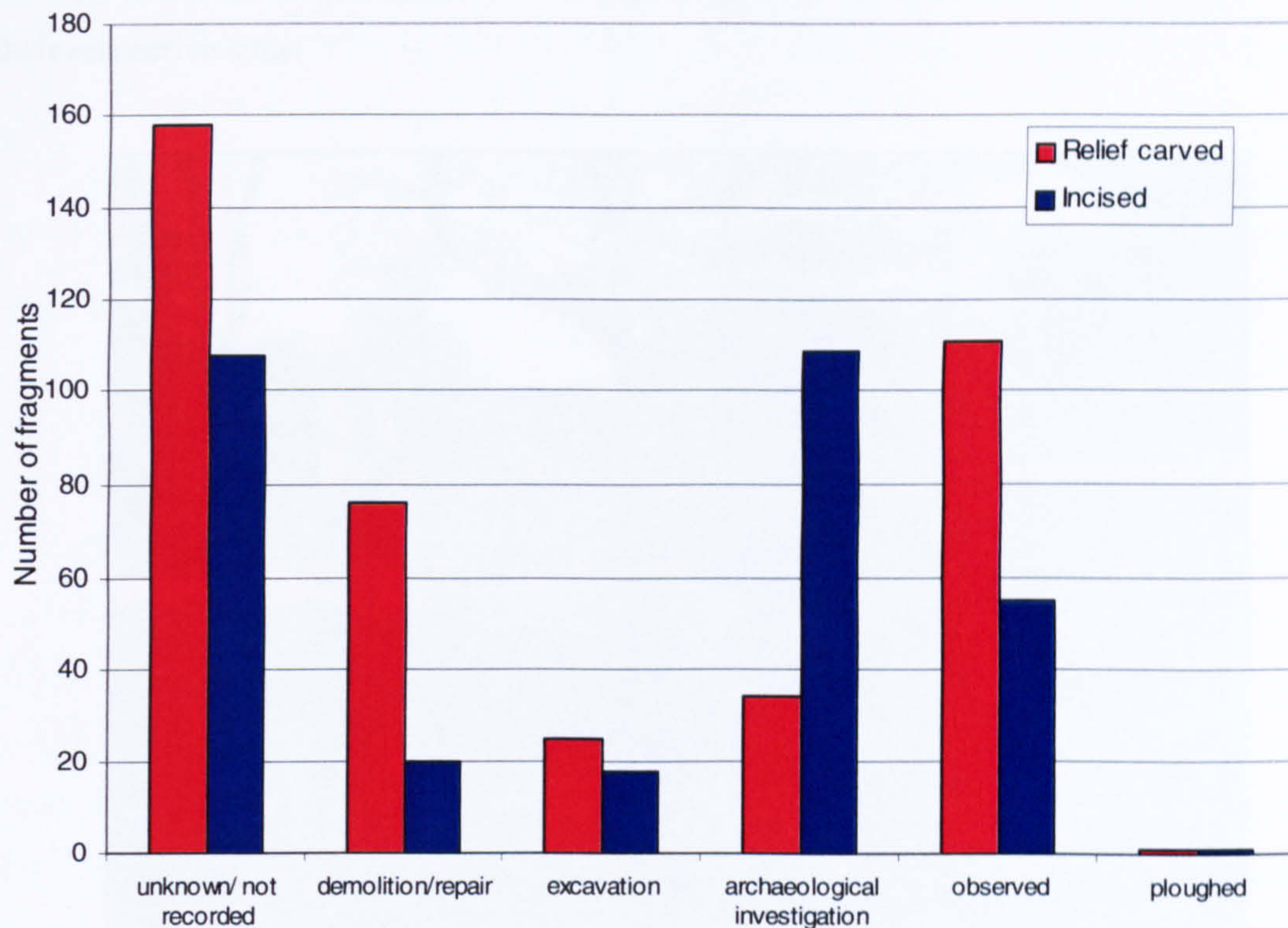


Figure 5.6: Comparison of circumstances of discovery of different monument types

IN SITU EXAMPLES AND ORIGINAL SITINGS

It seems, therefore, that the distribution maps and surviving quantities of monuments can be considered broadly representative of the original spread and frequency of monuments, dependent on degree of decoration. Less certain, however, are the original positions of the stones within their respective sites. Very few monuments can be regarded with any certainty as being *in situ*, demonstrated by the proportion of monuments found reused, loose, or below ground. Of the 822 known fragments from the study area, only 23 are thought likely to be in their original locations, 11 of which are rock carvings, which by their nature must be *in situ*. This leaves only 12, including the well-known cross shafts of Bewcastle and Gosforth, which are considered to stand in their original churchyard locations. A notable example on the Isle of Man occurs at Lonan church, where a cross slab stands in what appears to be its original setting, on a slightly different alignment to the church and monuments within the parish churchyard (figure 5.7). Recent excavations at Workington revealed a carved sculptural fragment that has been interpreted as a tenth-century cross base, possibly *in situ* (Flynn 1996, 16-7). Most of these examples, however, are considered to be *in situ* simply because their settings 'appear' original; these positions can rarely be substantiated, and are unlikely to provide information that can be applied across the whole dataset. As such, it seems unlikely

that any broad conclusions can be made regarding the precise location of monuments within their respective sites.



Figure 5.7: Relief decorated cross slab in Lonan churchyard, Isle of Man

The vast majority of monuments, therefore, cannot be studied in their original position. Consideration must therefore turn to the more general location, and whether monument find-spots can be considered representative of their original sites. This is problematic, as there is often very little evidence for the history of the monuments and their movement. Many scholars argue that a majority of monuments are likely to be located on or close to their original sites (Lang 1986, 244; Bailey 1985a, 11; 1985b, 54; Stocker 2000; 2001; Edwards 2001, 17). Stone is heavy, in many cases bulky, and though frequently reused is an ubiquitous commodity. As such, individuals seeking stone to use in construction are likely to use the nearest source, resulting in localised movements only.

There are isolated examples where stones have been transported for considerable distances. Nineteenth-century documents, for example, record the removal of a number of slabs from the Isle of Man to the Wallace collection in Distington, Cumbria, where they remained until Kermode ensured their return in 1899 (Trench-Jellicoe 1985, 60). A cross standing in the churchyard in Muncaster, Cumbria, is known to have come originally from a garden wall in Irton (Bailey and Cramp 1988, 117-8). It would be expected, however, that such examples are likely to be rare, and stones that have been transported for long distances might well be

detected as geological anomalies. If not, we must rely on antiquarian records to trace the movement of monuments in previous centuries, and must accept that there may be isolated cases of a stone having first been recorded some distance from its original position. Craig (1992) and others have demonstrated the value of researching such accounts to ascertain as far as possible the biographies of individual stones, and this information has been included as far as possible in the databases used for analysis of monuments within the study area.

RELIABILITY OF DISTRIBUTION MAPS

It seems reasonable to conclude therefore, that while the possibility of stones having been moved a long way must not be discounted, a majority of monuments are likely to have been found on or close to their original locations. Localised movement means that the precise positioning of monuments cannot be considered, but the overall distributions are likely to be representative, and consequently meaningful patterns can be sought. The numbers of relief carved monuments found at particular sites is arguably proportionate to their original quantities. In contrast, it seems likely that the number of incised monuments known on unexcavated sites is originally likely to have been much higher.

CLASSIFICATION OF MONUMENTS

Although the classification of monuments, as undertaken by various scholars (Kermode 1907; Nash-Williams 1950; Okasha 1993), may appear to be clear cut, the actual attribution of monuments to discrete classes is less simple. Clarification of the problems encountered when classifying such monuments, and definition of the groups to be employed, will therefore be outlined before considering further research; it must be remembered that the different classes that we perceive in the corpus of material are not necessarily the same as those that would have been understood in the past.

P.M.C. Kermode chose to classify monuments on the Isle of Man initially by date, the technology of their carving, and finally by the type of decoration, resulting in the following divisions of the corpus of *Manx Crosses* (table 5.1: after Kermode 1907 repr. 1994):

Kermode's Class	Division	Sub-division	
I. Pre-Scandinavian	Incised monuments	Ogam	
		Linear crosses of various form	
		Outline crosses of various form	
	Intermediate - 'sunk work' (false relief)		
	Relief carved monuments	Undecorated: stone generally dressed and rectangular, some raised borders	
		Decorated:	i. Geometric
ii. Zoomorphic			
iii. Figures of men and animals			
II. Scandinavian	Highly decorated, relief carved cross slabs		

Table 5.1: Divisions of the Manx stone monuments (Kermode 1907 reprinted 1994)



Figure 5.8: Techniques of carving: incised, false relief/sunk work, relief
(stones from Jurby, Ballaglass and Maughold respectively)

Although seemingly clear, Kermode's division of the monuments into groups is inconsistent, and the definitions of some types overlap. Wilson (1994, xviii) notes that several monuments described as 'pre-Scandinavian,' in fact belong to the later group; this has been redressed by Trench Jellicoe (1985). It seems that to impose chronological labels to groups from the outset is likely to be misleading, and for this reason, this initial classification is avoided. Division by decoration alone can also be problematic, as monuments are not often confined to one form of ornament. Kermode's groups also demonstrate some of the

drawbacks that will be encountered when dealing with simplified classes of monument. Within his incised class of ‘outline crosses,’ for example, monuments range from crudely depicted cross shapes, to well executed and elaborate designs. Despite obvious differences, however, it is difficult to draw definite lines within these groups. It seems that if a typology is to be devised that will enable large-scale patterns to be observed, a range of key attributes must be identified, and consistently applied.

The most widely accepted and enduring classification of early medieval monuments in Britain is that proposed by V.E. Nash-Williams in his 1950 publication *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales*. His four classes are shown below (table 5.2):

Class	Definition	Date range
I	Inscribed, unshaped or roughly shaped pillar stones	5 th to 7 th century
II	Cross marked stones (some inscribed)	7 th to 9 th century
III	Inscribed and uninscribed cross slabs and free standing crosses	9 th to 11 th century
IV	Later, Romanesque monuments	

Table 5.2: Nash-Williams’ classification of Welsh monuments (1950, 2)

In a discussion of these classes, Ken Dark (1992a, 52) states that, ‘it is no longer possible to wholly accept Nash-Williams’ classification and chronology, even as modified by later scholars.’ Despite this statement, however, Dark’s main point of contention seems to lie with the dating methods employed, and he suggests only small changes to the actual classification of monuments. He calls for clarification of the boundary between Classes I and II, which do overlap, suggesting that all inscribed stones be placed in Class I, and all uninscribed, cross-marked stones be placed in Class II. He also advocated further subdivision of Class III, into IIIa (free standing crosses) and IIIb (slab crosses). Class IIIb should then be divided between IIIbi, inscribed examples, and IIIbii, uninscribed examples (Dark 1992a, 52). The inscriptions on a stone would have served a specific purpose, and so it can be argued that uninscribed and inscribed stones would have been different in their initial functions (Higgitt 1986, 146). Nash-Williams’ classes of monument are simple, and although there is some ‘blurring’ at the edges, they provide a useful start for classification, particularly if Dark’s suggested modifications are applied.

In more specialised studies, focussing on inscribed monuments, the emphasis of

classification is not on monument type, but on factors such as script (ogam, Roman or runic; figure 5.9) or language (Latin, Irish, Old English or Norse). In this context, the division of the stones into a different set of categories is likely to be of more relevance. In the *Corpus of Early Christian Inscribed Stones of South-West Britain* (Okasha 1993), Elizabeth Okasha proposes three main categories, each with subdivisions (table 5.3).



Figure 5.9: Examples of script types within the study area

(clockwise from top left): ogam stone, Ballaqueeney (photo: Manx National Heritage); Latin inscription, Kirkmadrine (photo: Dumfries Museum); Anglian runes, Urswick; Insular script, Movilla; Norse runes, Kirk Andreas

Category		Sub division		Date
1	Pillar stones	A	Simple memorial formula	5 th / 6 th to 11 th century (refined by ogam, chi-rho, Latin names and half uncial script)
		B	Longer memorial formula	
		C	Probably originally pillar stones, but recut to form a cross	
2	Carved crosses	A	Inscribed cross shafts, with or without head or base	9 th to 11 th century
		B	Inscribed cross base	
3	Other (e.g. altar stones), and other unclassifiable monuments	A	Altar slabs	Undateable
		B	Undecorated slabs	
		C	Cross slabs	
		D	Chi-rho decorated stones	5 th century

Table 5.3: Okasha's categories of inscribed stones (Okasha 1993, 11)

Although these classifications work well for a study focused on inscribed stones, there remains little scope for incorporating the wide variety of monument forms and decorative styles that occur within our study area. It seems that the monuments within this study, over 820 fragments from over 250 sites, need to be classified using a variety of attributes, to enable a meaningful discussion of different types to be attempted. Although assigning monuments to discrete groups is problematic, it is more difficult to discuss variation within the dataset without clarifying the terminology to be used. In considering the monuments known from the study area, a number of key attributes have been defined (shape of monument, techniques of carving, presence of a cross, presence of an inscription, level of decoration). Using different combinations of these attributes, the monuments have been divided into 17 groups, which can each be considered further in terms of function, distribution and significance (table 5.4).

CLASSIFICATION	MONUMENT OUTLINE	INSCRIBED	CROSS DECORATED	OTHER ORNAMENT	MAIN TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION
INSCRIBED STONE	SLAB BOULDER PILLAR	YES	YES/ NO	NO	INCISED	Unshaped, dressed or undressed stone, on which the inscription is the main focus. No decoration, other than simple cross or chi-rho

CLASSIFICATION	MONUMENT OUTLINE	INSCRIBED	CROSS DECORATED	OTHER ORNAMENT	MAIN TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION
CROSS-INCISED STONE	SLAB BOULDER PILLAR	NO	YES	NO	INCISED	Simple slab or boulder bearing a cross but no further decoration
SIMPLE CROSS SLAB	SLAB BOULDER PILLAR	NO	YES	NO	RELIEF SUNK FALSE- RELIEF	Similar to above, with cross marked in relief, false relief or sunk work, but no further decoration
DECORATED, CROSS-INCISED STONE	SLAB BOULDER PILLAR	NO	YES	YES	INCISED	Similar to a cross-incised stone, but bearing further ornament indicating and increased level of investment
INCISED STONE	SLAB BOULDER PILLAR	NO	NO	YES	INCISED	Simple stone monument, with incised motifs NOT including a cross
ROUGH CROSS	ROUGH CROSS	NO	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	INCISED RELIEF NONE	Roughly shaped cross, bearing little or no decoration, and not inscribed
FREE STANDING CROSS	FREE STANDING CROSS	YES/ NO	YES	YES	RELIEF	Free standing cross form, usually highly decorated in relief (rare examples with incised decoration)
PSEUDO-FREE STANDING CROSS	PSEUDO- FREE STANDING CROSS	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	RELIEF	Relief carved slab, unique to the Isle of Man, designed to emulate free standing cross form
RELIEF CARVED SLAB	SLAB	YES/ NO	NO	YES	RELIEF	Ornate, relief carved slab, with no cross form displayed
DECORATED CROSS SLAB	SLAB	YES/ NO	YES	YES	RELIEF	Ornate, relief carved slab, bearing a cross and further decoration/ motifs
HOGBACK	HOGBACK	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	YES	RELIEF	Hogback form, relief decorated, generally not inscribed
SUNDIAL	SUNDIAL	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	ANY	Slab form bearing a shaped sundial at the top
BULLAUN	BULLAUN	NO	YES/ NO	NO	INCISED NONE	Hollowed stone, bearing no decoration, or simple incised cross
ROCK CARVING	ROCK CARVING	NO	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	INCISED	Motif or cross carved into natural rock
CROSS PEBBLE	PEBBLE	NO	YES	YES/ NO	INCISED	Small pebble, incised with cross design
ARCHITECTURAL	ARCHITECTU RAL	NO	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	ANY	Fragments deemed to be architectural, including fonts

CLASSIFICATION	MONUMENT OUTLINE	INSCRIBED	CROSS DECORATED	OTHER ORNAMENT	MAIN TECHNIQUE	DEFINITION
OTHER	OTHER	NO	NO	YES/ NO	ANY	Other stone artefacts, including vessels, and a trough, not belonging to other classes

Table 5.4: Classification of monuments used

DATING OF MONUMENTS

The dating of stone sculpture is difficult, as the material itself cannot be subjected to scientific analysis, and the pieces are rarely found in datable contexts, which in most cases provides only a *terminus ante quem* for the carving of the stone. Chronologies that have been established for sculpture have tended to assume a linear development from simple, incised stones, to ornate, relief carved monuments, and dates have been ascribed using epigraphic, historical, art historical and linguistic evidence. These dates and methods have been subject to much criticism (Dark 1992a), and recent studies have shown that chronologies such as that established by Nash-Williams (1950; table 5.2) can no longer be accepted. These studies have, however, tended to produce further questions rather than resolve the problems discussed, and a review of just some of the issues and debates for certain monument types demonstrates that more often than not, it is only possible to ascribe very broad dating parameters to particular stones.

DATING INSCRIPTIONS

Inscriptions found within the study area are diverse, in terms of script and language used. Inscribed stones using Roman capitals, ogam, or half uncial script, in Latin, Irish or Old English have initially been ascribed a date of between the fifth and seventh centuries. Some scholars have seen these monuments as ultimately late Roman in origin (Handley 2001), whilst others emphasize that they continue into much later centuries than previously allowed (Dark 1992a, 52). Also present in western Britain are inscriptions using runic script, both English and Scandinavian in origin, which have provided further evidence of dating, the former dating to the pre-Viking period, and the latter to the post-ninth century, Viking Age.

The basic chronology for non-runic inscribed stones was established by the works of Macalister (1949) and Nash Williams (1950), and has remained largely unquestioned. The inscriptions of western Britain were thought to have derived ultimately from Gaul, and the dating mechanisms employed were largely based on specific epigraphic formulae used in both these areas. These formulae, in particular *hic iacet*, which is used on Latin monuments, and the genitive formula 'of X son of Y' which is favoured in ogam and bilingual stones, have been compared with a dated sequence of monuments from Gaul, allowing a relative dating chronology to be applied. Discussions surrounding the use of memorial formulae and their value as dating mechanisms are complex (Knight 1992) and by no means universally accepted (Handley 2001). Knight (1992, 50) sees evidence supporting a mid- to late fifth century date for monuments inscribed in Roman capitals, which were introduced into western Britain and grafted onto a pre-existing tradition of ogam inscribed stones. He then sees the combined tradition continuing into the seventh century. Handley (2001) on the other hand, does not view these inscriptions as a post-Roman introduction, but places them into a wider tradition of epigraphic practice evident in late fourth century Britain, Italy, North Africa and Spain (*cf* Tedeschi 2001). It seems, for broad dating purposes, that a period from the fifth century is nevertheless widely accepted as the earlier date for these monuments, and more accurate parameters depend on individual monuments.

Ogam script has also often been used as an indicator of date. Traditionally this alphabet of linear strokes is considered to have developed in Ireland in the fourth century, specifically for the Irish language, and then been transmitted to western Britain in the fifth (McManus 1991, 1, 5). There is, however, an opinion that ogam might have been in use in Ireland as early as the third, or possibly even the second, century (Dark 1992a, 53), and that its use may have continued, albeit in a more limited capacity, beyond the seventh. The end date of ogam has been based on the use of the term *mucoi*, or 'son of' which is traditionally thought to have become obsolete by the eighth century. As Dark (1992a, 53) states, there are known examples of much later usage of ogam (Old Michael Church, Isle of Man), but this occurs on a very different type of monument, clearly belonging to a later period. It seems, therefore, that a general *floruit* in the fifth to seventh centuries is widely accepted, particularly when the inscriptions occur on undecorated monuments with no demonstrably later features.

An alternative method of dating inscriptions uses historical references, where available, to the named individuals commemorated on particular monuments. This is not generally accepted as an accurate means of dating monuments, due to the nature of the sources available for this period, and the multiple personages known to have had the same name. Dark levels criticism at the use of these 'pseudo-historical documents', describing them as

‘at best hagiographical’ (Dark 1992a, 54). Though useful for other aspects of the study of the past, it seems that to use these sources as a dating tool is tentative at best.

Epigraphic dating is equally problematic, and has tended to be based on the two principal types of script used; capital and half uncial. In 1953, Kenneth Jackson devised a chronology for inscriptions in Wales and the south west, based on the proportion of different letter forms found on specific monuments. This study resulted in four classes of inscription, to which Jackson ascribed quite narrow date ranges (table 5.5).

Jackson's Group	Description	Date
I	‘more or less pure, if often rough and debased, Roman monumental capitals with some vulgar and cursive forms’	Fifth to early sixth century
II	Increased use of vulgar forms, and ‘the appearance of certain uncial and half uncial letters derived from Gallic epigraphy, becoming commoner as the century went on’	Sixth century
III	fewer capitals, more uncial and half uncial, and half uncial forms evidently taken from manuscript writing	Late sixth to seventh century
IV	use of manuscript uncials and half uncials evolved into ‘full Hiberno-Saxon half uncials’	Eighth to twelfth/thirteenth century

Table 5.5: Jackson's use of script to date inscribed monuments (1953)

Dark (1992a, 60) would uphold a chronological horizon some time around the late sixth or seventh century for the introduction of half uncial script, but nothing more precise, whilst Okasha (1993, 55) states that ‘a theory based even in part on the ideas that the ‘more Roman’ the letters look, the earlier must be the text, must be rejected’. Letter forms on the stone vary greatly due to technology, geology and the competence of the carver, often making it impossible to distinguish between specific types. There is, however, still an accepted horizon for the introduction of definitely non-capital script into stone inscriptions in the seventh century (Redknap 1998, 405).

Okasha makes the alternative suggestion that different types of script might have been deemed suitable for different purposes. In the case of south-west Britain, she suggests that capitals may have been considered more appropriate for unshaped pillars, while half-uncial script, associated with literacy, manuscripts, and the church, may have been more suitable for inscribing dressed cross slabs (Okasha 1993, 53). Okasha states that, in general, inscribed pillar stones of the southwest can only be ascribed a date between the fifth and eleventh century (1993, 55), and that more precise dates can be provided by the use of ogam

(roughly fifth to eighth century), Latin (sixth to eighth century) or insular script (eighth to ninth century), although dating is only possible to within a century or two (Okasha 1993, 56).

DATING INCISED STONES AND SIMPLE CROSS SLABS

Cross-incised stones, bearing simple linear or outline crosses with little or no further ornament, are widespread throughout western and northern Britain and Ireland. These monuments, Thomas's 'primary cross-slabs' (Thomas 1971, 112-118) and Henderson's 'Class IV' monuments (Henderson 1987), are seen as a development of incised crosses found in the Mediterranean from the fifth century onwards, possibly introduced to Britain on portable items such as pottery, manuscripts or coins (Lionard 1961, 101). The lack of diagnostically datable features on these stones, however, makes them hard to interpret (Henderson 1987). Nash Williams labelled these monument types as Class II, and placed them between the seventh and the ninth centuries (Nash Williams 1950, 1-20). This date range was based on the premise that these monuments reflect an intermediate stage of development, from the inscribed stones of the fifth to seventh centuries, to the more ornate monuments of (Nash Williams') Class III, thought to have their origins in the ninth century. If, as Edwards has suggested, these monument classes reflect difference in function, rather than a linear stylistic development, then discrete date ranges are no longer applicable (Edwards 2001); several scholars have shown this to be the case. More recently, it has been argued that these parameters can be extended, and that examples of cross-incised stones occur from the sixth century to well beyond the ninth. Dark (1992a, 52) notes the occurrence of cross-incised stones in sixth-century contexts at Tintagel, and similar stones found in graves of the same period at Whithorn (Craig 1997a, 439) would suggest that the origins of these stones can be placed at least a century earlier than previously suggested.

It has also been noted, however, that cross-incised stones could equally have been produced in later periods. Of a group of slabs in Galloway, Derek Craig notes that they are 'almost impossible to date, since they are primitive enough to appear either very early or very late, and are so provincial in style as to make comparison meaningless' (Craig 1991, 55).

However, evidence from excavation, and consideration of more datable motifs, such as the chi-rho monogram and the compass-drawn designs of the sixth and eighth centuries (Hamlin 1982; Craig 1997a, 433-441; Swift 2001) support the premise that many of these simple monuments reflect an early phase of Christian activity. Whilst the distribution maps of these monument classes inevitably includes 'the flotsam and jetsam of many periods' (Henderson

1987, 50), they are likely to be meaningful when considering the choices made by early Christian communities of the sixth to eighth centuries. The problems with dating simple monuments do not justify them being overlooked in favour of more diagnostic sculpture. These simple stones reflect very different agendas to inscribed monuments and more ornately carved slabs and crosses, and as such are likely to be valuable in a discussion of the way that Christianity would have functioned within society, and the impact of ecclesiastical activity on the physical landscape. Henderson (1987, 50) is optimistic that a detailed study of the cross forms and carving methods used will enable more precise and datable groups within this class of monument to be defined, an approach that has successfully been adopted for small groups of incised crosses in Argyll (Campbell 1987) and Iceland (Ahronson 2003). Such a study is not within the remit of this thesis, and it seems that it must be accepted that some later examples will be included.

Similar debates apply to the much smaller class of simple cross slabs, which bear many of the same designs, but carved using relief or false relief techniques. Their simplicity makes them difficult to date, but on general terms, their occurrence within similar contexts to the incised stone crosses suggests that they may be at least partly contemporary.

DATING RELIEF CARVED SLABS, DECORATED CROSS SLABS AND FREE-STANDING CROSSES

The more ornate decorative schemes used on monuments carved in relief, including free-standing crosses and ornate cross slabs, have enabled these monuments to be dated more confidently. Generally, these classes have dated to between AD 750 to 1100, with specific motifs or elements used to ascribed closer date ranges, occasionally to within half a century. The very broad groups of Anglian (or pre-Viking Age) and Anglo-Scandinavian (or Viking Age), provide a useful classification for the monuments within the study area, and allow for broad chronological developments to be described. It must be noted, however, that these terms do not provide indicators of ethnicity or language, and are used only as chronological indicators in areas where there may in reality have been very little Scandinavian influence (Bailey 1980, 75).

Elements of sculptural ornament, such as vinescroll and interlace, have been studied in detail, enabling clearer chronologies to be established. Forms and styles identified as Scandinavian in origin, from the Jellinge, Mammen, Ringerike and Børre schools have also allowed for dating parameters to be further developed, usually between the ninth to eleventh centuries (Bailey 1980, 45-75). The introduction of new monument forms during the Viking

Age, most notably the hogback monument, also allow for general dates to be applied (Lang 1984). The precise methods used to date monuments are too lengthy and complex to be recounted here, and are probably best referred to in their original published contexts. This study therefore follows the dates ascribed to particular monuments by those who have studied monuments on an individual basis, with a recognition that such dates are not beyond dispute (Hamlin 1976; Kermode 1907; Trench Jellicoe 1985; Bailey and Cramp 1988; Craig 1992; Harbison 1992; Bailey 1996).

DISTRIBUTION AND FUNCTION OF MONUMENTS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

INSCRIPTIONS: DISTRIBUTION, FUNCTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

The presence or absence of inscriptions on stone monuments is one of the main characteristics considered, and one that may well indicate something of the way monuments would have been used (Higgitt 1986, 146). An inscription on stone represents a public statement. Literacy is not thought to have been widespread, and so the presence of inscriptions indicates access to education, or the participation of educated individuals. Although possibly intelligible to a limited few, the presence of an inscription would probably have been widely recognised, and its significance understood.

Inscriptions occur on roughly 10% of the monuments from the study area (80 of 822 monuments), representing a wide range of scripts (figure 5.10), epigraphic formulae and monumental traditions. These inscriptions have primarily been seen as evidence for literacy, language, and as tools to date particular monument types. Literacy has been seen as the preserve of the church, and so the presence of inscriptions is often viewed as evidence for Christian activity. Generally, inscribed monuments are assumed to have been votive or commemorative in function, and this, with preoccupations with literacy and language, has led to an overshadowing of the diversity of inscriptions which exist, and the multiple functions that they may have served. This has recently begun to be redressed by scholars such as Handley (1998), Edwards (2001) and Petts (2003b), allowing for the study of these monuments in their own terms. In doing so, the changing function they might have served becomes apparent, and conclusions can be drawn about regional practice.

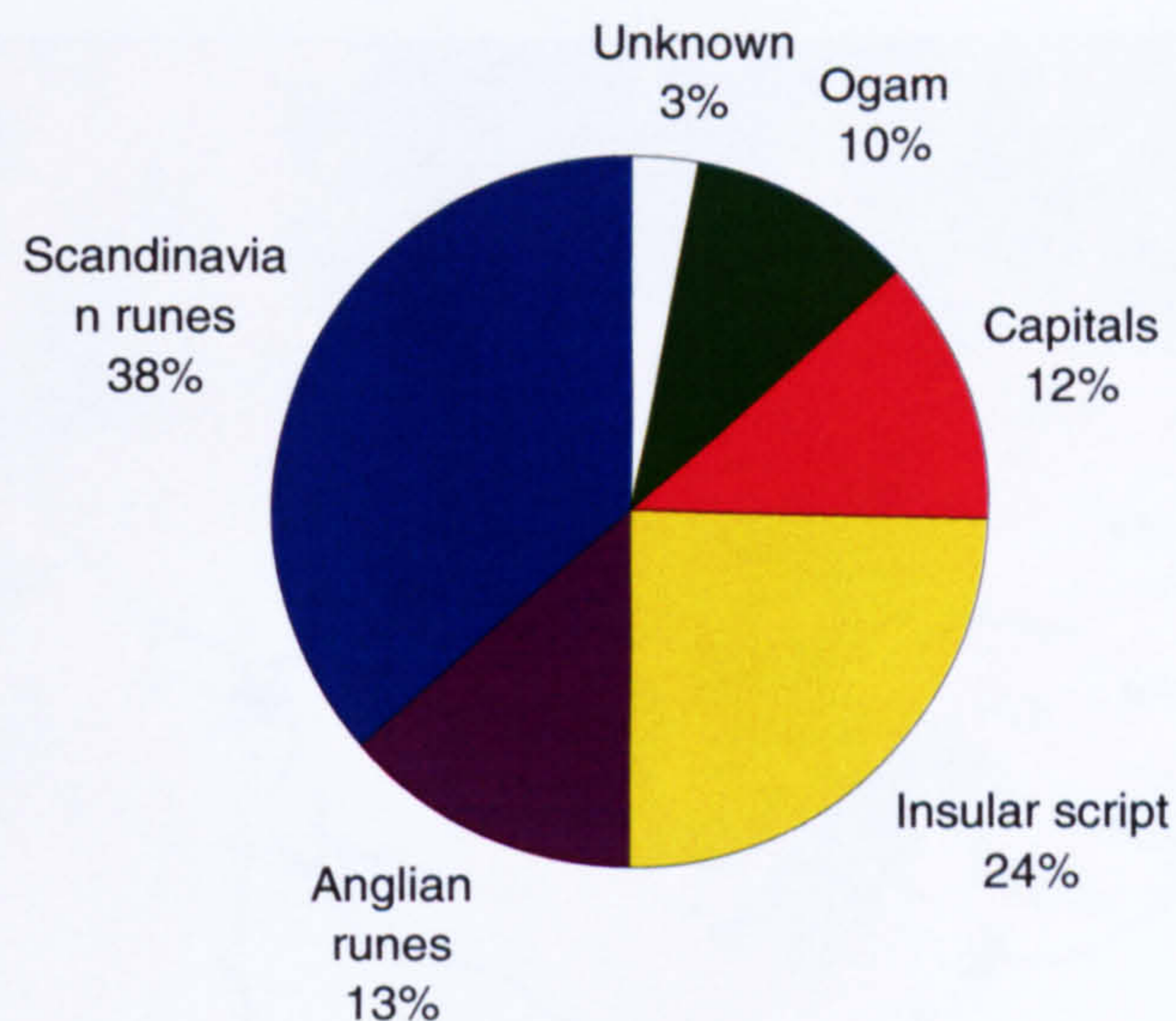


Figure 5.10: Types of script used within the study area.

Early inscriptions: Ogam and Roman capitals

The early medieval inscriptions of western Britain have been subject to much discussion, and whilst ogam inscriptions and those written primarily in Latin capitals may represent differing traditions of script, there is some overlap in terms of content. This, with their apparent contemporaneity, makes it pertinent to discuss them as a group. A previously held conviction that ogam inscriptions represent a specifically pagan phenomenon is no longer accepted (MacNeill 1909, 331-4; McManus 1991, 56, 60), and it is widely believed that these inscriptions are likely to have occurred within the same Christian milieu as their Latin counterparts.

These inscriptions can be seen to occur throughout the central part of the study area, but are notably lacking from Cumbria, Dumfriesshire and Northern Ireland, suggesting differences in the use of inscribed stone monuments in these areas (figure 5.11).

It has been widely assumed that these early inscriptions represent memorials. However, this narrow interpretation has recently been challenged by a number of scholars, who have used a variety of sources to suggest that these stones would have served multiple functions, as boundary markers, burial markers, and as statements of land ownership (Handley 1998; Petts 2003b), in much the same way as has been recognised for burial mounds and monuments

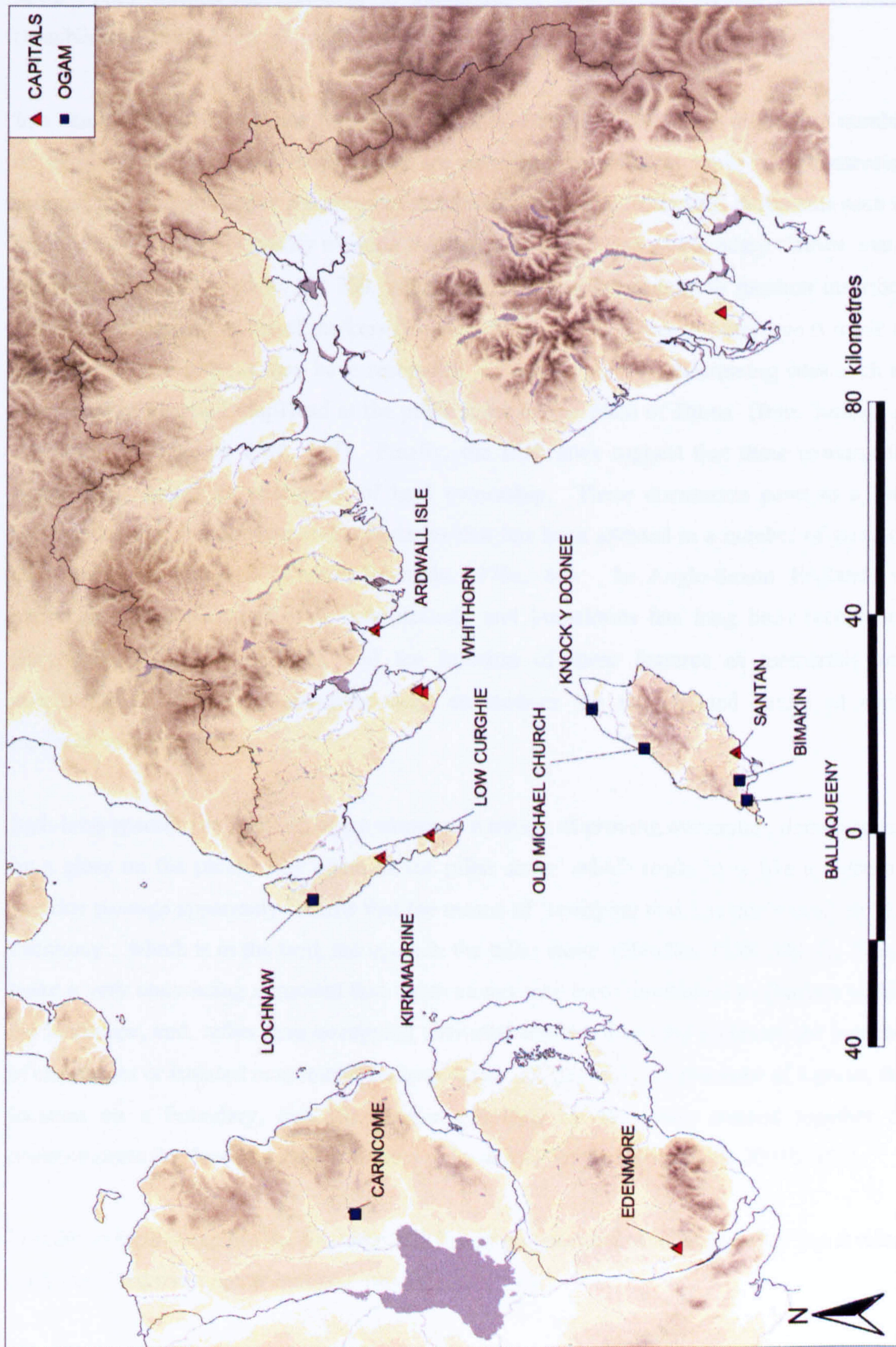


Figure 5.11: Early Latin and ogam inscriptions

elsewhere in early medieval Britain and Ireland (Bonney 1966; Bonney 1979; Driscoll 1991, 228). They formed the precursor to transferral of land through written sources alone (MacNiocaill 1984, 153).

In a study of literary evidence for inscribed stones, Handley (1998, 346) observes a number of trends in the way that these stones are described in different types of documentary sources, and draws together a number of strands of scholarship. Charters, documents such as the *Book of Llandaff*, primarily mention the stones in the context of boundary clauses, many examples of which predate AD 760, whilst poetry and sagas appear to mention inscribed stones in the context of burial markers (Handley 1998, 341). Although reference is made to later texts, these sources may have resonance for earlier periods, mentioning sites such as 'the grave of Fergus Long-Head at the pillar stone on the plain of Duma' (from *Stanzas of the Dead*, in Handley 1998, 343). Finally, the Irish laws suggest that these monuments would have served as statements of land ownership. These documents point to a link between burials, monuments and boundaries that has been attested in a number of areas of early medieval research (Charles-Edwards 1976a, 84). In Anglo-Saxon England, in particular, the association of burials mounds and boundaries has long been recognised (Reynolds 2002; Petts 2003b), and the function of these features as memorials and statements of ownership, simultaneously, emphasises the multifaceted nature of early medieval monumentality.

Irish laws specifically mention ogam stones as a means of proving ownership, demonstrated by a gloss on the phrase 'the ogam of the pillar stone' which reads 'it is like a witness'. Another passage apparently records that the means of 'testifying that it is one's land' in 'the testimony...which is in the land, the ogam in the pillar stone' (Handley 1998, 344-5). These make a very convincing argument that ogam stones may have functioned as charters within the landscape, and, rather than occupying territorial centres, they may represent the location of cemeteries or isolated monuments on boundaries. In this way, the presence of a grave, the location on a boundary, and the marker provided by the stone worked together to commemorate the dead and also to make a statement about the living (Petts 2003b, 201).

In order to further explore the function of different epigraphic formulae, Handley has divided early inscribed monuments into four classes (table 5.6).

Group	Inscription form
1	Inscriptions with no nominative case: name(s) in the genitive form
2	Memorial formula and name in the nominative case
3	Mixture of 1 and 2: Memorial formula with genitive case
4	Miscellany: fragmentary, name (nominative), with no formula, those with a specifically religious function

Table 5.6: Types of inscription, divided by content (Handley 1998)

Of the 242 inscriptions identified in western Britain as a whole, the majority fall into Group 1. If added to Group 3, these account for over half of the total number of inscriptions. A majority read ‘of X son of Y’, a formula previously assumed to refer to an unwritten ‘stone’ or ‘memorial’. Handley (1998, 348), endorsed by others (Edwards 2001), suggests that this may be an oversimplification, and that the stones could equally be intended to read ‘*land of X, son of Y*’, possibly in addition to physically marking a boundary or acting as a focus for burial. The multifunctional nature of the inscriptions may well be reflected in their ambiguity.

Group 2, which overtly identify themselves as memorials, are generally assumed to be the typical form of these monuments, but comprise only 15% of the known monuments, and even if combined with Group 3 form less than a third of the total. Group 4 represents a disparate class, which comprises very different types, many of which are too fragmentary or simple to be interpreted in any depth. For the purpose of discussion, Group 4 has been divided into Group 4 and Group 4 (ecclesiastical), which denotes longer inscriptions of an overtly ecclesiastical nature. If the monuments from the study area are considered in terms of both script and Handley’s inscription types, two distinct traditions emerge, with apparently different geographical foci (figure 5.11; 5.12).

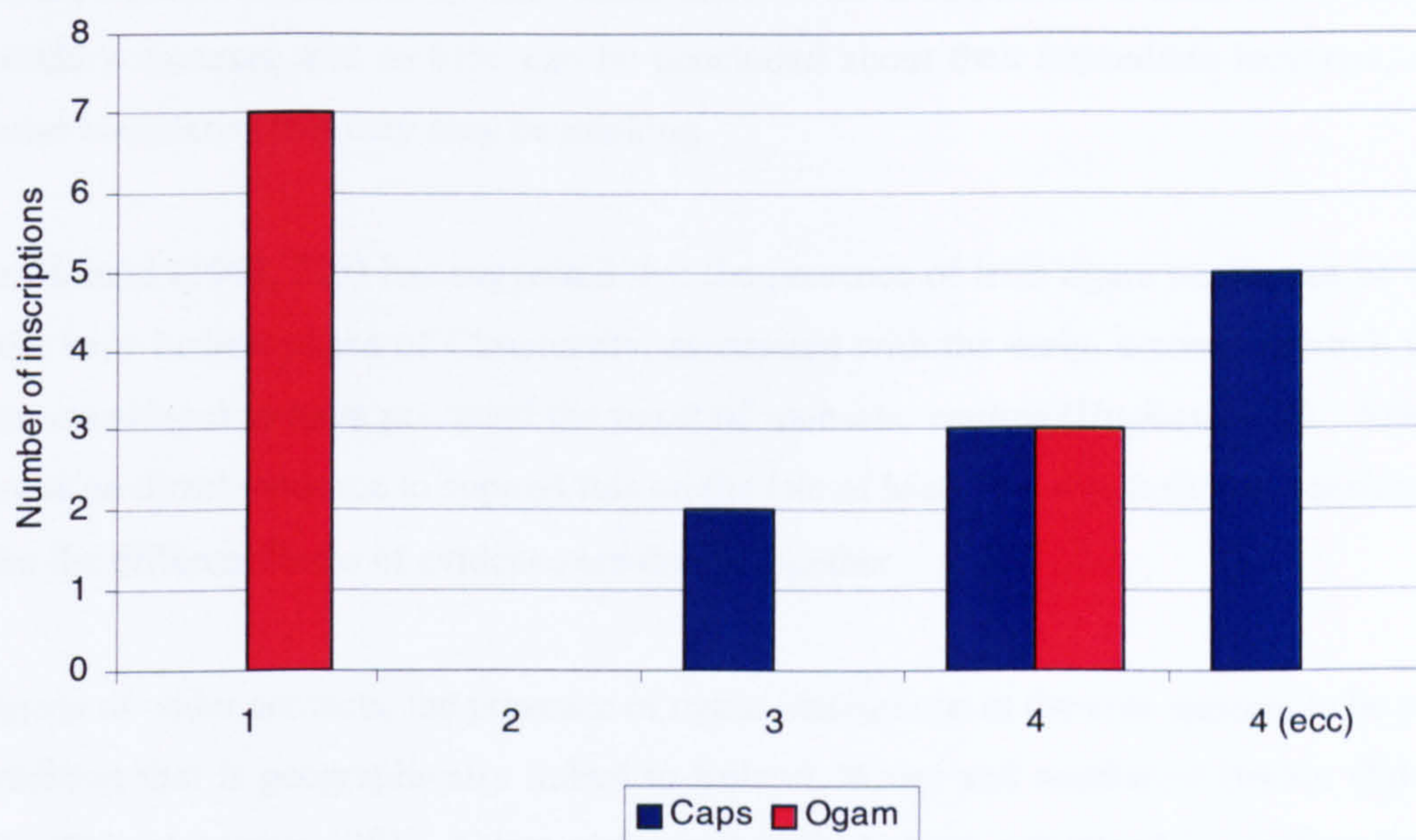


Figure 5.12: Ogam and Roman capitals: Inscriptions types (see table 5.6)

Ogam inscriptions in the study area occur primarily on the Isle of Man and Ireland, with a possible example at Lochnaw, on the Rhinns of Galloway. The inscription at Lochnaw (which is also cross-incised) was identified during ploughing in 1960s, and the ogams themselves are considered to be of a dubious nature (CISP: LONAW1/1; Forsyth 1996, 519-525). However, although illegible, they may represent a genuine inscription (Forsyth pers. comm.). An ogam inscription at the Old Church Michael is found on a relief carved slab alongside Norse runes, and therefore belongs to a much later tradition, and will be considered within this later group of monuments.

The remaining seven inscriptions are from three sites on the Isle of Man, and one in Ireland, comprising two purely ogam inscriptions at each of the sites of Ballaqueeney Farm, Bimakin Friary and Carncome, and a bilingual inscription from the site at Knock-y-Doonee. These inscriptions are all found on unworked pillars or boulders, and contain no other decoration, indicating that the inscription would have formed the primary function of these monuments.

All of the stones bear ogam inscriptions that fall into Handley's Group 1, and as such might be seen to represent statements of land ownership, erected at some point between the fifth and seventh centuries. Trench-Jellicoe (1985, 326) has suggested that a shared name ending of '-droata' on the stones from Ballaqueeney farm might indicate some familial link, possibly continued or shared ownership of land, a family burial location, or possibly both. As the monuments do not appear to be overtly ecclesiastical in nature, but might represent a more secular phase of land consolidation, though presumed to be within an early Christian

milieu (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 13). Unfortunately, all examples have been found reused in secondary contexts, and so little can be concluded about their immediate locations, or the precise boundaries that they may be marking.

Ann Hamlin (1982, 285) has suggested that the presence of Irish ogam stones can be linked to the very earliest phase of Christianity, associated with the early, diocesan church that is often considered to have preceded the onset of monastic centres (Hughes 1966). Although there is no direct evidence to support this on the Isle of Man, it is worth further consideration when the different forms of evidence are drawn together.

In terms of wider contacts, the presence of ogam inscriptions in the area appears to be part of a tradition that is geographically linked to Ireland, Wales and southwest Britain (Edwards 1990, 203; McManus 1991). Ogam script is thought to have originated in southern Ireland, where they occur in their highest quantities, and then permeated into western Britain (McManus 1991, 5; Hamlin 1982, 283; Trench-Jellicoe 1985, 20). Their occurrence on the Isle of Man has been interpreted as representing communication links, possibly even the establishment of an Irish community (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 13; *cf* Thomas 1972). This has been further supported by Sims-Williams' (2003) study of western inscriptions, in which a high level of Irish influence is evident in the names and scripts used; over 70% have some form of 'Irish' connection (Forsyth forthcoming, 9). Trench-Jellicoe (1985, 330) sees the single bilingual inscription at the site of Knock-y-Doonee as indicative of continued contact between the Isle of Man and Irish speaking settlements of western Britain.

Inscriptions employing Roman capitals can be seen to have a different distribution within the study area, using different formulae and apparently belong to quite distinct traditions. The earliest of these monuments is considered to be that at Whithorn, commonly known as the 'Latinus stone', and dated to the fifth century (figure 5.13).



Figure 5.13: The LATINUS stone, Whithorn, and Radford's drawing (Thomas 1971, 99)

The stone reads, in Latin, 'We praise thee Lord! Latinus, of 35 years, and his daughter of four years, here made a *sinum*. He was a descendant of Barrovadus'. The significance of the wording is debated, and although Thomas (1992a, 6) would argue that the term *sinum* represents the founding of a church by a layman Latinus, the archaeological evidence for a fifth-century church at Whithorn is not substantial (Hill 1997). However, the stone does appear to be primarily commemorative, and is considered by others to refer a *signum* or monument of some significance (Higgitt 2003, 329), possibly referring to the *chi-rho* monogram that precedes the inscription (Craig 1997b, 615).

Forsyth (forthcoming) considers the Latinus stone in the context of 'extended Latinate' inscriptions in western Britain, noting that these longer Latin texts are often 'one-offs', rather than following the more restrictive formulae of other groups. Several aspects of this stone are noted to hark back to the Roman period: Latinus' name itself (though Barrovadus is suggested to have Irish roots), the commemoration of a young child, and statement of age (Forsyth forthcoming). These compare with the Roman associations of similar inscriptions in Wales, and Forsyth also compares them to two roughly carved late Roman inscriptions from Maryport, which lies over the Solway on the Cumbrian coast (Collingwood and Wright 1995, 287), and also produced a stone with a Constantinian *chi-rho*. It may be, therefore, that the stone erected at Whithorn may represent a continuation of late Roman traditions that is not evident in the more fully Romanised parts of the study area; the potential that *Latinus*

may have Irish origins has also been stressed, however: 'there seems strong evidence to suggest that to at least some extent the Class I tradition has its origins in contacts between Irish settlers and Romanophile elites' (Forsyth forthcoming).

Thomas (1997; 1998a) drawing on the work of Howlett (1986; 1995) has stressed the sophistication of the composition of the Latinus stone, and argues that it represents a multi-layered, encoded message, depicting a 'mental image' of the Temple of Solomon (Thomas 1998a, 104-123). The reading of such messages requires the expansion of abbreviations into their full forms, laid out neatly in grid form, and has been treated with some scepticism (Clancy 2000; McKee and McKee 2002; Higgitt 2003, 328). It is accepted, however, that the monument does seem to represent a well-educated, overtly Christian (though not necessarily ecclesiastical) elite at the site at Whithorn.

Kirkmadrine, Low Curghie and the Petrus stone

To Handley's Group 4 (ecclesiastical) inscriptions can also be added a group of later monuments, clustered on the Rhinns and Machars peninsulas. These include a second stone from the Whithorn area, three stones from Kirkmadrine, and the lost stone from Low Curghie. This group of monuments, after some considerable debate, is now thought to belong to the mid- to late sixth century, possibly the early seventh (Sims-Williams 2003, Forsyth forthcoming; *cf* Thomas 1992a, 9; 1992b, 7). The stones from Kirkmadrine all exhibit a similar form, being decorated with encircled chi-rhos. Kirkmadrine 1 reads 'here lie the holy (*sancti*) and outstanding priests (*sacerdotes*), that is, Viventius and Mavorius'; Kirkmadrine 2 is incomplete, reading *...S ET FLORENTIUS*; Kirkmadrine 3 bears the inscription *INITIUM/ ET FINIS* - the beginning and the end (Thomas 1992b, 2). The stone from Low Curghie is lost, but is recorded to have commemorated a subdeacon (*SUBDIACONUS?*) called Ventidius (Reid 1957-8). The final stone of this group is a stone found at the farm of Mains, to the south of Whithorn, which reads *LOCI/PETRI APV/STOLI*, translated as 'of the *locus* of Peter the Apostle' (Thomas 1992b, 3; Craig 1997b, 616-7; figure 5.14).



Figure 5.14: The Mains stone: LOCI PETRI APVSTOLI

The three monuments from Kirkmadrine have been previously interpreted as representing major Gaulish influence, even Gaulish clerics settling in the area, due to elements of palaeography, the Latin names used, and the chi-rho monograms (Thomas 1994b, 203-4; 1998, 104-123; Hill 2001). However, it has recently been stressed that using these characteristics to support such an argument is no longer tenable. The palaeographic elements described (angle-bar A and sideways R) are found in Brittonic contexts, and early Roman inscriptions. The name Viventius is known from Roman Britain, and Mavorius has recently been identified as a Celtic name, with a Latinised ending (Sims-Williams 2003); the use of the chi-rho is known from Roman contexts. Although these men could have been Gauls, there is no reason to suggest that they were not Britons (Forsyth forthcoming). It has been suggested, therefore, that rather than representing an intrusive phenomenon, these stones should be seen as following developments of wider late Antique world, within a western British context (Handley 2001; Forsyth 2005).

Unlike the Latinus stone, which may be a secular monument, and the shorter inscriptions found on the ogam stones and the 'Avitus' stone at Santan, this group are overtly ecclesiastical. The lack of patronymics may suggest that the memorials were retrospective, and may represent the presence of relics, or a cult centre, at the site (Forsyth 2005). Hints that cults may have developed around individuals considered holy have been noted in Wales (Edwards, N. 2002, 229), and the use of the term *sanctus*, whilst not conclusive, may indicate such a function. With regards the *Petrus* stone, *locus* is a term which may have been used to mark holy place or site of a burial. In addition to denoting a place of some sanctity, possibly a burial ground, this monument may also have marked the route from Whithorn to the Isle of Whithorn, now followed by a path. The dedication to St Peter has previously been used to suggest Northumbrian influence and an eighth-century date. However, documentary and sculptural sources (such as the Kilnassagart stone, County Armagh) demonstrate the strength of the cult of St Peter in Ireland at a much earlier date, and the similarity of layout and symbols may suggest that this stone belongs to an earlier phase.

This leaves the second inscription of the bilingual Knock-y-Doonee stone, and a pillar stone from Santan bearing the inscription *Aviti Monomenti*, or 'of the tomb of Avitus'. The Knock-y-Doonee monument repeats the formula used on its corresponding ogam inscription, and presumably can be interpreted in a similar way; a sixth-century date is often accepted (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 13; Forsyth 2005). The Santan example is slightly different, and whilst exhibiting features of both traditions mentioned, is difficult to interpret. The monument lacks patronymics in the same way as the inscriptions at Kirkmadrine, an unusual feature on inscriptions of this type (Trench Jellicoe 1985, 332). The inscription, however, would appear to belong to Handley's Group 3, combining a possible memorial indicator, 'monomenti' with genitive form of the name. If it is accepted that the absence of patronymics could indicate an ecclesiastical focus, or possibly relics, it could be tentatively speculated that this monument refers to the presence of some type of shrine. If combined with Handley's interpretation of genitive inscriptions, and the multipurpose nature of these inscriptions, this stone could have been used to denote land or boundaries associated with such a memorial, possibly indicating a place of some sanctity, though this remains speculative.

Doubtful early inscriptions

There are other inscriptions in the study area of likely or possible early date, but these are not so overtly Christian in their nature. The examples from County Down and from Ardwall Isle

consist only of initials, and are of uncertain date, so can not reliably be considered as part of this group. Two fragments recently identified at Great Urswick have recently been interpreted as sub-Roman inscriptions (Dickinson 2002, 40). Dickinson reads one of the stones as 'IM', extrapolating this to form the beginning of IMP[eratori] CA[eseri], and suggesting that the stone may represent a late- or sub-Roman inscriptions under a Roman emperor, in the late fourth or fifth century (Dickinson 2002, 40). However, these remains are extremely fragmentary, and from the drawing provided, the inscription could equally be considered runic (an existing cross shaft at the site bears an inscription in Anglian runes). The conclusions drawn remain highly speculative, and the significance of the fragmentary remains will hopefully be ascertained with further research.

Anglian period runic and non-runic inscriptions

Moving into the seventh century, inscriptions are found in a wider area, and appear to have been employed in a different way. Inscriptions dated to this period, generally from the eighth century onwards include those written in Anglian (or English) runes, and in a range of scripts demonstrating the influence of manuscripts and literacy.

Anglian runes, and inscriptions written in Old English, provide evidence for communication links with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to the east, and may tentatively be associated with the expansion of Northumbria westwards (Cramp 1995). Monuments bearing these inscriptions are found primarily in the northern part of the study area (figure 5.15), at Ruthwell and Bewcastle, and further west near Whithorn. Perhaps surprisingly, Anglian runes are found outside the traditional area of Anglian influence, at Maughold and even a possible example at Nendrum, though the latter has since been more convincingly identified as written in Roman capitals (Trench-Jellicoe 1985, 231-5; Hamlin 2001). These outlying inscriptions, found at known early monastic centres, would have been the result of communication or contacts between ecclesiastical communities.

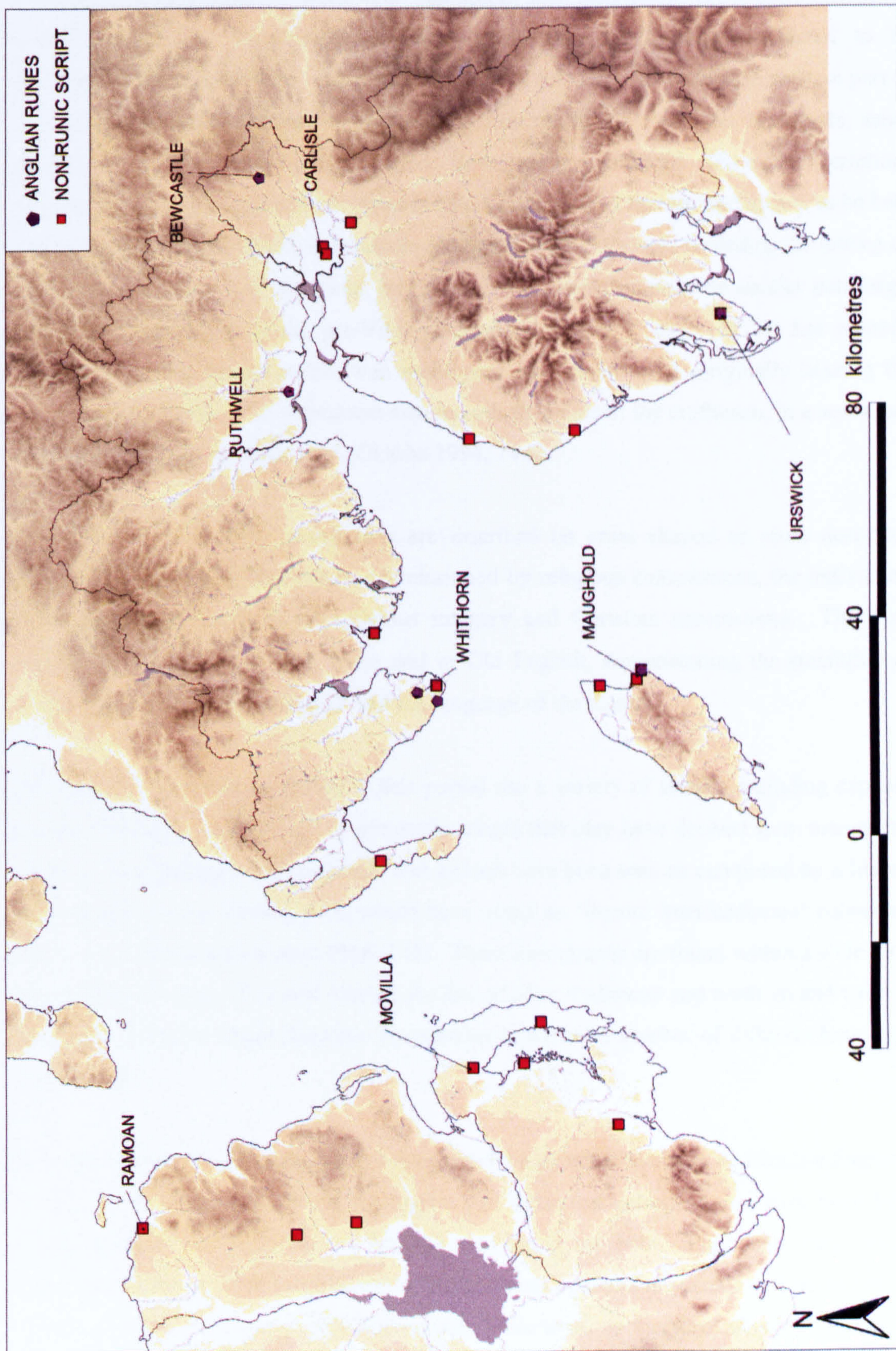


Figure 5.15: Anglian runes and non-runic script

Most of the surviving Anglian runic inscriptions are fragmentary, frequently comprising only a single name, or incomplete word. The function of such inscriptions is therefore difficult to assess, though the presence of a single name may be loosely considered to be commemorative in some way. Simple inscriptions of this type fall within the western part of the study area, whilst longer, more complex inscriptions are found on the ornate, relief carved monuments of sites such as Urswick, Bewcastle and Ruthwell. The runic inscriptions on these more easterly monuments demonstrate a high level of literacy and appear to be both commemorative and religious in function. A monument at Urswick, recording the setting up of a stone in memory of Torohtred, by one Tunwine, suggests possible secular patronage, though at a later date in the pre-Viking period. Dickinson (2002, 21-25) has recently suggested that the names within this monument have been recut, originally bearing the names Luibe/Luigne. This monument also records the name of the craftsman, in a secondary inscription reading 'lyl made this' (Okasha 1994, 74-6).

All of the Anglian runic inscriptions are inscribed on cross shaped or cross decorated monuments, indicating that, if not commissioned by religious communities, the individuals that patronised them drew on religious imagery and Christian associations. The texts themselves are written both in Latin and in Old English, demonstrating the suitability of runic script for both the vernacular and the language of the church.

The non-runic inscriptions dating to this period use a variety of scripts, including capitals, and the majuscule (half uncial) or miniscule scripts that may have derived from manuscript sources. Inscriptions found in Britain and Ireland have been seen as composed by a literate elite, in many cases clerics, who would have acted as 'literate intermediaries' between a patron and a craftsman (Higgitt 1986, 146). These monuments are found within a wide area, occurring in County Down and Antrim, the Isle of Man, Galloway and northern and western Cumbria. However, these disparate monuments represent a number of different languages and traditions.

As with the runic inscriptions, many comprise only a personal name, or an illegible fragment of a word, but there is evidence to suggest that these inscriptions would have been both commemorative and religious in function, occurring on both simple and very ornate monuments. In Cumbria, inscriptions in Anglo-Saxon capitals, majuscule and miniscule, in various combinations, occur on relief carved monuments, in the form of single names or longer commemorative inscriptions. Only the example of a single name at Knells was found on a solely incised monument. Longer inscriptions also appear commemorative, such as the early to mid-ninth century example at Beckermest St Bridget (figure 5.16), which reads 'Sig[-

]SE set this up in memory of Suitberht' (Bailey and Cramp 1988, 55-6). Higgitt (1986) has observed, in a study of inscribed stones in Ireland, Wales and England, that those found in Anglo-Saxon England exhibit the most variation, and so are likely to have served a wider range of functions, though primarily serving as memorials (Higgitt 1986, 142).

On the Isle of Man, the diverse range of monuments found around Maughold is testament to the diverse contacts and influences of this centre. These inscriptions use capital and miniscule script, and occurred on relief carved and incised monuments, all bearing crosses. Some appear overtly Christian, with a long inscription referring to a priest, and several inscriptions specifically mentioning the cross of Christ (Trench-Jellicoe 1985, 209). The distribution and content of inscriptions near Maughold attest to a major, literate ecclesiastical focus at the site, supporting the idea that a monastic centre was established on the site by the seventh century. Trench-Jellicoe (1985, 209) suggests that the longer Maughold inscription, commemorating a *presbiter*, represents a foundation document, and this, with a monument recording that one Branhui had brought water to the site, demonstrates the use of stone to document religious activity (Trench Jellicoe 1985, 209). At Ballavarkish, several personal names, in several hands, are inscribed on a cross slab, and are assumed to represent graffiti. Trench-Jellicoe (2002, 28) has suggested that these inscriptions were created by individuals waiting to embark on a journey from the coastal *keill* of Ballavarkish to Whithorn, and dates the stone to the ninth or tenth century (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 28)

Inscriptions from Ireland are much less varied, and are of more modest, overtly Christian nature, probably votive in function (Higgitt 1986, 142-4). Inscribed in half uncial script, on incised stones bearing crosses or no decoration, four of the five inscriptions are requests for prayer, in simple form 'prayer for X' (figure 5.17). This supports a more ecclesiastical purpose for these monuments, although possibly patronised by an elite, requesting prayer for themselves or their families.



Figure 5.16: Beckermes St Bridget

Figure 5.17: OROIT DO DERTREND (Movilla)

Scandinavian runic inscriptions

Into the tenth century, there is a proliferation in the number of inscriptions found within the study area, represented primarily by those using Scandinavian runes (figure 5.18). These inscriptions primarily occur on relief carved cross slabs, and show a strong distribution on Isle of Man (the example from Whithorn is uncertain, and now lost).

These stones appear to be primarily memorial in function, stating clearly who the stone had been erected for, by whom, and in some cases the identity of the scribe; of 38 Scandinavian runic inscriptions, 22 are of this nature. Nine inscriptions are too fragmentary to interpret, and three record events or make statements that do not appear to be commemorative; one example records the breaking of an oath, suggesting that into this period, inscribed stones could have served as a variety of secular documents. Only four of the inscriptions appear more ecclesiastical in function, and these are all simple, incised monuments, two of which are undecorated, two bearing only incised crosses. Two mention 'John the priest', a third simply says 'krus' and a fourth mentions the cross of Christ. The scarcity of these more ecclesiastical monuments, all found on the Isle of Man, suggests that the function of inscriptions during this period may have been primarily secular, and primarily commemorative. All but three of the monuments on which memorial inscriptions occur are relief carved, decorated cross slabs, representative of considerable investment. This change

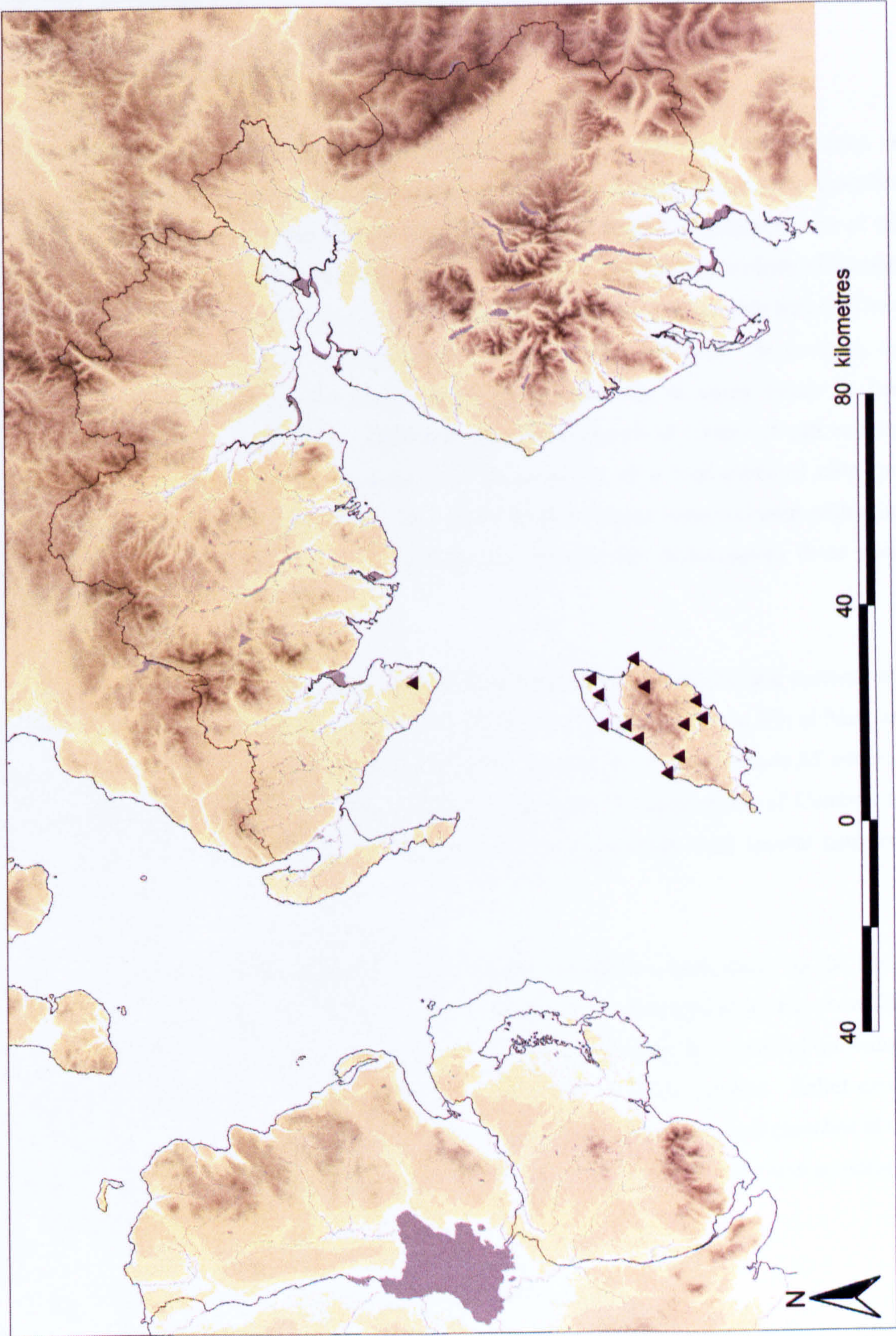


Figure 5.18: Scandinavian runic inscriptions

in function, as stone monuments became more secular in nature, is highlighted further by the types of monuments erected.

Changing use of inscriptions

The inscriptions of the study area demonstrate changes in the focus and function of investment. In the earlier part of the period, from the fifth to the seventh centuries, inscribed stones appear to represent two distinct zones of influence. Stones in southern parts of the Isle of Man and Ireland (and possibly northern Galloway) demonstrate an Irish affiliation, through the erection of ogam stones proclaiming land ownership and possibly burial. These stones show a high level of communication within the Irish Sea zone. In contrast, the Whithorn and Kirkmadrine monuments demonstrate adherence to wider trends in Late Antique Christianity, potentially representing the establishments of centres of cult activity. The pre-existing Latinus stone demonstrates the presence of a well-educated elite (not necessarily a bishopric or monastery) who would doubtless have communicated with elites elsewhere; the chi rho forms on the Kirkmadrine monuments demonstrates these wider connections (Craig 1997b).

From the seventh century onwards, inscriptions become more widespread, and patrons were commissioning a range of inscriptions. Those focussed at Maughold on the Isle of Man, and in Ireland, are overtly Christian and devotional, demonstrating the presence of educated communities, and probable monastic centres. In contrast, the inscriptions of Cumbria are more commemorative, and may be indicative of a move towards more secular patronage during this period.

This shift is much clearer in the Viking Age runic inscriptions, particularly on the Isle of Man. These adorn only a fraction of the large number of relief carved slabs, but show them to be primarily commemorative and secular in nature, proclaiming the wealth of individuals and families, and making overt statements of status and economic control. Relief carved monuments are considered to represent the newly established cemeteries and churches of this period (Stocker 2000); an inscription would have made all the clearer who was responsible for such an undertaking.

MONUMENT FORM AND TECHNIQUES OF CARVING

When all of the monuments from the study area are considered as a group, one of the clearest impressions gained is the variation in sophistication of craftsmanship involved. The levels

of labour and skill invested are demonstrated in the shaping of the stones, techniques of carving and the complexities of decoration, and these can provide clues to the way that monuments were used.

Although something of an oversimplification, the monuments identified within the study area fall into two main categories: those with incised decoration and those carved in relief. A recent consideration of the man-hours and resources involved in production has stressed the differences in investment between these forms (Gondek 2003, 54-9). Figure 5.19 shows the techniques used within the study area, demonstrating the balance between incised monuments (39%) and those carved in relief (49%). The remainder comprise those carved in false relief, or with sunken designs (3%), those with no decoration (6%) and those for which such records do not survive (3%).

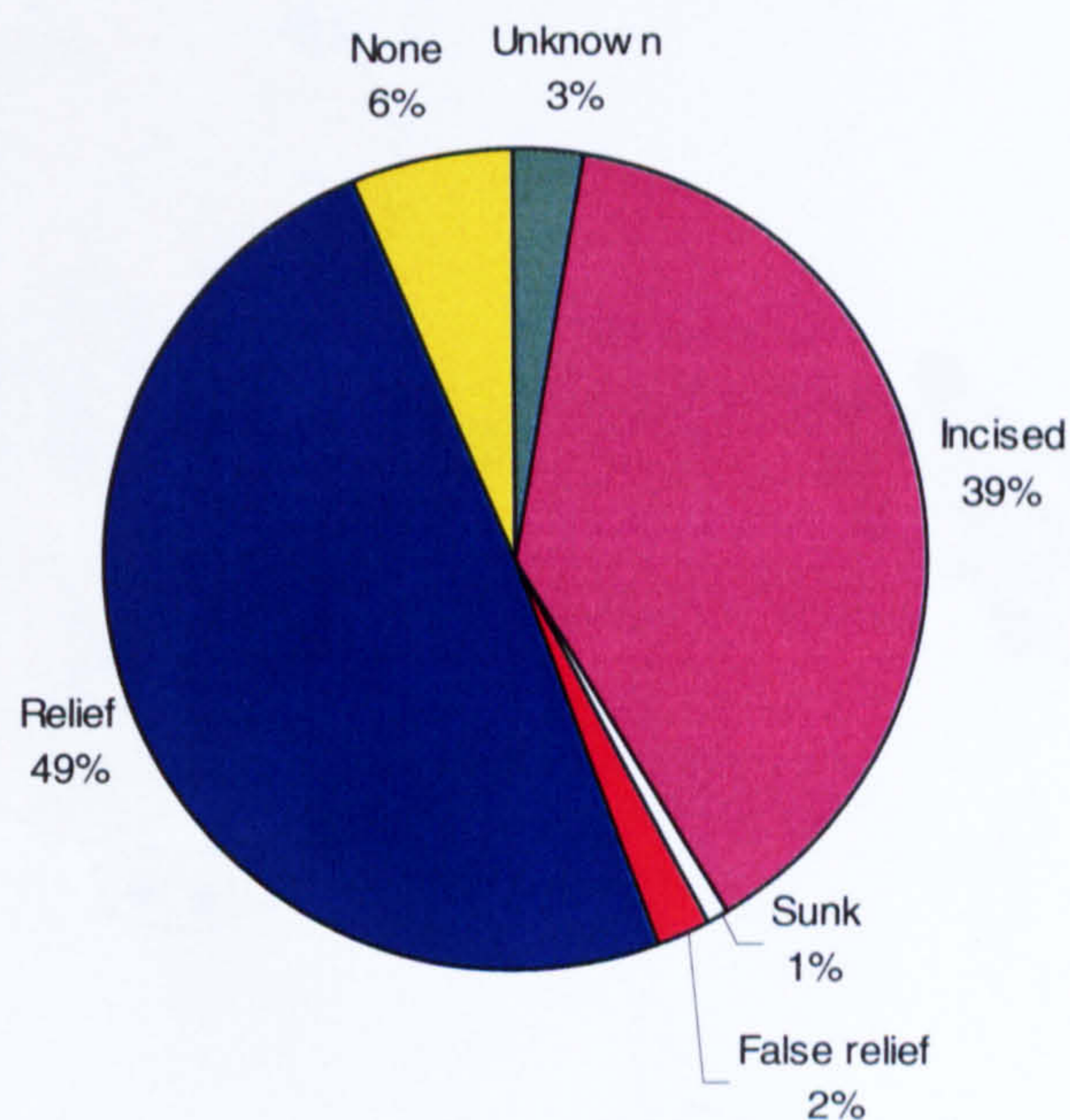


Figure 5.19: The main techniques used to carve monuments within the study area.

If the distributions of incised monuments, and those carved in relief, are mapped regardless of other characteristics of monument form or decoration, distinct distributions do emerge (figures 5.20 and 5.21). Monuments carved using incised techniques only are found in their densest concentrations on the Isle of Man and the Machars peninsula. These monuments are found regularly dispersed through County Down and County Antrim, but are notably scarce in the eastern parts of the study area, particularly Cumbria. In contrast, monuments carved

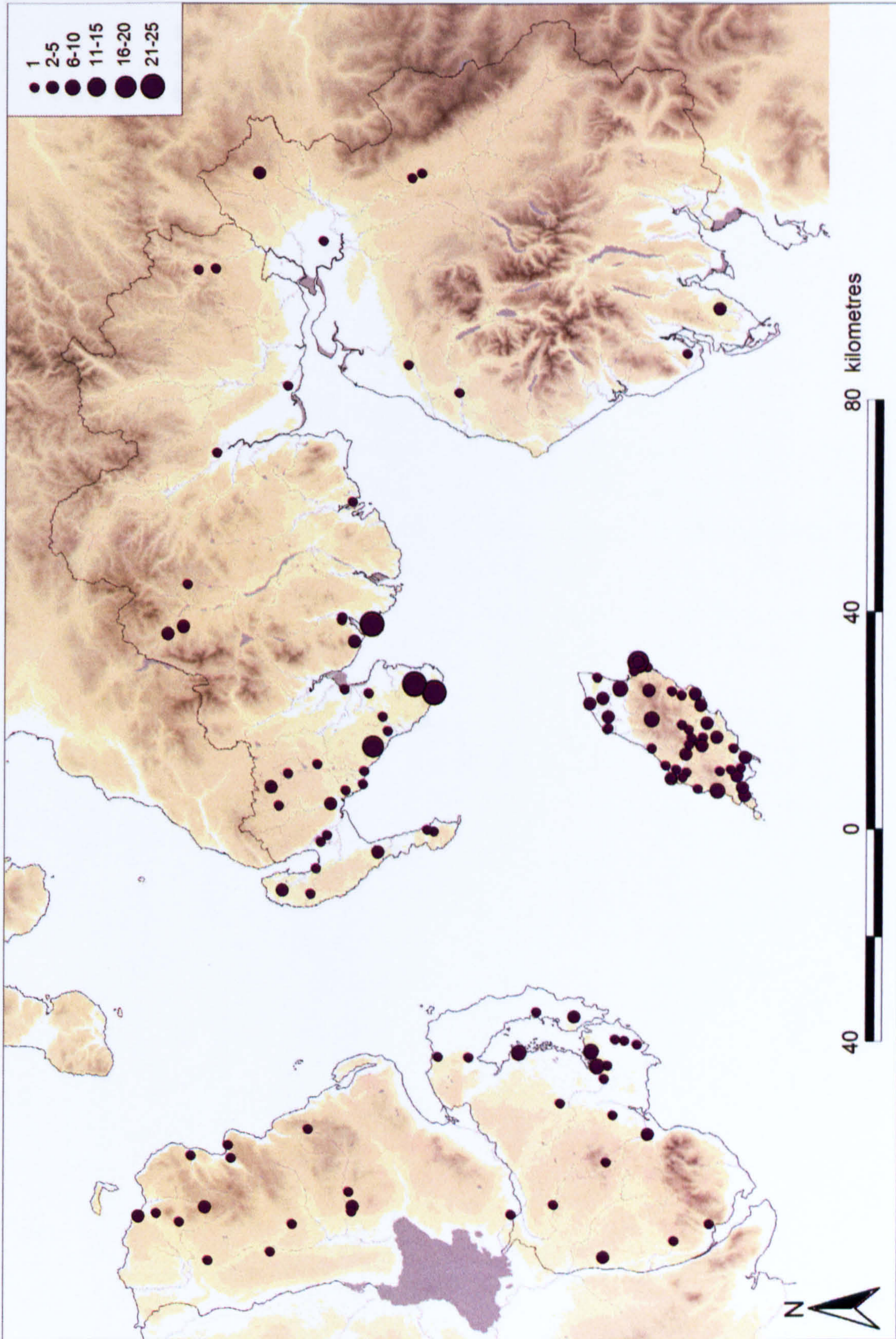


Figure 5.20: Frequency and distribution of incised monuments

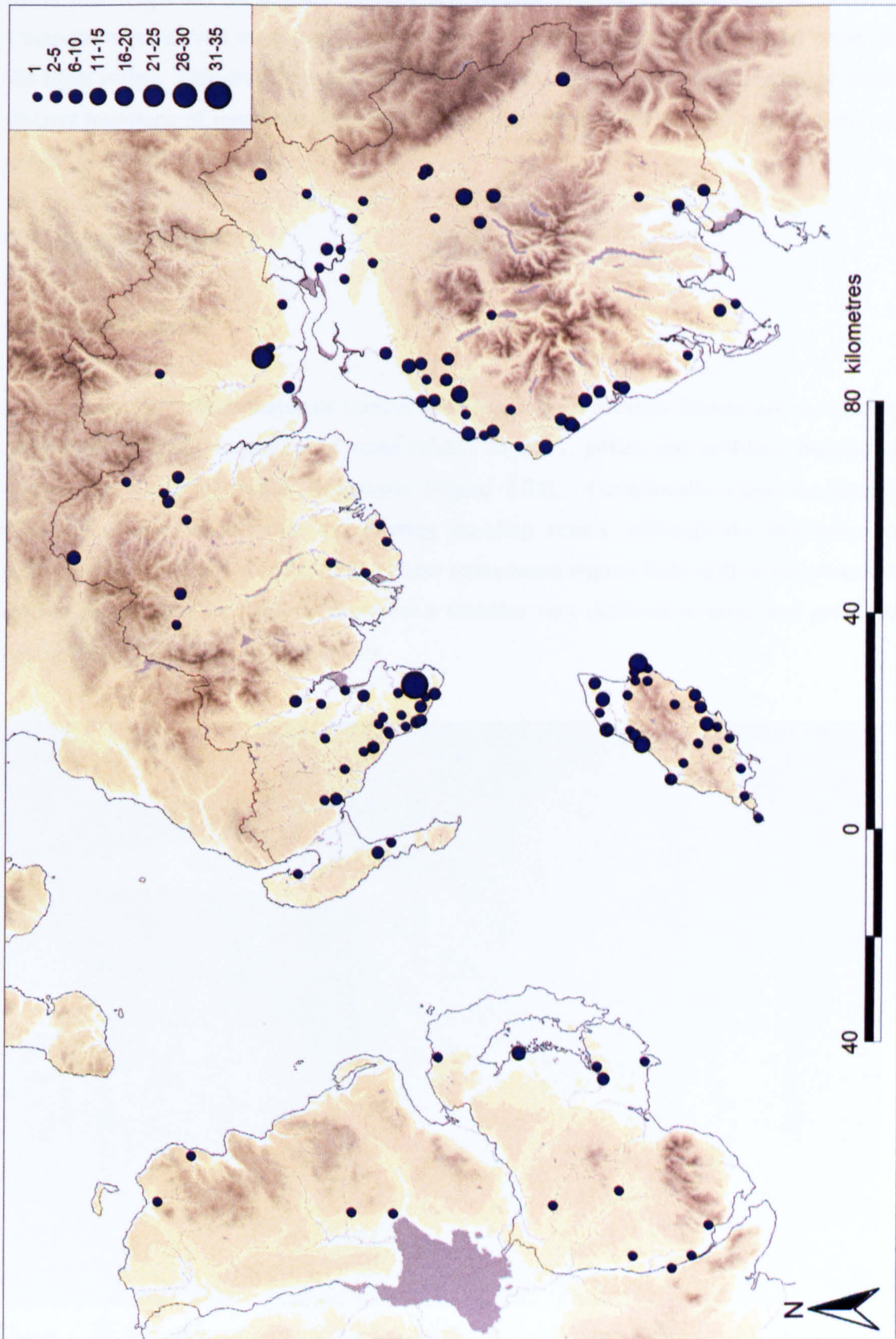


Figure 5.21: Frequency and distribution of relief carved monuments

primarily in relief are seen in similar distributions on Man and around Whithorn, but appear much less frequently in Ireland. Whilst few incised monuments have been observed in Cumbria, relief carved monuments show a strong distribution around the coastal plain and the Eden valley. This would suggest from the outset that techniques of carving might reflect distinct traditions of monumentality, and as such the monuments that fall within these two groups will be discussed in turn.

INCISED MONUMENTS

Cross-incised stones

The simplest form of monuments known from this area of western Britain are the crudely shaped or unshaped fragments of stone (slabs, boulders, pillars and pebbles), bearing an incised cross but no further decoration (figure 5.22). Occasionally these monuments represent crosses carved onto pre-existing standing stones, although the distinction is difficult to make (Hamlin 1982, 293). These monuments require little skill or investment to create, and as such are likely to represent a tradition very different to those that produced highly ornate, relief carved monuments.



Figure 5.22: Examples of cross-incised stones from Saul (County Down) and Lonan (Man)

Of 319 monuments with incised decoration, simple, cross-incised stones represent 218 monuments (68%), from 99 sites (figure 5.23). These monuments do appear to adhere to a significant distribution, with notable concentrations on the Machars peninsula, the Isle of Man and Strangford Lough. When contrasted with the overall distribution of early medieval sculpture in the area (see figure 5.1), there is a notable absence of these monuments from the coastal region of Cumbria and the Eden valley, apart from isolated examples from Addingham (Bailey 1960a), and Ruthwell (Radford 1950a, 158-160). It would appear that the use of these monuments represents a tradition practiced in the western parts of the study area, but not adopted by communities further east.

Traditionally, these stones have been interpreted as grave markers (Thomas 1967; 1971, 112-8), and this remains widely accepted. Though only a single example (from Ronaldsway Village, Isle of Man) can be interpreted as having been found *in situ* in a shrine (Neely 1940), twelve of these stones have been found reused in early medieval cemetery contexts, possibly representing reuse from earlier phases of burial. The occurrence of these monuments in significant numbers on excavated sites would support interpretation as grave markers within a burial ground.

Nancy Edwards (2001) has commented on a marked difference between inscribed stone monuments, which focus on the individual, and the much more anonymous monuments that these cross-incised stones represent (figure 5.23). Frequently associated with burial sites and local churches, these monuments are suggested to 'proclaim holy ground and represent the community of the Christian dead' (Edwards 2001, 33). This reflects a more communal attitude towards commemoration, where monuments no longer required the expressed identity of the individual, or the necessarily skilled scribes or craftsmen, and this has tentatively been suggested to equate with the spread of monastic ideals (Thomas 1971, 125).

Jane Hawkes (1999a) has considered the function that might have been played by simple stone monuments at the early medieval monastic site of Whitby. These simple stone crosses contrast strongly with the ornate sculpture from contemporary sites, and yet Hawkes (1999a, 413) states that 'symbolic statements were being made through more simplified motifs'. Whitby, in common with Lindisfarne and Hartlepool, demonstrates a preference for a more constrained repertoire of motifs, almost as a 'trademark'. In doing so, the community at Whitby 'was not simply constructing itself as a permanent feature in the landscape (geographically as well as politically), but was establishing itself as a focus of public veneration of the dead' (Hawkes 1999a, 417). Though the stone markers of western Britain

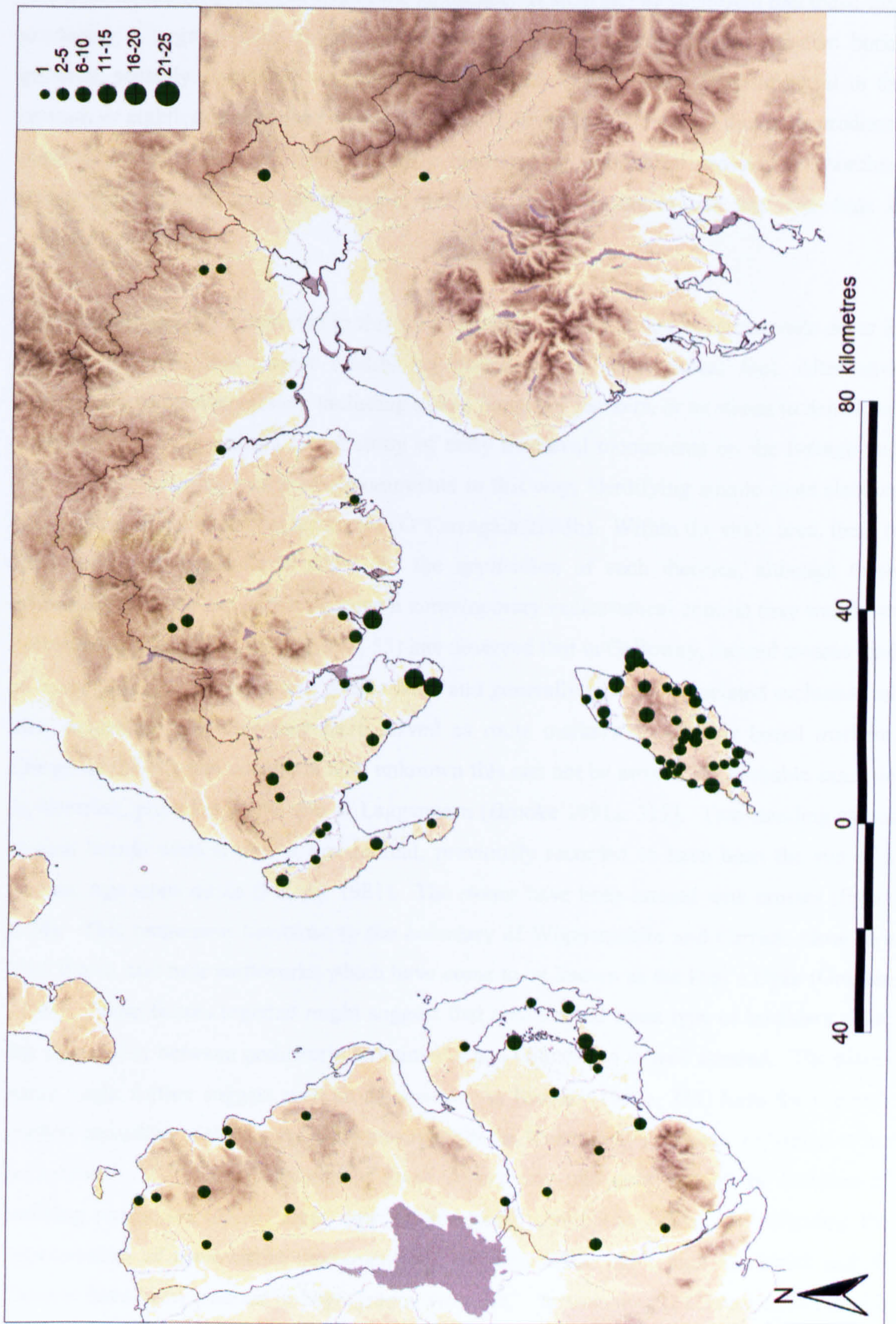


Figure 5.23: Frequency and distribution of cross incised stones

are in many cases much more crudely executed, they might collectively have been used to establish similar religious foci within the landscape. If so, it can be suggested that those sites producing a large number of cross-incised stones can be interpreted as Christian burial grounds, possibly associated with the documented move away from familial burial in the seventh or eighth centuries (see above, Chapter 4). Over half of the sites that have produced these monuments have evidence for early medieval or later burial grounds or churches, which may support such an assertion, although extrapolation of site use over time is necessarily tentative.

Not all stones can be interpreted in this way, however, and a number of monuments occur in isolated locations that cannot readily be interpreted as ecclesiastical foci. Alternative functions have been suggested, including use as boundary markers, or as stones to demarcate route ways. Ó'Carragáin's recent study of early medieval monuments on the Iveragh and Dingle peninsulas has interpreted monuments in this way, identifying simple cross slabs as the markers of ecclesiastical territories (Ó'Carragáin 2003b). Within the study area, there is little contextual evidence to allow for the application of such theories, although those monuments that do not appear to have a contemporary ecclesiastical context may well have served such a function. Craig (1991, 55) has observed that in Galloway, incised crosses tend to occur at higher altitudes, and poorer land, and generally have no associated ecclesiastical site, suggesting that they may have served as route markers or wayside burial markers, though as the original context is now unknown this can not be proved. A probable example is, however, provided by the site of Laggangarn (Brooke 1991a, 311). Two standing stones remain beside what is now a low mound, previously recorded to have been the site of a Bronze Age stone circle (Murray 1981). The stones have been incised with crosses (figure 5.24). This monument lies close to the boundary of Wigtownshire and Carrick, close to a Tarf Water, and near earthworks which have come to be known as the Deil's Dyke (Graham 1949). These factors together might suggest that area formed some type of boundary zone; the association between prehistoric monuments and boundaries is well attested. The place-name might further suggest such an association, as Brooke (1991a, 311) links the fifteenth century recording of the name *Lekkyngiorow* with the Welsh *llech-yn-gorau*, or 'stones at the boundaries'. The Christianisation of these stones may represent part of the tradition of marking routes and liminal areas with ecclesiastical symbolism, whilst also reflecting the appropriation of pre-existing monumentality (Hamlin 1982, 293); both St Patrick and St Samson have been credited in hagiography with the 'Christianising' of monuments through the carving of crosses. Also in the uplands of Dumfries and Galloway, located on the slopes above a glacial plain known as the Holm of Daltallochan, another 'isolated' cross-incised stone was identified at the base of a cairn (M'Diarmiud 1880, 283-4), which again might be

considered markers of some type.



Figure 5.24: Laggangarn standing stones

Possible markers of this type also occur in Northern Ireland, at sites of Dunteige, Drumaqueran, Drumeeny and Dromore, where monuments occur in elevated locations, and do not appear to be associated with any known settlements and may have served as markers within the wider landscape. At Dunteige the presence of the stone in close proximity to prehistoric burial cairn may again represent the imposition of Christianity in a landscape with pre-existing significance for surrounding communities. In discussing the significance of crosses, Moreland states that to appreciate their meaning, we must ‘place ourselves in a world where “aery demons” – the agents of satan, were an ever present reality, and in which the cross was one of the most potent weapons in the perpetual war conducted against them’ (Moreland 1999, 196; *cf* McEntire 1986, 348; Flint 1991, 156, 174). Boundaries have often been considered the ‘haunt of monsters, spirits and evil creatures’ (Semple 1998, 123), and the placement of ecclesiastical monuments in these locations would not only have demarcated boundaries, but also imposed a Christian ideology on the landscapes in which populations dwelt.

Harbison (1991, 192-5) has also considered the role of incised crosses in the marking of routeways, but in the context of pilgrimage. In particular, he suggests that the cross-of-arcs, found on monuments at Maughold and Whithorn, may have been associated with specific centres of pilgrimage, and the veneration of relics (Harbison 1991, 192). These motifs are

also found on stones at Saul (County Down), Drumsallagh (County Down) and Drumnacur (County Antrim), demonstrating the widespread adoption of this form, generally considered to be eighth century or earlier in date (Lionard 1961, 110-112; Hamlin 1972; Craig 1997b).

Incised crosses, with no further ornament, are found in the more static form of rock carvings at St Ninian's Cave, Wigtonshire, with forms that relate to those at Whithorn (Craig 1997a, 440). Although datable evidence from the site is rare, the site has long been suggested to form part of wider ecclesiastical landscape of the Machars peninsula, and would provide a suitable landing point for maritime transport from the west.

Although dating is difficult, it seems reasonable to conclude that the erection of simple, cross-incised stones would have represented the marking of new or existing religious foci, or the establishment of boundaries and routes, in a wider Christian landscape; a floruit in the between the seventh and ninth centuries is widely accepted. This may reflect a move towards Christian burial, and a communal Christian kinship, away from the secular familial ties evidenced in the earlier inscriptions (Petts 2003b, 206). The fact that this practice is not widely represented in Cumbria might indicate a differing form of Christian organisation in this region.

Decorated, cross-incised stones

Of those monuments decorated with incised techniques only, three are free-standing crosses, which due to their form belong to a different monument group. The remainder are slabs or fragments, incised with cross designs and bearing a variety of other designs (22 monuments). These more complex monuments required more time and investment than undecorated cross-incised stones, and might simply represent more sophisticated examples within this tradition; four examples are also inscribed. The monuments ascribed to this group have been dated both to the earlier, pre-Viking period, and to later centuries, and as such are difficult to interpret, particularly as evidence for context is lacking. However, their distribution is similar to the cross-incised stones, and occurrence on several of the same sites might indicate that they represent part of a continuing tradition of marking graves, significant point, or zones within ecclesiastical sites.

Incised stones

The remaining monuments carved using incised techniques do not have much bearing on the discussions of regional variation in monumentality, as they do not form a coherent group, and their function often remains unclear. Some have been seen as graffiti, or as trial pieces, and in some cases it seems that roughly incised, linear designs may not be ecclesiastical in nature, but represent gaming boards, such as the 'merrils' game known throughout England and the Isle of Man (Freke 2002). This group has few diagnostic features, and although individual monuments may be of interest within their respective contexts, they provide little further indication of ideological investment strategies; as such, they are not explored further

FALSE RELIEF

Kermode (1907) identified several monuments carved in 'false relief', with backgrounds pocked away to give the impression of relief carving, and saw them as an intermediary stage between incised and relief carving. Though the chronological implication of this technique is unclear, false relief can be seen to represent a 'half way' stage in terms of investment.

Fifteen monuments carved in false relief have been identified in the study area, comprising 12 slabs, two cross bases and a single 'rough cross' (figure 5.25). Apart from the rough cross, which bears carved symbols possibly indicative of St Anthony and St Paul (Harbison 1992, 30), and a cross base from Clonlea, all bear cross designs, most with no further ornamentation.

The simple cross slabs carved using this technique might again be seen as a continuation of the tradition of erecting simply carved markers, represented by cross-incised stones. The extra investment required to produce a cross in relief, might have been an indicator of status, or of new trends of carving. Of those with a known provenance, the majority appear to have originated on Christian centres; although small numbers make their distribution difficult to interpret, these stones appear confined to the same areas as simpler incised monuments, rather than representing a precursor to more elaborate relief carved monuments.

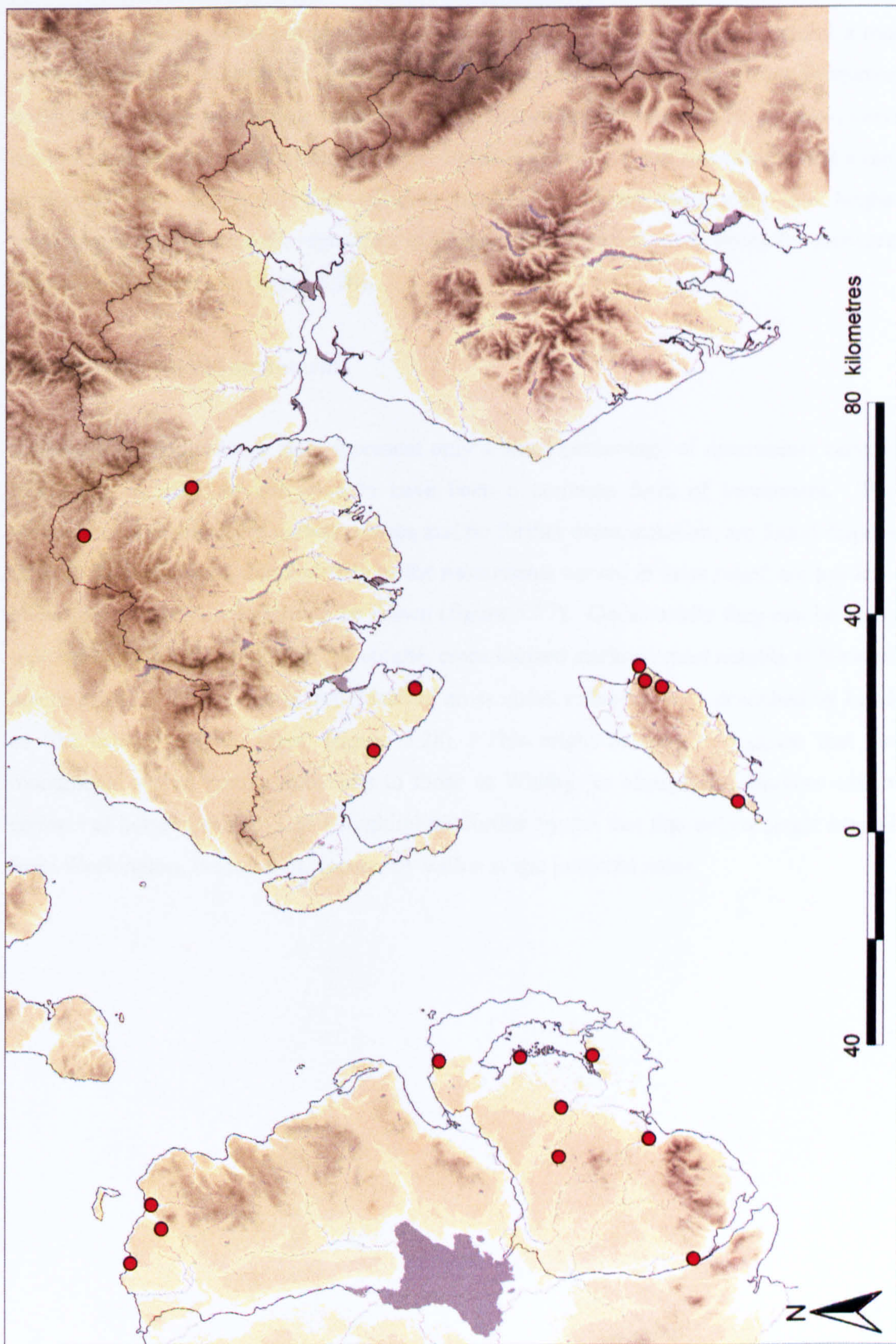


Figure 5.25: Monuments carved in false relief or sunk work

RELIEF CARVED MONUMENTS

Relief carved monuments comprise almost exactly half of the dataset, and exhibit a much wider range of monument styles, outlines and decoration. There are simple monuments within this group, which bear crosses and no further ornamentation (8% of relief carved monuments), but the vast majority are more ornately carved. These monuments take a range of forms, most commonly free standing crosses, decorated cross slabs and hogback monuments, and if mapped, regardless of date, certain regional preferences for monument form do seem to appear (figure 5.26).

Simple, relief carved monuments

Simple, undecorated cross slabs represent only a small percentage of monuments carved in relief, and as such do not seem to have been a common form of investment. These monuments, bearing relief carved crosses and no further ornamentation, are found dispersed through the study area, and similarly to the monuments carved in false relief, are too few to allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn (figure 5.27). Occasionally they can be seen to represent a regional variation of the simple, cross-incised markers, most notably at Nendrum, where many of the 16 simple, relief carved cross slabs, exhibit a form described by Lawlor as 'the usual Nendrum form' (figure 5.28). This might be seen to indicate that these monuments served similar functions to those at Whitby, as anonymous markers within a communal burial ground. This is highlighted further by the fact that only a single example, from Workington, is inscribed, apparently with a single personal name.

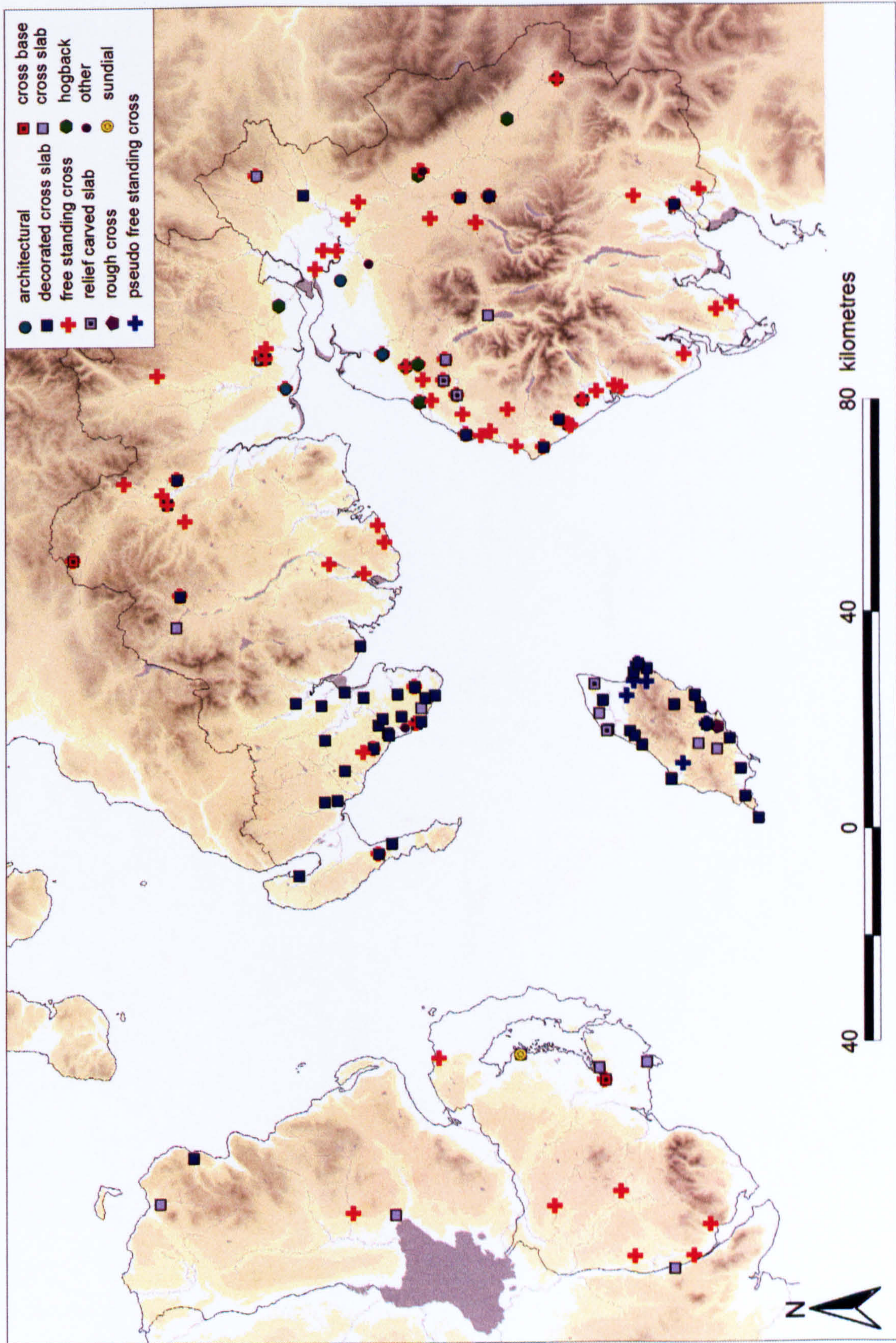


Figure 5.26: Relief carved monuments within the study area

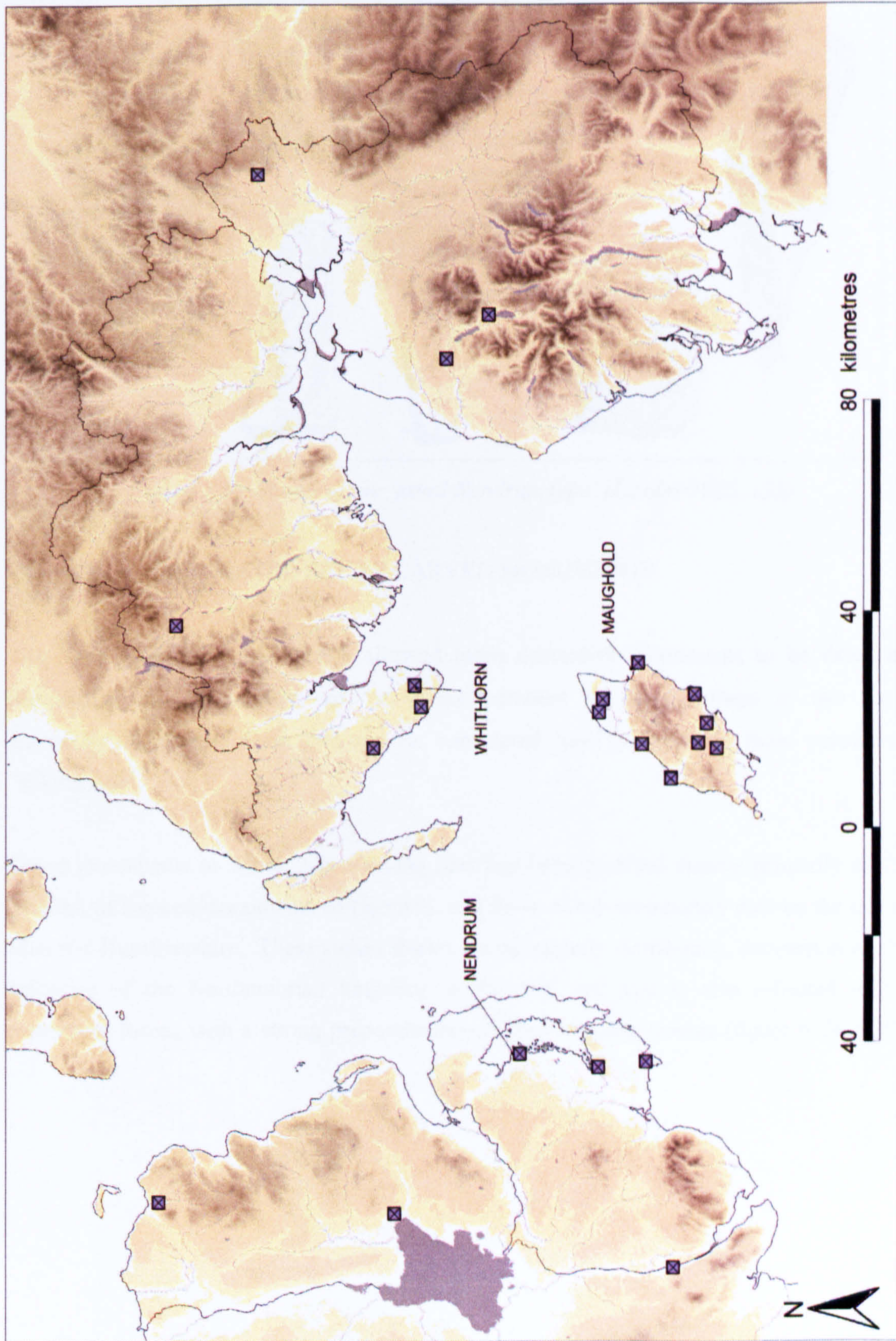


Figure 5.27: Simple relief carved cross slabs

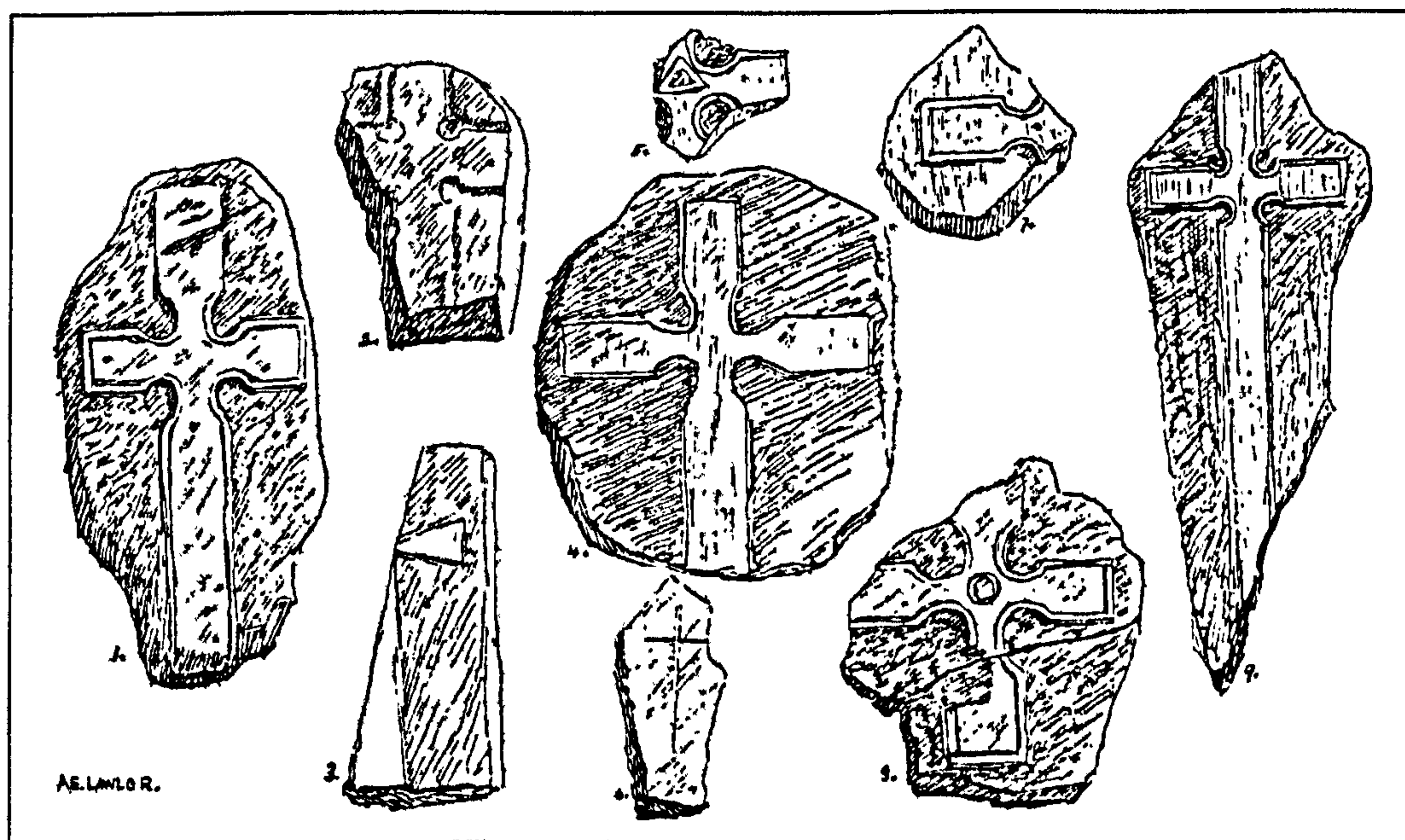


Figure 5.28: Stones of the 'usual Nendrum type' (Lawlor 1925, 131)

PRE-VIKING DECORATED RELIEF CARVED MONUMENTS

The styles and motifs used have allowed more decorative monuments to be dated art historically and stylistically, and it seems pertinent to discuss them in two main chronological groups, those that can be considered 'pre-Viking', and those considered 'Viking Age'.

Those monuments to which a pre-Viking date has been ascribed consist primarily of the Anglian influenced monuments of Cumbria, and those of a contemporary date on the Isle of Man and Dumfriesshire. These stones show a strong easterly distribution, demonstrating the influence of the Northumbrian kingdom to the east, and this is also reflected in the monument forms, with a strong preponderance of free-standing crosses (figure 5.29; 5.30).

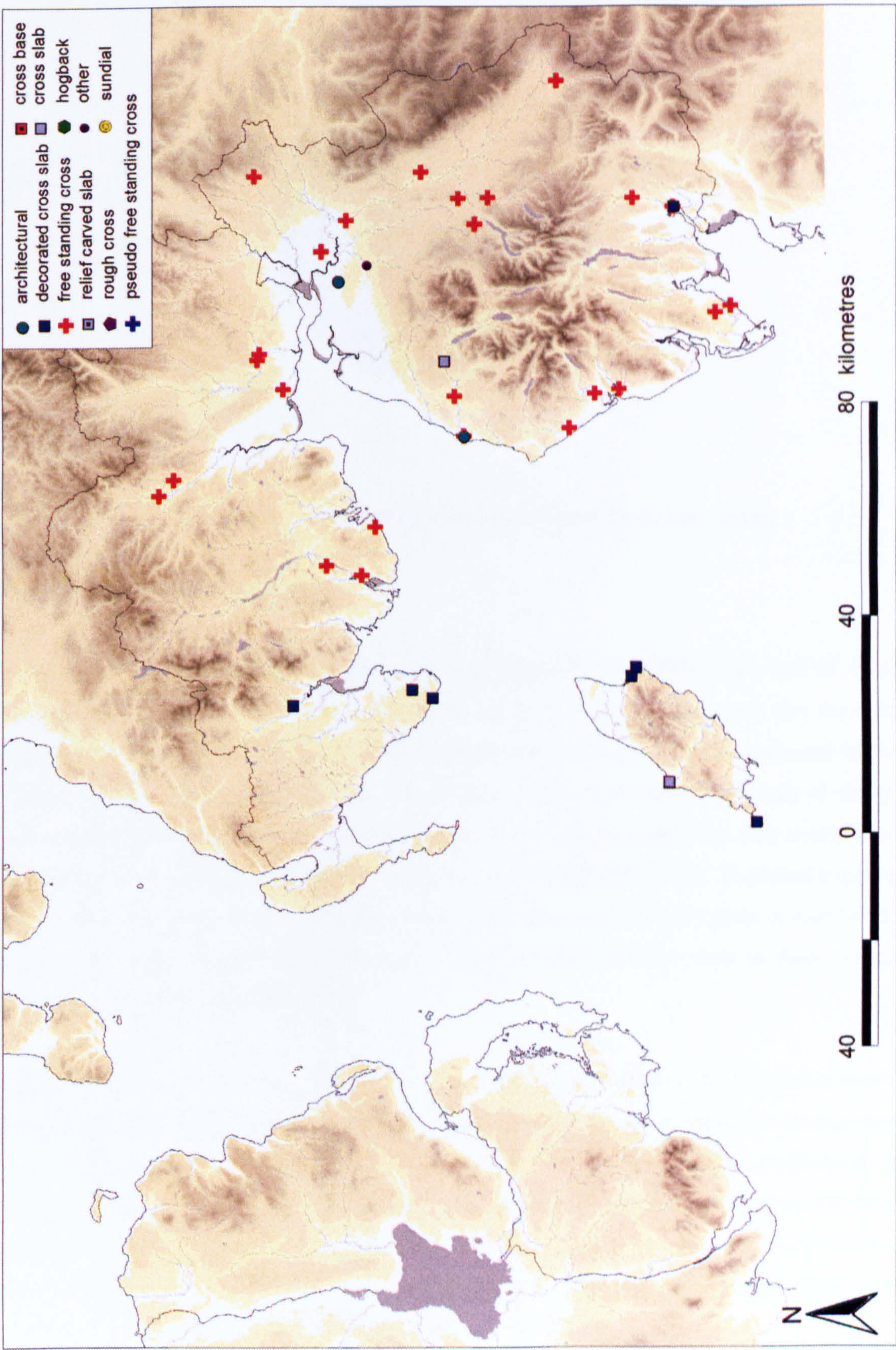


Figure 5.29: Pre-Viking, relief carved monuments: distribution

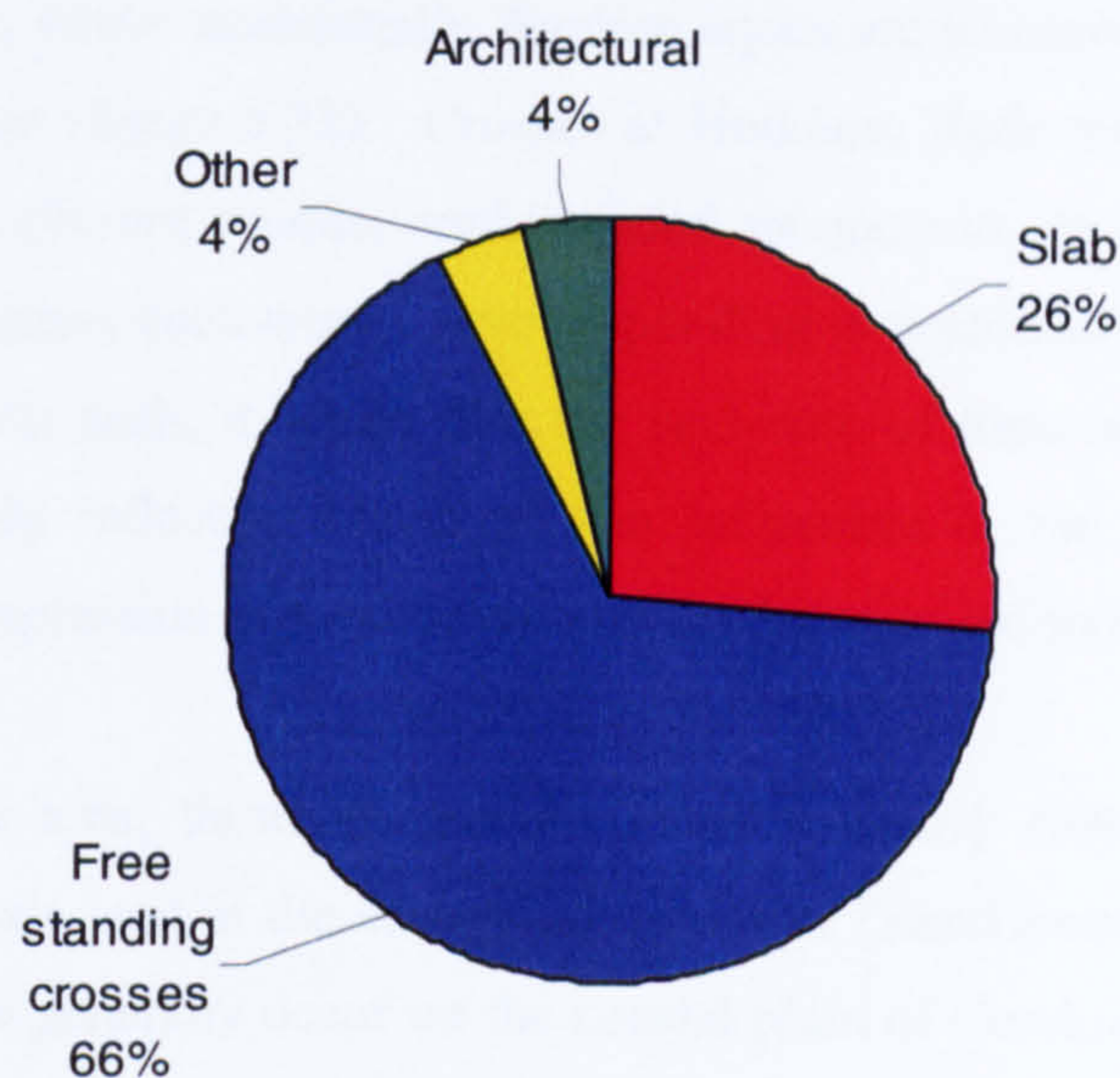


Figure 5.30: Pre-Viking, relief carved sculpture: Monument forms

Pre-Viking, free-standing crosses

Although cross forms are known to have been important in Christian art, and in stone carving, from an early date, it was not until the late seventh or eighth century that the free-standing cross form was developed. These monuments, thought to have originated in the Northumbrian monastic milieu of the east, display highly sophisticated schemes of design and meaning, and would have required an enormous investment to produce, best exemplified in the impressive crosses of Ruthwell and Bewcastle (Brown 1896, 212). Evidence suggests that these monuments would have been painted, and when adorned with glass or metalwork, would have made a much more dramatic impact on the landscape than in their current 'natural' form (Moreland 1999, 199).

Richard Bailey (1996) has emphasised the contemplative or meditative functions that would have been served by these monuments. Rather than being created for background decoration, these stones were intended to be 'lived', and would have been understood on many levels by different sectors of society. An enormous amount of scholarship has been directed towards the complex iconographic schemes on monuments such as the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses, highlighting the range of meanings that can be extracted from them (Cassidy 1992; Ó'Carragáin 1999; Orton 1999; Hawkes 2003).

The free-standing cross of Cumbria and Dumfriesshire demonstrate Northumbrian influence,

but also a considerable degree of innovation and localised style. This is demonstrated, for example, at Irton, where traditionally Anglian styles are incorporated in to a more localised style of decoration (figure 5.31). Crosses at Hoddum, Ruthwell and Bewcastle have each been shown to represent unique, sophisticated monuments, and in terms of iconography, message and function, each would have responded to a particular need or agenda (Hawkes 1999a, 211-2). As such, it seems that the sculpture of these more western communities, rather than simply reflecting Northumbrian influences in the west, was also used as a medium for the expression of local or community identity and individuality.

Within the study area, these monuments show a clearly eastern distribution, occurring throughout Cumbria, and in the easternmost parts of Dumfries and Galloway (figure 5.30). These monuments generally occur on the coastal plain of Cumbria, the Eden valley, and the Nith Valley, representing the main areas of settlement. The spread of these monuments would initially seem to reflect their dissemination from Northumbria, often associated with a political expansion westwards (Cramp 1995). It is notable however, that, although Whithorn is documented as a Northumbrian bishopric in the eighth century, diagnostically Anglian sculpture is scarce from the immediate vicinity, and the incised monuments identified actually show more Irish influence (Craig 1997a, 440-1). It might be that Anglian influence in this area was not so prevalent as is often assumed (see Chapter 8).



Figure 5.31: The free-standing cross at Irton, Cumbria

Monuments are not found in high numbers on individual sites during this period, emphasising still further the significance of the investment that would have been required to produce them. Of 23 sites, only 6 produced evidence for more than one free-standing monument, and the maximum of four from Hoddum (Knockhill summerhouse) might in reality reflect less than four monuments, classified separately due to their fragmentary state. The average number of early relief carved monuments per site is roughly 1.5. The small numbers, usually represented by a single surviving example, would have made these conspicuous markers within the landscape. It is readily accepted that these monuments are primarily found in association with major centres of ecclesiastical activity, loosely termed

monastic (Cambridge 1984; Bailey 1980, 81-2), and as such their influence might indicate the spread of the network of monastic centres into western Britain under the influence of the Northumbrian political leadership. The range of artistic influences evident demonstrates the wider networks of communication and interaction on which they were able to draw. Whether the establishment of these monuments represents Anglian political dominance, or affiliation of local rulers, has yet to be elucidated, but it might be suggested that the spread of this monument type in the eastern part of the study area only might reflect a real cultural or political boundary.

Pre-Viking, relief carved cross slabs

The majority of the relief carved slabs identified as pre-Viking are found on the Isle of Man, with the exception of cross slabs at Minnigaff and Isel, and the rune carved slabs from Whithorn and St Ninian's Cave, which in any case have been ascribed to the later part of this period. The remaining 10 monuments from the Isle of Man are found at three main foci on the Island, around Maughold, St Patrick's Isle, and the Calf of Man (see figure 5.30). The monastic centre at Maughold is attested in documentary sources, and also represented by the cross-incised monuments discussed above. It therefore seems that the carving of ornate monuments in this area would have served similar purposes to the free-standing crosses of Cumbria, as a means of demonstrating the status of the community, and providing ecclesiastical foci within the site and the surrounding landscape. At St Patrick's Isle, recent excavations have revealed an early ecclesiastical centre, with burials that date back to the tenth century and earlier (Freke 2002); the slabs from this site would fit well within this ecclesiastical context. The most sophisticated of the Early Manx monuments is, however, the one with the least secure context, found on the Calf of Man, off the southern tip of the island. The stone comprises a crucifixion plaque carved in high relief (here the problem of classification is again highlighted: a cross can be inferred, but is not carved), showing strong parallels with metalwork and carving of Ireland. Trench-Jellicoe (1985, 316) has discussed the significance of this monument, highlighting the drawbacks caused by poorly recorded context of the discovery. He tentatively suggests that the Irish influences evident in the carving of this monument might indicate that it would have been part of an Irish hermitage or chapel, founded from a major centre on the east coast of Ireland. The monuments on Maughold, in contrast, are much simpler, and area considered demonstrate links with northern and western Scotland, and particularly with Iona (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 16-21, 31). It seems, therefore, that the carving of relief monuments would have been a major undertaking during this period, represented by a low number of monuments on a dispersed group of sites. The nature of these sites and the role that they would have played within

society is open to debate, but it seems reasonable to conclude that the presence of sophisticated sculpture indicates the presence of a centre of some religious significance, education and patronage, which is reasonably termed monastic, during the pre-Viking period.

VIKING AGE SCULPTURE

From the late ninth century onwards, there is a notable proliferation in the number of sites producing relief carved monuments, and the number of monuments found on those sites. The widespread occurrence of Scandinavian styles, motifs and mythological scenes in Cumbria and the Isle of Man, and the introduction of the hogback monument, indicate an influx of new artistic ideas and influences during this period (Bailey 1980). This is not sufficient, however, to explain changes evident elsewhere, and it seems likely that these patterns reflect changes in the political and ecclesiastical organisation and relationships within the area as a whole. During this period, monuments were erected at a larger number of sites, and in slightly higher quantities, with an average of 2.7 monuments per site, compared to 1.5 of the pre-Viking relief carved monuments.

These relief carved monuments are represented by a variety of monument forms (figure 5.32), again most frequently attested by free-standing crosses, decorated cross slabs, and the new monument form found within the area, the hogback. The map of relief carved monuments of later date (also showing those of uncertain but likely later date), demonstrates that broad trends in monument type are instantly apparent (figure 5.33). The prevailing free-standing crosses of Cumbria and eastern Dumfriesshire contrast strongly with the decorated cross slabs of the Isle of Man and the Machars peninsula. On the Isle of Man, this can partly be attributed to geology, but it seems that regional styles are evident. Beyond broad patterns, regional schools of sculpture have been identified which demonstrate further regional trends, and these can be considered as part of the discussion of each monument form.

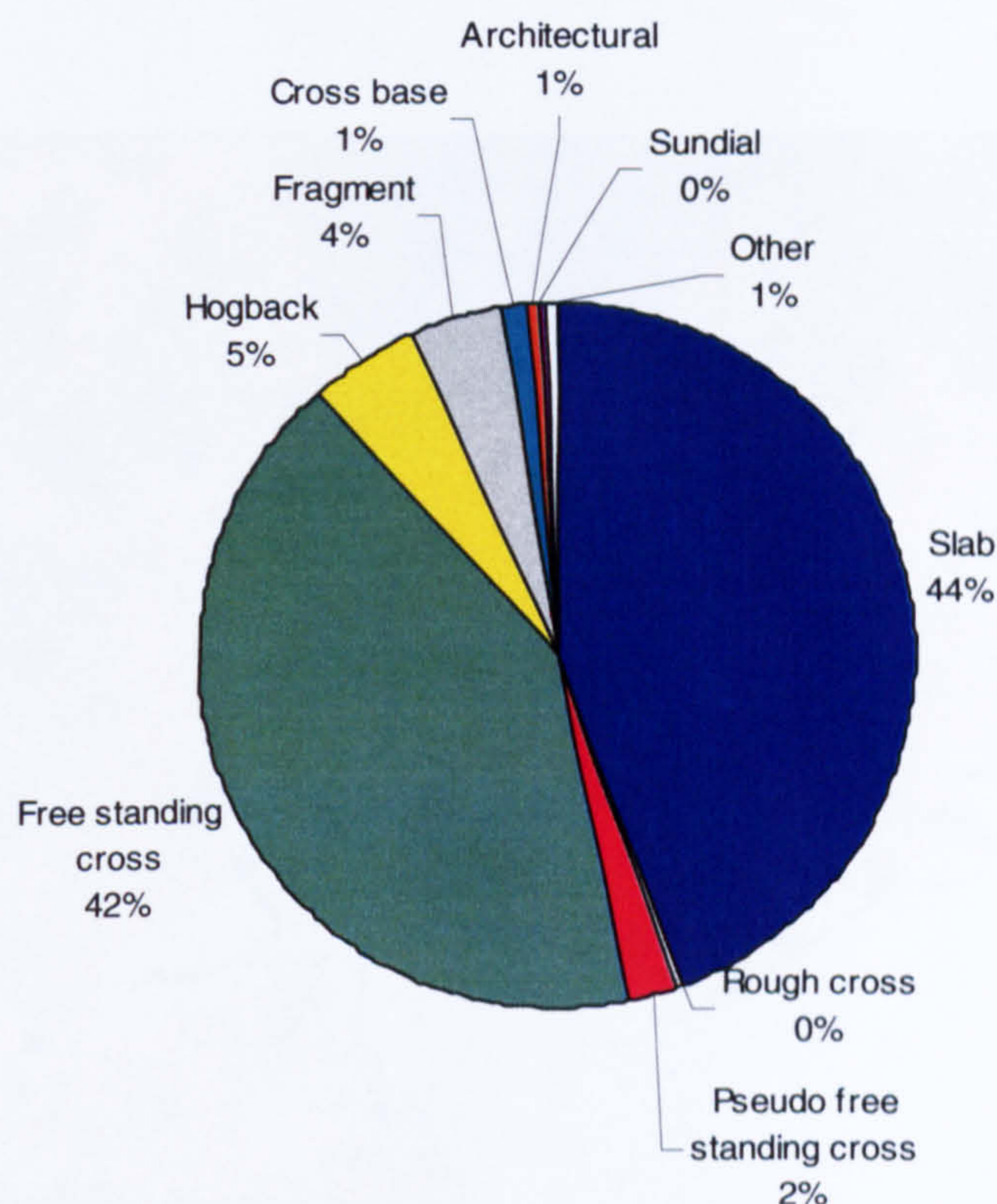


Figure 5.32: Monument forms dated to the Viking Age

Viking age free-standing crosses, and ‘pseudo-free standing crosses’

Free-standing crosses account for 98 of the monuments that have been ascribed to the Viking Age, and a much higher number if those of uncertain date are included. These monuments exhibit a similar distribution to the earlier examples, occurring in a primarily eastern area (figure 5.34). There are, however, a small number of examples from the Isle of Man, indicating a desire to produce such crosses, although inhibited by the natural geology. A free-standing cross identified at Braddan is carved from a sandstone not native to the vicinity in which it was found, and also highly reminiscent in style to monuments of the Beckermeth School of western Cumbria (Trench Jellicoe 1985, 67-73). It has been suggested, therefore, that this monument was actually imported from Cumbria, and that the second, closely related slate example from Braddan is Manx-carved emulation of the same form (figure 5.35). Trench Jellicoe has also identified a group of ‘pseudo-free standing crosses’, which are slabs designed to emulate the free-standing crosses, but that are not quite free-standing. This would seem to represent a compromise between intended monument form (though speculation on intent must be tentative), and geology.

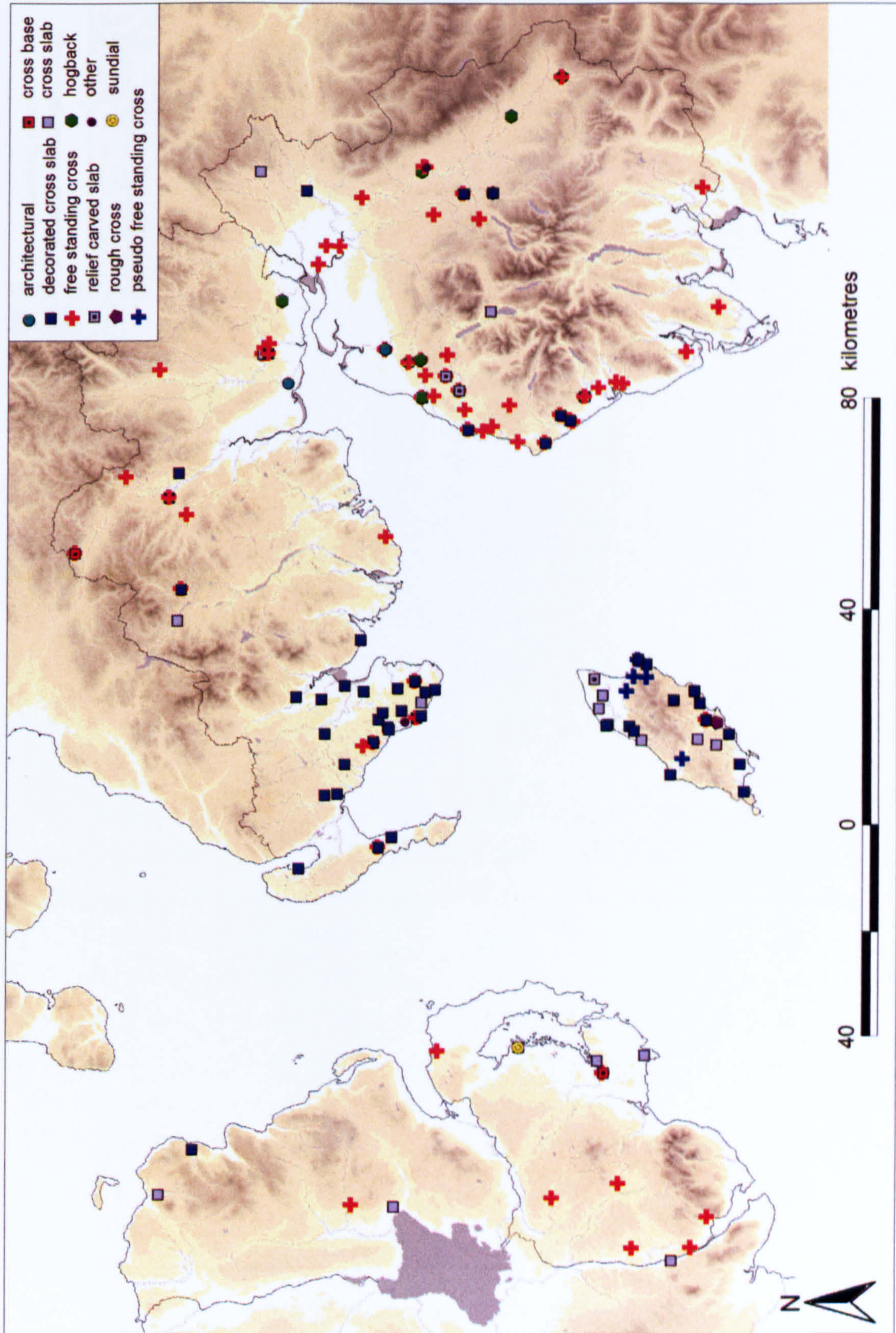


Figure 5.33: Later relief carved monument forms

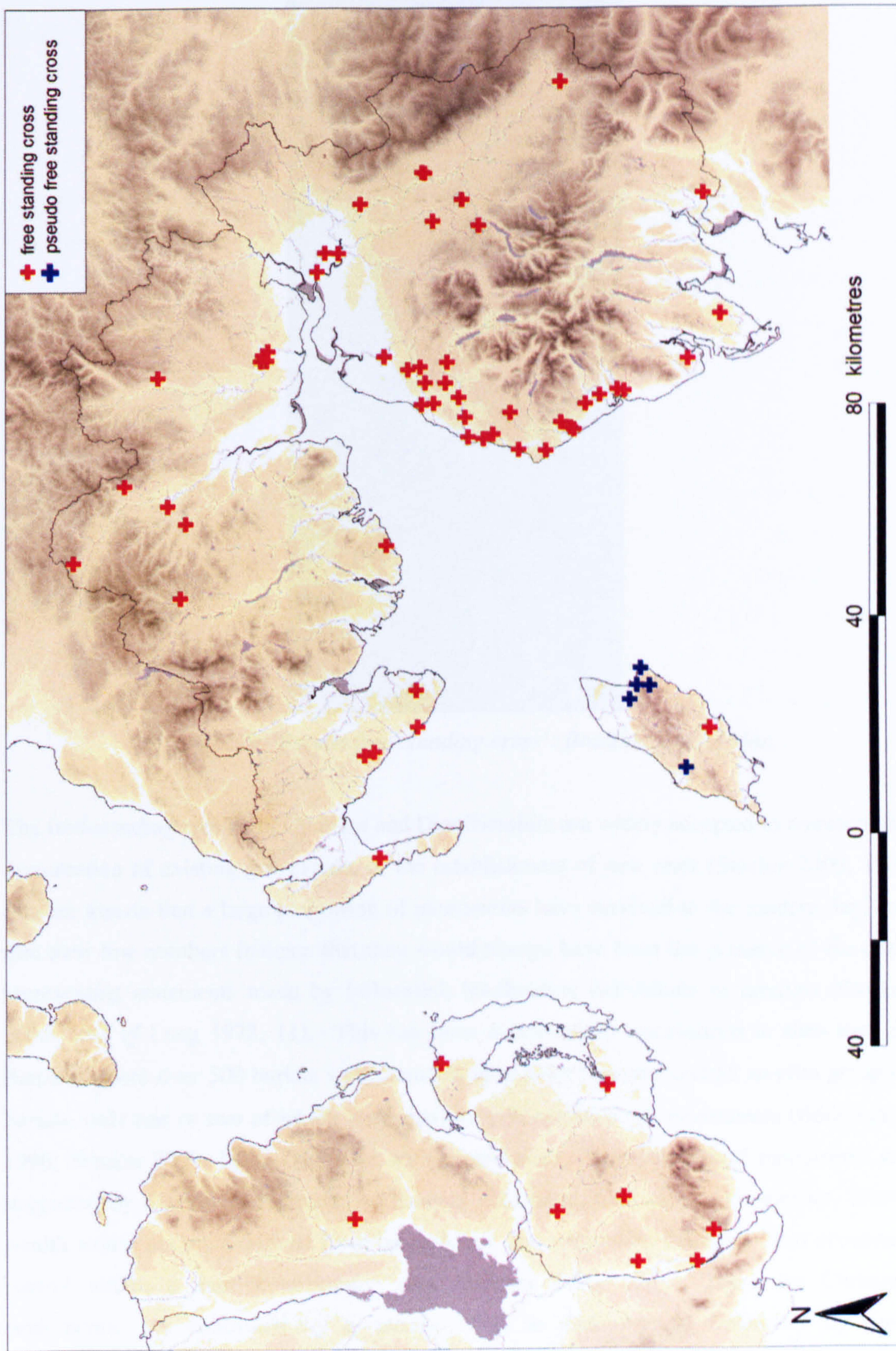


Figure 5.34: Later and possibly later free-standing and pseudo free-standing crosses



Figure 5.35: 'Pseudo free-standing cross': Braddan, Isle of Man

The free-standing crosses of Cumbria and Dumfriesshire are widely accepted to represent the demarcation of existing graveyards, or the establishment of new ones (Stocker 2000, 180). Stocker asserts that a large proportion of monuments have survived to the modern day, and that their low numbers indicate that they would always have been the preserve of the elite, representing statements made by influential, landholding individuals or families (Stocker 2000, 180; *cf* Lang 1978, 11). This has been supported by excavations at sites such as Raunds, where over 500 burials were found to have been focussed around an elite group of burials, only one or two of which were marked with carved stone monuments (Boddington 1996; Stocker 2000, 182). The sites with a particularly large number of monuments are suggested by Stocker to represent settlements with large, mercantile communities, whose wealth would not have derived from landholding, and who could therefore exert economic control within a more concentrated area (Stocker 2000, 189). These are Christian monuments, but controlled by a secular elite, as demonstrated frequently by their iconography (Cramp 1982, 12) and their inscriptions (see above). Though often discussed in 'Viking' terms, the art belays a more integrated tradition; less than 10% of the artistic motifs are considered to be purely Scandinavian, and a degree of continuity of artwork and form

from the pre-existing traditions is evident (Bailey 1985b, 55-6). The proliferation of monuments is seen to derive from a catalyst provided by two cultures in contact (Sidebottom 2000, 232-3).

Within the free-standing crosses of Cumbria, Bailey and Cramp (1988) have identified two schools of carving, termed the 'Beckermest School' and the 'Spiral Scroll school'. These schools, characterised by shared characteristics of motifs and styles, are discussed in detail in the *Corpus*, and this will not be repeated. The spiral scroll school is primarily represented around the coastal plain of Cumbria, with an anomalous outlier at Addingham (figure 5.36). Sculptural schools identified in the Midlands have been found to correspond to political boundaries of secular society; those identified in the study are might therefore be considered to represent real political divisions (Sidebottom 2000, 28; cf Cramp 1977).

A particular group of monuments at Gosforth have been linked as the work of a 'Gosforth Master' (Bailey 2000). The use of pagan Norse mythological scenes within a Christian context is a major element of many of the design schemes of these monuments, which have been dated to the mid-tenth century (Bailey and Lang 1975; Bailey 2000, 18). These monuments are considered to represent 'a local dynasty, controlling an important routeway, ...intent on visually establishing its identity by reference to Scandinavian based narratives' (Bailey 2000, 18). The use of pagan iconography is considered to demonstrate a degree of 'encoding' of Christian messages, using a world view that would have been familiar to a northern European culture (Russell 1994; Stone 1999).

There appears to have been less of a proliferation of monuments in the eastern part of Dumfriesshire, though Craig has identified smaller regional groups, and the tastes and trends that they exhibit (Craig 1991). He observes a shift from the Anglian group of sculptured stones at Hoddum, towards a second group around Thornhill to the northwest. These crosses, at Boatford, Glencairn, Closeburn and Durrisdeer share characteristics both with the earlier group, and with a later group of monuments higher up the Nith Valley. This would indicate some groupings, though not the same as the 'schools' evidenced in the western Cumbria, the Eden Valley, and amongst the slabs of the Isle of Man and Whithorn (see below).

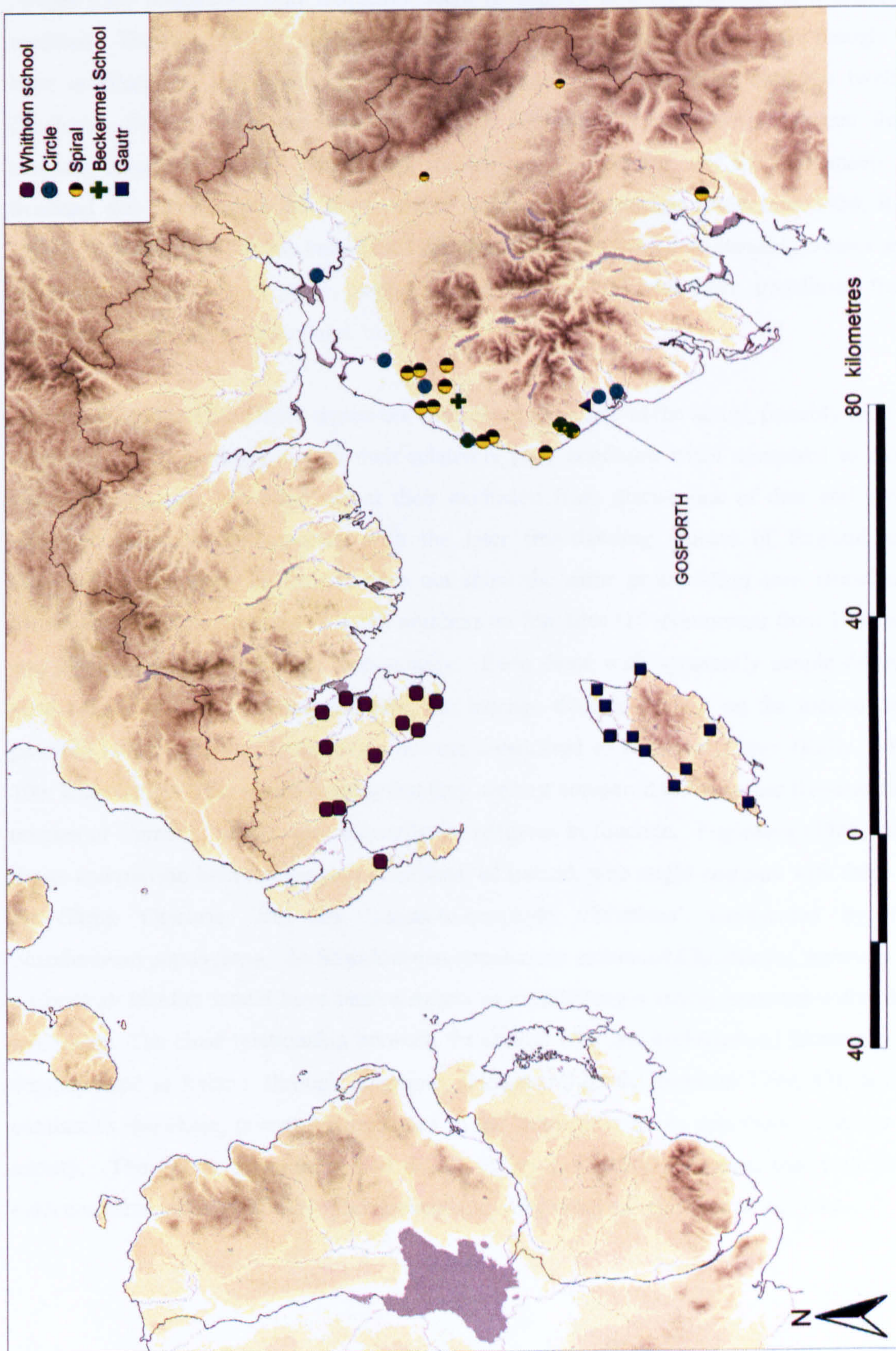


Figure 5.36: Schools of sculpture within the study area

There is also a marked preference for free-standing crosses in Counties Down and Antrim, though their distribution and frequency seem to suggest that they belong to a different tradition. The free-standing crosses of Ireland, often termed 'high crosses', are thought to have originated in the eighth century, and continued to be produced until the twelfth (Harbison 1979). Their development remains debated; the relationship between free-standing crosses of Ireland, pre-existing incised cross decoration, and the monuments of Scotland and Northumbria has been subject to previous discussion (Stevenson 1956; Roe 1965). Edwards (1985b) has considered the relationship between free-standing crosses and techniques of building in stone, suggesting that both would have been transferred from Northumbria, possibly via Pictland, to Ireland.

The examples from the Ulster region are considered to be late in the series, possibly erected around the tenth century, though their relatively poor condition when compared to more southerly examples has often meant their exclusion from discussions of date and style. Although possibly contemporary with the later free-standing crosses of England and Scotland, the sculpture in Ireland does not show the same proliferation seen elsewhere. Monuments continue to occur in small numbers on few sites (14 monuments from 10 sites), and display primarily religious iconography. Even those with apparently simple designs have been shown to be more complex; the lozenge designs evident on the incised, and possibly relatively early, Kilbroney cross are considered to represent Christ (Kelly 1991, 109; King 2003). This would suggest that they are best compared to the earlier free-standing crosses of Cumbria, which were primarily for religious in function. Fuglesang (1986, 203) draws comparison between the 'old Christians' of Ireland, who might compare with those of pre-Viking Cumbria, and the 'pagan-to-neophyte Christians' represented by the Scandinavian populations. As Scandinavian populations embraced Christianity, assertion of a Christian identity would have been a means of establishing a strong presence within the landscape. The close relationship between the secular elite and ecclesiastical hierarchies is demonstrated in Ireland, through epigraphy (Fitzpatrick 1998; Harbison 1999, 43), but in contrast to elsewhere, investment remained in the hands of only the uppermost echelons of society. The artistic repertoires also differ; Bailey (1985a) has stressed that very little evidence for sculptural links between Ireland and other areas can be made at this time.

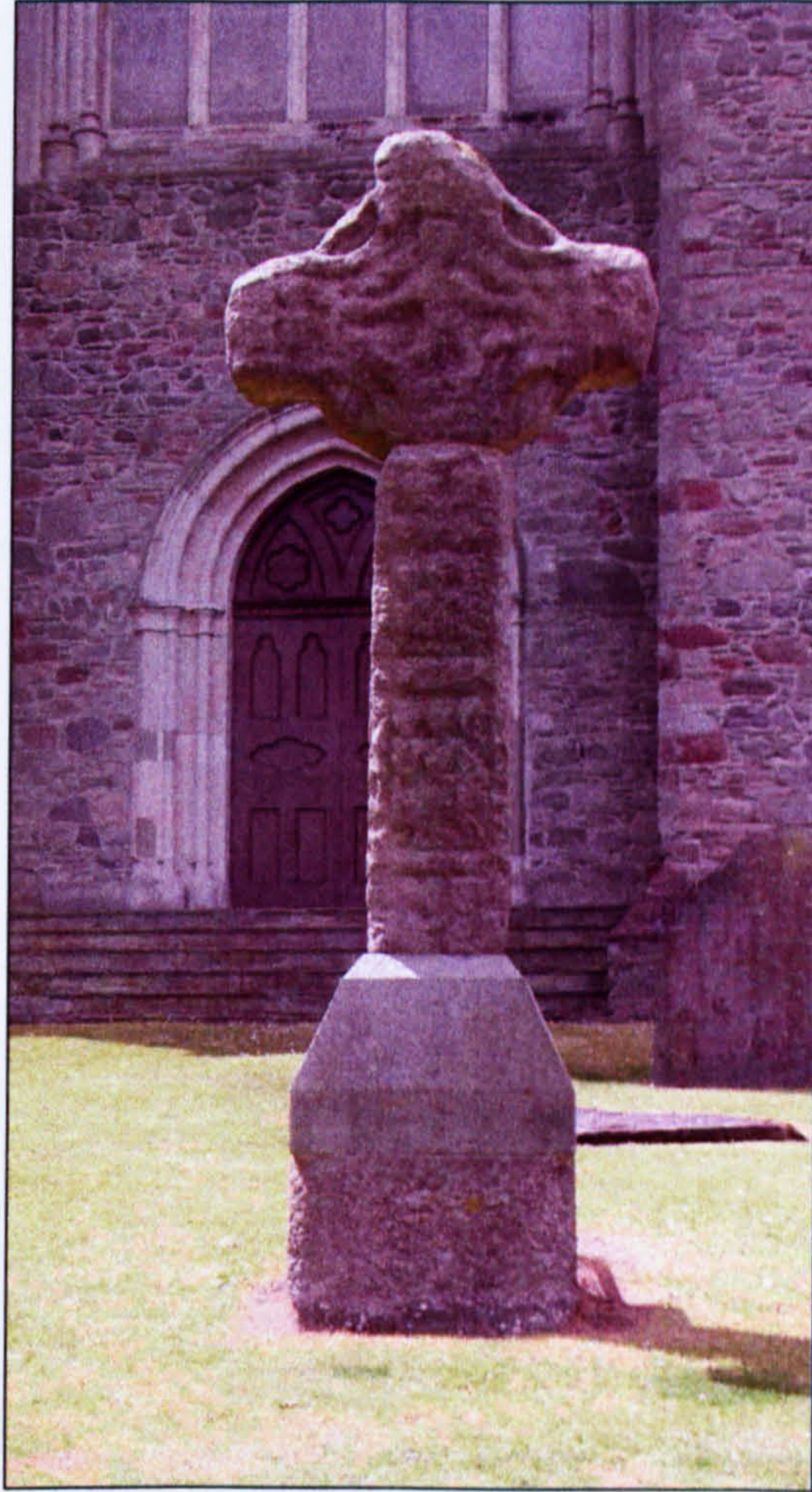


Figure 5.37: The high cross at Downpatrick, showing figural carving

Viking Age, decorated cross slabs

Decorated cross slabs comprise 88 of the monuments dated to the Viking Age (almost doubled if those of uncertain date are included) and seem to have had a similar function to free-standing crosses (*cf* Ritchie 1995). Cross slabs, carved in relief and decorated with abstract and other ornament, are found in their largest quantities on the Machars peninsula and the Isle of Man, two areas which demonstrate distinct traditions of carving, and which might be interpreted in different ways (figure 5.38).

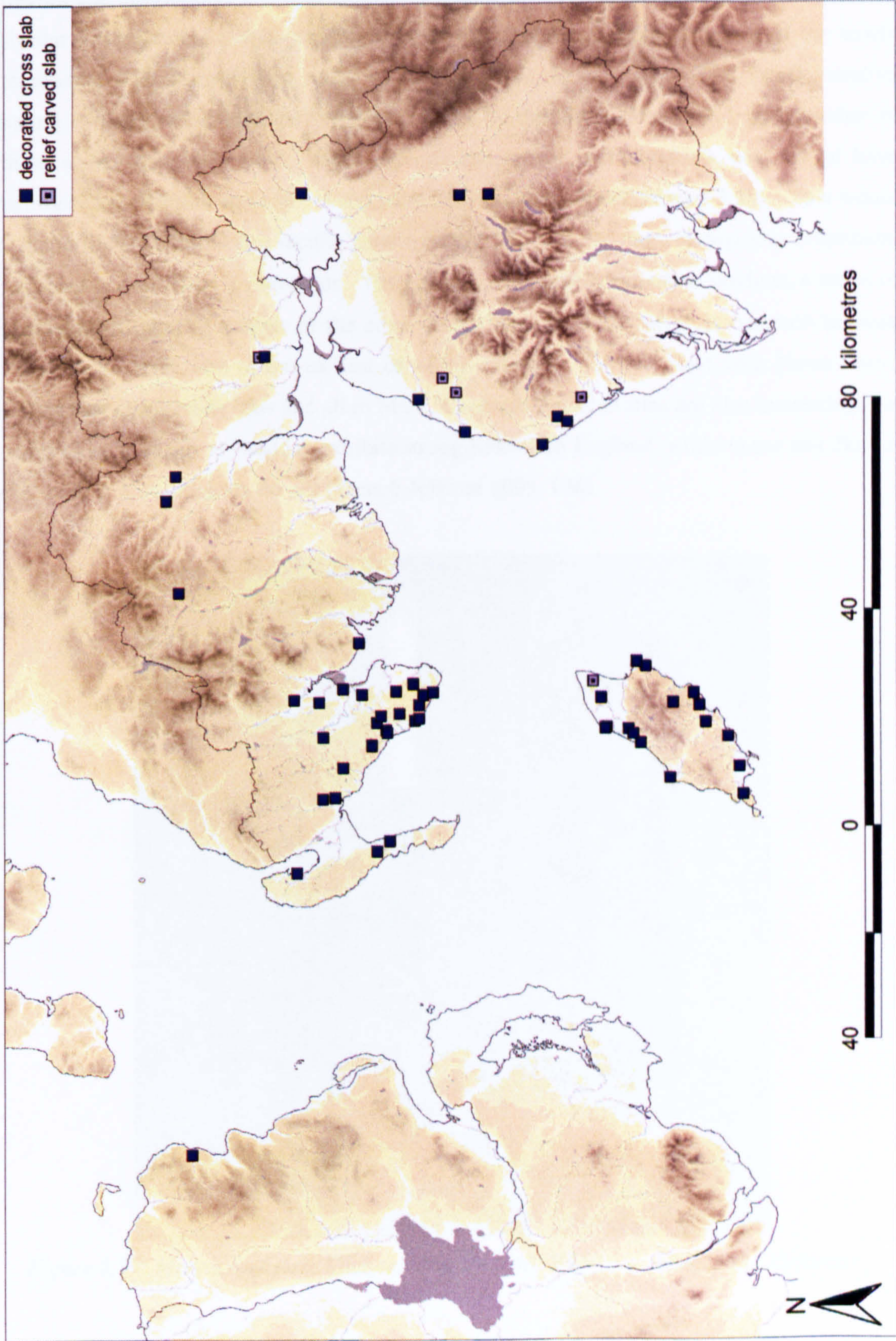


Figure 5.38: Later relief carved slabs

Cross slabs on the Isle of Man for the most part depict Scandinavian elements of style, themes and inscriptions, and their frequency and distribution might indicate that they served similar functions to the free-standing crosses of Cumbria, as status symbols of the newly established elite, marking new religious centres within the landscape. The commemorative nature of these monuments is further supported by the inscriptions found on a number of these slabs, discussed above, which provide the names of individuals who would have patronised the stones, and who would have been commemorated (figure 5.39). This would seem to illustrate their more secular nature, contrasting with the more anonymous investment reflected in pre-Viking monuments. Though regional schools are not so obvious, a series of characteristics and treatments of the cross design have been identified as common to these Manx monuments, one of the earliest of which might be that inscribed with Norse runes, stating that Gautr made 'this and all in Man'. Contrasts between sites are also interesting; the series of monuments at Braddan exhibits strong links with England, whilst those just 2km to the south at Kirk Michael, do not (Trench-Jellicoe 1999, 196).



Figure 5.39: Manx cross slab, Michael Figure 5.40: Whithorn school slab, Kirkinner

In contrast, slabs on the Machars peninsula do not demonstrate the same levels of Scandinavian influence, which, with other archaeological and historical factors, has led scholars to question the level of Scandinavian settlement in Galloway (Cowan 1991).

Although motifs are shared between the areas of Cumbria and Galloway, these cannot gloss over the fact that two very distinct sculptural traditions are represented (Bailey 1985a, 26). A strong regional school is evident in southwest Scotland termed the 'Whithorn school'. The disc headed cross slabs of the Whithorn School are highly uniform in their shape, decoration and execution, and are found in a confined geographical region (figure 5.40). This might be equated with the same changes and factors occurring in Cumbria and the Isle of Man, but it is interesting to note the lack of Scandinavian characteristics. It is possible that the elite who influenced the implementation and spread of this school drew on different cultural influences, or alternatively, it may be that, whilst the ecclesiastical organisation of the area changed in the same way as other regions, with a proliferation of more local centres, the major influence continued to be the community at Whithorn, rather than a secular elite.

Hogbacks

Despite a decline in innovation amongst the relief carved monuments of this period, a degree of originality is reflected by the introduction of the hogback monument, distributed along the Eden valley and around the coastal plain of Cumbria (Lang 1984, 86; figures 5.41 and 5.42).



Figure 5.41: Gosforth hogbacks

Despite a strong Scandinavian influence on the Isle of Man, there is an absence of hogbacks in this area, considered by Smyth to represent the isolation of the island, but explained by Lang in geological terms (Smyth 1979, 272; Lang 1984, 90).

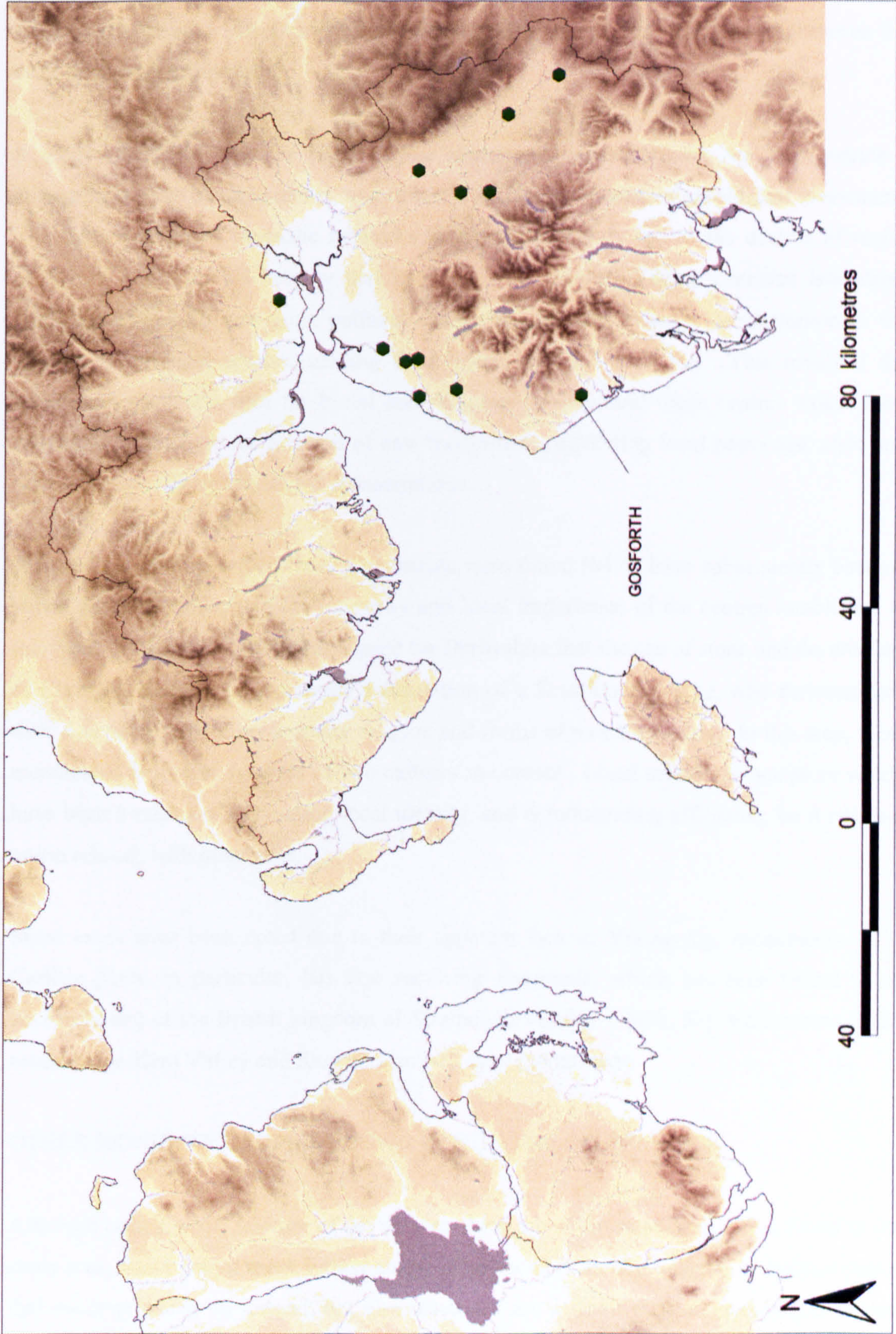


Figure 5.42: Hogbacks within the study area

Lang (1984) with other scholars (Ritchie 2003), interprets these monuments as the preserve of the elite, used primarily as grave markers. As such they would have served similar functions to the other relief carved monuments of this later period, with less emphasis on the cross as the dominant motif.

It seems, therefore, that the relief carved monuments of the Viking Age demonstrate a change in the use of monuments, and reflect a shift in the nature of ideological investment. The disintegration of monastic networks in the ninth century led to the decline of major centres of ecclesiastical activity that had dominated the pre-Viking Christian landscape. With the onset of a new elite, political change would have meant a secularisation in the control of religious centres, making them more localised in focus. This involved the establishment of new foci for burial and religious activity, and these centres would have provided an arena for the erection of new monuments, exhibiting local patronage, style and taste, occasionally overtly stated in inscriptions.

Many of the sites on which these monuments were found (64%) have subsequently become parish churches, indicating the longevity and local importance of the centres established at this time. Sidebottom (2000) has argued for Derbyshire that the use of stone and the erection of Christian monuments represents assimilation of a Scandinavian elite, who demonstrated their acceptance of the pre-existing religion and forms of monumentality. In this way, these monuments represent symbols of two cultures in contact. Local schools of sculpture would have been a means of expressing local identity, and demonstrating affiliation, be it political or kin related, with other sites.

Some areas have been noted due to their apparent lack of Viking-Age monuments. The Carlisle plain, in particular, has few surviving fragments, which has been linked to an encroachment of the British kingdom of Strathclyde (Bailey 1985b, 57), whilst areas to the south, in the Kent Valley and Kendal, also lack later monuments.

OTHER MONUMENT FORMS FOUND WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

Although only a small fraction of the dataset, there are other monument forms found in the study area, which might merit further study. Most notable are the *ballaun*, or *bulllaun* stones that occur primarily in Ireland, but also discussed are a small class of monuments termed 'rough crosses'.

Bullaun stones

The term *bullau*n comes from the Irish *bullán*, commonly referring to an artificial basin in a boulder or rock (Crozier and Rea 1940, 104). This term is usually applied to unshaped or roughly shaped stones with one or more hollows or cups carved into the upper surface (figure 5.43). These monuments represent a variety of geologies, and some stones (limestone, sandstone) seem to form suitable cups or hollows through natural weathering.



Figure 5.43: Bullauns at Aghalee (left) and St John's Point (right)

These monuments have frequently been associated with early medieval Christianity, and are often found on early ecclesiastical sites (Hamlin 1976). However, the nature of this association, their date and precise function, remain very vague; scholars seem content to ascribe an early date to them without discussing these issues further (Hurley 1982, 314; Swan 1983, 274; Bitel 1990, 51; Fitzpatrick 1998, 98). Harbison (1991) pessimistically sums up the state of knowledge: 'here I shall discuss them [*bullau*ns] in a little more detail, though without providing any adequate explanation for them – simply because there is none' (Harbison 1991, 223).

However, certain factors do suggest that an early medieval link is tenable for these stones. A single example from the study area is incised with a cross, which would suggest Christian significance at some date; a seventh to ninth century date is ventured due to links with cross-incised stones above. The stones are shown in later sources to be associated with saints, through miraculous stories, or through identification as saint's pillows, the marks of praying knees (Price 1959, 168; Harbison 1991, 223), or as possible baptismal fonts or stoups (Crozier and Rea 1940, 111). Crozier and Rea (1940, 111) suggest that, in the case of earthfast examples, they may have formed the focus for religious activity, and led to the establishment of Christian sites in a particular location. These stones are certainly found in

large numbers at a number of known sites of major significance, including Glendalough (Price 1959).

These stones are often seen, however, to have had a more domestic function, as mortars for grinding grain, which has led to scepticism over their ecclesiastical significance (Lecaille 1953). Two examples occur on Rathlin Island, one of which was still used for bruising cereals into the 1930s (Hewson 1938, 151). Price (1959, 187) suggests that they represent a method of food preparation brought to Ireland from Roman Britain by Christians missionaries or travellers; hence their occurrence on ecclesiastical sites. Such an explanation is, however simplistic, and it seems that other explanations for their significance can be sought.

Quernstones, also linked to grinding and grain, are known to have been of symbolic significance in the early medieval period (Campbell 1987, 112). Adomnán records a cross set in a millstone at Iona, whilst miraculous stories are associated with a millstone in Cogitosus's *Life of St Brigit*; several examples are known to have been incised with crosses (Campbell 1987, 112). Querns have been suggested to represent bread, and therefore one of the staples of life, or possibly the Eucharist: the Christian symbolism is clear. It is unattested, but possible, that a similar link can be made with *bulllauns* (Harbison 1991, 223), potentially arising in an early medieval context.

The spread of these monuments is predominantly Irish, with outliers in western Scotland (figure 5.44). Some 25 such stones occur in the study area, on 20 different sites. Six of these sites have produced other sculptural evidence, but the remainder have produced only *bulllauns* as evidence for the use of worked stone. It would appear, therefore, that these monuments represent a purely Irish phenomenon, but it seems possible that this can be attributed to an imbalance of recognition, and the lack of a suitable term to apply to such monuments outside Ireland. 'Hollowed stones' are mentioned in accounts of Manx archaeology; they are not further documented or discussed, but could be interpreted in a similar way. A 'carved boulder' published from Dailly (Ayrshire; Curle 1962, plate XV.6), had it been found in Ireland, would have been termed a *bulllaun*. In 1953, a paper was published on the 'stone basins' of western Scotland, which were considered domestic in use, but again could equally be reconsidered in the light of *bulllauns* (Lacaille 1953). The distribution map presented, therefore, may not reflect a real distribution, but a factor of scholarship and terminology; these stones merit further research across a much wider area.

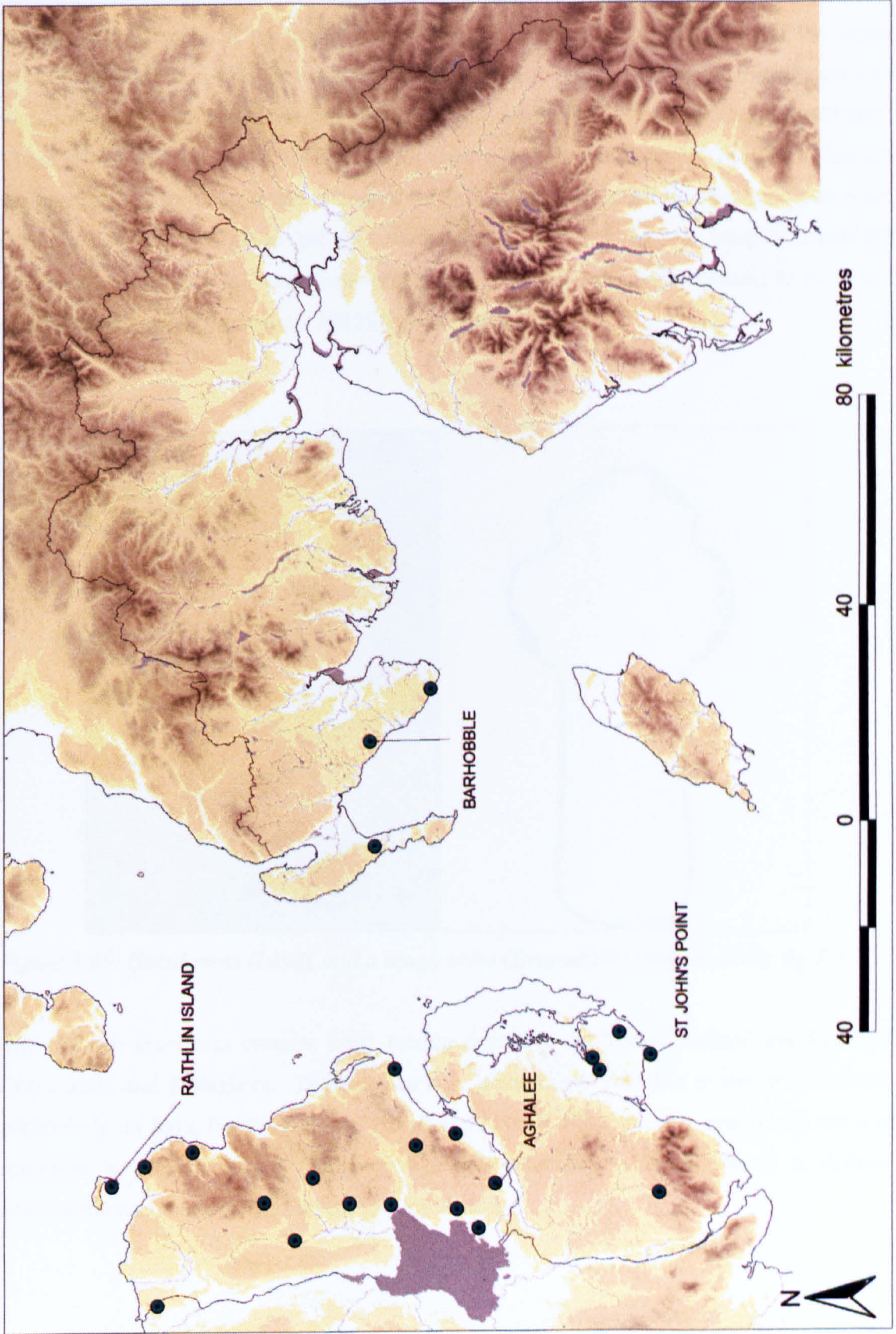


Figure 5.44: Distribution of bullaunms within the study area

Rough crosses

Rough crosses, some of which have already been noted, form a small part of the larger dataset, one that is not an homogenous group, but comprises a group of monuments that would seem to have served similar functions and represent the same levels of investment. These monuments do not demonstrate great artistic skill, and of the eight examples, four are undecorated. Two have some ornament incised on the faces, whilst one has some relief carving. Within this group are two main subsets; those which are roughly cruciform (following Hamlin 1976), and those with a more circular head, also referred to as 'holed stones' (Frazer 1896; Macalister 1922)(figures 5.45 and 5.46).

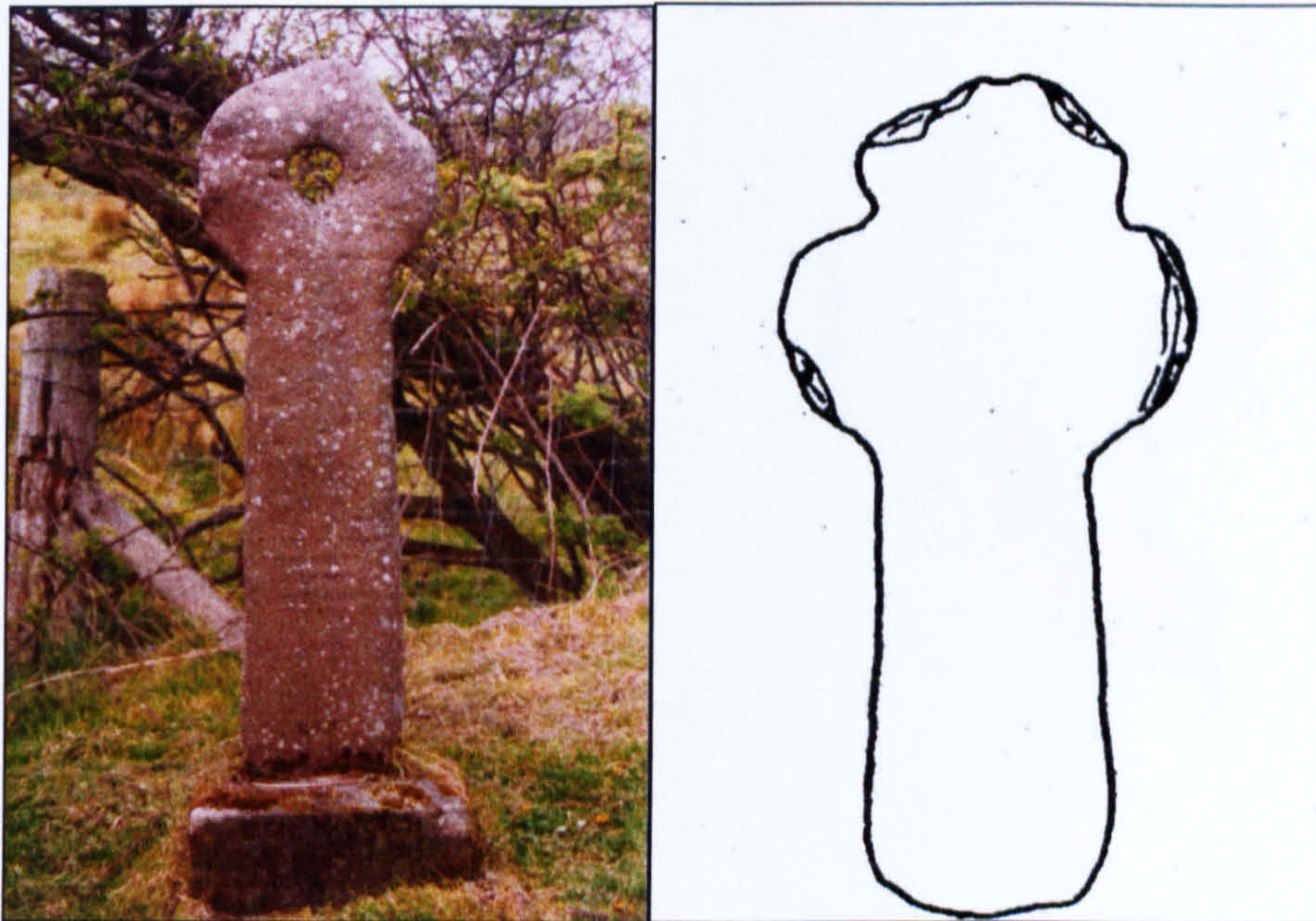


Figure 5.45: Holed cross (Layd), and a rough cross (Drumnakill) (Hamlin 1976, fig 22)

The roughly cruciform crosses, most readily described as 'rough crosses' are found at Drumnakill, and Tullaghore. These stones have a number of parallels in western Scotland, particularly on Iona, North Rona and Hougharry (Fisher 2001, 17, 56), and would seem to represent a low investment form of Christian monument, which shows a definite concentration in the northern parts of County Antrim.

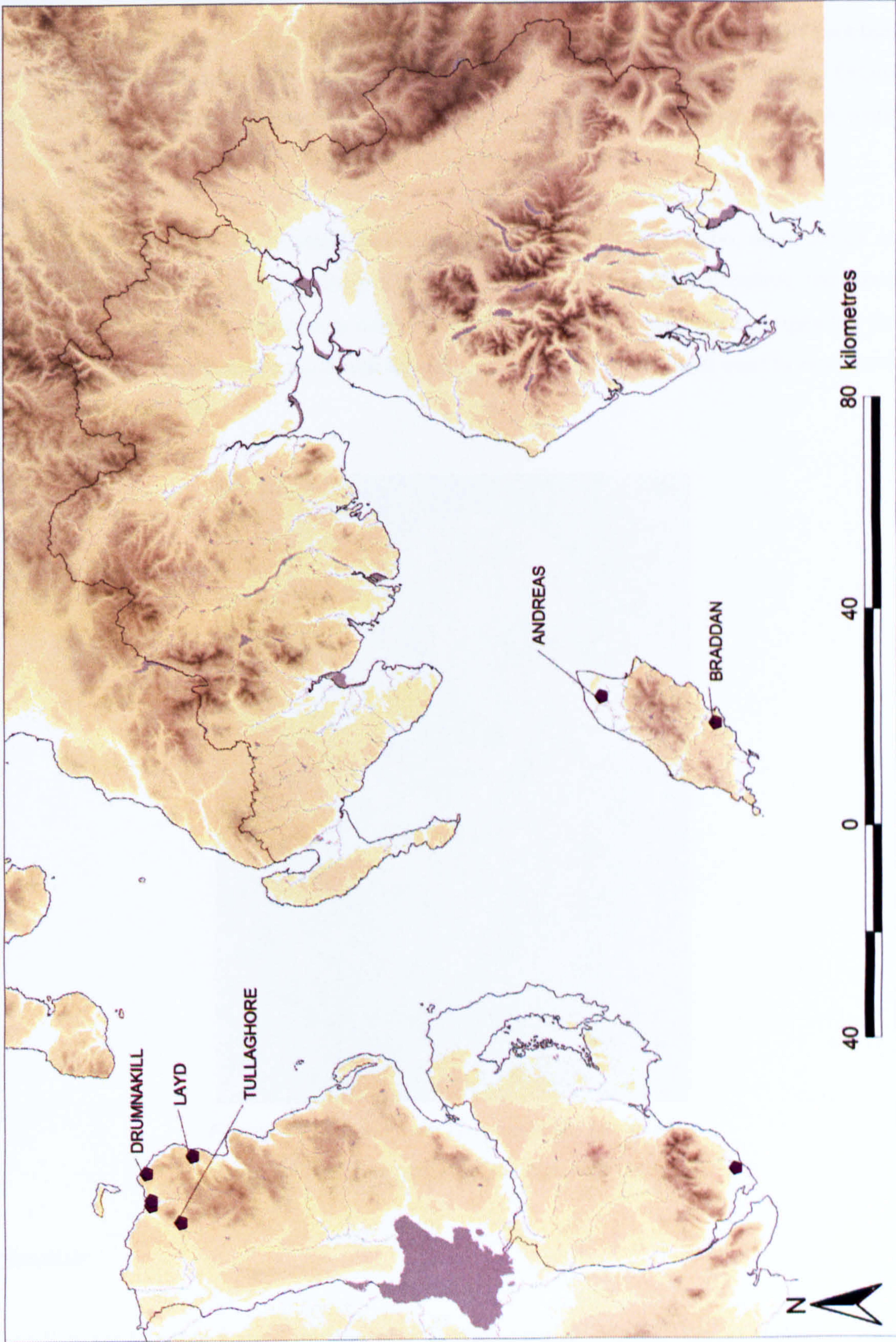


Figure 5.47: Rough cross distribution

The holed crosses are more difficult to interpret, but have a considerable amount of anecdotal association. A number of legends are attached to these stones in the modern day; at Inishmurray, women passing their fingers through the holes are thought to avert problems with childbirth (Harbison 1991, 228). A cruciform stone with a hole through it from Greeba (Isle of Man) has been suggested to represent the end of an altar or shrine, through which relics could be accessed (Trench-Jellicoe 1985 II 64-5; figure 5.47).

Very difficult to date, due to small numbers and to the lack of decoration, these stones are presumed to fit broadly into the early Christian period. In terms of distribution, they seem form a coherent group, focussed in northern Antrim. It might tentatively be suggested that they can be associated with a particular territory, or a specific, short-lived need to erect crude ecclesiastical markers.



*Figure 5.47: Stone from Greeba Mills, Isle of Man
(photo: author, courtesy of Manx National Heritage)*

Sundials

Sundials are found at a small number of sites within the study area. Stones shaped to serve the purpose are attested at Nendrum (figure 5.48), and an example recorded from Saul has since been lost (Way 1868). Hamlin (1987a; 1987b) sees these monuments as monastic,

providing the division of the day for monastic offices, whilst Harbison (1992, 215) suggests that they may have an association with pilgrimage; the two need not be mutually exclusive. Few examples survive from the study area, and with the carved sundial on the face of the Bewcastle cross, represent a widespread tradition across a broad area. Little can be demonstrated, therefore, in terms of regional variation.



Figure 5.48: Sundial at Nendrum

Architectural fragments

Only 10 architectural fragments have been identified within the study area, and have been given a wide range of dates. Stone buildings are not thought to have been common in the earlier part of the period of interest, and this, with the recycling of stone that is inevitable at such sites means that the very early remains of stone built Christian buildings rarely survives. The few stones that do remain are largely undiagnostic and undated, and do not fall within the remit of this chapter; as such they have not been further included.

CONCLUSIONS

Having considered a variety of sculptural attributes, and broad monument groups, several conclusions can be drawn, and their chronological implications considered. Dating mechanisms require refining; independent dating is not yet available, represented by a few stratified fragments from excavated sites, but would assist in further demonstrating when particular monument forms were adopted in specific places. As such, therefore, current conclusions rest on broad dating parameters only (figure 5.49)

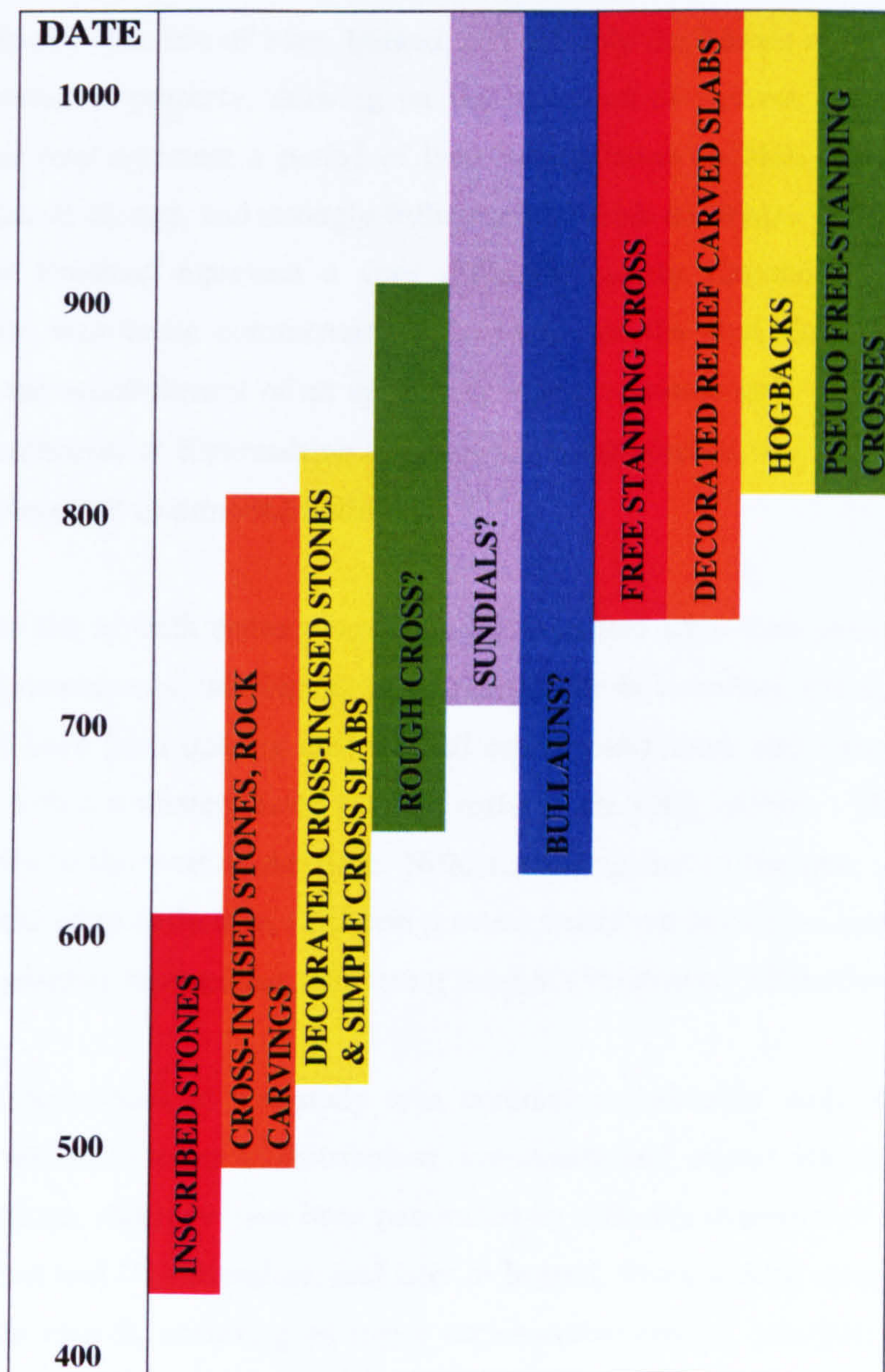


Figure 5.49: Sculptural investment throughout the period of interest

The original map of sculpture demonstrates that the use of stone to make statements in the landscape was widespread; these monuments are found throughout the study area and can therefore be used to distinguish between investment strategies of a range of polities. In considering the degree to which the dataset is representative, it seems that relief carved monuments can reasonably be considered highly representative of their original spread and frequency. Incised monuments, and therefore also inscribed monuments, are likely to be underrepresented, although their overall distribution is likely to be similar to their original spread.

During the earliest phases of the period, inscriptions demonstrate what appear to be two distinct traditions. The Isle of Man, Ireland, and possibly the Rhinns share the use of ogam stones to demarcate property, drawing on the traditions of western Britain and southern Ireland. This may represent a period of land consolidation on Man, tentatively linked to social or political change, and strongly influenced by Irish traditions. The inscribed stones of southwest Scotland represent a very different, overtly Christian practice, where a Christian elite was being commemorated in stone for the first time in the landscape, proclaiming the establishment of an apparently religious monument. The later erection of inscribed monuments at Kirkmadrine suggests the establishment of a cult centre, possibly following widespread Continental traditions.

Roughly from the seventh century onwards, ecclesiastical sites were marked with simple, cross-incised monuments, whether as grave markers or as boundary stones. Cross-incised stones would have been quickly erected, and easily understood, and appear to have been widely used within a western zone from as early as the sixth century. These monuments occur primarily to the west of the River Nith, suggesting that to the east, which also lacks inscribed stones of an early date, Christian practice would not have been manifested in stone monuments, possibly representing a differing form of Christian or political organization.

The incised monuments of the study area contrast considerably with the relief carved monuments, which, in terms of distribution, investment and impact appear to have served different functions, and may have been patronized by different segments of society. In pre-Viking Cumbria and Dumfriesshire, and later in Ireland, free-standing crosses remained the preserve of the church, occurring on major ecclesiastical centres, possibly patronized by a royal elite. The development of freestanding crosses across Ireland and Northumbria demonstrates strong links and communication at this time. These monuments would have been understood on many levels, as objects for contemplation by members of an ecclesiastical elite, and as symbols of power, wealth or religious practice by the laity.

Inscriptions of this period suggest that monuments served multiple purposes, as complex and sophisticated ecclesiastical monuments, with texts that may have been addressed to the Redeemer himself (Ruthwell; Wormald 1977), or as commemorative monuments that may have been patronized by the elite, particularly towards the later pre-Viking period.

The influence of Northumbria does not seem to have been expressed sculpturally in the western parts of southwest Scotland, and is notably absent surrounding Whithorn, suggesting that a reconsideration is required, either of the influence of Whithorn at this time, or of its nature.

Into the later part of the early Christian period, the proliferation of sculpture represents a change in the organization of the ecclesiastical and secular landscape. Ornate, relief carved monuments provided indicators of wealth and status, and served to commemorate individuals (particularly through inscriptions), as well as to demonstrate the appropriation of particular sites by their patrons. Many new sites, possibly burial grounds, appear to have been established, and represent a secularisation of the church, linked with the rise of a Scandinavian-influenced elite. This would seem to have been the case on the Isle of Man and in Cumbria. Although there does not appear to have been a strong Scandinavian influence in Galloway, the area around Whithorn sees a similar proliferation and a similar development of a regional style. It may be that the elite within this area, possibly the ecclesiastical powers at Whithorn, sought to react to the changes in Cumbria and the surrounding area by establishing centres marked with their own stylistic monuments.

In contrast, the later sculpture found in Counties Down and Antrim does not demonstrate the same changes into the ninth century, but seems to demonstrate a similar use of sculpture as pre-Viking Cumbria. Sculpture remained religious, depicting primarily biblical or ecclesiastical motifs, and occurring in low numbers on fewer sites. The inscriptions of Ireland show the same trends, serving simple, votive functions of a primarily Christian nature. By this period, therefore, it seems that the organisation and patronage of the church had stabilised in Ireland: new forms of monumentality were not required to herald the status of elites.

This is a very generalised discussion of what is actually a much more complicated subject. Each monument has a complex story to tell, but the aim of this chapter has been to take a step back from such specialised studies, to see what the available information might reveal about changes within the area as a whole. Stone does seem to have been an important medium for the Christian church, used to consolidate land, to proclaim influence and finally as a means

of expressing regional identity or localised influence. This thesis will then turn to other forms of evidence, to see whether the regional trends suggested by the sculptural evidence can be discerned or dismissed through the study of other media.

CHAPTER SIX

LANGUAGE, PLACE-NAMES AND ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANISATION

Place-names represent a very different type of signal to churches, sculpture or burials, and yet can also provide valuable evidence for the constant interaction of Christian communities with each other and with their surrounding landscapes. Names denoting ecclesiastical centres, whilst not costly in terms of labour or resources, are as significant as physical monuments in the creation and appropriation of a Christian landscape.

‘The naming and identification of particular topographical features,... settlements and sites is crucial for the establishment and maintenance of their identity. Through the act of naming and through the development of human and mythological associations, such names become invested with meaning and significance. By the process of naming places and things they become captured in social discourses and act as mnemonics for the historical actions of individuals and groups’ (Tilley 1994, 18).

As such, place-names need not be regarded as purely descriptive mechanisms; the bestowing of a specifically ecclesiastical place-name on a site highlighted the ideological investment involved, and adds another dimension to the development of the Christian landscape. Existing place-names could also be reinterpreted in ecclesiastical terms, as notable churches came to prominence.

Ecclesiastical place-names, therefore, highlight specific points of ideological significance within the landscape. Elements denoting ecclesiastical activity occur in Brittonic, Gaelic, Anglian and Scandinavian place-names, and reveal something of the Christian terminology that was used to describe newly founded, or appropriated, sites. A range of terms was employed to name these sites, and, although some variations are evidently due to the language being spoken, it seems from their distribution and density that they reflect differences in ecclesiastical activity. Ecclesiastical place-names do not always fit neatly into their respective ‘language zones’ and as such, would seem to show real regional variation.

The linguistic background to the study area must first be taken into account. As part of the Irish Sea region in general, this area has a complex linguistic history (Jackson 1953, 9), and there is no simple, neat, chronological development from one language to another. The decline and resurgence of Gaelic and Brittonic has created a difficult palimpsest of place-names, and a brief summary of the generally accepted chronology of these names demonstrates this complexity. Regional studies, and those covering larger areas (Watson 1926; Jackson 1953; Fellows-Jensen 1983; 1985a; 1985b; 1991; Gelling 1991), provide the basis for this study. Place-name scholars have used the distribution of place-names to discuss the linguistic history of the area, and their conclusions have provided useful pointers to the language spoken and the character of the landscape, for archaeologists, historians and geographers (Taylor 1998a). Whilst it is not argued that language can be directly correlated with political kingdoms, a change in the linguistic tradition of a region is likely to have been caused by major political, social or ideological changes, and therefore provides a context for more specific developments, such as change in ecclesiastical names.

There has been a tendency to discuss linguistic change in terms of political events, or mass migration, and the boundaries demonstrated by place-names have frequently been equated with the physical extent of political entities or cultural groups. Jackson (1953, 22f) is cautious when linking place-name evidence to political territories, and Nicolaisen (2001, 60) also urges against such a simplistic approach. The dominance of one language over another is likely to have been a gradual process, and would not have resulted in an immediate change in place-nomenclature. Consideration of the modern, English speaking world, as an example, clearly demonstrates that a common language need not reflect common identity, politics, or material culture. Campbell (2001, 291) has noted that there is sometimes a tendency towards circular arguments between disciplines, with linguistic evidence being used to suggest hypotheses, upon which historical or archaeological conclusions are based; conclusions which are then subsequently used to strengthen the onomastic argument. Nicolaisen observes that 'linguistic people with certain naming habits are not necessarily identical with archaeological people of certain burial and drinking habits,...certainly the procedures employed ...are primarily onomastic/linguistic and therefore lead to onomastic/linguistic conclusions' (Nicolaisen 2001, 60). This chapter will consider the place-name evidence alone, and only in synthesis will it be drawn together with other forms of evidence, so that circular arguments of this type are avoided.

USES OF PLACE-NAMES

Individual place-names can provide information on an immediate, local scale, demonstrating the language spoken when the name was given, and the specific characteristics of a site that were considered significant enough to describe that particular location. However, place-names are not always securely fixed, or easily dated, meaning that individual interpretations are often open to debate. Nicolaisen notes that individual place-names cannot be considered in isolation, and 'can rarely be interpreted on their own and for their own sake' (Nicolaisen 2001, 44). Place-names have both 'horizontal', spatial links with other names across the landscape, and 'vertical', temporal links 'as part of a continuously changing linguistic evolution in that part of the country in which they have their being' (Nicolaisen 2001, 44). In order to overcome the danger of attributing too much significance to individual names, the majority of studies consider place-names in broader regional terms.

Though identification of a site on the basis of a place-name alone is likely to be problematic, multidisciplinary approaches combining toponymic survey and archaeological evidence may add to our knowledge of particular monument types. James (1998) has considered the value of place-names to large-scale archaeological studies, with particular emphasis on southwest Wales. Place-names denoting particular structures or features, such as the Welsh term, *caer* (meaning enclosure or fort), or the ecclesiastical terms *eglwys* (church) and *llan* (enclosure or church) have been used to add to distribution maps of sites known archaeologically or from aerial photography. Roberts (1992) has considered a number of Welsh ecclesiastical place-names, and draws similar conclusions regarding their value to archaeologists.

Using a slightly different, more developed approach, Margaret Gelling has used the physical landscape to reveal more about the nuances of meaning of particular Anglo-Saxon terms that are frequently found as elements within place-names. Anglo-Saxon names include a wide range of terms that have been translated in very general terms, such as 'hill' or 'valley'. Gelling, with Ann Cole (Gelling and Cole 1998) have shown that, by returning to the landscape in which these names can be found and observing the lie of the land, different terms interpreted generically, for example as meaning 'hill', actually refer to quite specific topographic formations.

Although ecclesiastical sites do not always survive to be studied in the same way as major features of the natural landscape, it is hoped that there will be sufficient evidence to use a related approach. By considering initially the different types of ecclesiastical place-name evident within the study area, and their distributions, and then returning to the

archaeological, historical and sculptural evidence associated with particular areas, the aim will be to consider whether the use of different ecclesiastical terms simply reflects a change in the spoken language of an area, or whether they reflect real differences in Christian activity. Generic translation as 'church' or 'chapel' appears to mask a range of sites that reflect the diversity of early medieval Christianity during the early medieval period.

PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS: A PALIMPSEST OF TOPONYMIC WRITING

As with all studies which draw conclusions from distribution maps, there is a need to assess how representative the current distribution is of its original extent. Place-names, though often transferred from a topographical feature to a settlement or *vice versa*, are unlikely to have moved far within their immediate locale, and so their general distribution is unlikely to be skewed through movement of the points themselves. However, the nature of place-naming, and the complex linguistic history of the area, is likely to have affected the distribution maps, with each generation of inhabitants replacing, altering or adding to, existing names. Nicolaisen (2001, 61) highlights this issue, advocating that place-name scholars should regard the landscape 'as a palimpsest of layer upon layer of toponymic writing, some of it very faint, half obscured and half erased, and all of it still being written on by new generations of name givers'. It must be recognised, therefore, that place-name distributions, whilst likely to depict the original spread of particular elements, will not reflect their original density, particularly in those areas that have been intensely occupied for centuries. This does not, however, invalidate the use of distribution maps as a tool for the interpretation of place-names, and almost all place-name studies employ this approach (for example, Nicolaisen 2001). These maps have been shown by scholars to be informative and meaningful (Taylor 1996; Nicolaisen 2001), and using these tools, place-names can be correlated or contrasted with evidence from other disciplines. Recent studies have developed this approach further, and have shown the value of plotting place-names against topographic and environmental aspects of the landscape using GIS (Turner 2003a). This has only been possible in the broadest sense for this study, using topographical data, but would merit future research.

One of the primary problems with the use of place-names appears to lie in the highly specialist skills needed to interpret them. Place-names that survive, either in modern usage or recorded in historical documents, are likely to have undergone significance changes, often losing their original meanings and changing form and pronunciation. Occasionally, names appear to contain elements with a completely different meaning to their original form. It is necessary, therefore, for interpretation of place-names to be undertaken with caution; as

several scholars point out, names cannot simply be lifted from a modern Ordnance Survey map (Fellows-Jensen 1989-90, 41; Taylor 1998b, 9). Consideration of as many forms and spellings as early as documentation will allow must be undertaken for each place-name. Gelling (1997, 1) is firmly of the opinion that only those with relevant linguistic expertise should undertake such analysis. 'A closed shop is something of a necessity on the etymological side of place-name study. The subject is not difficult but it is full of pitfalls' (Gelling 1997, 1). However, this does not mean that place-names should be excluded from archaeological or historical research. Gelling notes that the study of place-names has become uneven; 'etymology has become a highly developed science, but the work on the historical bearing of the material has not kept pace' (Gelling 1997, 2). By using existing studies of the raw material by place-name experts, place-names can be usefully employed by scholars from a range of disciplines.

Time restrictions and lack of expertise mean that the data gathered for place-names within the study area are derived from secondary sources. Place-names within the study area have been subject to a considerable amount of study over the past fifty years, and work by MacQueen (1955; 1956; 1973; 2002), Fellows-Jensen (1991), Broderick (1994-2002), Nicolaisen (2001) and Brooke (1983; 1991a; 1991b) provide the basic information for this chapter. Further studies that have been invaluable are those on specific ecclesiastical elements (MacDonald 1973; Barrow 1983; Clancy 1995; Taylor 1996). The raw material has not, therefore, been subject to new rigorous assessment, but relies on the expertise of those involved in compiling regional place-name *corpora*. The four main areas, Scotland, England, Man and Northern Ireland, have been subject to quite differing levels of investigation, and the documents that allow for place-names to be traced back in time are very different within each area. This is likely to have an impact on the distribution maps, but overall patterns should not be adversely affected, and it is these that are of primary interest.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

Within the study area during the early medieval period, the four main languages evident in place-name formation are Gaelic, Brittonic, Anglian (termed Old English) and Scandinavian. Each of these linguistic strands contains elements of an ecclesiastical nature (though of a debatable nature in the case of Old English names) and although these will be the main focus of this chapter, they cannot be considered in isolation.

BRITTONIC AND GAELIC

The earliest stratum of place-names coined during the early medieval period reflect Celtic languages, which had by this time diverged to become Brittonic (also referred to as Brythonic) and Gaelic. The Irish Sea is a meeting point between the traditional areas in which these languages were spoken, and the fluidity of their boundaries is represented by apparently alternating strata of Brittonic and Gaelic place-names that intersperse those of Anglian or Scandinavian origin.

Brittonic and Gaelic share an origin in 'Common Celtic', the presumed language of much of Europe in prehistoric times. This language diverged into various strands, including the two Celtic language groups commonly referred to as q-Celtic and p-Celtic, named due to the differential treatment of the *qu* sound, retained in the former, but changed to a *p* in the latter (Watson 1926, 2; Jackson 1953, 4). These developed to become Brittonic and Gaelic languages, both of which were spoken in the British Isles. Brittonic languages subsequently evolved further, with the emergence of regional dialects such as Cumbric and Pictish (debatably a distinct language), and an eventual divergence to become Welsh, Cornish and Breton, languages considered by Jackson to have developed from the sixth century AD. During the spread of the Germanic, Old English language from the fifth century AD, the three areas of Cumbria (in its wider sense of north-west England and south-west Scotland), Wales and Cornwall preserved their Brittonic language. The Brittonic dialect spoken during the period of interest in the study area is commonly referred to as Cumbric (Jackson 1953, 9), but in order to avoid confusion with modern Cumbria, the term Brittonic will be used throughout. Gaelic, the language of Ireland and parts of western Scotland, eventually developed into Manx, Scottish and Irish Gaelic, a development dated by Jackson to the tenth century (Jackson 1953, 27).

At the outset of the early medieval period, it is generally accepted that much of the population of Great Britain would have spoken a Brittonic language, whilst those in Ireland would have been Gaelic speakers (Jackson 1953; *cf* Campbell 2001). As the study area encompasses parts of both regions, and interaction between areas would have been considerable, such divisions are not clear-cut, and this is evident in the place-name evidence.

Generally, place-name elements demonstrate a Brittonic stratum of place-names through Cumbria and much of southwest Scotland. The word *cair* (fort) is an element of Brittonic (Cumbric) often used to illustrate this linguistic zone (Fellows-Jensen 1991, 77; Nicolaisen 2001, 207; O'Sullivan 1980a, figure IV), although more northerly examples could reflect a

Pictish reflex of the same term (Taylor pers. comm.). Within the study area, these names are generally found located on the low-lying areas of the Eden Valley and the Solway plain, and the upper Nith valley (figure 6.1). *Cair* names refer to fortifications, sites of human activity, and can be used as evidence for Brittonic speaking populations within this area. These place-names are difficult to date, as Brittonic is known to have been spoken at the earliest part of the period of interest, but also had a later resurgence in the tenth century, following a period during which names of Gaelic, Anglian and Scandinavian origin would have been coined. Fellows-Jensen (1991, 77) appears to be of the opinion that, whilst Brittonic place-names can only be broadly dated to between the fifth and the eleventh centuries, it is likely that names containing *cair* in Dumfriesshire derive from the earlier part of this period. Conversely, the distribution of *cair* names in Cumbria is suggested to relate to a later, tenth century, spread of the language from the north rather than an early stratum of place-names (O'Sullivan 1980a, 91; Nicolaisen 2001, 208), suggesting that these names may not represent an homogenous group.

Names containing the element '*tref*' have also been used to trace the spread of Brittonic names, demonstrating a slightly wider distribution (Nicolaisen 2001, figure 21, 215). Recent studies have shown that *tre* names in southwest Britain are likely to represent settlements established from the fifth or sixth century AD (Turner 2003a). Nicolaisen (2001, 214) has noted the different distribution of *tref* names that are compounded in different ways. Whilst those which are formed as *tref yr -*, or with *tref* as a second element exhibit a broader distribution compared to elements such as *cair*, names where *tref* forms the first element are more restricted. Within the study area the latter group of names occur slightly further west than *cair* names, and follow the valley of Loch Ken and the Water of Ken (Nicolaisen 2001, figure 21, 215). Place-names such as Terregles (*tref yr eglwys*) in Dumfriesshire, where both elements are considered early, may belong to an earlier phase of place naming, as in southwest Britain.

It seems that in Cumbria and southwest Scotland, Brittonic place-name elements have a broad chronological relevance, which has yet to be refined. However, particular examples of *tref* names, as at Terregles, may indicate an early phase of place-names, and demonstrate a spread of settlement throughout eastern Dumfriesshire that is not evidenced in much of Cumbria. *Cair* shows a more restricted distribution, notably occurring along the Nith valley. Although Nicolaisen (2001, 208) is of the opinion that *cair* names in Scotland are unlikely to refer to military fortifications, their correlation in southwest Scotland with areas of Roman fortification may be of significance. This would compare with the *caer* names of Wales, which are often given to Roman sites. Place-name elements of a Brittonic nature are not

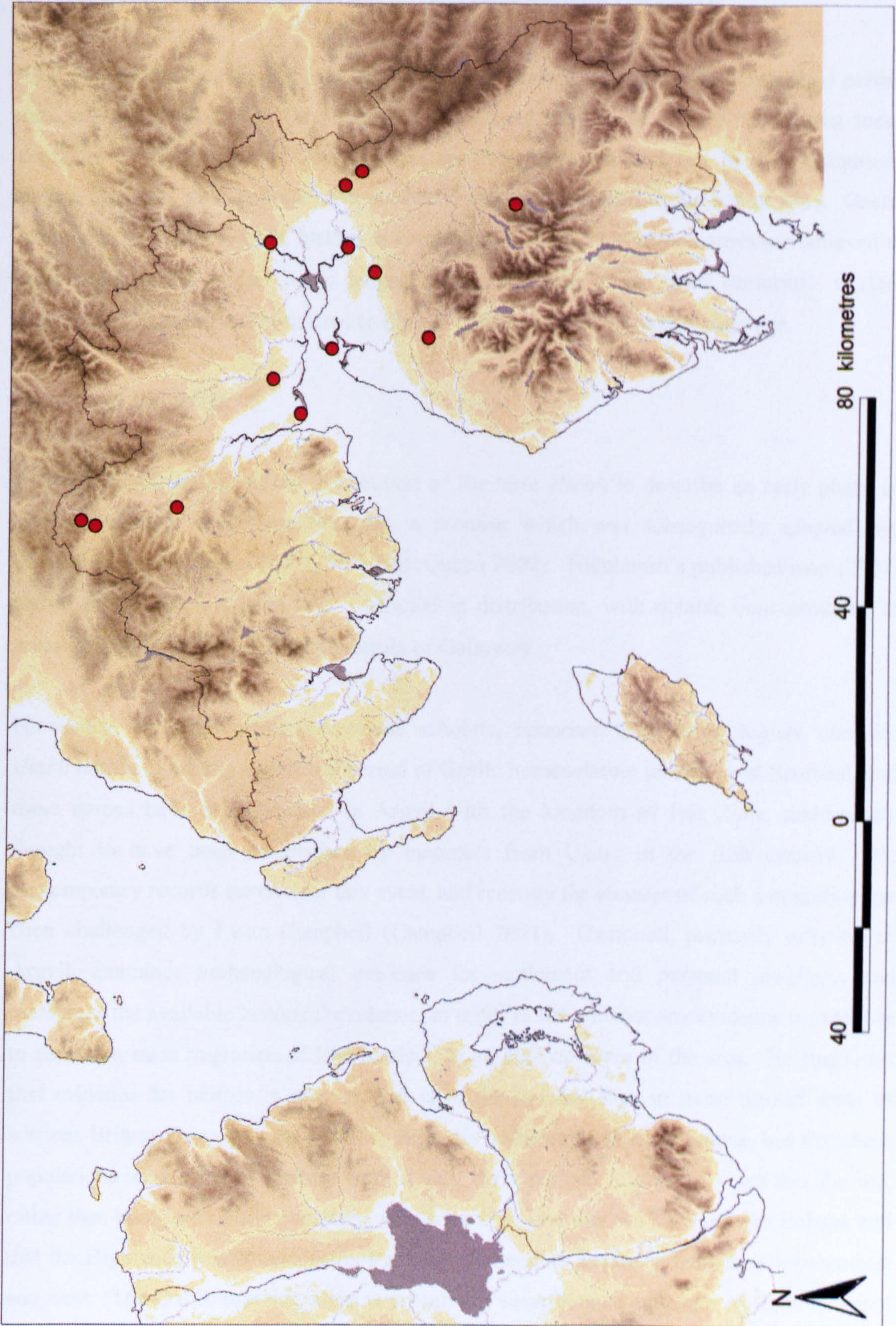


Figure 6.1: Cairn names within the study area (after Nicolaisen 2001)

found on the Isle of Man, though evidence of the inscriptions indicates that this language may have been spoken on the island at an early stage (Gelling 1978, 255).

Gaelic is accepted as having been the language of Ireland during the early medieval period and into the modern day, and Gaelic place-names have been created throughout these centuries. Place-names of Gaelic origin are still prevalent, and due to their ubiquitous nature, elements such as *baile* have not been mapped for Ireland or the Isle of Man. Gaelic has a long, but more varied, history in southwest Scotland, and place-names are believed to have been coined in the Gaelic language from the fifth to the tenth centuries. Certain elements have, however, been used to discuss the earliest spread of this language.

***Sliabh* and Dál Riata**

In 1955, MacQueen used the distribution of the term *sliabh* to describe an early phase of Gaelic language in western Scotland, a premise which was subsequently adopted and developed by Nicolaisen (2001, 51-9; MacQueen 2002). Nicolaisen's published map (2001) shows these names to have been restricted in distribution, with notable concentrations in areas of Argyll, and the Rhinns peninsula of Galloway.

Nicolaisen, and subsequent place-name scholars, historians and archaeologists, consider *sliabh* names to belong to an early period of Gaelic nomenclature in southwest Scotland, and these names have been equated in Argyll with the kingdom of Dál Riata, traditionally thought to have been established by incomers from Ulster in the fifth century. No contemporary records survive for this event, and recently the concept of such a migration has been challenged by Ewan Campbell (Campbell 2001). Campbell, primarily referring to Argyll, examines archaeological evidence for settlement and personal jewellery, and reassesses the available historical evidence, in order to see whether any evidence is available to support a mass migration of Irish settlers, or an elite takeover of the area. He concludes that evidence for neither is present, and is of the opinion that, in these limited areas of western Britain, there was no p-Celtic, Brittonic substratum of place-names, but that these populations were Gaelic speakers from a very early period. Campbell notes that the sea, rather than being a dividing boundary, would have unified western Scotland and Ireland, and that the Highlands would have formed a more challenging linguistic boundary between east and west. The Dál Riata migration is potentially something of an origin myth, propagated in Irish literature of the tenth to twelfth centuries, and instead this shared language is seen as the result of continuous interaction between communities within a maritime area (Campbell 2001, 284-5). Campbell's map of Gaelic speaking areas in Scotland shows some uncertainty

with regard to areas further south, particularly Galloway, but his arguments seem equally applicable to the study area (figure 6.2).

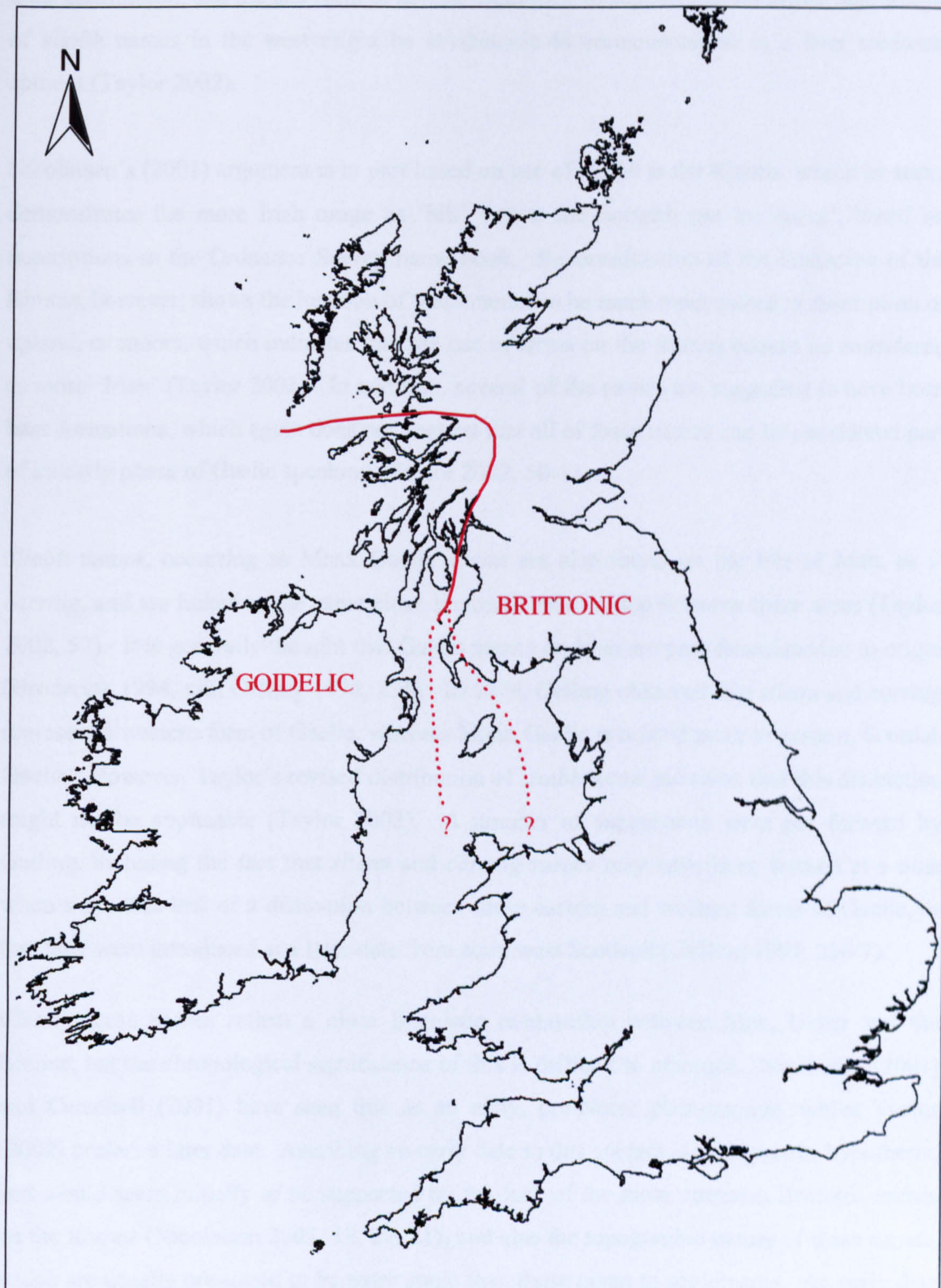


Figure 6.2: Possible linguistic zones (after Campbell 2001)

The early date of these names has been countered by Simon Taylor (2002), who demonstrates that *sliabh* names are not confined to the west, as previously thought, but are also found throughout the Highlands. Taylor takes into account the usage of these names, their distribution, and the late form of several examples, to suggest that the dense distribution of *sliabh* names in the west might be attributable to communication in a later medieval context (Taylor 2002).

Nicolaisen's (2001) argument is in part based on use of *sliabh* in the Rhinns, which he states demonstrates the more Irish usage as 'hill' versus the Scottish use as 'moor', based on descriptions in the Ordnance Survey name book. Reconsideration of the landscape of the Rhinns, however, shows the location of these names to be much more suited to description of upland, or moors, which indicates that the use of terms on the Rhinns cannot be considered as more 'Irish' (Taylor 2002). In addition, several of the names are suggested to have been later formations, which again does not suggest that all of these names can be considered part of an early phase of Gaelic speaking (Taylor 2002, 50-1).

Sliabh names, occurring as Manx Gaelic *slieau* are also found on the Isle of Man, as is *carraig*, and are linked to the same close linguistic relationship between these areas (Taylor 2002, 52). It is generally thought that Gaelic names on Man are post-Scandinavian in origin (Broderick 1994, xiii; Gelling 1978, 255). In 1978, Gelling observed that *slieau* and *carraig* represent a western form of Gaelic, whereas Manx Gaelic is related more to eastern, Scottish Gaelic. However, Taylor's revised distribution of *sliabh* terms indicates that this distinction might not be applicable (Taylor 2002). A number of suggestions were put forward by Gelling, including the fact that *slieau* and *carraig* names may have been formed at a time when there was less of a distinction between these eastern and western forms of Gaelic, or that they were introduced at a later date from southwest Scotland (Gelling 1991, 256-7).

Clearly these names reflect a close linguistic relationship between Man, Ulster and the Rhinns, but the chronological significance of this is difficult to untangle. Nicolaisen (2001) and Campbell (2001) have seen this as an early, pre-Norse phenomenon, whilst Taylor (2002) prefers a later date. Ascribing an early date to this contact is an attractive hypothesis, and would seem initially to be supported by the lack of the more common Brittonic names on the Rhinns (Nicolaisen 2001, 19, 20, 21), and also the topographic nature of these names, which are usually presumed to be more static than those given to settlements. An early date would provide a context for the traditionally accepted spread of Christianity from Ireland to western Scotland. However, a reassessment of this information shows that *sliabh* names can no longer be accepted as early in date, and it seems plausible that these names can be placed

within a broader chronological framework, which saw the spread of Gaelic names into western Scotland, which Nicolaisen would date from the seventh century (*cill* – see below) through the tenth (*baile*) and into the eleventh century (*achadh*) (Nicolaisen 2001, 175).

Gaelic names that are accepted as later in date, or created over a longer period, are found throughout southwest Scotland, and these have been considered in further detail by Nicolaisen, using in particular the elements *baile* and *achadh* (2001, 159-183). These names have been used to identify several ‘zones’ of Gaelic place-names. *Baile* is translated variously as farm, hamlet, village or town, and is clearly associated with settlement, representing a ‘permanent, well settled, Gaelic-speaking population’. Such names occur in southwest Scotland, with the strongest concentration (Nicolaisen’s Zone I) in Galloway, South Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire west of the Nith (Nicolaisen 2001, 162). Nicolaisen’s Zone III, interpreted as a second zone of full-scale settlement, occurs further north, in Dumbartonshire, Stirling, West Lothian and Mid Lothian. Although difficult to date, Nicolaisen has suggested that *baile* names are likely to date to expansion of Gaelic settlement, from a core area on the Rhinns and in Argyll, and that these names were coined throughout several centuries. A subsequent expansion is evidenced by the element *achadh*, originally meaning ‘field’ but likely to have been transferred to associated settlements at a later date (Nicolaisen 2001, 180). Both elements are evident through Gaelic speaking areas, in Ireland and on the Isle of Man, but are difficult to date and have often been attributed to later centuries, generally the tenth century at the earliest (MacQueen 1973, 30; Fellows-Jensen 1983; Nicolaisen 2001).

The presence of these later Gaelic names in Galloway has been linked in some debates to an enigmatic group referred to as the *Gall-Ghaidheil*. *Gall-Ghaidheil* is a Gaelic term, translated as ‘foreign Gaelic speakers’, and the identity of the *Gall-Ghaidheil* has been subject to much ongoing debate. The *Gall-Ghaidheil* are recorded in documents from the ninth century, as a war band fighting on sea and land in Ireland for Aed of Ailech, or for a force of Scandinavians in Munster (Brooke 1991a, 99). The term occurs in the notes to the ninth century Martyrology of Oengus, which Ó Riain (1999, 89) would date to the twelfth century. These notes pertain to the seventh-century deaths of St Donnan of Eigg and St Blaan of Kingarth. Donnan is said to have gone ‘among the Gall-Gaidhil’, whilst Kingarth is also situated ‘in *Gallgaedelaib*’ (Brooke 1991a, 99, 112). These references are late, and although potentially drawing on earlier sources must be considered with caution. These references have been used to demonstrate that the *Gall-Ghaidheil* occupied Argyll and Bute during the ninth century, and Irish sources continue to refer to those in Argyll in this way until the thirteenth century, when Roland of Galloway is referred to in the Annals of the Four

Masters as 'King of the *Gall-Gaidhil*' (Brooke 1991a, 100). The apparent geographical shift from Argyll to Galloway has been explained in a number of ways, none of which has been fully disproved or accepted: that the territory of the *Gall-Gaidheil* shifted southwards to Galloway, that *Gall-Ghaidheil* refers to a group of people rather than a fixed place, or that the 'kingdom of the *Gall-Ghaidheil*' extended from Argyll to Galloway. The name of Galloway itself is thought to derive from this term (Brooke 1991a).

Commonly, the *Gall-Ghaidheil* are thought to have been Gaelic speakers of Hiberno-Scandinavian stock (Brooke 1991a, 97), either inhabitants of Galloway won over to a Norse way of life (MacQueen 1973, 172-3), or incomers from Ireland who were descendants of Scandinavians (Kirby 1975, 22). Although discussion of Scandinavian place-names does, at times, refer to the *Gall-Ghaidheil* as responsible for the occurrence of certain Scandinavian place-name elements, there is a wider consensus that these people would have been Gaelic speakers (MacQueen 1973, 25), partly due to the paucity of Scandinavian place-names in Galloway.

Brooke (1991a) argues against the idea that the *Gall-Ghaidheil* were settlers in Galloway, and argues that '*Gall-Ghaidheil*' is a Gaelic adaptation of a term deriving from an existing topographical name, along the lines of (*Coed*) *Celyddon*. This argument is based on several points, some of which are more compelling than others. Brooke (1991a) observes that the strongholds of the Lords of Galloway all have Brittonic or Anglian place-names, and seems to suggest that, had they been occupied by incoming Gaelic-speakers, they would have been renamed (1991a, 111). She holds that the Gaelic names of Galloway, as field and settlement names, are 'demonstrably the product of the peasantry and not its political masters'. The evidence of personal names from charters of the twelfth century have been used to suggest that the change from Brittonic to Gaelic within Galloway occurred not with settlers, but with the eleventh century ascendancy of the King of Scots over Galloway.

Grant (2002; 2004) has recently addressed the issue of 'inversion compounds' in southwest Scotland and northwest England. These comprise names where elements are ordered following a Gaelic tradition, but contain Scandinavian elements; 'kirk' names comprise a large number of such names (see below). Grant (2004, 105) maintains that these names were 'coined by Gaelic speakers who had shifted to the culturally dominant Scandinavian language in the western Isle of Scotland, and then travelled to the northwest of England along with the monolingual Scandinavian speakers. Thus, the inversion names were essentially coined using a dialect of the Scandinavian language which included some features from Gaelic, including syntax, personal names and diminutive suffixes'. However,

the opinion of other scholars is that the *Gall-Ghaidheil* were predominantly Gaelic speakers and that they were influenced in some way by the Norse (Jennings 1996, 68; Taylor pers. comm.). Essentially, *Gall-Ghaidheil* is considered to mean 'Scandinavianised Gaels', or 'foreign Gaelic speakers' (Barrett 2003, 77).

The debate is complex, and will doubtless remain the subject of much discussion. The chronology of Gaelic names in particular is unclear, and whilst there may have been Gaelic speaking populations within Galloway from an early period, particularly in the westernmost areas, the coining of many settlement and agricultural names seems likely to belong to the latter centuries of the period of interest.

OLD ENGLISH PLACE-NAMES

Place-names coined by an Old English-speaking population are comparatively rare within the study area, and are described as representing the faintest layer of place-names within the toponymic palimpsest (Brooke 1991b, 297). Generally, these place-names have been used to discuss the ascendancy of the kingdom of Northumbria over parts of Cumbria and southwest Scotland. Although the association of political boundaries with place-name distributions requires caution, the presence of Old English place-name elements within these areas does suggest a westward moving linguistic influence, relating to political or social change.

Daphne Brooke (1991b, 299) notes that Old English place-names are often difficult to distinguish from those coined in Middle English in later centuries, a problem which has obvious chronological implications. Brooke (1991b, 299) also notes the wide chronological span during which some Old English place-names were created. The place-name element *tūn*, for example, though in use during the early medieval period, also continued to be used into the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Despite these problems, both Nicolaisen and Brooke have joined other scholars in using specific Old English place-name elements to discuss the extent of Northumbrian settlement in the study area (Brooke 1991b; Nicolaisen 2001, 106).

Brooke's (1991b) study of Northumbrian settlement in Carrick and Galloway uses a range of place-names displaying Old English elements to map different stages of Northumbrian settlement in Galloway. The map of these names (Brooke 1991b, Illus 4) shows Old English place-names extending up the river valleys of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright and along the eastern coast of the Machars, with a few examples on the Rhinns. The majority are, however, difficult to date, and these names do not necessarily reflect the presence of Old English speakers within the early centuries of Northumbrian settlement. Other scholars have

tended to be more selective (Nicolaisen 2001, 89-108), using only those elements which are thought to have been used as place-naming devices prior to the ninth century.

Nicolaisen (2001, 89-108) discusses those place-name elements which provide a fair indication of early Anglian place-names in Scotland, many of which are the same as those used to discuss early medieval Cumbria (O'Sullivan 1980a, 95-100). Nicolaisen takes the earliest stratum of Anglian place-names in England as a whole to be those containing elements deriving from '-ing', folk names denoting a community of people under a particular leader. Although scholars have more recently suggested that toponymic names were coined beforehand, such names still provide an early indication of settlement sites (Gelling and Cole 2000, *xii-xiii*). The earliest of these take the singular and plural forms '-ing' and '-ingas' in place-names, both of which are notably absent from the study area (O'Sullivan 1980a, 99; Nicolaisen 2001, 90-2), as might be expected for an area thought to have come under Northumbrian influence from the seventh century. Within Scotland and Cumbria the earliest examples of Anglian names are those containing the element 'hām' translated as 'homestead', sometimes compounded to form 'inga-hām' (Nicolaisen 2001, 98). *Tūn*, as noted, is often confused with later elements, but its early usage is more recognisable in the compound 'ingtūn'. Though slightly later than the elements containing 'hām', these names are also used to describe an early stratum of Old English names in the study area (Nicolaisen 2001, 95). The elements *burg/burh* denoting a fortified place, and *botl/bodl*, translated as dwelling place or house, have also been used to discuss this pre-Viking phase of place-naming (Barrow 1998) (figure 6.3).

Old English place-names are not densely distributed within the study area, but can be used to demonstrate the extent to which speakers of this language had an impact on toponymy. These names do not extend far to the west, and Penningham provides the westernmost outlier, and the only example to lie beyond the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright (figure 6.3). The majority of Anglian names denote settlements, and these sites (or the parishes to which they have subsequently given their names) are located on the low-lying land of the Solway plain, extending round the Cumbrian coast and along the Eden valley. The majority are situated close to the coast, and along river valleys, and all are below 100m AOD, presumably on land that would have been most suitable for agriculture and subsistence. Though equating political change with place-names is not always considered advisable, the expansion of the Northumbrian kingdom westwards is often linked to Anglian place-names, and it seems that to dissociate the two is taking the opposite extreme. These names provide a useful indicator of the extent to which Northumbrian Old English speakers held sufficient influence for place-names to be coined.

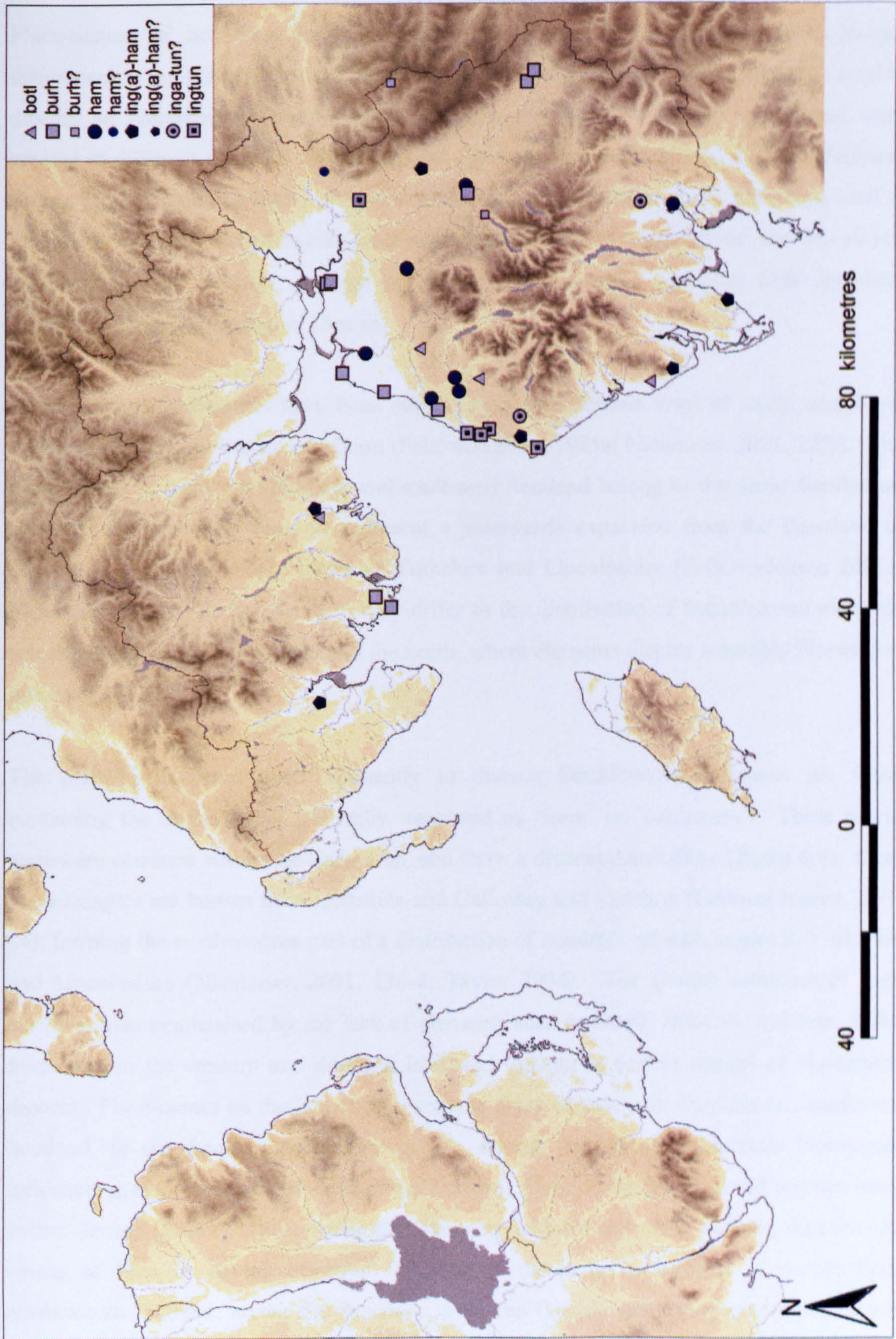


Figure 6.3: Old English place-names within the study area

SCANDINAVIAN PLACE-NAMES

Place-names of Scandinavian origin occur throughout the Irish Sea region, though differences in their density and the generics employed emphasise that they can not be used to discuss an homogenous stratum of place-names, but instead represent names that were created at different times, in different places, by individuals of differing descent (Fellows-Jensen 1991; Nicolaisen 2001, 109). Place-names of Scandinavian origin have been used to discuss the extent of Scandinavian settlement throughout Britain and Ireland, the role played by Scandinavian speakers amongst pre-existing communities, and also their linguistic origins, whether Norwegian or Danish.

Scandinavian place-names have been subject to a considerable level of study, and those within the study area are no exception (Fellows-Jensen 1985a; Nicolaisen 2001, 127f). The place-names of northwest England and southwest Scotland belong to the same distribution patterns, and generally seem to represent a westwards expansion from the Danelaw, of generics that are commonly found in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire (Fellows-Jensen 2001a; Nicolaisen 2001, 130-2). As such, they differ to the distribution of Scandinavian elements identified elsewhere in Scotland and the north, where elements display a notably Norwegian influence.

The place-names used most frequently to discuss Scandinavian influence are those containing the element *-bý*, generally translated as 'farm' or 'settlement'. These place-names are common within the study area, and show a distinct distribution (figure 6.4). Over 100 examples are known from Dumfries and Galloway and Cumbria (Fellows-Jensen 1991, 84), forming the northwestern part of a distribution of hundreds of such names in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire (Nicolaisen 2001, 130-2; Taylor 2004). The Danish influence of such names is also emphasised by the lack of elements such as *staðir*, *bólstaðr* and *setr*, found frequently in the western and northern Isles and thought to denote settlers of Norwegian descent. Place-names on the Isle of Man seem to share origins with Cumbria and southwest Scotland, in the frequent occurrence of *-bý* names, but also demonstrates Norwegian influence, in the occurrence of some of the elements found in the northern and western isles. Fellow-Jensen (2001a), whilst noting that many are undated and could be later, sees the *-bý* names of Man as having occurred following a clockwise movement of people from northeastern England, across the Pennines; from the Carlisle plain they moved westwards into Dumfriesshire and south along the Cumbrian coast, from whence they may have travelled to the Isle of Man (Fellows-Jensen 2001a, 46; see Roberts 1989-90 for later examples).

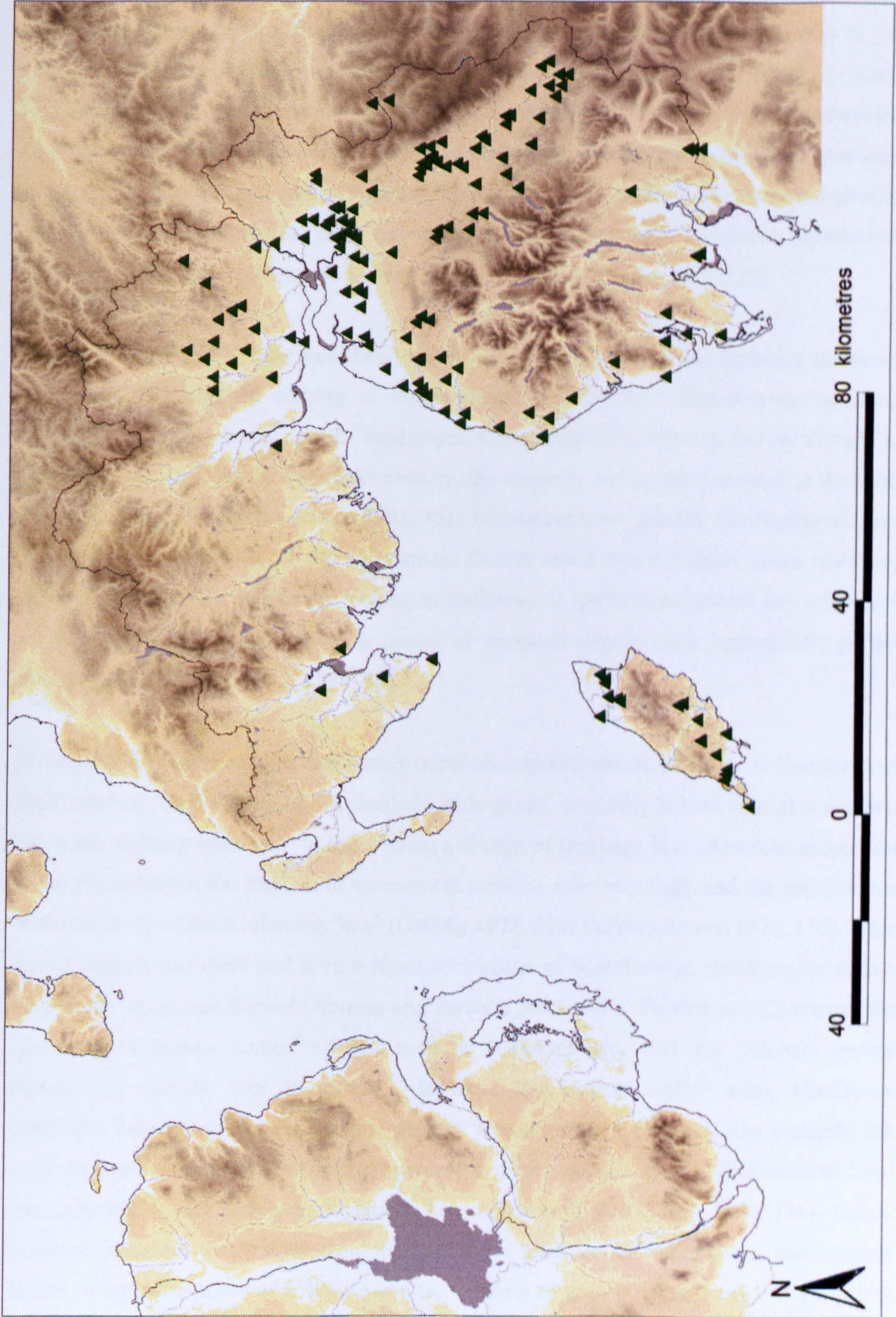


Figure 6.4: By names in the study area

The distribution of *-by* names shows definite foci in eastern Dumfriesshire, and along the Eden Valley, which appears to have provided one of the main routes for the spread of these place-names from eastern England. These sites occupy similar low-lying areas to the Anglian settlement names, indicating that the same general areas were being occupied. Names containing the element *-by*, along with the range of Scandinavian place-names, demonstrate a different distribution pattern in Galloway. Names are focussed on two main areas, on the Machars and around Kirkcudbright (Oram 1995, 128). The coastal distribution of these names is thought to 'point very much towards a secondary sea-borne colonization from the earlier Norse settlements in Man and the Hebrides' (Oram 1995, 128).

Nicolaisen (2001, 127f) also considered the elements 'beck', from *bekkr* (stream), and *thveit* (clearing), reflecting the naming of topographical features by a Scandinavian speaking population, and their impact on the landscape. Chronologically, these names are thought to have been coined from the late ninth century, the majority having been created in the tenth (Gelling 1978, 259; Fellows-Jensen 1991, 85). Nicolaisen notes that the distribution of these place-names mirrors that of the *-by* names, though *thveit* has a slightly more restricted distribution. As *thveit* names are lacking in Galloway, it has been suggested that settlement in the more western areas was less dense, or occurred over a more limited time period (Fellows-Jensen 1989-90, 45; 1991, 86).

On the Isle of Man, Scandinavian names occur throughout, and in the areas of Cumbria and Dumfriesshire, their distribution is similarly widespread, occurring in both coastal and inland locations. Gelling notes that 'to bring about a change of language in a substantial proportion of the place-names, the number of newcomers must be relatively high, and the social status of the majority of them relatively low' (Gelling 1978, 259; Fellows-Jensen 1978, 316). This would suggest that there had been a significant influx of Scandinavian speakers, for such a large scale toponymic impact (Abrams and Parsons 2004, 404). Further west, however, the clustering of names around centres such as Kirkcudbright, and the Machars appear representing specific foci of activity. In these less densely settled areas, MacQueen concludes from the place-names evidence that 'Scandinavian influence...was probably felt most strongly at the centres of local government, from which it may be deduced that local government was very largely in the hands of Scandinavians' (MacQueen 1956, 146). Oram, however, suggests that, rather than representing a takeover of settlements, these names reflect 'a limited number of colonists and the infilling of gaps in what is otherwise a place-name map dominated by Brythonic, Gaelic and Anglian name-forms' (Oram 1995, 130). The Norse are suggested to have been invited or welcomed into the area, rather than

representing hostile encroachers, and may have occupied land held by the church; the example of 'Bysbie' translates as 'bishop's farm' (Oram 1995, 131).

This situation compares in some ways with the Scandinavian place-names of Ireland (Oftedal 1973; Fellows-Jensen 2001b). Despite a well-documented Scandinavian presence, place-names of Scandinavian origin are infrequent, and found to cluster around coastal areas (Oftedal 1973, 125). Kay Muhr (2002, 37) notes that the names of sea lochs of the east coast in particular are found to have Scandinavian names (Olderfleet, Strangford and Carlingford), suggesting a maritime focus for Scandinavian-speaking communities. Oftedal (1973, 125) and Fellows-Jensen (2001b, 107) observe a contrast between the Scandinavian names on the coast, often given to topographical features, and the lack of such names further inland, also noting the minimal influence that Scandinavian had on the spoken language of Ireland. This would suggest that a large population of Scandinavian speakers was not present in the Irish countryside, and Oftedal explains this in terms of the roles played by Scandinavian settlers within Irish society. Whilst in Scotland and on the Isle of Man a significant proportion of the lower echelons of society, the farmers and fishermen, were Scandinavian speakers, in Ireland they formed a mercantile class, settling in urban centres around the coastal ports. These communities retained a group identity until the twelfth century (Oftedal 1973, 125-6). This, with the Norwegian, rather than Danish, character of Scandinavian place-names (Oftedal 1973, 126) demonstrates that very different circumstances led to the creation of Scandinavian place-names in Ireland and in northwest England, southwest Scotland and Man. At this time, the sea does seem to form a boundary between different linguistic place-naming traditions. Whereas Scandinavian speakers appear to have had a major impact on the place-names of southwest Scotland, Man and Cumbria, suggesting that they were present throughout the landscape, in Ireland there appears to have been much less of a widespread linguistic impact. 'The Vikings seem to have continued to live their own lives and to speak their own language in their own strongholds, perhaps until the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169' (Fellows-Jensen 2001b, 113)

Using these elements, it is possible to identify areas that have experienced significant changes in the language in which place-names were coined, and others which seem to have been relatively stable. Ireland remained overwhelmingly Gaelic with regards linguistic tradition, and was only minimally affected by the presence of Scandinavian populations. Although a Brittonic tradition may have been evident on the Rhinns, evidence suggests a similarly strong Gaelic tradition in this small region. In contrast, the place-names of Galloway have been subject to the influence of Brittonic, Gaelic and Anglian speaking populations. Further east, the development from a Brittonic substratum of names, with the

influence of Anglian, later Brittonic, and Scandinavian names demonstrate the different linguistic interactions that occurred throughout the period of interest. Notably, the lands north of the Solway, including the Nith valley, appear to have been most changeable, a territory described from the late Roman period as 'debatable lands' (McCarthy 2002, 13). Those areas which saw most change may be equated with those that were most politically or ideologically unstable.

ECCLESIASTICAL PLACE-NAMES

The brief overview of place-names in the study area demonstrates that they do not necessarily fall into well-defined 'linguistic zones'. However, certain elements, such as Brittonic *cair* and Gaelic *sliabh* do seem to provide an idea of changing language boundaries that might have existed within the study area during this period, and the spread of the languages of the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians can be charted to some extent by particular place-name elements. Within these linguistic strands, place-names can be identified which denote the presence of a church or ecclesiastical focus. Few of these are plentiful, however, and as large scale patterns are sought, only the most common are considered here: Brittonic *eglēs*, Gaelic *domnach*, *cill* and *andoit*, and Anglian or Scandinavian 'Kirk'.

EGLES: 'ECCLES' NAMES

Eglēs, translated as 'church' occurs in Brittonic language, borrowed from the Latin *ecclesia*, which in turn originates from the Greek. This is one of many words borrowed into Brittonic from Latin, along with several other ecclesiastical terms, such as *episcopus*, *sanctus* and *martyrem*, serving as a reminder that Latin was the language of the church. Loanwords occur in both Brittonic and Gaelic, demonstrating the influence of the church over speakers of both languages. Jackson (1953, 78-9) notes that the term was borrowed not from the written form of the word, but from the spoken, Vulgar Latin, indicating direct contact and interaction with Latin speakers, rather than religious teaching spread through written sources.

Eglēs generally survives in place-names as the element 'Eccles'. 'Eccles' place-names occur in England and Scotland, and have been subject to discussion by Cameron (1968) and Barrow (1981) for these areas respectively. Both scholars seem to accept that this term belongs to an early phase of Brittonic place-names, denoting the existence of an early church, as first suggested by Ekwall. Ekwall (1922, in Cameron 1968) was of the opinion that 'names such as Eccles, Eccleston...indicate that there were British churches in the

places so-called', and whilst there has been no definite archaeological evidence found for British church sites at these locations, the place-names are strongly indicative of centres of Christian activity. It is argued that the loanword *ecclesia* was not used as the normal word for 'church' by the Anglo-Saxon populations (who adopted the term *cirice*, ultimately 'church'), nor the Irish (who used *cill*) (Barrow 1981, 3-5). Though *ecclesia* is known from Irish documents, the loanword *eclais* is notably lacking in place-nomenclature (Flanagan 1984, 38). Flanagan tentatively explains this as due to the fact that *ecclesia* would have referred to an individual church building, rather than the unit, such as a monastery, which would usually be referred to in the place-names (Flanagan 1984, 39). The presence of 'Eccles-' place-names, therefore, seems to have been indicative of a church site named by communities who spoke a Brittonic language. This was not, however, universally used; *eglwys* is found occasionally in Welsh place-names, and although Roberts (1992) believes these names bear the same significance as Eccles names elsewhere, the term was used much less frequently than the preferred term *llan* (James 1998, 111). It appears that this term was adopted and employed in slightly different ways in different strands of the Celtic languages.

Within English and Scottish place-names, names containing the element *eglēs* generally occur either as 'Eccles,' or as compounds with elements such as Old English *tūn*. Place-names such as Eccleston have been translated as 'the homestead or village at or near Eccles,' where Eccles refers to 'a British church' (Cameron 1968, 89). Cameron notes, however, that there is no independent evidence that the term was adopted into colloquial use by English speaking populations, and may simply have been borrowed as a place-name, rather than an appellative (Cameron 1968, 89).

The distribution of these place-names is quite distinctive (figure 6.5). Although generally widespread, as noted by Cameron (1968, 89), there is a cluster around the northwest Midlands and Lancashire, and he also observes that the majority are located close to Roman roads (Cameron 1968; Barrow 1981). The three examples noted in Dumfriesshire, concentrated around the valleys of the Rivers Nith and Annan, are found in similar areas to the northerly distribution of the element *cair* (figure 6.6). However, Eccles names are notably lacking in Cumbria, where *cair* names are also known. The site of Eaglesfield provides the only suggested example, and the presence of early burials may be used to support identification of an early ecclesiastical centre (O'Sullivan 1980a, 88). However, the first part of the name has been identified as a personal name, *Ecgel*, and no surviving early forms suggest the element *eglēs* (Armstrong *et al* 1950, 378). The survival of such an early stratum of place-names is not likely to have been even, particularly with later incursions of English and Scandinavian speakers, and it may be that those names containing the element

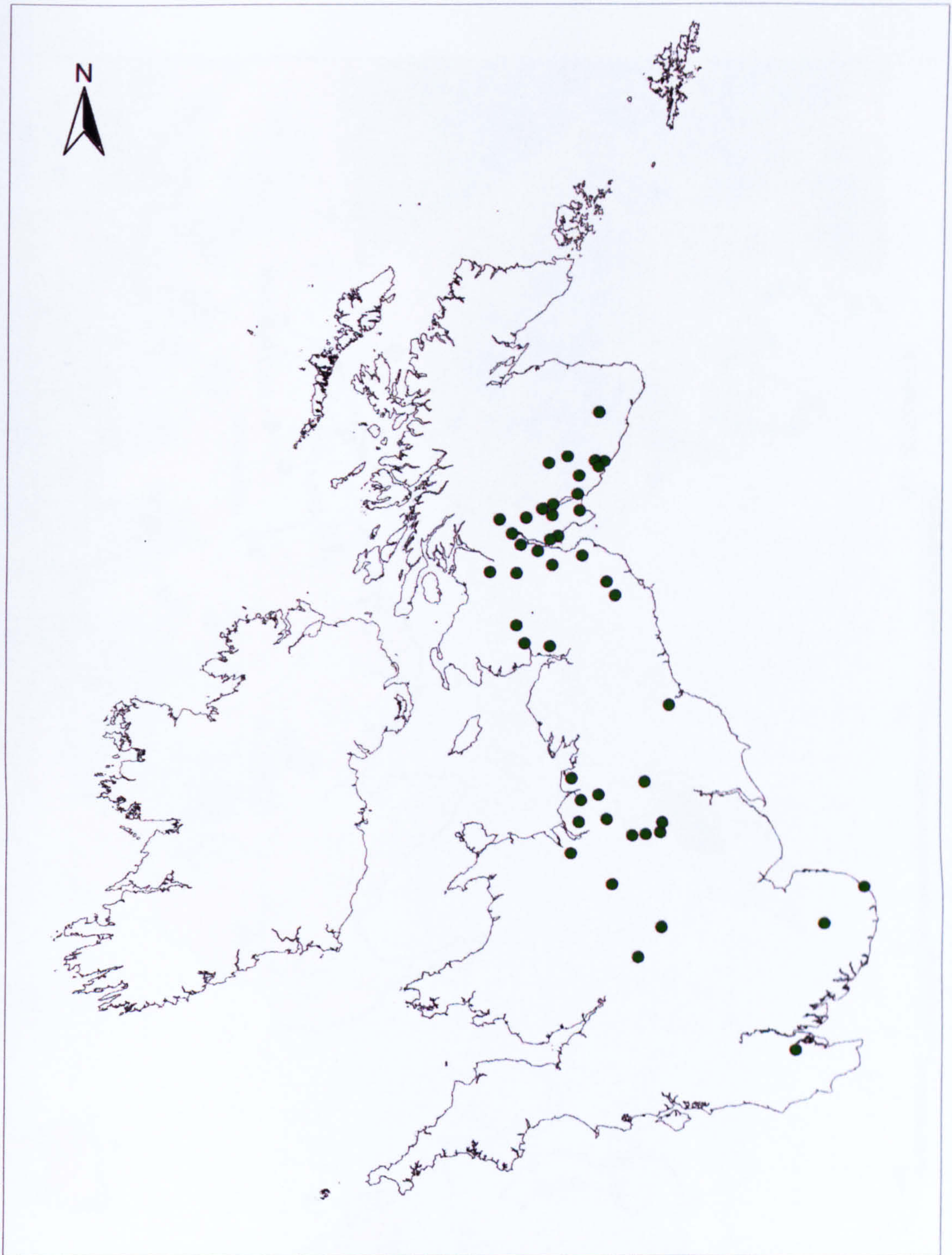


Figure 6.5: Eccles names in Britain

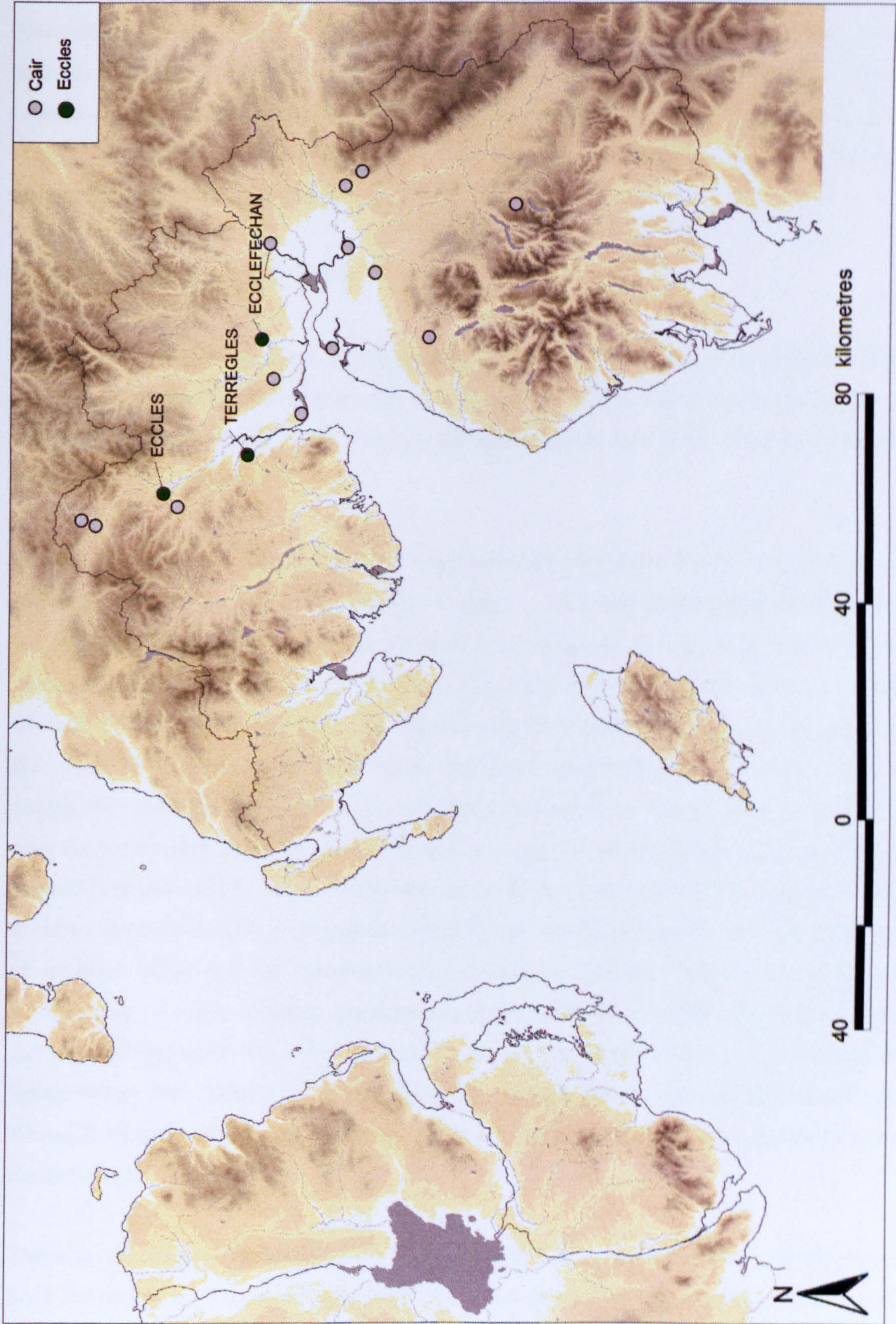


Figure 6.6: Eccles names in the study area

eglēs have been replaced and subsequently forgotten. Overall trends do seem distinctive, however, and suggest a real *lacuna* in Cumbria. If these place-names are as early as generally assumed (pre-AD 650; MacQueen 1990, 28; Taylor 1998b, 4) then these names provide evidence for localised Christian activity amongst Brittonic speaking population in eastern Dumfriesshire, which was not shared by communities immediately to the south. The Solway appears to divide the two zones, and it might tentatively be suggested that this represents a real ideological boundary.

DOMNACH: DONAGH-NAMES

Latin loanwords have also been identified in the Gaelic language, divided by Jackson (1953, 122-124; 134) into two chronologically distinct groups, due to differences in the linguistic evolution of the borrowed terms. Both groups are thought to have been adopted into Gaelic around the fifth century.

Dominicus, 'that pertaining to the Lord' was borrowed into Gaelic as *domnach*, and occurs in place-names as the Anglicised element 'Donagh-'. *Domnach* is thought to belong to the earlier group of loanwords, and has therefore been discussed as a place-name element of particular significance to the earliest phases of Christianity in Ireland (Flanagan 1984; Thomas 1998b). Flanagan (1984, 26) believes that these place-names were coined prior to the eighth century, based on documentary references, and on the fact that their presence among the townland and parish names of Ireland demonstrates 'unequivocally that at one time the word *domnach* in the sense of church site was part of the natural vocabulary of the people' (Flanagan 1984, 25-6). A reference in the Book of Armagh refers to 'any place that is called *dominicus*', used as an indication that by the eighth century, the term had fallen out of common usage and become primarily a place-name element, albeit of ecclesiastical significance. The lack of *dominicus* names associated with the Columban mission has been further used to support the argument that the term would have fallen out of use during or before the seventh century (Flanagan 1984, 26). Sharpe (1992, 94) is of the opinion that *domnach* churches would have been high status churches, superior to lesser churches within the landscape.

The map of 'Donagh-' names shows a restricted distribution, the significance of which has been discussed by Charles Thomas (1998b), who notes that the densest frequency of 'Donagh-' names occurs in northern and eastern Ireland, also demonstrated by Flanagan (1984, maps 1-5). The far northeast of the country, however, has fewer than central Ulster.

Figure 6.7 shows examples from Flanagan (1984; maps 3 and 4), but does not include three tentative/approximate *domnach* points from County Antrim.

Generally, names containing the term *domnach* are thought to be confined to Ireland, again used to support the suggestion that the term fell out of common usage at a relatively early date. However, further study shows that such names occur, albeit rarely, in Scotland and on the Isle of Man. Examples from the Isle of Man occur at Knock y Doonee and Cronk y Doonee, translated as 'hill of the church', Rhullick y Doonee, 'graveyard of the church', and Keeill Maloney. These names might, therefore, be tentatively associated with an early stratum of Gaelic ecclesiastical names on the island.

Gilbert Markus (2003) has shown that *domnach* names do occur in Scotland, discussing an example of the element in *Druimandonich*, a name given to a ridge in Lochaber. He suggests that the name may be linked to a *domnach* site at Kilmonivaig, but that, due to the status of the church, this was later described using the term *annat* (see below). Examples are not known, however, from the Gaelic speaking areas of western Galloway. If, as Markus suggests, *annat* was used as a term for *domnach* churches, once this term had fallen out of use, then the two terms may represent regional or chronological variations in terminology for major ecclesiastical centres. Though not necessarily contemporary, it might be possible that the combined distribution of *domnach* names and *annat* names indicate similar, high status churches, which were well established within their respective landscapes, and enjoyed considerable influence over secondary centres.

Due to their presumed early date, 'Donagh-' place-names have been linked to the earliest historically documented phases of Christian activity in Ireland. Flanagan (1984, 30-1) and Thomas (1998b, 12) suggest that *domnach* sites might be tentatively associated with pre-Patrician activity, or with missions contemporary with, but independent from, work associated with Patrick. Such sites are suggested to have been the equivalents of regional parish churches, as centres of pastoral care for surrounding communities (Flanagan 1984, 30-1). Although contemporary settlement evidence is scarce, in Ireland, a coincidence of *domnach* names, and place-names containing the element *mag* (plain), seems to indicate the establishment of ecclesiastical centres in areas of population. Donaghmore derives from *Domnach Mór*, or 'great church'. The *Litany of the Irish Saints* remembers seven bishops of *Domnach Mór Maigi Coba*, describing the 'church of the plain of the Uí Echach Coba', one of the main Ulster dynasties during the early medieval period (Hamlin 1997, 49).

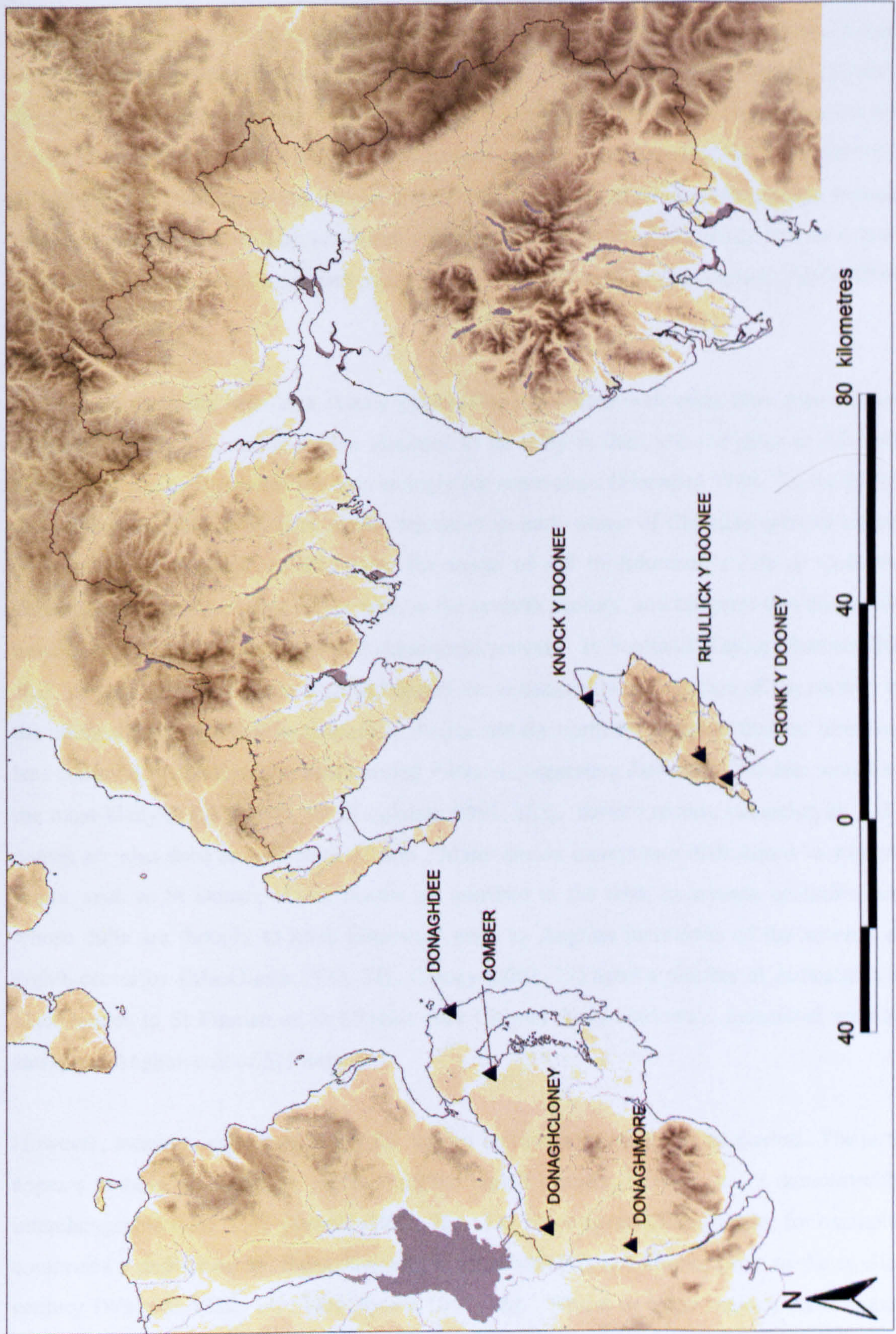


Figure 6.7: Donnagh names in the study area

CILL: 'KIL-' AND KEEILL PLACE-NAMES

Thomas (1998b, 12) has contrasted the northerly distribution of 'Donagh-' names in Ireland with the most common ecclesiastical element found in Gaelic place-names, *cill*. Derived from the Latin *cella*, meaning 'cell' or one room in a building, the term was borrowed into Greek as *kell*, and then back into Latin with more ecclesiastical connotations (Thomas 1995, 57; 1998b, 14). *Cill* appears in Gaelic place-names as 'Kil' and is found throughout Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man, providing a substantial corpus of place-names that have been used as a basis for interdisciplinary studies of early Christianity in these areas (Taylor 1996; Thomas 1998b).

Cill names are often seen as a classic place-name associated with early Irish monasticism (Thomas 1998b, 12), and are often assumed to be early in date, created prior to AD 800. Whilst this can be demonstrated convincingly for some areas (Flanagan 1984; Taylor 1996), the assumption that all of these names represent an early phase of Christian activity cannot be supported. Flanagan (1984) notes the usage of *cill* in Adomnan's *Life of Columba* demonstrates common usage of the term in the seventh century, and suggests that this would have been the case for previous and subsequent periods. In Scotland, Taylor observes that 'Kil-' names occur in eastern Scotland before the widespread Gaelicisation of the country in the ninth century, and that its absence in Angus and the northeast suggests that the term was less common by the time the Scots settled Pictland, suggesting that a pre-800 date would be the most likely (Taylor 1996, 99; Nicolaisen 2001, 183). Saint's names, occurring in 'Kil-' names are also used as indicators of date. Many names incorporate dedications to western saints, such as St Donan, whose deaths are ascribed to the sixth to seventh centuries, and whose cults are thought to have flourished prior to Anglian incursions of the seventh or eighth centuries (MacQueen 1973, 24). Clancy (2001, 17) notes a number of dedications in place-names to St Finnian or St *Uinniau* (see Chapter 3) in Galloway, associated with an early, pre-Anglian cult of St Finnian.

However, ascribing early date to all 'Kil' names on this basis cannot be supported. The term appears to have continued in use beyond the eighth century, in some cases demonstrably interchangeable with 'kirk' (Brooke 1983, 59). The place-name Killantringan, for example, comprises a dedication to 'Sanct Ringan', a form which is not known prior to the twelfth century (Watson, 1926, 170; MacDonald 1979, 16). Whilst in some regions these names may represent early Christian sites, in other areas, where Gaelic place-names were coined over a number of centuries, 'Kil-' sites may be indicative of a longer lived tradition.

Nicolaisen (2001, 184) states that ‘ “Kil-” names are not dedications by missionaries speaking a foreign language, but commemorations by people to whom *cill* was the natural word for a church like structure’ (Nicolaisen 2001, 128-9). As such, they would be expected to be coined in areas once Gaelic language had been established. Nicolaisen suggests that ‘Kil-’ names represent one or two generations of place-naming, as Gaelic terminology spread out from its core area (as represented by *sliabh*), but which had ceased before the spread of Gaelic into Pictland proper (Nicolaisen 2001, 183). However, the map of ‘Kil’ names (figure 6.8), when compared with Nicolaisen’s figures (2001, map 14), shows that their wider distribution seems to correspond more closely to that of *baile* names. Whilst some ‘Kil’ names might have been coined by early communities, this term seems to have been in use amongst Gaelic speakers of the later centuries, possibly as late as the tenth century, and cannot be ascribed the same early date as ‘Kil’ names in eastern Scotland (Taylor 1996) or Ireland.

On the Isle of Man, *cill* occurs as *keeill*, in names that are still attached to the remains or sites of early medieval chapels (Broderick 1979b). The generic rarely occurs in place-names (MacQueen 1973, 148), except where a chapel name has become incorporated in a later settlement name, as at Ballakilmartin, examples of which are still infrequent, and of later date (Broderick 1994). Gaelic names on the Isle of Man are generally considered to post-date Scandinavian settlement, and as many of the *keeills* themselves are thought to be of late Scandinavian date, the names are unlikely to have been created at an early date (Broderick 1994, xxiii). This would seem to indicate continued currency of the Gaelic term *cill* in the Irish Sea area.

Thomas (1998b, 12) has noted that the distribution of *cill* names to some extent complements that of the ‘Donagh-’ names, leading to the suggestion that, ‘even if *domnach* and *cill* both denoted types of Christian site at much the same early period, the two words cannot have meant the same, and that quite separate Christian manifestations are involved’. The density of *cill* names, compared to the relative infrequency of *domnach* names, is not highlighted by Thomas’s maps, but further supports this idea. For the examples in Ireland, Thomas is quite specific with his interpretation of their significance; ‘*cell* was a new word to name a new wave of Christian life in Ireland, at first individual (eremitic) monasticism...; its origin was literary, through reading aloud, copying and diffusion of relevant Latin writings’ (Thomas 1998b, 14). It is not, however, suggested that each ‘Kil’ name represents a separate monastic establishment. MacDonald (1979, 19) states that *cill* place-names often represent the lesser or least churches of monastic *paruchia*, and as such would be expected to be of lesser status than those described by *domnach* or *andóit* (see below). Similarly, Taylor suggests the

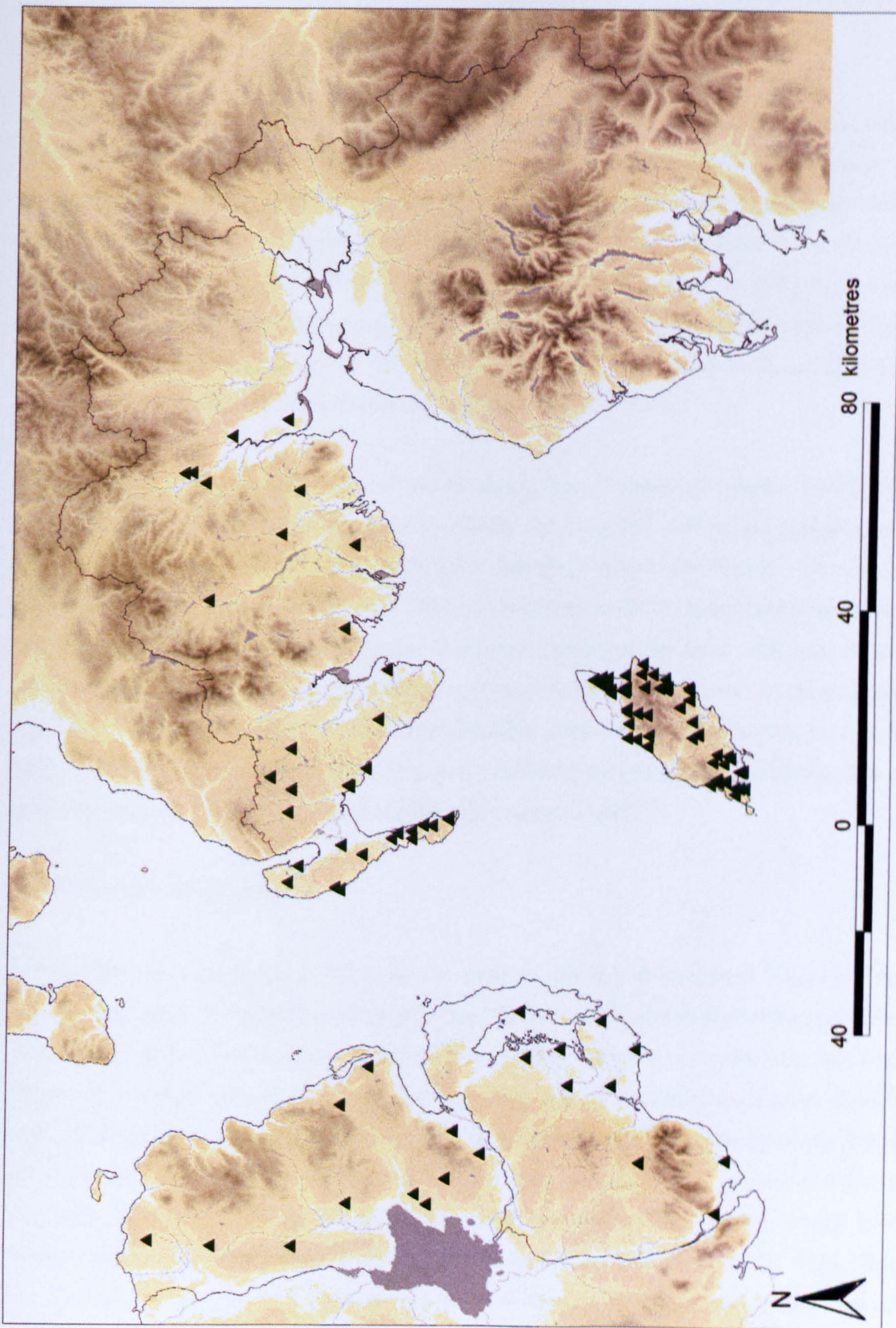


Figure 6.8: Cill names within the study area

possibility that the 'Kil' names of eastern Scotland represent ecclesiastical sites emanating from major Dál Riata monastic centres (1996, 99), suggesting again that they would have been secondary establishments from major centres.

Within the study area, 'Kil-' names are found widely distributed throughout Ireland, Man and Galloway, though occurring in concentrations in specific areas. The Rhinns, in particular, has a notable clustering of these sites, established throughout the peninsula, which contrasts with the fewer examples from the Machars. 'Kil-' names are found along the Nith valley, and show a strong correlation with waterways within the area. In Ireland, sites are widely distributed through Down and Antrim, although it must be noted that figure 6.8 may show less than the original density for Ireland, as data has been largely collected from less comprehensive sources than those used for Scotland (Mackay 1999).

Names containing the element 'kil' are notably absent from Cumbria (O'Sullivan 1980a, 88). Although some Cumbrian names, such as Gilcrux and Culgaith, may be interpreted as *cill* names, O'Sullivan notes the higher probability that they contain the Brittonic element *cil* (retreat), or Scandinavian *gil* (ravine). This interpretation would fit more comfortably with the presumed Brittonic and Scandinavian place-name strata of the area. 'Kil' names, and their westerly distribution, would seem to represent a real difference in the naming and density of ecclesiastical sites. There is no comparable place-name element within the eastern part of the study area, indicating possibly that a different ecclesiastical organisation was in place (though this cannot be concluded from place-names alone).

ANDÓIT: ANNAT-NAMES

A third ecclesiastical name found in Gaelic place-names and documentary sources is the term *andóit*, generally translated as 'church', and further consideration has been given to the status and function of these sites. Thought to have been coined at a slightly later date than 'Kil' and 'Donagh' names, *andóit* occurs frequently in Irish documentary sources, though not in Irish place-names. It is in Scotland that the element occurs as a place-naming device (MacDonald 1973; Clancy 1995). In the documentary sources, *andóit* appears to refer to ecclesiastical sites of some importance, characterised by MacDonald as those Christian sites where a patron saint was educated, or where relics were held (MacDonald 1973, 135). This has, however, been seen as a contrast to a series of sites in Scotland bearing place-names containing the element 'Annat-', which show no signs of having been centres of major importance, and are generally characterised by their anonymity and remote locations (Watson 1926, 250-1; MacDonald 1973, 135).

MacDonald addressed this issue in 1973, and explained the unimpressive nature of these sites as due to a shift in the meaning of the word *andóit*. He argued that *andóit* had come to have an anachronistic meaning, translating as 'old church', and denoting those sites which had previously been the site of an important church, but which had subsequently been abandoned or re-established in another location (MacDonald 1973, 138-9; MacQueen 1990, 30). Though plausible, this hypothesis is not supported by archaeological evidence for churches of early date at these sites, and Thomas Owen Clancy has more recently suggested an alternative explanation (Clancy 1995).

Clancy draws on recent studies of ecclesiastical organisation in Ireland, which have countered a previous overemphasis on the monastic nature of the Irish church. Scholars have used legal texts of the seventh and eighth century to suggest that the church in Ireland would have been strongly hierarchical, comprising a network of superior and subsidiary churches that would have provided pastoral care for communities within the landscape. Whilst monastic communities played a role in this pastoral activity, they are by no means regarded as the primary element within this organisation (Clancy 1995, 93-95). *Andóit* sites are interpreted as important components of this hierarchy, and the word is seen as 'a flexible technical term for a church in a superior position to others, possessing the relics of a saint, entitled to a share of pastoral dues, and having a responsibility for the maintenance of subordinate churches and for the provision of pastoral care' (Clancy 1995, 101). This would have meant that a number of such churches were spread throughout the landscape. With reference to 'Annat-' place-names, Clancy believes that, rather than denoting the site of the church itself, these names refer to places and resources that were held by the local *andóit*. This accounts for the many examples of compound 'Annat-' names, with meanings such as 'graveyard of the *andóit*', 'field of the *andóit*' or, as at Annat Hill in Dumfriesshire, 'hill of the *andóit*'. These names can then be tentatively linked to nearby sites known to have been of ecclesiastical importance during the early medieval period, which might have been the local *andóit* centre. This explanation neatly accounts for the anonymity of 'Annat' sites that concerned MacDonald, and also provides evidence that 'the pastoral model envisaged by the eighth- and ninth- century Irish legal texts and their subsequent commentators, existed in Scotland too' (Clancy 1995, 107).

In the study area, 'Annat' names are not common, which would concur with interpretation as superior churches within a wider network. MacDonald (1973, 140-143) lists four examples in the study area, dispersed through the landscape, to which Clancy adds further examples (though not securely located), including three possible examples in Cumbria (figure 6.9). Two of these terms in Scotland are directly linked to examples listed by MacDonald, which

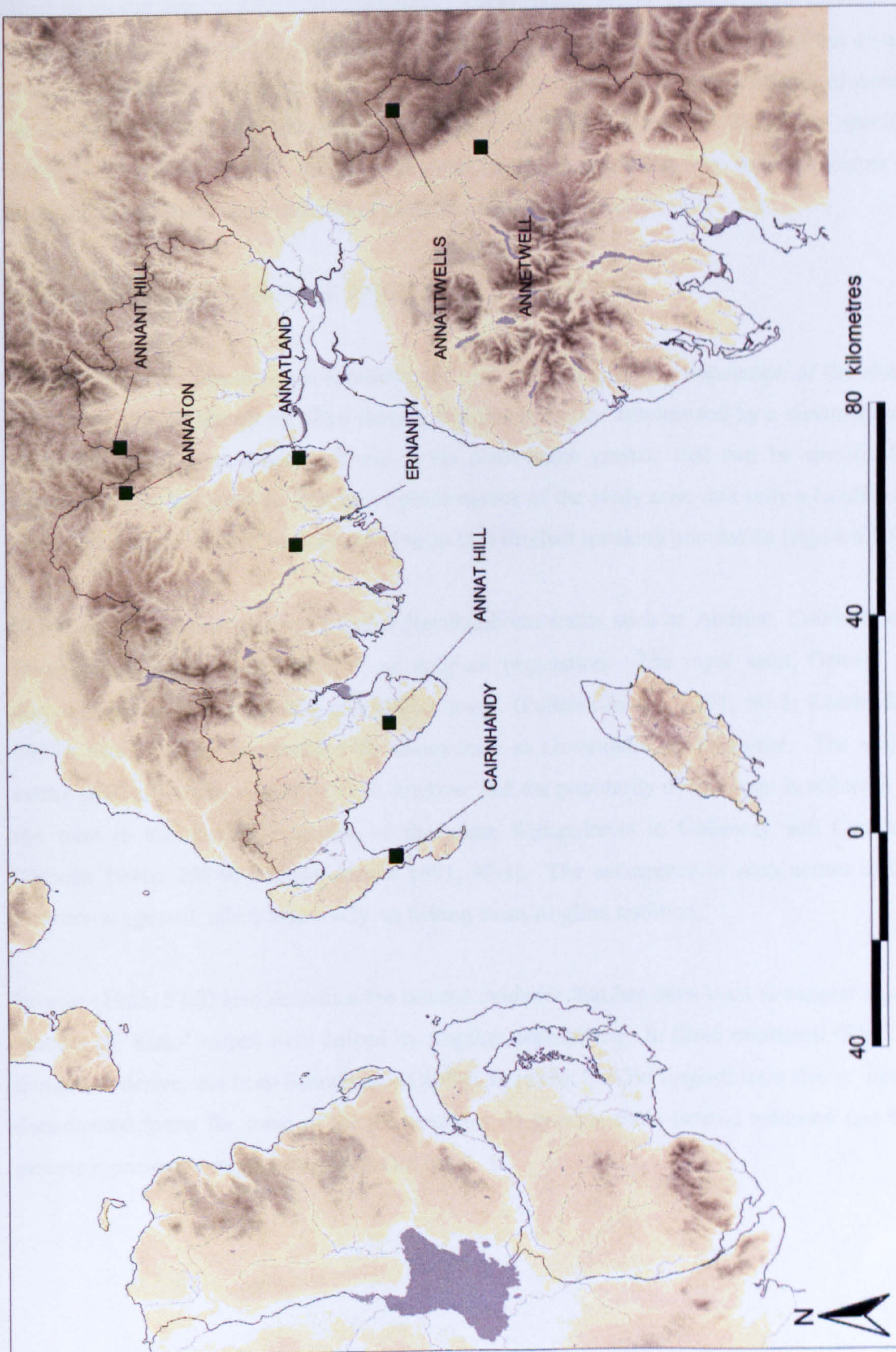


Figure 6.9: Annat names within the study area

would support the idea that 'Annat' names denote resources of major centres, as they would tend to cluster around significant locations. These names seem to correspond to areas of Gaelic speaking (denoted by the distribution of *baile*; Nicolaisen 2001, figure 14), but do not occur in the Gaelic speaking areas of the Isle of Man and Ireland. The significance of names in Cumbria is difficult to assess, particularly as they cannot be linked to specific ecclesiastical sites. Overall, the rarity of these names suggests that they indicate centres of high status, similar to sites referred to using the term *domnach*.

ECCLESIASTICAL NAMES OF ANGLIAN SIGNIFICANCE

Unlike Gaelic or Scandinavian speakers, the Old English speaking population of the study area had a limited impact on place-names, and this is further emphasised by a consideration of ecclesiastical place-names. There is no place-name generic that can be specifically associated with the Anglian stratum of place-names of the study area, and only a handful of ecclesiastical names have been ascribed to an Old English speaking population (figure 6.10).

'Kirk' names commemorating popular Northumbrian saints such as Andrew, Cuthbert and Oswald have been associated with an Anglian population. The royal saint, Oswald, is commemorated in Kirkoswald and Kirkcarswell (Fellows-Jensen 1991, 90-1; Cambridge 1995), which can be compared with names such as Oswaldkirk in Yorkshire. The major centre at Hexham was dedicated to St Andrew, and the popularity of this saint is reflected in the west in the several examples of the name Kirkandrews in Galloway and Cumbria (Brooke 1991a, 298-9; Fellows-Jensen 1991, 90-1). The occurrence of such names in the west are suggested, albeit tentatively, to belong to an Anglian tradition.

Brooke (1983, 57-8) also describes the limited evidence that has been used to suggest that a number of 'Kirk-' names were coined by Anglian populations. In these examples, 'Kirk' is thought to derive, not from Scandinavian *kirkja*, but from the Old English term *cirice*. Early documented forms for some of the place-names do provide some limited evidence that the generic represented might be *cirice* (table 6.1).

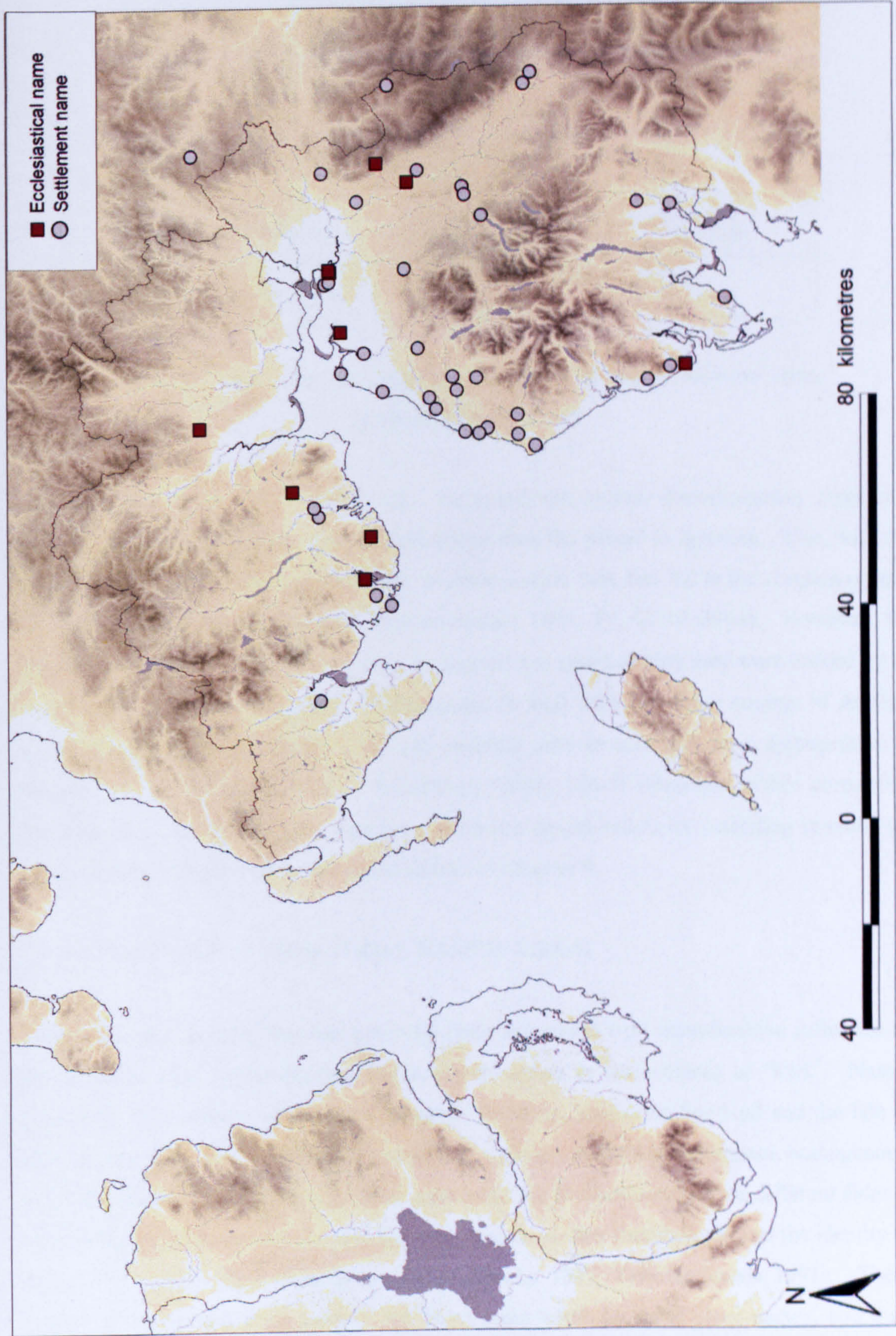


Figure 6.10: Place-names and ecclesiastical names of possible Anglian origin

Place-name	Previous documented form	Date of documentation
Kirksantan, Cumbria	Santacherche Kirkesanton	1087 1185
St Bees, Cumbria	Cherchebi Kirke bibeccoch	1125 1195
Kirkbride, Cumbria	Chirchebrid Kirkebride	1165 1187
Kirkgunzeon, Galloway	Cherchewinni Kirkewinnen	1159-1181 1174-1199
Kirkcudbright, Galloway	Cuthbrichtis Khirche Kyrke Cuthbert	1164 1200-1206

Table 6.1: Place-names possibly containing the Old English element 'cirice'
(from Brooke 1983, 58)

Such evidence is, however, debateable. As noted, the written documentation supporting these suggestions dates to several centuries later than the period in question. This, with the lack of names of this type in Northumbrian areas further east, has led to the Anglian origins of these names being questioned (Fellows-Jensen 1991, 91; Grant 2004). However, the distribution of these names would seem to support the assertion that they were coined by an Old English speaking population. These names fit well with the earlier stratum of Anglian names identified above (figure 6.10), and possibly refer to sites that were appropriated or founded by Northumbrian elites. Nicolaisen (2001, 106-8) observes further correlation between these names and sites that have produced Anglo-Saxon free-standing crosses, the significance of which will be discussed further in Chapter 9.

SCANDINAVIAN ECCLESIASTICAL NAMES: *KIRKJA*

The place-name generic that has generally been associated with Scandinavian influence on ecclesiastical sites is the element *kirkja*, which occurs in place-names as 'Kirk'. Names containing this element are found throughout Cumbria, southwest Scotland and the Isle of Man (figure 6.11; 6.12). Though this would, at a glance, suggest a widespread, homogenous, trend, the different forms taken by these names has led to discussions of the different dates at which they could have been formed, the significance of their distributions and the identity of those who created them (MacQueen 1956; Brooke 1983; Fellows-Jensen 1991). These debates focus on two main aspects: the word order taken by these place-names, and their distribution.

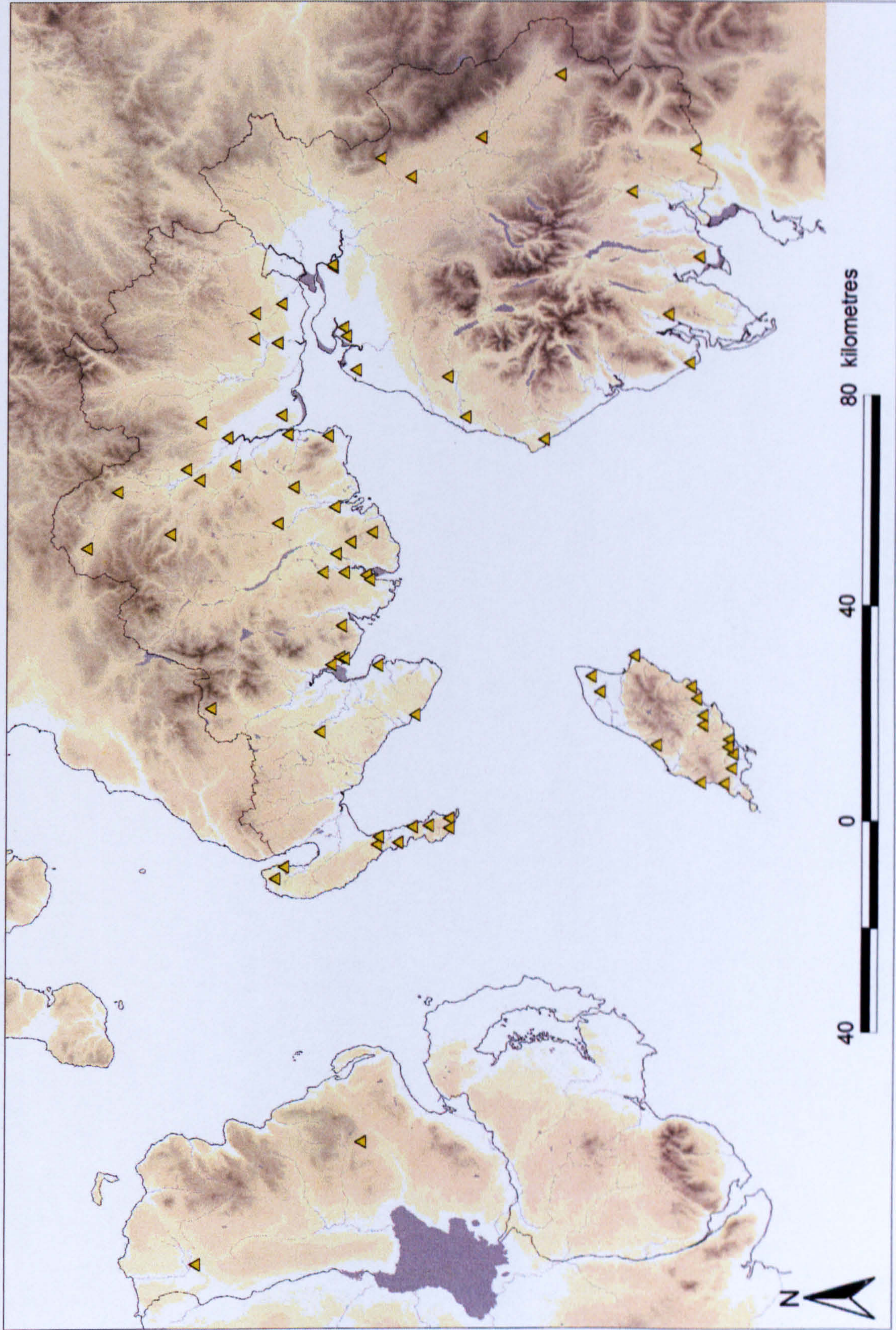


Figure 6.11: Kirk names in the study area

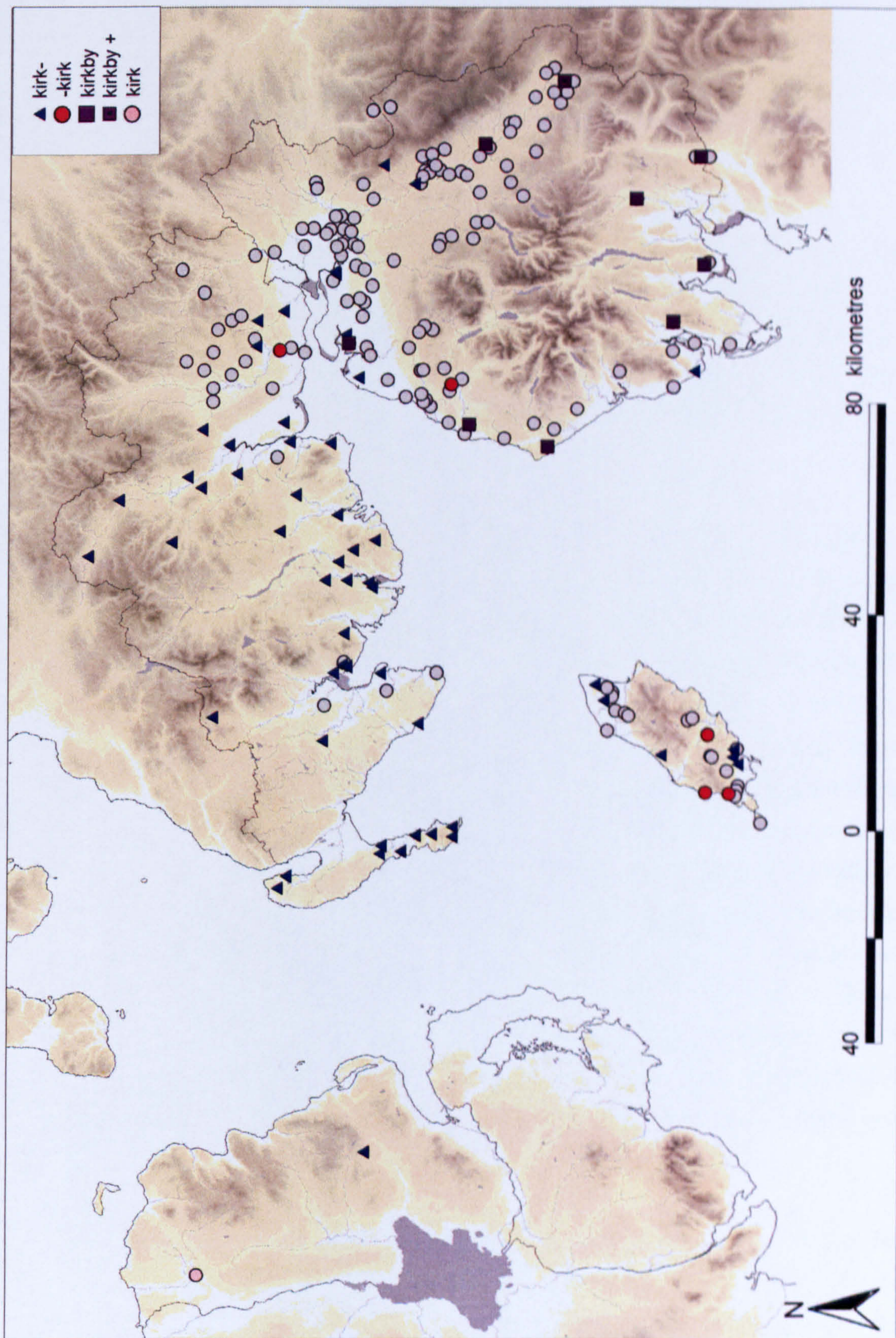


Figure 6.12: Kirk names and their forms, with the distribution of by names

In Cumbria, as in much of Scandinavian-influenced England, 'Kirk' is frequently found as 'Kirkby', compounded with the settlement element *-by'*. More rarely, the name is found in a '*-kirk*' form, occasionally preceded by the name of a saint, as at Bridekirk. These names, which follow the usual Scandinavian word order, would seem to form a natural proportion of the Scandinavian *-by'* place-names of the area, denoting sites where Scandinavian speakers encountered pre-existing churches, or established new ones (figure 6.12).

Throughout the wider area, however, the situation is more complex. Through much of southwest Scotland, and northern Cumbria, *kirkja* is used in names taking the form 'Kirk-', as in Kirkbride, often referred to as 'inversion compounds', where the qualifying element of the name, in many cases a saint, is found to follow the main element. A large number of these names have been identified in the study area, and their widespread occurrence has led to much debate.

Inversion compounds follow a Celtic word order, and so are seen to reflect Gaelic influence. The form is already known from the 'Kil-' names of Galloway. This has led to the simplistic explanation that many 'Kirk-' compounds reflect the replacement of 'Kil' with 'Kirk' under Scandinavian influence, and that other names were created following this pre-existing pattern (Fellows-Jensen 1991, 89; Nicolaisen 2001, 142). This explanation, which would attribute 'Kirk-' names to direct Scandinavian influence has, however, been disputed (MacQueen 1956, 145). Grant (2004) notes many examples of names where the 'kirk' name demonstrably predates the 'kil' name, and suggests further explanation is required. Also, the distribution of these names is far more extensive than that of settlement elements such as *-by'* and *-thveit*. Though MacQueen (1956) argues that Scandinavian influence would have been felt most strongly at centres of local importance, it seems highly unlikely that this would have been confined solely to ecclesiastical sites. 'Kirk' names do not seem to fit into a landscape of Scandinavian place-names. Although there is some correlation with 'fell' names, it is argued that this term is a borrowing into Scots, and as such cannot be ascribed to Scandinavian place-naming. An alternative explanation for a majority of 'Kirk-' names within the study area has therefore been sought.

MacQueen (1956, 139) notes that 'kirk' could have been adopted into Gaelic as a loanword, during a period of close contact with Scandinavian speakers. The replacement of 'Kil-' names, and the establishment of names with a Celtic word order, would therefore not require further explanation. MacQueen sees this interaction as a result of the simultaneous arrival of Norse and Gaelic speakers to Galloway in the tenth century, a phenomenon that he associates

with the *Gall-Ghaidhil* (MacQueen 1956, 136), and a suggestion which adds complexity to the debate.

However, 'Kil-' type names provide evidence for pre-existing Gaelic ecclesiastical names, and if Kirk was established as a loanword, then no mass movement of newcomers is needed to explain the Kirk compounds. A similar scenario might explain such names on the Isle of Man, where both Scandinavian and Gaelic languages are thought to have been in evidence (Brooke 1983, 62). These names would therefore appear to result from the indirect influence of Scandinavian language in a Gaelic milieu.

Brooke (1983) further removes 'Kirk' names from Scandinavian influence, attributing their occurrence to parochial reorganisation in the twelfth century, amongst a multilingual society (Brooke 1983, 62). She argues that 'Kirk' had been adopted into a Middle English dialect by this time, and consequently formed the natural place-naming device for new parishes established during developments in church organisation. 'Kirk' names are linked with the final overthrowing of Cumbric power and the decline of the Brittonic language in the mid-eleventh century (Brooke 1983, 67). Brooke's argument, though explaining the lack of correlation between Scandinavian settlement and 'Kirk-' names, would seem extreme, and does not take into account the presence of 'Kirkby' names, which appear to suggest that *kirkja* was in use as a place-naming element in the area, during a period of Scandinavian settlement prior to the tenth century. Fellows-Jensen (1991, 91-93) takes a more central stance, and ascribes these names to influence from a variety of areas. The presence of 'Kirkbride' type names is attributed to a confrontation between Scandinavian 'Kirkby' names and the Gaelic 'Kilbride' names of the west. This would account for their presence in Gaelic speaking areas, and highlights the interaction within this area that would undoubtedly have existed. It is also suggested that the 'Kirk-' compounds of southwest Scotland would have been the main influence for Manx parish names. Fellows-Jensen acknowledges that the twelfth century reorganisation of the church would account for younger examples of this type, following a widespread, pre-existing form (Fellows-Jensen 1991, 92). Names like 'Kirkby Stephen' seem to represent a combination of traditions. Kirkby follows a normal word order for Scandinavian names, but combined with a second element, often a saint, would seem to draw together the range of linguistic traditions evident in the area.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter works from the premise that different ecclesiastical terms used in early place-names represent different types or periods of Christian activity. The Latin roots of a majority of early terms demonstrate the overarching language of the church, but their diversity represents the divergent ways that Christianity, or ecclesiastical terminology, could be adopted amongst different communities. Some 55 such terms have been identified by Simon Taylor (1998b), only a handful of which have been considered here, although the few terms studied represent those that were most commonly employed, and therefore the most relevant to regional studies.

The uncertain chronology of place-names, and the problems associated with their interpretation, makes conclusions necessarily tentative. However, based on the observations of those who have studied these names in detail, and drawing on the distribution maps compiled for the study area, it is possible to propose hypotheses regarding the development of ecclesiastical organisation of the study area, which can subsequently be assessed when compared and contrasted to available archaeological and historical evidence. A simplified map shows the broad zones identified (figure 6.13).

The earliest phase of ecclesiastical place-names identified within the study area are the examples of 'eccles' names in Dumfriesshire. A date prior to the seventh century is accepted, and as such, these would fit into a Brittonic, pre-Anglian, context. Although these names are rare, a number of observations can be made concerning their overall location, and the cultural context in which they were established. These 'eccles' names occur along the major western route into Scotland from the south, from the crossing of the Solway (McCarthy 2002, 64). The valleys of the River Nith and Annan are known to have been centres of political significance from prehistoric times, attested by the major fortifications at the mouth of the Nith (Ward Law), and in Annandale (Burnswark). These valleys would have provided an important route northwards through the uplands, which was followed by the postulated Roman road, with its forts and temporary camps, leading from Carlisle to the northwest (RCHM 1994). The establishment of Christian centres along this route would have been a highly visible undertaking, and a strong ideological statement. It has been suggested that the Nith formed something of a boundary zone between Brittonic and Gaelic speakers (*cair* does not extend further west, and *baile*, *cill* are rare east of this line). Whilst linear boundaries may be an anachronistic concept, strong ideological or political investments (such as hill forts or churches) in these boundary zones would have been a means of attesting the identity and influence of different polities. The lack of 'eccles' names

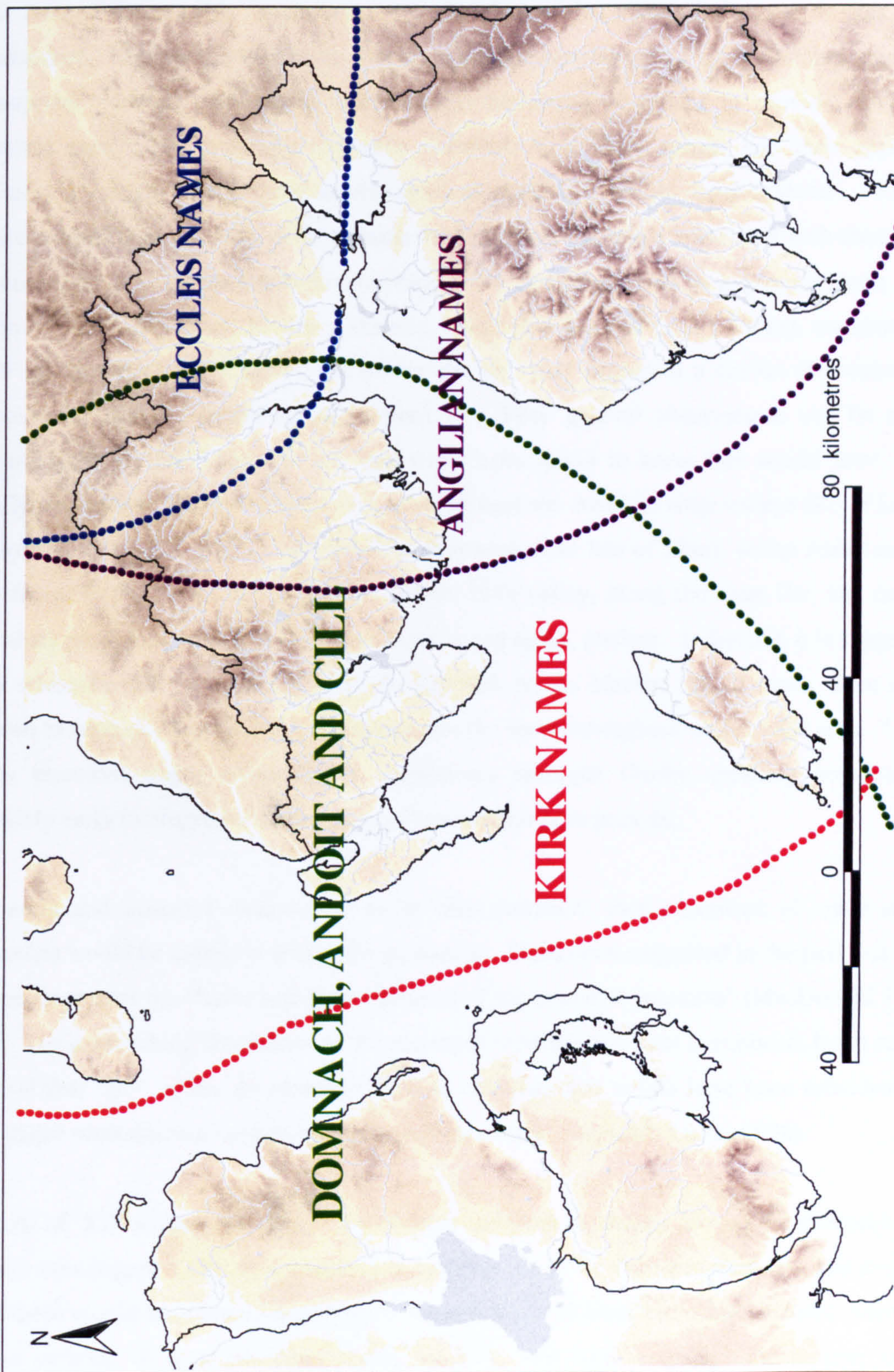


Figure 6.13: Simplified map of place-name zones within the study area

in Cumbria is notable, and appears to represent different ideological choices of communities further south.

It is west of the possible 'boundary zone' of Nithsdale that *andoit* and *domnach* sites were established. Historical work shows that these names were bestowed upon churches enjoying a superior position amongst an ecclesiastical hierarchy, organised to provide extensive pastoral care. The mutually exclusive distribution of these terms, and their apparent infrequency, suggests that these names represent centres of similar, superior status. 'Annat' place-names do not directly refer to ecclesiastical sites, but lands associated with them, and so consideration of their distribution (of only a few examples) must be in general terms. The form of *domnach* names, Knock y Doonee, Rhullick y Doonee (Isle of Man), translated as 'hill of the church' and 'graveyard of the church', may represent a similar dislocation of place-name and the centre being referred to. Very general observations can be made regarding their distribution, which appears to correspond to areas that would have been easily accessible. *Domnach* names occur on or near the coast, in river valleys (River Lagan in Ireland), or along major routes (such as that across the Isle of Man), whilst Annat names are found at the mouth and upper part of the Nith valley, along the river Urr, and on the Machars peninsula. The date of these names is, yet again, unclear. In Ireland, it is suggested that *domnach* fell out of use prior to the AD 500, but as Markus (2003) states, there is no reason to suppose that the date of this term was the same throughout such a wide area. These sites represent major ecclesiastical foundations amongst Gaelic speaking populations, possibly early in origin, but retaining significance into later periods.

If *andóit* and *domnach* names refer to 'mother churches', then a network of lower status churches would be expected within the landscape. It has been suggested in the past that 'kil' names represent the 'lesser and least churches of the monastic paruchia' (MacDonald 1979, 19). The overarching dominance of the monastic paruchia has been questioned, but it seems logical that 'kil-' names do represent smaller churches that would have been subsidiary to the major ecclesiastical centres (as suggested for eastern Scotland; Taylor 1996).

A map of 'Kil' names shows that they seem to infill the landscape around the *domnach* and Annat sites (figure 6.14). It is tempting to 'join up' all of the different elements, and suggest that these would have been founded as a secondary tier of local ecclesiastical sites, from the major centres. It must be remembered, however, that these maps are incomplete; many Christian centres will not have had specifically ecclesiastical names, and many names will have been lost. However, it seems reasonable to assume, from their distribution and density, that 'kil' names represent local centres of Christian activity providing religious foci for a

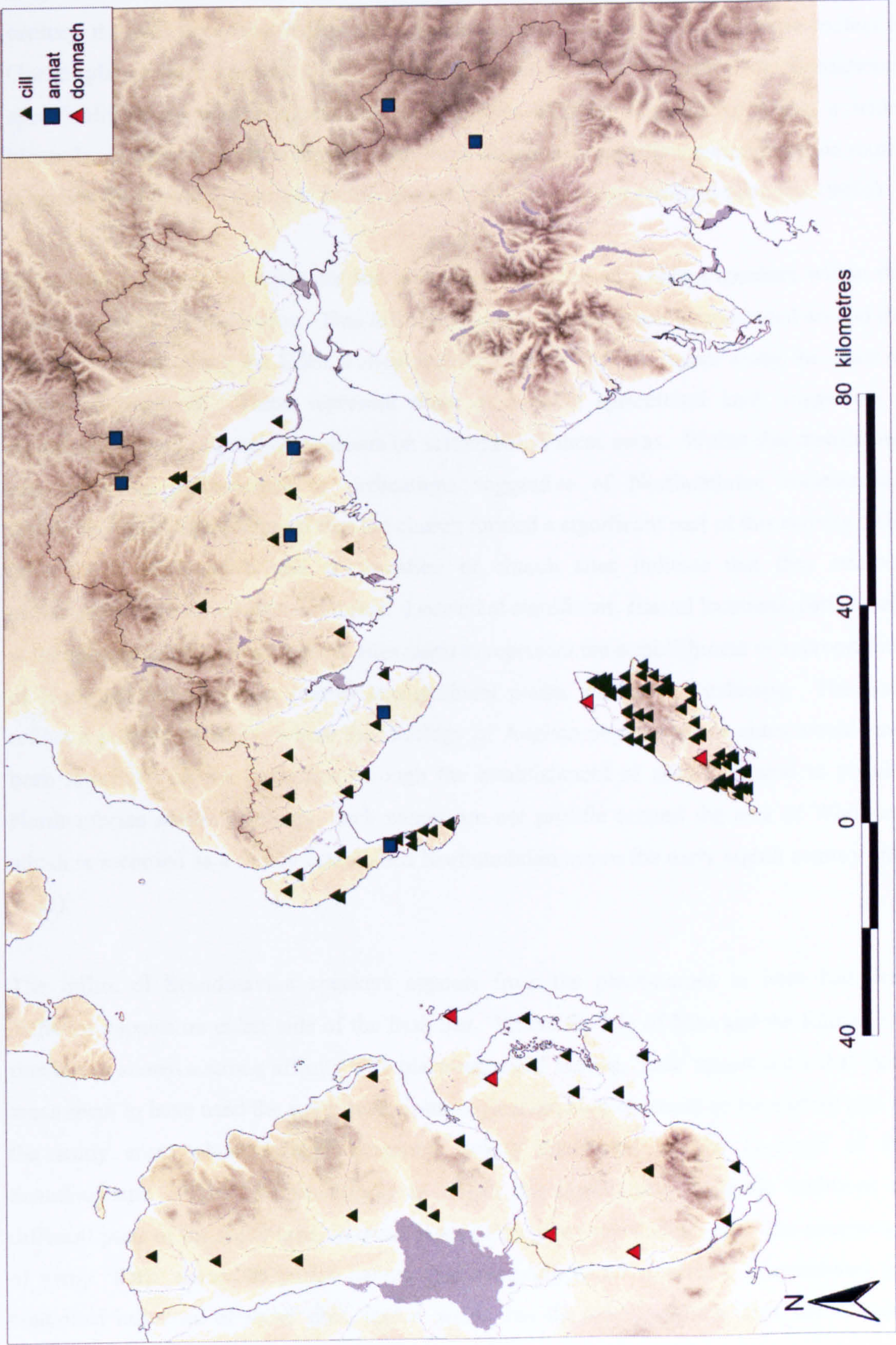


Figure 6.14: Gaelic ecclesiastical place-names within the study area

wider populace than *andóit* or *domnach* names. The date of this proliferation remains unclear. Whilst some of the 'kil' sites may have been established as early as the seventh century, it seems likely that these names developed over a long period, within the context of Gaelic place-names in the wider landscape. Rather than indicative of monasticism specifically, these names appear represent centres of local Christianity within a wider hierarchy of sites. In Ireland in particular, these sites appear to follow communication routes (Comber 2001), which does not fit the 'eremitic' role previously assumed (Thomas 1998b).

Place-names provide evidence for the increasing influence of Anglian speakers within the eastern parts of the study area. This influence appears to have been concentrated around the Cumbrian coast, along the Eden Valley and focussed at specific points along the coast of southwest Scotland. These represent areas of suitable agricultural land, suggesting a significant impact of Anglian speakers on settlement in these areas. Within this distribution can be found place-names or dedications suggestive of Northumbrian ecclesiastical influence, which might suggest that the church formed a significant part of this activity. The later 'kirk' place-names and continuation of church sites indicate that they retained ecclesiastical status into later centuries. Located at significant, coastal locations, particularly at the mouths of major rivers, these sites seem to represent the establishment or appropriation of Northumbrian Christian centres at significant points within the landscape. This may reflect a political strategy, where the ideology of Anglian populations or elites would have been imprinted on the landscape through the establishment of sites dedicated to popular Northumbrian saints. Notably, such names are not prolific around the area of Whithorn, which is recorded as a newly established Northumbrian see in the early eighth century (*HE* V.23).

The influx of Scandinavian speakers appears from the place-names to have had very different impacts on either side of the Irish Sea. Where the Isle of Man and the Rhinns had previously shown a strong affinity with place-names of Ireland, 'kirk' names show that these areas seem to have used the same ecclesiastical place-naming elements as the eastern part of the study area, whilst Ireland remained largely unaffected by the language of the Scandinavians. 'Kirk' names appear to reflect the pre-existing linguistic traditions of different parts of the study area, in some cases being given to existing sites. The occurrence of many 'Kirk' names as parish names, and surviving parish churches, demonstrates the continued influence of these sites, and it seems that the sites to which these names were given formed the basis of subsequent proto-parochial organisation of the area.

These common elements represent only specific elements with a developing landscape of ecclesiastical place-names. It is worth noting that documented monastic sites within the area do not have names that are imbued with specifically ecclesiastical meaning, and as such, it is clear that this chapter does not provide a comprehensive view of the Christian landscape. As such, the conclusions drawn represent only part of the picture. The elements described seem to reflect the gradual Christianisation of the landscapes around the Irish Sea, and also variations in the organisation of ecclesiastical sites throughout the landscape, which can be explored further by drawing on other forms of evidence.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ECCLESIASTICAL SITES, LONG DISTANCE EXCHANGE AND CRAFTWORKING CENTRES

The development of Christianity around the Irish Sea cannot be discussed without reference to the political, social and economic context in which ecclesiastical centres were founded and Christian monuments erected. Consideration of these issues can involve a wide range of sources, but this study will focus on two main areas: imported ceramics and evidence for craftworking. The distribution and context of these finds provides an insight, albeit fragmentary, into the social and economic organisation of communities around the northern Irish Sea, the polities with whom they aligned themselves, and the way that high status artefacts could have been used to articulate power and ideology.

Imported ceramic and glass found in western Britain provide evidence for long distance communication networks that were in place during the fifth to seventh centuries. The study of this material has been considerable over the past 50 years and yet many questions remain. Although often labelled simply as 'trade', the mechanisms that brought this material to Britain are complex, and cannot be explained in purely commercial terms. Recent studies have drawn attention to the non-commercial aspects of exchange, highlighting the possible political and ideological agendas behind importation (Carver 1993; Harris 2003). Contact with the Eastern Mediterranean and the Continent drew western British communities into a wider Christian sphere, and would have facilitated the exchange of ideology and material culture across a wide area.

The acquisition of imported goods suggests the ability to control and manipulate surplus. This is also demonstrated by evidence for specialist production, in particular, high status metalwork. Items of personal jewellery, particularly brooches, were used as symbols of elite status (Nieke 1993), and control of their production and distribution would have been of particular importance. Similarly, ecclesiastical metalwork, including reliquaries, bells, croziers and Eucharistic vessels, whilst outwardly demonstrating the wealth of the church and illustrating devotional investment, was also actively used in the collection of tribute, as a symbol of the status of an ecclesiastical elite (Lucas 1986, 13). The capacity of the church to produce metalwork was therefore essential to their interests (Bourke 1993, 24), and this may

have been undertaken through centralised production at ecclesiastical sites, or through the patronage of specialist craftworking centres.

Imported goods and evidence for specialised craftworking can illuminate a number of aspects of society. Both demonstrate the ability of political centres to control surplus, whether directly or through systems of reciprocity. As such, the presence of high status items can be seen as evidence that these would have been 'central places' within their landscapes, maintaining relations with surrounding settlements (Fabech 1999a; 1999b; 2000; Hjärthner-Holdar 2002). The distribution of imported goods provides evidence for long distance supply networks, and for the localised systems of distribution that formed the basis of early medieval society (Doherty 1980; Gerriets 1983; 1987). These items can be placed into context using evidence drawn from archaeological and historical sources, and interpretation of the mechanisms of exchange can be undertaken in greater depth using models drawn from economic anthropology.

The evidence used in this chapter relates primarily to the earlier part of the period of interest. Following a decline in trade of imported Continental goods in the eighth century, no comparable material emerges for the ninth and tenth. It is recognised that other indicators of exchange, and most particularly coinage, might further elucidate the shifting relationships between polities. However, coinage frequently leads to discussions in terms of 'trade', rather than ideologically-driven exchange, and this, with the constraints imposed by time and length of this thesis, has meant that such material has not been included. Similarly, the evidence for craftworking is also focussed in the period prior to the ninth century. This is partly due to the clearer association between ecclesiastical, and therefore ideological, sites and craftworking during the earlier period, but is also a characteristic of the evidence from the study area. Whilst precious metalwork itself attests to the continuation of ideological investment in craftworking, this study looks primarily at the sites where the material was produced, and these have generally been assigned to the earlier part of the period, often with broad sixth to ninth century parameters.

This creates something of a chronological imbalance. However, the value of the material as an indicator of ideological alignment goes some way towards outweighing this disadvantage, and is in itself an indication of the way that investment strategies changed over time. During this earlier period, evidence for craftworking and imported goods provides a counterbalance to the relative scarcity of sculpture (see Chapter 5); this is redressed during the latter part of the period of interest, demonstrating clear changes in monumental strategies.

**IMPORTED CERAMIC AND GLASS IN WESTERN BRITAIN
FROM THE FIFTH TO THE SEVENTH CENTURY**

Early medieval imports (ceramic and glass) have been found at numerous western British sites, and have been used to describe two main phases of importation, the first from the Mediterranean in the fifth and sixth centuries, and the second from western France in the sixth and seventh centuries.

Study of this material began in earnest with the publication of Radford's classification of imported pottery types, following excavations at Tintagel (Radford 1956a; Alcock 1983, 48). Radford (1956a, 60) identified four main classes of imported pottery, labelled A, B, C and D. With the exception of Class C, which has since been identified as medieval, this classification is still widely used, albeit added to and modified slightly. Charles Thomas added a further three groups, Classes E, F and G (Thomas 1959), and although Classes F and G have since been shown to be Romano-British in origin, Class E, or more commonly 'E ware' remains one of the most discussed of the imported ceramic types (Campbell 1991; Wooding 1988; 1996a; 1996b; Mansfield 2002). The most recent typology for imported pottery in western Britain, as described by various scholars, is as demonstrated in Table 7.1.

Fourteen sites within the study area have produced imported material, which, in addition to providing valuable chronological indicators for the contexts in which they are found, can be used to discuss the communication links, economic strengths and ideological alignment of different polities.

Class	Subdivision	Description	Date	Provenance
A	Phocean Red Slip Ware (PRSW)	Bowls and dishes in a soft, orange red fabric, covered with a darker red slip. The bases are sometimes decorated with stamped motifs.	Late fifth to early sixth century	Kiln site was found at Phocaea, western Turkey. An origin in Asia Minor is therefore suggested (Hayes 1972; 1980, <i>lix</i> ; Langlotz 1969 in Wooding 1996a, 42)
	African Red Slip Ware (ARSW)	Bowls in a darker, harder fabric than PRSW with a wash on interior and exterior. Rouletted rims, but no further decoration.	Early sixth century	No kiln site has been found, but an origin in Tunisia is likely (Hayes 1980, <i>li-liii</i>)

Class	Subdivision	Description	Date	Provenance
B	<i>Bi</i> Late Roman 2	Globular, two-handled amphorae, with combed decoration in a band about the shoulder point.	Fourth to seventh century (in western Britain, late fifth to sixth century)	Aegean, Argolid area of Greece
	<i>Bii</i> Late Roman 1	Narrow, thin-walled amphorae with sharp ribbing over the length.	Fifth to seventh century	Mediterranean, possibly Cicilia in southern Turkey
	<i>Biv</i>	Tall, narrow amphorae with one or two handles. Decorated with light external ribbing.	First to seventh century	Asia Minor, almost certainly the Sardis area of southern Turkey
	<i>Bv</i>	Cylindrical amphorae, with pointed toe and collar rims.	Late fourth century, possibly into the fifth	Central Tunisia
D	-	Black, colour coated greywares which in Britain comprise bowls and mortaria (Rigoir 1968 in Campbell <i>et al</i> 1997, 319)	Sixth century	Western France, possibly Bordeaux
E	-	Gritty coarseware, occurring as jars, beakers, bowls, pitchers, lids and unguent jars, in a variety of colours	Late sixth to seventh century	Western France

Table 7.1: Classes of imported pottery in western Britain (after Radford 1956; Thomas 1959, Hayes 1972; 1980; Fulford 1989; Campbell 1991; Lane 1994, 106; Wooding 1996a, 42)

MEDITERRANEAN IMPORTS

Imported Mediterranean ceramics found in western Britain have been ascribed to two main areas of production - the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa - both of which produced the high quality tablewares and amphorae, which formed the main components of assemblages of imported pottery throughout the Mediterranean region. It is widely assumed that amphorae would have been used for the transportation of olive oil and wine. Olive oil was a particularly important commodity, representing a basic food source, and also used as fuel for lighting, and the base for medicaments, soaps, skin oils, perfumes and cosmetics (Mattingley 1988a, 33). The amphorae are thought to have formed the larger component of varied cargoes, with Phocian Red Slip ware (hereafter PRSW) and African Red Slip ware (ARSW) forming only a small proportion of cargoes, as 'space fillers'. Such cargoes have been identified archaeologically at the seventh century wreck site of Yassi Ada.

A 'package' of goods from the Aegean has been identified, comprising PRSW, frequently in association with amphorae types *Bii* and *Biv*, and imported to Britain during the late fifth to

early sixth centuries. North African wares comprised tableware (ARSW), found with amphorae (Bv), for which a Tunisian origin has been suggested; a sixth-century date is preferred for the importation of these wares into Britain (Fulford and Peacock 1984, 48-114). Although the Aegean and Tunisian wares differ slightly in terms of chronology, their occurrence on the same sites indicates that they represent similar patterns of activity, and part of a specific phase of contact between the Eastern Empire and British polities (Campbell 1991, 189; Harris 2003) (figure 7.1).

In Britain, the Mediterranean pottery shows a marked distribution, confined largely to southwest England, with examples in Ireland, and isolated occurrences further north (figure 7.1). The distinct, western distribution of these goods has been used to suggest that the interaction represented is not simply commercially-driven exchange, which might have resulted in a more random distribution, but the articulation of specific relationships between the elite of the Eastern empire and western British polities.

Within the study area, just two sites have produced Mediterranean imports to date, both of which lie in southwest Scotland (figure 7.2). The Mote of Mark, a hill fort site overlooking the Urr estuary (figure 7.3) produced only two adjoining sherds of *Bi* (LR2) amphora, and the abraded nature of the pottery makes it unclear whether they were brought to the site as part of a complete vessel, or were deposited at a later date (Campbell forthcoming). At Whithorn, however, the assemblage of Mediterranean imports is more substantial, and it seems that this centre participated in the same supply networks as those centred in the southwest. Some 211 sherds of amphorae have been recovered, from ten vessels: three *Bi* (LR2), three *Bii* (LR1), one *Biv*, one *Bv*, two *Bmisc*, and fragments of ARSW. The presence of fineware amongst these ceramics has led to the suggestion that these goods formed part of cargoes brought directly from the Mediterranean, rather than shipped from one of the import centres in southwest Britain (Campbell *et al* 1997, 316). As the site lies outside the main area of Mediterranean importation and is not a prominent site (though the Isle of Whithorn may have been the first point of contact), it appears that this must have been a well known, and deliberately targeted centre. By considering the wider significance attributed to Mediterranean imports, the importance of this material to interpretation of Whithorn, and the ideological investment strategies of the community, can be considered.

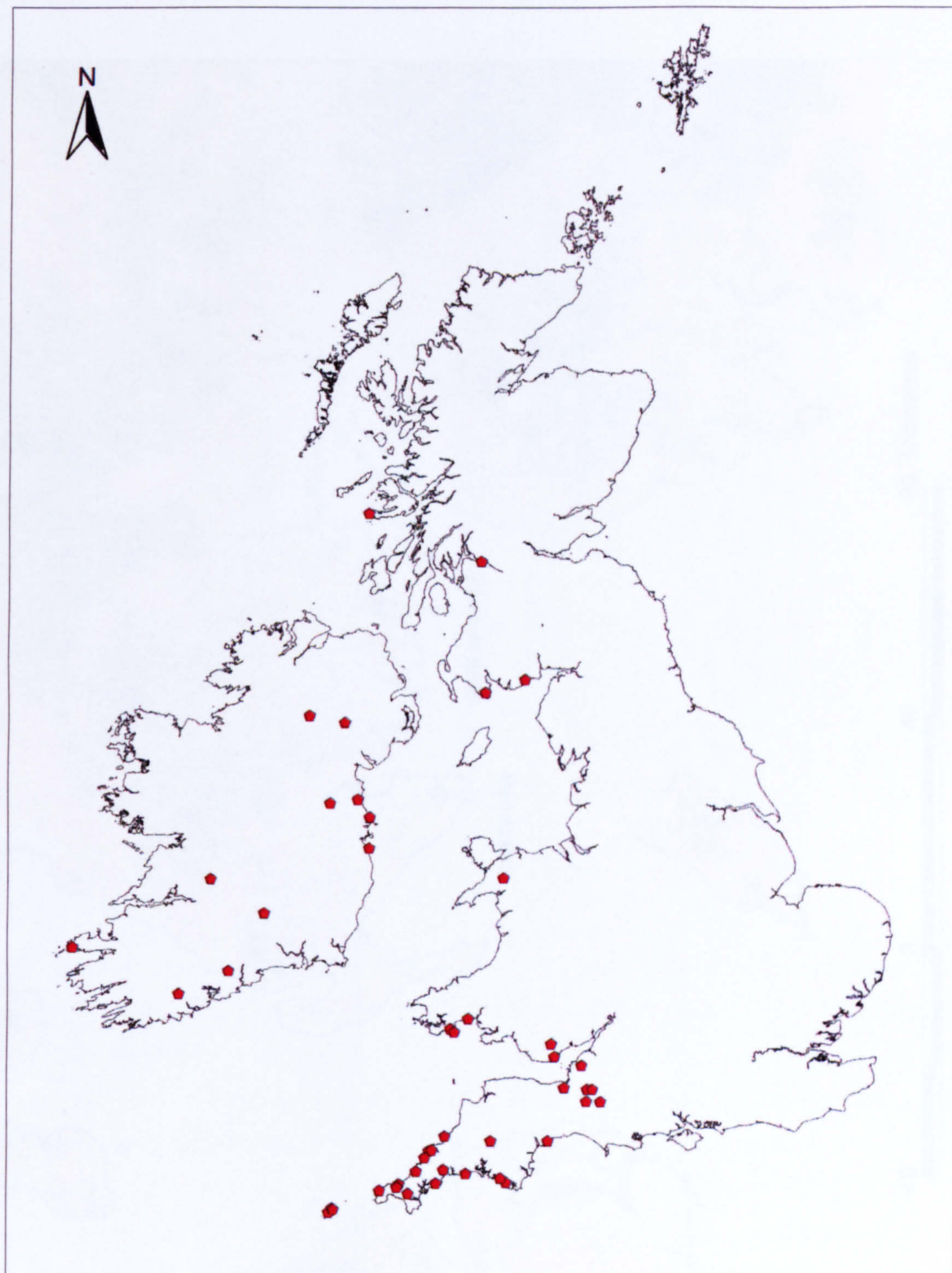


Figure 7.1: Mediterranean imports in Britain

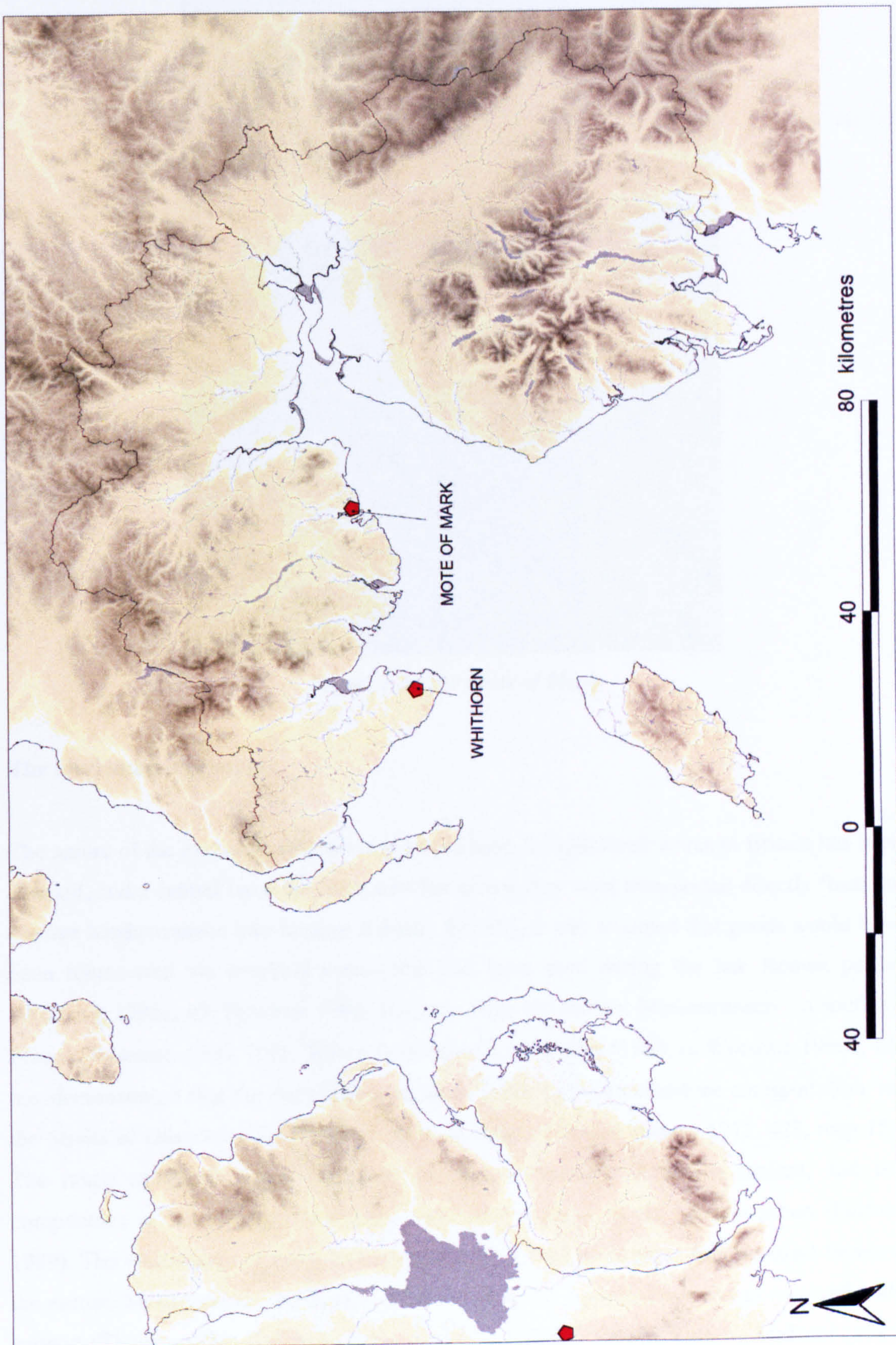


Figure 7.2: Mediterranean imports in the study area



Figure 7.3: The Mote of Mark

The mechanisms of supply

The nature of the exchange systems that would have brought these wares to Britain has been debated, and a central issue has been whether or not they were transported directly from the Eastern Mediterranean into western Britain. Initially, it was assumed that goods would have been transported via overland routes that had been used during the late Roman period (Wooding 1996a, 43; Bowman 1996, 101), *i.e.* from the eastern Mediterranean via southern France (Bowman 1996, 101). However, fieldwork by Wailes (1963, in Wooding 1996a, 43) has demonstrated that the distribution of these goods indicates maritime transportation via the Straits of Gibraltar and around the western coast of France (Hayes 1972, 423, map 15). The range of vessel forms identified on sites in western Britain is limited, and the components of assemblages have been compared to those in the Mediterranean (Fulford 1989). The consistency of these 'packages' has been used to propose direct contact between the eastern Mediterranean and Britain (Fulford 1989, 4), a premise which has received wide support (Thomas 1988; Campbell 1991; Wooding 1996a). Recent work by McGrail (1997, 265-288) demonstrates that sailing directly from the Mediterranean to western Britain is likely to have been relatively commonplace from prehistoric or Roman times, and as such,

need not have been the momentous undertaking that is often alluded to. Tidal patterns would have meant that, whilst routes would have been difficult from northern Gaul to Tintagel, the southwest would have been a suitable landing place for ships sailing in from the Atlantic (McGrail 1997, 265-288). This would further support the proposed direct supply link, and it appears that the ceramic evidence from Whithorn indicates direct contact between this community and the Eastern Mediterranean.

The scale of this communication has also been debated. Some scholars take the minimalist view that all known imports could have arrived in less than five voyages (Alcock 1987; Thomas 1988). Others, however, are willing to interpret these journeys as evidence for continued links, possibly tens of journeys *per annum* (Fulford 1989, 4-5; Campbell 1991; Lane 1994). Campbell has noted that the respective date ranges of the Aegean and African wares would suggest a minimum date range of AD 500 to 525, indicating that a sustained, albeit relatively short, period of contact is likely.

Control of exchange, and motives behind the supply of goods to Western Britain

The arrival of imported goods in western Britain is readily, and frequently, described as 'trade' (Thomas 1988; Campbell 1991; Lane 1994). However, consideration of the historical context of this supply indicates that this term is somewhat misleading (Mytum 1992, 261). Trade is understood as transactions 'between relative strangers who are not tied to each other by special relations...it is impersonal. It does not have, nor is it meant to have, a unifying effect' (Van Baal 1975, 43-4). However, studies of the exchange networks of the Mediterranean during the early first millennium have highlighted the highly politicised nature of supply (Mattingley 1988a; Mattingley 1988b, 159; Carver 1993, 36-7; Kingsley and Decker 2001, 19*n*), indicating that the movement of goods was widely controlled by the landholding elite, and used as a means of cementing political alliances (Harris 2003). Following the decline of state-controlled supply in the Mediterranean, a multitude of exchange relationships were forged, resulting in what Wickham describes as 'fifty games of chess being played at once' (Wickham 1985 in Carver 1993, 39). Exchange would have been controlled by the emergent secular or ecclesiastical elite, major landowners, who, within their own estates or 'little kingdoms' would have forged and maintained exchange relationships with other influential individuals or communities. Evidence indicates that relationships would have been articulated by individuals acting as diplomats and emissaries, in particular between the Eastern Empire and polities of the Mediterranean and western Europe (Whittaker 1983; Dark 2001, 91-92; Harris 2003, 53-61). These *negotiatores* would have been closely affiliated to specific elites; if wealth and production were tied up in such

relations, then trade, whilst it would have existed, would not have predominated (Whittaker 1983, 173).

This subject has been explored in some detail by Harris (2003), who has built on studies of amphorae (Karagiorgou 2001), to suggest that the exportation of goods to Britain and western Europe from the eastern Mediterranean formed part of a wider, elite-controlled network of supply, indicative of political or ideological contact. Historical evidence for large, diplomatic gifts (Harris 2003, 30-33) and the involvement of Byzantium in political affairs in the west, provides a context for the maintenance of such relations (Dark 2001, 91-2; Harris 2003, 60-1). Byzantine merchants in the west would have participated in exchange, but are also suggested to have played a diplomatic role as a link between the east and west, bringing communities of western Europe and Britain into contact with Mediterranean ideas, material culture, and practices (Dark 2001, 91).

A study based on amphorae alone cannot be considered conclusive, but the evidence put forward by Harris (2003), Whittaker (1983) and Carver (1993, 39) strongly suggests that the presence of Mediterranean goods at Whithorn, as in the rest of western Britain, is likely to have resulted from multiple, complex relationships, consciously forged by the elite of the eastern Empire. Whilst the supply of goods is likely to have been instigated from the east, however, the British elite will have amassed goods to participate in exchange, indicating acceptance of these contacts, and suggesting a desire to invest in imported goods. It remains to be considered why they chose to forge these contacts, and previous work on the impetus behind supply must be given attention.

Early studies explained the arrival of Byzantine goods Britain as having been instigated by the church, as a means of acquiring wine for communion (Thomas 1959; Doherty 1980, 77; Alcock 1983, 50); to support the Christian association further, amongst stamped motifs adorning PRSW and ARSW were cross and chi-rho motifs (Hayes 1972, 228; figure 7.4). However, this was disputed in favour of more commercially-driven explanations and it was frequently suggested that the acquisition of tin from Cornwall would have been a motive for exchange (Thomas 1988, 14-15; *cf* McCormick 2001, 47). A number of other possible items for exchange from the rest of the country are highlighted by Alcock, including lead, copper, silver, slaves, hides and wool (Alcock 2003, 90). However, whilst of value, the range of resources that are suggested do not provide compelling evidence for the targeting of western Britain for economic reasons.

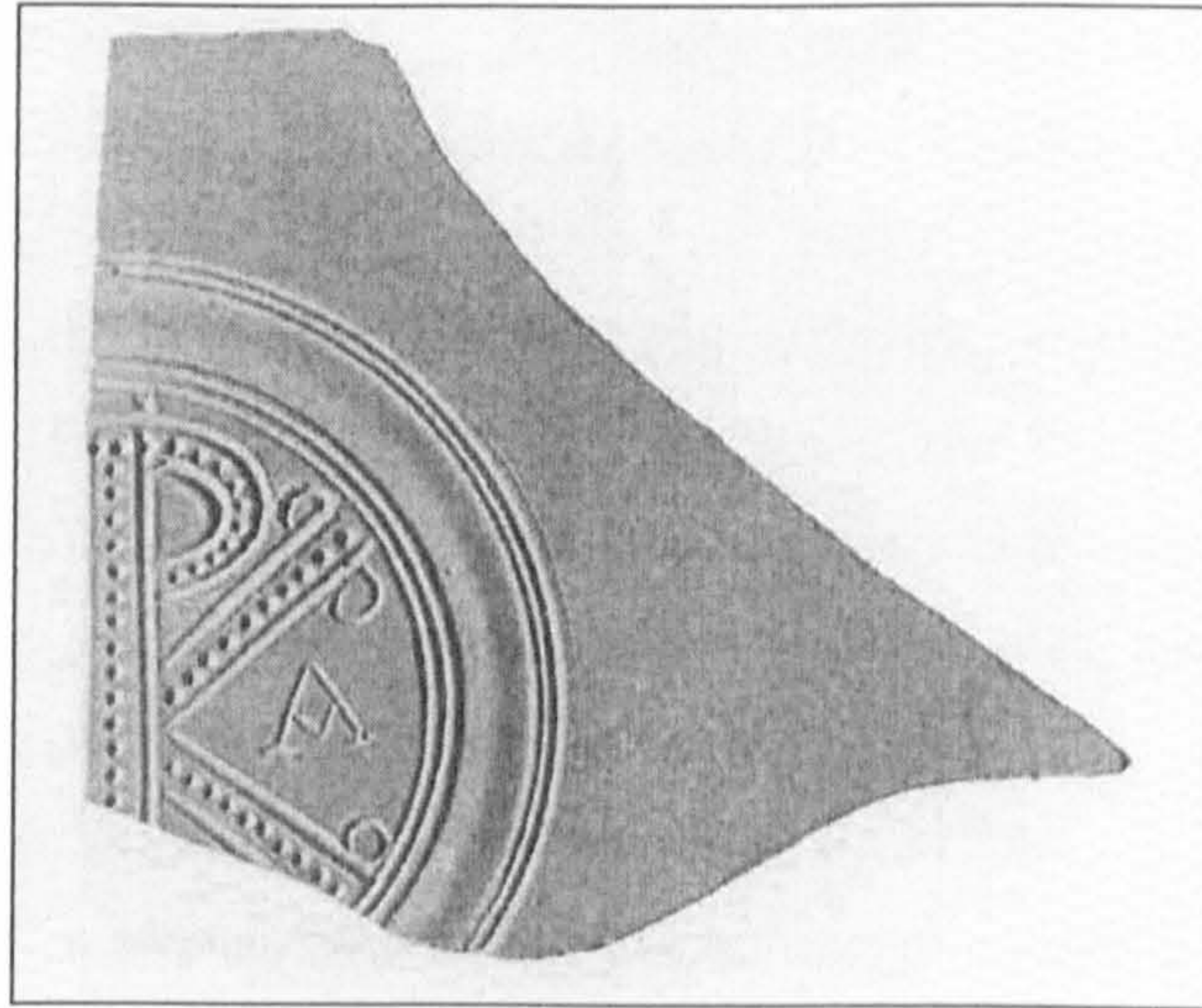


Figure 7.4: Chi-rho design, stamped on ARSW (Harris 2003, 158)

Since then, archaeologists have returned to ideological interpretations of contact, and recent studies have ascribed the impetus behind the supply of these goods to shared ideologies and political interaction (Carver 1993, 17, 63; Dark 2001, 57; Harris 2003). This is not, however, a return to suggesting that trade was instigated by the church alone; rather, it is suggested that these links were forged between elites who saw themselves as belonging to the same, overarching, Christian world (Harris 2003, 138). Peter Brown (2003, 130) has used detailed historical sources to discuss this phenomenon, suggesting that, in the eyes of the Byzantine leaders, Western Europe was part of a single, far-reaching, Christian empire (Brown 2003, 130). Although the eastern leaders did not hold political control over western Europe, they maintained strong links within major centres in the west, articulated through diplomatic missions and communication of a shared ideology (Harris 2003, 25). The church formed a central part of this perception; as bishop of Rome and head of a universal Catholic church, the Pope was seen have been responsible for communities beyond the reaches of the Roman Empire in the early fifth century (Brown 2003, 130).

Polities of western Britain therefore formed part of a wider Christian world, bound by a shared ideology. Links with the east, via the Mediterranean, would have been a means of maintaining social and political relations, and the imported goods found archaeologically can be viewed as a trace element of these interactions. What formed the cargoes of returning ships is unknown, and in many ways may not be important, as economic considerations were not paramount. That specific polities were deliberately targeted is strongly supported by the lack of imports in eastern Britain. Whether these were mainly ecclesiastical centres or secular strongholds is a much-debated issue. However however, it has recently been suggested that, in this case, the dichotomy of 'ecclesiastical' and 'secular' need not have

been so clear cut (Turner 2003a, 126-7). It is likely that the major secular centres of the fifth and sixth centuries would also have been the bases from which ecclesiastical activity was carried out, under the patronage of secular leaders. This would mirror, to some extent, the urban nature of Christianity on the Continent and in the Mediterranean during this period. The political leaders viewed themselves as Christian, and would have participated in Christian activity. It has been argued that this activity might have been intensified during the fifth century, as a means of expressing strong identity as Christian kingdoms, in contrast to the non-Christian religions of Germanic incomers (Petts 1999).

The significance of imported Mediterranean pottery: making a mountain out of a molehill?

The debate surrounding the significance of this trade rests on very few vessels, which has led some scholars to take a minimal view of their importance (Wooding 1996a, 54). Within the study area specifically, the discussion rests primarily on the site of Whithorn, due to the lack of secure evidence from the Mote of Mark.

However, at a time when political power would have constantly been negotiated through the giving and receiving of tribute (Gerriets 1983; 1987), the importance of high status exchange should not be dismissed. Though the intrinsic value of these items may have been limited, the networks of interaction that they represented would have been of much wider significance to surrounding society. If, as Petts (1999) suggests, the elite of western Britain embraced Christianity as part of their identity, in opposition to the 'pagan' Anglo-Saxons, then the acquisition of material culture from the wider Christian world may have been of more consequence than it initially appears. Dark (2001, 55, 57) notes that PRSW and ARSW form part of a group of ceramics that represent a continuation of late Roman fineware traditions, and as such would have been associated with a Roman identity. This association may account for the widespread use of these goods, but also with its subsequent decline, as communities no longer wished to appear 'Roman'. Petts (1999, 90-1) suggests that, as the developing Germanic kingdoms of eastern England employed aspects of Roman culture to legitimise power, so the polities of western Britain rejected material culture evoking *Romanitas*.

Dark (2001, 91-2) has suggested that there may have been a Byzantine community resident at Tintagel, on the basis of Byzantine coarsewares and amphora stoppers, in addition to the amphorae and tablewares. Evidence is too limited to allow for similar interpretations at Whithorn, although Thomas has argued for the presence missionary incomers from Gaul at

the site (Thomas 1992a; 1994b; Hill 2001). Imported goods have been found in a range of contexts on the site, but many occur in domestic debris that appears to have been associated with metalworking. Imported goods (or their containers) may therefore have been used by artisans resident at the site, though this is a simplistic reading of the archaeology. Whether these individuals represent incomers, or resident craftsmen receiving imports from the elite, cannot be ascertained from the archaeological record. What can be inferred, however, is a direct relationship and shared ideology with the Christian communities of the Mediterranean. This interaction could be viewed in terms of political influence of Byzantium in the west: if a Mediterranean Pope could send a bishop to Ireland, then it is not implausible that Byzantine leaders could establish, patronise or establish links with a Christian settlement in southwest Scotland, located at a strategic location in what Brown has termed the 'Celtic Mediterranean' (Brown 2003, 129).

The occurrence of Mediterranean imports within the study area, therefore, is informative. That the community of Whithorn were Christian is evidenced by the *Latinus* stone, and participation in long distance exchange might have been a further way of emphasising Christian identity and economic power. Both this inscription and the appropriation of imported Mediterranean goods may have been a means of expressing Roman culture and identity, and links within a wider Empire. The fact that the Whithorn elite directly received these goods is evidence for elevated status and economic power, and therefore provides an indication of the political landscape of the area during the fifth and sixth centuries (see Chapter 9).

CONTINENTAL EXCHANGE IN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH CENTURY

More visible, and arguably of greater significance to this study, is the subsequent period of Continental importation, attested by finds of D ware, E ware and associated glass vessels on sites around the more northerly parts of western Britain and Ireland. This period of contact, again frequently labelled as 'trade', is thought to extend from the late sixth to the end of the seventh century.

D ware

D ware, the rarest of the ceramic types, occurs in Britain as bowls and mortaria, and is thought to represent a late derivation of the Late Roman tablewares of western France (Campbell *et al* 1997, 319), dating to the sixth century (Wooding 1996a, 61; Campbell *et al* 1997, 319). An origin in Bordeaux and an association with the supply of wine, is often quoted, although not unanimously accepted (Zimmer 1909-10 in Wooding 1996a, 60;

Campbell *et al* 1997, 319). The low number of sites to have produced D ware (only nine in western Britain), and the types of vessels represented, makes interpretation difficult. The presence of mortaria, in particular, is not easy to explain, and has led to D ware being assigned to an historical context that is 'unknowable' (Lane 1994, 107). These wares represent a continuation of traffic along the western searoutes, although the nature of this activity remains debated.

Imported glass

Many sites that have produced Continental ceramics have also produced imported glass, which appears to have formed part of the mixed cargoes brought from the Continent into western Britain from the sixth century (Harden 1956). The glass found in the west is frequently decorated with white trails, which are absent from much of the material in eastern areas of Britain, and has led to a rejection of the initial interpretation of glass in western Britain as a secondary import, brought from eastern England as cullet for remelting. A reconstructed conical vessel from Dinas Powys demonstrates that glass was brought to the west as complete vessels, in all likelihood for use in high status dining (Campbell 2000, 44). The presence of glass vessels in graves in the east indicates that, whilst they may have been represented the same lifestyles, they were employed in different ways as a means of 'consuming' prestige items.

Some 60% of sites that have produced imported glass have also produced E ware, and their occurrence in the same archaeological contexts supports a close association between these materials (Campbell 2000, 35). Occurrence in association with D ware may indicate that the main phase of glass imports occurred in the sixth century, continuing into the seventh with the trade in E ware. The lack of white trailed decoration on vessels found in Ireland is thought to reflect a later date of these vessels, in the seventh or eighth century (Campbell 2000, 44). A suggested provenance in western France fits well with a model of directed communication between this area and western Britain in the sixth and seventh centuries.

E ware

E ware, first identified in the early 1950s (Thomas 1959) comprises a number of vessel forms in a gritty, whitish fabric (figure 7.5). Beakers and jars form the most common vessels to be imported, whilst bowls, pitchers, lids and bottles, though rarer, are also found (figure 7.6). The provenance of this ware has yet to be defined, despite petrological analysis and much discussion (Peacock and Thomas 1967, 35-6; Campbell 1984; Thomas 1990, 2).

Western France is seen as the most likely contender for a general area of origin, due to the known distribution of finds, but without further research on the Continent, this issue is unlikely to be resolved in the immediate future.

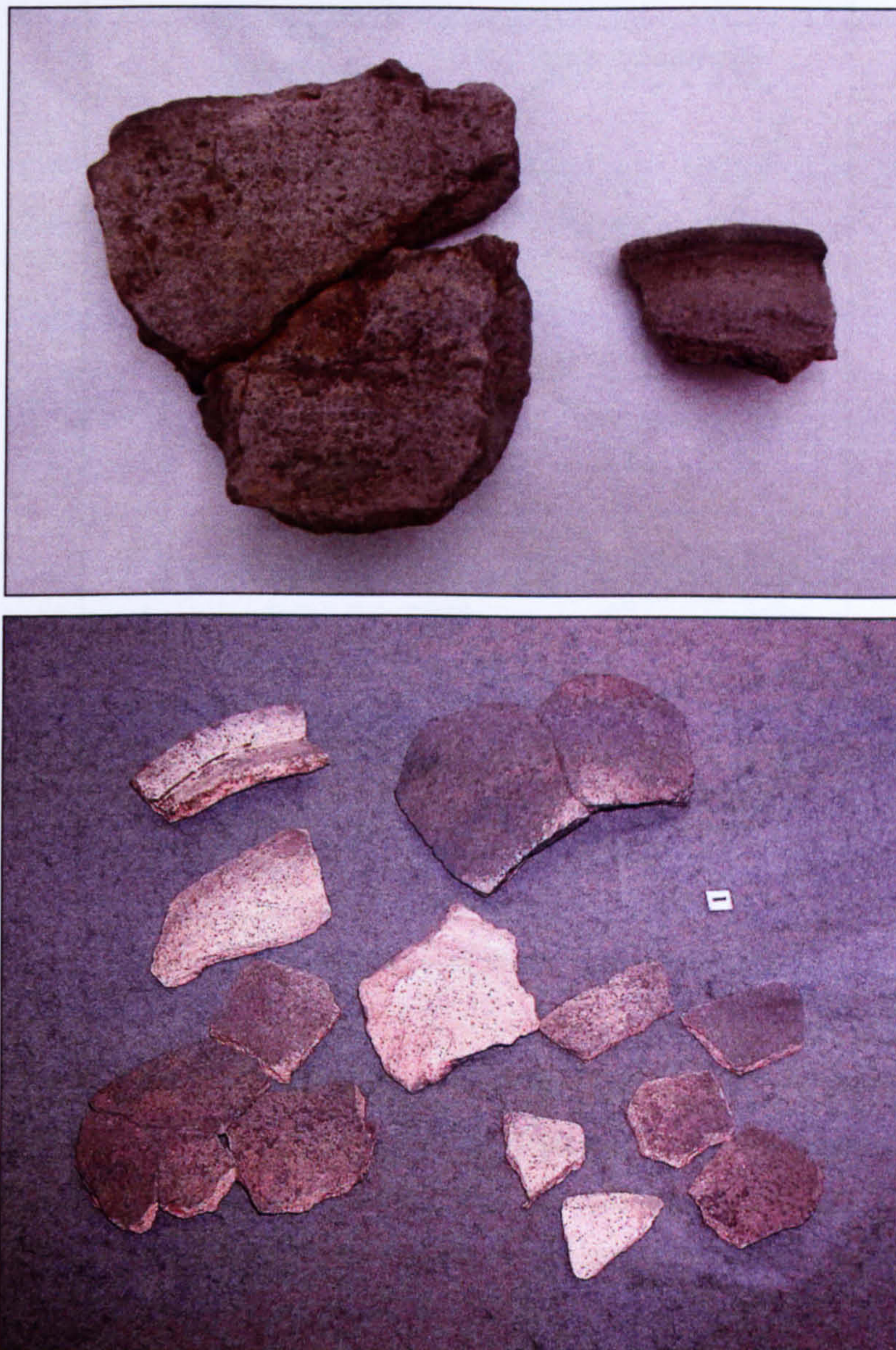


Figure 7.5: E ware from Kiondroghad (above: author, courtesy of Manx National Heritage) and from Gransha, County Down (below: author, courtesy of North Down Heritage Centre)

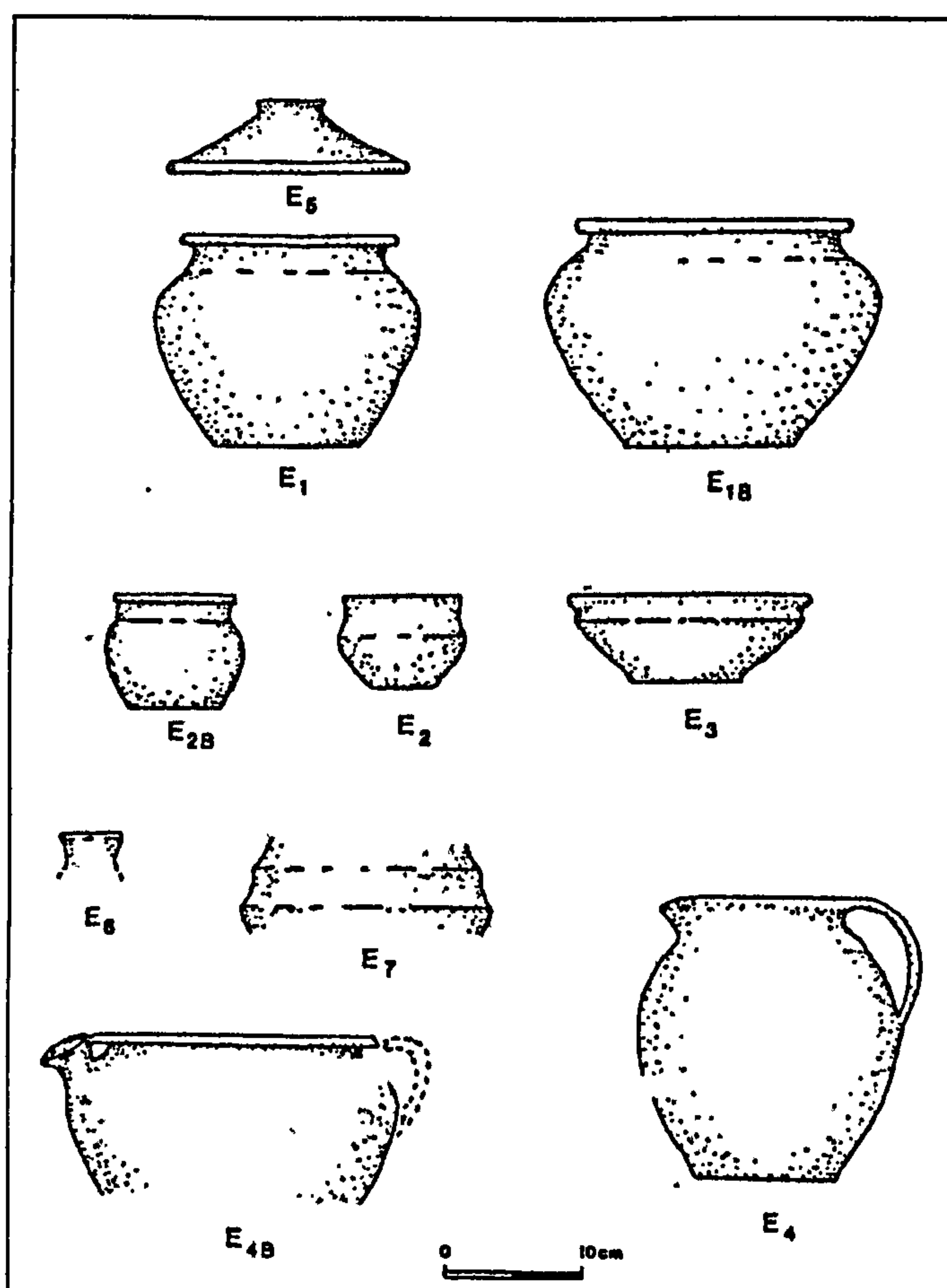


Figure 7.6: E ware vessel forms (Campbell 1991)

The date of these imports is, however, slightly clearer. This is largely due to the stratification of E ware in datable deposits at Clogher (Warner 1979), which have provided a *terminus post quem* in the late sixth century for importations of this ware (Campbell 1991, 8). Evidence from Whithorn and Moynagh Lough indicates that the import of E ware ceased before the first half of the eighth century, and so a date range of AD 575 to 700 is widely accepted (Campbell 1991, 210, 220).

The function of E ware vessels is not immediately apparent, as the vessel forms have not lent themselves to immediate interpretation as containers. It has therefore been suggested that E ware was imported for functional reasons (Wooding 1988; Thomas 1990). The vessels are considered to be late Roman in appearance, and Thomas states that, in the range of vessels represented, 'we are seeing the ceramic furniture of a post-Roman villa kitchen' (Thomas 1990, 8). Emphasis has been placed on the aceramic culture of the areas to which E ware was imported, and the idea that wares were imported for use in cooking or dining has been accepted by some scholars (Wooding 1988, 16). The introduction of a new, imported

ceramic type is suggested to represent a change in dining practice, which may in itself be indicative of social change (Thomas 1990, 2). Wooding (1988) suggests that a move from communal dining to eating in individual households might have provided a context for the importing of smaller cooking vessels.

However, other scholars have dismissed these interpretations. The fabric of E ware does not readily lend itself to interpretation as high status tableware, and the small numbers of vessels found does not support the idea of widespread use in food preparation. It has instead been suggested that E ware may have been associated with the importing of scarce, luxury items. Campbell and others have noted that the everted rim form of the E1 and E2 vessels would have been suitable for the binding of textile or leather lids to the vessels (Wooding 1988, 13; Campbell 1991, 191), suited to the transportation of small quantities of items. At several sites, fragments of E ware were stained with Dyer's Madder (*rubia tinctorum*), a plant imported for use as a dye (Campbell 1991, 191). Other possible contents include nuts, honey and spices (Lane 1994, 107). Finds of coriander and dill seeds in the same contexts as madder-stained E ware fragments at Whithorn may also represent imported goods (Campbell 1996b, 92). It is accepted that these containers would not have been the main cargo of the shipments, and that they are likely to have accompanied bulkier commodities, generally assumed to be wine. The find of pegged barrel loops at Lough Faughan and Lagore may represent rare archaeological evidence for this trade. Jugs, and bottles, unlikely to have been used to carry luxury items, may have been imported as decanters, supported by the spatial association of E ware jugs and glass drinking vessels at Dinas Powys (Campbell 1991, 196). It is interesting to note that the range of E ware forms would have provided all of the necessary vessels for conducting the Mass: jugs for decanting wine, beakers to hold it, covered dishes to contain the host, and the shallow dishes to act as patens. This suggestion requires a less domestic function for the wares, and would have resulted in low numbers of vessels on individual sites; this is, however, unsubstantiated, and must remain speculative.

Distribution and context of Continental imports in western Britain

Continental imports in Britain show a much more northerly distribution than those from the Mediterranean, but occur within a similarly restricted geographical range (figure 7.7). Within the study area, the finds occur within a marked western zone, occurring in Ireland, Man and southwest Scotland, but conspicuously lacking in Cumbria (figure 7.8), allowing some reflection on the nature of social and economic relations between import sites during the sixth and seventh centuries.

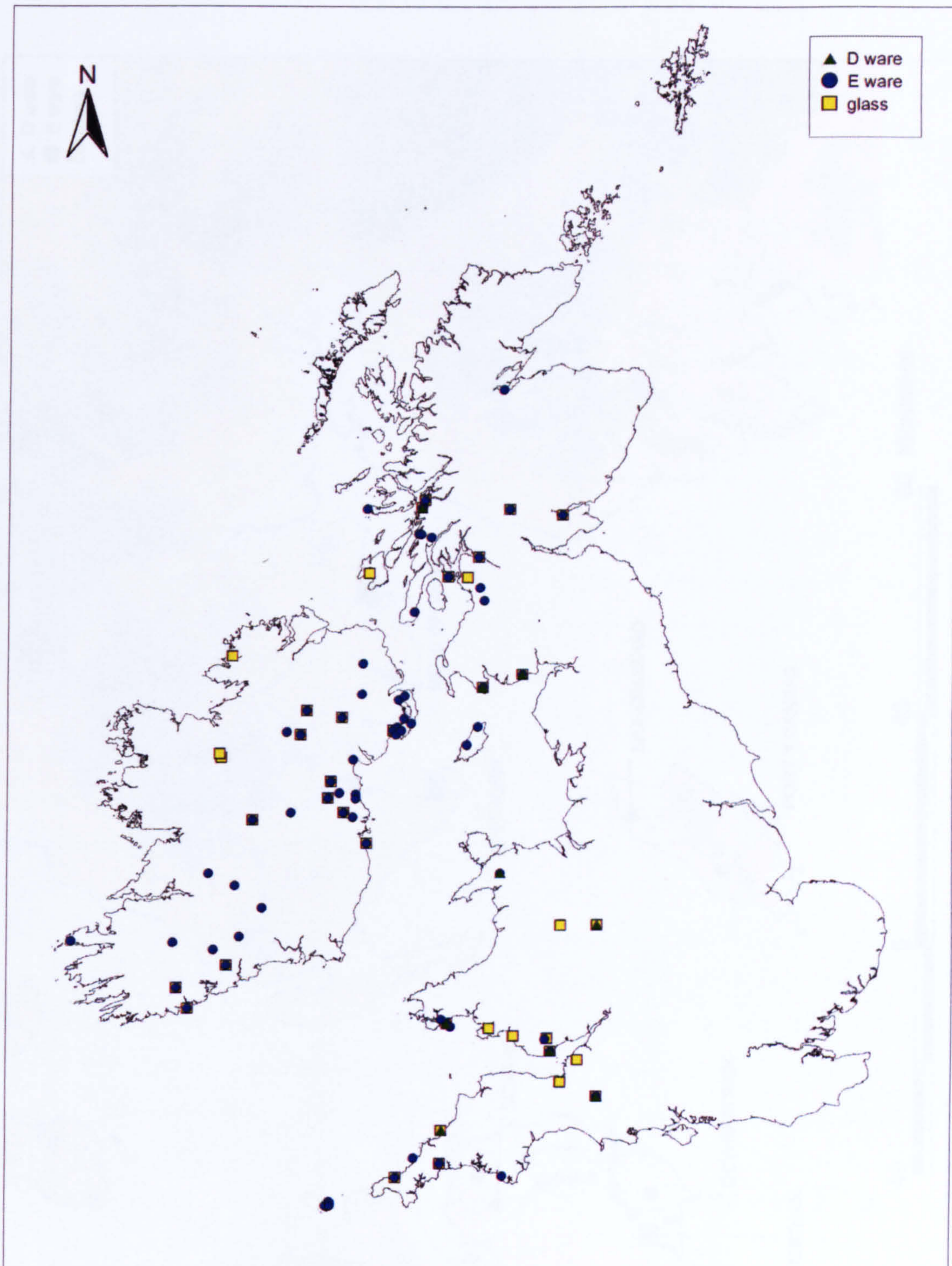


Figure 7.7: Continental imports in Britain

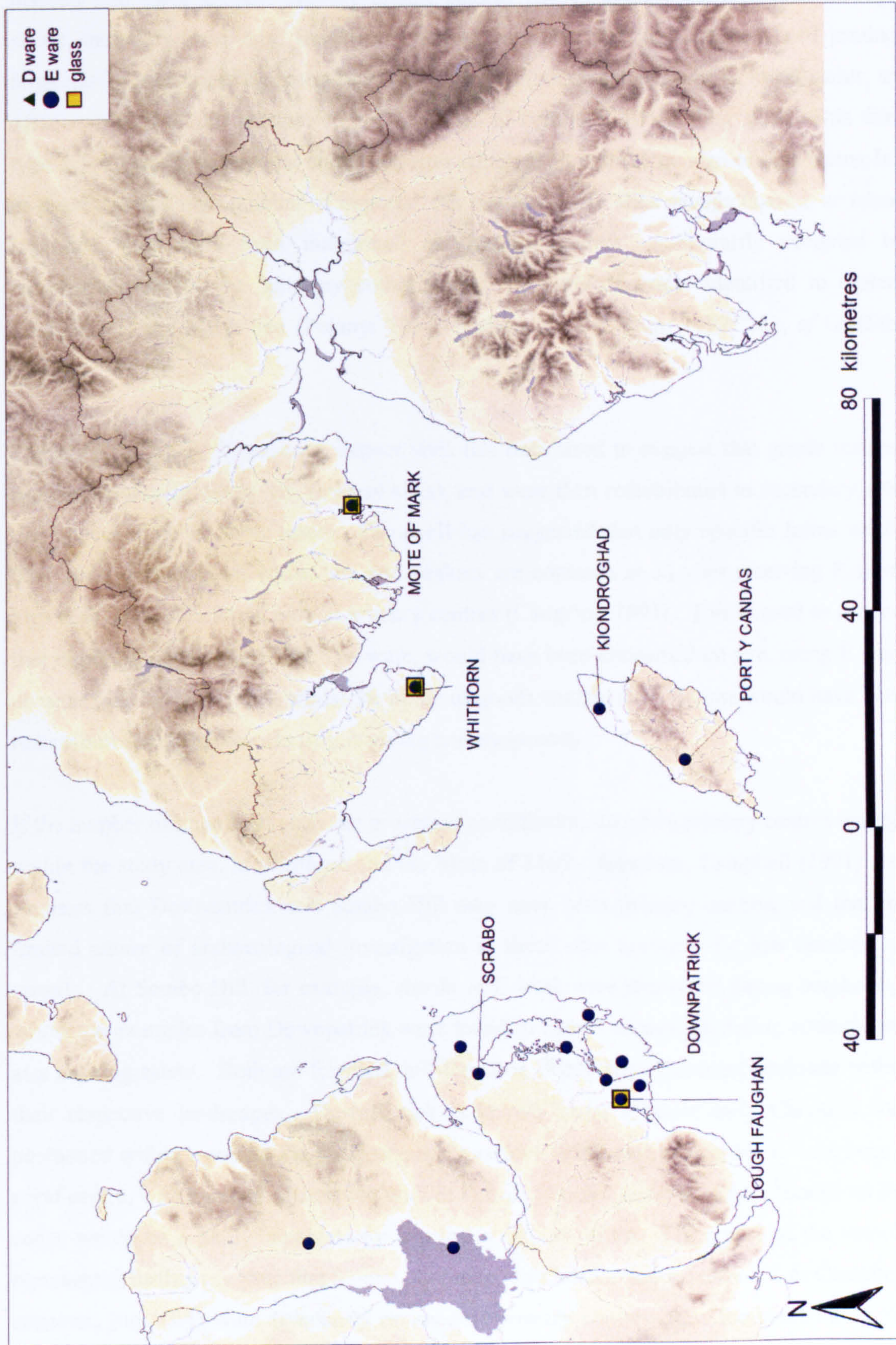


Figure 7.8: Continental imports in the study area

Campbell (1991) has suggested that early medieval import sites in western Britain can be divided into three groups: primary import centres (which exhibit characteristics of royal status, including weaponry, jewellery, precious metalworking and defences, and produce large numbers of imports), secondary import centres (which appear to be of lower status, are often unenclosed, and produce lower quantities of ceramic), and trading sites. This third type is less easy to define, but comprises sites which show little or no sign of high status, but have produced a high number of imports. As many of these sites occupy coastal, or island locations, they have been interpreted as 'trading centres', temporarily occupied by merchants, akin to the 'gateway communities' or 'ports of trade' identified in eastern England and the North Sea (Polanyi 1963; Hodges 1982; Mytum 1992, 262; cf Griffiths 1994).

The distributions of Continental import sites has been used to suggest that goods reached primary centres (possibly via gateway sites), and were then redistributed to secondary sites that appear to be of lower status. Campbell has suggested that only specific forms would have been redistributed; whilst jars and beakers are common at all sites receiving E ware, jugs (E4) tend to be found only at primary centres (Campbell 1991). This is used to suggest that imported commodities, such as wine, would have been consumed on site, using E ware decanters and glass vessels, whilst the range of goods contained in the jars would have been redistributed within networks of gift-giving and reciprocity.

If the number of imports at each site is used as an indicator, then two primary centres emerge within the study area, at Whithorn and the Mote of Mark. However, Campbell (1991) also suggests that Downpatrick and Scrabo Hill may have been primary centres, and that the limited nature of archaeological investigation at these sites accounts for low numbers of vessels. At Scrabo Hill, for example, sherds of E ware were recovered during boreholing, whilst the examples from Downpatrick were found in rescue excavation during construction at a housing estate. Both are fortified, hill-top sites, occupying prominent positions within their respective landscapes. Downpatrick is known to be a major early Christian site, positioned within a prehistoric fortification (Proudfoot 1956), and is recorded to have been a royal centre, with a strong association with St Patrick. Such a high status site, located on the coast, would be a likely candidate for a primary import centre. The nature of the vessels represented further suggests that Scrabo, too, may have been a major centre. If, as Campbell suggests, jugs (E4) were frequently retained at primary centres, then the presence of E4 forms at Scrabo supports interpretation of this site as a primary import centre (figure 7.9). Like Downpatrick, Scrabo occupies a prominent, coastal position, dominating its immediate landscape. Downpatrick and Scrabo Hill would therefore have represented primary centres,

from which goods were redistributed to the more numerous secondary sites that occupy the surrounding area.

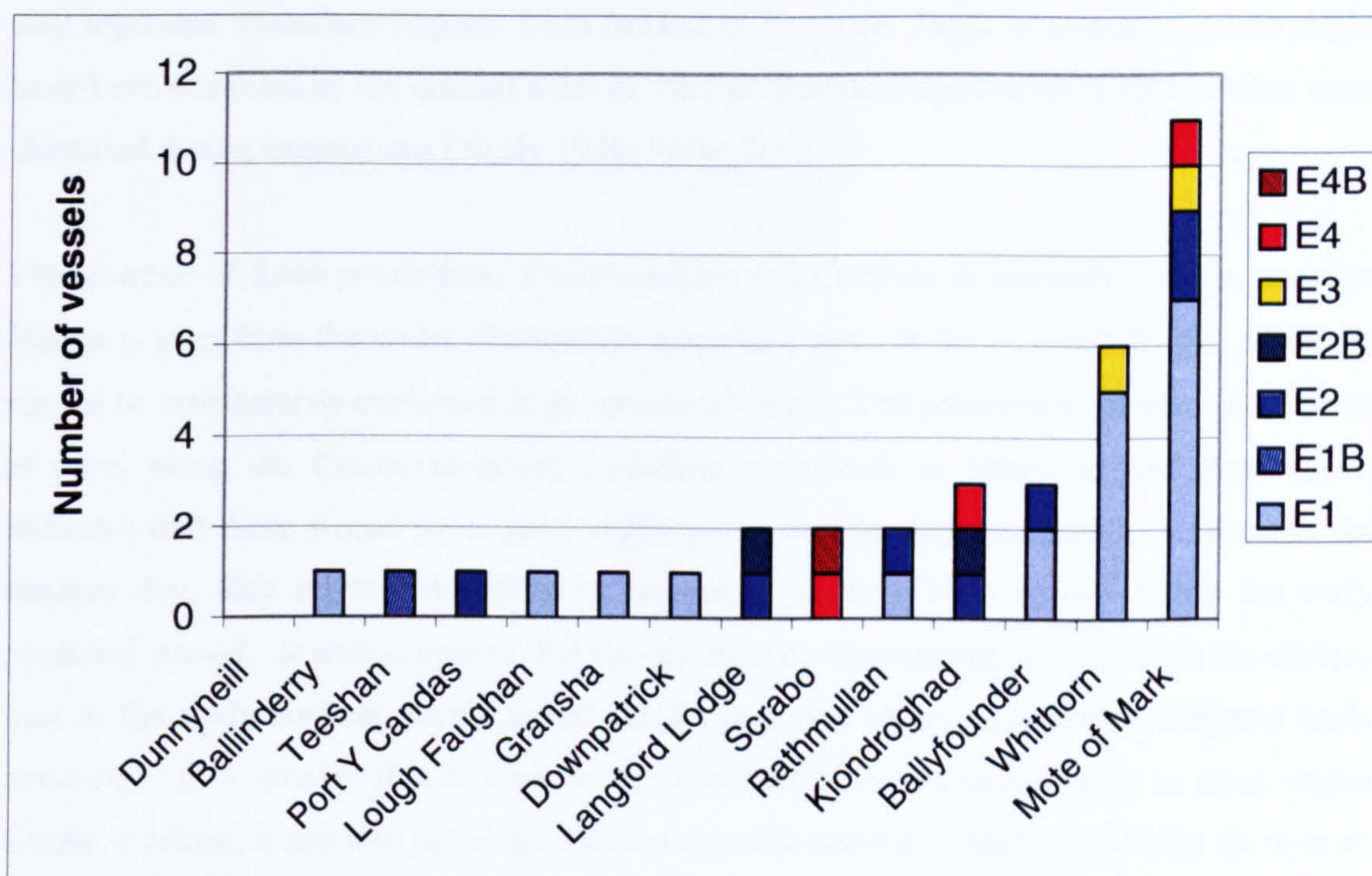


Figure 7.9: E ware vessel types represented at sites within the study area
(information from Campbell 1991)

In southwest Scotland, the two clear primary import centres are located within 4km of each other. Whithorn is situated in the low-lying centre of the Machars, whilst the Mote of Mark dominates the Urr estuary and surrounding landscape. Campbell (forthcoming) has noted that the imports at these two centres exhibit such a degree of similarity that they are likely to have originated from the same source, whether a shipment arriving at one centre and subsequently being redistributed to another, or both sites receiving imports from the same journey. During the seventh century, Whithorn has been interpreted as ecclesiastical in function (Hill 1997, see Chapter 9), whilst the Mote of Mark has been interpreted as a secular, elite centre. From the distribution alone, it could be suggested that the two sites represent elite centres within distinct territories, *i.e.* that Whithorn exerted control over the Machars areas, whilst the Mote of Mark held sway to the east. Clearly there was some degree of shared contact between the sites.

On the Isle of Man, interpretation of the two import sites is difficult. Despite considerable archaeological excavation, neither has produced a large quantity of imported pottery,

although Kiondroghad has produced a fragment identified as representing an E4 jug, which adds complexity to interpretation. Neither site has produced evidence indicative of high status, although both have revealed evidence for craftworking (see below), and these finds may represent secondary imports from Ireland or Scotland. Finds of imported goods might have been expected at the coastal sites of Peel or Ronaldsway, but no such ceramics were identified during excavations (Neely 1940; Freke 2002)

The absence of these goods from Dumfriesshire and Cumbria is instantly notable, and this *lacuna* is seen from the wider distribution maps to extend as far as south Wales. This gap cannot be satisfactorily explained in geographical terms. The presence of Roman settlements at ports along the Cumbrian coast, including sites such as Maryport and Ravenglass, indicates that these would have been viable ports, and as they continue to be used to the modern day, they might reasonably be suggested to have been in use during the early medieval period. It would appear that the absence of Continental imports from the eastern part of the study area represents a real divide, and may represent access to different trade networks. It is notable that E ware in the northern Irish Sea occurs only in areas where Gaelic speaking is attested (although chronologically unclear: Chapter 6), whilst there is an absence of such goods from Brittonic 'British' speaking areas. It is possible that the distribution of E ware in the study area reflects relationships between Gaelic-speaking polities and communities in western France, contacts which were not evident with the British speaking polities of Cumbria and Dumfriesshire. This is not, however, suggested to be applicable to Britain as a whole, demonstrated by concentrations of E ware in southwest Britain.

Control of exchange and motives for supply

Without a precise provenance for the origin of these goods, it is difficult to discuss the mechanisms and motives behind their supply to western Britain. The wider distribution of the finds indicates maritime contact, and it is most likely that this communication was direct. McGrail's (1997) consideration of maritime contact and tidal patterns between the Continent and Britain in prehistory demonstrates that there would have been favourable conditions for travel northwards from Brittany to western Britain, and the western sealanes are known from a shared material culture to have been well used from prehistoric times (for example Macready and Thompson 1984, figure 9). Political and ideological situations in Gaul and surrounding areas during this period were changeable (Wood 1994), and it is unclear which polities would have controlled the supply.

As with the Mediterranean goods, the supply of E ware is often labelled as 'trade', and only when the redistribution of goods within western Britain is considered are the social and ideological aspects of exchange discussed. However, a brief look at contemporary supply routes suggests the forging of specific exchange relationships between the Continent and areas of Britain, indicative of more politicised exchange. Following the fragmentation of fifth-century Mediterranean exchange networks, two distinct axes of supply can be identified across the Atlantic and the Channel. Whilst E ware and glass were being supplied to communities in the west, Byzantine goods and other prestige items were reaching eastern England via overland and riverine routes across the Continent (Harris 2003, 65-68). The deposition of Byzantine metalwork in graves of this period in Anglo-Saxon England is well attested, and distribution maps of Byzantine ivory rings, amethysts and garnets are also restricted to southern and eastern England (Harris 2003, figures 59-61). The absence of such items from western Britain is notable, and, with the lack of Continental ceramic from the east, highlights a real difference in the alignments of east and west Britain, and strongly suggests that the goods reaching Britain reflect not random, but directed, supply.

It would appear, therefore, that the exchange of goods between Europe and Britain was not necessarily a commercially-driven exercise, and that relationships were established across the channel between specific parts of Britain and the Continent (Alcock 2003, 92; Mansfield 2002). Whilst Merovingian leaders were exerting influence, even claiming overlordship, over southeastern England (Procopius in Wood 1994, 176), polities in western France were forging links with the British and Gaelic leaders of western Britain, again possibly facilitated by a shared Christian ideology.

MODELS FOR INTERACTION, REDISTRIBUTION AND CENTRAL PLACES

It is clear from a consideration of imported pottery Britain that these goods represent much more than commercial enterprise between 'strangers'. During the fifth to seventh centuries, goods were directly supplied to western Britain, first from the Mediterranean elite and then from the Continent leaders, representing the forging of alliances through exchange. The significance of these links can be studied further using models drawn from economic anthropology, already shown to be of particular relevance to archaeology. These can be used to discuss three key issues: why the goods were transported to Britain, how they were appropriated, and what they can tell us about the sites on which they occur.

The impetus for the supply of goods from the Mediterranean and the Continent to western Britain is accepted to have come from the suppliers rather than the recipients. The

importation of goods is therefore often studied as part of a core-periphery model, whereby goods were produced and distributed from an active 'core' to a passive 'periphery'. However, the validity of such an approach has been questioned. Hodges and Moreland state that the participation of the recipients of imported goods must not be overlooked; 'the flow in such relationships is almost never in one direction only' (Hodges and Moreland 1988, 84). It is presumed that the ships that brought goods to Britain would not have returned unladen, and the accumulation of goods for exchange would have required collection of tribute, and therefore the active participation of the British elite. The motive of the 'core' in these supply networks is important: it is suggested that the Byzantine elite wanted to create relationships through the full extent of the Christian world, and that these links were reflected in the supply of wine, oil and high status pottery to elite centres in western Britain. By the late sixth or early seventh century, these networks had declined, and to some extent been eclipsed by communication links that were between Britain and western France. Rather than being one way, the establishment of these relationships, and the provision of what would have been perceived as *exotica* would have facilitated emulation of one culture by another, and the development of ideologies and political situations through peer polity interaction (Renfrew 1986; Hodges 1986). The outward message exerted by these contacts may have been set up in opposition to the exchange networks in operation between southeast England and ports in the North Sea and the Channel.

Once these goods were received, those who acquired them would have appropriated them in different ways. Hodges (1988, 36) has described two main ways that prestige items can be appropriated in order to enhance status or display wealth. Goods can be consumed on site, and so 'withdrawn' from circulation, or 'dispersed' in systems of gift exchange. The 'withdrawal' of goods from circulation enhances their value, and conspicuous consumption can be used as a means of openly displaying wealth. Hodges draws on anthropology to highlight this process, using the frequently employed example of the potlatch of the Kwakiuti people of Vancouver and North Carolina, where feasting was embedded in the political economy (Hodges 1988, 58-60). Wine, oil and other imported items may have been consumed in a similarly conspicuous way, and used to highlight the Byzantine or Continental contacts of these communities. The concentration of finds at sites such as Whithorn and the Mote of Mark, and the occurrence of jugs for decanting amongst Continental assemblages on primary import sites may be indicative of these activities. If these vessels were employed for any liturgical reasons, this would also have provided an active means of 'consuming' these wares (and possibly imported wine and oil) within a public and overtly Christian context.

Hodges also notes that through communal feasting, goods were also being redistributed (Hodges 1988, 36). The sharing of imported commodities on site, and redistribution to secondary sites, would have been means of utilising these items in the creation and maintenance of social relationships, whether between elites and their dependants, or leaders of peer polities. The importance of gift exchange as a social process is emphasised in the seminal works of Malinowski (1922) and Mauss (1954), whose works on networks of exchange and the significance of gift giving, have formed the basis of much archaeological theorising, and have long been recognised as applicable to early medieval society (Grierson 1959). Malinowski's analysis of exchange in the kula ring demonstrates the way that the bestowal of seemingly invaluable commodities could have been used to maintain social relations, through relations of reciprocity; incorporating 'low level economic transactions which served socially integrative purposes often of enormous magnitude' (Hodges 1988, 41). The bestowing of gifts created an obligation, which could be reciprocated through resources, labour or service. For early medieval society in Britain, the imported ceramics and glass that arrived at major centres were subsequently appropriated by a society where trade was a similarly peripheral activity (Doherty 1980, 69) and concepts of 'purchase' are thought to have been foreign (Polanyi 1978, 92). The movement of goods was bound up in the systems of gift exchange and clientship that formed the basis of social structure, at least until economic and political changes of the eighth to tenth centuries, and these networks can be further explored through consideration of the historical evidence (Doherty 1980, 67).

Gerriets (1983) has used the Irish law tracts, notably *Cáin Aigillne*, *Cáin Saorrath* and *Críth Gablach*, to study clientship, concluding that 'individuals participated in society through their bonds, obligations and rights regarding their lords or clients' (Gerriets 1983, 43). At each level of the political hierarchy, from kings and nobles down to free commoners or servile tenants, the exchange of resources would have created and maintained social relations. Goods such as cattle and other food items would have been exchanged for military service, legal protection or land (Gerriets 1983, 43-44; Patterson 1994, 119-146). Documentary sources suggest that the structure of Irish society, created through the formation of these alliances, would not have been static, and that the status of individuals could have improved or declined depending on individual circumstances. As such, these relationships would have had to be constantly renegotiated.

Hodges (1988) has drawn on the work of Carol Smith (1976) to describe the range of geographical models that can be applied to the acquisition and redistribution of goods within territories, and the degrees of commercialisation and specialisation that might be expected within such systems (Hodges 1988, 18). Five systems have been identified and defined:

Unbounded network system	Direct exchange with no division of labour. An uncommercialised system. Small quantities of simple resources tend to figure, gaining value as they travel from their source.
Bounded hierarchical system	Exchange is direct, and division of labour is slight. Uncommercialised, with only the movement of scarce and prestige resources.
Solar central place system	An administered market exists at the centre of a region. Division of labour is slight, and network of relationships between central place and satellite settlements is determined principally by administrative decision making forces. Only partly commercialised.
Dendritic central place system	A monopolistic market occurs in the confines of a region. Partly commercialised, in which exchange with another region is encouraged but focussed at a single centre. Items obtained are used by an elite to sustain and manipulate the social system. Limited increase in craft specialisation at the monopolistic single centre, which has some influence on a zone from which that community draws its subsistence. These systems indicate exploitative, imbalanced exchange.
Interlocking central place system	Competitive markets are a prominent feature. High division of labour, implementation of tributary relations to mediate across the divisions. The market fully extends to all parts of the region.

*Table 7.2: Models of exchange and central places defined by Smith
(Smith 1976; summarised in Hodges 1988, 18)*

No single system can easily be applied to early medieval society (Hodges 1988, 22-24). The fragmentation of power, such as the numerous small polities or kingdoms that are thought to have existed within western Britain, might be represented by several, possibly overlapping dendritic central place systems, or a patchwork of solar central place systems (Hodges 1988, 23-4). Without the available evidence to place imports into specific political or social contexts, the distinction may not be possible. However, the broad definition of both 'central place' systems is of value, and can be used to discuss the nature of these elite centres. Notably, Smith has noted presence of specialised craftworking, and the manipulation of prestige items by elites at central places. This craft specialisation, and the presence of high status artefacts, has been identified as an important factor by Scandinavian scholars working on the role of 'central places' within early medieval Scandinavian landscapes (Fabech 1999a; 1999b; Hårdh and Larsson 2002), and is therefore an important avenue to explore for sites within the Irish Sea area (Griffiths 1994, 186).

CRAFTWORKING

The elite of early medieval western Britain and Ireland appear to have controlled the production of high status, precious metalwork (Alcock 2003, 307-8). Consideration of this evidence demonstrates the increasing influence of the church, and its integration into networks of exchange and investment. The correspondence between import and craftworking at sites in western Britain has been noted by Campbell (1991), suggesting that the centralisation of craftworking involved the same social and political mechanisms as those involved in the acquisition and circulation of imported ceramics (Smith 1976). High status, precious metalwork was not essential to subsistence, and as such must be explained in more than economic terms. These items cannot merely be regarded as indicators of wealth and status; attention must be given to the way that they were used, and the social significance of their creation. Theoretical developments since the 1980s have encouraged interpretation of artefacts as 'symbols in action' (Hodder 1986; *cf* Nieke 1993) and anthropological and historical evidence can be used to discuss the ideological, social and political significance of the artefacts that were being produced.

Historical evidence indicates that metalworkers would have enjoyed a special status within society (Gillies 1981; Helms 1993), and recent work has indicated that the sites at which manufacture would have taken place were also imbued with significance, as visible locations for the transformation from raw materials to socially significance artefacts. If such a premise is accepted within the study area, this has particular implications for the increasing significance of ecclesiastical sites within society and within the landscape.

It must be stressed that this study looks only at evidence for non-ferrous metalworking; iron tools would have been a more essential and ubiquitous commodity, and as such cannot be used to discuss elite exchange.

ARTEFACTS AS ACTIVE SYMBOLS: METALWORK

Finds of high quality metalwork in Britain demonstrate the sophistication of insular workshops, the wide range of artistic influences that were being drawn upon, and the high levels of investment that were involved. Items that dominate discussions of this material include ornate personal jewellery, most notably pennanular brooches, and a range of ecclesiastical items, including chalices, patens, and book mounts (see Ryan 2002a to 2002i). Control over the production of these items demonstrates the ability of an elite to create a surplus, to support craftsmen and to access raw materials. The production of these items

would have had far greater implications; and exploration of the social and political significance of specific artefacts highlights this point, demonstrating the role that manufacture might have played in the articulation of power and ideology.

Items of personal jewellery, in particular brooches, are known to have been subject to high levels of investment through the early medieval period, exemplified by the impressive Hunterston and Tara brooches, dated to the late seventh century, and *c.* AD 800 respectively (Whitfield 1993, 126). Nieke (1993), drawing on evidence from the Roman period, and in contemporary literature, has suggested that brooches would have served as symbols of power and authority, and would have been employed as items within gift exchange. That these items denoted insignia of office is often highlighted by drawing attention to the depiction of Christ wearing a brooch, on a cross shaft at Monasterboice (Nieke and Duncan 1988, 32).

More overtly related to Christian investment are the items of metalwork that would have performed a religious function, and foremost among these are reliquaries. Relics were of increasing importance in the early medieval church from the middle of the seventh century, and possession of sacred remains was essential for the status of individual ecclesiastical sites (Doherty 1984, 100). The highly decorated nature of the reliquaries that were commissioned to house these artefacts indicate the importance attached to the display and preservation of these relics, and in time, reliquaries absorbed some of the properties of the relics themselves.

Doherty (1984) and Lucas (1986) have highlighted the way that relics would have been employed, and the importance that would have been attached to them. Reliquaries were portable items and many seem to be equipped with attachments for straps, indicating that they are likely to have been worn. As such, they would have become insignia of office for ecclesiastical individuals (Lucas 1986, 13). As a representative of the church or the saints, the bearer of relics would have held considerable power, and documentary evidence suggests that, amongst other uses, relics would have been used in the exaction of tribute from tenants and clients within territories (Lucas 1986, 14). This demonstrates the physical means by which ecclesiastical control was taken over the landscape, and the symbolic tools that were used to do so. As such, it the capacity to produce metalwork was 'essential to the interests of the church' (Bourke 1993, 24). In the eighth-century Rule of Patrick, it is stated that 'the church which has not its proper equipment is not entitled to the dues of God's church, and it is not a church but its name according to Christ is a den of thieves' (Ryan 2002c, 262). This 'equipment' may have encompassed Eucharistic vessels, fine examples of which include chalices and patens, and the bells that are found at various sites (Bourke 1980; 1983).

The majority of complete or near complete artefacts on which these studies are based are unprovenanced. However, the production and circulation of high status metalwork can be explored through consideration of sites that have produced evidence for metalworking. Within the study area, this includes seven of the import centres (50%), and a further four possible sites, three of which are considered to be monastic in nature. Though it is often difficult to ascertain from quite small finds exactly what was being produced, finds of crucibles, moulds and fragments of precious metals are likely to represent the production of sophisticated, high status items.

EARLY MEDIEVAL CRAFTWORKING SITES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Evidence for craftworking has been recovered from a variety of sites in western and northern Britain and Ireland. A handful of excavations have produced stratified evidence for craft workshops (Bradley 1993; Hill 1997; Campbell and Lane 1993; 2000; Carver 2004), though the evidence for craftworking at a majority of sites is fragmentary at best, often comprising finds of precious metal, or fragments of crucible or mould, recovered during very small scale investigations (Heald 2003).

Much of the evidence for the craftworking has been found at nucleated forts, considered to be the residences of early medieval royalty or aristocracy (Alcock 1988), such as the Scottish sites of Dunadd, Dunollie, Dundurn, Clatchard Craig, Mote of Mark, *Alt Clut* and Craig Phadraig. Metalworking is not, however, confined to these centres, and evidence of this type has also been recovered from crannogs, duns, wheelhouses, and enclosed and unenclosed monastic sites. It is presumed that these sites represent the variety of settlements occupied by the upper echelons of society, an assumption which tends to be supported by the range of finds at these sites.

The logistics of production, and the artefacts being produced, are not always clear. Hjartner-Holdar (2002, 161) has emphasised that a distinction needs to be made between temporary and permanent craftworking sites, and hence whether craftsmen were peripatetic or resident at high status settlements. 'Whereas a settlement with some few scattered remains of bronze casting should not be classified as a central place, nucleated settlements with permanent workshops may be regarded as having been central within a region' (Hjartner-Holdar 2002, 169). Whilst archaeological and historical evidence indicates that craftsmen may have been itinerant and communicated widely, there is also significant evidence to indicate that there would have been permanent workshops at high status sites. At Dunadd, for example, the nature and quantity of the archaeological evidence for brooch production has been used as

evidence for permanent craftsmen, resident at a royal inauguration site (Campbell and Lane 2000). At Moynagh Lough, the reuse of two particular areas of the site for metal- and glassworking has been used to suggest that they represent permanent residence (Bradley 1993, 81). Such zonation is also recorded at Whithorn, where evidence for precious metalworking is confined to a particular area (Hill 1997, 400). A craftworking area is also postulated for Nendrum, though interpretation of the site is unclear (Lawlor 1925). Further afield, well-defined workshops are currently undergoing investigation at Portmahomack, Ross-shire (Carver 2004; Spall 2004).

On the Isle of Man, there is also evidence that craftworking was undertaken repeatedly at specific sites. Kiondroghad, an apparently unenclosed site, produced evidence for two phases of craftworking activity, both between the seventh and the ninth centuries (Gelling 1969). The first phase of activity is represented by successive dumps of metalworking debris around the edge of the site, used to suggest that the site was occupied, and that waste was being disposed of away from main areas of activity. In the subsequent phase, however, the metalworking debris had been deposited throughout the site, and Gelling (1969) sees this as evidence that the site was no longer occupied, but remained in use as a craftworking site. Though there is evidence for fine metalworking, Gelling suggests that this would not have been a regular occurrence, and that much of the activity would have been of more everyday status, possibly indicating more sporadic demand for more prestige items. At Port y Candas, finds of crucibles, moulds and copper alloy sheet also attest fine metalworking, and it seems to be no coincidence that these two sites were the only on the island to have produced E ware.

It seems, therefore, that craftsmen would have been in permanent or long-term residence at a number of centres, both secular and monastic. The nature of the evidence, however, only rarely allows for conclusions to be made about what was being produced. At the Mote of Mark, six moulds were recovered for the production of penannular brooches or their components, twenty-five for buckles and strap fittings, twenty-seven for studs, pins, and eighty for decorative plates (Longley 2001). A rectilinear plaque decorated with pelta and circle ornament in a cruciform arc has been suggested as a possible component of a book cover or reliquary (Longley 2001). Similar artefacts appear to have been produced at Dunadd, where there is considerable evidence for brooch production (Campbell and Lane 2000). In contrast, evidence to date suggests that metalwork at Portmahomack was dedicated to the production of ecclesiastical artefacts. However, at a majority of sites, particularly where evidence does not include mould fragments, it is not possible to make such a distinction.

Craftworking sites within the study area

Within the study area, evidence for craftworking is confined to nine sites, a number of which have already been noted (table 7.3; figure 7.10). A variety of site types have produced craftworking evidence within the study area. Only the Mote of Mark is an archetypal fortified site, though crannogs, raths and other enclosed sites are also well known craftworking site types. Notably, a number of ecclesiastical sites have also produced evidence for craftworking, including the documented sites of Nendrum, Tullylish, Movilla and Whithorn.

Site	Site characteristics	Evidence for craftworking	Date
Dunnyneill Island, County Down	Island	Crucible fragments, slag, metalworking debris	Early medieval?
Gransha, County Down	Rath	Penannular brooch found in the same context as E ware Kerbed hearths, polishing and rubbing stones, clay moulds for bronze casting trial pieces	7th century 9th century
Kiondroghad, Isle of Man	Unenclosed site	Two phases of craftworking, the first of which may have accompanied occupation, whilst phase II represents intermittent use. Evidence includes whetstones, smoothing stones, ingot moulds, pattern stones, and crucibles. Suggested that fine work was only rarely carried out.	7th to 9th century
Lough Faughan, County Down	Crannog	Finds of silver, crucibles and brooches	Early medieval
Mote of Mark, Kirkcudbright	Fort	Brooches, crucibles and moulds	6th – 7th century
Movilla, County Down	Documented monastic site (enclosed)	Debris associated with bronzeworking and glassworking Possible evidence for gold filigree	Early medieval
Nendrum, County Down	Documented monastic site (enclosed)	Pennanular brooch; Craftworking area; crucibles, mould for pin heads, polishing stones, 'fine hone'	Early medieval
Port y Candas, Isle of Man	Circular, banked enclosure	Pennanular brooch. Crucibles, mould fragment, copper alloy sheet	Early medieval (from 7th C)
Tullylish, County Down	Documented monastic site (enclosed)	Evidence for metalworking	9th
Whithorn	Enclosed site?	Evidence for metalworking	Late 7th C

Table 7.3: Craftworking sites within the study area

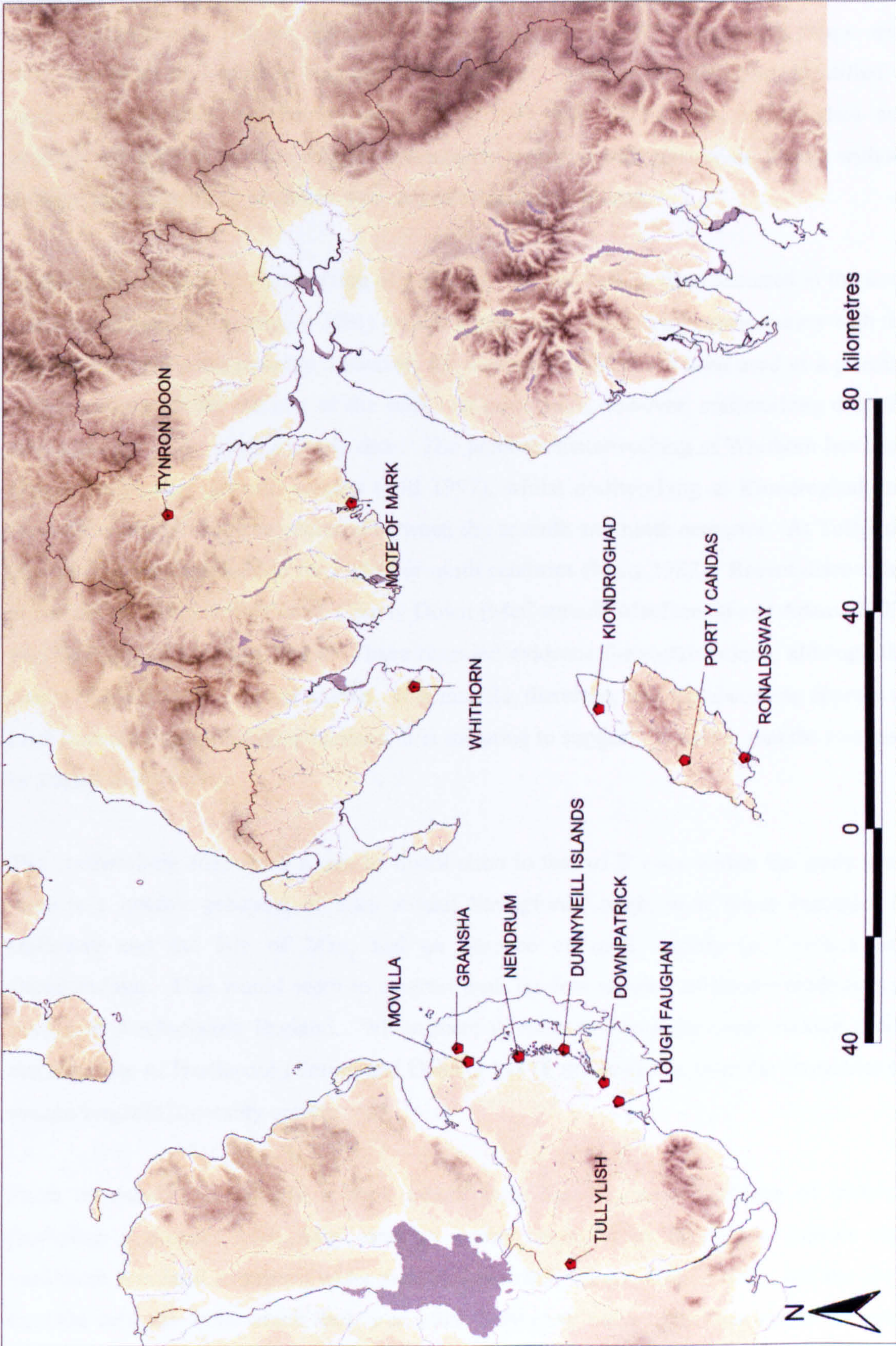


Figure 7.10: Craftworking sites in the study area

Much of the evidence is fragmentary, and, as noted, it is not possible to distinguish between the different items that were being produced. Clearly, the Mote of Mark produced a variety of objects, primarily secular, though it has been suggested that the decorative plaque may have served an ecclesiastical function. At Whithorn, evidence has also been identified to suggest that brooches were being produced (Hill 1997, 400). At Movilla, finds of glass- and bronze-working may indicate composite artefacts, decorated with glass studs, though without further, more diagnostic evidence, this cannot be further explored.

At the Mote of Mark, the production of metal artefacts appears to have occurred in the sixth and seventh centuries (Longley 2001), which would make the activity contemporary with the importation of E ware (notably, however, the ceramic evidence has been used as a primary dating mechanism for the rest of the site). At other sites, however, craftworking deposits have not been given such an early date. The precious metalworking at Whithorn has been placed in the later seventh century (Hill 1997), whilst craftworking at Kiondroghad and Gransha is thought to have occurred between the seventh and ninth centuries. At Tullylish, activity has been ascribed to the eighth or ninth centuries (Ivens 1987). Recent discoveries at the site of Dunnyneill Islands, County Down (McCormick, MacDonald and Adams 2002; McCormick and MacDonald 2004) have revealed evidence for metalworking, although the date of this activity is not yet known. It is notable, therefore, that metalworking appears to have increased as importation declined; it is tempting to suggest, therefore, that the two may be related in some way.

The craftworking sites show a similar distribution to that of E ware within the study area; there is a notable grouping of sites around Strangford Lough, with fewer examples in Galloway and the Isle of Man, and an absence of such activity in Cumbria and Dumfriesshire. This would seem to contrast with the low number of known craftworking centres in Anglo-Saxon England. Whilst there is some evidence for metalworking at the monastic site of Hartlepool (Cramp and Daniels 1987), the evidence from the remainder of eastern England is notably scarce.

Finds of metalwork; notably a book mount from Rerrick, an assemblage of material (including a plaque) from Asby, and an ornate mount from Brougham indicate that metalwork was used in a much wider area. The portable nature of these finds, and the often insecure contexts from which they are often recovered, means that they cannot be used reliably to discuss their significance in terms of distribution. Often, such goods are likely to be found far away from their place of manufacture or initial use; the plaque at Asby has been

suggested to represent Viking grave-goods (Youngs 1999). As such, they have not been included in this chapter.

The significance of craftworking within the study area

The evidence suggests that the control of craftworking, like the control of imports, was an important means of maintaining and conveying prestige. Through the circulation of the items produced, political relations and alliances could be maintained, and social hierarchies reinforced. It is notable therefore, that there is a spatial coincidence, and an apparent chronological distinction, between imported goods (primarily E ware) and evidence for craftworking. It is particularly notable that a number of sites where metalworking appears to have taken place, but which have produced no E ware, are identified in historical sources as major ecclesiastical centres (Nendrum, Movilla, Tullylish). This could be attributed to a difference between ecclesiastical and secular centres, *i.e.* E ware was the preserve of the secular elite, whilst fine metalworking was ubiquitous amongst all upper echelons of society. However, finds of E ware at ecclesiastical sites in other regions, particularly at Iona and Longbury Bank, and the possible ecclesiastical centres of Whithorn and Downpatrick, would suggest that this was not the case. It is suggested, therefore, that there was an increase in fine metalworking in the later seventh century, as increasingly wealthy ecclesiastical centres became more fully integrated into pre-existing systems of social interaction, production and exchange. It could tentatively be suggested that precious metalwork would have replaced imported goods as items of prestige, social significance and, possibly, ecclesiastical function.

The increasing importance of relics would have provided a context for the production of ecclesiastical metalwork, and demonstrates the way that the church may have used the artefacts that were produced. Reliquaries and associated finery would have been essential to the foundation of new sites, and in the maintaining of networks of ecclesiastical centres. Finds of complete brooches at Nendrum, evidence for brooch production at Whithorn and Nendrum, and the possible book mount mould from the Mote of Mark, indicate that the boundaries between secular and ecclesiastical production sites were not concrete. Precious metals or finished artefacts may have been part of gift exchange from secular elite to ecclesiastical sites, and enhanced a symbiotic nature of support between these two elite groups. They could also provide links between different political and cultural groups; metalwork at the Mote of Mark demonstrates the amalgamation of Germanic and Celtic traditions (Cramp 1999, 5).

The church appears, therefore, to have adopted a new role within society. In previous centuries, the 'supernatural' aspect of metalworking may have been expressed through juxtaposition on sites of prehistoric significance, as at Pict's Knowe (Thomas 2000). By the seventh century, however, ecclesiastical centres were clearly seen as suitable locations for such activity, and the 'power' of smiths may have been appropriated by ecclesiastical elites. This relation may not, however, have been entirely easy; an eighth century hymn calls for protection against the spells of women, druids and smiths (Kelly 1988, 60).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Christian centres were not founded in a political or social vacuum, and evidence for importation and high status craftworking can be used to discuss the social and political context into which ecclesiastical activity can be placed. These goods can be used to discuss the interaction of elite centres, and also serve to highlight the links of western Britain and Ireland to the wider Christian world.

The presence of imports along the western seaboard of Britain and Ireland emphasises that developments in these areas must not be considered in isolation from the rest of Europe. The Irish Sea would have had access to goods, and more particularly, ideas, from a wide area. The first phase of importation identified, that with eastern Byzantine world, is interpreted as politicised supply, the deliberate targeting of areas in the westernmost parts of the Christian world. Byzantine goods at Whithorn strongly suggest the presence of an elite centre, which would have had sufficient connections to be targeted outside a more restricted distribution area.

Importation from the eastern Mediterranean had ceased by the seventh century, but was replaced by communication with the developing polities of western France. These links, again instigated by the importers, were more northerly in focus, and can be seen as the deliberate creation of relationships between the two areas, aimed at elite centres of power. Focus around Strangford Lough in particular suggests the development of dynamic and wealthy leaders within society, keen to participate in such exchange, and to emphasise their links with the wider Christian world. Campbell (1991, 234) has noted a particular correlation between the distribution of imports and the known kingdom of the Dál Fiatach, suggesting that these goods reflect the particular economic and political strength of this kingdom during the sixth and seventh century. This would have been focussed at the primary import centres of Scrabo and Downpatrick, and redistributive networks would have allowed the maintenance of control over wider territories (figure 7.11).

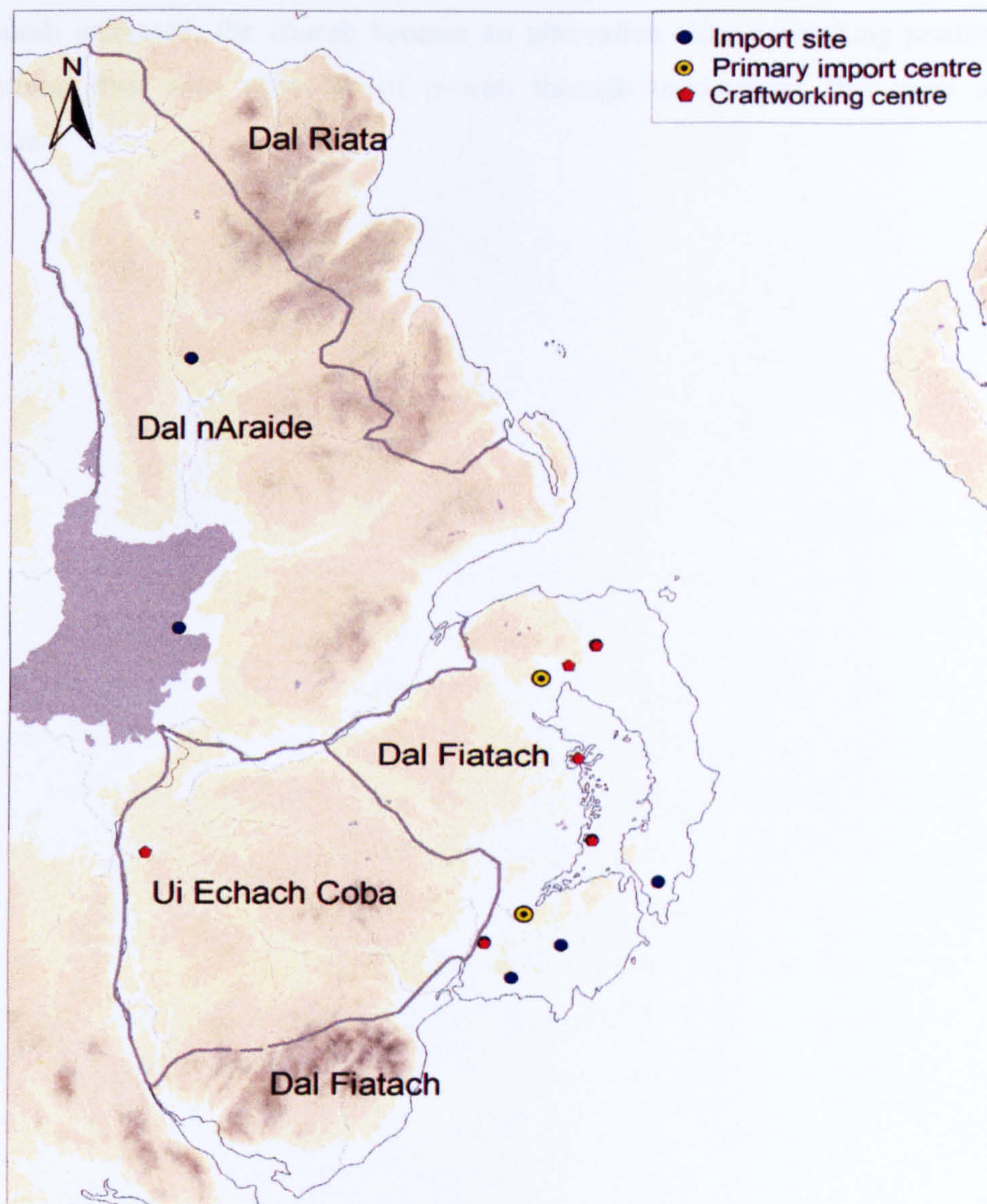


Figure 7.11: Imports and craftworking in northern Ireland

During the later seventh century, there appears to have been a rise in craftworking and particularly in the productivity of the church, in the same area as most of the imported goods, which by this time had declined. Rather than rely on exotica from elsewhere, elites were increasingly producing their own high status items. The production of fine metalwork suggests that ecclesiastical centres from this period had access to sufficient wealth to participate in the same forms of investment as secular elites. The rise in the importance of relics (and therefore reliquaries) may be linked to this change; ecclesiastical sites were vying for status, and relics would have been a means to acquire prestige, and also to found secondary centres. As such, investment in such activity can be viewed as part of

programmes of monumentality. As society became more Christianised, and investment in the church increased, the church became an alternative elite, controlling production, and maintaining their own networks of power, through mechanisms that were already in existence.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE INTERPRETATION OF WHITHORN AND ITS PLACE WITHIN THE IRISH SEA REGION

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have shown that, throughout the period of interest, regional variations can be identified in the way that communities around the northern Irish Sea employed the available forms of monumentality and ideological investment. By drawing together the varying strands of the thesis, it is possible to use similarities and contrasts between investment strategies to explore the changing political alignments of the region. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to test the significance of these apparent regional trends, to ascertain that the variations evident in each of the preceding chapters represent more than factors of discovery and survival. Within the study area, the site of Whithorn has been subject to most archaeological intervention and detailed study (Hill 1997), and has produced evidence for nearly all the investment types identified in this thesis. A detailed study of the archaeological sequence at Whithorn has therefore been undertaken, as a means of demonstrating the potential significance of variations in ideological investment, and their wider chronological implications.

Detailed consideration of Whithorn provides a valuable tool for use within the wider study for a number of reasons. Firstly, the site itself has emerged as a focal point for activity in many of the preceding chapters, with historical, archaeological and artefactual correlates for high levels of ideological investment (Chapters, 3, 4, 5 and 7). As a central place, Whithorn will have both influenced and absorbed ideological change from the surrounding area. Understanding the nature of the settlement, and the way that it developed, provides an insight into the way that changes in ideological alignment were implemented on a site-specific level. The interpretations applied to Whithorn have been central to understanding of this area of southwest Scotland; revisiting the sequence, and considering alternative means of interpreting the site, have wider implications for its landscape and political context.

Secondly, the site provides an invaluable opportunity to consider different types of monumentality within a single, continuous sequence. Each of the preceding chapters has highlighted problems with dating and chronology; at Whithorn, enclosures, ecclesiastical

structures, burials, sculpture and imported pottery have all been identified on the same site, within relatively-, if not absolutely-,dated contexts. The sequence therefore provides a basic chronology to facilitate the drawing together of information from each of the preceding chapters, and also provides a context in which these types of investment might have occurred.

Using Whithorn as a case study demonstrates the way that site-specific archaeological information can be integrated with conclusions drawn from wider syntheses. Open area excavations provide unique information on sequence and context, allowing the chronological development of sites to be charted. The wider context, however, allows the significance of these finds to be more comprehensively explored and appreciated. The process is discursive; by re-examining the archaeology at Whithorn in its landscape context, the role of the centre can be considered on a wider scale (Chapter 9).

INTERPRETATION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE AT WHITHORN

Archaeological, or antiquarian, investigations have been undertaken at Whithorn since at least the 1880s; the results have been published in individual accounts, and are summarised by Peter Hill in his report on the more extensive excavations of the 1980s and early 1990s, from which the majority of information regarding the site is now to be derived (Hill 1997). These modern investigations, which form the basis for this study, explored an area to the southwest of the surviving cathedral at Whithorn, and the results have been used to describe the development of an ecclesiastical settlement from the sub-Roman period to the modern day.

Six periods have been assigned to the site, spanning prehistoric origins to the modern day (Hill 1997). The centuries of interest, *c.* AD 400 to AD 1000, encompass the first three of Hill's periods. Period I, covers the origins of the site to *c.* AD 730, Period II has been assigned to the years between AD 730 and *c.* AD 845, whilst Period III dates from *c.* AD 845 to AD 1000 X 1050. Each Period is divided into Phases (for example, Period I.1, Period I.2 and further subdivided into stages (for example, Period I.1 Stage 1). Four key phases of activity can be discerned within Period I to III, allocated to Period I.0-I.1, Period I.2-I.4, Period II and Period III.

HILL'S MODEL

Period I.1: The origins of the *monasterium*

Settlement on the site originated prior to the late fifth century, represented by a roadway and evidence for agricultural practice, in the form of plough pebbles and ploughsoil (Period I.0). From the late fifth century onwards, (Period I.1) the archaeological remains have been used to suggest the establishment of an ecclesiastical centre, termed a *monasterium*, and associated with the cult of St Ninian. The structural remains relate primarily to a number of timber buildings (figure 8.1), which have been combined with evidence for the onset of burial at the end of Period I.1 to describe an enclosed ecclesiastical settlement (Hill 1997, 29-30), surrounding a focal religious point, and incorporating a cemetery; evidence of lime and haematite has been used to infer the construction of a sophisticated stone church (Hill 1997, 28, 39).

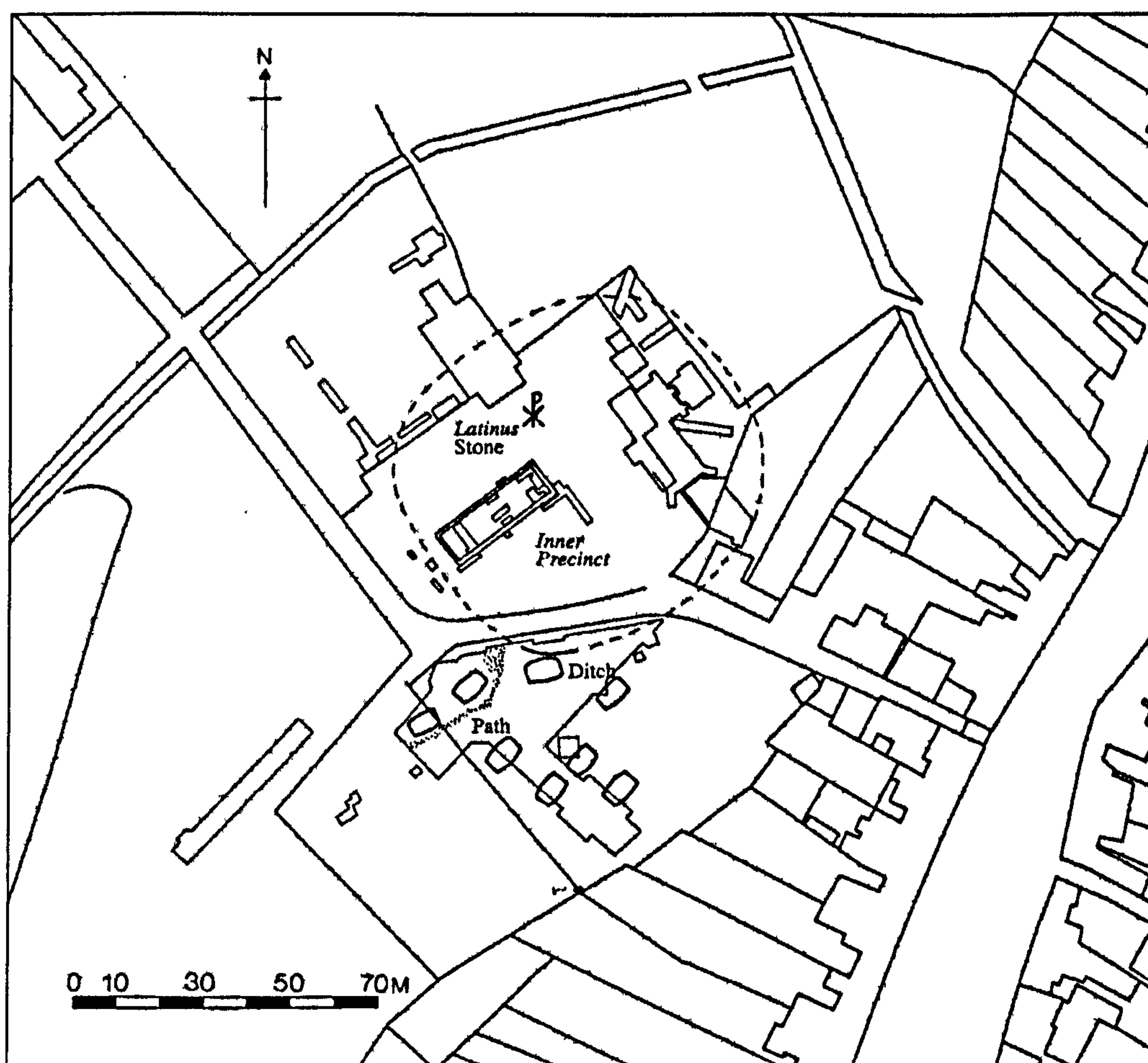


Figure 8.1 Buildings of the Period I.1 monasterium, before establishment of the cemetery (Hill 1997, 29)

Period I.2 to I.4: Development of the *monasterium*

Subsequently, the *monasterium* developed further, with the consolidation of a concentric layout, reminiscent of a 'typical' Irish monastic plan (Hill 1997, 30; cf Swan 1985; Blair 1992). The cemetery continued to evolve, with burials in the 'inner precinct' gravitating towards a succession of three curvilinear shrines. Beyond the inner precinct, in line with theories regarding the organisation of space within monasteries, domestic and craftworking activity took place (figure 8.2).

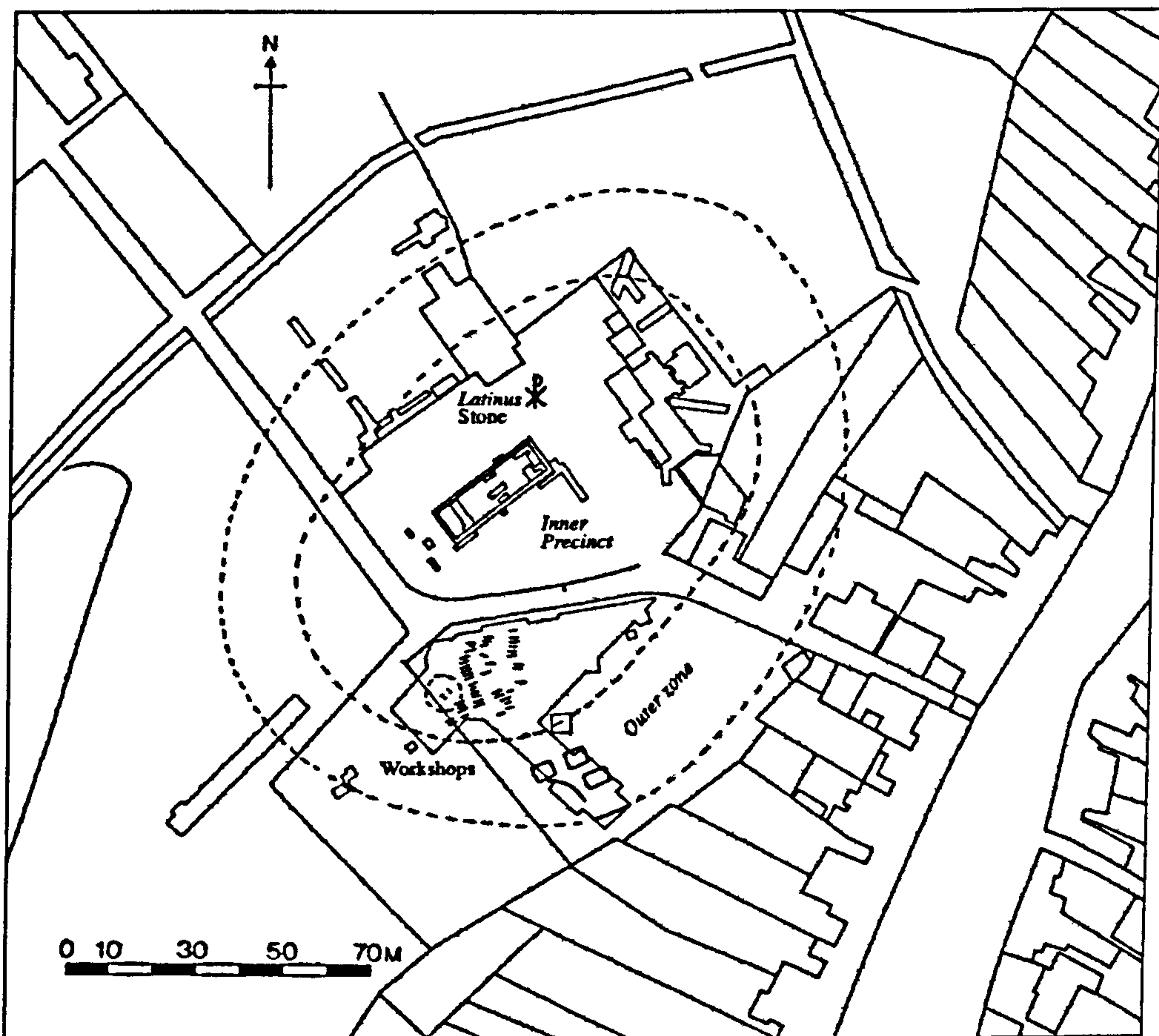


Figure 8.2: Period I.4 - the developed *monasterium*, with the third shrine (Hill 1997, 33)

Period II Anglian minster

Into Period II, Whithorn saw extensive redevelopment, as the site came under Anglian influence, and a minster was established, possibly under Bishop Pecthelm. The curvilinear shrines identified within the Period I *monasterium* were replaced with an aligned rectilinear layout of two oratories and a clay-bonded chapel. Burial continued, and the oratories saw a major alteration, when the two timber structures were conjoined to form a large timber church, aligned with the chapel (figure 8.3).

Although the layout of the inner precinct was altered considerably, the concentric zonation of the site continued, with the outer precinct occupied by parallel ranges of large and small timber structures. The buildings have been interpreted as guesthouses, associated with smaller ancillary structures. The material culture of this period shows a marked shift towards Northumbria whilst, the timber buildings are also seen as evidence for Anglian influence, being comparable in plan to those identified at Hartlepool (Daniels 1988; Hill 1997, 37).

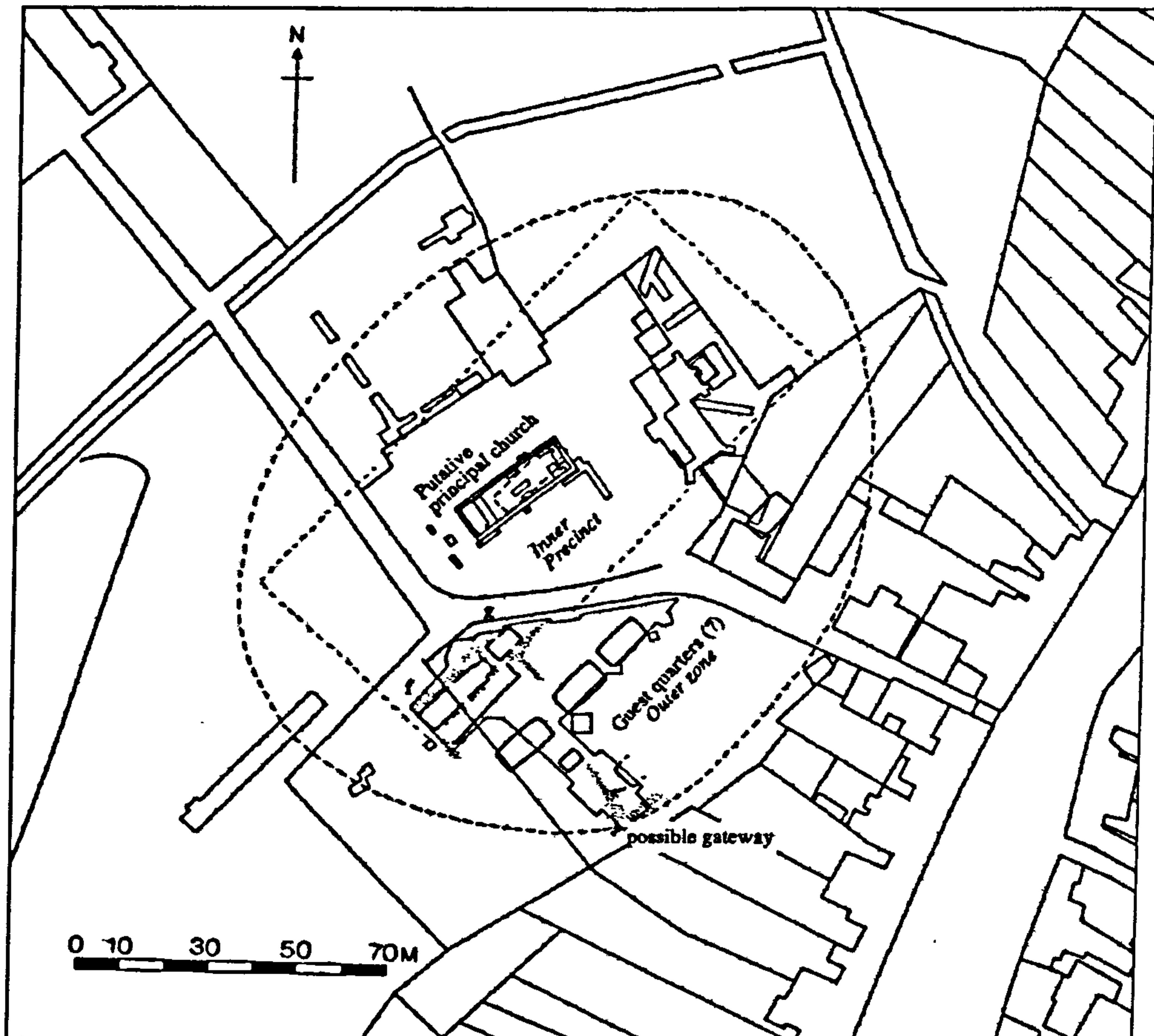


Figure 8.3: The Anglian minster, Period II (Hill 1997, 41)

Period III: Ninth and tenth century Whithorn, the minster restored

The Anglian minster continued, and experienced stability, until a period of crisis and change in the early ninth century. The church was badly damaged by fire and, following a brief period of renovation at the beginning of Period III, was destroyed, before a series of aligned, sub-rectangular wattle-built structures were constructed, and the focus of the settlement shifted. The artefacts associated with these buildings suggested a change in the material culture of the community, demonstrating limited continuity of Anglian influence (Hill 1997, 52), and increasing indications of both Norse and Irish origin (Hill 1997, 48). During this

time, the southeastern part of the site saw continued flooding, and activity within the southern sector therefore appears to have declined. Hill sees this phase, as representing continued investment in an ecclesiastical centre, and marking an important stage in the development of a 'monastic town' (Hill 1997, 48) (figure 8.4).

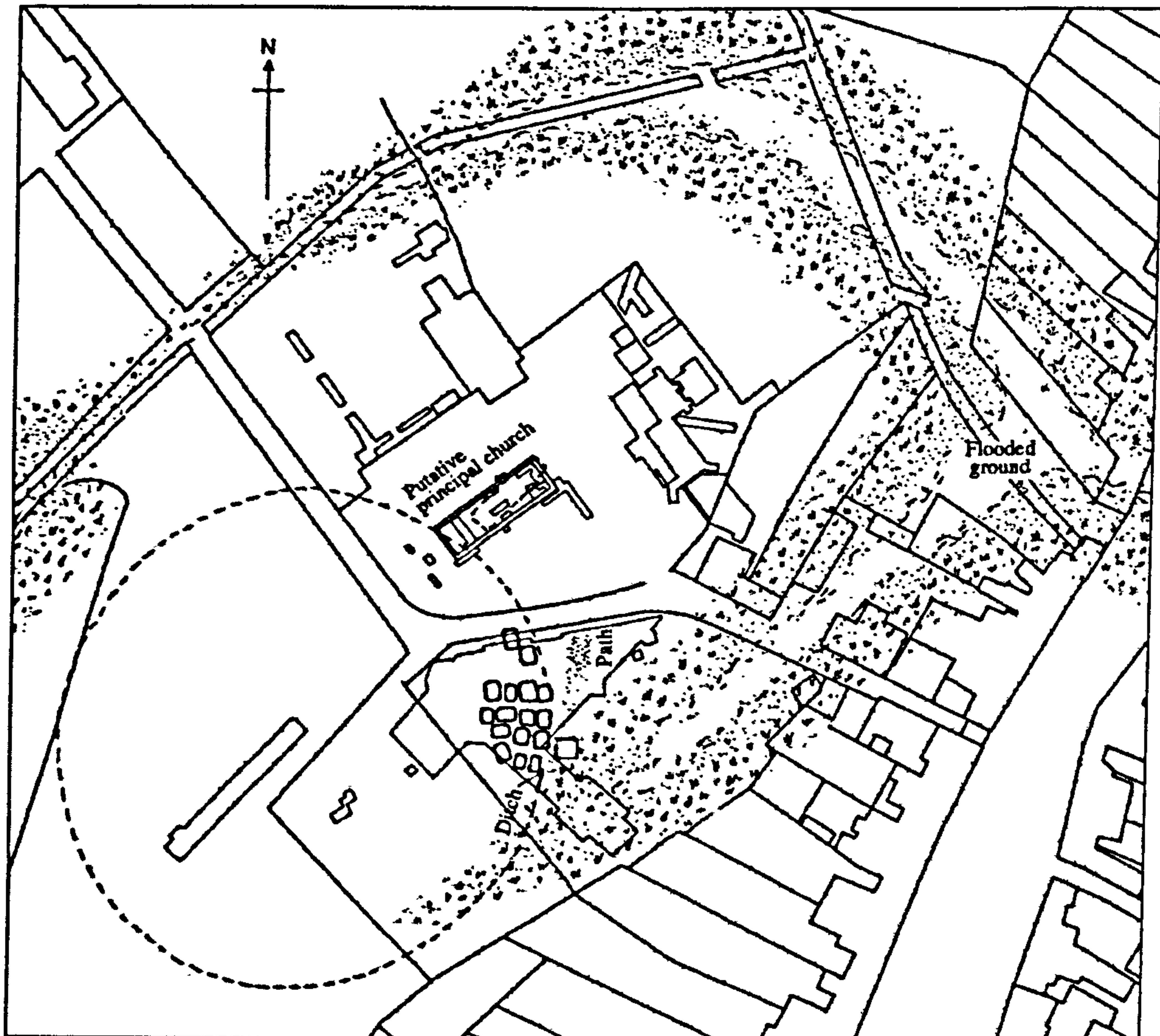


Figure 8.4: The Period III settlement (Hill 1997, 51)

CRITIQUE: THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

Briefly outlined, these interpretations appear to provide a comprehensive narrative for the development of the site. However, if the sequence is considered in more detail, the challenging and highly complex nature of the archaeology becomes clear. The remains on the site were, in many cases, not well stratified, and throughout much of the report, the reconstructed sequence appears to be more complicated than the evidence perhaps allows. This can be attributed partly to a desire to identify elements typical of ecclesiastical sites - enclosures, shrines, zonation of activity - from features that were often highly ephemeral.

The interpretation of Whithorn as a long-lived ecclesiastical centre has also led a focus on continuity between each of the periods. This continuity has been emphasised by the way that the site has been phased; assemblages and structures indicating the onset of change have been assigned to the end of one period, thereby demonstrating continuity with activity in the next. On occasion, however, this has led to somewhat circular arguments. If the sequence is simplified slightly, then changes in layout and orientation appear much more pronounced, and the site appears to have experienced discrete phases of reorganisation, with significant changes to its focus and function, as well as to its structural layout. In my opinion, the ecclesiastical role of Whithorn has been overemphasised, and, when placed within its wider context, the site has broader political, economic and ideological roles.

PERIOD I.0 AND I.1: THE ORIGINS OF THE *MONASTERIUM*

Period I.0 was assigned to the earliest remains on the site, comprising a handful of unstratified Roman finds, and a broad roadway, represented by a levelled, worn surface across the exposed bedrock (Hill 1997, 26, 74). The Roman artefacts are difficult to interpret; although the nature of the material may indicate occupation in the vicinity, it has also been suggested that they may have been brought to the site as talismans or souvenirs (Dickinson *et al* 1997, 293). The road cannot be dated, but the fact that it was disturbed by cultivation assigned to Period I.1, and a possible boundary ditch, has led to a pre-late fifth century date being proposed (Hill 1997, 74). The ploughsoil and associated distribution of plough pebbles (Hill 1997, 464-5), allocated to the earliest part of Period I.1, provide evidence for cultivation, potentially before a sequence of structures was established on the site (Hill 1997, 80).

Period I.1 has been ascribed to the establishment of a *monasterium*, subdivided into six stages for the northern sector, and linked to a similar sequence for the southern sector. Interpretation as an early *monasterium* rests heavily on the historical traditions associated with St Ninian, and archaeological models of enclosed ecclesiastical settlements proposed by scholars such as Thomas (1971), both of which have been called into doubt in recent years (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4). If considered in isolation, evidence for the key elements of a monastic foundation (enclosure, cemetery, church) appear highly ephemeral, suggesting that an alternative interpretation should be sought (figure 8.5). Drawing on the evidence that is available for this period, and adapting the sequence slightly, it is suggested that the site emerges as a high status, secular centre.



Figure 8.5: Period I.1 features (after Hill 1997, figures 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7)

Enclosure

The evidence for the enclosure of the site during this period is confined to the 'inner ditch', described only in the earliest part of Period I.1, and represented by a poorly dated, apparently short-lived feature, 1.0m wide and 0.5m deep. Hill's hesitance to assign it to any particular stage of Period I demonstrates its chronological ambiguity (Hill 1997, 77), and the feature is not thought to have endured into later periods. Although only a two metre sample was excavated, this boundary was extrapolated to enclose a large area, based on the assumption that the site would have encompassed the early building identified by Raleigh Radford during investigations of the 1950s, centring on the crossing of the later cathedral (Hill 1997, 28; Radford 1950; 1957). Such evidence is highly speculative, and, given the limited extent and endurance of the feature, cannot be used as evidence for an early enclosure of the size that has been suggested.

Church

Allocated to Period I.1 (Stage 2) were displaced fragments of lime and haematite, which have been interpreted as the debris from building and smithing, and have been used to infer the construction of a stone structure in the vicinity. The physically-attested buildings of this period are of stake-built construction, and so this more sophisticated structure was suggested to have been a church (Hill 1997, 28-30, 39; 2001, 26), subsequently used as evidence supportive of the shining white church of *Candida Casa*. However, the insecure stratification of these finds, and the lack of an associated structure, means that such conclusions are speculative, and there is no conclusive evidence for a church at such an early date. The assertion that the *sinum* on the Latinus stone refers to this church has been refuted, suggested by Craig to refer instead to the *chi rho* on the stone itself (Thomas 1992b, 7; Craig 1997b, 615).

Burial ground

To the penultimate stage of Period I.1 (Stage 5), Hill assigned the onset of east-west burial, seen to indicate the beginning of a cemetery, represented initially by three lintel graves within an enclosure, loosely defined by gullies and stone alignments (Hill 1997, 87-88; see figure 8.5). Although aligned with these graves, five log coffins were assumed, due to their type, to have been chronologically later, and were allocated to Period I.4 (Hill 1997, 87).

Ascription to Period I.1 is based primarily on spatial evidence, and the fact that a sinuous hollow, assigned to Period I.1 (Stage 6), appears to respect the three burials. Stage 6 has been assigned a *terminus ante quem* of AD 550, based on the ceramic evidence (imported Mediterranean pottery), and is used as a final stage to define Period I.1. The onset of burial, therefore, is placed in the late fifth or early sixth century; however, no secure stratigraphic relationship exists between the hollow and the burials, and the spatial arrangement is not a close one. The burials appear somewhat out of place, occurring in a small gap between a number of buildings.

In addition, deposits within the northern part of the site, including the sequence backfilling the Stage 6 hollow, have produced significant evidence for both craftworking and occupation (see below), and it seems incongruous to suggest that a cemetery would have been established in an area where domestic and industrial activity was apparently ongoing. According to the published stratigraphic sequence (Hill 1997, 75), the deposition of craftworking material and imported goods continued for some time before activity in the northern part of the site declined. Then much of the area was sealed by worm-sorted soils, and a metalled roadway was established across the site (Road 72; Hill 1997, 98). The published matrix suggests that none of these layers or features bore a direct stratigraphic relationship with the burials, indicating that this activity might, in fact, have predated the inhumations (Hill 1997, 75). Given the difficult, and relatively shallow, stratigraphy of the site, and the lack of absolute dating, it is simpler to suggest that the industrial activity came to an end in the northern part of the site at the end of Period I.1 (after c.AD 550), before the area was given over to burial, starting in Period I.2.

Without the enclosure, church and cemetery, use of the term *monasterium* appears unfounded; considered independently, the structural and artefactual evidence also point to a different interpretation.

Structural evidence and layout

Twenty-three buildings have been assigned Period I generally, eleven of which have been assigned to Period I.1, and the equivalent Stages (2-5) in the southern sector (Hill 1997, 119-20). Examination of the available evidence reveals their ephemeral nature, and the problems facing the excavators. A number of buildings have been reconstructed from rectilinear hollows, stake-hole alignments and areas of paving, very few of which represent complete plans. Furthermore, most were identified during the post-excavation programme, and the huge numbers of stake-holes that were identified make the outlining of plans within them

equivocal (Hill 1997, 81-2, 118-9). Neither did these remains assist the phasing of activity on the site; the stake-holes were not stratified, as they could not be recognised above subsoil, and the majority were dated no closer than between the sixth and the eighth centuries (Hill 1997, 118-9).

Despite, these problems however, the cumulative evidence does seem to describe a sequence of buildings, aligned roughly northeast-southwest over much of the site; potentially, further structures to the east were obliterated by later burials

Imported pottery and evidence for craftworking

Distributed in and around these structures were assemblages of imported ceramic and craftworking waste. The imported goods, including Mediterranean pottery and glass, were distributed in both the northern and southern parts of the site, and although some material is believed to have derived from later rubbish spreads, much would seem to have been associated with the Period I.1 structures (Campbell, Hill and Price 1997, 323-4). Likewise, the material associated with metalworking, comprising mould fragments, crucibles and scrap metal, also occurred in both the northern and southern parts of the site (Hill and Nicholson 1997, 403).

These wide distributions, whilst possibly partly due to later recycling of material, appear to suggest that the strict zonation proposed for later periods was not evident during the earliest phases of the settlement, and that domestic or industrial activity occurred throughout the excavated area. The imported goods and non-ferrous metalworking indicate control of surplus, and long distance communication links, all of which are indicative of a high status central place of some importance in the fifth and sixth century (Chapter 7).

Interpretation of Period I.1

By considering the key elements in turn, the arguments for an early, Period I.1 *monasterium*, are quickly diminished. The historical sources on which the published interpretation has drawn, primarily the hagiography of St Ninian, has already been challenged by Clancy (Chapter 3), and the ecclesiastical function of the site requires reconsideration.

Hill himself has expressed concern with the idea 'that there was a large, Latinate, Christian, late-Roman community at Whithorn, necessary to explain the appointment of St Ninian as bishop' (Hill 2001, 27-8). Instead he opted for a different ecclesiastical explanation,

suggesting that the site was established by Pelagian refugees on land granted by a local magnate (Hill 2001, 30). The presence of a Pelagian group is unsupported, but the idea that the site formed part of the estate of a local tribal leader is highly plausible. Of particular interest is Hill's suggestion that the land may have been granted by a local ruler whose seat may be represented by the fortified peninsula of the Isle of Whithorn (Hill 2001, 29). In Irish law, trivallate defences are considered to have been the preserve of royalty, and though the site on the Isle has not been dated, typologically it would not be out of place in the early medieval period. The double landing site offered by the Isle would have provided access to major transport routes for communities at Whithorn and on the Machars; a link between the Isle of Whithorn and Whithorn is evident in the later medieval ages, as the harbour site was the property of the later priory (Hill 1997, 5). As such, it may be more appropriate to consider these sites as two nuclei within a larger territory, rather than distinct centres.

The writings of Patrick suggest that during the fifth century Christianity would have spread with the support of local leaders, who controlled land and resources, and would have been able to make grants to support the establishment of churches. 'The strategy of the church was to win whole countries, political units or peoples; hence it preferred to aim at the top of society' (Brink 1998, 22). If a ruler was situated at the Isle of Whithorn in the early medieval period, the site at Whithorn may have been used for ecclesiastical activity (evidenced by the Latinus stone), possibly implemented by individual clerics following a process of gift giving and reciprocity. Clearly, Whithorn was inhabited by individuals of considerable social standing. Although too much emphasis can be placed on imported pottery, the quantity that the site produced implies the presence of an elite with sufficient resources to engage in long distance exchange, and of sufficient renown to have been targeted in the first place. Alignment with the Christian Mediterranean would have provided a means of exploiting exotica to demonstrate political control, and the overt expression of Christianity through inscriptions would also have enabled leaders to associate themselves with this wider world. Monasticism would not, however, have been a necessary prescription for such contact. Imported pottery reached secular centres such as Tintagel and Dinas Powys, which are not claimed as specifically ecclesiastical centres, and inscriptions need not have been a monastic preserve. Instead, Whithorn appears to belong to the realm of secular, tribal leaders of the fifth and early sixth centuries. The imports, metal- and glass-working are typical features of such high status settlements (Campbell 1991).

In this light, Whithorn emerges not as a devotional desert place (Hill 1997, 39), but as a power centre which had adopted Christianity, sharing links with the Continent and the Mediterranean, potentially to demonstrate a new form of *Romanitas*, in contrast to the

encroaching Germanic powers in the east (Quensel-von Kalben 1999). Rather than interpret of the site in terms of incoming groups, whether Gaulish or Pelagian (Thomas 1994b, 103-4; 1998, 104-123; Hill 2001), the creation of such new centres need not represent foreign settlers. An existing elite, whose contacts with the Roman world may have resulted in Romanised names such as Latinus, but whose kin-links are also demonstrably Irish (as shown by the name Barrovadus; Forsyth 2005, 115, 117), could easily have adopted Christianity through the shared ideas and ideology of the western seaways.

PERIOD I.2 TO I.4: DEVELOPMENT OF THE *MONASTERIUM*

Periods I.2 to I.4 have been dated to between c. AD 550 and AD 730, and the archaeological remains have been employed to describe the development of a complex and organised settlement, with a series of concentric boundaries demarcating specific zones of activity and increasing areas of sanctity. According to Hill's sequence, the graveyard that began in Period I.1, developed within an extended *inner precinct*, focussed around a series of sub-circular 'shrines'. Areas beyond the inner precinct boundary have been identified on the strength of assemblages as 'industrial' or 'open' spaces, and the outer zone, beyond the inner precinct boundary, has been seen as a more domestic or artisanal, with a series of rectilinear buildings associated with finds of domestic waste.

With the onset of burial, evidence for ideological investment is more tangible, and the types of burial employed – initially lintel graves, and later log coffins and coffins – do indicate shifts in alignment, and changing trends in funerary practice. However, if the evidence for 'shrines' is considered in a more sceptical light, and layout of the burials is reconsidered, it can be suggested instead that this was a well-organised, regular cemetery. It is suggested that the cemetery was established *de novo* in Period I.2, rather than originating in Period I.1, and that represents a significant reorganisation of the site, as the community actively invested land and resources in the creation of an overt ideological focus.

Development of the cemetery and the sequence of shrines

Although Hill suggests that a church would have been one of the earliest features of the *monasterium*, the graveyard itself is described as developing around a separate ritual focus, represented by a shifting sequence of three 'shrines' (Hill 1997, 90f). The suggested sequence follows that proposed in Charles Thomas' model for developed cemeteries (1971, 141-144; Chapter 4), and the identification of curvilinear features interpreted as focal points for burial has parallels with other western sites, such as Cannington (Rahtz, Hirst and Wright

2000, 398-410) or Cadbury Congresbury (Rahtz *et al* 1992, 242-243). That a cemetery existed at the site is unequivocal; however, the evidence for the three shrines is ephemeral and there is no substantial evidence for a church prior to Period II.

First 'shrine'

The suggested Period I.1 graveyard was 'developed' in Period I.2 (Stage 1), with the construction of a focal shrine (Hill 1997, 85, 92). A total of seven stages were identified to describe its development, beginning with small gullies describing a central curvilinear area (Stage 1; Hill 1997, 92-6). During Stage 2, the earlier features were partly overlain with shale, tentatively interpreted as a path leading to the monument (Hill 1997, 94), before nine Period I.2 Stage 3 burials cut the enclosure itself, one of which (Grave 18) was deemed to have been of particular importance, represented by a stone-lined grave of massive proportions. Grave 18 was positioned between the postulated outer and inner fences of the shrine; evidence for the outer enclosure comprised a layout of kerbstones and two stakeholes. Ordered stones are seen to have been laid down in direct relation to the outer boundary of the shrine in Stage 4 (Hill 1997, 96), whilst the gravitational pull of the feature continued into Stage 5, when a second, eastern row of lintel graves has been described as 'curving round' the enclosure. The final stage in the development of the first shrine occurred in Stage 6, when the northern limit of the graveyard was demarcated by a curving ditch; a third row of graves 'cannot be placed securely in the sequence, but possibly pertained to this phase' (see figure 8.6; Hill 1997, 97). The curving ditch appears to have been short-lived, becoming covered with rubble in Stage 7.

This shrine is therefore represented by highly ephemeral remains, and there is a marked lack of continuity of any of its components. The gully forming the central enclosure actually encircles less than half of the proposed area, and although the proposed building materials - wattle and upright stakes - are not likely to have survived, the evidence for the layout of this suggested structure is unconvincing. The attraction of burials towards this monument is also less clear than the interpretation might suggest; the phased rows of burials frequently appear to oversail and disregard elements of the proposed monument. In Period I.2 Stage 3, for example, the row of burials extends over the shrine edges (Hill 1997, 94); the Stage 5 burials, although suggested to 'curve round' the shrine, would not do so if their northernmost burial were not included (Hill 1997, 96). If evidence for the shrine is not sought, a more simple, aligned cemetery can be seen from the composite plans of all phases of the cemetery (see figure 8.6), reflecting the organised layout of potentially contemporary cemeteries such as Poundbury (Farwell and Molleson 1993).

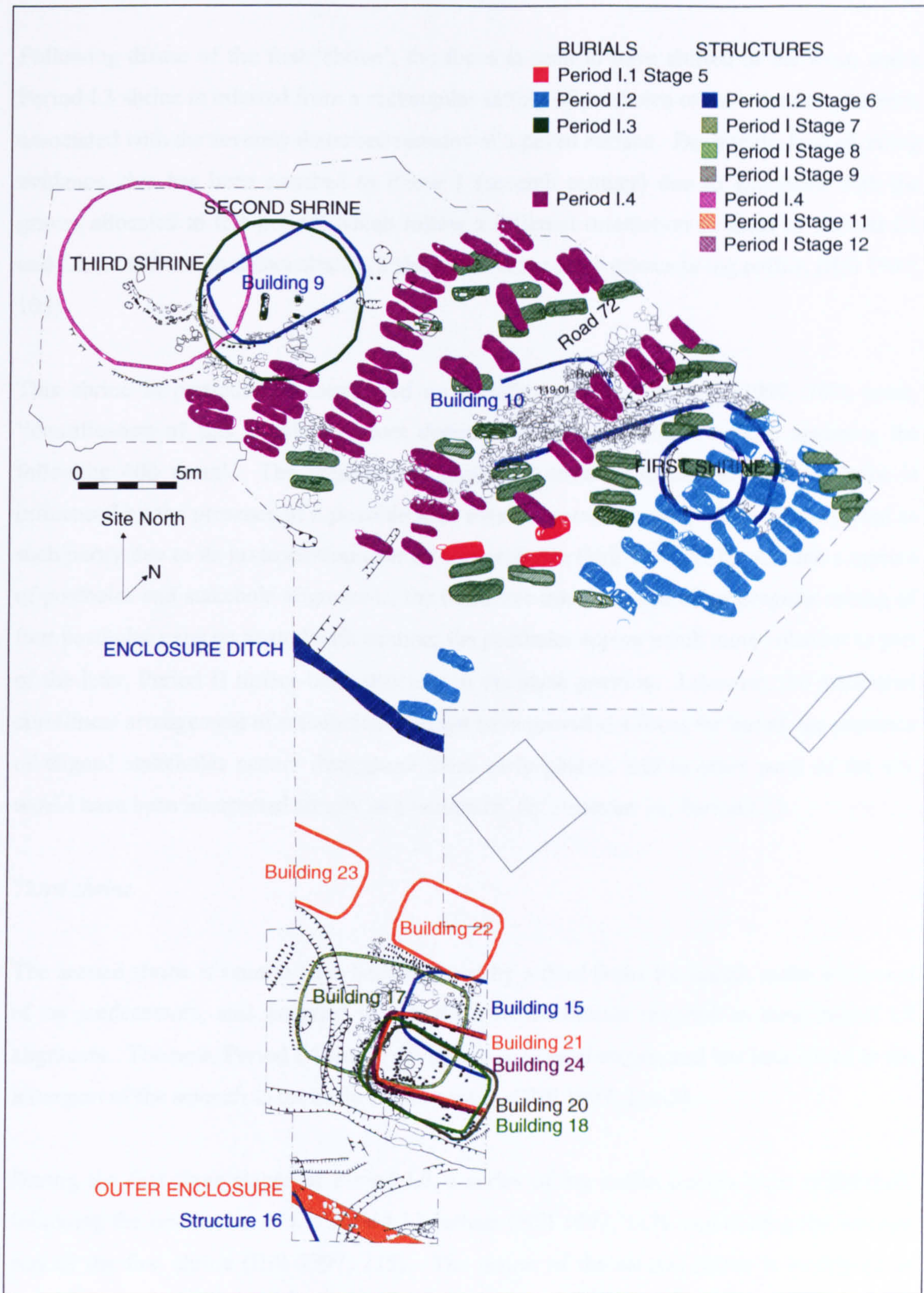


Figure 8.6 Buildings and features of Periods I.2 to I.4, by phase/stage

(after Hill 1997, figures 3.2, 3.13-3.32)

Second shrine

Following disuse of the first 'shrine', the focus is seen to have shifted to the west, and a Period I.3 shrine is inferred from a rectangular setting of postholes on an extended platform, associated with the severely disturbed remains of a paved surface. Despite the lack of dating evidence, this has been ascribed to Phase 3 (seventh century) due to alignment with the graves allocated to this period, which follow a different orientation to those of Periods I.1 and I.2, in addition to demonstrating a shift from stone-lined graves to log coffins (Hill 1997, 103).

This shrine in particular is interpreted on tentative grounds; as Hill (1997, 103) notes, 'identification of this simple structure depends on circumstantial evidence spanning the following 400 years'. The argument is somewhat circular; identification as a shrine is influenced by the presence of a possible altar over the same location, which is interpreted as such partly due to its juxtaposition over an earlier shrine (Hill 1997, 103). In such a myriad of postholes and stakehole alignments, the definitive interpretation of an irregular setting of four postholes must be treated with caution; the postholes appear much more coherent as part of the later, Period II timber-built structure in the same position. Likewise, the associated curvilinear arrangement of stakeholes need not have provided a focus for burial; the presence of aligned stakeholes occurs throughout these early phases, and in other parts of the site would have been interpreted simply as a 'structure' (*cf* Structure 11, Period I.1).

Third shrine

The second shrine is seen to have been eclipsed by a third focus for burial, to the northwest of its predecessors, and assigned to a horizon where burials reverted to their Period I.2 alignment. The new, Period I.4 shrine developed in several stages, and has been dated to the latter part of the seventh to the early eighth century (Hill 1997, 114-5).

During the first three stages of Period I.4, a series of log coffin burials were established, following the orientation of the Period I.2 burials (Hill 1997, 112), and cutting the western part of the first shrine (Hill 1997, 113). The disuse of the second shrine is evidenced in Stage 3 and 4, when 16 burials were aligned west of the second shrine, which was subsequently covered with rubble. This 'comprehensive redesign' saw the establishment of the third shrine, represented by an arc of upright timbers, within a circular platform, formed by an apron of soil deposited against a curvilinear wattle revetment (Hill 1997, 114). The subsequent stages of Period I.4 saw further log coffins burials within the same area.

Layout of the site

The location of the burial ground and associated structures, with a series of postulated boundaries, has contributed to the wider interpretation of the layout of the site. Hill (1997, 30) suggests that the cemetery would have been located within the inner precinct of the site, based on the plans of western British or Irish sites such as Nendrum or Monasterboice (Swan 1985; Swift 1998), and a series of possible boundary features have been used to reconstruct this concentric plan.

As with the preceding period, the boundaries themselves are not substantial features, and despite frequent references to the 'double oval' plan, the inner and outer boundaries have not been published on the same phase plans. The inner boundary, dividing the inner and outer precincts, was first identified in Period I.2, comprising a shallow feature, 1.0m wide and 0.15m deep, depicted for a length of roughly 10m across the site (Hill 1997, 89). No dating material was recovered; the only find was an iron bolt, and the feature was assigned to this period on the grounds that it respected a contemporary group of burials (Hill 1997, 89). The projected line of this boundary would have cut across the westernmost corner of the excavation, but does not appear to have been defined in this area. Neither is the feature shown in subsequent plans of Period I.3, and it is uncertain whether the boundary had fallen out of use by this period. The main evidence supporting identification of this as a boundary, however, is its clear relationship with the cemetery, in terms of location and alignment, and the fact that it would appear divide areas of burial and non-burial.

The outer boundary is much less certain, and is not represented until Stage 11 in the southern sector, roughly contemporary with Period I.4; the feature was identified in an area previously occupied by a series of gullies and pits. Initially demarcated by an alignment of stakes, the boundary was replaced by a spread of slabs c.1.0m wide, running for c.7m across the southern end of the trench. By Stage 12, this had been cut by a perpendicular alignment of stakes, representing a possible fence (Hill 1997, 133). This boundary has been equated with a linear feature identified in the adjacent Market Garden, during the excavation of a small trench in the 1970s (Tabraham 1979); however, the difference between the ditch revealed at the latter site (over 0.90m deep with associated bank), and the slab alignments of Stage 11, does not add weight to this conclusion (Hill 1997, 10-11).

Neither boundary, therefore, is securely assigned to this period; neither are they demonstrably contemporary. Although traced for significant distances in places (10m), there is no certain evidence for extrapolating the boundaries around the whole site, particularly

when compared to the substantial cropmarks, earthworks or field boundaries that have been identified at sites such as Iona (Reece 1980), Tarbat (Carver 2004), Nendrum (Jope 1966) and Hoddom (Lowe forthcoming). Where such boundaries have been excavated, they have proved to be substantial features, measuring 2 or 3m in depth (for example, Reece 1980; Carver 2004), requiring high levels of investment, which would appear to reflect the symbolic importance of such boundaries (Chapter 4). The more ephemeral, and comparatively short-lived, nature of the boundaries at Whithorn, and their insecure dating, makes the reconstructed plan less certain than those with which it has been compared, and whilst a plausible reconstruction, alternative interpretations cannot be easily dismissed. Despite being actively sought, secure evidence for the outer boundaries of the site at Whithorn has not been forthcoming, other than speculative observations in local field boundaries (Lowe 2001; Morrison 2001). This problem has been noted by a number of scholars, who suggest that instead of seeking a 'typical' monastic plan, Whithorn could be seen as an unenclosed site, which would have served a range of secular and ecclesiastical functions (Campbell 1991, 172; Davies 1998, 4; Gondek 2004, 328-9). Demarcation of an area of ideological investment (a cemetery) does necessarily demonstrate a concentric arrangement.

Structural activity and zonation of activity

Although the 'typical' monastic plan is not clear, the development of zones of activity has been demonstrated, in the clearly defined areas of burial and non-burial, divided by the east-west ditch running across the site (see figure 8.6). Structural evidence appears confined to the southern part of the site, although there is a hint of complexity in the northwesternmost corner of the excavated area.

Stakeholes and linear features in the southern part of the site have been used to describe a complex sequence of buildings; Stages 6 to 12 in the southern sector equate broadly with Periods I.2 to I.4 to the north (see figure 8.6). Again, evidence for buildings is insubstantial; wattle-built construction resulted in numerous small stake holes, and plans were largely discerned in post excavation. Occasionally, the sequence appears to have been overcomplicated; Buildings 18 and 20 seem to occupy the same ground plan and may relate to the same structure. Similarly, Buildings 21 and 24 would appear represent different features of the same building. Two separate structures were identified, as surviving timbers of Building 24 protruded through a layer of shale, which sealed the disused postholes of Building 21. However, if the shale layer was deposited when the Building was in disrepair,

with some timbers having been robbed and some upstanding, then the regular layout of construction features can be more logically assigned to a single structure (figure 8.7).

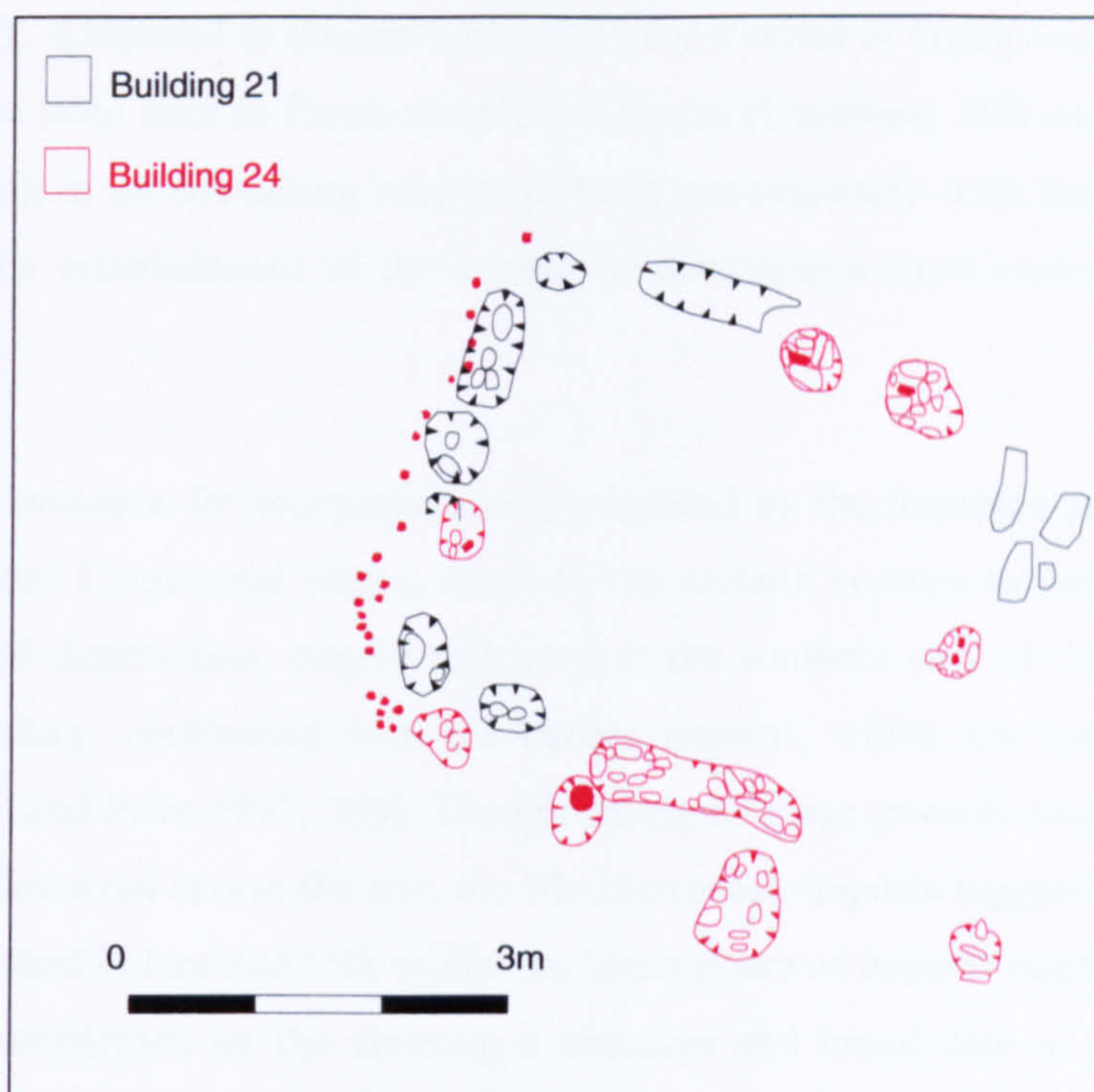


Figure 8.7 Structural remains of buildings 21 and 24 (after Hill 1997, figure 3.31, 3.43)

Despite their problematic nature, however, the general layout of buildings assigned to Periods I.2 to I.4 does show a coherent distribution and alignment. All but two (Buildings 9 and 10) occur outside the area of burial, and show a marked change in orientation from those identified in Period I.1, running parallel to the proposed enclosure ditch. The apparently over-populated southern sector is partly explained when evidence for silting in Stage 10 is considered; presumably rebuilding occurred following an episode of flooding.

Building 10, identified largely from an area of paving, is not a convincing structure, and its situation within the cemetery suggests that should be disregarded, at least from this Period. Building 9, however, is better represented by paving, stakeholes and a platform (Hill 1997, 98-99). The structure is spatially associated with a spread of industrial debris (Hill 1997, 102), including evidence for precious metalworking and possibly glassworking (Hill 1997, 117-8; Nicholson and Hill 1997, 385). Whilst some of this material is believed to have been redistributed from the southern part of the site, it may be that craftworking continued specifically within this building. Stratigraphically, it seems possible that Building 9 could belong to Period I.1, but as it occupies a different alignment to earlier structures, and bears an apparent spatial relationship with the cemetery, it may represent the northwestern limit of

burial. The increasing wealth of the Whithorn community would seem to be attested by a peak in the working of precious metals at this time; finds of gold, including a rod and ingot were found close to fragments of silver and moulds in the northern sector (Nicholson and Hill 1997, 404). Clustered in the same vicinity were a series of hones and smoothing stones that would have been used to finish completed objects (Chadburn, Hill and Nicholson 1997, 454). This peak in metalworking may have been contemporary with the reorganisation of the site, and the establishment of the cemetery, indicating a more widespread increase in investment.

Chronological evidence for reorganisation is provided by the imported pottery. The latest stage of imported Continental wares, dated to the seventh century to early eighth century, shows a marked distribution, largely restricted to the southern part of the site, beyond the cemetery boundary, contrasting with the earlier imports, which are scattered throughout (Campbell, Hill and Price 1997, 326). Though dating on these grounds must be cautious, due to recycling of material across the site, the Mediterranean imports suggest that the cemetery was not established before AD 550, whilst the latest phase of imports might indicate that the zonation was established by the seventh; a tentative and broad date of c. AD 600 might therefore be proposed for reorganisation and the onset of burial

Further evidence for end date of this period has been recovered from the structures themselves, although this evidence has also been treated with caution (Crone 1997, 595-6; Hill 1997b, 596-8). The dendrochronological dates from 19 oak samples from the site fell between AD 329 and AD 752; however, the fact that the wood had been heavily trimmed resulted in the outer rings providing only a *terminus post quem* for the felling of the tree, and a number of samples were recovered from much later contexts, indicating residuality. However, 13 samples from Building 24 (Period I.4) suggested that the timbers were likely to have been felled between c. AD 690 and AD 716 (Crone 1997, 596; Hill 1997, 130). As this structure is demonstrably late in the Period I.4 sequence, it provides date for the latter end of the period.

Interpretation of Period I.2 - I.4

Interpretation of Whithorn during this period has focussed on its role as a monastic centre, emphasising traditions associated with the episcopal *monasterium* of St Ninian (Hill 1997, 11-16), and citing archaeological models for monastic layouts in western Britain and Ireland (Thomas 1971; Swan 1985; Blair 1992). Hill has suggested, albeit tentatively, that Whithorn formed a prototype for the plan of monastic sites in Ireland (Hill 1997, 15, 39), and emphasis

has been placed on continuity from an early ecclesiastical focus, and the fifth century foundation.

Reconsideration of the evidence suggests that a significant change to a secular settlement occurred in the late sixth or seventh century, with the establishment of a new ideological focus, represented by an organised cemetery. The southern boundary of the burial ground appears to have been demarcated by an east-west ditch, and subsequent realignment of associated buildings suggests that this occurred as part of a wider episode of reorganisation. Notably, this seems to have occurred at a time when contemporary communities in Ireland were establishing ecclesiastical centres, and individuals such as St *Uinniau* were active (see Chapter 3).

This change represents a conscious increase in ideological investment, and potentially represents the consolidation of an ecclesiastical, possibly monastic, element within the community. The identification of incised monuments of this date would further support such a trend (Chapter 5). However, this need not be lead to descriptions of the site in purely monastic terms, and to do so glosses over its wider political and economic role. The range of other evidence from the site, and in particular the imported goods, represents phenomena predominantly associated with high status, royal, centres; no other potentially monastic site has produced quantities comparable to those at Whithorn (Campbell 1991, 172; Campbell, Hill and Price 1997, 299). Although possibly attributable to factors of discovery, this emphasises the close relationship between religious and secular power at this time. Scholars have stressed the oversimplification of the monastic/episcopal/secular division, and have shown that these roles could all be incorporated in individual sites (discussed in Chapter 3). The establishment of a cemetery in Periods I.2 to I.4 could therefore be perceived as the introduction of a monastic element to a high status, central place, which maintained a strong political and economic presence within the surrounding territory. Imports indicate access to communication routes, and the establishment of a Christian focus would have resulted from the exchange of ideas, and alignment, with polities in Ireland and further afield.

Specifically, the archaeological finds at Whithorn reveal something of the influences that were being drawn upon. Stone-lined graves are demonstrably prevalent in Ireland and western Britain, and have parallels in monastic contexts both in Ireland (Nendrum), and northeastern Scotland at Tarbat (Carver 2004), and southeast Scotland (Proudfoot 1997), dating to the sixth to ninth century (see Chapter 4). Particular significance has been assigned to the shift from lintel graves to log coffins in Period I.3, and this has been perceived as the adoption of a trait belonging to the 'Irish Sea province', with *comparanda* cited in northern

England (Quernmore, Lancs), Ireland (Armagh) and the Isle of Man (Maughold) (Hill 1997, 37). Although there is little absolute dating for this change, Hill (1997, 112-3) has suggested that the adoption of log coffins indicates a marked shift towards Irish influence during this period.

Further parallels with the west are provided by stone monuments, the form of which provides more indication of the influences drawn upon. The inscription on the Petrus stone has Irish parallels, notably on the inscribed stone from Kilnassagart, Armagh; and the cross-of-arcs and marigold designs also have westward affinities, with strong parallels at Maughold (Trench-Jellicoe 1980; Craig 1997a, 439). Similarly, examples of metalwork - the form of nail-headed pins, and a spiral ring recovered from one of the seventh-century graves - show affinities with Ireland (Nicholson and Hill 1997), whilst the wattle construction of the buildings can be compared with surviving examples from northern Ireland, at sites such as Deer Parks Farm, County Antrim (Hamlin and Lynn 1988, 44-7; Cramp 1995, 15).

When Whithorn is considered within its wider context, it appears that the alignment of Galloway was towards the Irish Sea at this time. Place-name evidence, most notably *kil* names, and the tradition of cross-incised stones, both occur within a western zone that encompasses western Galloway (see Chapter 9). Specifically, *kil* names associated with St Finnian would denote the presence of Gaelic speakers who coined names associated with the cult, prior to the establishment of the Northumbrian bishopric and reinvention of St Ninian (see below). It would seem that the chosen means of investing in Christianity developed out of close contacts across the Irish Sea during this period.

To sum up, Hill's Period I.1 saw the establishment of a local secular estate and power centre, while Period I.2-I.4 saw the development of an ecclesiastical focus under Irish influence, at the same place.

PERIOD II: THE ANGLIAN MINSTER c. AD 730 to AD 845

Period II, dating from the early eighth century, saw another major alteration to the layout of the site, with the construction of aligned timber oratories, later combined to form a 'church', and a clay-bonded chapel (figure 8.8). Metalwork, coinage, coffin burials and building traditions suggest the increasing adoption of Anglian practices, and have therefore been placed within the context of the encroaching power of Northumbria, and attributed to the establishment of a documented Anglian bishopric. Coinage provides a more datable sequence throughout Period II, and seven distinct phases have been defined by Hill, to

describe the complicated development of an ecclesiastical complex in the northern part of the site, and the contemporary creation and use of guest quarters and ancillary buildings within the outer zone to the south (Hill 1997, 136).

As with the preceding transition between Period I.1 and Period I.2, a degree of continuity has been argued between the latter part of Period I.4 and Period II:

‘The [new layout] seems radical, but there were strong links between the old and the new, which may be seen as a physical expression of the process of assimilation and transformation evinced by the written records’ (Hill 1997, 134)

The Period I.4 ‘shrine’, Building 24 of Period I and the outer boundary are all projected into Period II; the Period I.3 shrine is seen to have been incorporated into later oratory/church structures, whilst burial is said to have continued within the cemetery, associated with the new burial enclosure and apparently respecting the Period I.2 graveyard (Hill 1997, 135).

Again, much of the evidence for continuity appears to have been overemphasised. Stratigraphically, none of the shrines need have continued in use; neither do the boundary features lie convincingly with the new rectilinear layout (figure 8.8). Although burial continued, this appears to have been within a specific, chapel context, and the wider cemetery of Period I.2 to I.4 appears to have been disregarded. The wider trend, therefore, is one of wholesale change, and it is simpler to see these alterations as evidence for complete transformation. The impetus for this change, however, requires reconsideration.

Development of the northern ‘ecclesiastical complex’: Period II.1 and II.2

The published Period II sequence is said to begin with the establishment of a timber oratory and stone building enclosure, aligned with the Period I.4 shrine (Period II.1). In Period II.2, this layout was seen to have developed further with the construction of a second timber oratory over the site of the Period I.4 ‘shrine’, and a clay bonded chapel over the stone enclosure. A case can be made, however, for these structures having been constructed in a single episode.

The first, or ‘primary’, timber ‘oratory’ is much more substantial than Period I structures, comprising a rectilinear arrangement of slots, with aligned post-holes (see figure 8.8). Although the structure apparently incorporated the Period I.3 ‘shrine’, the postholes sit much more comfortably within this timber building, and it seems possible that they were integral to

its creation; a corresponding timber post in at least one of the corners would have formed a central alignment for the support of roof timbers. A similar layout can be seen if the postholes from the Period I.4 shrine are placed within the second timber building.

There appears to be no reason why the second, western oratory had to have post-dated the first, and given similarities in their layout and construction, it seems more likely that they were constructed as part of a concerted, planned event (Hill 1997, 144). Both are typical of timber buildings of the period, conforming to the double square plan prevailing in Anglo-Saxon buildings (James *et al* 1984, 186; Hill 1997, 141), and mark the introduction of a new layout, enclosed by a rectilinear enclosure on a new alignment.

The 'burial enclosure', identified to the east of the new northern range, has been identified by Hill as a distinct structure belonging to Period II.1, replaced by a clay-built burial chapel in Period II.2 (Hill 1997, 143). The enclosure is represented archaeologically by the stone foundations of the west, east and south walls, with a single course of large stones surviving externally, and three courses internally. A Southumbrian *sceat*, identified against the western wall, has been used to date the structure to the early eighth century (AD 715-730).

Hill states that this enclosure, which may have been associated with three burials (Burial numbers II/2, II/3, II/4b), was demolished to foundation level before being rebuilt with the stone and clay walls of the Period II.2 chapel. The reasoning behind this interpretation is not explicit, and no clear argument is put forwards as to why the 'stone enclosure' foundations should not have been constructed in the first instance for the stone and clay superstructure of the 'later' chapel. The published north-south section through the site does not encompass this structure (Hill 1997, 142, 145, 147), and so the stratigraphic relationship between the various elements cannot be assessed; nothing separates the two elements on the stratigraphic sequence diagram (Hill 1997, 137). Based on the available evidence, therefore, it would be simpler if the chapel was intended to be constructed as such from the outset; the enduring structure would therefore have been constructed in a single, planned episode, which would seem more likely for such a sophisticated building (Hill 1997, 143).

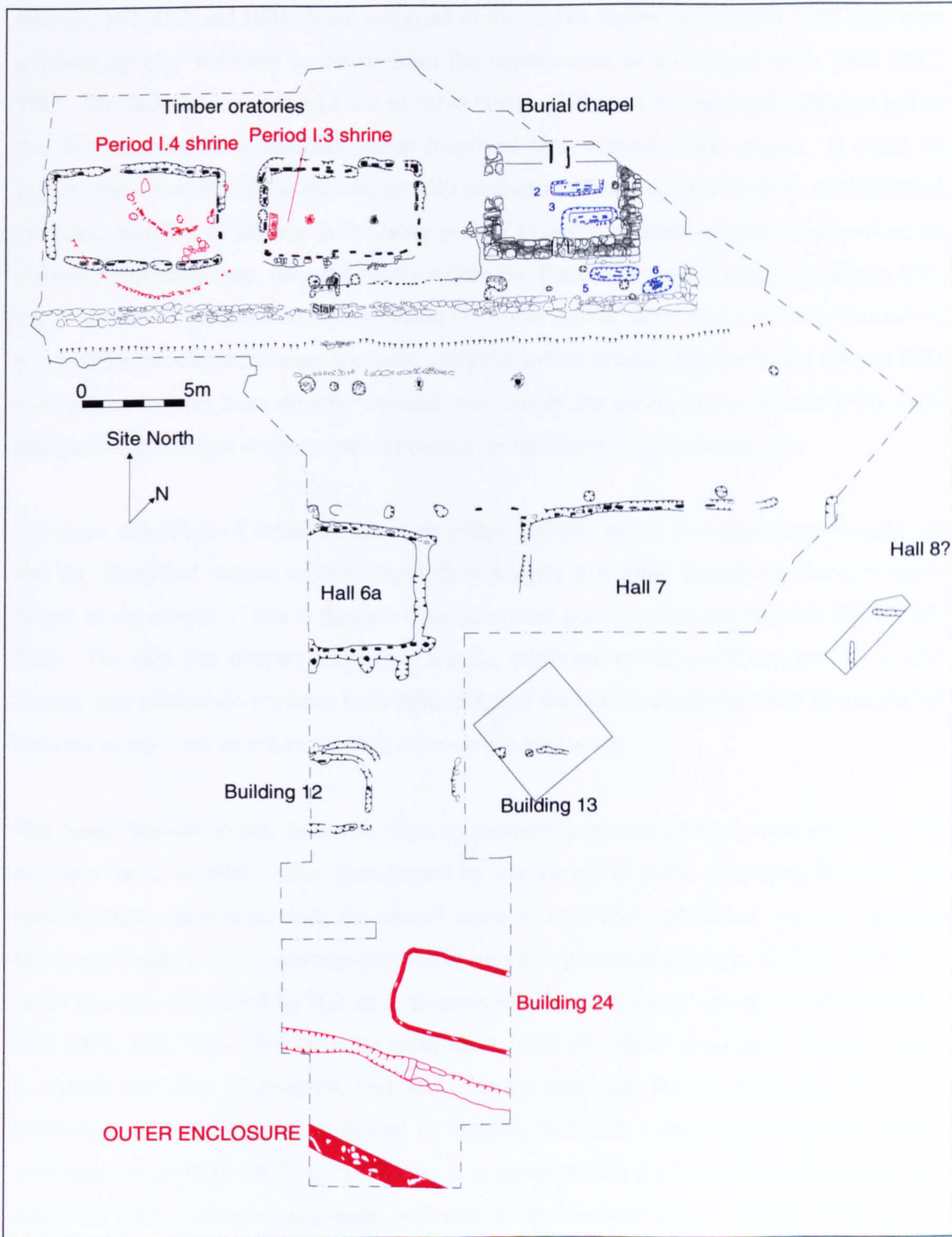


Figure 8.8 Period II.1-II. 2, with features suggested to have continued from Period I (red)
 (after Hill 1997, figure 4.5)

Part of the reasoning for a two-phase construction may have been the stratigraphic relationship with associated burials, which are considered to belong to Period II on the basis of Anglian type coffin fittings. Their precise chronology, however, is unclear. Three graves

(Burials II/2, II/3 and II/4b) were assigned to the earlier enclosure, because their cuts were overlain by clay believed to derive from the construction of the chapel walls (Hill 1997, 168). The fact that the coffin of one of these burials (II/2) had decayed and collapsed before the clay was deposited indicates some length of time between these events. It could be argued, therefore, that these burials actually predated the redevelopment of the ecclesiastical complex, possibly belonging to the latter part of Period I. Indeed, if they are placed on an overall distribution map, they fall neatly within the Period I.2 Stage 3 cemetery (figure 8.9). Certainly one of the more southerly Period II burials (Burial II/5), which was represented by a log coffin, would seem more logically assigned to this period. Another burial (Burial II/3) even seems to have been directly situated over one of the earlier graves (Burial I/54), with such coincidence, that it may represent deliberate interment in an existing grave.

However, a number of these burials were within coffins, which does mark a new tradition, and the illustrated section of the chapel does suggest that other burials cut through 'earth floors' of the chapel; if this is the case they must have post-dated its construction (Hill 1997, 168). The clay that overlay the earlier burials, attributed to the initial construction of the chapel, may instead derive from refurbishment, and the burials could therefore be associated with the newly built structure, instead of an earlier enclosure.

The chapel burials do not, however, seem to represent continuity of the wider cemetery, the southern limits of which were disregarded by the Period II halls. The specific rites, and limited burial, associated with the chapel seem to represent a different type of religious focus, particularly if the southern log coffin burial, adjacent charnel pit, and the children's burial ground, described by Hill as a 'discrete stratigraphic entity' are assigned to Period I (Hill 1997, 136, 170). That the latter group of children's burials is associated with the chapel is argued only due to location, and the complex sequence that is proposed, of burials followed by a building (5a), followed by burials, and then a later rebuilding (5b) seems overcomplicated (Hill 1997, 155). Whilst it is apparent that grave sites were forgotten and disturbed, such a complex sequence, and alternating function, seems unlikely. The burials did not bear a direct relationship to the structures, but underlay the clay debris associated with the construction of the later buildings, and it seems possible that a more simple burial-building sequence can be postulated, and that the inhumations were in fact earlier. Without the detailed stratigraphic information, however, this must also remain speculative.



Figure 8.9 Period I burials, with Period II burials and infant burials(shaded)
 (after Hill 1997, figures 3.2, 4.5, 4.29)

The chapel represents one of the most sophisticated structures identified on the site during these early periods, and represents significant levels of investment. Coloured window glass recovered from in and around the structure (114 sherds in total), represents at least two windows, the colour and quantity of which has been compared with the site of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow (Cramp 1997, 327-9; Hill 1997, 167, 170). The identification of the structure as a mortuary chapel is supported by the burials, and by the presence of apparently disarticulated remains within the structure at its demolition by fire at the end of the period. Hill (1997, 144, 170) suggests that the chapel would have been constructed in clay to provide insulated walls, for the preservation of remains laid out within it.

Period II.3 – construction of the church

By the later eighth century (Phase II.3), the two timber oratories had been conjoined to create a timber structure, which saw renovation in the later eighth century, before c. AD 760 (Period II.4). This structure has widely been interpreted as a church, primarily due to its location, and alignment with the chapel. Evidence for internal fittings, however, are notably scarce.

The western wall of the first oratory formed a dividing wall within the church, separating the eastern chancel from the western nave. Within the church, tentative interpretations of ritual focus have been proposed, based on the apparent location of the Period I.4 shrine, one socket of which is suggested to have contained a monolith (Hill 1997, 102, 148). This is suggested to have been superseded as a focal point by a stone-built altar, represented archaeologically by stone sockets, stones and chock stones (Hill 1997, 148). Further gullies, postholes and sockets within the church have been interpreted as representing liturgical fittings, which had been removed prior to the destruction of the church in the mid-ninth century (Hill 1997, 147-8). This rather insubstantial evidence is not convincing, and given more domestic activity identified at a later date, interpretation as a church remains open to debate.

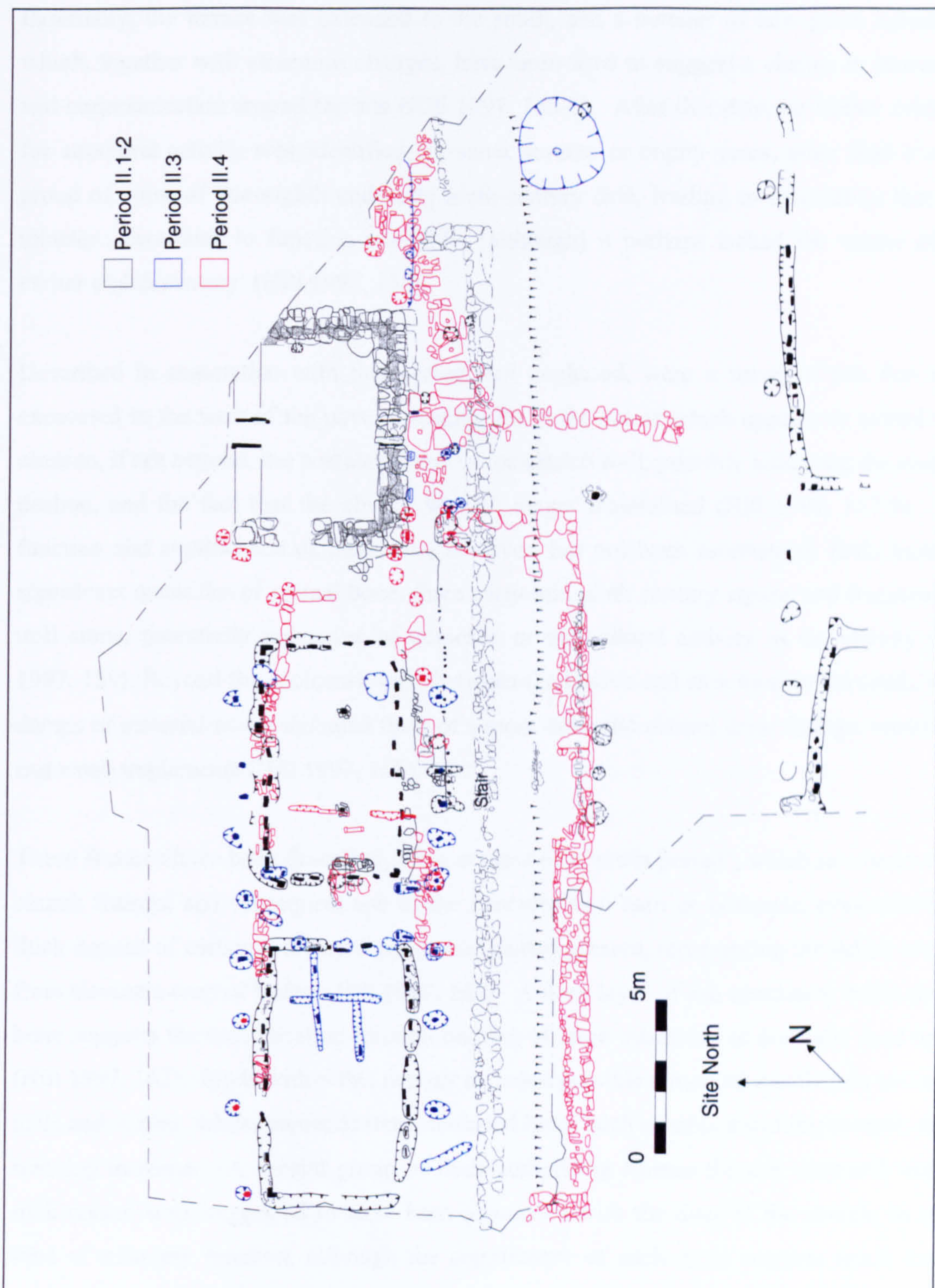


Figure 8.10 Development of the church complex in Period II.3-II.4

Period II.4, the end date of which has been placed by coinage at *c.* AD 760, saw the renovation of the church, evidenced by troughs excavated around the walls, and stones wedged beneath timbers, interpreted as the repairing of rotting of upright timbers (Hill 1997, 151). Also assigned to this period were changes to the internal arrangement of the church,

with the relocation of the altar, and an apparent extension of the chancel (Hill 1997, 153). Externally, the terrace was extended to the south, and a number of new paths introduced which, together with structural changes, have been used to suggest a change in movement and communication around the site (Hill 1997, 155-6). After this date, no further evidence for structural activity was identified for some seventy or eighty years, other than a small group of coins of late eighth and early ninth-century date, leading to speculation that 'the minster...continued to function smoothly, [although] it perhaps lacked the vigour of the earlier eighth century' (Hill 1997, 157).

Described in association with this period, but unphased, were a series of pits that were excavated to the west of the nave, including Pit 7, the cut of which appears to extend very close to, if not beyond, the postulated line of the church wall, possibly indicating the onset of decline, and the fact that the church was no longer maintained (Hill 1997, 157-9). The function and significance of these pits, however, has not been ascertained; finds included significant quantities of animal bone, three early-mid ninth century stycas, and fragments of mill stone, potentially indicative of domestic or agricultural activity in the vicinity (Hill 1997, 159). Beyond the enclosure wall, between the church and structures to the south, were dumps of material which included finds of a more domestic nature; dress fittings, ornaments and small implements (Hill 1997, 160).

These features have been described in the context of a 'crisis period', which saw removal of church fittings, and subsequent use of the structure as a barn or outhouse, evidenced by a thick deposit of carbonised cereal grains and matted grasses, representing the debris created from sieving a crop of barley (Hill 1997, 162). A deep layer of ash containing burnt animal bone suggests the carbonisation through burning of large quantities of domestic food refuse (Hill 1997, 162). Finds within this deposit included possible structural metalwork, including nails and staples, whilst domestic items included items such as a bone gaming counter, and a weaving tensioner. A second group of finds comprising Roman Samian ware and worked rock crystal were suggested to have been associated with the altar of the church, in some kind of reliquary function, although the significance of such items requires much further explanation (Hill 1997, 164). Given the insecure lack of dating, however, particularly of the pit features, it is possible that the church structure served a multifaceted role from the outset.

Interpretation as a church is widely accepted, and comparison has been made with the aligned churches and mausolea of Repton, Wells and Glastonbury (Blair 1992, 252-3; Hill 1997, 45). That the church was constructed in timber, rather than stone, may reflect Irish influence of the region, but is also reminiscent of the halls identified on many early medieval

sites, such as Yeavinger, Cowdery's Down, or Cheddar (Hope-Taylor 1977; James, Marshall and Millett 1984). Both secular and religious statements might have been made, as the Whithorn community reinvented themselves as Anglian lords, and it might be that the structure served many purposes, as a great hall and as a location for Christian ceremony, with the more ornate, adjacent chapel forming a permanent focus for religious activity. In either scenario, it is clear that this area formed a focus for investment and activity within the settlement.

Zonation

As with the preceding period, specific zones of activity have been identified, decreasing in sanctity from an inner enclosure to a more domestic outer area. Three parallel ranges of buildings were identified within the area of investigation: the northern ecclesiastical complex, a central range of halls, and smaller ancillary buildings to the south.

To the south of the church and chapel complex, large timber buildings were interpreted as halls, partly due their size. The structures themselves produced relatively few finds, suggesting that they were kept clean (Hill 1997, 175). However, this range was separated from the central ecclesiastical zone by a wide band of apparently unoccupied land, which produced a significant quantity of artefacts, including eighth and ninth century coins, a rich assemblage of animal bones and personal items such as needles, pins, and strap ends (Hill 1997, 155). This assemblage supports the interpretation of the larger structures as halls, possibly guesthouses, rather than barns; the animal bones reflect a relatively high status diet appropriate for hospitality (Hill 1997, 47, 155).

The coinage, in particular, is notable, as few Northumbrian coins have been recovered from the surrounding region, whilst 62 eighth- and ninth-century coins were found at Whithorn, largely from the southern sector (Pirie 1997 334). These included Northumbrian issues (AD 737 to 855), representing contact with areas relatively far afield, and particularly with York (Pirie 1997, 334).

A third range of buildings was identified to the south of the larger halls (Hill 1997, 178). These structures were cut into Period I deposits, and appeared aligned with, and possibly ancillary to, the halls, but could not be securely linked stratigraphically (Hill 1997, 178). The buildings had rectangular ground plans, with opposing doorways, the internal arrangements for which were largely unattested (Hill 1997, 138-9). These outer buildings provide evidence for an architectural tradition which began during Period I with Building

21/24, and potentially continued into Period III (Hill 1997, 139). These structures have been compared with eighth-century buildings identified at Church Close, Hartlepool, and are suggested to follow Northumbrian building practices (Hill 1997, 139).

Together, the buildings show a regular layout, with apparent declining levels of investment moving away from the church/hall and chapel, demonstrating a highly organised settlement. Within this context, the suggested curvilinear enclosure continued does not seem necessary. The postulated outer boundary, identified as a shallow gully, again appears less than substantial and remains inconclusive (Hill 1997, 179). The wider reorganisation and realignment of the site, demonstrated by the parallel ranges of buildings, does not sit comfortably within a concentric layout, the extent of which has never been clearly demonstrated. In addition, Hill's wider reconstruction is based on the premise that there would have been an early church on the site of the current cathedral. If so, Period II would have seen two churches and a chapel, within 30m of each other, potentially on different alignments. Whilst not impossible, the rigidly planned layout of the excavated area suggests a more uniform site, and indicates the possibility that any broader curvilinear boundary was not extant at this phase. By the end of Period II, waterborne silts suggest that much of the southern area was in fact inundated, and that the marshy nature of the ground made it uninhabitable (Hill 1997, 182).

Interpretation of the Anglian minster

Period II undoubtedly saw a major reorganisation of the site, and a significant shift in orientation, away from an Irish Sea alignment towards traditions pervading in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria. The layout of buildings, and the coins, coffin fittings and window glass, in particular, reflect specifically Northumbrian influence; items of personal jewellery and dress fittings, notably strap ends and ball-headed pins, have also been used to suggest that life within the settlement was Northumbrian (Hill 1997, 47). The archaeological evidence for this phase is much more substantial than for earlier periods, and the layout of the site appears to be coherent and regular, rather than a more piecemeal development with shrines and boundaries enduring. Burial did continue, but within a very specific context, possibly restricted to those of particular importance or note; the wider cemetery appears to have been cleared for the second range of timber buildings.

This change can be dated with some certainty to the early years of the eighth century; Building I/24 dates to the early eighth century, providing a *terminus post quem*, while the earlier 'burial enclosure' has been dated to a period around c.715- 730 on the basis of the

sceat (Hill 1997, 595, 136). Notably, both of these fall just before the recorded establishment of an Anglian bishopric by Pecthelm, suggesting that the horizon of AD 730 might have been too rigidly adhered to in discussions of the shifting alignment of the site. The end date of the period is assigned to the demolition of the church and chapel by fire, and is numismatically dated to *c.* AD 845.

The wider context: Northumbrian influence in Galloway

The evidence from Whithorn, at face value, appears to indicate a wholesale shift towards Northumbrian style settlement and church, and, when considered on a site specific level, fits neatly with the bishopric documented by Bede. The natural assumption has been that this occurred within the context of Anglian overlordship. However, when the wider context is considered, the situation is much less clear cut

The account in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, of the newly-established bishopric at Whithorn is, as noted by Peter Hill, the only contemporary account of Northumbrian expansion into Galloway (Hill 1997, 16). The textual evidence for the wider western expansion is fragmentary at best, and rests largely on accounts of specific events, and the achievements of individual rulers (Cramp 1995). Although it has been assumed that Northumbrian control may have extended into Galloway as early as the late sixth or early seventh century (Higham 1993, 110), the evidence is far from conclusive.

As shown in the preceding chapters, Whithorn appears as something of an anomaly in what would otherwise be a relatively neat pattern of Northumbrian influence. Anglian sculpture is largely confined to an area to the east of the River Cree (Chapter 5), and the ecclesiastical place-names that may be indicative of Northumbrian religious centres also occur only with this more restricted zone (Chapter 6). Place-names indicative of early settlement are lacking, and those Old English elements that do exist suggest isolated Anglian enclaves, a pattern which has been described as 'reminiscent of the dispersed territories of the later middle ages, gained by dynastic marriage, political intrigue and vicious exploitation of mortgage agreements' (Hill 1997, 17). Had the area been occupied under military conquest and wider colonisation, a less patchy distribution would be expected (Hill 1997, 17, 84). The ideological evidence from the wider area indicates a continuity of a more Gaelic-flavoured Christianity, with *cill* sites and incised monuments prevailing. This has been noted on the site itself: 'it may...be remarked that, at a period when the historical record shows links with Anglo-Saxon England, the predominant type of sculpture shows connections with Ireland' (Craig 1997a, 441).

Within this context, Whithorn has been described as an 'ecclesiastical bridgehead' (Hill 1997, 48), established as a means of establishing further control in the west. If, however, the impetus for adopting a Northumbrian style of settlement is placed into the hands of the existing elite, then the apparent contradiction can be reconciled. When considered within a framework of ideological alignment, the changes of Period II, like those of Period I.2, may be seen as the Whithorn community reacting to the changing balance of power in the region. Northumbrian political control was increasing and, particularly after the Synod of Whitby, so was the status of its church. It seems possible that, rather than being imposed on a subject polity, the Whithorn community instigated the installation of a Bishop Pecthelm, as a means of forging alliances with these increasing eastern powers. This has clear parallels in Aidan's foundation at Lindisfarne in earlier centuries; the establishment of that community entailed the invitation of an outsider to take a primary role, leading to construction in a different style. More importantly, this did not amount to Irish or Dál Riata conquest of Bernicia, but was borne out of political contacts and allegiance. The choice of Pecthelm as bishop, from the Irish-founded monastery of Malmesbury appears to have been no mistake, and if Whithorn remained primarily in 'Irish' hands, that would account for the apparent lack of linguistic and monumental impact that the Anglian presence had on the surrounding landscape.

The literature demonstrates that Northumbria made full advantage of the new alliance (Clancy 2001; Fraser 2002). The Ninianic hagiography, commissioned during the eighth century, extolled a new cult centre and attracted visitors, wealth and consequently influence, whilst integrating pre-existing traditions. Fraser (2002) has discussed the historical material within the wider ecclesiastical context of the time, and has suggested that the lack of knowledge concerning the cult of St *Uinniau* indicates that the author was divorced from the traditions of the area, and that the early (lost) life of St Ninian was composed elsewhere. The apparent adoption of the life of St Wilfrid as a model for this composition, and association with Bishop Acca, has led to the *scriptorium* of Hexham being proposed as a likely candidate (Fraser 2002, 54). That the hagiography, with its propagandist overtones, was created elsewhere, may further demonstrate the diminished role played by the Northumbrian ecclesiastical powers at the site itself. The establishment of a see here would have assisted the ambition of York in acquiring metropolitan status (Fraser 2002, 57-8), demonstrating that the aspirations associated with Whithorn would have extended far across Northumbria. A symbiotic relationship can be envisaged; Northumbria could have their See, and use it accordingly, whilst the community at Whithorn protected their territorial interests. Whithorn therefore emerges not as a direct reflection of Northumbrian dominance in the region, but as a symbol of aspiration, and of interaction with existing traditions.

PERIOD III: THE MINSTER RESTORED AD 845 – AD 1000 X 1050

Period III (figure 8.10) saw a further change to the site, following the demolition and decline of the earlier complex. Although initially said to have been rebuilt, the site saw another change in physical orientation. The building traditions and artefactual assemblages attest to incoming Scandinavian and Irish influences, demonstrating again the propensity of the site to adopt current influences, but on their own terms.

Church and chapel

At the onset of Period III.1, the church and chapel of Period II were rebuilt (Hill 1997, 186). The church, occupying the location of the preceding timber church, was represented by fragmentary stone footings to the south, north and west, and paved surfaces abutting walls and doorways. Apart from the seven-course stone-built northern wall of the structure, these remains were fragmentary, having been disturbed by later activity; much of the reconstructed plan, therefore, is conjectural (Hill 1997, 187). The insubstantial nature of the stonework has been used to suggest that it would have formed the base for a timber superstructure. Interpretation as a church is based on location, and the possibly significance of a reused marigold-incised stone, but, as Hill notes (Hill 1997, 187), other secular or ecclesiastical functions could have been possible.

More secure evidence for continuity is represented by the renewal of the burial chapel (Hill 1997, 187), which occupied the same footprint, albeit with some slight differences. No evidence suggested that the burials continued or were remembered within the structure. Burial does, however, appear to have occurred to the east of the chapel, but appears different, and more varied, in its character; possibly reflecting recognition of place of veneration, but which had largely fallen out of regular, central usage, as the ecclesiastical focus of the site shifted elsewhere. Two graves (one containing apparently disarticulated remains) were cut through burnt deposits to the east of the chapel, one of which was accompanied by an amber bead, indicative of increased Scandinavian influence at the site (Nicholson 1997, 360). A final burial was represented by a spread of cremated human bone. Cremation was a non-Christian practice at this time, possibly representing new elements within the ideological practices of the community at this time, and again indicating changes in the function of these buildings (Hill 1997, 189).



Figure 8.11: The redesigned settlement of Period III, with structure numbers
(Hill 1997, 202)

In the second part of Period III.1, a rectilinear building was identified immediately to the south of the burial chapel, beyond which the land appears to have been given over, very briefly, to cultivation (Hill 1997, 190). This structure (11), tentatively inferred from a large,

rectilinear hollow, produced evidence for comb production (Hill 1997, 190), reflecting a shift in focus from ecclesiastical to artisan activity, further demonstrated by the subsequent construction of aligned buildings in both the central and northern sectors.

Structural activity and a change in the layout of the site

Following the demolition of the possible stone church in Period III.2, a cluster of similar rectilinear structures occupied the northern part of the site, and a further nine buildings were identified in the central sector (Hill 1997, 194). Evidence for dating is sparse, and the tenth century date assigned to this activity in the northern sector is dependant on a ring pin identified on the floor of an associated building, and a coin of Eadgar, suggesting that this phase ended 960 X 1000 (Hill 1997, 194-5). Many of the structures identified during this period were poorly preserved, represented by the vestiges of floor hollows, incomplete stake-hole alignments and spreads of debris; interpretation of the remains was problematic, and of those in the northern sector, Hill states that they can 'at best be described as "possible"' (Hill 1997, 192). The complexities of the archaeological record are demonstrated by the fact that only two of the 42 reconstructed buildings were identified before post-excavation work began (Hill 1997, 183). Finds within these buildings have been used to demonstrate the dramatic change in the material culture of the site, and the onset of the newly organised settlement is marked by notable shifts in particular artefacts: from iron stick pins and club-headed copper alloy pins to ring pins; from millstones to querns; and from silver to amber and opaque white beads (Hill 1997, 185).

Following the complete decline of the earlier ecclesiastical buildings, two further phases of building were identified within the central sector, represented by similar stake-built rectilinear structures. During Period III.3, it has been suggested that new boundaries were established, and a dense concentration of structures was established in the central sector, mirroring the architecture of the Period III.2 buildings. Few finds indicate date or function, as these structures were distinguished by their poverty, and diagnostic material was confined to six sherds of souterrain ware, probably derived from County Antrim (Hill 1997, 201; Campbell 1997). Although insecurely dated, numismatic and stratigraphic evidence have been used to suggest that Period III.3 dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century.

The new 'enclosure' was inferred from two successive 'boundary ditches', associated with two phases of structural activity. Although not linked stratigraphically, the inner ditch is though to have been replaced by an outer enclosure. The reconstruction of these enclosures does not, however, seem to be supported by the evidence. The ditches themselves are

discontinuous and insubstantial. Their ephemeral nature is recognised, but the suggestion is made that they could have been marked by hedges, as they appear to be recognised into Period IV. However, the proposed boundaries seem to adhere too closely to the layout of the already tightly-packed buildings, to the extent that the projected line of the outer ditch would have passed through one of the buildings (Building 41; Hill 1997, 202). The possibility remains that these features were associated with drainage or construction of the buildings themselves, rather than a newly established enclosure. The presence of a boundary in later periods was also not represented physically, and as such does not add strength to the argument that the boundary must have been demarcated at an earlier date (Hill 1997, 211-7). The shifted orientation and apparent focus of the settlement is, however, unequivocal; cobbling identified to the southeast might represent a roadway but there appears no reason why the site had to be enclosed.

Cultural contacts

A marked dichotomy has been observed in the archaeological remains on the site. The buildings themselves show a similarity to those constructed in earlier periods on the site, used to describe 'a stable population developing without strong influences from elsewhere, and argues against the intrusion of new ethnic groups' (Hill 1997, 52). Northumbrian coinage, including three *stycas* of the later 840s and 850s represent continued contacts with the east, after the apparent crisis (Hill 1997, 189); however, the lack of later issue coins suggests that such links had failed in the latter part of the ninth century. From this point, there does seem to have been a rapid and sudden change in the nature of material culture on the site, represented by increased artefacts of Norse and Irish influence (Hill 1997, 185). The diagnostic artefacts have been suggested to indicate 'continuing Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian contacts in the later ninth and, perhaps, earlier-tenth centuries with Scandinavian influence in the tenth century, but not apparently before' (Hill 1997, 52). The evidence from the site, and the surrounding landscape, however, indicate the acceptance of Scandinavian-influenced groups into the community, but do not indicate their dominance.

Landscape context and interpretation

The final disuse of the church, possibly in the tenth century, lacks an obvious historical context, and Hill (1997, 20-2) states that the possible contexts include Viking raids, attacks by Cínead, king of the Scots or his father, Alpín, Northumbrian civil unrest, or simply an accident. Such an issue cannot be resolved, and it is perhaps more significant that the structures that had existed were not replaced in the same form. The new layout of the site

(with or without associated boundaries) has been perceived as a rejection of the Northumbrian established minster and associated traditions (Hill 1997, 48-9). Historically, this has been linked to the fall of York to the Danes (Hill 1997, 49); on a broader scale, this reflects the breakdown of wider ecclesiastical networks during the late ninth and tenth centuries, and the re-establishment of more localised power centres.

New influences are evident in the material culture recovered from the site. New fashions, in terms of metalwork and sculpture, reflect the influences that were prevalent on the site at this time. Nicholson's (1997) consideration of the metalwork suggests strong links with Ireland and Man, using a theoretical stance propounded by Michelli to infer that the craftsmen may have been trained in Scandinavian workshops, but that they chose to adopt motifs (in particular the hexafoil), which may indicate British or Anglo-British patronage (Nicholson 1997, 623). The repertoire of motifs reflects not only contemporary traditions, but also bears links with pre-existing sculpture, and also non-Christian traditions; some elements parallel metalwork recovered from furnished burials on Man (Balladoole) and the Western Isles (Kilroan)(Nicholson 1997, 623), an observation which has resonance with the possible non-Christian cremation burial identified in the graveyard.

The drawing together of influences, reflected in individual objects as well as the wider assemblages, is important in considering the alliances of the community at this time. Change should not, therefore, necessarily be viewed in terms of political takeover, rather the deliberate choices of an existing community, dictated by the changing political and ideological climate of the time.

Here, the wider context is informative. Scandinavian influence, though evident, does not appear to have been overwhelming on the Machars and the immediate area. 'Kirk' names reveal the adoption of Scandinavian terminology in the landscape, but are not accompanied by the same widespread distribution of Scandinavian settlement names that is evident further east. The pattern that emerges in the wider area is one of co-existence rather than conquest, with Scandinavian-speaking settlers fitting into existing systems of landholding (Oram 1995; Hill 1997, 54)(Chapter 6). That investment in monumentality remained in the hands of the Whithorn community is evidenced by the 'Whithorn School' of sculpture; the complementary distribution of Scandinavian place-names and Whithorn school monuments is further suggestive of that the community retained territorial control.

The Whithorn School has been used as evidence for a continued ecclesiastical element on the site, which has consequently been described as a revived minster or *monasterium* (Hill 1997,

48). Though not well-documented, it seems possible that the site may have continued as an episcopal centre of a bishopric, although again, it cannot be assumed that the role of the site was a purely monastic one. A bishop may have been based at this centre of secular power; the close relationship between secular and episcopal power may have strengthened hold over the wider territory during this period. That evidence for a church has not been found throughout this period suggests that the ecclesiastical focus of the site itself had shifted, potentially representing the first church to be established on its current site. The Period II church declined, as the new centre to the north developed further; the rare later burials suggest that its significance was not forgotten immediately.

Unlike the monuments that are evident in Northumbria and Cumbria during the preceding period, the sculpture on the Machars is localised in its style (Hill 1997, 52), and shows that, although wider networks had broken down, the power of Whithorn within the immediate landscape continued. New influences reflect links forged with the immediate region, through the communication of ideas and more limited settlement. Such influences do not, however, reflect conquests, but a confident and conscious acceptance of new ideas by a regional elite.

DISCUSSION

The excavations at Whithorn, and their prompt and thoughtful publication, have provided a rare opportunity to explore the layout and material culture of an early medieval site in the study area, over the whole period of interest. Intensive investigation, when compared to the lack of excavation in the surrounding area, may have led to an overemphasis of the wealth of Whithorn, but the contextual evidence supports interpretation of the site as a major, and continuing, centre of power. The trajectory of investment on the site demonstrates changes in ideological emphasis, as new media were employed to express new political alignments, whether through imports, structural reorganisation, burial or sculpture.

Reconsideration of some of the interpretations applied to the site, in particular during the earlier period, have emphasised the problems with trying to decide on single labels to tie to the settlement. Rather than attempting to apply single religious or secular roles to Whithorn, it is necessary to consider its broader role as centre of power, integral to economic, political and ideological spheres. The site played a changing ecclesiastical role throughout, alongside changing influences in material culture and architecture. The cultural investment at the site shows that political alignment was also changing, and demonstrates the integral role played by ideology in the exercising and communication of power.

MODIFIED WHITHORN SEQUENCE

Hill (1997, 69) notes the lack of secure chronological indicators for the site, and states that, despite a relative sequence, securely dated horizons are provided only by the imported Mediterranean pottery (AD 550), and the horizon of AD 700 suggested by the dendrochronological dates from Building I/24. Consequently, it is permissible to suggest some revision of the sequence, which, although not radical, has allowed significant phases of reorganisation to be interpreted in terms of shifting ideological alignment.

In the present study, detailed consideration of the published evidence has resulted in a rationalisation and simplification of the sequence, which can now be considered in terms of four, discrete phases of investment and activity:

PERIOD 1.1: ELITE SECULAR CENTRE

During the earliest period, it is suggested that this was an elite, royal centre within a wider territorial estate, which may also have encompassed the Isle of Whithorn. The site was occupied by small, timber buildings, and the material assemblages indicate a focal point for both craftworking and Mediterranean imports. The elite had adopted Christianity, demonstrated by the Latinus stone, but this occurred within a secular context. As such, the site appears much less anomalous than an isolated, late fifth-century *monasterium*.

PERIOD 1.2-I.4: ELITE CENTRE, WITH A NEW ECCLESIASTICAL FOCUS

From the latter part of the sixth century, or possibly the earlier seventh, an ecclesiastical focus was established on the site, with the creation of a Christianity cemetery, possibly under Irish influence, and the erection of incised monuments. Imports continued, and there appears to have been a further increase in wealth, evidenced by precious metalworking, perhaps for ecclesiastical purposes.

These changes occurred as communication networks shifted towards Continental exchange, and there seems to have been increased interaction across the Irish Sea. Ideas were spread, possibly passed on through individuals such as *Uinniau*, which included the support of monastic communities, and the establishment of Christian centres and cemeteries. The establishment of the cemetery at Whithorn may have resulted from a desire to invest in these new forms of ideological monumentality, as the elite aligned themselves with Irish traditions, and Christian politics further afield.

PERIOD II: ALIGNMENT WITH NORTHUMBRIA

From the early eighth century, Northumbrian influence permeated the site, and a church was established in the northern part of the site. The previous cemetery was disused, and burial continued only in the context of a small chapel, possibly reserved for the secular or ecclesiastical elite. A rectilinear enclosure surrounded the church-chapel complex, dividing this focal area from halls and ancillary structures to the south.

These changes may reflect a decline in the Irish Sea networks, as Continental exchange deteriorated, and the Whithorn community turned to the newly established power of the east for their ideological alignment. The Northumbrian kings had effectively harnessed Christianity as a political tool, and were expanding into British territories. Apparently Whithorn did not lose its territory to the encroaching Anglian elite, but instead forged an alliance using the medium of the church, inviting, or allowing, a Northumbrian see to be established. Links with Ireland would not, however, have been completely severed, and the status quo appears to have been maintained until the ninth and tenth centuries, when wider changes to Irish Sea society meant that patterns of land holding and power were threatened.

PERIOD III: NEW CHURCH, SHIFTING ORIENTATION

During the tenth century, the site appears to have undergone a further reorganisation, and the earlier church complex fell out of use, after forming a focal point for a small number of burials. A sequence of small timber buildings occupied the site on a northeast-southwest alignment. That ecclesiastical activity continued is evidenced by the sculpture of the Whithorn School, and it seems likely that it was during this phase of activity that the central church shifted to the north, and occupied its current location.

The reason behind the reorganisation is unclear, although the Scandinavian incursions into the Irish Sea area may have formed a catalyst for changing patterns of landholding and power. Possibly the site itself came under attack. Whithorn remained open to such influences, accepting incomers onto the site and the wider territory but not, however, being subjugated by the new incoming population.

The evidence from Whithorn provides a valuable means of charting the shifting alignments of this community, and the way that they were expressed. That the community consciously chose to adopt new forms of ideological expression is demonstrated in the dramatic way that change was implemented. Rather than gradual, encroaching influence, these can be

interpreted as deliberate and planned programmes of change. It is evident that the site does not employ all of the monumental forms available within the Irish Sea area, further indicating that the different investment strategies reflect real choice, and reveal local shifts in ideological alignment over time.

The changes reflect reactions of Whithorn to the shifting political landscape of the northern Irish Sea, to be explored more fully in Chapter 9, and have demonstrated again the need for historical and archaeological evidence to be interpreted independently and for hasty links between preconceived models or narratives to be avoided.

CHAPTER NINE

IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE NORTHERN IRISH SEA c. AD 400 TO AD 1000

THE ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

In Chapter 8, consideration of the sequence at Whithorn has demonstrated the fluid and dynamic way that ideology, and Christianity in particular, could be employed to signal the political alignments of individual communities during this period. Distinct horizons of ideological realignment have been identified, demonstrating the way that Christian monumentality was consciously employed to signal shifting political orientations. Using evidence from all of the previous chapters, similar chronological phases can be defined for the study area as a whole (table 9.1).

A lack of precise chronological indicators has been stressed for each of the forms of evidence, and so drawing the material together is challenging. However, using broad parameters, four key phases of ecclesiastical investment can be outlined. Some forms of investment are particularly poorly dated, or long-lived, and as such span much of the period of interest. The ‘phasing’ that has been applied is based on the onset of new types of investment or ecclesiastical activity: the beginnings of Christian monumentality, the foundation of major centres (through Irish and then Northumbrian influence), and the onset of more fragmented ecclesiastical organisation. The beginning of one phase did not, however, mean the end of earlier monument types – they simply added a new layer to the palimpsest of the Christian landscape.

PHASE I is ascribed to the earliest evidence for Christian investment, from the fifth century into the later sixth century. This would have encompassed the historically documented activity of individuals such as Patrick and Palladius, and is evidenced monumentally in the inscribed stones bearing Latin and ogam script. The very earliest Christian place-names (bearing elements of *domnach* and *eglēs*) may have been coined during this period, and interaction with areas further afield is demonstrated by the presence of Mediterranean ceramics (ARSW, PRSW, B ware).

PHASE II dates from the end of the sixth century, and is marked by the establishment and growth of specifically ecclesiastical settlements in Ireland and Scotland. Hagiography becomes a powerful medium for promoting Christian agendas, and more localised investment in Christianity is demonstrated by cross-incised stones and a proliferation of *cill* place-names. Finds of E-ware, D-ware and imported glass reveal continuing contact with the Continent, and an increase in precious metalworking at ecclesiastical sites demonstrates the ability of a Christian elite to extract and manipulate surplus wealth.

PHASE III (eighth century) sees increased investment in ecclesiastical settlements, and the establishment of major ecclesiastical centres (monasteries or minsters) in Cumbria and Dumfriesshire. Archaeological remains are restricted to a few main sites, but the presence of early ecclesiastical communities is inferred through the presence of ornate, relief-carved free-standing crosses and decorated cross slabs. The establishment of smaller, lesser sites across the whole of the study area is likely to have continued throughout this period.

Between the ninth and tenth centuries (**PHASE IV**), the Christian landscape appears to have become more fragmented. Scandinavian influence in parts of the study area is attested linguistically and through furnished burial. The proliferation of stone monuments, ecclesiastical sites and place-names signal major changes in ecclesiastical organisation, and a fragmentation of Christian organisation.

DATE RANGE	MONUMENTS	PLACE-NAMES	IMPORTS AND CRAFTS	BURIALS AND CHURCHES	HISTORICAL EVENTS
1000					
900	FREE-STANDING CROSSES RELIEF CARVED CROSSES HOGBACKS	CILL / KIL KIRKJA / KIRK		FURNISHED SCANDINAVIAN GRAVES EXCAVATED TIMBER CHURCHES SURVIVING STONE CHURCHES	
800		ANDÓIT / ANNAT			AD 731 Bishopric founded at Whithorn Monastery at Dacre
700	CROSS-INCISED STONES			INCREASED METALWORK	
600	OGAM AND LATIN INSCRIPTIONS	EGLES / ECCLES	ARSW / PRSW B WARE D WARE	STONE LINED GRAVES AND DUG GRAVES E WARE ANGLO-SAXON ? FURNISHED GRAVES	AD 687 Cuthbert visits Carlisle St Uinniau Mid sixth century: foundation of Irish monastic sites
500	DOMNACH				AD 431 Palladius Mid fifth century: St Patrick.
400					
					WHITHORN PERIOD I.1
					WHITHORN PERIOD I.2-1.4
					WHITHORN PERIOD II
					WHITHORN PERIOD III
					PHASE I
					PHASE II
					PHASE III
					PHASE IV

Table 9.1: Correlation of information from Chapters 3 to 7, using approximate dating parameters

Using these chronological phases, the varying strands of this thesis can be brought together, to describe the shifting ideological alignments of the northern Irish Sea as a whole. The evidence is considered within its landscape context, a more detailed account of which is provided for each of the modern regions (County Down and Antrim, Dumfries and Galloway, the Isle of Man and Cumbria) in Appendix B. The regional accounts provide a descriptive narrative of the investment trajectories for each of the four main parts of the study area, and flesh out the more two-dimensional maps of the previous chapters with topographical evidence and known political context. By discussing the evidence with reference to modern counties, however, modern perceptions of land division are imposed onto the early medieval landscape. As highlighted in Chapter 1, early medieval society was not nearly as land-based as our own, and the boundaries that are recognised today will not necessarily have had relevance in earlier periods. In order to more fully explore the political alignments of the early medieval Irish Sea area, it is necessary to study the area as a whole, integrating all of the available evidence to identify meaningful boundaries and zones of investment. In doing so, it is possible to address the initial aim of the thesis, to explore the development of the political landscape of the northern Irish Sea during the early medieval period.

As investment choices across the study area are compared and contrasted, shifting 'zones of interaction' emerge, as neighbouring polities adopted similar forms of monumentality. When interpreted in the light of theoretical stances outlined in Chapter 2, this 'history of alignments', can be considered a reflection of socio-political change within the area, as new ideologies were materialised and new relationships forged. The boundaries that are identified, and the societies that they represent, differ in some key ways to the widely accepted history of this region, and allow the construction of an 'alternative narrative' for the area.

PHASE I - FIFTH TO EARLY SIXTH CENTURIES

ZONES OF INTERACTION

During Phase I, four zones of ideological investment can be identified (figure 9.1). To the west, Ireland, the Rhinns and the Isle of Man share the attributes of *domnach* names and ogam inscriptions, indicating the creation of sites and monuments within a Gaelic speaking *milieu*. In contrast, on the Machars peninsula, the evidence shows a more unique character, and a wider range of influences. The elite at Whithorn received Mediterranean imports, and the epigraphy indicates a sophisticated, literate presence, apparently drawing on both a late

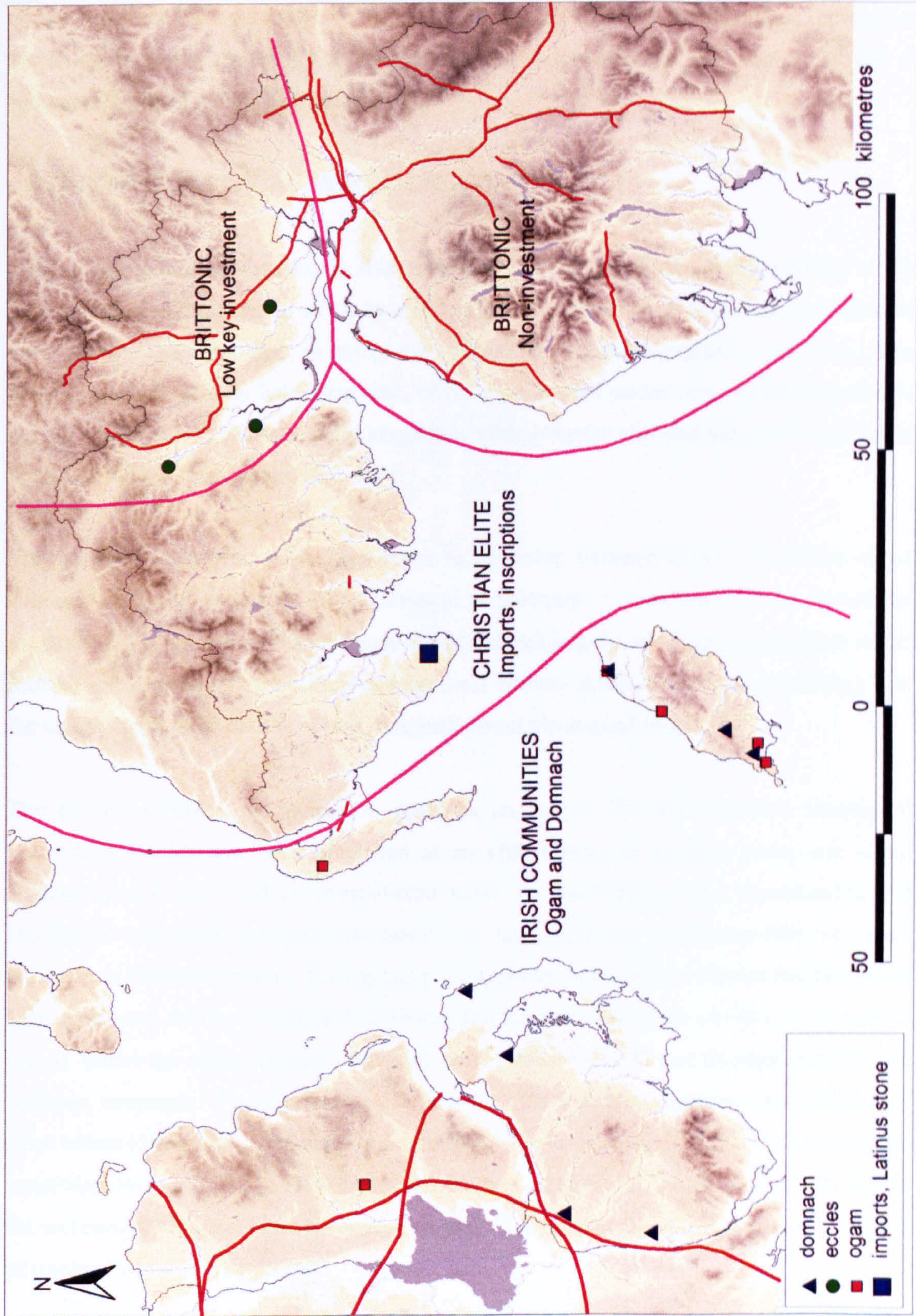


Figure 9.1: PHASE I zones of interaction

Roman past, and a continuing Late Antique tradition of inscription. To the east, within a primarily Brittonic-speaking area, investment is notably lacking. In Dumfriesshire, *eglēs* names represent the only evidence for early Christianity whilst in the final zone represented by Cumbria, even the evidence of place-names is lacking, and the map is devoid of indicators of ideological investment.

POST-ROMAN POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION

Although only broadly datable, the four zones assigned to Period I provide a snapshot of the socio-political fragmentation of study area during the fifth to sixth centuries, as individual communities chose to adopt or reject the various ideological expressions available. This concurs with the widely held view that, in the post-Roman period, the region comprised a patchwork of small polities or petty kingdoms, with a similar size and social structure to the *tuatha* of Ireland (McCarthy 2002, 360).

The zones of interaction allow boundaries to be drawn between groups of polities whose adopted different strategies of ideological investment. Furthermore, the nature of monumentality, in terms of both levels of investment and the ideological references made, provide information on the political development of these different areas, demonstrating how the unique heritage of each area will have influenced ideological choice.

The earliest evidence, at Whithorn, provides an insight into the way that ideological investment would have been employed at an elite centre, to enhance status and signal alignment on a local and an international scale. In the western zone, commonalities in ideological investment provide information on alignment and interaction between small polities in a maritime sphere. During this period, communities on the Rhinns and the Isle of Man employed similar ideological attributes and expressed an Irish identity, a connection that is otherwise undocumented, but that may reflect links forged through kinship and common language. Finally, and problematically, the evidence prompts consideration of areas where ideological investment is demonstrably lacking. Arguing from absence must be undertaken with caution, but it seems that Christianity, played a less politicised role within the societies of Cumbria and Dumfriesshire, potentially highlighting divisions, and a lack of interaction, within the landscape.

ELITE APPROPRIATION OF CHRISTIANITY: WHITHORN

The earliest evidence for Christianity in the region occurs at the site of Whithorn, where the archaeological evidence indicates the presence of an elite central place during the fifth to sixth century, possibly part of a wider, polyfocal settlement encompassing the Isle of Whithorn (see Chapter 8).

The investment strategies of the site reveal something of its contemporary alignments. Alone amongst the communities in study area, Whithorn was of sufficient importance or reknown to receive goods from the Mediterranean, suggesting a well-connected elite of considerable standing. Exchange of goods, and presumably ideas and traditions, would have linked the ecclesiastical elite of Whithorn to the wider world of late Antique Christianity; by openly investing in ideology, these connections, and the status attached to them, could be overtly materialised.

The *Latinus* inscription further attests to a sophisticated, literate element within the community, but reveals more about the kinship links and heritage of the site. Latinus' name is Latinised, and many aspects of the inscription itself, including commemoration of a child, and age at death, hark back to Roman epigraphic traditions (Forsyth 2005, 115). However, the name of Latinus' ancestor, *Barrovadus*, suggests Irish origins, and the monument would seem to represent a local king or magnate, of Irish origin, who drew on the influences and affectations of the Roman world.

Whithorn appears to command unique economic influence within this area, links with long distance and local polities, and with the immediate past. This in turn invites further analysis of why this particular site might have held such elevated status. The settlement occupies an undramatic location some distance from the coast, in the northernmost tip of the Irish Sea; none of the obvious physical dominance of sites such as Dunadd or the Mote of Mark is evident. The political milieu of the site is largely unknown, as are the identities of its leaders themselves. However, if the wider context of the site is considered, in terms of location and cultural heritage, then the unique and advantageous situation that the site occupied becomes apparent.

If, as Hill (2001) has suggested, Whithorn formed part of a wider estate, connected to the fortified site of the Isle of Whithorn, then its central position within the Irish Sea becomes clearer. The double beaching place of the Isle would have been a strategic point for access to the western seaways and beyond, and the intervisibility of the Machars with Ireland, Man

and Cumbria places it centrally within an important maritime zone, allowing influence over the sea-borne traffic of the Irish Sea, and participation in the communication and exchange networks of the western seaways.

Access to maritime resources would have been advantageous, but it would seem that the landward location of Whithorn, at the extremities of the previous Roman world, would also have provided a political precondition for the development of a stable and wealthy elite. A propensity to receive and exploit exotica has previously been noted for western Galloway (Hunter 2001; Wilson 2001). Hoards of Roman Iron Age and Roman-period metalwork have been identified in a zone west of the River Nith; in particular, high status objects have been recovered from Dowalton Loch, on the Machars (Hunter 1994; Hunter 2001, 290). This area occupied the edges of the militarised Roman world, in an area where 'buffer' territories may well have been established, and reciprocal relationships formed, in order to maintain a stable *status quo*. Although a long way overland from the Roman *civitas* centred at Carlisle, western Galloway would have been just a few hours journey by sea, and hostile relations would have placed strain on coastal defences. Ptolemy's map places the Novantae and Selgovae to the west and east of the Nith respectively (Strang 1997, 25; figure 9.2), and it is possible that the distribution of Roman exotica represents relationships between the Roman militarised zone and the Novantae, or their successors. Roman activity in Galloway is considered to have been sporadic and confined to short-lived, specific campaigns; the area may have retained independence, and accumulated wealth, through peaceful alliance. These pre-existing tribal areas go some way towards explaining differences identified in the monumental zones of later periods, and the alliances that are expressed.

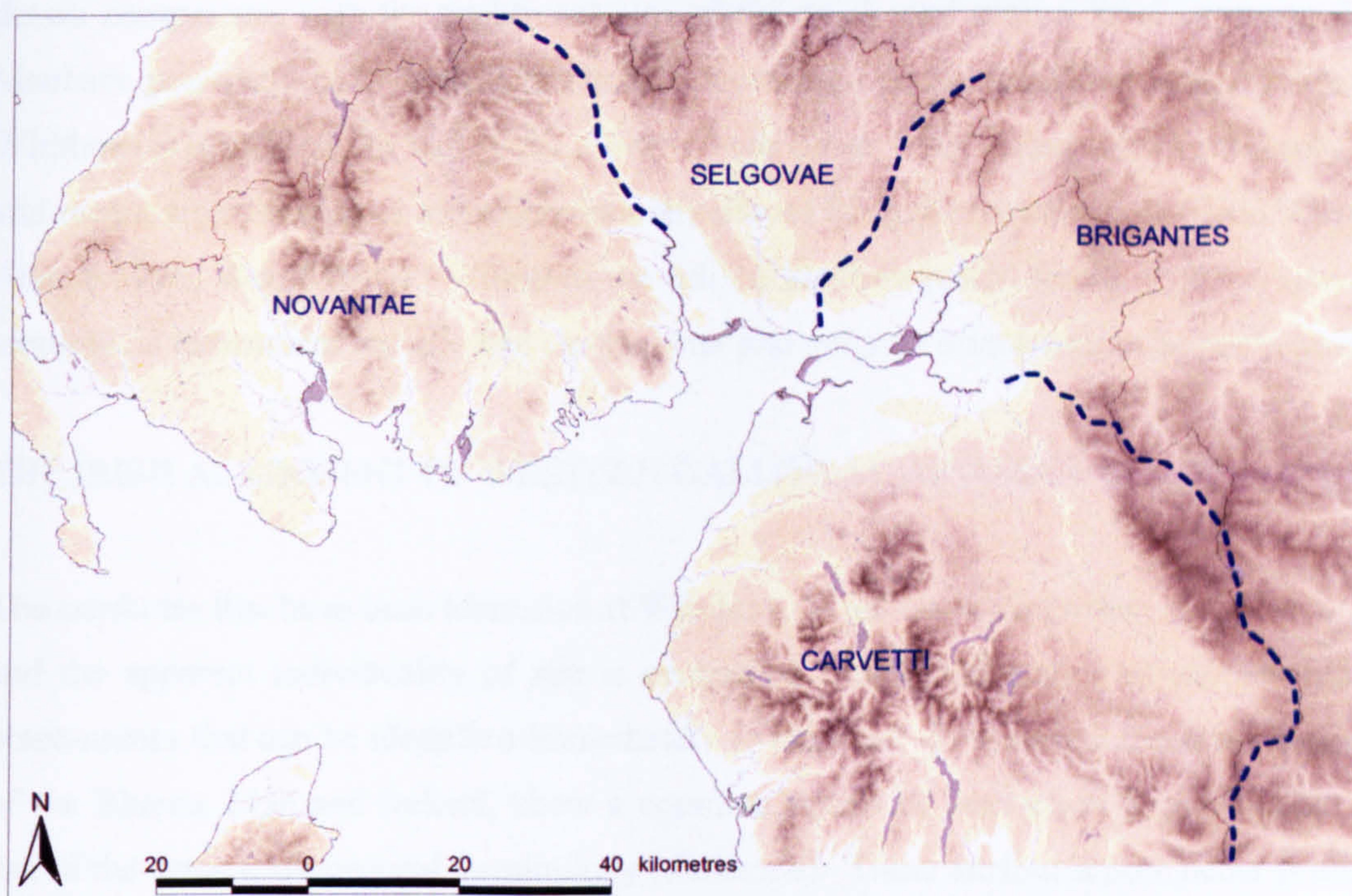


Figure 9.2: Postulated boundaries of pre-Roman tribal areas (based on Strang 1997)

High status goods could have been acquired via trade or gift giving, and subsequently appropriated within a local context, as a means of demonstrating rank and power. Access to the items would have been socially controlled, encouraging the development of centralised power networks (Hunter 2001, 302; Wilson 2001), and an hierarchical, tribal society, free to adopt the accoutrements and titles of the Roman world. Potentially, these tools, combined with the strategic maritime location of the site, allowed the elite of the Machars develop social and political control over the region, emerging in the fifth century as an independent and stable polity, aware of the Christianity of the wider Roman world, and keen to accept the benefits that it could bring.

Handley's (2001) argument that the Latin inscriptions of the west represent continuity of late Antique epigraphic traditions, and the links attested by the imported goods, would suggest that the elite at Whithorn saw themselves as belonging to a Roman world. This need not, however, have been a reference to the declining Roman past of northern Britain, but to much wider membership of the Christian Roman Empire that was being extolled by Pope Leo in the early fifth century.

The identity of this polity, or the labels that can be attached to it, remain uncertain. McCarthy (2002, 373) has suggested that the sixth-century kingdom of Rheged would have been focussed around Dunragit and Luce Bay, possibly including the Machars. McCarthy

draws comparison with the traditional size of the *tuath*, and such a label seems to fit the Machars peninsula as a logical territory. However, further evidence suggests that the Whithorn area is likely to have been a power base for an Irish, rather than a Brittonic, elite, and recent arguments have more convincingly placed Rheged in southern Cumbria (Phythian Adams 1996; Woolf 2006). Whatever the title of Machars polity, however, the evidence of ideological investment has allowed its character and political orientation to be distinguished.

THE IRISH ALIGNMENT OF WESTERN GALLOWAY AND MAN

The attributes that have been identified at Whithorn do not occur elsewhere in the study area, and the apparent individuality of site is contrasted with a wider zone of monuments and place-names that can be identified immediately to the west. The earliest Christian indicators of the Rhinns, Man and Ireland, show a common means of inscription (ogam stones), and use of the same ecclesiastical terminology (*domnach*). These attributes both occur primarily in Ireland, and their occurrence on landfalls close to the northern Irish coast would seem to suggested positive interaction within this maritime zone.

It has been argued that ogam stones occur within the context of Irish communities established in Britain (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 13; *cf* Richards 1960; Thomas 1972); a particular example is found in Dyfed, in south-west Wales, where ogam stones are found within an area believed to have been settled by the Déisi of southern Ireland (Mytum 1992, 30). Whether the script itself was developed in Britain or Ireland is uncertain, but it would appear that the shared tradition occurred in the context of continued contact between these communities (Mytum 1992, 31).

The ogam stones of the Isle of Man, therefore, represent possible Irish settlements (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 13) and, notably, these monuments occur primarily on the western parts of the island, which would have formed the natural landing points from Ireland. The tentative identification of ogam on the Rhinns offers the seductive, and otherwise undocumented, possibility that Irish communities were also established in this southwestern limit of Scotland. This would seem to be borne out by the subsequent evidence from the peninsula (Phase II), and certainly fits comfortably with the geographical proximity to Northern Ireland. Enduring kinship connections with Ireland, and an Irish community on the Rhinns, may have provided the earlier context for the Irish ancestry suggested by the *Latinus* stone.

The other shared element, *domnach* names, suggests that Gaelic-speaking communities within this zone were adopting Christianity, and that ecclesiastical centres were being

established within main areas of population. In both County Down and the Isle of Man, these forms of evidence occur in habitable, accessible locations, in both coastal zones, and riverine arteries (see Appendix B). At Knock y Doonee, on the Isle of Man, the two forms of evidence combine to form compelling evidence that the site represents an early church. The similar terminology adopted in both areas further illustrates a high level of interaction between communities, arguably via networks of kinship.

These observations make an interesting contribution to wider narrative of politics in the Irish Sea region at this time. The concept of Irish communities in Great Britain is not a new one, but these specific areas have received little attention. Study has instead been focussed on the better documented Dál Ríata, discussion of which has particular implications for the interpretation of this western zone.

Traditional historical accounts record that in the early sixth century, the Scots of Ireland migrated to western Scotland and founded the kingdom of Dál Ríata, located roughly in the area of modern Argyll (Bannerman 1974, 1; Campbell 2001, 285). This kingdom was a maritime entity, with Irish and Scottish areas ruled under the same dynasties into the seventh century (Bannerman 1974, 7). It has more recently been suggested, however, that these links do necessarily derive from migratory events. Rather, Ewan Campbell (2001) has suggested that the area that later became Dál Ríata was, from the outset, part of Irish society, linked to Ireland through kinship links and maritime communication, and divided from Brittonic society by the less passable uplands. Campbell's tentative boundary for a 'Goidelic' zone provides two options - to include the Rhinns and Man, or to place them within the Brittonic zone. The initial evidence from Phase I would support the former, and whether the result of migration, or shared cultural history, it would appear that parts of the Isle of Man and the Rhinns formed part of a wider Irish zone from a very early period. The concept of a maritime culture or kingdom is a familiar one in the early medieval period; communication by boat could have been easier and less hazardous than overland routes. Journeys from Ireland to the Rhinns and Man would have been short; perception of unity would have been further enhanced by the intervisibility of these landscapes, and the shared characteristics outlined in Chapter 1. The Irish alignment of Galloway was either followed by, or contemporary with, the formation of the Irish-Argyll polity of Dál Ríata. It would not be too great a step to propose that the Irish communities of the Rhinns and Man, and potentially the Machars, would have fallen within an Irish hegemony, whether that of the documented kingdom of Dál Ríata, or related to the more southerly kingdom of the Dál Fiatach, whose location around Strangford Lough would also have made them a maritime entity.

Within these areas, culture, technologies and ideology would have spread via some of the strongest channels for the dissemination of ideas; those of kinship and a perceived cultural unity (Mytum 1992, 28-9). These links, attested by a small amount of evidence in this period, were sustained and strengthened further during Phase II, through ideological investment and Christian contacts.

BRITTONIC AREAS: A CONSPICUOUS LACK OF MONUMENTALITY

One of the most notable trends observed in Phase I is that the earliest evidence for Christian monumentality occurs in the west, and not, as might be expected, in the more Romanised areas where Christianity would have been pre-existent. Evidence within Dumfriesshire and Cumbria is confined to the small distribution of *egles* names to the north of the Solway. This lack of monumentality continues even more conspicuously into Phase II, when monumental evidence in adjacent areas becomes more prolific.

Christianity is known to have been established in the area during Roman period, when Cumbria, and to a lesser extent Dumfriesshire, formed part of a militarised zone (Thomas 1981). A lost *chi-rho* from Maryport, and a number of late Roman inscriptions at Maryport and Old Carlisle would seem to attest to the integration of Christianity into a continuing epigraphic tradition (Petts 2003c, 150-154; Forsyth 2005, 114). However, it is precisely these areas where Phase I and II evidence for Christianity is absent, despite Thomas' hypothesis that sub-Roman dioceses survived within the area (Thomas 1971, 16), and the writings of St Patrick which, although insecurely located, attest to the continuation of Christianity into post-Roman society.

Unless the architectural fragments of stone at Dalston and Falstead can be considered to represent ecclesiastical activity in the vicinity of Carlisle, no evidence for ecclesiastical structures has been identified. An epigraphic tradition does not seem to have survived into the fifth and sixth centuries, and place-names do not illustrate the making of a Christian landscape. The key contender for an early Christian site, Ninekirks Brougham, needs further exploration before it can contribute to discussions of such an early date; given re-examination of St Ninian, the place-name may in fact be more indicative of Northumbrian investment. Basing conclusions on negative evidence is always dangerous, but, for the purpose of argument, it is assumed that the Phase I and II lacuna is real. Woolf (2003, 356) has previously observed a large zone throughout the country where Christian monuments do not occur, situated between the furnished Anglo-Saxon graves to the east, and the epigraphic

evidence of western Britain. Such a zone cannot be attributed entirely to factors of discovery, and so reasons to explain a lack of investment in Christianity must be sought.

Three broad hypotheses can be proposed: firstly, that the population were no longer Christian; secondly, that they were Christian but did not command sufficient resources or economic power to overtly invest in Christianity; thirdly that they were Christian but chose not to express this monumentally. Inevitably, no clear-cut answer can be drawn from the available evidence, and it seems likely that a complex combination of factors was involved.

The first explanation, which requires reversion to paganism, would seem to be overly simplistic. Whilst Christianity had not necessarily permeated all levels of society during the Roman period, the scant evidence from Britain as a whole suggests that it was not completely eradicated in the following centuries. Late Roman inscriptions, in particular those bearing British names, and documentary references to the British church, indicate some Christianity continuity, albeit potentially amongst a small proportion of the population.

The second possibility is that extant communities did not invest in monuments because they lacked the ability to do so, whether in terms of craftworking skills, or control of sufficient economic surplus. The evidence for the Roman church has notably been identified within the context of Roman military settlements, such as Maryport, Carlisle, and along Hadrian's Wall (McCarthy 2002, 378). Following the breakdown of a Roman infrastructure, the hierarchy and organisation of the Roman church may have disintegrated; in a period of fragmentation and declining economic surplus, ideological monumentality would have featured low in the priorities of the nascent polities. If Christianity did survive it is likely to have been small scale; Christian offices may have been held as nominal roles amongst the smaller segments of population who strove to maintain a Romanised lifestyle (Higham 1992, 215-222). The lack of territorial stability may also have contributed; continuing conflict, as suggested by the documentary sources (Chapter 3), would suggest that boundaries continually changed, and the establishment of permanent monuments may not, at the time, have been viable.

The final, and related, suggestion, therefore, is that the lack of monumentality in the east can be considered as evidence for deliberate choice, whether attributed to conservatism within a continuing church, or to a political statement of identity or internal control by a newly emerging elite.

If this can be attributed to a doctrinal choice, it might have represented a lack of interest in things material. In terms of interaction, the British church may have wished to define itself against the more lavish, furnished burials of the encroaching, non-Christian powers to the east. The assertion of a Christian identity, through the establishment of low-key churches (*eglēs*), rather than through overt monuments, may have been a means of confronting the new culture and defining themselves against it. This may also account for the slight variation in distribution, and the existence of *eglēs* sites in the northern part of this Brittonic area. Elsewhere, Quensel von Kalben (1999, 95) has suggested that by the later fifth and sixth century, Christianity had become an integral part of British identity, particularly in the face of a pagan Anglo-Saxon advance. The creation and expression of a Christian identity in Dumfriesshire would have been a reaction to the increasing power of the Bernician kingdom to the east. The Nith valley formed a significant boundary zone and communication route at this time, and would therefore have been a key arena for the expression of control and identity. This contrasts with the areas to the south, where the Pennines would have formed a natural boundary between east and west, and the pressure from Deira may have been less immediate, particularly if British power was maintained as far as Catterick during this period (Phythian-Adams 1996; Woolf 2006). As with the Machars, these distinct choices may be an indication of the survival of pre-Roman tribal differences: the suggested extents of the Selgovae and the Carvetii (predecessors of the Roman *civitas*) seem coincident with these slightly differing areas of investment.

It is also possible that the emerging British leaders deliberately chose to distance themselves from an ideology linked with the declining Roman administration. Christianity during the Roman period, is said to have 'owed more to its place in the Roman system than to its inherent attraction to the bulk of the population' (Higham 1992, 214). Esmonde Cleary has made a similar statement, suggesting that, as part of the late Roman elite culture-package, Christianity might have been 'something Roman which disappeared with that order of things...' (Esmonde Cleary 2000, 92). Woolf (2003, 377) suggests that, in the western and northern kingdoms, elites remained Romanising 'as long as they lay close to a large contiguous zone in which Romance culture thrived; with the decline of Roman society, therefore, Christianity would not have retained its potency within the upper echelons of society' (Woolf 2003, 376-7). In a newly emerging political landscape, the elite may have wished to redefine their identities and power; continuing to invest in the inscriptions and symbolism that remained within the landscape may not have been an attractive option.

The evidence is difficult, and it is likely that a combination of factors would have created the notable contrast between the lack of Christianity in the Roman areas, and the more western

areas where society appears to have been organised differently. As the militarised zone fragmented, Christianity was not key to stressing individual identity or power, and consequently did not form an arena for investment. These appear to have been volatile times and, in the balance of power, military and political prowess may have been tantamount; economic control would have been unstable, and would have been directed towards strategies with more immediate political rewards, including warfare, and land-taking. Christianity continued, but amongst the few, and those who expressed a Christian identity may have wished to contrast their own forms of investment with those of the non-Christian Germanic communities to the east, the Irish communities of the west, and the declining Christian past of the Roman military. A combination of such factors would appear to have resulted in the apparent dichotomy of investment evident in this, and succeeding, periods. It must be noted, however, that the assumption is not being made that the lack of investment in Christianity represents a united, homogenous culture, simply that the communities in this area, by sharing aspects of a common cultural heritage, may have been affected in the same way in terms of ideological strategies.

The evidence from this period is, as noted, fragmentary, but many of the boundaries and observations made appear to continue into Phase II, thereby adding weight to the suggestion that they represent real differences within the landscape.

PHASE II: MID SIXTH CENTURY ONWARDS: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ECCLESIASTICAL CENTRES

ZONES OF INTERACTION

During Phase II, a contrast between east and west continues, with the monumental balance still weighted towards the west. Rather than four units, two broad zones can be defined. Cumbria and Dumfriesshire remained largely devoid of monumentality, and form an area of 'non-investment' in the east. In the west, the connections hinted at during Phase I appear to have been strengthened, with Christianity providing an avenue for further interaction, and an arena for increased investment. The zone is extended to encompass Whithorn, and the community appears, from both its landscape context and the site itself, to have aligned with the Christian polities of Ireland and Man. Evidence from this western area indicates similar types and levels of investment, in both secular and ecclesiastical spheres. The elite were engaging in long distance exchange (Continental imports) and investing in high status craft-working (figure 9.3); within the same zone, new ecclesiastical sites were established, as the major political contenders of the period granted land for the foundation of monastic centres

or cult foci. There were centres of particular importance around Strangford Lough, Whithorn and on the Rhinns, with monastic sites evidenced by the documented or archaeological remains at Maughold, Movilla, Nendrum, Armoy and Connor. The inscriptions of Whithorn and Kirkmadrine suggest the establishment of cult centres in alignment with the traditions of the Continent and western Britain, through focus on the clergy.

Largely confined to the same area, but less chronologically precise, are monuments indicative of more localised investment, including cross-incised stones, stone-lined graves and *cill* place-names (figure 9.4). The proliferation of sites is difficult to chart precisely as the majority are poorly dated, but the evidence for the onset of these attributes in Phase II, their spatial relationship, and their association at the site of Whithorn, suggest that they belong to the same period of Christian activity within this western zone.

Within this area, all of the key Phase II attributes appear widely distributed: imported pottery, high status settlements, monastic sites, inscriptions, stone-lined burials and cross-incised stones. When considered across the area, the evidence elucidates the way that power was implemented within society, and more particularly, the role played by Christianity in the articulation of power. Shared attributes across western zone illustrate similarities in social and ideological organisation, arguably facilitated by the channels forged by the Christian church.

The evidence does, however, demonstrate variations within this zone, emphasising the need to perceive these boundaries as 'zones of interaction' rather than homogenous areas. A concentration of sites in County Down, and the continuing individuality of Whithorn, emphasise that distinct communities adopted slightly different investment strategies, influenced by socio-political and economic factors, and resulting from communication, competition, emulation and alliance.

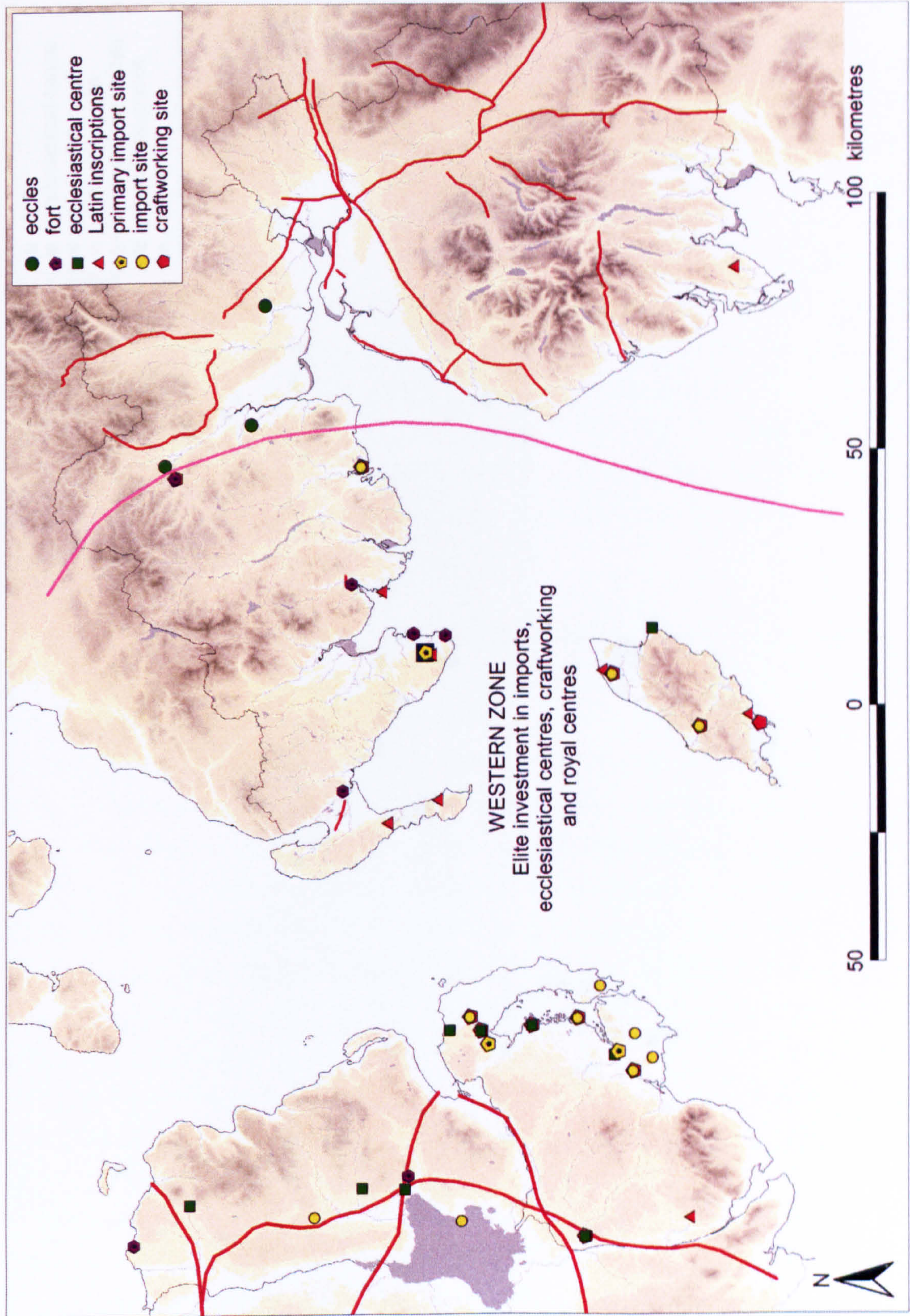


Figure 9.3: PHASE II zones of interaction

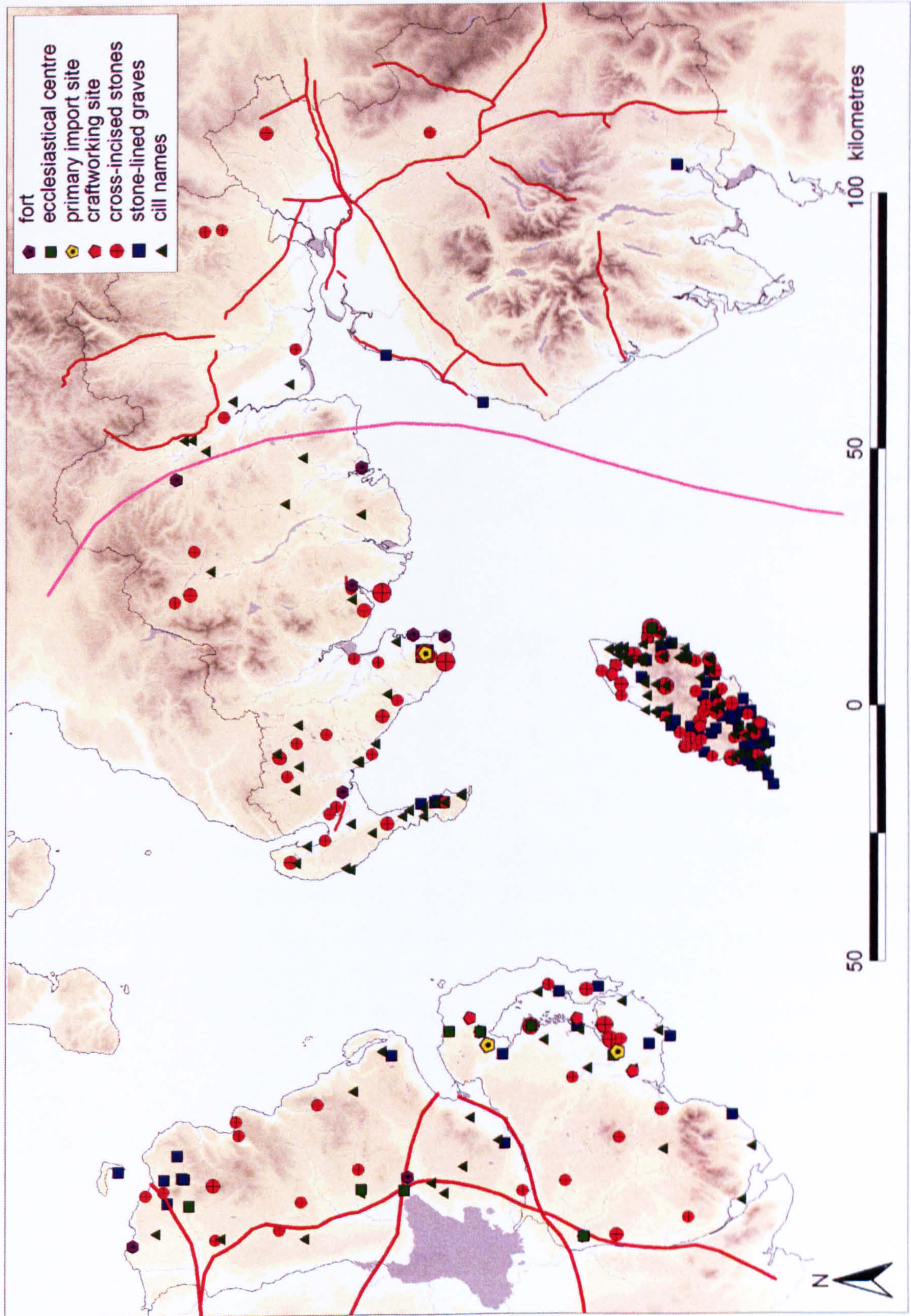


Figure 9.4: PHASE II-IV Christianisation of the landscape in the western zone

STRATEGIES OF IDEOLOGICAL INVESTMENT WITHIN THE WESTERN ZONE

Ideological indicators support the assumption that broadly similar social structures and economic systems were in place across this western zone. Expressions of secular power are comparable; leaders achieved physical dominance by drawing on natural features of the landscape, and the prominent forts of Ireland and Scotland (and possibly the Isle of Man, although Cronk Sumark has provided no dating evidence), were occupied by elites who commanded sufficient resources to control exchange for continental goods, and invest in precious metalwork. The exploitation of imported wares would have been a means for this elite to express a new Christian identity, through alignment with the powerful kings of western Europe, and redistribution of these items would have been a means of maintaining power within a polity, or between leaders. This is particularly evident in the area of Strangford Lough, where a concentration of imported goods and craftworking centres appears focussed around the primary import centres of Scrabo and Downpatrick, showing a marked correlation with the territory of powerful and eminent dynasty of the Dál Fiatach (see Chapter 7; Appendix B).

As the symbiotic nature of kingship and Christianity developed, investment in Christian settlements and foci increased. A desire to align themselves with powerful ideology of the Continental kingdoms may have made leaders more receptive to individual Christian enterprises from neighbouring polities or abroad. The activity of individuals such as *Uinniau*, Maccuil or Columba demonstrates contact within this western zone, and their individual foundations could not have been established without elite support. A willingness to grant land for ecclesiastical foundations would have signalled an overt expression of Christianity identity, as well as use of the church as a practical means of controlling territory. In this context, similar forms of Christian investment may be attributed to competition or emulation; in the Irish kingdoms, the establishment of monastic communities close to dynastic boundaries may have prompted neighbouring competitors to do the same, as a means of consolidating and expressing territorial control. This is exemplified in the territory of the Dál Fiatach, whose boundary with the Dál nAraide appears to be marked by the monastic centres of Movilla and Bangor (see Appendix B). Likewise, the monastic centre of Connor occupies a riverine location that appears to have continued as a boundary into later periods. At Whithorn and Downpatrick, an alternative strategy was employed, as an ecclesiastical focus appears to have been incorporated within the existing secular settlement, further enhancing the status and draw of these central places

As investment in the church continued, ecclesiastical settlements became more economically autonomous, and could themselves participate in exchange and production networks. From the end of the seventh century, the wide-reaching ambitions of Irish ecclesiastical communities were further articulated through the production of texts, in particular the hagiography, which allowed expansionist agendas to be expressed. Such foundations could not exist within a vacuum, and channels of education, communication and kinship would have existed between ecclesiastical centres and individuals, and between leaders and associated churches. This would have strengthened interaction between polities across the sea; the movement of individuals such as Finnian/*Uinniau* would have forged close relationships, possibly alliances.

Following the patronage by the upper echelons of society, the wider landscape was further 'Christianised', with the establishment of ecclesiastical sites of more local significance, including cemetery sites, *cill* names and cross-incised stones. These sites reflect not only increasing monumentality within this western zone, but interaction *within* these societies, as religion developed from an elite preserve towards relevance for a much wider segment of society. An important aspect of this process appears to have been a move towards overtly Christian burial grounds. From the eighth century onwards, the church in Ireland actively encouraged a move away from familial cemeteries towards burial in Christian graveyards (Petts 2002a, 44; O'Brien 2004), presumably a process that had begun on a lesser scale at an earlier date. This would have meant a significant change to the religious landscapes of much of the population, whose society had been strongly bound up in concepts of kinship; a new Christian familial identity may have gradually emerged (Petts 2002a). The demarcation of routes, boundaries and sites with simple, cross-incised monuments would have been a means to actively express this identity, and also reaffirmed the Christian identity of populations within specific areas. The relationship with these sites and monuments would have been discursive, as people added to them, and were affected by them. Their establishment would also have facilitated the political and social hierarchy, as control of local churches meant an ability to exact burial dues and tithes.

Shared features of ideological investment suggest that the alignments forged via Irish kinship links in Phase I continued, further enhanced by the active exchange of goods, competition or emulation, and the movement of individuals. Individual sites can provide material evidence of these links; Irish influence has been observed at Whithorn, both in terms of artefacts (see Chapter 8), and ecclesiastical traditions (St *Uinniau*); the idea of a shared bishopric between Movilla and Whithorn is a highly attractive one in this context (Clancy 2001, 26). Continued communication is further attested by the similar motifs and artforms that adorned the

monuments within this zone. Specifically, forms of the monogram *chi-rho*, occur both on the Rhinns and in County Antrim, whilst the cross of arcs and marigold designs, demonstrate strong links between Whithorn and Maughold (Trench-Jellicoe 1980; 1998).

POLITICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE WESTERN ZONE

It is not suggested that this zone was an homogenous one, and although a shared ideological 'package' appears to have been adopted, different communities adapted it to their own ends. Ó'Carragáin (2005, 30) has observed that, 'while the Church had the potential to transcend local identities, in practice it was organised along territorial lines'. The density of ecclesiastical sites in the landscape, the form that they took, and the nature of monuments commissioned, would have been influenced by local circumstances, both in terms of political situations, contemporary architectural traditions, and the pre-existing shape of the landscape. The distribution map of this western zone is, in fact, much more textured.

Firstly, in terms of density, high levels of investment reflect the political dominance of the Dál Fiatach within northern Ireland. That Christianity formed an important part of the identity and investment strategies of this polity is emphasised by the high number of ecclesiastical sites and burial grounds within their territory, evidenced by cross-incised stones, and stone-lined graves (see Appendix B). A high concentration of imported goods and craftworking centres indicates that this investment occurred within the context of a particularly wealthy and dynamic kingdom. A less dense, but notably similar concentration of investment has been identified in northern Antrim, and seems to point to another focus of power, which can be associated with the more extended Dál Ríatan thalassocracy (figure 9.5 and Appendix B).

The cluster of sites on the southern Rhinns would seem to represent another distinct entity, which saw the establishment of a cult centres at Kirkmadrine and possibly Low Curghie. A concentration of stone-lined graves suggests adoption of an Irish burial practice, mirrored by parallels between the Kirkmadrine motifs and that at Drumaqueran, County Down. Further Irish Sea influences are attested by comparison of the possible function of these stones with the Avitus monument of the Isle of Man (Forsyth 2005, 125). Despite these links, however, the religious focus represented by the three Kirkmadrine stones, demonstrated by their concentration and epigraphic traditions, is unique. The community that established this site was aware of Irish traditions, but not to the exclusion of other influences (Forsyth 2005, 125).

The Phase II to Phase IV investment also shows a notable concentration of activity on the Isle of Man, one that is not readily explained. The island would doubtless have played a significant role in maritime connections within the Irish Sea area, due to its central location, and intervisibility with the surrounding shores. Man may also have had symbolic associations; for much earlier periods, it has been suggested that Man, linked to the god Manannan, played a central symbolic role within the Irish Sea (Davey 2004). Had this carried over into the Christian period, it might have been manifested in the island forming a focus for burial and monumental investment.

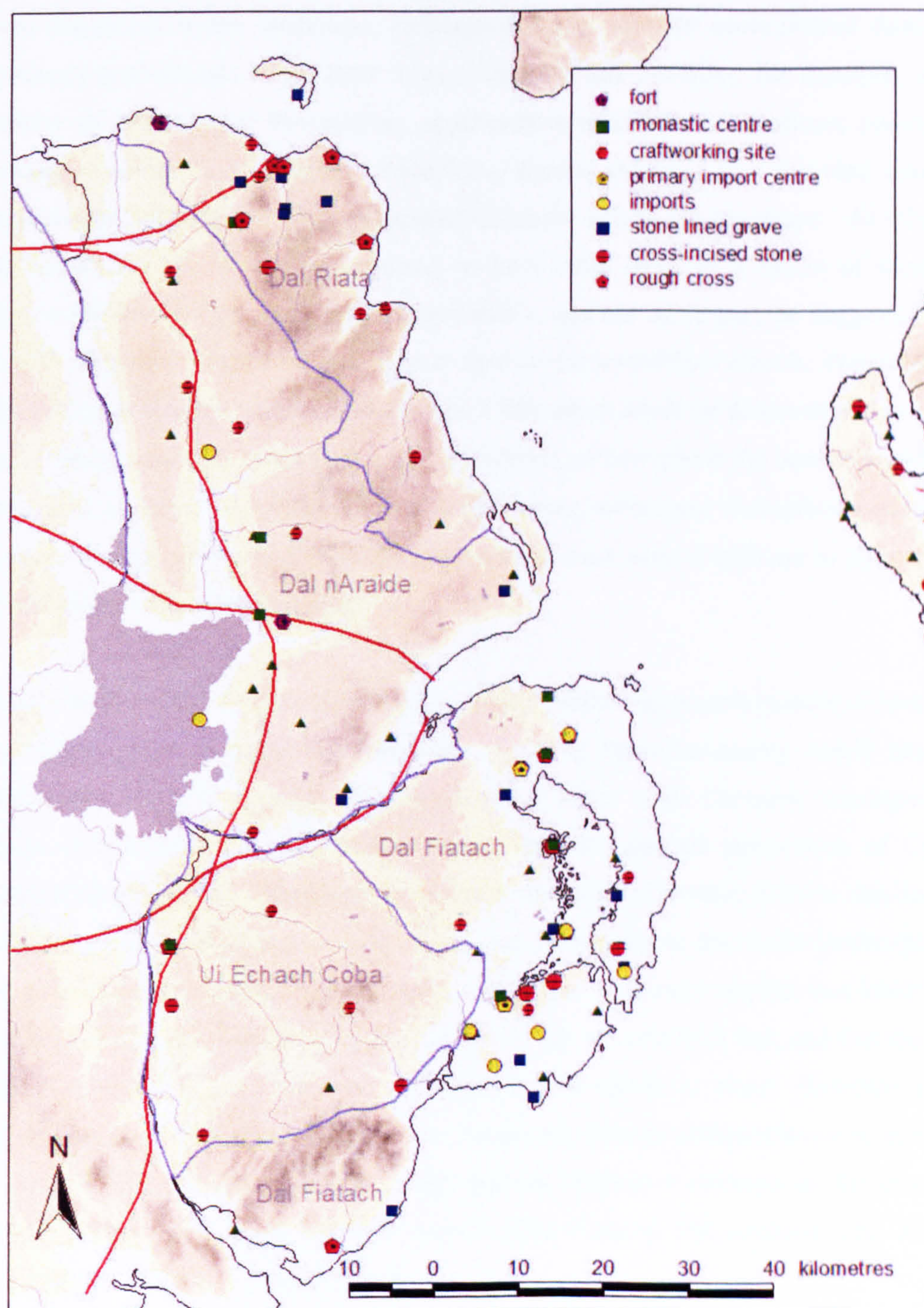


Figure 9.5: Regional variation in investment in Counties Down and Antrim

That each of these centres, or focal points, adopted a slightly different level of investment within a difference context is unsurprising, as each society would have made conscious choices in terms of ideological investment. This may have involved adoption of local building techniques, as in the cashel structure of Nendrum, or the adoption of sites that may have had pre-existing significance, as at Movilla, where the place-name may indicate an earlier cult focus.

The way that Christianity was manifested would also have differed according to the way that it was organised in the landscape, although defining specific ecclesiastical functions is notoriously problematic. The latter sites (Nendrum and Movilla), for example, are both examples of documented monasteries, apparently established at significant points in the landscape, intervisible with, but separate from, secular centres. This provided a means of appropriating land and exerting widespread influence across the landscape. At other sites, most notably at Whithorn, there appears to have been more of a fusion of secular and religious elements within a single elite settlement, and the same may be suggested for the fort of Downpatrick, known to have been a royal centre served by a church. Particularly, this might reflect differences in territorial control; Christianity could be demonstrated in a central place within a relatively stable polity, as at Whithorn, or throughout the landscape, where the church was required to actively control wider areas, as around Strangford Lough. In a majority of cases, however, the distinction between such sites is difficult to define, and so regional trends cannot be identified.

Overall, therefore, the western zone reveals valuable information on a number of levels. The broad trajectory of investment demonstrates the way that Christianity would have been implemented; initially through the alignment of elites with Christian ideologies, with subsequent investment in ecclesiastical sites, and the gradual permeation of Christian practice through society. The assertion of a communal new Christian identity resulted in the establishment of local churches, monuments and cemeteries in the wider landscape. That same forms of evidence increasingly occur within this wide zone implies that kinship links and interpolity competition were long-lived within the western Irish Sea, and that the church widened channels of communication and increased the spread of ideas. However, political diversity and individual choices can still be discerned, through different levels of investment and variations in monumentality, as small polities employed elements of the ideological package to their own ends, whether named (Dál Fiatach, Dál nAraide, Dál Ríata) or undocumented (Machars, Rhinns, Man).

CONTINUING LACK OF MONUMENTALITY IN THE EAST

As the landscape of the west became richer in Christian symbolism and religious foci, the evidence from Cumbria and Dumfriesshire continues to indicate a marked lack of investment in Christian monumentality. Possible explanations have been outlined for Phase I, but the arguments can be developed further for Phase II, by drawing on the available literary sources.

That British society was at least partly Christian, and that ecclesiastical sites existed by this time, is indicated by literary sources: the sixth-century king, Urien of Rheged is recorded in Christian terms, and his son, Rhun, is documented as a cleric involved in the baptism of King Edwin in the seventh century (*Historia Brittonum*; McCarthy 2002, 370). The place-name Papcastle is believed to contain the name of one King Pabo, recorded as a sixth-century king, whose name has both Latin and ecclesiastical overtones (McCarthy 2002, 368). In addition, by the later seventh century, certain amounts of land appear to have been held by a British clergy, before it was granted to the Northumbrian church and to individuals such as Bishop Wilfrid (*VW* 17).

Suggesting that British society or the British church was too weak to invest in monuments appears oversimplistic, and instead, it must be assumed that the structure of society, and the sources of power drawn upon, differed between this region and the western zone. The literary sources, whilst problematic, hint at a key issue, in suggesting that military prowess, rather than ideological justification, formed the mainstay of political control. The sixth-century kingdom of Rheged is recorded in heroic terms, in tales of Urien, whose 'military skill and generalship surpassed those of all other kings', and his contemporaries (*Book of Taliesin* 57). Military power, and warfare, provided means of gaining territory and overlordship, and it might appear from the documented battles of the Men of the North, that this was a main priority of the nascent kingdoms of sixth and seventh century Cumbria and Dumfriesshire.

Warfare has, however, been highlighted by De Marrais, Castillo and Earle (1996, 16), as the least stable source of power, one that cannot easily be maintained, and that requires significant economic input. Contemporary leaders in the west, and the later Northumbrian kings, recognised the church as a more stable means of controlling land and maintaining power, and consequently invested in Christian monumentality. Potentially, this is due to the fact that the British kings were forging comparatively new identities; the former societies were better established and therefore more stable. It may also be significant that, in both of

the former cases, the implementation of Christianity represented the appropriation of a new ideology. In the British zone Christianity was already established. Whilst the church might have been influenced by secular leaders, it could not be reinvented, and it may be that the existing Christian infrastructure did not lend itself to supporting the emergent leaders. Together, the relatively unstable nature of power held by British kings, resting largely on the fate of individuals, and the possible stagnant or weak nature of the existing Christian infrastructure, did not result in a situation whereby a rich and productive church could flourish in line with its kings. This situation continued, and with the encroachment of Northumbria into the west (Cramp 1995), a lack of stability within the church itself at this time is suggested by the acquisition of its sites by the Anglian bishops.

PHASE III: THE AMBITIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF NORTHUMBRIA

ZONES OF INTERACTION

During Phase III, Christian investment is dramatically re-focussed in the eastern part of the study area, where sophisticated sculpture reflects a surge in monumentality (figure 9.6). From the seventh, or possibly the eighth century, the now-Christian kingdom of Northumbria began to exert considerable political pressure in the west, and Northumbrian forms of ecclesiastical investment attest to increased influence of the Anglian elite in this area (Rollason 2003, 29-30). The sculptural evidence and place-name elements show a marked distribution, occupying a clear eastern zone; Northumbrian influenced monuments only occur in a limited coastal area beyond the Nith, around the Mote of Mark, and do not extend beyond the River Cree. These are demonstrably those areas where pre-existing evidence for Christianity, as depicted for Period I and II, were least prevalent, and it would seem to represent Northumbrian political success within predefined territories. As noted in Chapter 8, the documented Anglian bishopric at Whithorn, beyond the Cree, does not show signs of having fallen directly within Northumbrian control, and evidence from this site can be used to discuss Northumbrian relationships with their new neighbours.

NORTHUMBRIAN COLONIALISM IN THE WEST

The establishment of monuments is identified by DeMarrais *et al* (1996) as a key means of materialising ideology, emphasising both political and economic control over an area. This observation is particularly pertinent to the sophisticated monuments of the Anglian period, the complexities of which attest to skilled craftsmen, and bold statements of both Christian doctrine and political dominance.

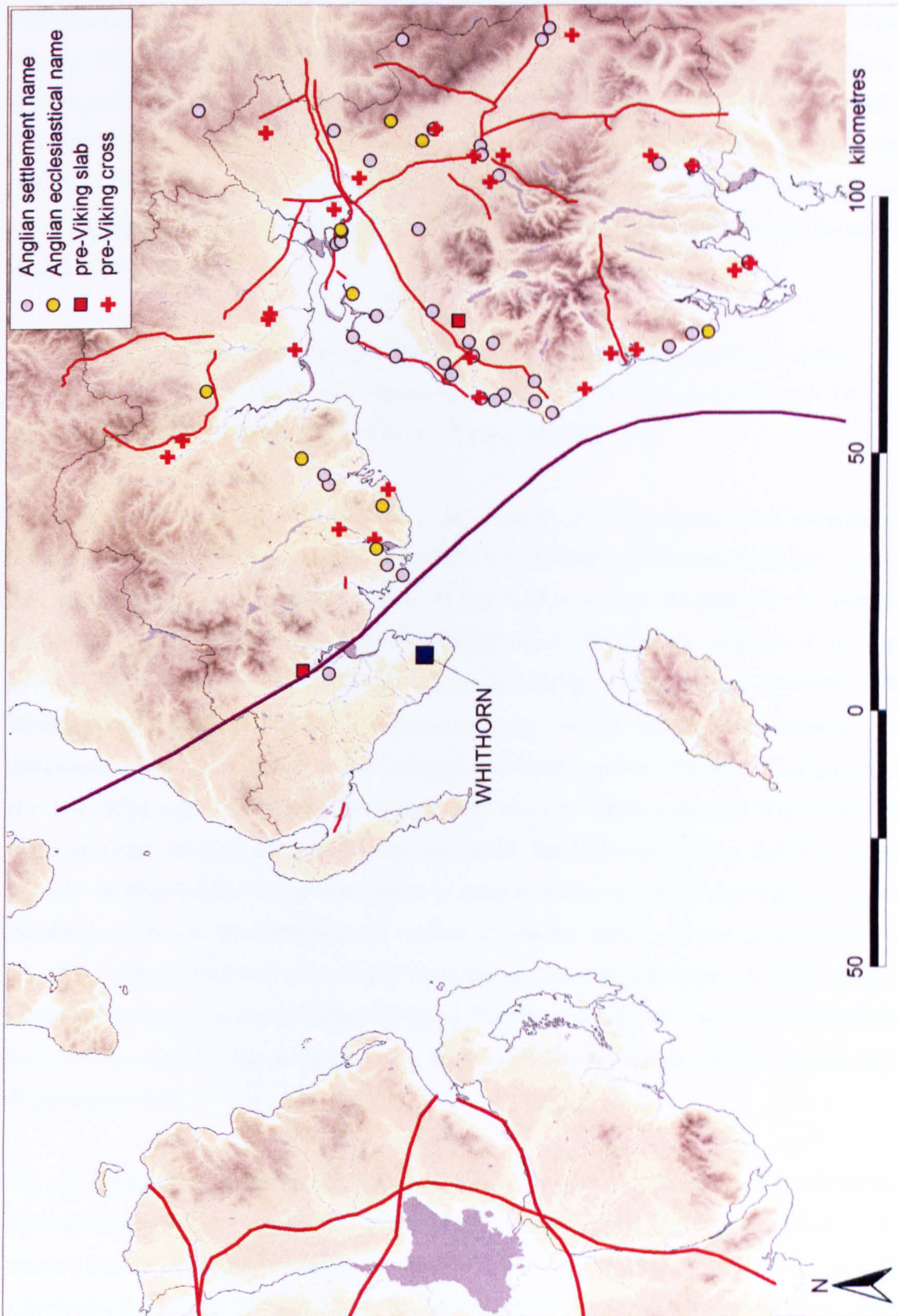


Figure 9.6: PHASE III Northumbrian expansion

The granting of land to the Northumbrian church, including the sites of pre-existing British churches, and the establishment of new ecclesiastical centres, represent effective means of implementing territorial control. The promotion of Roman orthodoxy by the Northumbrian church would have justified their ecclesiastical expansion into the British territories, a development that would have resulted in the control of new parcels of land, to go hand in hand with the appropriation of new secular estates. The establishment of churches in an area may have been one of the first means of asserting influence; in the materialisation of ideology amongst the Moche of Peru, for example, monumental architecture is said to represent

‘ideological infiltration, planned and executed in advance of geopolitical control, with ideological centres of monumental proportions serving as beachheads for this advance’ (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996, 25)

Granting newly acquired land for the establishment of ecclesiastical sites provided an effective means of gaining a secure foothold in a new territory, demonstrating the way that the Anglian monasteries and monuments of the west served as ‘beachheads’ for political advancement. Historical sources provide a record, albeit fragmentary, of grants of this type to notable individuals, which would then have been brought into the wider networks of the Northumbrian church (*VW* 17). The important role that the Northumbrian churches and monuments played is reflected in their strategic and highly visible locations (see Appendix B for illustrative material). Major routeways were chosen, within areas that had formed the focus of earlier activity, and presumably population; the Derwent, Eamont and Nith valleys provide examples. Location of monuments in coastal zones, notably around Ravenglass and Workington, would have emphasised control of natural ports, and the establishment of churches in key agricultural areas would have been a means of dominating the main areas of economic resources and settlement. Favoured Northumbrian saints would have supplanted those of local significance in many places; the distribution of their dedications mirrors those of the monuments.

The correlation with Roman centres is also notable. The active promotion of a new Roman ecclesiastical orthodoxy would have been visually strengthened by the appropriation of pre-existing Roman sites; the ornate cross in the fort at Bewcastle is an obvious example, and the ecclesiastical centres at Penrith, Brigham and Ninekirks are all located in close proximity to significant Roman centres. The latter site is situated within a landscape that has been a focus for monumentality from prehistory, into the Roman period (Cool 2004) and would have been a highly visible location for the expression of ideological power.

Significantly, Anglian monumental control is not evidenced across the whole of southwest Scotland, but is confined primarily to areas east of the Nith, and a restricted region around Kirkcudbright. This correlates with the area where Phase II, Irish-influenced Christianity does not occur, suggesting that the Northumbrian advance was successful only within a pre-defined area, and would seem to indicate that expansion occurred through taking control of discrete polities or individual kingdoms (figure 9.7). That the church played a major role in this process is supported by the recent idea that specific political units formed the basis for new dioceses; the kingdom of Rheged, for example, is suggested to have been subsumed into Northumbria as the diocese of Ripon (Woolf 2006); the high level of monumentality in the Derwent valley, which formed its northern boundary, may have represented a demarcation of this territorial unit, as well as investment along a major routeway.

Discussed in the context of Whithorn, it is suggested that the Cree formed the western extent of Northumbrian territorial success, beyond which, influence amongst the more dynamic, Irish-influenced societies was gained only through alliance. The installation of an Anglian bishopric may have been largely instigated by the Whithorn community; the Northumbrian elite, however, used the situation to their own advantage, with the commissioning of propagandist hagiography, and the promulgation of the cult of St Ninian.

The Nith Valley and Stewartry of Kirkcudbright therefore formed a 'monumental frontier' between an encroaching Northumbrian monumentality in the east, and the Machars and Rhinns polities of the west. Not for nothing are some of the finest examples of sculptural monumentality found in these western areas of Northumbrian Christianity, at Ruthwell, Bewcastle and Hoddum (Cramp 1999, 8). The Ruthwell Cross, in particular, standing at one of the westernmost areas of investment, has been seen as a strong symbol of this Christianity, acting as a conciliatory monument between Irish Christianity in the west, and Roman orthodoxy in the east (Cramp 1995; Wood 2003). This provides an example of the trends noted in anthropological work by Hodder, where specific areas of conflict and competition led to the need to express overtly clear and unambiguous identities; investment was strongest at the point where interaction occurred (Hodder 1982, 85). The level of monumentality evident in Dumfriesshire illuminates an area of confrontation between two distinct ideologies, of the Northumbria kingdom to the east, and the polities of the west.

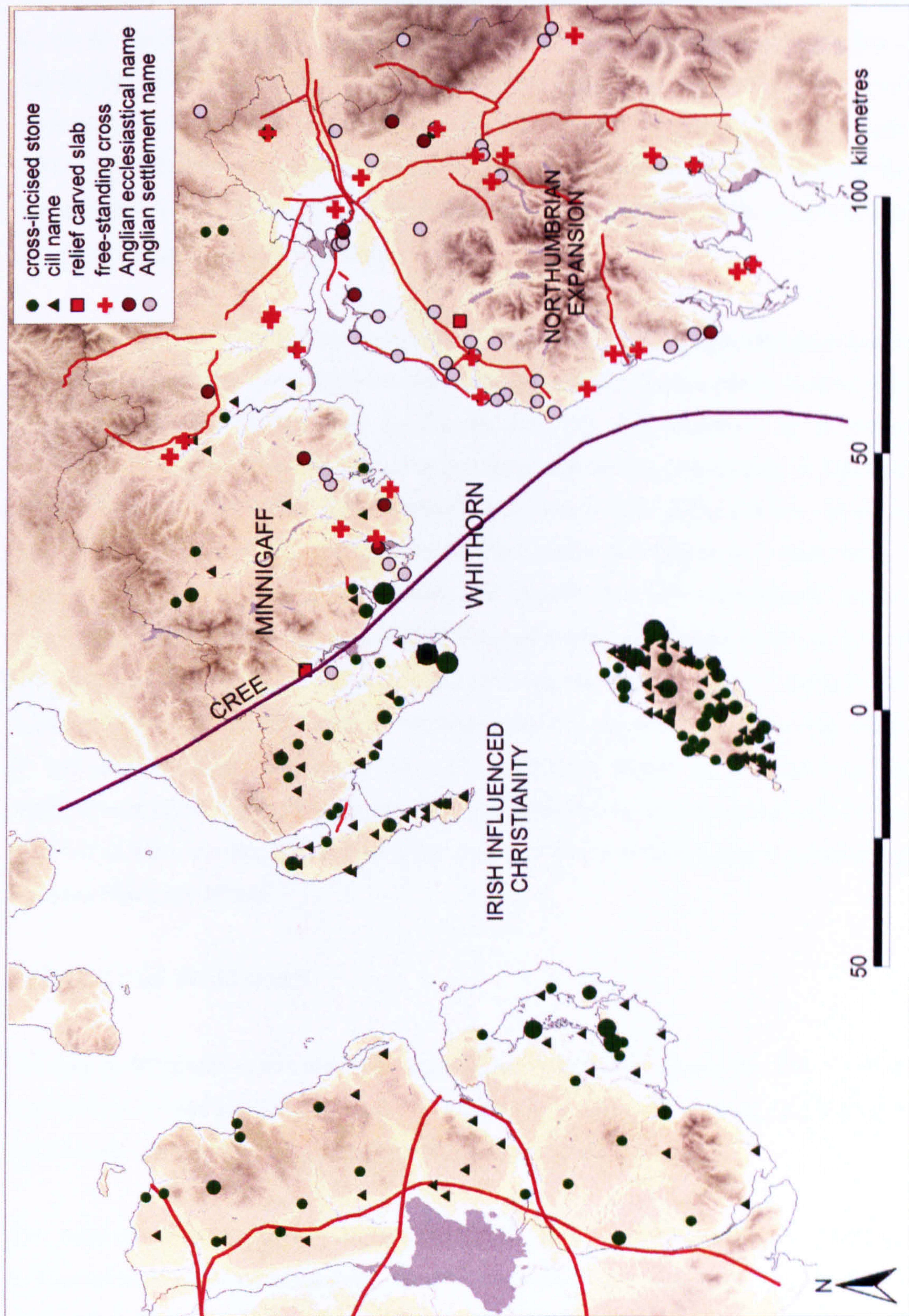


Figure 9.7: Phase III zones of interaction

DECLINE IN WESTERN MONUMENTALITY

The marked contrast between the sophisticated Anglian monuments and the simple incised stones of the west reflects a shift in the balance of investment within the Irish Sea area. Whilst the initial establishment of ecclesiastical sites demonstrated a high level of investment in the west, the church appears comparatively less dynamic during this period. Potentially, this reflects unequal access to wealth; the importation of goods to the Irish Sea had declined, whilst Northumbria is known to have been importing glass, stone technology, and participating in the use of coinage.

However, it seems likely that these trends reflect more than a simple change in economic systems, and represent more complex situations. As noted, monumentality is most overt in times of stress and confrontation (*cf* Carver 2001, 9). Representative of an incoming influence, the Anglian monuments had to proclaim an unambiguous identity in a prominent way; the strong infrastructure of the Northumbrian church allowed this to be so. In the west, the much more protracted establishment of Christianity had begun with high status and prominent investment, through metalwork and imports, but had subsequently permeated lower levels of society, resulting in varied levels of sophistication and wealth, and a stable, but not necessarily weaker church. An apparent decrease in investment in Ireland and the west might therefore be attributed to increasing stability; the maturing church may have led to less need for overt monumentality. The continuing ability of the church to create sophisticated items in specific circumstances is emphasised by the somewhat isolated find of the Calf of Man crucifix, which attests not only to a wealthy church, but to continued links between Man and Ireland.

THE ROLE OF WHITHORN

The role of Whithorn in this period is arguably one of its most significant. The community, situated at a pivotal location between two distinct ecclesiastical traditions, weighed up their options and chose to shift alignment towards the more powerful entity.

The subsequent Northumbrian exploitation of the newly established see at Whithorn, in hagiographical and historical sources, demonstrates the discursive nature of this relationship, and another way that they used ideology to enhance power. That a local saint was revived and venerated at Whithorn emphasises an appropriation of existing traditions, and also provides a possible context for the establishment of Ninianic dedications in both Cumbria and further afield. Phythian-Adams notes that the two sites dedicated to St Ninian in

Cumbria (Ninekirks Brougham and Ninewells, near Brampton) occur on the boundary of the sees of Lindisfarne and Hexham (within the western, Lindisfarne diocese), further reflecting the far-reaching ecclesiastical ambitions of the Northumbrian church (Phythian-Adams 1996, 72).

The site itself represents an important weathercock for the shifting balance of power within the region, and its strategic location again allowed the community to draw on the most politically advantageous influences available. Whithorn remained a powerful entity, but ideologically had orientated itself towards the politically dominant Northumbrian church in the east, a decision which will have resulted in stability and security until the ecclesiastical fragmentation of Period IV.

PHASE IV: SECULARISATION AND FRAGMENTATION

Phase IV, spanning the ninth and tenth centuries, saw significant changes in the political and ideological landscape of the northern Irish Sea, occurring as new, Scandinavian influences permeated the area, from both Ireland and the Danelaw. Across much of the study area, there was a shift in emphasis from major ecclesiastical centres, with networks of dependant sites, towards increasing investment on a local scale, seen to represent the patronising, and controlling, of the church by a secular elite. This fragmentation of the ecclesiastical landscape saw a move away from the broader east-west confrontations of the earlier periods, towards a series of interlinked spheres of interaction. Such a change is not, however, attested in Ireland, where investment seems to have remained dominated by fewer ecclesiastical centres, indicating a distinct difference in socio-political situation within this area (figure 9.8).

ZONES OF INTERACTION

Cumbria and Dumfriesshire continue to demonstrate shared monumentality, and both saw a proliferation of stone sculpture, and widespread Scandinavian linguistic influence demonstrated by 'Kirk' names. During Phase IV these attributes are also shared with the Isle of Man, indicating a shift in orientation of the island from west to east, although vestiges of Irish influence are evident on the island of Peel. The changing shape of the Christian landscape across this eastern area parallels changes identified elsewhere in Britain, widely interpreted as the establishment of a new ecclesiastical infrastructure that was patronised by local secular elite, rather than major monastic centres. The artistic influences evinced by the sculpture of this period demonstrate the permeation of Scandinavian influences; the creation

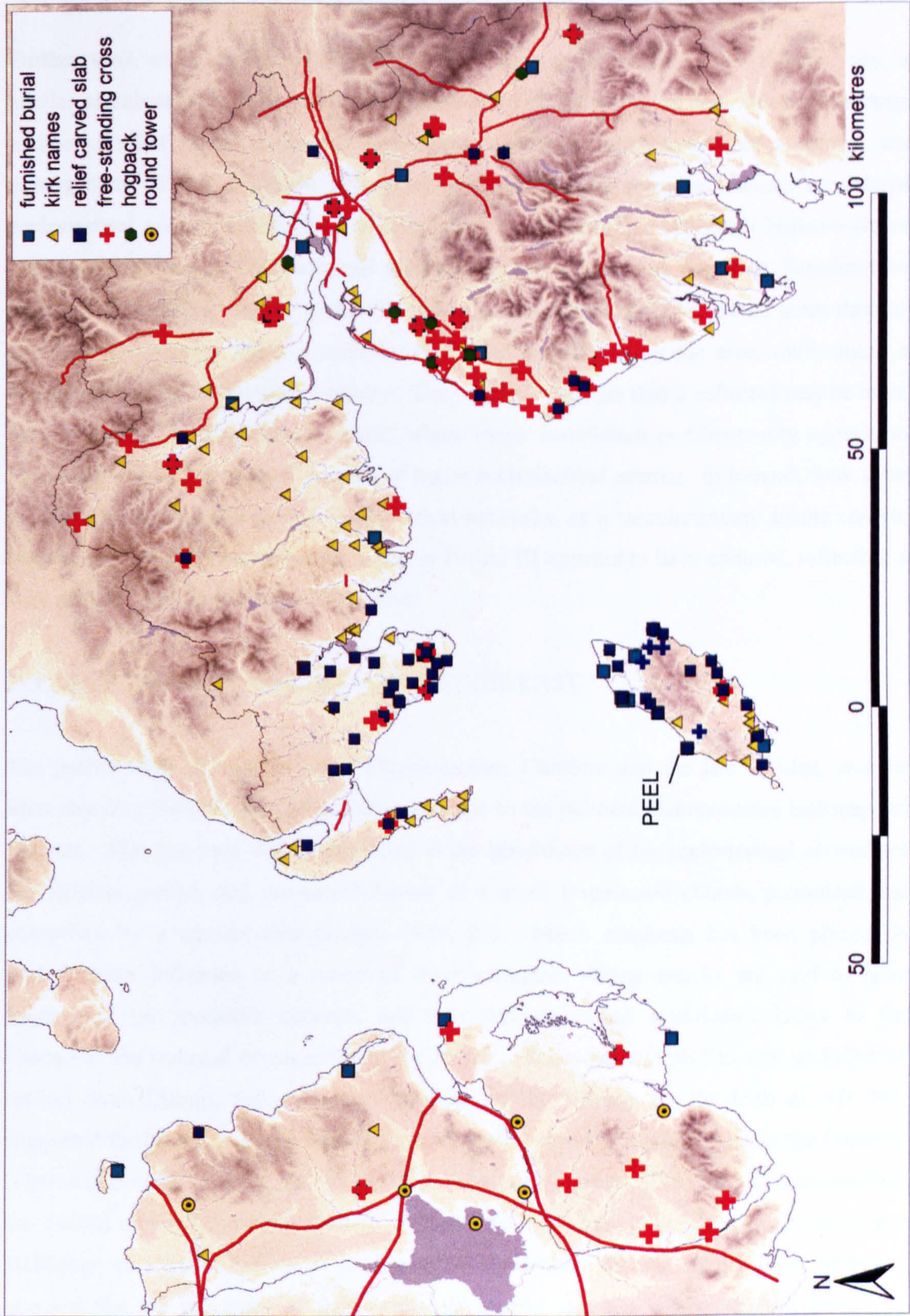


Figure 9.8: PHASE IV ideological investment

of regional schools, and commemorative inscriptions, represent the expression of local power and identity through the church.

Further west, evidence for monumentality reflects a different situation. Superficially, a similar proliferation of investment can be discerned on the Machars peninsula, with a large number of relief carved slabs, and 'kirk' names. However, when considered in context, the homogeneity of the Whithorn School of sculpture would seem to indicate centralised ecclesiastical control, rather than fragmentation of the church. Although Hiberno-Norse influence is evident in the artefactual assemblages of the period at Whithorn, Scandinavian linguistic influence is largely absent from the surrounding area, and it would seem that the Whithorn community again remained unique and central within the area, maintaining a strong hold on the surrounding territory. The political situation that is reflected may be more reminiscent of the situation in Ireland, where major investment in Christianity appears to have been retained by a small number of major ecclesiastical centres. In Ireland, there is no evidence for a fragmentation of ecclesiastical networks, or a 'secularisation' of the church, and the ecclesiastical stability that began in Period III appears to have endured, reflecting a very different social and political situation.

ECCLESIASTICAL FRAGMENTATION TO THE EAST

The proliferation of monuments in Dumfriesshire, Cumbria and the Isle of Man, and the form that they took, indicates significant changes to the political and economic landscape of the area. This has been widely attributed to the breakdown of the ecclesiastical network of the Anglian period, and the establishment of a more fragmented church, patronised and controlled by a secular elite (Bailey 1988, 27). Much emphasis has been placed on Scandinavian influence as a cause of these changes; Viking attacks are said to have fragmented the monastic network, and new settlers caused significant change to the economic and political organisation of the region. The western Irish Sea saw an influx of settlers from Dublin, following the expulsion of the Vikings by the Irish in AD 902, supported further by Scandinavian-influenced settlers moving westwards from the Danelaw (Graham-Campbell 1998, 115). Within the study area, Griffiths (2004, 131-2) has identified the coastal plain of Cumbria, the Isle of Man, and more limited enclaves in Dumfries and Galloway, as areas of 'primary', tenth-century settlement. Recent studies have, however, stressed that the processes at work were not simple, and that change cannot simply be attributed to incoming populations and influences (Barrow 2000). One society did not simply replace another, but changes that occurred were the result of interaction and acculturation as two distinct cultures came into close contact.

Linguistic evidence attests to a strong Scandinavian-speaking presence in the eastern part of the study area, indicative of a significant incoming population (Chapter 6). Such an insurgence would have altered the pattern of landholding, as new elites carved out their own estates. An increase in monumentality followed, as landholders materialised their claim over land, through highly visible media of burial and sculpture. The earliest evidence for Scandinavian-influenced ideological investment within the study area occurs in the form of furnished burials, frequently found in the context of pre-existing religious sites. Sporadic examples occur throughout the study area, demonstrating the maritime nature of Scandinavian activity; however, only in the 'primary' settlement areas of Cumbria and Man they are more numerous, occupying inland locations. The monumental burials demonstrate that the Scandinavian elite both recognised the church as an arena for the display of power and wealth, and appropriated these sites using their own monumental strategies. The furnished burials represent both an explicit statement of difference, as well as a continuity of burial (Griffiths 2004, 127).

Scandinavian-influenced populations subsequently adopted Christianity, presumably through interaction with pre-existing communities, and chose to demonstrate political and economic control through a monumental form that was already extant. As estates were divided and reorganised, the new elite could express identity and control through the establishment of churches and the erection of Christian monuments. Free-standing crosses and relief carved slabs therefore proliferated. Although adopting an existing medium, new artistic elements were woven into the mix, and the stones demonstrate the development of localised schools (Bailey 1985b, 58). The occurrence of inscriptions, commemorating individuals who had erected monuments, demonstrates the significant move away from the collective investment of monastic communities, towards an emphasis on the role of individuals and specific families.

The apparently short time span between the burial mounds and stone sculpture, or their possible contemporaneity, demonstrates the dynamic nature of the new Scandinavian-influenced lordship of this area, whose investment strategies 'involved conservative elements (mound burials) and forward-looking elements more in tune with the contemporary tradition of the host country (namely sculpture)' (Griffiths 2004, 133). In doing so, power was expressed using monumental vocabularies familiar to both incomers, and those who already inhabited the area. Notably, it is in Man and Cumbria where two *thing* mounds of this period are attested, at Tynwald, and Little Langdale respectively, reflecting the physical impact of new political influences within this area (Higham 1985, 36).

Within the eastern zone, shared elements of ideological investment reveal high levels of interaction between neighbouring communities. The cross slabs of Man, and particularly the pseudo-freestanding crosses identified by Trench-Jellicoe, demonstrate a desire to amalgamate surrounding influences, particularly those of Cumbria. This demonstrates a major shift in the orientation of the island's population away from the west, and towards the main areas of tenth-century Scandinavian settlement (Griffiths 2004, 127). The sculpture on the Isle of Man, however, also reflects the development of a unique Manx form of monument, representing more localised strategies of investment. This eastern area was not an homogenous zone, and is characterised by the expression of localised, secular identities. Within Cumbria, the occurrence of distinct schools of sculpture (Beckermest, Spiral Scroll) or particular foci of investment (Gosforth) may attest to the investment strategies of individual families, or allied groups within society (Sidebottom 2000, 28). Particularly high levels of investment may have occurred where land was at a premium. The proliferation of monuments and churches is particularly notable on the Isle of Man, where no pre-existing tradition of free-standing, relief carved monument existed. This may be a reflection of the strategic maritime location of the island to the communication links of the Irish Sea and beyond, and control of the coastal zones of the island would have been a valuable asset.

Explanation of these changes as due to Viking migration is simplistic, and the impetus for increase levels of investment cannot be attributed wholly to incomers. However, linguistic evidence for large scale Scandinavian settlement in the areas which saw the highest levels of investment indicates that the changing population would have provided a catalyst for change. An incoming elite, taking control of land, would have prompted increased investment, as both newcomers and existing populations sought to maintain economic and political control, expressed through monumentality. The monuments themselves reflect the integration of newly arrived influences into the existing society, and represent the materialisation not only of a changing ideology, but also the changing political and economic organisation of the area. The proliferation of monuments, and the demography that they represent, contrasts notably with the trends evident on both the Machars and in Ireland.

THE MACHARS AND THE WHITHORN SCHOOL

The sculptural tradition of the Machars peninsula would seem, initially, to represent a similar fragmentation of the landscape to that evident in the areas to the east. Likewise, the distribution of 'kirk' names mirrors the ecclesiastical place-name distribution of other areas. However, upon closer inspection, it is clear that the investment strategies and place-naming traditions of this area occur within a different socio-political *milieu*, and that the relationship

between the community of Whithorn and new Scandinavian elements of society was very different to the acculturation and integration that occurred to the east. It would appear that control of the ecclesiastical and secular centre, and the territory as a whole, was not affected, but that a new Scandinavian element was integrated into the existing society, without the social reorganisation suggested elsewhere.

The archaeological evidence from the site itself reflects this phenomenon. After the demolition of the 'Northumbrian' complex, the site was reconstructed on a different alignment (Chapter 8), and a new church may have been constructed at this time. The structural evidence indicates a marked continuity of building traditions, represented by small, wattle-built structures, contrasting with the artefactual assemblages, which betray new influences within the population (Hill 1997, 52).

Scandinavian influence in the wider area is evidenced to only a limited degree in place-names, and Oram's (1995) study suggests that incomers would have occupied land and resources within an existing pattern of landholding, forming small enclaves (Cowan 1991, 71; Griffiths 2004, 127). The issue is somewhat complicated by discussions of 'kirk' compound names, which have been attributed to a mixed Hiberno-Norse influence (Grant 2004), and also linked to debates surrounding the enigmatic *Gall-Ghaidheil*. However, the general scarcity of the archetypal Norse settlement names in the region, and the general opinion that *Gall-Ghaidheil* refers to Gaelic speakers of Scandinavian stock, supports a generalisation that Scandinavian settlement of the Machars was limited, and did not have a major impact on the organisation of the landscape. Similarly, the artistic and material influences of the Whithorn community, reflected by the metalwork, appear to suggest that existing leaders maintained control. This is supported by Nicholson's assertion that the artefacts represent Scandinavian-trained craftsmen, but the patronage of a British or Anglo-British elite (Nicholson 1997). Cowan (1991, 71) suggests, on the basis of historical evidence, that the Viking settlers were only allowed to occupy land in Galloway on native terms.

The limited influence of Scandinavian artwork is also evident in the sculpture, where the uniform design of the Whithorn School appears very conservative (Craig 1991). Whithorn shares a 'slab culture' with the Isle of Man, but, rather than being patronised by a secular elite, the community maintained control, using sculpture to reaffirm pre-existing territorial control. Whithorn's control is marked by the widespread establishment of monuments, on sites whose importance is demonstrated by their subsequent parochial status (Crowe 2003). This network is reminiscent of the monastic hierarchies of earlier periods, and control may

have been maintained through an episcopal network, implemented through the payment of burial dues and taxes. Again, the independence of the centre at Whithorn is emphasised through ideological investment. The apparent unity of the peninsula has been a continuing factor throughout the period of interest, a reflection of a well-defined territory, in a key location, whose elite were able, and willing, to draw on the most potent symbols of power available at any one time.

Phase IV on the Machars therefore sees in a similar distribution of monumentality to the coastal plain of Cumbria, but the artistic influences attest to a more stable, centralised power. This could be seen in terms of 'competitive emulation', whereby the elite of one area used the same media as their neighbours, employed to assert their own regional organisation and agendas. During this period, Whithorn appears to turn away from alignment with major polities – first Irish kingdoms and then Northumbria – towards expression of localised control, as a reaction to the changing climate of the wider region and the emergence of a more fragmented political landscape.

IRISH ISOLATION?

As noted, Ireland does not exhibit fragmentation within its ideological landscape, despite the oft-lamented 'secularisation' of the church. The latter refers instead to an increased interest of monastic communities in worldly affairs; control of issues and assets still remained in the hands of the ecclesiastical few, and would have been inextricably linked to the changing dynastic politics of the region. Instead, Ireland developed a distinctive ecclesiastical culture, albeit drawing on trends from elsewhere, in their adoption of the high cross and the round tower, and generally, seems to have been isolated from the rest of the area at this time. A significant exception is represented by the architecture of the site at Peel, where the round tower and church suggest a continued link with the western coast of the Isle of Man.

The contrast between the ideological investment of Ireland and the rest of the study area during this period is emphasised by the distribution of sculpture and monumental architecture. Although employing the same medium as communities across the Irish Sea, high crosses were created to assert the continuing influence of major ecclesiastical centres, rather than the secular aristocracy. The crosses at sites such as Downpatrick and Kilbroney bear strong religious messages; personalised inscriptions, and local schools, are not evident. At the same time, round towers were being constructed within the landscape; again, however, these are confined to major ecclesiastical sites. Smaller, local churches continued in use, and stone churches were built, but these sites were not endowed with ornate

monuments. Neither do the church structures exhibit distinctive local styles that might be indicative of politicised secular patronage (Ó'Carragáin 2003a; 2004).

Ireland, therefore, shows a very different trajectory of ideological investment to other areas, with the Irish Sea representing a boundary at this time. Contacts with Britain and further afield are known to have continued, attested by documented travels and communication between individuals (Hughes 1971; Cramp 1986), but these links are not attested monumentally. Rather, investment in Ireland would appear to be increasingly insular, and when the wider context is considered, it seems that this can be attributed to two interlinked factors; the centralisation of power of the Irish kings, and the lack of integration of Norse and Irish populations.

Politically, Ireland was becoming a less fragmented entity, with the centralisation of power, and the increasing role of 'high kings' in controlling larger, more stable territories (Mytum 1992, 165), contrasting with the small *tuatha* of earlier periods. The church remained inextricably linked with these political hierarchies, and both high crosses and round towers are considered to represent the ecclesiastical patronage of the royal elite (Fitzpatrick 1998, 118-9; O'Keefe 2004, 110-1). Investment in ideology, therefore, appears to have been concentrated at key sites, linked to specific dynasties; the stabilisation of political control over large areas would have resulted in fewer sites seeing high levels of monumentality. In this way, the materialisation of ideology is being used as a means of countering fragmentation (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996, 31), as an expression of political and economic control.

These trends suggest that the factors that instigated change elsewhere in the region had little effect on the Irish mainland. Although Scandinavian influence is not totally absent in this area of Ireland, linguistic evidence does not indicate large scale influx of population, and there appears to have been very limited integration of Norse and Irish populations. Instead, Scandinavian communities remained distinct within society and the landscape (*cf* Mytum 2003). This accounts not only for the lack of Scandinavian style within the sculptural repertoire, but may also have contributed to continuing stability of the ecclesiastical landscape. As noted for earlier periods, monumental expression is greatest in times of change and confrontation. The prolific monumentality of Cumbria and Man reflects a newly-defined Christian identity and organisation resulting from distinct cultures in contact. In Ireland, however, the ideological investment is linked to the 'old Christians' of a well-established, more stable ecclesiastical hierarchy (Fuglesang 1986, 203).

Monumental investment in Ireland, therefore, reflects a major change in the study area, as the Irish Sea came to represent a boundary, rather than a channel for the communication of ideas and practices. In all previous periods, Ireland showed high levels of interaction with a western maritime zone, facilitated by the networks of the church. From the eighth century, however, ideological investment suggests a downturn in dynamism of the Irish church, and the apparent isolation of Phase IV may be a continuation of this trend, enhanced by the different political and social situations. Anglian polities, particularly in the centuries following the Synod of Whitby, were increasingly turning to the Continent, and despite the earlier Irish contribution, saw their roots with Gregory and Augustine (Fenn 1970, 84). In the ninth century, the Synod of Chelsea, reflecting doubts as to the validity of Irish ministry, suggests a further change. Whilst communication with the Irish church would have continued, overt orientation with this church would have declined.

Whether a contributing factor or a symptom of these external changes, the Irish church became increasingly inward looking, adopting the vernacular and embracing a distinctive ecclesiastical architecture (Charles Edwards 2000, 592). By no means a decline or defeat, this simply represents a change of emphasis, as 'the tides of the Irish Sea had receded to their present day limits' (Fenn 1970, 84).

ST PATRICK'S ISLE, PEEL: IRISH INFLUENCE

St Patrick's Isle, Peel represents a site unique within the remainder of the study area, in its continued evidence for Irish influence (Freke 2002). The presence of both a Type 2 church and a round tower (with the dedication of the island itself) indicate strong Irish links, and rather than simply an allusion to Irish influence, may be indicative of more direct interaction. The Calf of Man crucifix, assigned to the preceding phase of activity on the island, has tentatively been ascribed to an island hermitage belonging to an east coast Irish monastery (Trench-Jellicoe 1985, 316). Peel may represent a similar enclave, in the ownership, or at least patronage, of an Irish king or major monastic centre at this time. The situation of the centre on the west coast of Man, intervisible with both Ireland and Galloway, would have made this an ideal location for communication with the Irish coast, and the Phase IV investment may be a continuation of an alignment forged at a much earlier date. The Irish character of the site is further emphasised by the contrast with the site of Maughold; although hints at an earlier Irish influence are represented by the legend of St Maccuil, and the cashel-style enclosure, such influences are not evident in later investment, which show a stronger Scandinavian influence, and exhibit an orientation towards the Viking settlements of the eastern Irish Sea.

Peel, however, would seem to be an exception that proves a rule, and otherwise, evidence for the materialisation of ideology within Irish church shows it to be increasingly insular. Stable political control, and a lack of external catalysts for change, meant less pressure for overt monumentality, and the maturing church that appears to have become less 'monumental' in Phase III, continued along the same trajectory.

DISCUSSION

This 'alternative narrative' is necessarily generalised, but has demonstrated the value of taking a multidisciplinary approach in elucidating areas about which documents are silent or ambiguous, and in identifying real variation in the agendas of different communities. Within this study, each of the four distinct periods of ideological materialisation has revealed issues that are otherwise unattested in the historical record.

The potential presence of an Irish community on the Rhinns peninsula from an early period, and continued Irish identity here and on Man is unsurprising given the geography of the Irish Sea, but these areas have been overshadowed by the better-documented kingdom of Dál Riata to the north. Similarly, the historical record has been particularly influential in the interpretation of archaeological remains at Whithorn in creating an undue focus on the ecclesiastical role of what was otherwise a secular elite centre. Reconsideration of the evidence from all periods indicates that this unique site saw continued change and reinvention as political climates changed, rather than gradually adopting contemporary ideas from the surrounding area.

In this context, the lack of Northumbrian influence in Galloway has also emerged as a particularly significant point. Although the Northumbrian expansion westwards has been given particular attention in the past, it seems that its westernmost frontier, and the impression of all-pervading influence requires revision. The Whithorn community appears to have remained independent throughout the period of interest, and a more complex relationship with the Anglian elite has been proposed. Northumbrian colonialism was, however, demonstrably successful amongst the Brittonic territories, where overt monumentality did not form part of investment strategies. These results, and the perpetuation of ideological boundaries between different periods, would suggest that they reflect real political differences.

The shifting alignments of the final period of interest, and distinct variations in the patterns of Christianity monumentality, reflect not only the changing role that the church played

within society, but also the close relationship between ideology, and economic and political control. As external catalysts for change in the eastern part of the study area resulted in political fragmentation and new social hierarchies, so new strategies of ideological investment were adopted; in Ireland, where power was becoming more centralised, rather than fragmenting, the monumentality tells a very different story.

CHAPTER TEN

CONSIDERING INTERACTION THROUGH IDEOLOGY: A CRITIQUE

Throughout this thesis, the underlying theoretical stance has been that ideology, in this case Christianity, forms a major source of social power, articulated and advanced through 'materialization' (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996), or 'monumentality' (Carver 2001). Variations in the way that communities materialize ideology have therefore been used as a reflection of political organisation and alignment, providing a valuable tool to explore a period for which documentary sources are fragmentary at best.

The key means of 'materializing ideology' highlighted by DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle (monuments, ceremonies, artefacts and writing systems) translate into some of the main forms of archaeological and historical evidence available for the early medieval period (sculpture, churches, burials, hagiography, imported goods and equipment for ceremonies). Although drawing information from a range of disciplines has necessarily resulted in reliance on secondary sources, this approach provides a clear-cut framework for studying disparate sources of evidence as part of a coherent narrative. Overemphasis on textual sources, which is a common trait of medieval archaeology, has been avoided, and documents are viewed rather as another means of materialization. In a number of cases, the evidence supports known historical situations, including, for example, the prominence of the Dál Fiatach, and the expansion of Northumbria into parts of the west. In other cases, however, ideological investment has provided information that is omitted or contradicted by accepted historical narratives: the Irish identity of the Rhinns and Irish settlements on Man, the secular nature of early Whithorn, and the complex interaction between Northumbria and the Machars elite provide notable examples. Likewise, ideas of continuity between Roman and sub-Roman Christianity in this area have been disputed (Thomas 1971). There appears to be a marked dislocation in the expression of Christian identity from the Romanised areas to the western polities, reflecting changes in political strategies and perceived identities.

By considering ideological investment as integral to wider political and economic systems, the distribution of Christian indicators can reveal key differences within societies, in terms of social complexity, ideological alignment and political agendas. Different levels of investment and the sophistication of monuments, reveal distinctions in social organisation, as

demonstrated in the contrasts between the initial case studies of chiefdoms and states used to formulate the ideas of materialization (DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle 1996). This is particularly pertinent for the earlier part of the study, when it is suggested that the fragmented, Phase I Christian landscape resulted from different levels of social complexity and organisation. Whithorn and the Machars had developed into an hierarchical, well-connected polity due to stability throughout the Roman period; in the less stable areas of the Brittonic tribal leaders, society was less able to make strong statements of ideological affiliation, possibly due to a focus of investment in military power. Interpretation of these phenomena has required the contextualisation of the monumental evidence using a wider range of historical and ideological sources; only by using this multidisciplinary approach in line with analysis of the 'materialization of ideology', is it possible to place the results of the study into a meaningful context.

Studying ideological investment as a tool for advancing political agendas has been particularly relevant to periods and areas where monuments were clearly patronised by the elite; the initial investment in monastic sites in Phase II, Northumbrian expansion into the west in Phase III, royally patronised Irish Christianity of Phase IV, and the use of sculpture by the secular elite of Phase IV are all inextricably linked to aspects of political and economic control, and provide insight into the wider social context in which they were created. The specific forms of monumentality that were implemented illuminate the influences that communities were drawing upon, reflecting their unique political connections and alignments. The locations of monuments reveal the landscapes that they wished to dominate. That changes represent the conscious strategies of individual communities has been highlighted by a detailed study of Whithorn, where distinct horizons of reorganisation represent overt shifts in orientation. Interpretation of monumental change can therefore justifiably be couched in political terms, rather than attributed to the more generic dissemination of new ideas, or the result of migrations. The value of Whithorn as a case study has further been demonstrated by its pivotal location, of which has made it a 'weathercock' for the wider shifting alignments of the region.

Not all evidence for Christianity, however, indicates overt 'materialization of ideology', most notably the localised evidence for incised monuments and place-names. Christianity, due to the nature of its own tenets, spreads throughout society via a number of routes, and whilst high status investment is retained in the hands of the elite, the ideology itself can be adopted more widely. These lower investment elements therefore have to be viewed as part of a wider trajectory, permeating from the initial implementation of Christianity, rather than direct investment on the part of a political elite. Each form of evidence has to be considered

in its own terms, to avoid the temptation to create a one-dimensional picture from fragmentary sources of evidence.

Drawing together all of the evidence has required the interpretation of numerous distribution maps. Here, peer polity interaction has provided a basic paradigm; instead of assuming static cultural zones, shared attributes can be discussed as spheres of interaction, resulting from competition, emulation or political alignment. This provides a simple but effective means of interpreting distributions. It has, however, had to be undertaken in broad terms, as the boundaries of the individual polities participating in the interaction were not evident from the outset. On several occasions, more informative evidence has been provided by the contrasts, rather than similarities, between areas; the choice of a community to invest in a different form of monument to their neighbours, or simply not to adopt a particular attribute, can make equally clear, if not more overt statements of political affiliation. Both interaction and non-interaction have therefore played a valuable part in reconstructing a narrative for the area.

Spatially, the study of a maritime area has demonstrated the limitations of purely land-based studies. The changing role of the Irish Sea, from a communication route between many polities (Phase I), towards a unifying highway (Phases II and III) and eventually becoming a boundary dividing Ireland from the remainder of the study area (Phase IV) has demonstrated the need to look beyond modern country boundaries, to take into account maritime zones that may have been of more relevance to early medieval communities. A particular phenomenon throughout has been the unique level of investment on the Isle of Man, clearly reflecting a pivotal location in the early medieval maritime world, and meriting further investigation.

Whilst broad dating parameters, and the large study area, have meant that developments have been discussed in simplified terms, the long term regional trajectories that have been identified provide a framework for future study within this region specifically. It is clear that much work remains to be done on both the scale of individual sites and monuments, and in broader synthesis. The general lack of modern excavation, in particular in Cumbria, may have led to an overemphasis on the lacuna of earlier periods; a site such as Ninekirks Brougham would provide a good candidate for future research. Likewise, throughout the area, many more of the smaller ecclesiastical centres merit research, to balance work that has focussed on the larger, more productive centres. More evidence for dating, and more comprehensive plans of sites, will hopefully refine what is currently a very loose chronology. Whithorn has provided a case study for the information that can be gained in combining broad scale and site specific studies; it is hoped that further research into both individual

sites, and larger landscape areas, will refine or refute some of the conclusions drawn in this thesis.

The approach itself, using the concept of the 'materialization of ideology' has proved a valid one that is transferable to other regions, and to studies on a variety of scales. Christianity, whilst representing a single religion, could be adopted in any number of ways, and forms an underlying theme of early medieval period. By looking at the way that polities manifested Christianity, in terms of the level of surplus invested, cultural or kinship links reflected (language, art; terminology or technology), shared and contrasting zones of monumentality, organisation of religion in the landscape, it is possible to explore the political development and alignment of polities about which very little is documented. Certain caveats exist; monument distributions must be seen as incomplete and deriving from interaction, rather than directly reflecting political boundaries, and a choice *not* to use a particular monument type can be as meaningful as conspicuous investment. If these aspects are taken into account, and the sources treated critically and in their own terms, then evidence for Christianity has still a great deal more to reveal about early medieval society.

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APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION AND DATABASE

The information employed within this thesis is drawn from a wide range of sources, covering a variety of disciplines and a considerable geographical area. As such, the nature of the available data has been highly varied. In order to identify wide scale trends across the study area, it has been necessary to devise a means of recording and interrogation that allows the material to be brought together in a manageable and consistent way. A database was devised which allowed the information to be stored for use in each Chapter of the thesis; this Appendix outlines the structure of this database, which is provided on the CD.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Initial searches of information were undertaken by contacting relevant Sites and Monuments Records, and employing the existing corpora of information (Hamlin 1976, O'Sullivan 1980a, Lowe 1987, Trench-Jellicoe 1987, Bailey and Cramp 1988, Campbell 1991, Craig 1992). On-line searches were undertaken of the Dumfries and Galloway sites using CANMORE, and the Northern Ireland database was searched using the link provided by ADS. These records were then supplemented by consultation of available published material, and accessing some individual SMR files. As a broad-brush approach has been undertaken, it has not been possible to consult paper files for all sites; such an exercise would certainly prove valuable for more focussed landscape studies.

DATABASE: ORGANISATION AND TABLES

The database was designed to be interrogated to provide information for each of the chapters within the thesis. As such, the information required for each section of the thesis was recorded in a series of interlinked tables, which are summarised below (numbered as they exist within the database). Where lists of terms are provided, these represent keywords used within a particular field

BASIC SITE INFORMATION

All of the possible early medieval ecclesiastical sites were initially entered into the database on Table 001, which provides basic geographical and locational information, and cross-references to known Sites and Monuments Record numbers which refer to the site as a whole. Site numbers are arbitrary, and were allocated as and when sites were added to the database, and as such have no real value other than providing a Unique Identifier for each site.

As the database was then used to create maps using ArcView, the co-ordinates had to be split into X and Y, using the British National Grid.

NB Using a conversion mechanism, Irish coordinates were converted to the British National Grid; this is likely to have incurred a small discrepancy in their location, but as this study is essentially broad scale, this was deemed acceptable.

001_SITES	
Site number	Unique site identifier
Site name	General name by which site is known
Parish	Parish
County	Modern region/County: <i>DOWN, ANTRIM, ISLE OF MAN, CUMBRIA, DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY</i>
Grid reference	National Grid Reference (Northern Irish or Great British)
X	X-coordinate
Y	Y-coordinate
SMR ref	Cross reference for the site: SMR No, Gazetteer Nos
No Mons	Number of stone monuments (for site summaries)
Imports	Yes/No
References	Select bibliographic references relating to the site

CHAPTER 4: SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Information for each site is simplified and summarised in a single table (Table 002)

002_SITE SUMMARY	
Site number	Unique site identifier
Burial	early medieval burials identified on the site – <i>YES/NO</i>
Church	early medieval or possible early medieval church on the site – <i>YES/NO</i>
Type of church	<i>STONE/TIMBER/MAPPED</i> (historical drawings but since lost)/ <i>Unknown</i>
Church notes	Any details of the church
Round tower	round tower present or previously recorded at the site – <i>YES/NO</i>
Enclosure	early medieval or possible early medieval enclosure around the site – <i>YES/NO</i>
Evidence	Nature of the enclosure – <i>EARTHWORKS, WALLS, MOUND, MAPPED/AP</i> (seen only in cropmarks or field boundaries), <i>DITCH</i> (excavated)
Dating	Known date, if any, of the enclosure
Early medieval finds	Chance finds or features of early medieval date on the site, including coins, pottery, souterrains
Ecclesiastical finds	Early medieval finds of a strictly ecclesiastical nature, including croziers, mounts
Other structures	Other structures of potential ecclesiastical significance: cells, altars
Site type	Summary of the early medieval activity on the site, on the basis of the evidence (this is not a definitive interpretation): <i>CHURCH, CEMETERY, CHURCH AND CEMETERY, ENCLOSED CHURCH, ENCLOSED CEMETERY, ENCLOSED CHURCH AND CEMETERY, DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE ONLY, MONASTIC ENCLOSURE</i> (of sufficient size, documentary evidence, or detailed layout), <i>PROBABLY EARLY SITE</i> (those with no early remains but suggestive finds), <i>NO EARLY REMAINS</i> (no physical evidence for burial, church, enclosure – includes those with only sculpture)
Later use	Later use of the church for ecclesiastical purposes
Notes	More detailed evidence

EVIDENCE FOR BURIAL

003_BURIAL	
Site number	Unique site identifier (multiple forms of burial at one site are recorded on separate entries)
Type	Type of burial: <i>LINTEL, DUG, TIMBER, BOAT, BARROW (A), BARROW(V)</i> (Viking or Anglian date), <i>CHURCHYARD</i> (furnished churchyard burial), <i>FURNISHED</i> (furnished grave in neither churchyard or barrow), <i>PILLOW SETTING, SHRINE, UNKNOWN</i> (insufficient record to categorise)
Grave goods	Details of any artefacts associated with burials
Quantity	Number of this type of grave; 1, 2, ..., or <i>MULTIPLE</i> if figures are not known
Context of find	Circumstances leading to discovery: <i>ARCHAEOLOGICAL, WORKMEN/GRAVEDIGGING, EROSION, PLOUGHING, REPORTED</i>

003_BURIAL	
Date of find	If known
Sex	General demographic, if known
Age	General age ranges, if known
Date	General date of the burial, if known
Dating evidence	Evidence used to ascribe such a date: <i>TYPE</i> (type of burial), <i>GRAVEGOODS</i>
Notes	Further detail

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR CHURCHES

004_CHURCH (doc)	
Site number	Unique site identifier
Place-name used	Place-name referred to in the documentary source
Documentary source	Source of reference
Date of reference	Date of reference
Terminology	Term used to describe church: <i>DAMLIAC, DAIRTHECH, CLOICHTECH</i>
Reference to	Interpretation/translation: <i>TIMBER CHURCH, STONE CHURCH, ROUND TOWER</i>
Event described	Nature of event to which source refers

CHAPTER 5: CARVED STONE MONUMENTS

Table 005 records the basic information on each monument, before Tables 006, 007, 008 and 009 record more specific attributes

005_SCULPTURE	
Sculpture number	Unique monument number
Site number	Unique site identifier
SMR refs	Cross references to gazetteers, museum, SMR nos.
General date range	Date range ascribed to the monument: <i>Viking Age, Early/Late Manx, Anglian</i>
More specific	More specific date range applied, if any
References	Bibliographic references

006_MONUMENT DETAILS	
Sculpture number	Unique monument number
Monument outline	Shape of the stone: <i>SLAB (specified), BOULDER, ROUGH CROSS, FREE STANDING CROSS, PSEUDO-FREE STANDING CROSS, OTHER, PEBBLE, HOGBACK, PILLAR</i>
Inscribed	Bearing inscriptions? <i>YES/NO</i>

Cross decorated	Bearing a cross (not including in the shape)? <i>YES/NO</i>
Sides decorated	Number of faces of the stone decorated
Techniques	Main technique used: <i>INCISED, SUNK/FALSE RELIEF, RELIEF</i>
General type	Overall classification of the monument: <i>ARCHITECTURAL, FRAGMENT, BULLAUN, CROSS BASE, CROSS SLAB, CROSS INCISED STONE, (PSEUDO) FREE STANDING CROSS, DECORATED CROSS SLAB, HOGBACK, INCISED STONE, RELIEF CARVED FRAGMENT/SLAB, SUNDIAL, ROUGH CROSS, TROUGH, UNDECORATED STONE</i> (see Chapter 5 for details)
School	Any school of sculpture to which the stone has been assigned

007_INSCRIPTIONS	
Sculpture number	Unique monument number
Handley no	Number relating to Handley's inscription types (see Chapter 5; 1-4 non-runic, 5-8 runic)
Script	Type of script: <i>OGAM, AS CAPS, CAPS (capitals), RUNEA (Anglian runes), RUNEN (Norse runes), BOOKHAND, HU (Half Uncial)</i>
Language	Language: <i>LATIN, IRISH, GOIDELIC, OLD ENGLISH, SCANDINAVIAN</i>
Inscription	Text of the inscription
Translation	Translation (if available)

008_PROVENANCE	
Sculpture number	Unique monument number
Date of earliest record	Date at which the monument was first recorded
Date of find	Date when the discovery was made
Context of find	Circumstances leading to discovery: <i>UNKNOWN, PLOUGHED, OBSERVED (noticed in an existing location), EXCAVATION (groundworks, gravedigging), DEMOLITION/REPAIR, ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION</i>
Earliest recorded location	Situation in which the sculpture was first found (free description)
Use of stone	General use of the stone when discovered: <i>UNKNOWN, STANDING/RECUMBENT (i.e. in use as a monument), ROCK CARVING, REUSED, LOOSE, BELOW GROUND</i>
Dating evidence	Dating evidence (if any) provided by the context of the find
In situ	<i>In situ</i> at time of discovery <i>YES/NO</i>
Still in situ?	<i>YES/NO</i>
Context in churchyard	Relationship to ecclesiastical site, if relevant: <i>CHURCH BUILDING, CHURCHYARD, GENERAL VICINITY, UNKNOWN</i>
Burial	Associated with burials? <i>YES/NO</i>
Suggested provenance	Suggested provenance, if differing from the site of discovery
Current location	Current location of the monument

009_GEOLOGY	
Sculpture number	Unique monument number
Geology	General geology
Geology specific	Specific geological description
Local	Local (if known): <i>YES/NO</i>

CHAPTER 6: PLACE-NAMES

Due to the uncertain nature of linking place-names with specific locations, the information on place-names was recorded largely in isolation, although relatively secure associations between specific names and located sites were noted for cross-referencing purposes.

010_PLACE-NAMES	
Site number	For limited cross referencing with known sites
Place-name	Place-name
Parish	Parish
County	County
Name of	Subject of name currently: <i>PARISH, DISTRICT, HOUSE, CASTLE, FARM, HAMLET, VILLAGE, SETTLEMENT, CHURCH, CHAPEL, INTACK, TREEN, QUARTERLAND, ISLAND, TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURE, FIELD NAME</i>
Main element	Main place-name element relevant to the study: <i>BAILE, ANNAT, KIL/CILL/KEEILL, KIRKJA, BY, BOTL, BURH, DOMNACH, ECCLES, HAM, ING(A)HAM, ING(A)TUN, SLIABH</i>
Other element	Any other identifiable elements
Type of kirk name	Formation of the kirk names: -kirk, kirk-, Kirkby, Kirkby+
Earlier versions of the place-name	Any other recorded forms
Date of reference	Date of the earliest known reference
Source	Source of information
Notes	Any significant notes on the name
NGR	National Grid reference
X	X coordinate
Y	Y coordinate

CHAPTER 7: IMPORTS AND CRAFTWORKING

011_IMPORT AND CRAFTWORKING	
Site number	Unique site number
Mediterranean	Mediterranean imports: <i>YES/NO</i>

011_IMPORT AND CRAFTWORKING	
Med Qty	Quantity of Mediterranean vessels
D	D Ware: <i>YES/NO</i>
D Qty	Quantity of D ware vessels
Glass	Imported glass: <i>YES/NO</i>
Glass Qty	Quantity of glass vessels
E	E Ware: <i>YES/NO</i>
E Qty	Quantity of E ware vessels

012_IMPORT – sherds/vessels	
Site number	Unique site number
E Ware sherds	Quantity of E ware sherds
E Ware vessels	Quantity of E ware vessels
Glass sherds	Quantity of glass sherds
Glass vessels	Quantity of glass vessels

013_IMPORT – vessel types	
Site number	Unique site number
Types of vessel	E1, E2, E4 etc.

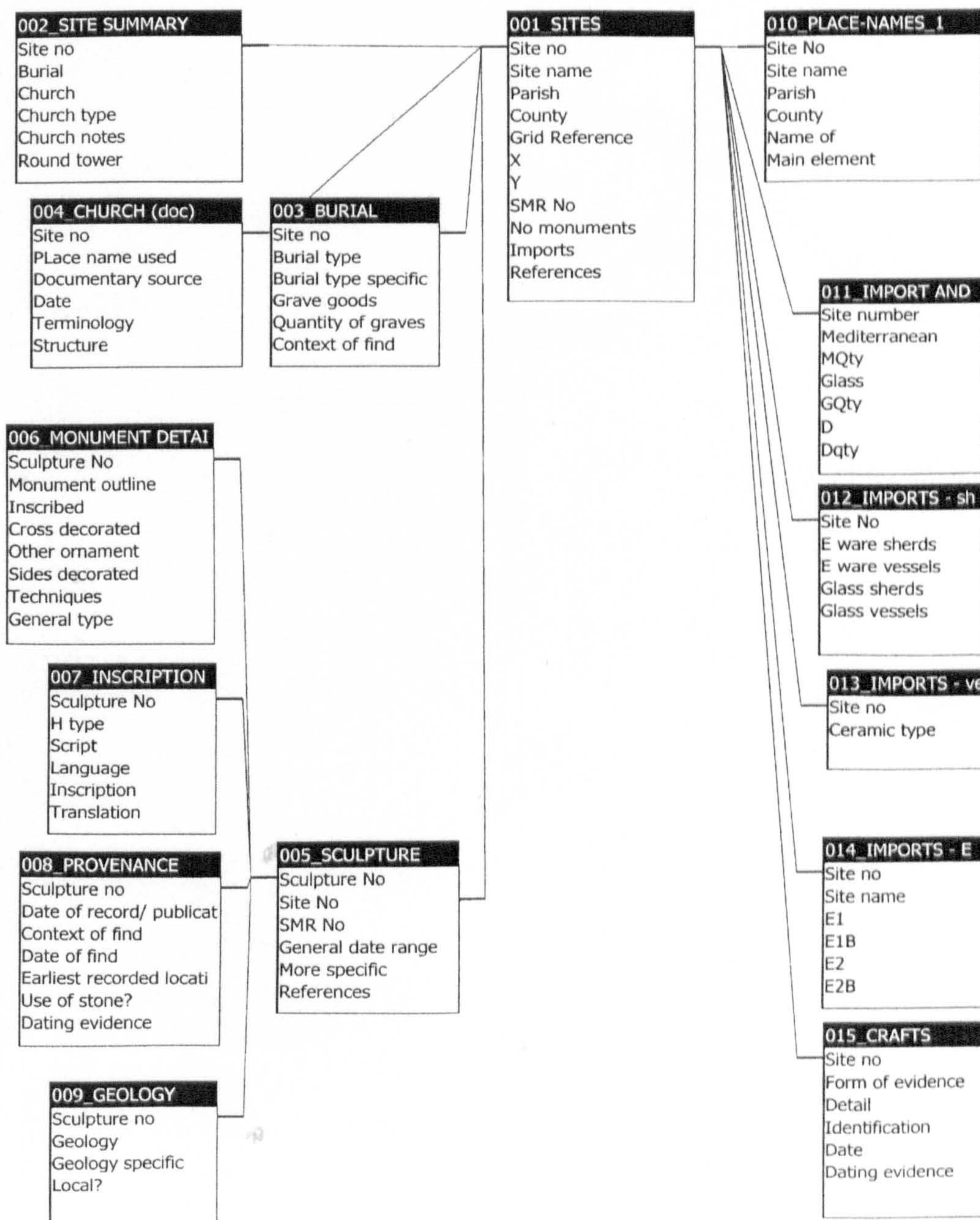
013_IMPORT – E Ware quantities	
Site number	Unique site number
E1	Quantity of E1 vessels
E1B	Quantity of E1B vessels
E2	Quantity of E2 vessels
E2B	Quantity of E2B vessels
E3	Quantity of E3 vessels
E4	Quantity of E4 vessels
E4B	Quantity of E4B vessels
E5	Quantity of E5 vessels
E6	Quantity of E6 vessels
E7	Quantity of E7 vessels
E?	Quantity of E? vessels

014_CRAFTWORKING	
Site number	Unique site number
Evidence for craftworking	Evidence for craftworking, whether glass- or metalworking debris, artefacts, tools or scrap material

Detail	Detailed description of finds
Identification	Type of activity: <i>METALWORKING, GLASS WORKING, BONEWORKING</i>
Date	Date of the material, if known
Dating evidence	Evidence for date: <i>STRATIGRAPHY, FINDS, C14, ARTISTIC STYLE</i>

STRUCTURE OF THE DATABASE

The unique identifiers (site numbers, sculpture numbers) provide a means to link the tables together, so that all of the data can be interrogated, and the results mapped (see below).



USING THE DATABASE

The complete Access database is to be found on the enclosed CD. Once opened in Microsoft Access, a number of forms are presented, which display all of the information for specific sites or monuments, and provide a means of browsing data, or looking up specific sites. These can be closed, however, so that the individual tables outlined above can be opened, and specific queries created.



APPENDIX B

THE CREATION OF CHRISTIAN LANDSCAPES AROUND THE NORTHERN IRISH SEA

REGIONAL NARRATIVES

The individual forms of evidence – documents, churches, burial, sculpture, place-names, imports and craftworking, with the material from the site of Whithorn, have been used to define four distinct phases of ideological investment within the northern Irish Sea area.

The following accounts present descriptive narratives of the trajectories of ideological investment on a region-by-region basis, which, in conjunction with the database (Appendix A), provides more detailed information on the material from individual parts of the study area. The four areas that are considered: Counties Down and Antrim, Cumbria, the Isle of Man and Dumfries and Galloway, are modern entities, and are employed here as a convenient means of dividing the landscape. As this thesis demonstrates, however, modern boundaries would have had little significance in the early medieval period, and these regional narratives are presented here to provide more detailed contextual information for the patterns that are drawn together and interpreted in Chapter 9. Each trajectory provides an informative case study in its own right, demonstrating the variety of forms of investment within the study area, and providing a starting point for future study.

Each region is described phase-by-phase, and the available evidence for landscape context is provided. The character of the early medieval landscape is difficult to study in any detail, as there is only limited evidence for natural environment, settlement patterns or transport networks. However, by considering the basic shape of the land, and drawing together the available archaeological and environmental evidence, it is possible to discuss the wider landscape into which Christianity was introduced. A generalised picture can be created of known settlement types, the general economic basis of the area, and the routeways through it (Warner 1976; Ordnance Survey 1994; Comber 2001).

The lack of precise information concerning the average coverage and level of forestation during the early medieval period has meant that computer-aided analysis of viewsheds and

visibility has not been attempted. Rather, the approach has been to observe very general traits; situation with respect to agricultural resources (using broad landscape trends), proximity to known settlements and communication routes (using maps), intervisibility with other sites and prominence of location (through visits and topographic data), and position in relation to pre-existing monuments (using maps and fieldwork).

APPENDIX B PART I: COUNTY DOWN AND COUNTY ANTRIM

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The early medieval Irish landscape is dominated by ring-forts - the circular, stone or earth-built structures that are widely considered to have been the settlements of the land-holding classes (Stout 2000, 92). Though a wide date range has been demonstrated for these sites, excavation and radiocarbon dating has indicated that the majority were in use between the seventh and ninth centuries (Stout 2000, 92). Up to 45,000 examples are known from Ireland, and a high proportion of dated examples are found in Ulster (Stout 2000, 92).

The distribution of ringforts is fairly ubiquitous, although regional variations do occur; within the study area, for example, there are notably fewer sites on the Lecale peninsula (Aalen, Whelan and Stout 1997, 280). The majority of sites occupy gently sloping land; this would have provided access to upland pasture, avoided the waterlogged soils of valley bottoms, and allowed a wide field of view (Aalen, Whelan and Stout 1997, 45-7). Most would have enclosed single farmsteads involved in a pastoral economy (Proudfoot 1961); some arable activity is attested by small field systems identified archaeologically adjacent to forts, and indirectly by environmental remains (McCormick 2000, 38). More upland settlements of early medieval date have also been identified, at sites such as Ballyutuog, County Antrim; the upland plateau of this county would have been exploited for pasture and peat (Williams 1984).

Work by Stout (1997; 2000, 95-6) has demonstrated that different classes of fort (univallate or multivallate; large or small) appear to represent different levels of influence and status, and that their spatial relationships reflect the organisation of a social or political hierarchy within the landscape. In many cases, smaller sites focus around larger forts, suggesting a system of territorial overlordship (Stout 2000, 97-99; Aalen, Whelan and Stout 1997, 45-7). Larger, multivallate forts would have occupied the upper end of this scale. Historical documents suggest that trivallate defences are likely to represent royal settlements (Warner 1976, 59; Hill 2001, 30), and the strategic or defensive location of other sites (promontory

forts, outcrop forts, and crannogs) may also indicate centres of royal occupation (Warner 1988, 50). It is likely that the hill forts at Scrabo Hill and Downpatrick would have been part of this upper stratum of sites. The site at Dunseverick is correlated with the *Dún Sobairche* of the Dál Riata (Warner 1988, 60), and *Ráith Mór*, recorded as the capital of the *Dal nAraide*, has been associated with an excavated ringfort in Rathmore townland (Warner 1988, 59). Tara fort, on the Ards peninsula, has not been explored archaeologically, but in terms of location and form it has been identified as a possible early medieval fort (Hamlin 1997, 53).

County Down and County Antrim: PHASE I

The earliest evidence for Christian activity comprises the *domnach* place-names and ogam inscribed stones that are widely dispersed throughout this area (no Mediterranean ceramic was identified from these counties)(figure B1). Interpretation of this evidence is problematic; possible fifth-century *domnach* names are not found in association with contemporary remains, and the ogam inscriptions at Carncome were found *ex situ*, reused within a souterrain. As such, their location and significance can only be considered in broad terms.

Although contemporary settlement evidence is scarce, a coincidence of *domnach* names, and place-names containing the element *mag* (plain), seems to indicate the establishment of ecclesiastical centres in areas of population. Donaghmore derives from *Domnach Mór*, or 'great church'. The *Litany of the Irish Saints* remembers seven bishops of *Domnach Mór Maigi Coba*, describing the 'church of the plain of the Uí Echach Coba', one of the main Ulster dynasties during the early medieval period (Hamlin 1997, 49).

The centrality of *domnach* sites is further demonstrated by their landscape setting. Comber (*Domnach Combair*) and Donaghdee occupy coastal locations, providing access to Strangford Lough and the Irish Sea respectively. Donaghdee was until modern times the major crossing point to Portpatrick on the Rhinns (Stell 1986, 17-18). Donaghcloney and Donaghmore lie further inland, in major river valleys; Donaghcloney is situated on the River Lagan, whilst Donaghmore lies close to the River Bann. These valleys would have been major transport routes through the lowlands of County Down, and the postulated roads through the area link these sites with the north and south, whilst Donaghcloney is also close to a crossroad with the road leading to Armagh. These would have been nodal points within transport networks, and stress the integration of ecclesiastical sites into a populated landscape; these were not sites established on the margins of society. The potentially

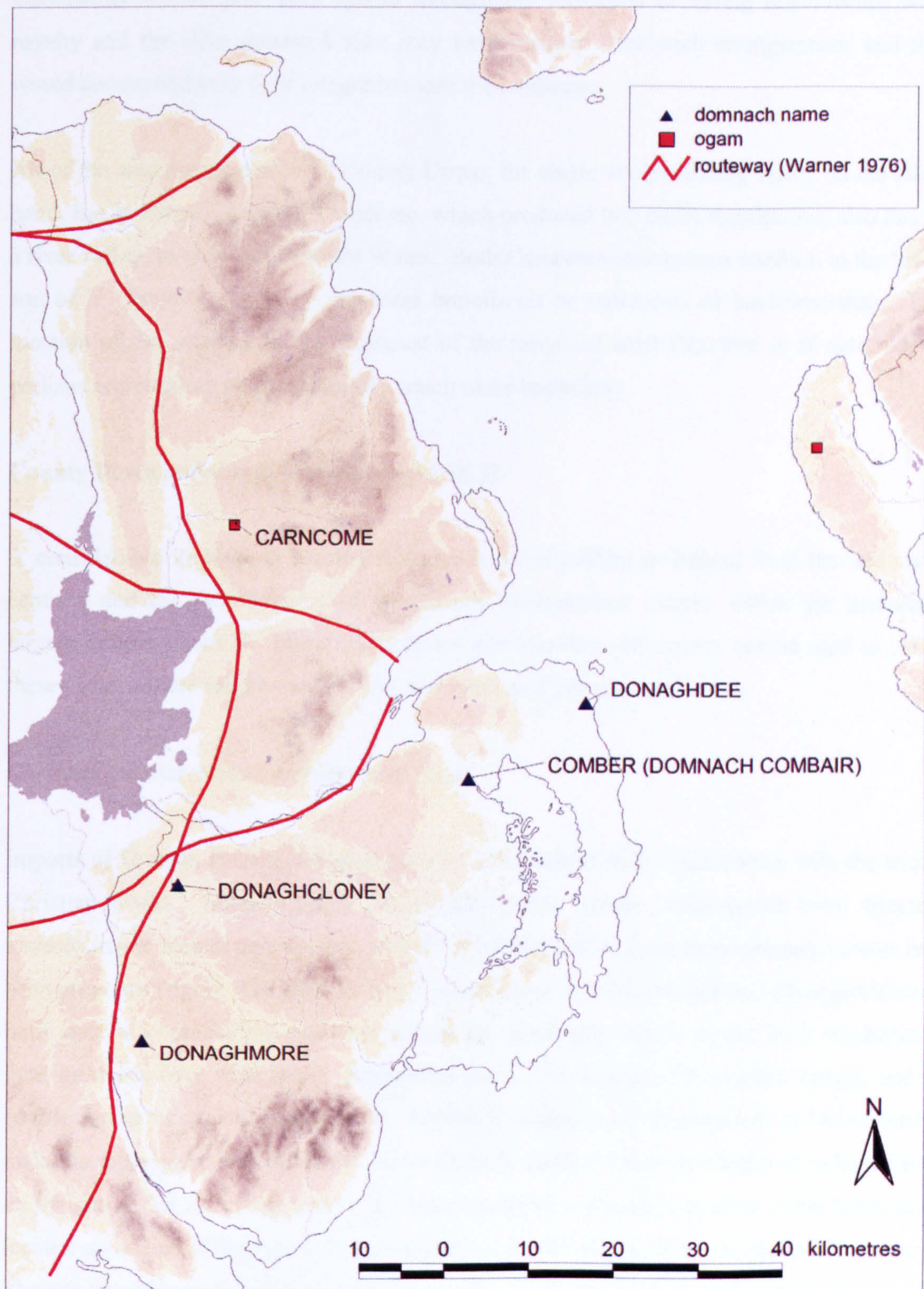


Figure B1: County Down and County Antrim: PHASE I

monastic nature of *domnach* sites has been overemphasised; although some became centres of ecclesiastical settlement at a later date, it is suggested that these sites would originally have been established as ecclesiastical foci, possibly episcopal sees, linked to existing centres of secular power. Patrick's writings, though geographically unlocated, suggest that

Christianity would have been spread through the formation of strong relationships with royalty and the elite; *domnach* sites may have resulted from such arrangements, and this would correspond with their integration into the landscape.

All of the sites mentioned lie in County Down; the single site producing ogam, on the other hand, lies in County Antrim. Carncome, which produced two ogam inscriptions, also lies in a river valley, to the south of Kells Water. Both Carncome inscriptions conform to the 'of X son of Y' formula, argued to represent boundaries or statements of landownership. The location of this site just to the southeast of the townland limit therefore is of note, which perhaps representing perpetuation of a much older boundary.

County Down and County Antrim: PHASE II

A considerable increase in ideological investment is evident in Ireland from the late sixth century, and the establishment of specifically ecclesiastical centres within the landscape largely defines Phase II. Imported ceramics and known royal centres can be used to place these ecclesiastical centres into a wider economic and political landscape.

Christian, secular centres and imported goods

Imports of D-ware, E-ware and glass reflect interaction of Irish communities with the wider Christian world. Within County Down and County Antrim, these goods were directed towards major secular centres, and a model of redistribution from these primary centres has been proposed (figure B2). The 'primary' import centres at Scrabo Hill and Downpatrick are both sited at commanding positions within the landscape, which would have emphasised their influence over wide areas. Scrabo dominates the skyline of Strangford Lough, and is visible for miles around (figure B3). Although centuries of development at Downpatrick make its topography less clear, the centre of early medieval activity (believed to have been on the site of the cathedral) would also have occupied a dramatic location in the landscape, located on a spur of high ground, surrounded by the lower, flat lands of the Quoile estuary. The site would have been more coastal during the early medieval period, with three quarters of its base 'lapped by the tide' (figure A4; McErlean 2002, 59), and as such would have controlled an important point of access from the sea. Identification of these power centres has depended on the discovery of E ware. Other forts which may have been significant during this period can be suggested on the grounds of form, or documentary evidence.

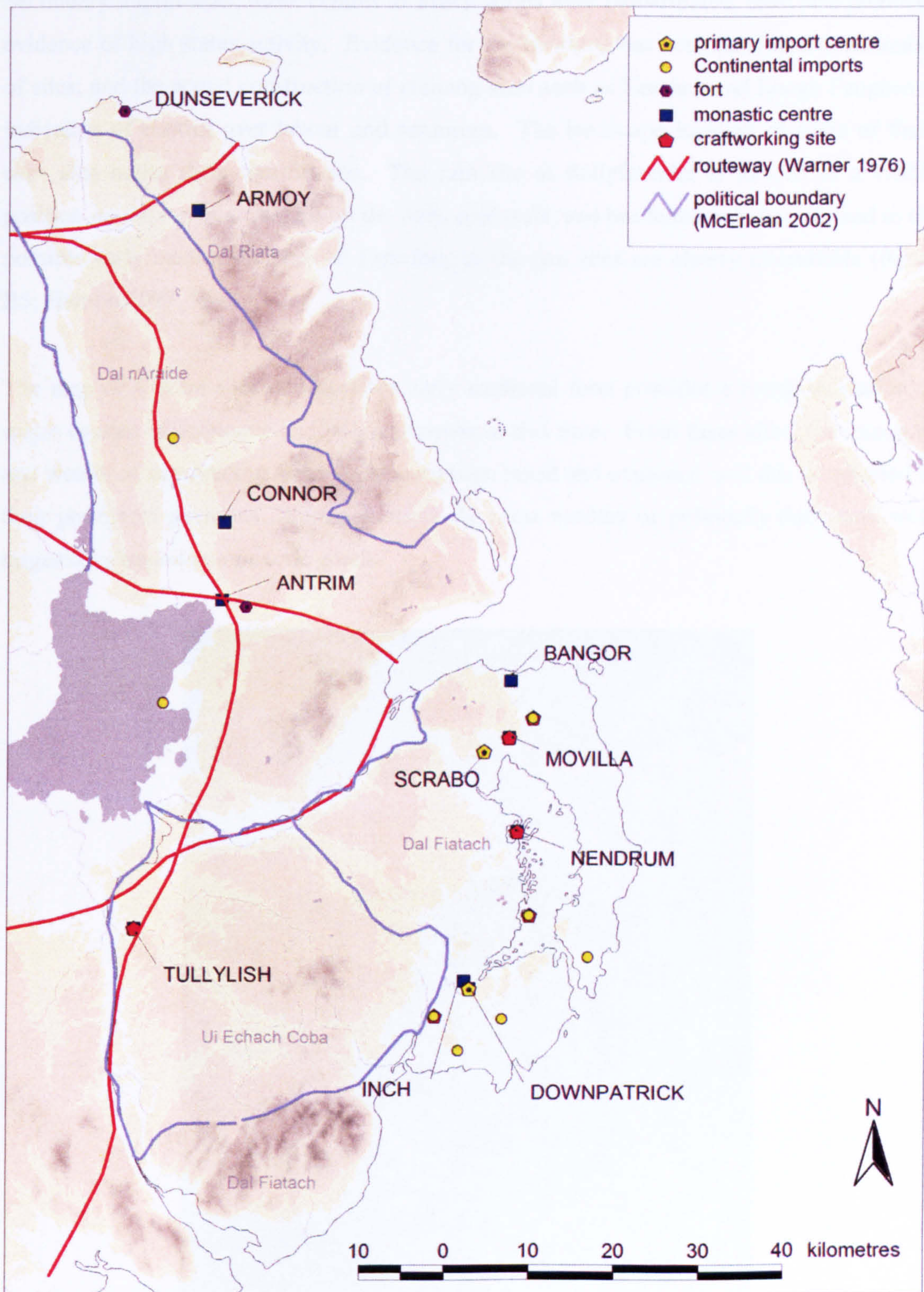


Figure B2: County Down and County Antrim: PHASE II

Secondary import sites, those centres to which goods were redistributed, have also produced evidence of high status activity. Evidence for craftworking has been produced at a number of sites, and the actual construction of crannog sites such as Teeshan and Lough Faughan is indicative of control over labour and resources. The landscape location of some of these sites also belies their significance. The rath site at Ballyfounder is located in a visible position on the top of a drumlin on the Ards peninsula, and has tentatively been linked to the possible early medieval centre of Tara fort, as the two sites are clearly intervisible (figure B5; Hamlin 1997, 53).

The map of E ware sites and possible early medieval forts provides a rough indication of major centres of economic and political power at this time. From these sites, the resources and wealth of surrounding areas could have been taxed and exploited, and this is reflected in their prominent positions. Some, possibly the most wealthy or politically dominant, were targeted by importers of exotic goods.



Figure B3: Scrabo Hill from the east, across the top of Strangford Lough



Figure B4: Downpatrick, viewed from Inch Abbey



Figure B5: Tara fort (right foreground) and Ballyfounder rath (left background)

Establishment of ecclesiastical centres

From the latter part of the sixth century, documentary sources record the establishment of a number of ecclesiastical communities within this area. This investment appears to have been focussed to a large degree around Strangford Lough, and consideration of their physical relationship to import centres demonstrates the close relationship between ecclesiastical

activity and centres of secular power. A sixth-century date for many sites relies primarily on the annalistic evidence and later sources. Movilla is recorded as having been founded by the British saint *Uinniau*, prior to his death in AD 579 (Ivens 1984, 71). Bangor is well documented from an early period, thought to have been founded by Comgall between AD 555 and 559 (Hamlin 1997, 50-1), whilst Connor and Nendrum are also thought to have been established by the mid-sixth century. Though not always considered accurate, recent work on the annals has been used to suggest that these records provide reasonably reliable dates for foundations (McCarthy and Croínin 1987-8); a sixth-century radiocarbon date from the outer cashel at Nendrum would further support this assertion (Hamlin 1997, 49).

In terms of the impact of Christianity on the landscape, it becomes apparent that ideological investment was beginning to show a major presence within specific areas, as ecclesiastical centres were established in close relation to secular power centres. As in England, ecclesiastical centres were established close to, but not directly on, royal centres (Blair 1992, 229). It is possible, due to reasonable levels of documentation available for early medieval Ireland, to place this activity within a political context. The Dál Fiatach, whose territory encompasses Strangford Lough, are recorded as the dominant dynasty during much of the early medieval period, based at Downpatrick. According to historical documents, they provided some 80% of the overkings of the Ulaid from the sixth to the twelfth century (McErlean 2002, 57-8). The strong correlation of import centres with the postulated territory of the Dál Fiatach has been noted (Campbell 1991, 234); it seems that the dynasty would have strengthened status and asserted a Christianity identity both through interaction with Continental polities, and also in the establishment of Christian foci within the landscape. Though annals record the foundation of ecclesiastical centres by saints, it is unlikely that these sites would have been established without the patronage of the Dál Fiatach elite.

The location of these sites reflects a close relationship with the political centres of the area, and, far from reflecting the eremitic ideal of the hagiographical sources, these would have occupied central points within the landscape. Nendrum occupies one of the more favoured monastic locations, situated on an island that would have been accessible on foot (Morris 1989, 110). Sites of this type offer naturally defined areas for ecclesiastical activity, and as such are clearly separated from the rest of society. At the same time, however, the location of Nendrum would have placed it in an ideal position for the exploitation of maritime resources, and access to communication routes. The community is likely to have relied on secular support to maintain their position; the sight of Scrabo Hill on the skyline would have been a constant reminder of the dominance of the elite of the area (figure B6).



Figure B6: Scrabo Hill from the inner cashel at Nendrum

Though set back from the shore, the ridge-top site at Movilla also has a maritime aspect (figure B7), with views afforded over Strangford Lough towards Nendrum, and to Scrabo Hill (figure B8). The place-name *Mag Bile*, 'plain of the [oak] tree', has been used to suggest that there may have been a sacred tree on the site, a known phenomenon during the pre-Christian period (Lucas 1963). The granting of a pre-Christian ritual site for the foundation of a Christian community was relatively common; Armagh, for example, was associated with an Iron Age enclosure with pre-existing ritual associations (Aitchison 1994, 293). Movilla may have been established on land that was already of ideological significance to surrounding populations. This would have strengthened the perception of these ecclesiastical sites as centres of power and influence (Bitel 1990, 44). The close relationship between possible sacred sites and secular centres has many parallels, for example at Cladh a'Bhile and A'Chrannog in western Scotland (Gondek 2003, 103), or at Clogher (Warner 1973).



Figure B7: Movilla from Scrabo Hill (site of monastery marked)



Figure B8: Scrabo Hill from Movilla

Bangor, located on the northern coast of County Down, is thought to have been associated with the neighbouring subkingdom of the Dal nAraide, from whom their founder, Comgall, descended. Though located less than 7km from Movilla, Bangor occupies a quite separate landscape, divided from areas further south by an area of higher ground. Situated in a coastal location, at the mouth of a wide valley, the community is known to have had its own sheltered harbour of *Inber Beg* (Bitel 1990, 38), which would have been a valuable asset, and provided maritime links with western Britain. The documented travels of Comgall and Columbanus attest to continuing interaction with areas further afield. Within Ireland, the site is known to have had a more northern outlook, with documented links with the churches at Antrim and Camus, just south of Coleraine (*Cammas Comgail*) (Hamlin 1997, 50).

The erection of churches on boundaries has been observed in a number of areas, (for example in County Clare; Mytum 1982, 353), and can be related to the correlation between routeways, boundaries and meeting places (Ó Riain 1972-4). It is possible that Bangor was established on the edge of Dál Fiatach territory for dynastic reasons. The establishment of an ecclesiastical site would have allowed land to be granted in a politically marginal location, and demonstrates the use of the church to control areas of political weakness (Nieke and Duncan 1988, 11). In this way, church sites could provide a 'buffer zone' between political territories, providing a direct link between secular and ecclesiastical power (Mytum 1982, 354).

The monastic centre of Connor, located in the east-west valley of Kells Water, just 200m from a stream marking the townland boundary, also appears also to have had strong royal connections. The Tripartite *Vita* records the founder of Connor, Mac Nisse, as a disciple of Bishop Olcán of Armoy (Charles Edwards 2000, 59), and annals record the burial of King Diarmuit mac Cerbaill (minus his head) at the site, following his death at the hands of the king of Dal nAraide in AD 565 (AU 565.1; Charles-Edwards 2000, 63, 295). Both monasteries and ogam inscriptions are suggested to have been situated at liminal locations, to demarcate land or boundaries. The coincidence of the two may suggest that Kells Water represented a significant boundary, and so a focus of investment, at this time.

Continued endowment of land and goods allowed these centres, and their ecclesiastical leaders, to become more independent. Evidence for craftworking at many sites exhibits continued patronage, but may also represent control of surplus. Doherty (1980, 81; 1982, 302-3) suggests that monasteries would have been the sites of the *oenach*, or markets, by the eighth century, demonstrating an important economic role within society.

The economic development of the church is also potentially evident in settlement patterns. The main areas of ecclesiastical activity within County Down (notably the region surrounding Movilla and Scrabo, and the Lecale peninsula) are noted to be those most suited for arable farming (McCormick 1997, 35-6). There are notable gaps in the distribution of ring-forts in these regions; McCormick tentatively suggests that this can be attributed to continued control of the land by the church. Lecale, in particular, was predominantly church-lands in to the Anglo-Norman period, and this may reflect a hold gained during the first few centuries of ecclesiastical activity in these regions. Charles-Edwards had previously observed that the church was unlikely to impact settlement patterns until large areas of territory had been acquired; the increase in influence and landholding by the seventh century may have been fossilised in settlement patterns (Charles-Edwards 1984).

County Down and County Antrim: PHASE III

Investment in major ecclesiastical centres was not confined to the sixth and seventh centuries, but continued into the eighth century. Sites such as Downpatrick, Inch, Tullylish, Armoy and Maghera are dated by archaeological material and documents to the early medieval period, and ecclesiastical communities may have been founded at these sites during the seventh or eighth centuries. As the power of the Dál Fiatach shifted northwards, it is suggested that the establishment of a monastic community at Downpatrick itself would have been a means for the leading dynasty to maintain control in the south (Hamlin 1997, 52). Inch, as its place-name suggests, occupies a site that would have been an island during the early medieval period, and would have been clearly visible from the site at Downpatrick just a short distance away (figure B9). The large enclosure at Tullylish, located in the Bann valley, was established by at least the seventh century, to enclose an ecclesiastical establishment (Ivens 1987). Armoy, situated on an eminent spur within the landscape, has produced no securely datable remains; however, the church is recorded by early sources to be the seat of the bishop of Dál Riata (Charles-Edwards 2000, 59). Inscriptions such as that at Movilla attest to continued ecclesiastical activity at the pre-existing sites.



Figure B9: Inch from Downpatrick: the monastic site is situated at the foot of the hill

PHASE II to PHASE IV: The establishment of local Christian centres

Etchingam (1999, 457) has suggested that a distinction should be drawn between major ecclesiastical centres, which would have been foci for occupation and craftworking as well as religious devotion, and those sites that would have been of more local significance. Documentary sources indicate that major ecclesiastical settlements would have been at the top of a wider hierarchy of lesser sites, responsible for pastoral care across wider territories. The Irish material, in particular, suggests a proliferation of lesser churches in the landscape by the eighth century, serving communities on a local level (Sharpe 1992, 86-7). Control of the church could have been in a range of hands: some churches would have been founded by monastic centres, some by local landowners, some by royalty, and so this need not represent a single, homogenous phenomenon. What is being signalled is the 'Christianisation' of the population, as communities moved towards active participation in Christianity. Interment in Christian burial grounds, in particular, would have been a means of demonstrating this change, and signalling a new Christian identity.

Unfortunately, no church structures dating to Phase II survive; a post-built predecessor of the church at Derry has been tentatively ascribed an eighth century date, but represents the only example of a church of such early date (Waterman 1967). The best evidence for smaller, local ecclesiastical sites are the simple stone monuments (cross-incised stones, sunken/false relief crosses, roughly shaped crosses, bullaun stones), *cill* place-names and burials

(generally represented by lintel graves). All of these elements are found at major ecclesiastical centres; Nendrum, for example, has produced a significant number of cross-incised stones, and a number of lintel graves. However, the distribution of these attributes is much more widespread, and the lower levels of investment involved suggest that they represent foundations of local significance (figure B10). This could encompass a range of sites, from isolated monuments in the landscape, enclosed cemeteries, or small church complexes.

Localised investment suggests that Christianity gradually became fully integrated into society. A move from familial to ecclesiastical burial grounds would seem to strongly indicate the creation and signalling of a wider Christian identity (Petts 2002a, 44). Charles-Edwards (1984, 137) notes that the majority of these churches or burial grounds would have represented 'small scale economic enterprises, in effect the land of one branch of a not very wealthy family dedicated to the support of the church held by that branch'. Local burial sites and churches would have brought benefits of freedom from royal dues, and the ability to pay taxes within ones own family (Charles Edwards 1984, 137). This would represent the alignment of lower tiers of society with the ideological affiliations of the elite, recognising Christianity as a significant source of power at this time.

Sites represented by cross-incised stones, lintel graves, or *cill* names occupy a wider range of landscape locations and frequently occur near to routeways. This corresponds with what is known of general patterns of settlement at this time. An overview of the heights AOD of these sites provides a broad indication of their location with respect to topography (figure B11). The majority of sites are located between 0 and 130m AOD; of ecclesiastical centres through Ireland as a whole, Swan (1983, 273) and Hurley (1982, 307) have noted that few occur above 120m AOD, and none above 170m AOD. The exception, represented by Dunteige (at 270m AOD), is not likely to have been a church site. The cross-incised stone, of uncertain date, is situated on high land and has no associated Christian remains (figure B12). It is possible that this represents the marking of a boundary, or upland route; the situation in close proximity to a chambered cairn demonstrates the significance of this landscape as an arena for monumentality.

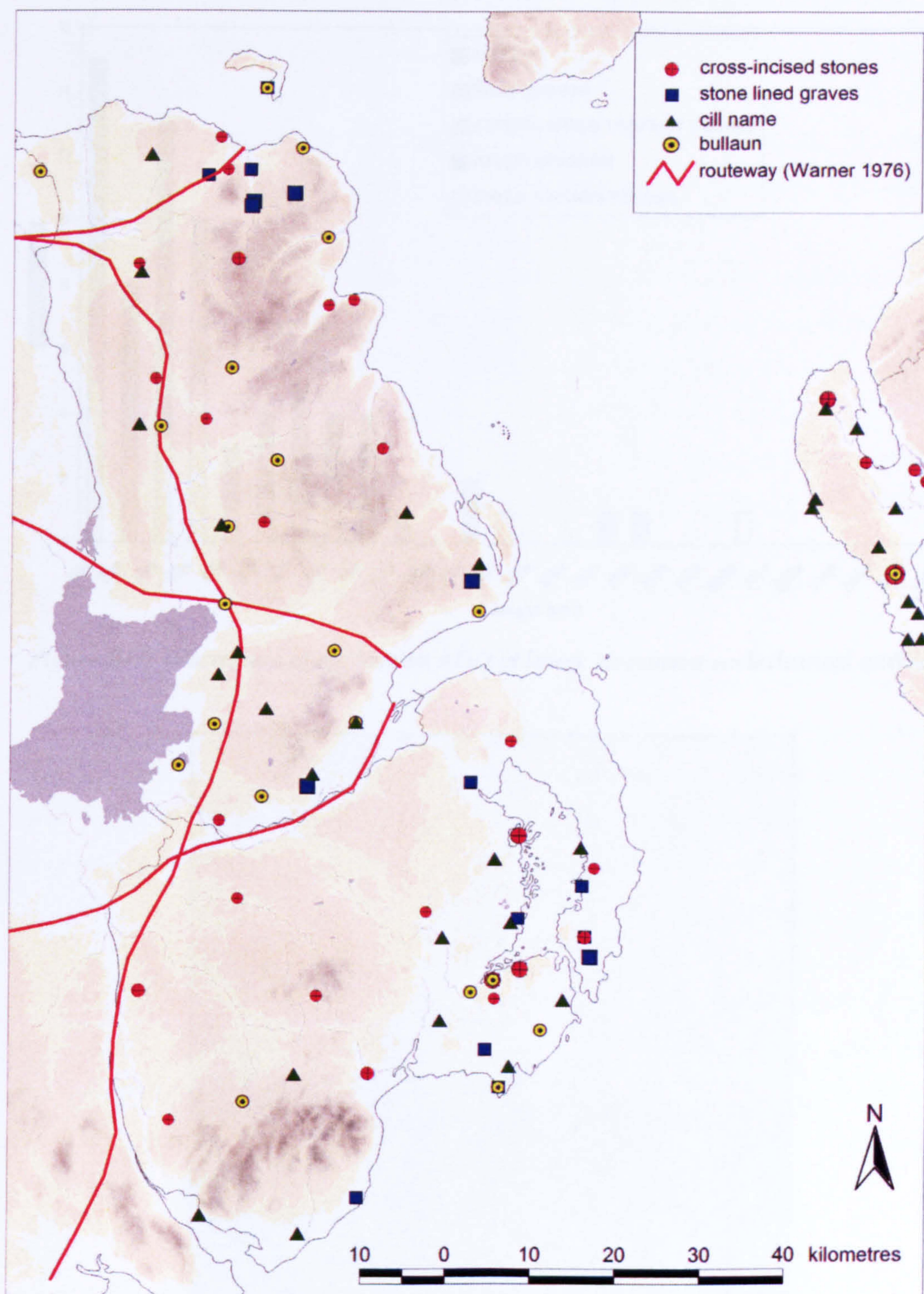


Figure B10: County Down and County Antrim: Phase II to IV

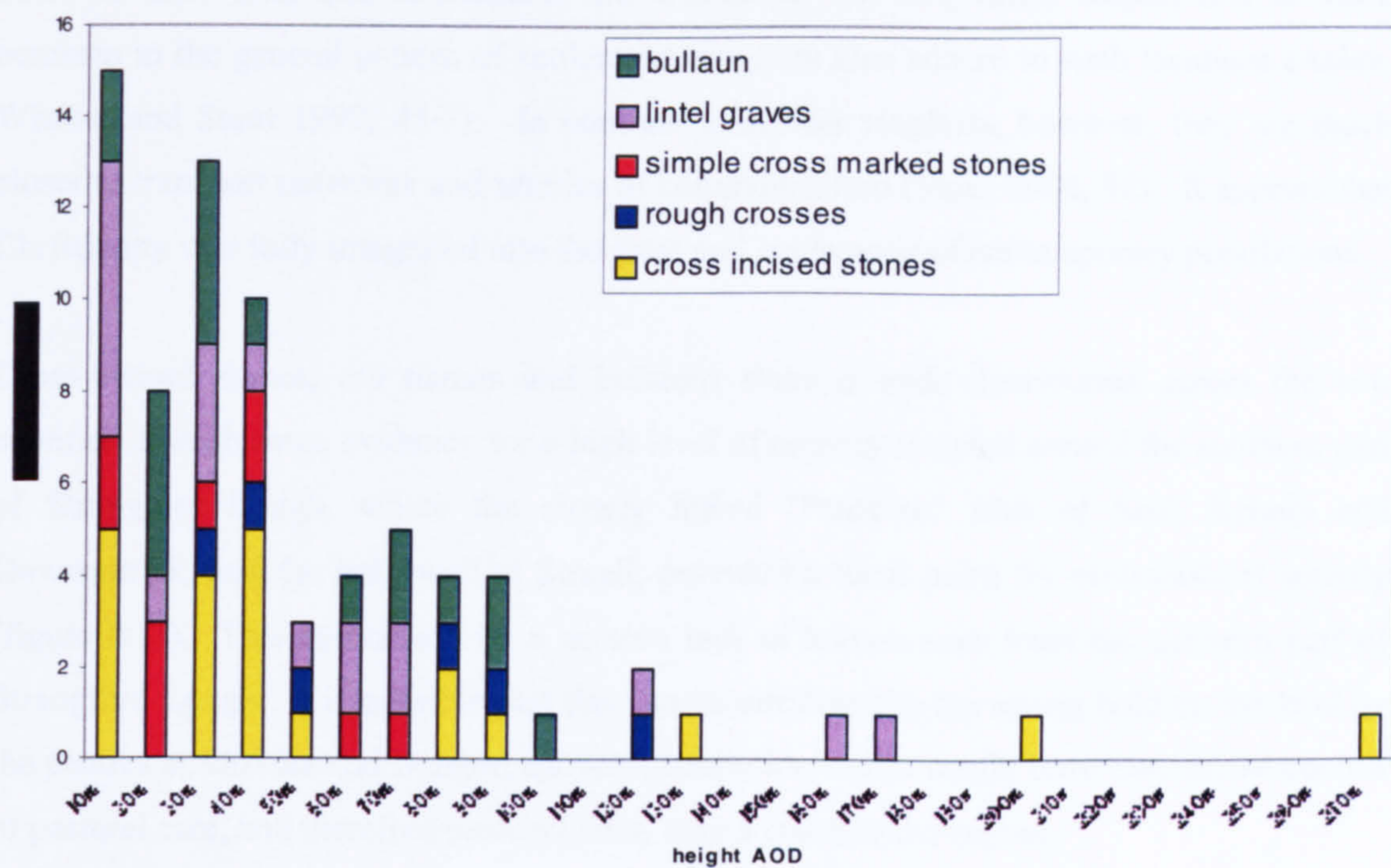


Figure B11: Illustration of the heights AOD of lower investment ecclesiastical attributes



Figure B12: Cross-incised stone at Dunteige, with chambered tomb

Most of these sites and monuments are located on hill and valley slopes, and as such, conform to the general pattern of settlement; ringforts also adhere to such locations (Aalen, Whelan and Stout 1997, 45-7). In contrast to secular ringforts, however, they are much closer to transport networks and arteries of communication (Stout 2000, 92). It appears that Christianity was fully integrated into the lives and landscapes of contemporary populations.

Cross-incised stones, *cill* names and bullauns share a wide distribution across the two counties, though some evidence for a high level of activity is noted around the southern part of Strangford Lough, where the closely linked 'Patrician' sites of Saul, Raholp and Downpatrick, and the holy well at Struell, provided a focal point for ecclesiastical activity (figure B13). This contrasts with a notable lack of known sites from the northern part of Strangford Lough. It is possible that this can be attributed to the strong hold on the land by the centres at Movilla and Bangor, as major landholders who would have maintained control of pastoral care, and therefore pastoral dues, over a much wider region.

In contrast, the distribution of slightly more complex stone monuments (rough crosses, sunken/false relief crosses and undecorated, relief carved crosses), and lintel graves is more limited, and two notable concentrations appear, around Strangford Lough and the northern tip of County Antrim. The focus of investment around Strangford Lough is unsurprising, given the high levels of ecclesiastical activity in preceding and contemporary periods. The Patrician hagiography of the seventh and eighth centuries focuses on many of these sites, from the major centre at Downpatrick to the lesser sites at Raholp and Saul. Lintel graves and cross marked stones have been discovered at both of these locations, which occupy sites of local prominence (figure B14). Other sites at which evidence for lintel graves has been recovered occur in coastal locations; those at Corporation and Lisban overlook the waters of Strangford Lough, and would have been highly visible within this maritime zone (figure B15).

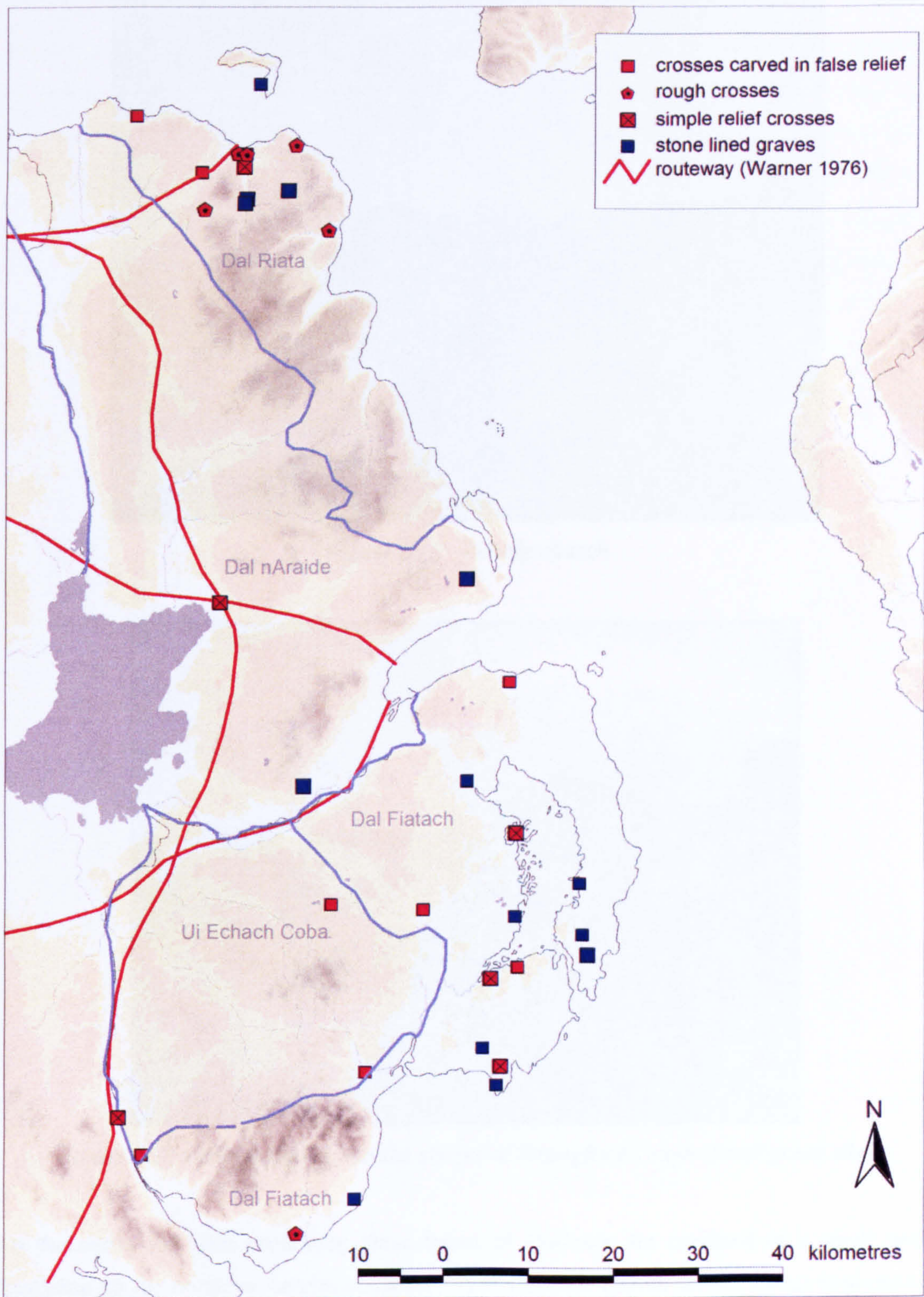


Figure B13: County Down and County Antrim: rough crosses, lintel graves



Figure B14: Raholp church



Figure B.15: Lisban church, on the shores of Strangford Lough (lintel grave site)

To the north, the sites producing these forms of evidence are confined to a small area, focussing on the northern Antrim coast around Ballycastle (figure B16). These monuments and cemeteries centre on the area of the steep Glenshesk valley, leading northwards towards the harbour at Ballycastle. Control over this area would have been highly advantageous. The region has comparatively good agricultural resources, and would have allowed for a productive mixed economy. Perhaps more significantly, however, this harbour would have provided access to Rathlin Island, an important staging point between Ireland and Scotland, and to the seaways; these routes would have been dominated by the Dál Riata

thalassocracy. The twelfth century *Book of Rights* records that Dál Riata was one of the kingdoms in receipt of the *tuarstal*, a payment of ships received from an overking, to be reciprocated through naval support in times of war (McErlean 2002, 66). The presence of a fleet would have emphasised the maritime outlook of this kingdom, and this seems to be reflected in the location of ecclesiastical centres (figure B17). Ecclesiastical investment seems to suggest that this would have been a centre of Dál Riatan power, with dispersed nuclei at Armoy and Dunseverick. *Tírechán* records Dunseverick as the location of Patrick's consecration of Bishop Olcán of the Dál Riatan see at Armoy (Charles Edwards 2000, 59). The importance of the area is emphasised by its focal role for ecclesiastical investment.

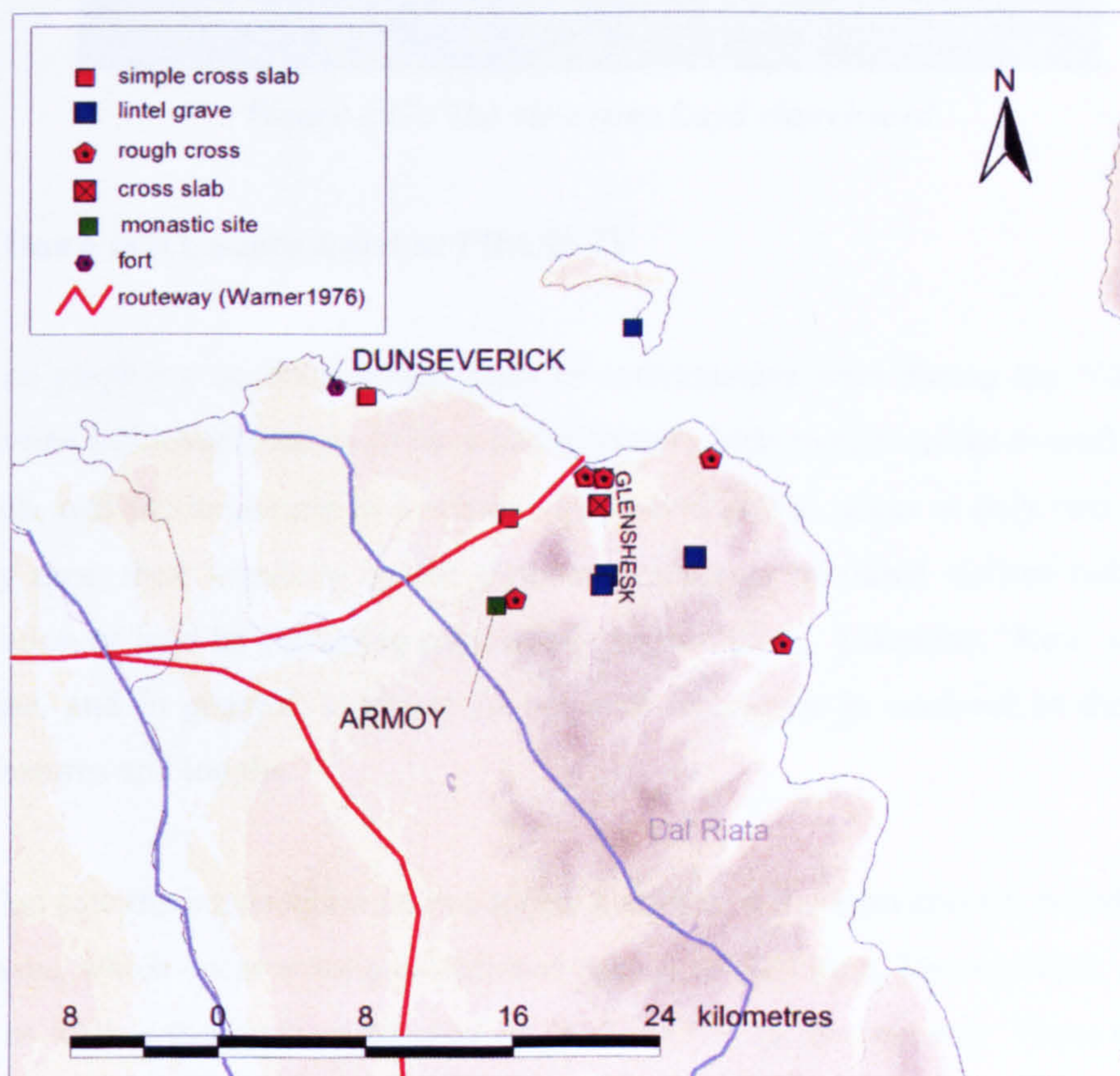


Figure B16: Monuments and cemeteries in northern Antrim



Figure B17: The view from Layd churchyard

County Down and County Antrim: PHASE IV

Despite an emphasis on documented raids of ecclesiastical sites during the Viking period, Scandinavian influence appears to have had relatively little impact on the overall structure of the church, and the landscape as a whole. Furnished graves occur at only two sites within the study area; their locations on the shore may indicate maritime visitors rather than the appropriation of land by incoming populations (figure B18). Likewise, 'Kirk' names occur only twice, and in general, evidence of linguistic influence is confined to the names for coastal features and loughs.

This period saw the introduction of two iconic symbols of the Irish church, round towers and high crosses, which occur at long-established centres of Nendrum, Downpatrick, Armoy, and Connor, as well as those which have as yet produced no earlier remains. These monuments, particularly the round towers, would have been prominent within the landscape; from their distribution and documentary evidence, this high level of investment appears to have been retained in the hands of the few, potentially representing royal patronage of major ecclesiastical centres (O'Keefe 2004, 110-2). For County Offaly, it has been suggested that high crosses represent politicised statements of the divine overlordship of the Uí Néill (Fitzpatrick 1998, 118-9); the relationship between church and secular rulers appears to have remained close, and the increased territories of kings might have meant that a small number of churches were subject to high levels of patronage.

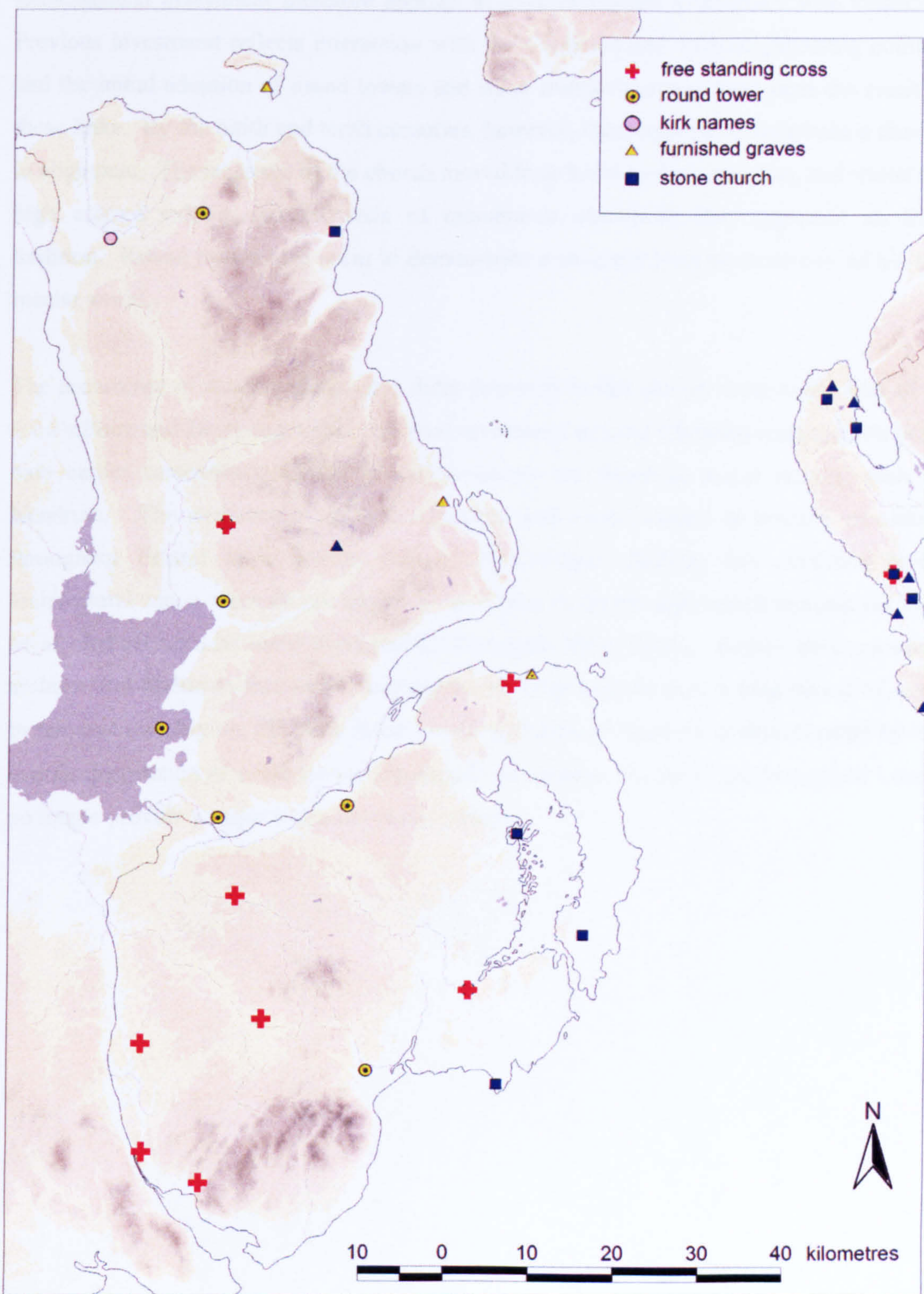


Figure B18: County Down and County Antrim: PHASE IV

Ecclesiastical investment therefore appears to have developed a distinctly Irish character. Previous investment reflects interaction with the Continent and with neighbouring polities, and the initial adoption of round towers and stone architecture may have been the result of these links. By the ninth and tenth centuries, however, there appears to have been a change in alignment. The language of the church moved from Latin to the vernacular, and whilst the high crosses exhibit characteristics of monuments elsewhere, they represent an Irish tradition. Round towers also seem to demonstrate a uniquely Irish phenomenon within the insular world.

The occurrence of stone churches also dates primarily to this period; those at the sites of St John's Point and Derry represent continued investment in local Christian centres (both post-date earlier cemeteries), whilst similar structures are found at major centres, such as Nendrum. The architecture of both churches and round towers is notably consistent throughout Ireland as a whole; although Ó'Carragáin (2003a) has identified broad architectural zones, these do not appear to have been media through which regional political or ideological agendas were expressed (Ó'Carragáin 2004; 2005). Rather, they represent architectural traditions that were maintained over large regions over a long period of time. In terms of distribution, the more inward looking church of Phase IV is demonstrated by the overall distribution of evidence for ideological investment; the coast and Strangford Lough no longer provide a major focus for monumentality.

APPENDIX B PART II: DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

The early medieval landscape of Dumfries and Galloway did not comprise a unified entity. Prehistoric settlement patterns are known to have differed across the region (Cowley 2000), and the Roman impact on the landscape was highly variable, being largely confined to the east. The area was occupied by a patchwork of small polities, and this political fragmentation is also evident in the nature of ideological investment.

ROMAN INFLUENCE

The Roman impact on this area is difficult to discuss in chronological terms, as many of the sites, including Dalswinton, Glenluce and Kirkpatrick-Fleming, are likely to have been constructed for specific campaigns, and as such would not have attracted the same levels of occupation as more permanent settlements to the south (RCAHMS 1997, 184; McCarthy 2002, 365). Roman troops in this northern area may have been locally recruited, and as such, the cultural impact would have been limited. Nonetheless, the construction of roads through Nithsdale and Annandale, and the relatively short-lived occupation of the region would have influenced the landscape, and also the politics of the area, reducing the overarching influence of native elite (RCAHMS 1997, 184). Interestingly, however, there is a distribution of Roman material west of the Nith, outside the main areas of Roman activity, perhaps suggesting that these goods were actively appropriated, possibly as exotica (Hunter 1994; 1997; 2001; Cowley 2000, 274; Wilson 2001)

Into the post-Roman period, knowledge of settlement patterns in Scotland is confined largely to the sites of higher status, 'enclosed places' (Alcock 1981; 1988), encompassing a variety of site types, including hill forts, promontory forts, and crannogs. A number of forts in Dumfries and Galloway, whether newly constructed or reoccupied, have been identified as early medieval in date, and appear to have been in use from the fifth to at least the seventh century. Crannogs are thought to have had a slightly different period of use. In Ireland, a programme of dendrochronological dating has identified two main phases of construction, roughly between AD 525 and 650, and AD 725 and 925 (Stout 2000, 101). In Scotland, however, they occur at a much earlier date, with evidence for Iron Age occupation at several examples.

A number of references to forts and strongholds in the Annals, and by Gildas, with archaeological evidence for craftworking and high status goods, have been used to suggest that these prominent, enclosed sites represent the strongholds of royalty or the upper

echelons of society (Alcock 1988, 31), 'a manifestation of the political structures of the historically documented Celtic kingdoms of the first millennium AD' (Cowley 2000, 175). The nature of artefacts recovered, and the massive nature of their construction implies an organised hierarchical society. The lack of Roman impact is likely to have meant a more continuous development of the political structures in these more western areas, from the *Novantae* identified by Ptolemy in the second century AD to the historically documented (or otherwise) kingdoms of the sixth century (Cowley 2000, 175; McCarthy 2002).

Unenclosed settlements of possible early medieval date have been identified in southwest Scotland: excavations at Kirkconnel, for example, produced evidence for post-built structures (Laing and Clough 1969; Crowe 2003, 200). It has been suggested that, following a decline of hillfort occupation and crannog use in the latter part of the first millennium, settlements moved from uplands to lowland, at some time between the seventh and ninth centuries (Crowe 2003, 200). However, this remains largely unsubstantiated, and many more dated sites would be required to support such a hypothesis.

Ecclesiastical investment, therefore, occurred in a highly varied landscape across southwest Scotland, which had been subject to difference external influences for several centuries. The variation in ecclesiastical monumentality across the region highlights further the range of political and ideological entities encompassed within this region.

Dumfries and Galloway: PHASE I

The Latinate inscriptions and settlement remains at Whithorn represent the earliest identified Christian activity in Dumfries and Galloway, possibly contemporary with the importing of Mediterranean goods (figure B19). Traditionally, Whithorn has been 'perilously central' to the study of early Christianity in this area (Hill 1991, 27). Deprived of St Ninian (Clancy 2001), interpretation of the site as a fifth century monastic establishment is no longer so strongly supported (see Chapter 8). However, evidence for cultivation (plough pebbles), structures (wattle buildings, lime technology) and for a road indicate the presence of a settlement at the site (Hill 1997, 67-133); fifth and sixth century finds attest to an early date and an important community, and the fact that this community was Christian is demonstrated by the presence of the extended Latinate inscription on the *Latinus* stone. Moreover, work by Charles Thomas (1998a, 101-116) has demonstrated the sophistication of this monument, emphasising the fact that the community that created it must have been well educated, and familiar with the Celtic Biblical tradition.

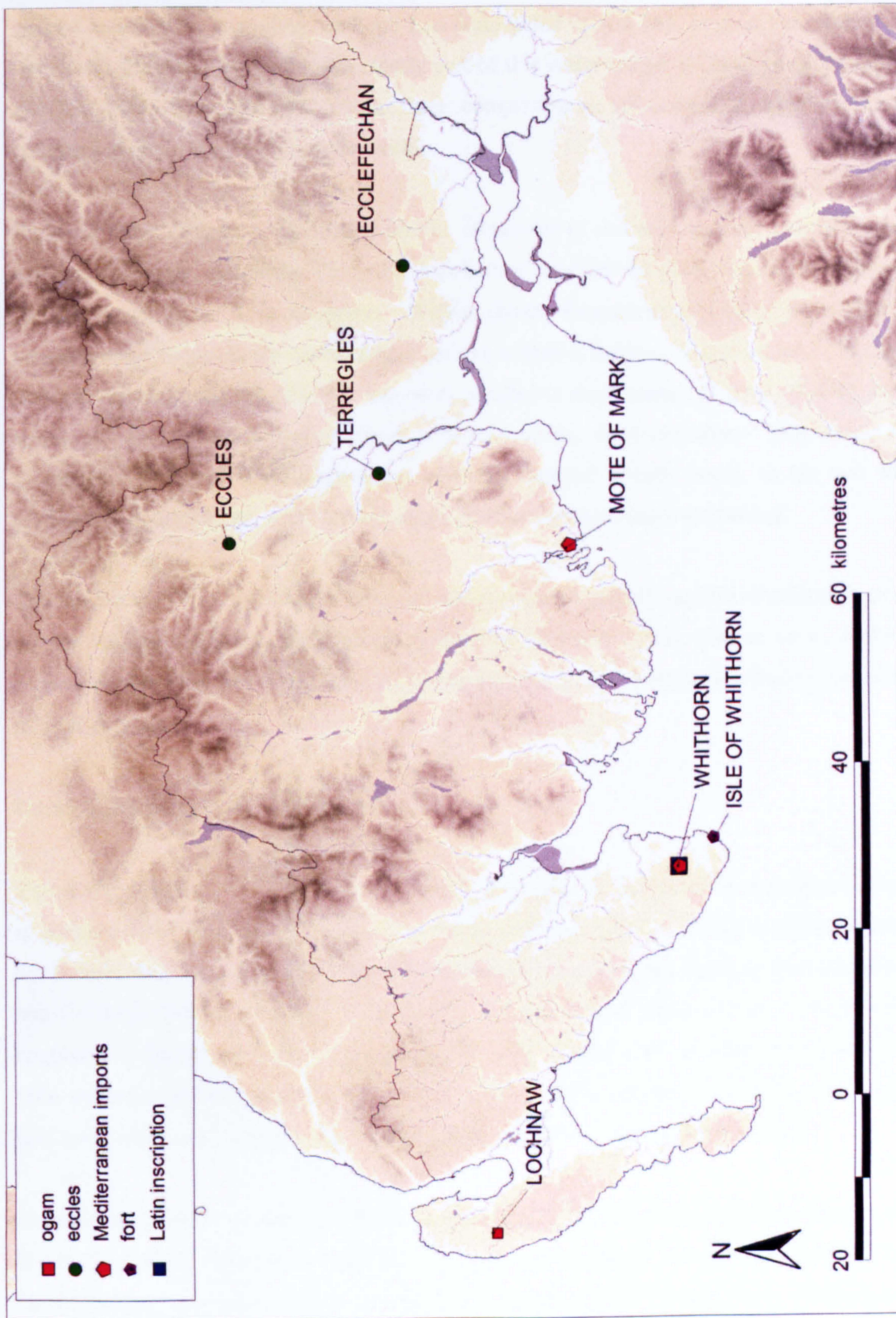


Figure B19: Dumfries and Galloway: PHASE I

Reassessment of the site has suggested that this was an important secular centre during Phase I. Historical evidence indicates the ambitions of the eastern church in the establishment of a wider Christendom, extending, as Pope Leo highlighted in AD 441, beyond the reaches of the Roman Empire. Whithorn was clearly part of this wider world; a Christian community, possibly within the estate of a secular ruler, comprising an educated elite, which fostered communications with the Byzantine world.

Early Christian remains are lacking from the remainder of this area, and the only potential evidence for early ecclesiastical activity elsewhere is provided by place-names, and a single possible ogam stone from Lochnaw. Within eastern Dumfriesshire, *eglēs/Eccles* place-names provide evidence for ecclesiastical activity within a Brittonic linguistic zone. A date no more precise than 'pre-AD 650' has been ascribed to these names (Taylor 1998, 4), and so they are not necessarily contemporary with the evidence discussed above. However, it is of interest to contrast their distribution with the material already noted, as the two are confined to distinct areas, with 'eccles' sites adhering to major routes northwards.

The Lochnaw stone is difficult to interpret, but represents a tantalising hint of Irish influence on the Rhinns. The inscription cannot be read (Forsyth 1996), and as such, further discussion of significance is difficult, but given the later evidence for Irish influence, appears to be significant.

Dumfries and Galloway: PHASE II

The political landscape of Dumfries and Galloway during the late sixth and seventh centuries is unclear, although evidence points to a strong maritime power. The somewhat limited documents, and the nature of archaeological material, suggest that much of Dumfriesshire and Galloway would have been controlled by a patchwork of small polities. The British kingdom of Rheged is commonly associated with this general area; as noted, however, very little evidence survives for the possible boundary of this kingdom (Cramp 1995, 5-6; McCarthy 2002), and the polity has recently been placed in Cumbria (Woolf 2006)

Archaeological evidence from the Mote of Mark (Longley 2001) has illustrated occupation of a hillfort during the sixth to eighth century. An early medieval radiocarbon date from the fort of Cruggleton Castle also indicates activity during this phase (Ewart 1985). The form of the Isle of Whithorn; a Pictish carving at Trusty's Hill; finds of metalworking debris at Tynron Doon; and the place-name of 'Dunragit' have all been used to suggest that these may be contenders for political centres of this period (figure B20). Notably, all of these sites

overlook the major north-south routes through the area; Dunragit would have controlled the rich arable lands around Stranraer and access to Loch Ryan, Cruggleton and the Isle of Whithorn sit at the tip of the Machars, Tynron Doon occupies a prominent location in the Nith valley, whilst Trusty's Hill and the Mote and Mark overlook the estuaries of the Dee and Urr respectively. These are only a handful of possible sites; the coast of southwest Scotland, particularly the Rhinns, is dense with fortifications for which no date has, as yet, been obtained (Cowley 2000, 175).

The presence of significant assemblages of Continental imports at Whithorn and the Mote of Mark demonstrates continued, and increased, traffic along the western seaways. The ability of the occupants of these sites, whether kings or bishops, to exact sufficient surplus to exchange these goods demonstrates not only the presence of an hierarchical society, but also their willingness to be drawn into a wider Christian world.

During Phase II, activity continued at Whithorn, with the establishment of a major centre, which provided a focal point for burial, occupation and craftworking. The continuation of a tradition of Latin inscriptions suggests the establishment of further ecclesiastical foci within the landscape of southwest Scotland, again confined in the west. The three inscribed stones of Kirkmadrine, dated to the sixth century (Sims-Williams 2003; Forsyth 2005), and the lost Low Curghie stone, provide evidence for specifically ecclesiastical activity in the region, utilising the vocabulary of an episcopal church, and possibly representing the establishment of a major cult centre in this western area (figure B21). In terms of place-names, the *andóit* sites reflected in the 'Annat' place-names may also have been established at this time. 'Annat' names have been interpreted as denoting major centres of ecclesiastical power within the landscape, and may have formed the uppermost tier of an ecclesiastical hierarchy (Clancy 1995).

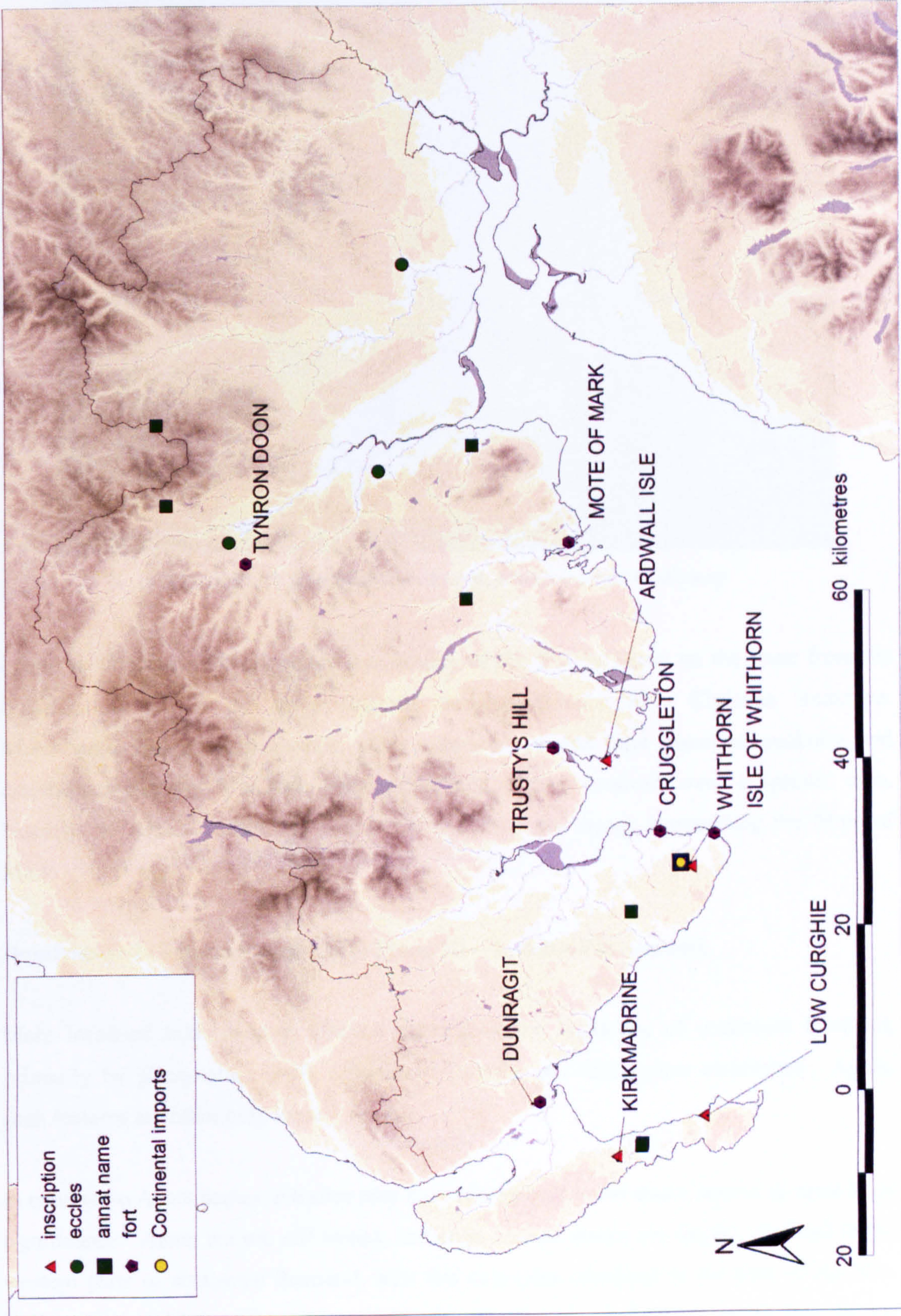


Figure B20: Dumfries and Galloway: PHASE II



Figure B21: Kirkmadrine church, Dumfries and Galloway

Closer to Whithorn, the suggested provenance of the ‘Petrus’ stone on the route from the ecclesiastical site to the shore suggests the consolidation of a Christian landscape. Monuments, and possibly burials, along routeways would have provided guidance and emphasised a strong Christian presence, if not religious control, over a specific area. Notably, no such evidence has been identified from the region surrounding the Mote of Mark.

Dumfries and Galloway: Phase II to Phase III – Localised investment

More localised investment is attested throughout the landscape of southwest Scotland, primarily by place-names (*cill*), cross-incised stones and lintel grave cemeteries. Again, such features are often only loosely datable.

In contrast to Annat names, *cill* sites may have represented lower status centres of more local significance. Annat names, *cill* names, and cross-incised stones are largely confined to the western parts of southwest Scotland, with few examples occurring to the west of the Nith Valley (figure B22). The contrast with the distribution of Brittonic *eglēs* may be no coincidence; it appears that the limits of an early Gaelic speaking, Christian population is marked by this major route from south to north. The *cill* names commemorating St Finnian

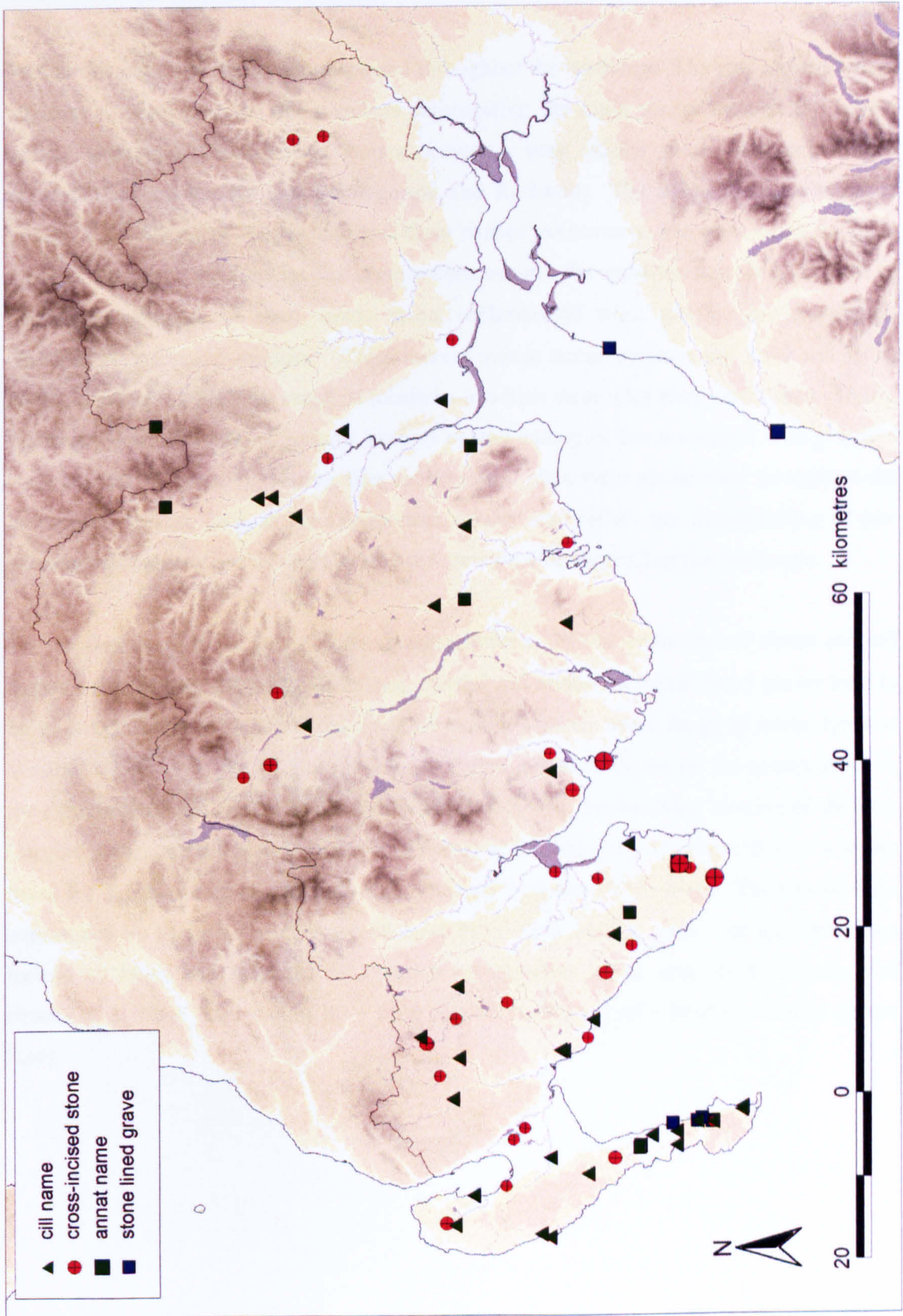


Figure B22: Lintel graves, cill names and cross-incised stones

are likely to have been coined prior to the arrival of the Anglian clerics in the eighth century, as their meaning had been sufficiently lost to allow St Ninian to be created.

Within this zone, *cill* names are dispersed throughout the landscape. The vast majority occur adjacent to watercourses, along valleys representing the main routes through the largely upland landscape. Cross-incised stones occupy a very similar zone, with rare eastern examples beyond the Nith, at Staplegorton and Ruthwell. The coincidence, in terms of general distribution, of 'kil' names and these simple monuments, has been noted for other areas of Scotland, and their similar distributions support the assertion that they can both be considered evidence of local, lower status ecclesiastical sites, whether burial grounds, churches or landscape markers. Cross-incised stones occur between sea level and 290m AOD, representing the wide range of locations in which these sites were established. Unlike the example at Dunteige in Ireland, several upland examples are associated with potential ecclesiastical remains, suggesting that ecclesiastical sites were established throughout the landscape. Others, such as the Laggangarn stones, may reflect the Christianising of pre-existing monuments, further representing the creation of a wider Christian landscape.

The occurrence of lintel graves is much more limited. Whilst cross-incised stones and *cill* names occur in both lowland and upland, coastal and inland locations, lintel graves tend to be in coastal locations. Lintel graves occur within a much wider range of burial types at Whithorn (Hill 1997, 70-74), but outside this centre, the sites cluster on the eastern shore of the Rhinns peninsula (figure B23). This corresponds with the recorded location of the Low Curghie stone, and the place-names of Kildonan and Kilstay bay are suggestive of a strong focus for ecclesiastical investment in this area (*cf* McLean 1997, 46-7). The coastal bays overlooked by these burial sites would have been ideal landing points for incomers from Ireland or Man, and as such, the creation of Christian burial grounds with associated structures at these sites would have been visible statements of Christian identity (figure B24).

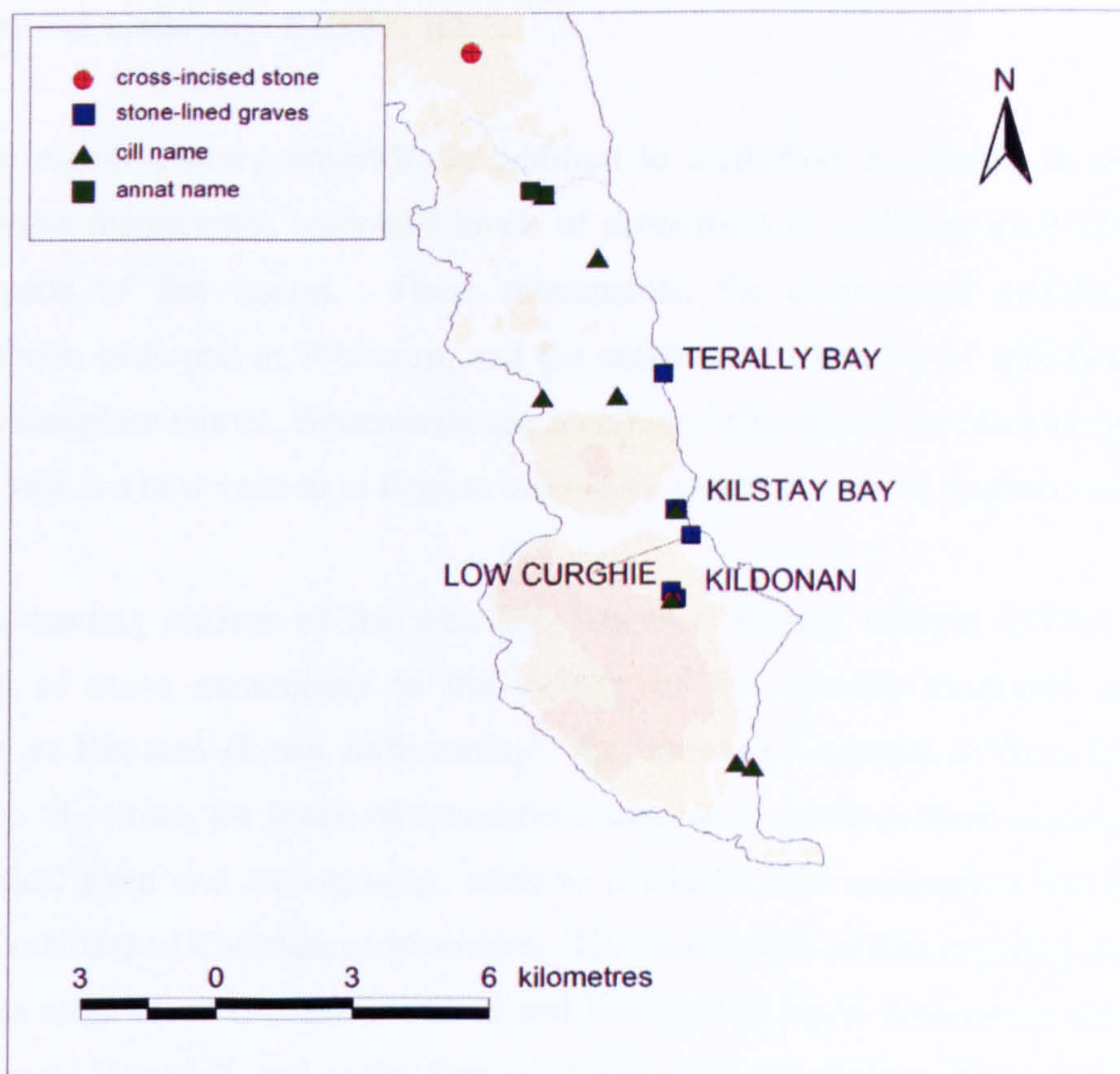


Figure B23: Lintel grave cemeteries (with Kil names) in the southern Rhinns



Figure B24: View from Low Curghie towards Drummore Bay

Dumfries and Galloway: PHASE III

From the eighth century onwards, in addition to continued investment in *cill* sites and simple, stone monuments, increased levels of investment in sculpture are evidenced in the eastern parts of this region. These monuments, the documented establishment of a Northumbrian bishopric at Whithorn, and the creation of a number of specifically Anglian ecclesiastical place-names, demonstrate the incoming influence of the Northumbrian church, bringing with it a new version of Roman orthodoxy and overtones of Anglian overlordship.

The free-standing crosses of the area are, however, largely without context. With the exception of those monuments in the vicinity of the recently excavated ecclesiastical enclosure at Hoddom (Lowe forthcoming), the 'monastic' context of these sites remains unproven. However, the levels of investment required to produce these carvings, and their ecclesiastical form and iconography, leads to a widely held assumption that they can be linked to established Christian communities. The distribution of free-standing crosses shows three main areas of investment: Hoddom and Ruthwell in lower Annandale; the upper Nith Valley around Thornhill; and on the Stewartry, around Kirkcudbright (figure B25).

The earliest of the Northumbrian-influenced stone monuments in this region occurs at Ruthwell, situated on the coastal plain, and Hoddom, located in a loop of the River Annan, less than 9km to the northeast. Ruthwell, situated on a stream leading to the coast of the Solway, would have been easily accessible from the sea, and situation in relation to a Roman camp may have been symbolic (Crowe 1987). The position of ecclesiastical centres on, or near, Roman remains is well attested in England as a whole (Rodwell 1984, 3-14). Annandale is known to have been an area of importance from at least prehistoric times; the large hillfort of Burnswark demonstrates high levels of investment in the valley in the Iron Age, whilst the main Roman road from north to south passed through the valley before leading into the upper Nith valley. The Annan valley, like that of the Nith, can be regarded both as an area for settlement, and a major transport route, and investment in this region would have made a strong political statement.

Further north, the crosses of Boatford and Closeburn, ascribed broadly to this period, are also situated with respect to the Roman road network, lying adjacent to the north-south route through Carlisle to the north. It is notable that these sites, with that at Hoddom, lie close to the *eglēs* place-names that were coined within a Brittonic speaking context in previous centuries. It is possible that the location of Northumbrian influenced sculpture in the vicinity of pre-existing ecclesiastical sites is no coincidence, and that this was a means for an

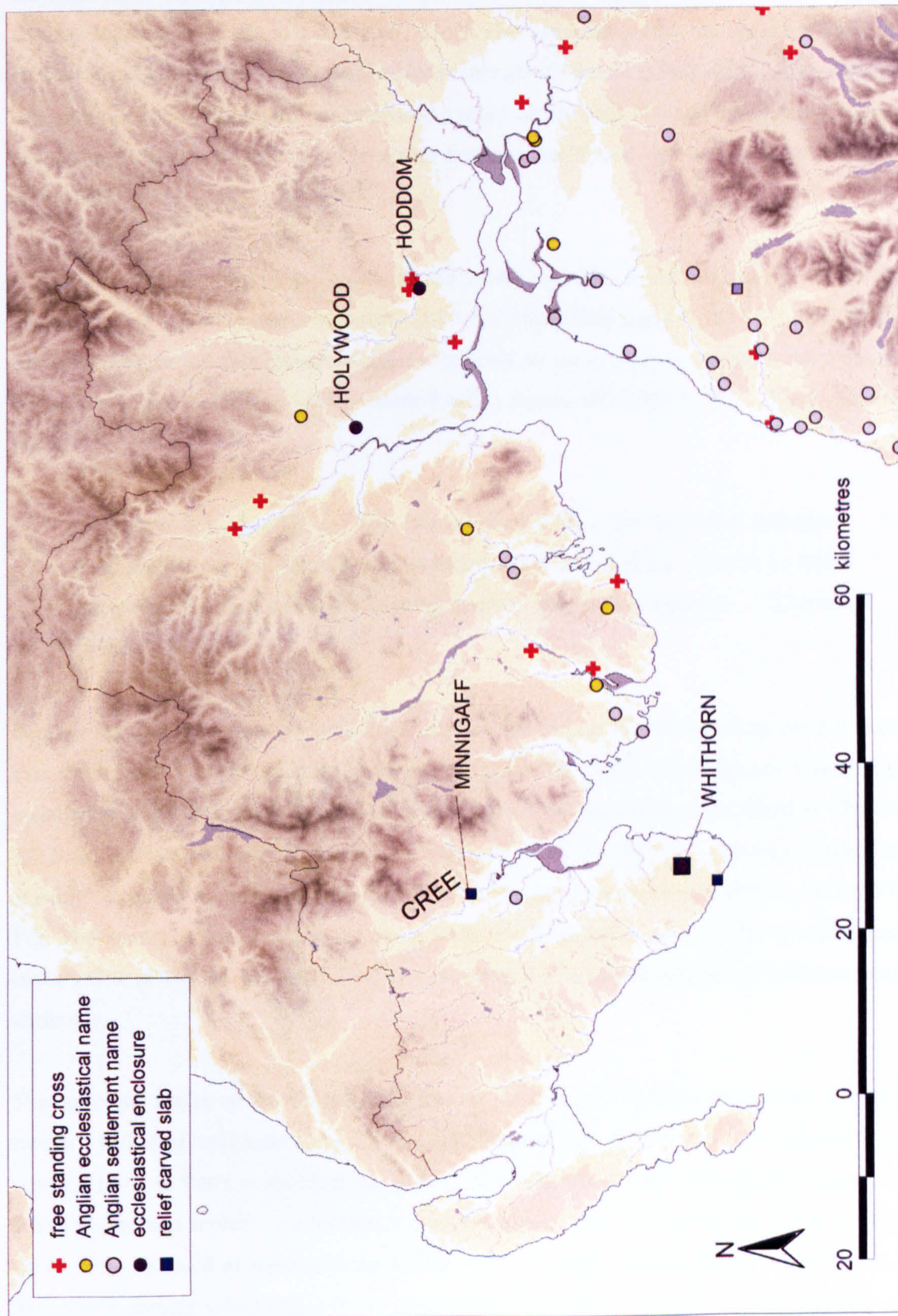


Figure B25: Dumfries and Galloway: PHASE III

Anglian elite to demonstrate control over both territory and religious practise. To the west of the Nith, a small group of sites occurs in the west of the Stewartry, around the coast and in a riverine location adjacent to Loch Ken, which also correlates with the apparent limits of ecclesiastical place-names of possible Northumbrian influence (Craig 1991, 55). Beyond this, only the site at Minnigaff has produced a relief carved slab of likely eighth century date, occupying a commanding location on a spur between two rivers, on the edge of the Machars peninsula.

It is notable that the limit of this monumentality does not seem to extend as far as Whithorn, despite Bede's assertion that a bishopric had been established there by AD 731 (*HE* V.23). The significance of this phenomenon is difficult to ascertain, as Anglian influence is demonstrated by records of bishops with English names (Hill 1997, 19). Wendy Davies notes:

'Whithorn was Anglian in 800, but Anglian within the Irish Sea province: Anglian, but not wholly Anglian; an outpost, too far north and west to be fully integrated into the rapidly developing English distribution systems...' (Davies 1998).

Possible explanations for this apparent contradiction, which place control of the site back into the hands of a western elite, include the possibility that a Northumbrian bishop was installed at a site that remained outside Northumbrian political control (explored in Chapter 8). Small enclaves of Anglian population may have existed within the landscape, but within existing territorial organisations, suggested by some place-name studies (1991a; Hill 1997, 17). The nearby site of Cruggleton has produced evidence for timber halls of mid-eighth century date (Ewart 1985), which may also represent the localised adoption of Northumbrian attributes.

The episcopal nature of the documentary records that indicate Whithorn's primary function was as a bishopric, and it seems likely that the interpretation of Whithorn as a monastery, or minster, in these years is misleading. Whilst there was definitely a community present in this area that was served by a bishop, it does not appear that the function of Whithorn was the same as enclosed monastic centres further east. A recent suggestion that Whithorn may represent a secular settlement with an ecclesiastical element is worthy of consideration in this light (Gondek 2003, 328-9; see Chapter 8).

Dumfries and Galloway: PHASE IV

Into the ninth and tenth centuries, the nature and focus of ideological investment in southwest Scotland alters dramatically, as the area witnesses a proliferation of stone monuments and ecclesiastical place-names (figure B26). The expansion of patronage to a larger number of sites is paralleled elsewhere, often interpreted as an increased involvement of the secular elite in ecclesiastical affairs.

Within the denser distribution of sculpture, a number of significant patterns emerge. To the east, the free-standing crosses occupy primarily the same area as those of Phase III, and within this zone a number of localised groups have been identified, potentially representing the patronage of local elites (Craig 1991). The prominent locations of many sites (figure B27), and their position along transport routes demonstrate the visibility of such investment. Some sites were linked in the landscape through lines of sight; Penpont, for example, is visible from the lower lying site of Dalgarnock (figure B28).

To the west, relief carved slabs dominate the Machars peninsula, many of which are characteristic of the 'Whithorn School'. Whilst the many free-standing crosses of Dumfriesshire have been used to suggest elite, secular, patronage of the church, the presence of a school of sculpture, centred at a known bishopric, suggests control of manufacture by the church. It is possible that this reflects a reaction to the secularisation of the church to the east; strong statements of overarching ecclesiastical control were being made in the same medium as more secular Christian centres, but using a distinctive, local monument form. Richard Oram's study of Scandinavian place-names in the Machars area suggests that the church retained a strong hold on land; later settlers fitted into existing patterns of landholding (Oram 1995).

Kirk names occur throughout all areas, further representing this image of a widely expanding church; several 'kil' sites were renamed, alongside newly coined ecclesiastical names. This represents a widespread Scandinavian influence, whether direct or indirect. Other Scandinavian settlement names are generally restricted to the east, whilst in the west, Kirk names seem to have been established within a predominantly Gaelic speaking area.

Crowe (1998; 2003) has suggested that the distribution of ecclesiastical sites formed the basis of a later parochial system, and suggest that these centres represent the provision of pastoral care over a wider population. Whilst evidence of cross-incised stones and *cill* sites indicates that churches may have been widespread at an earlier date in the west, this does not

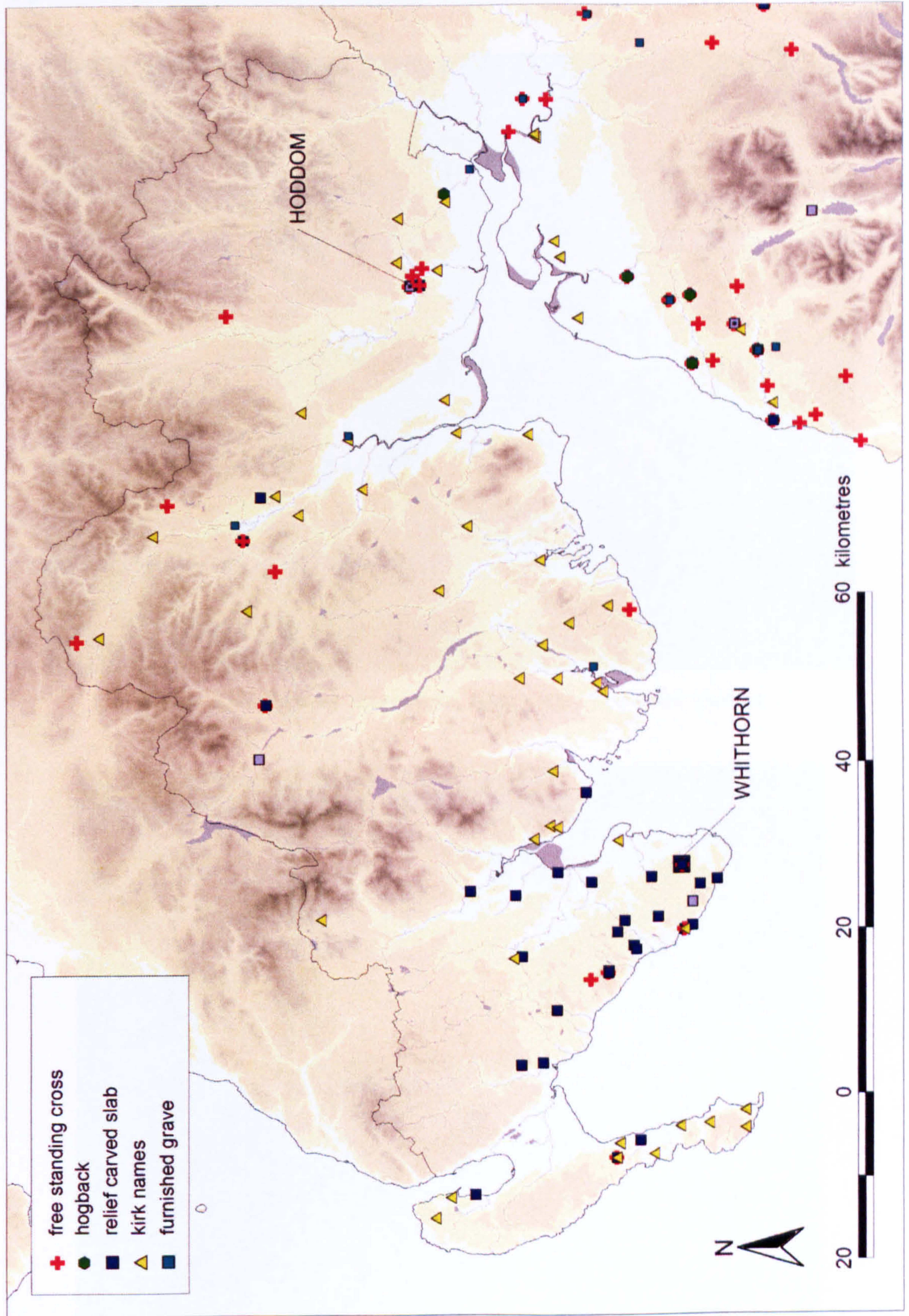


Figure B26: Dumfries and Galloway: PHASE IV

seem to have been the case in the east, and these sites represent the earliest evidence for a large number of Christian centres within the landscape.



Figure B27: Penpont churchyard, occupying a prominent mound



Figure B28: Dalgarnock churchyard, looking towards Penpont

APPENDIX BIII: THE ISLE OF MAN

SETTLEMENT

For the Isle of Man, there is a notable lack of evidence available for early settlement, and dating is insecure for those sites that have been identified. Archaeological evidence for the nature of settlement is confined to a small number of sites. Circular structures have been excavated at Port-y-Candas (Gelling 1977), Ronaldsway (Neely 1940) and the Braaid (Fleure and Dunlop 1942), and are considered to represent buildings of the pre-Norse period, whilst evidence for settlement of the Norse period has previously been identified at the enclosed sites of Cass ny Howin, Cronk ny Merriu, Close ny Chollagh and Vowlan (Bersu 1949; Gelling 1952; 1957; 1970; Freke 1990). However, the lack of securely datable finds from these sites is problematic, and recent reassessment suggests that such sites may be later medieval in date (Johnson 2002, 173). The site at Ronaldsway, where a succession of structures dating from the Bronze Age to the medieval period were excavated prior to the construction of the airport, may represent a rare example of a settlement which can be ascribed to the early medieval period (Neely 1940; Laing and Laing 1987), representing a coastal port (Griffiths 1992, 63).

The lack of material means that the changing settlement patterns of the island cannot be easily reconstructed. However, evidence for Christian investment is, as a rule, so widespread that general analysis would not necessarily yield clear results; stone churches, cross marked stones and relief carved slabs appear to occur in all areas that are likely to have been populated. It seems that the density of investment on the island reflects its role as a central point in the Irish Sea, and as an island population that would have absorbed and adapted influences from all surrounding areas.

Isle of Man: PHASE I

Though insecurely dated, it appears that the three examples of *domnach* names provide the earliest evidence for Christianity on the Isle of Man (figure B29), whilst ogam stones, found at four sites, suggest the onset of a tradition of inscription. The distribution of the sites producing inscribed stones shows that they generally occur in the more habitable areas of the Isle of Man, on the northern and southern plains. Knock y Doonee and Old Michael Church lie on the northwestern coast of the island, and although they occupy the extremities of the northern plain, both occupy prominent positions, with extensive coastal views towards Ireland and Scotland. To the south, Ballaqueeney occupies a highly accessible location

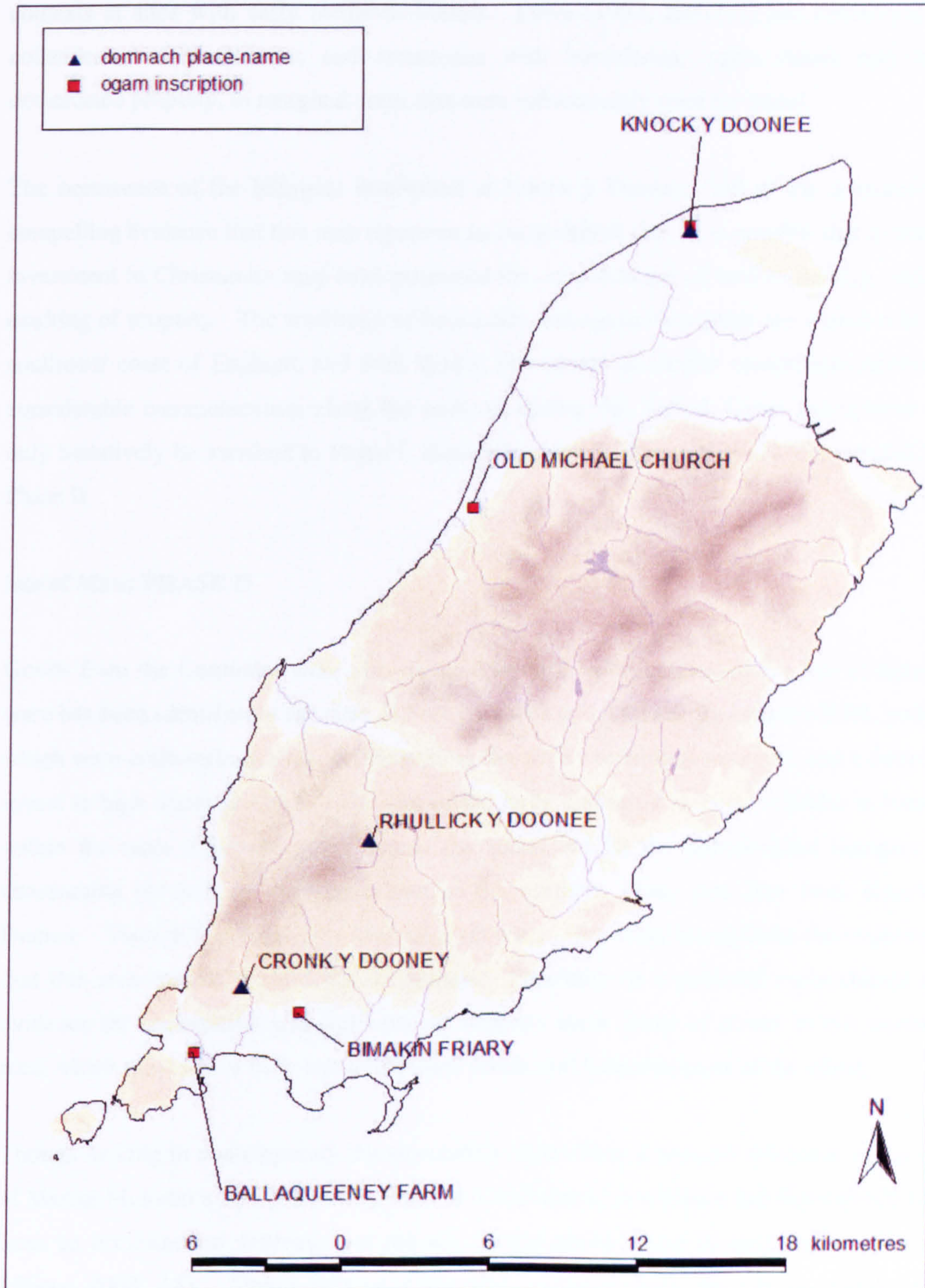


Figure B29: Isle of Man: PHASE I

almost directly between the harbours of Port St Mary and Port Erin, whilst Bimakin friary occupies level ground adjacent to a watercourse running towards the coast at Strandhall. Those found to the south of the Island, at Bimakin Friary, and at Ballaqueeney Farm are classic examples of the 'of X son of Y' formulae; all four monuments were found in reused

contexts at sites with early medieval burials. Lowe (1987, 229-231) has considered the coincidence of keill sites and cemeteries with boundaries; ogam stones may have demarcated property, in marginal areas that were subsequently used for burial.

The occurrence of the bilingual inscription at Knock y Doonee, 'hill of the *domnach*', is compelling evidence that this may represent an early church site. It is possible that increased investment in Christianity may have prompted the consolidation of land ownership, and the marking of property. The traditions of both Latin and ogam inscription are shared with the southwest coast of England, and with Wales; investment in similar monuments represents considerable communication along the seaways during this period. Ogam inscriptions can only tentatively be ascribed to Phase I; their date range is wide and could be extended into Phase II.

Isle of Man: PHASE II

Goods from the Continent were also directed towards communities on the Isle of Man; E ware has been identified at the sites of Port y Candas and Kiondroghad (figure B30), both of which were craftworking sites, demonstrating the ability to control resources and a desire to invest in high status artefacts. The site of the large enclosure at Port y Candas is located within the main east-west artery across the island, whilst the Kiondroghad occupies an unassuming location on low-lying land of the northern plain, just 2km from Knock y Doonee. Though based on very few 'dots on maps', the latter strengthens the impression that this area formed a focus for investment. Proximity to a potential early church and evidence for importation and craftworking suggests some focus of power in this northern area, which would have been one of the more fertile and habitable parts of the island.

Though lacking in contemporary documentation (apart from a possible reference to the Isle of Man in Muirchú's *Life of Patrick*), there is a widespread acceptance that there would have been an ecclesiastical settlement at the site of Maughold in the seventh century (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 15). Trench-Jellicoe notes that sculpture from the site is 'distinctively monastic in style', including an inscription recording 'that Arneit was not only a priest and a bishop in the island but also an abbot' (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 15). The 'level of literacy and sophistication us unlikely to be encountered elsewhere other than at a monastic site' (Trench-Jellicoe 2002, 15). The motifs found on these stones are shared with monuments in Ireland and Scotland, demonstrating the widespread contacts hinted at by Muirchú (Trench-Jellicoe 1980). Trench-Jellicoe (2002, 28) has suggested that the *keill* at Ballavarkish, which has

produced evidence for *graffiti* by literate Christians, may have been *en route* to a departure point for individuals sailing to Whithorn.

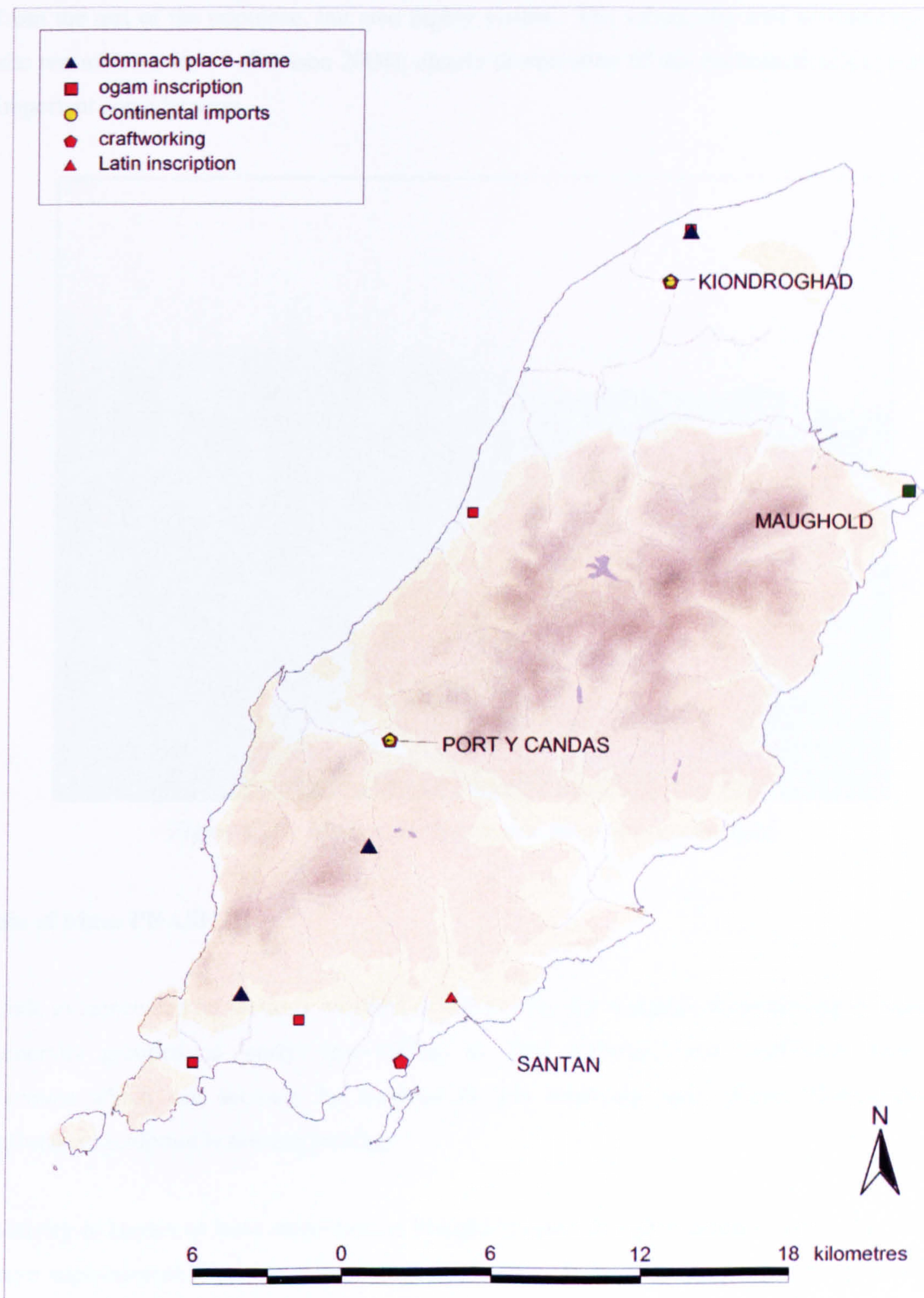


Figure B30: Isle of Man: PHASE II

The headland site of Maughold is prominent (figure B31), with views extending to the north and south, overlooked by Maughold Head. This is one of the 'typical' site types for monasteries identified by Morris (1989, 110), and demonstrates a need to be both detached from the rest of the populace, but also highly visible. The substantial wall surrounding the site resembles a cashel (Johnson 2004); clearly demarcation of this ecclesiastical site was an important consideration.



Figure C.31: Maughold churchyard, from Maughold Head

Isle of Man: PHASE III

Little evidence can be securely ascribed to this period; the sculpture from the Isle of Man is generally grouped as 'early' (pre-Viking) or 'late' (Viking), and insufficient material survives which can securely be ascribed to this relatively short phase; Northumbrian influenced sculpture is notably lacking.

Activity is known to have continued at Maughold into the eighth century, and some of the more sophisticated cross-incised and decorated slabs continued to demarcate this as a major centre of ecclesiastical activity. An Anglo-Saxon runic inscription bearing an English name provides evidence for communication with an increasingly close Anglian culture. In contrast, the highly sophisticated Calf of Man crucifix from the southern part of the island (figure

B32) suggests a degree of interaction with Ireland; strong parallels have been made between iconography of this stone, and that of Irish metalwork.



Figure B32: The Calf of Man

Isle of Man: PHASES II to IV: Localised investment

Investment in Christianity on a wider scale is attested by the presence of cross-incised stones, *cill* (*keill*) names and lintel grave cemeteries. Frequently all three attributes are combined; lintel graves form a common feature of *keill* sites, many of which have retained *keill* (*cill*) within their place-names, and often produce one or more cross-incised stones. In terms of distribution, all features are widespread within the Manx landscape (figure B33).

Figure C.33 demonstrates that the sites selected for lintel grave cemeteries adhere to the lower slopes of the two upland regions, occurring along valleys, around the coast, and following the major east-west valley that bisects the island. Although a strong concentration is evident on the southern plain, however, there is a notable lack of lintel graves from the north. Similar, yet less pronounced, patterns can be demonstrated for the *keill* names. The small concentration of kil names around the eastern coast of the northern plain encompasses a number of names meaning 'field/fold of the church', suggesting that not all refer to ecclesiastical centres themselves.

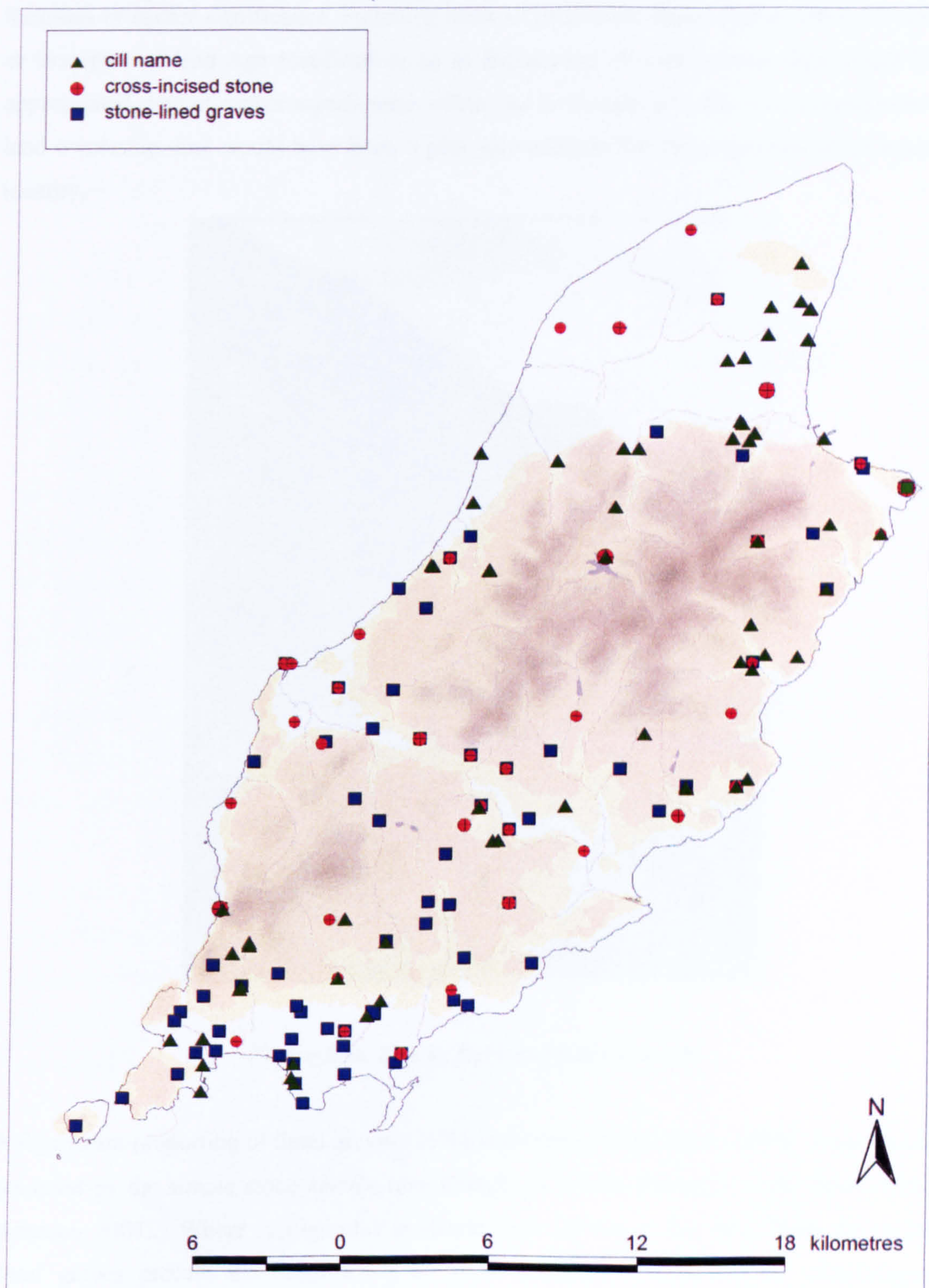


Figure B33: Isle of Man: PHASE II to IV

The sites occupied by these foundations are varied, encompassing lowland positions, and steeper, apparently less accessible locations (figure B34). However, those within extreme coastal positions would often have been easily accessible from the ocean, which counters perceived ideas of marginality. It has been demonstrated that a number of sites occupy

locations of earlier significance, including areas of prehistoric burial (Lowe 1987, 255-298), or examples of Iron Age fortification, as at Balladoole. Burial at such sites would have appropriated sites of earlier significance within the landscape, possibly with connotations of land ownership, and would have been a powerful medium for the expression of a Christian identity.



Figure B34: Lag ny Keeillee from the north

A significant proportion of lintel graves (26%), and cross-incised stones (45%) occur on sites occupied by the simple stone *keeills*, now thought to belong primarily to the tenth century (Johnson 2004). Where stratigraphic evidence does survive, it has often been shown that lintel graves predate the construction of stone churches. However, the chronological implications of this are unclear. Irish and Scottish burials of this type are often presumed to date from the fifth to the eighth century (O'Brien 1992; 2004), and the Manx *keeills* could therefore have been erected on long established burial sites. The disturbance of lintel graves by a ship burial at Balladoole indicates a pre-ninth century date. However, many burials also appear contemporary with the *keeills*, and lintel graves identified at the ecclesiastical centre at Peel have been scientifically dated to phases in the pre-tenth century, the tenth century, and later (Freke 2002, 59-74). It is unclear how many pre-Phase IV lintel graves can be

assumed within the corpus of Manx material without further dating evidence. It is possible that the proliferation of sites and monuments should be ascribed to a later, ninth or tenth-century date.

Isle of Man: PHASE IV

From tenth century, Scandinavian influence is apparent throughout the Isle of Man, evidenced by furnished burial, linguistics, art and artefacts (Bornholdt-Collins 2004). High levels of investment in this area again attest to the centrality of the Isle of Man within the Irish Sea.

Ship burials, those beneath large mounds, or furnished graves within churchyards, would have been a major ideological statement. Furnished burials of the ninth to tenth century are predominantly coastal, and occupy visible positions within the landscape (figure B35). A series of burials along the western coastal ridge of the northern plain, all of which command extensive views, demonstrates this practice. From the burial sites within the churchyard at Jurby, itself visible from a great distance (figure B36), the shores of Ireland, Scotland and England can be seen, providing an impression of dominance, not only within the Manx landscape, but also within the Irish Sea as a whole.

The churchyards of Malew, Jurby and Maughold have all produced evidence for furnished burial of this date. The nature of the sites that were occupied is uncertain, as the evidence produced (cross-incised stones) does not provide clear dates. At Knock y Doonee, a ship burial appears to have been closely associated with a centre of ecclesiastical activity from the earliest phases of Christianity on the island. Likewise, the Christian burial site within fortifications at Balladoole was also used for a Viking ship burial (Bersu and Wilson 1966, 1). Burial would have been a means for an incoming elite to appropriate land, express identity, and the choice of Christian centres for this purpose demonstrates their importance as an arena for signalling political power.



Figure B35: Phase IV furnished burials



Figure B36: Jurby church on the horizon, looking northwest

Ecclesiastical investment

A subsequent proliferation of overtly Christian investment is evident within the Isle of Man, exhibiting strong Scandinavian artistic and linguistic influence (figure B37). Stone monuments of the Isle of Man prior to the ninth century, with the exception of the Calf of Man crucifix and some Maughold stones, are not indicative of high levels of investment. During Phase IV, however, stone appears to have become a major medium for patronage, and the erection of relief carved stone slabs occurs throughout the island. The Manx cross slabs exhibit artistic influences from surrounding areas, in terms of form, style and motifs. The presence of a number of 'pseudo-free-standing crosses', for example, suggests a desire to emulate monument forms from Cumbria, adapted to available stone. However, the overall design of these cross slabs demonstrates a uniquely Manx style, exemplified by the 'Gautr' group.

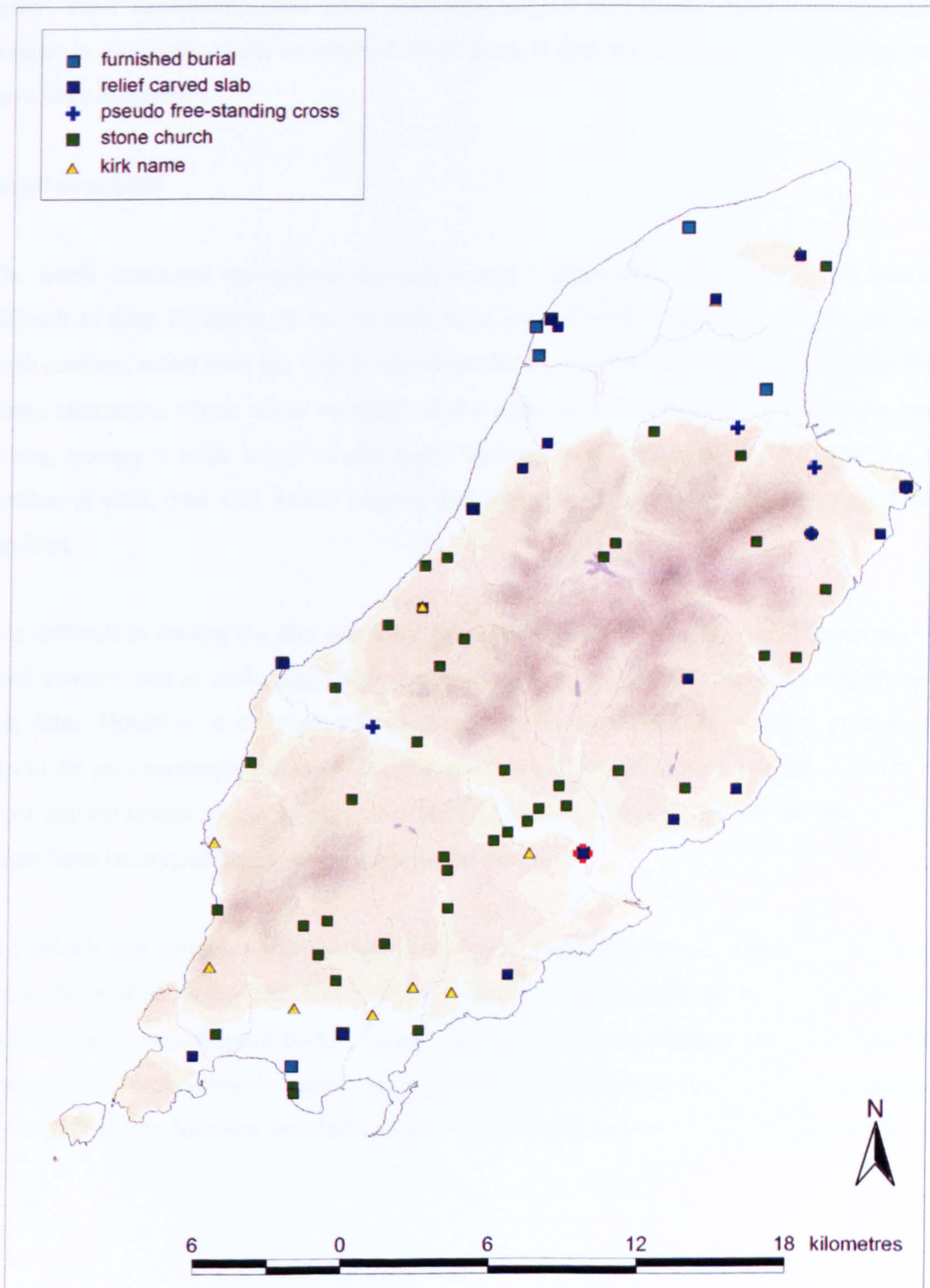


Figure B37: Isle of Man PHASE IV

Erection of monuments at sites such as Jurby and Maughold would have reinforced their status as centres of ideological power. Others occupy positions that would have been locally prominent, and all occur in the areas that would have been most suited to settlement and agriculture; no upland sites have produced this higher status sculpture. Many of these sites were named with the Scandinavian derived element *kirk*, and continue as parish centres

today. Their distribution, and lower numbers, suggest that these would have been power centres to which the wider number of *keeill* sites, if they were in fact contemporary, might have been subsidiary.

Keeill structures

The *keeill* structures themselves are simple and undiagnostic, and as such are extremely difficult to date. However, it has recently been suggested that they belong primarily to the tenth century, rather than the fifth to eighth centuries, as previously thought (Johnson 2004). These structures, which occur on many of the same sites as lintel graves and cross-incised stones, occupy a wide range of site types throughout the Manx landscape, and the high number of sites, over 150, would suggest that they served small, local communities or even families.

It is difficult to escape the fact that very few *keeill* sites can be placed any earlier than the tenth century, and as such, might represent a reorganisation of the ecclesiastical landscape at this date. However, it seems that to propose a single model for the creation of these sites would be an oversimplification. Traditions of small church sites, lintel grave burial and cross-incised stones appear to have been particularly long-lived on the Isle of Man, and sites might have been established over a long period of time.

St Patrick's Isle provides a divergence from these simple traditions. The long-lived, multi-focal site exhibits strong Irish architectural traditions, with the erection of a round tower, and a church with *antae* (figure B38). There is strong evidence to suggest that this would have been a major ecclesiastical centre from at least the tenth century; again occupying a strategic and highly visible location, possibly on the site of an Iron Age fortification (Freke 2002, 57)

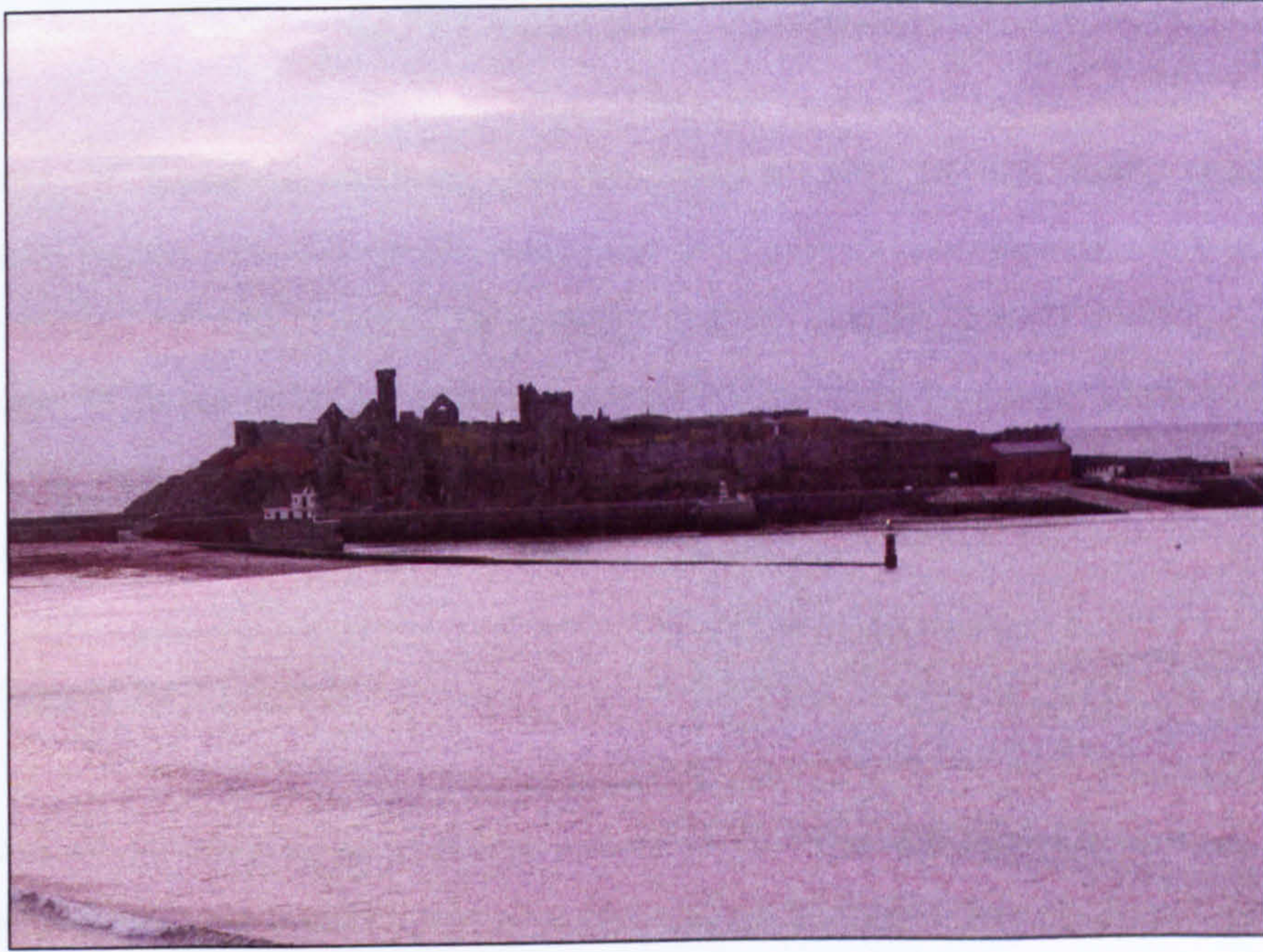


Figure B38: St Patrick's Isle, Peel, with round tower and successors to Type 3 church visible on the left

APPENDIX BIV: CUMBRIA

The county of Cumbria, forming the easternmost part of the study area, covers a geographical region bounded by the sea to the west and the Pennines to the east. Evidence for early phases of Christianity are notably scarce, despite known evidence for Roman Christianity. With the influx of influence from Northumbria, however, Christianity becomes more visible, and from the ninth to tenth centuries, there is a notable proliferation of monuments.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The pattern of settlement in Cumbria would have been dramatically altered during the Roman period, with the construction of a network of roads and forts. Intensified agriculture and the importation of goods to support an increased population would have impacted the vegetation of the landscape, and the nature of communication within it (McCarthy 2002, 365); to the south of the Solway, the land that had formed the territory of the *Carvettii* had become a *civitas* by the third century, with a probable capital at Carlisle (McCarthy 2002, 365).

Though the distribution of sub-Roman and early medieval finds in Cumbria would seem to correspond to areas of low-lying land (O'Sullivan 1993, 26), archaeological evidence attesting to the nature of associated settlement has not been forthcoming (O'Sullivan 1985). Some evidence survives for post-Roman occupation at Roman sites such as Birdoswald (Wilmott 1997), Stanwix (Burnham 2000) and Carlisle (McCarthy 2002, 367), and possibly at Netherby (McCarthy 2002, 366-7). This occupation does not necessarily have to represent a refortification of Roman defences (Dark 1992b); 'the conclusion that one might legitimately draw is that important buildings in important locations (mostly, but not necessarily only, forts) continued to have a function at and beyond the point where old-style Roman military command structure no longer had any force' (McCarthy 2002, 267). McCarthy tentatively suggests that these sites may have been occupied by local lords (2002, 367), prior to the development of small kingdoms, or the 'return to tribalism' (Higham 1986, 235).

Outside these examples, little is known of the nature of settlement in Cumbria into continuing centuries. Although candidates for early medieval forts have been suggested at Carrock Fell (Newman 1984, 155), Kingsmoor, Carlisle Castle, Cargo and Liddel Strength (McCarthy 2000, 136-7; 2002, 363), until recently none had been conclusively dated.

Radiocarbon dates acquired for a hillfort at Shoulthwaite, above Thirlmere, produced dates of AD598-657 (1435±50 BP: AA-33591) and AD 616-664 (1500±50BP: AA-33592)(Newman 2004, 19). However, there remains a scarcity of such sites when compared to southwest Scotland, especially given the suitability of the topography. Crannogs, too, are notably lacking in such a lake-dominated landscape (McCarthy 2002, 363).

Recent excavations have started to elucidate the nature of early medieval rural settlement in this area, including *grubenhauser* and post-built structures at Fremington (Oliver, Howard-Davis and Newman 1996), and the remains from Shap, Brougham (Heawood and Howard-Davis 2002) and Kentmere (Dickinson 1985). Further work is required, however, to demonstrate the extent and range of settlement in this area, and to investigate how it changed through time.

LATE ROMAN CHRISTIANITY

Unlike those areas beyond Hadrian's Wall, Roman settlements in Cumbria attracted high numbers of inhabitants, and became major nuclei within the landscape. These would have been highly Romanised, and in constant communication with Roman administrative units across Europe. Christianity would have been one of many 'exotic' cults that travelled along these channels, and evidence for ecclesiastical activity, as represented by inscribed stones and artefacts, is relatively strong for this region (Watts 1991, 219)

Cumbria: PHASE I

Despite known late Roman Christianity, archaeological evidence for ecclesiastical investment in Cumbria prior to the eighth century is largely absent. Although Thomas (1981, 16-17) argues for a degree of Christian continuity, and the survival of an episcopal see at Carlisle, there is nothing concrete to support such an assertion. It can, however, be reasonably assumed that the population remained officially Christian. In interpreting the writings of Patrick in the fifth century, Howlett suggests that his tone reflects the existence of 'nominal' Christianity, whereby ecclesiastical offices would have become part of contemporary administration, but lacked a strong missionary or expansive dimension (Howlett 1994, 53). If religion was not perceived as a powerful tool at this time, there would have been no motivation for high levels of investment. Likewise, if society was not sufficiently hierarchical to control the surplus required to invest in churches, there would also have been a lack of investment of this type. Claims for a fifth-century monastic centre

at Urswick are therefore of considerable interest, but as yet have to be substantiated (Dickinson 2002).

Cumbria: Phase II

Isolated examples of cross-incised stones at Addingham and Bewcastle have previously been considered evidence for early Christian activity (Bailey 1960a). However, the undiagnostic nature of these monuments makes them equally likely to belong to later centuries. Likewise, the evidence for stone-lined and dug graves of early date in Cumbria is insubstantial, and provides little evidence for spatial trends, other than adhering to the coast and major valleys (figure B39).

Neither can any major ecclesiastical settlement can be securely ascribed to an early period. Despite long held traditions of antiquity at sites such as Ninekirks Brougham and Brampton Old Church, there is a conspicuous lack of early evidence at these sites. Dedications to St Ninian are likely to be anachronistic (*cf* Clancy 2001), and the supposedly secondary dedication to St Wilfrid may in fact be more relevant (Bouch 1950). Although the riverside location of the site, at a significant point in the Roman network, with evidence of a Roman hoard, would make this an ideal candidate for an early ecclesiastical site, no secure evidence survives for a Phase II activity. The cropmark of an enclosure provides no secure indication of chronology (Higham 1986, 276; Cramp 1995), and indeed the best dated find is a cup mount of eighth century date, indicating a possible focus of activity in Phase III, potentially linked with the nearby settlement at Fremington (Brougham 1847; Bailey 1977; Loveluck 2002, 144). Further work would be required to prove the presence of pre-eighth century activity (O'Sullivan 1980a, 209-214). The striking location of Brampton, in a Roman fort, would again not be out of place for an early medieval church, but this does not provide sufficient evidence for such a date. Fieldwork at these sites would hopefully elucidate the situation.

During Phase II, evidence has been proposed for Northumbrian investment in the northern reaches of the Eden Valley, although it seems that the burials ascribed by O'Sullivan (1980a; 1996) to the seventh century may in fact belong to a later period. If these burials do belong within Phase II, then they represent the first signs of ideological activity by an Anglian population in the landscape of Cumbria. The upper Eden valley linked with the thoroughfare from east to west, and furnished burial in the vicinity of this major route way would have been a visible encroachment of eastern ideas on territories west of the Pennines.

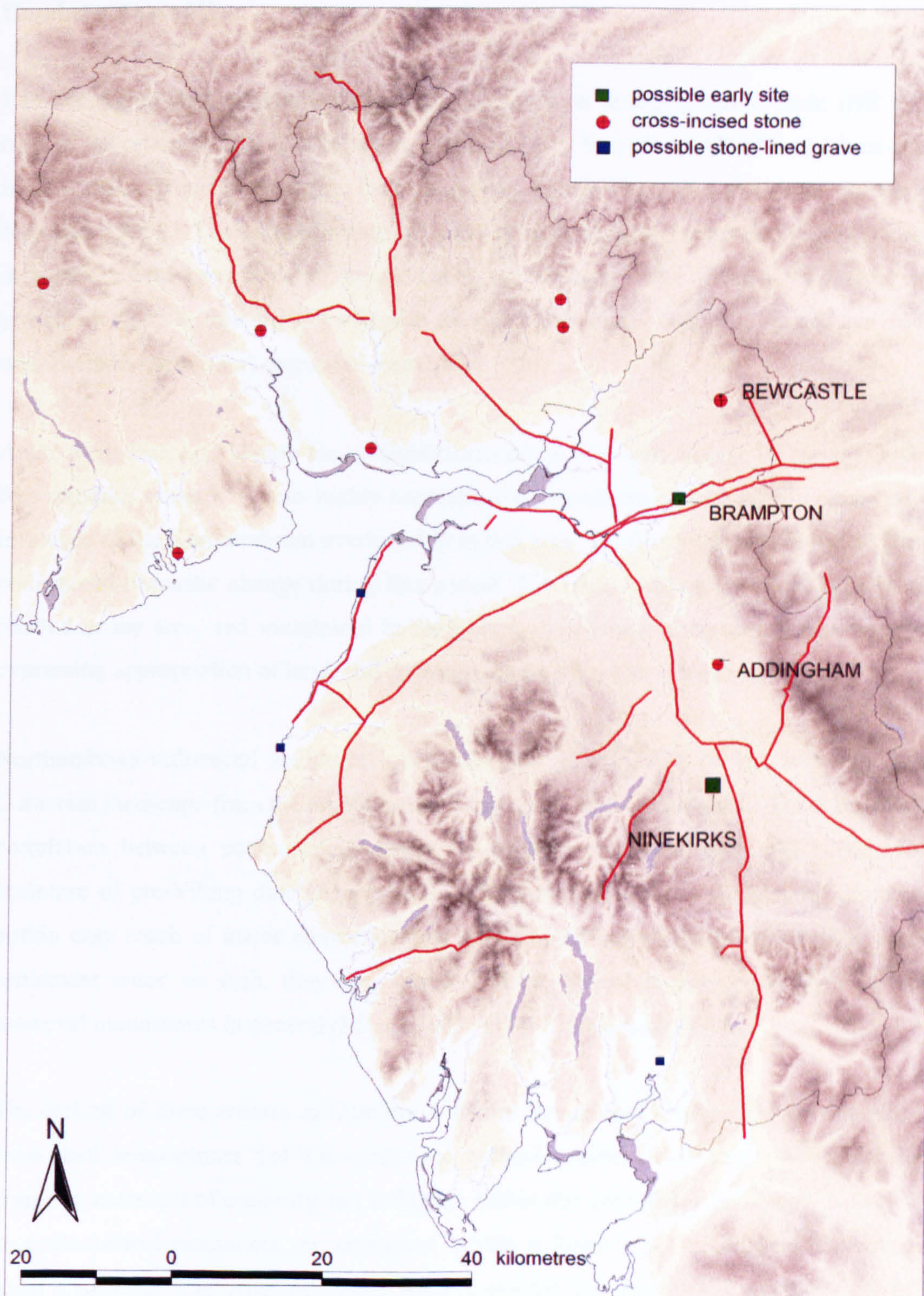


Figure B39: Possible activity ascribed to Phase II, Cumbria

Cumbria: Phase III

Into the eighth century, evidence for Christianity is on firmer ground. Bede (*HE* IV.32) records the establishment of a monastic centre at Dacre by at least AD 698, and excavations in the 1980s revealed evidence for occupation, ironworking, and enclosure (Leech and Newman 1985). The establishment of a major ecclesiastical centre under Northumbrian influence would have been of considerable significance. The location of Dacre, on a prominent slope, within sight of a Roman road and delimited by streams, would have made a well-defined, visible and accessible foundation.

Apart from Dacre, evidence for ecclesiastical sites is provided largely by the presence of free-standing crosses. These highly sophisticated monuments would have represented the influence of the Northumbrian overlordship in this area. Settlement names do not indicate a widespread linguistic change during this period; it is likely that only a small Anglian elite resided in the area, and investment in the church would have been an effective means of expressing appropriation of land, and dominance with the wider landscape.

Northumbrian-influenced sculpture was established at a number of key locations in the Cumbrian landscape from the eighth century through to the ninth or tenth. There is a marked correlation between ecclesiastical names of possible Anglian origin, and relief carved sculpture of pre-Viking date (figure B40). The locations of these sites are all prominent, within easy reach of major communication arteries, and often occupy pre-existing Roman settlement areas; as such, they correspond well the typical locations identified for early medieval monasteries in general (Morris 1989, 110-112; Rodwell 1984).

The earliest of these crosses in Cumbria is that at Bewcastle. The sundial carved onto the cross shaft demonstrates that it was intended to stand outside; clearly this would have been a dramatic statement of authority and influence within this immediate landscape. Location of an ecclesiastical monument, or settlement, within a Roman fort would also have been of some resonance. The reuse of Roman sites represents the 'creation of continuity' (Bradley 1988); a Northumbrian elite may have wished to recreate Roman dominance over this area.

Likewise, many of the sites further south were established in close proximity to Roman forts; Kendal has Roman fortifications; Penrith lies by Roman *Brocavvm*, and Brigham lies 2.5km from *Derventio*. This may, however, also reflect practical considerations. McCarthy has recently summarised the increasing evidence for continued or renewed occupation at Roman sites in the early medieval period (McCarthy 2002, 366-7) and the Roman road network has

continued in use until the modern day. The foundation of ecclesiastical centres at these locations would have placed them in close proximity to centres of population and power, further demonstrated by the fact that all of the sites occur within the fertile areas of the Eden valley and the coastal plain.

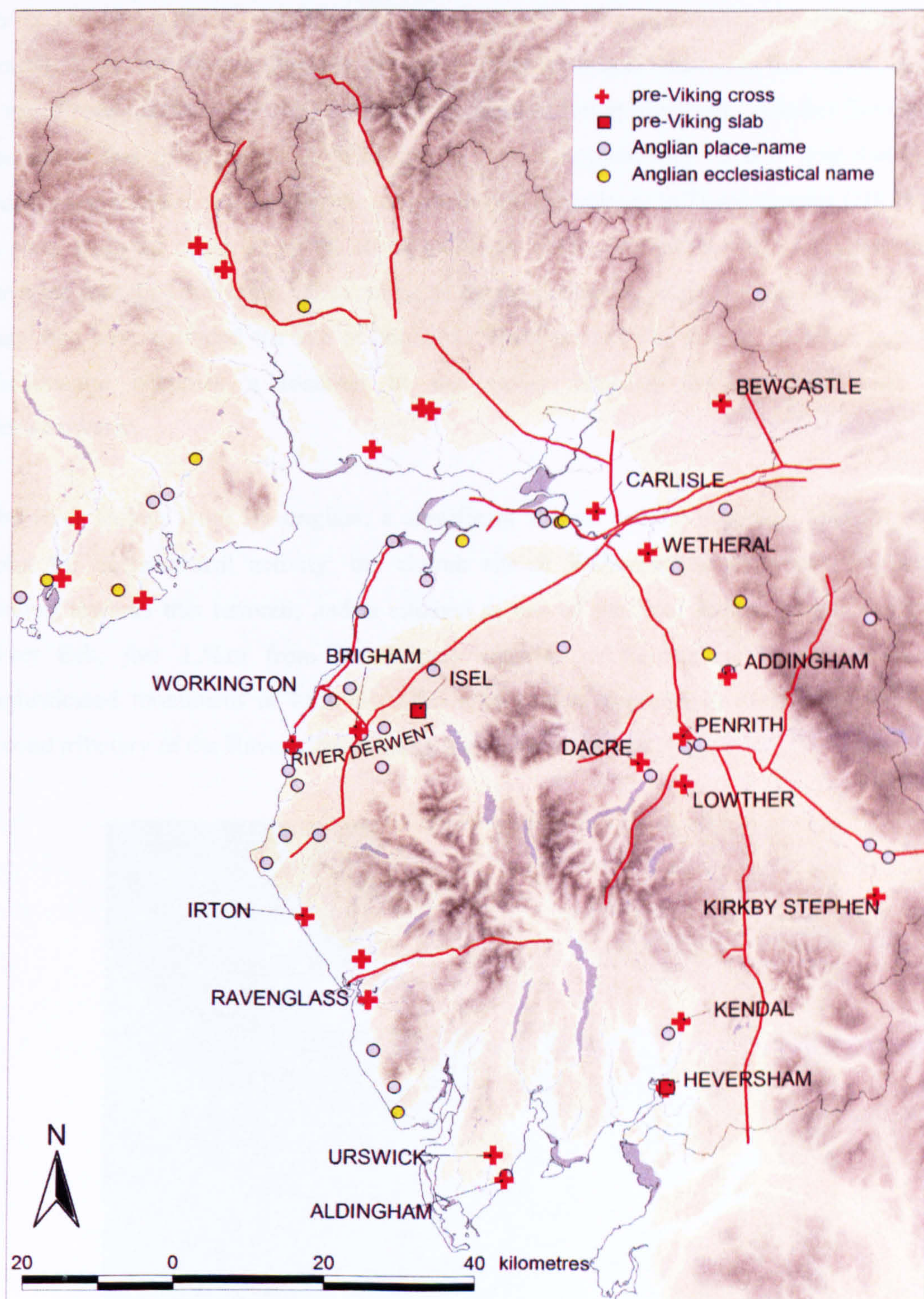


Figure B40: Cumbria PHASE III

Evidence suggests that the Anglian presence was focussed in a small number of specific areas. Workington has produced evidence for a possible early church (SMR No 1011; Flynn 1996), and a large quantity of early medieval sculpture; the site occupies a significant coastal position, still operating today as a harbour at the mouth of the Derwent. The centre would have commanded excellent coastal views, with the Isle of Man visible on a clear day. The River Derwent appears to have been of particular significance during the early medieval period. Less than 10km to the east, the site of Brigham is also situated in this valley, close to a major road junction with the route from the Roman port at Maryport. Another 9km inland, the site of Isel also produced a relief carved slab of Anglian date. It is of note that one of Bede's few references to Cumbrian sites mentions a hermitage in Derwentwater (*HE* IV.24). A route from the coast, along the River Derwent, via Bassenthwaite Lake could eventually have led into the wide Eden valley, close to the concentration of sites around Penrith (which may also have included the site at Ninekirks Brougham). The simple, undated slab from Crosthwaite occupies a location in the valley between Bassenthwaite Lake and Derwentwater.

The river valleys from Ravenglass, a significant Roman coastal site, also formed a focal point for ecclesiastical activity; the church site at Waberthwaite overlooks the estuary leading towards this harbour, and is situated at one of the final fording places across the River Esk, just 1.5km from the Roman remains at Ravenglass (figure B41). The sophisticated monument at Irton occupies a prominent position in the landscape over a second tributary of the Ravenglass estuary, the River Irt (figure B42).



Figure B41: The raised edge of Waberthwaite churchyard, looking towards Ravenglass



Figure B42: Irton church on the horizon

Further south, Aldingham sits virtually on the beach (figure B43), and would have provided a point of access by sea for the more sheltered inland site of Urswick; the site also lies within sight of the contemporary, cliff top site of Heysham (Potter and Andrews 1994). The site of Heversham, recorded as a monastery from the tenth century, overlooks Morecambe Bay and the mouth of the River Kent, which runs through the site of Kendal, another site producing early medieval sculpture, approximately 8km to the north. Though not necessarily part of a single coordinated episode of Anglian expansion, the location of ecclesiastical monuments along the coast and the principal river valleys demonstrates the full penetration of Northumbrian influence across the area. The erection of highly visible, sophisticated monuments would have consolidated the position of an Anglian elite in the area, and allowed local leaders to demonstrate affiliation with an incoming influence.

Within the Eden valley, a cluster of sites occurs close to the major junction of roads leading north-south and east-west across the uplands. Dacre, Penrith and Lowther occur within 10km of each other around the valley and tributaries of the River Eamont, just a short distance from Eamont Bridge, a site known to have been of political significance into later centuries (King Athelstan met the Kings of Strathclyde at Eamont Bridge in AD 927). The site was clearly of some significance from prehistoric times; the concentration of sites in the vicinity includes the henges of Mayburgh and King Arthur's Seat (McCarthy 2000, 138). Further sites were established along the banks of the Eden valley itself; the original site of Addingham was situated in such close proximity to the river that it was flooded and abandoned in the twelfth century (Gordon 1915).



Figure B43: Aldingham church, southern Cumbria

The presence of an ecclesiastical settlement at Carlisle is one of the few documented foundations in Cumbria apart from that at Dacre. Despite evidence for early medieval settlement, and some sculpture, the nature of ecclesiastical activity remains uncertain (McCarthy 1990), although recent finds near to the Cathedral may be associated. If Carlisle had, however, continued as a centre of power since the Roman period, this would have been an ideal candidate for the establishment of an ecclesiastical centre; the ruins of a Roman city would have been equally suitable.

Cumbria: Phase IV

During the ninth and tenth centuries, a number of furnished burials herald the presence of an elite of Scandinavian descent or affiliation. Place-name experts suggest that this may be seen in terms of an influx of settlers both from the Danelaw and Norway (Fellows-Jensen 1985; 1992). The furnished grave at Brigham, and that of Eaglesfield to the south, demonstrate the continued importance of the Derwent valley. The churchyard burial at Rampside occupies a bluff overlooking Morecambe Bay, whilst the rich burials at Hesketh-in-the-Forest, and Ormside, continue to demonstrate the importance of the Eden valley as a major thoroughfare and area of investment.

A similar distribution is shown by the 'kirk' names of Cumbria, following the coast and the Eden valley, representing the naming of ecclesiastical sites by a Scandinavian-speaking population who had adopted, or accepted, Christianity (figure B44). This ecclesiastical

place-naming may have represented the appropriation of pre-existing sites, or the establishment of new Christian centres, and may have been contemporary with the proliferation of monuments that is evident from the ninth century onwards.

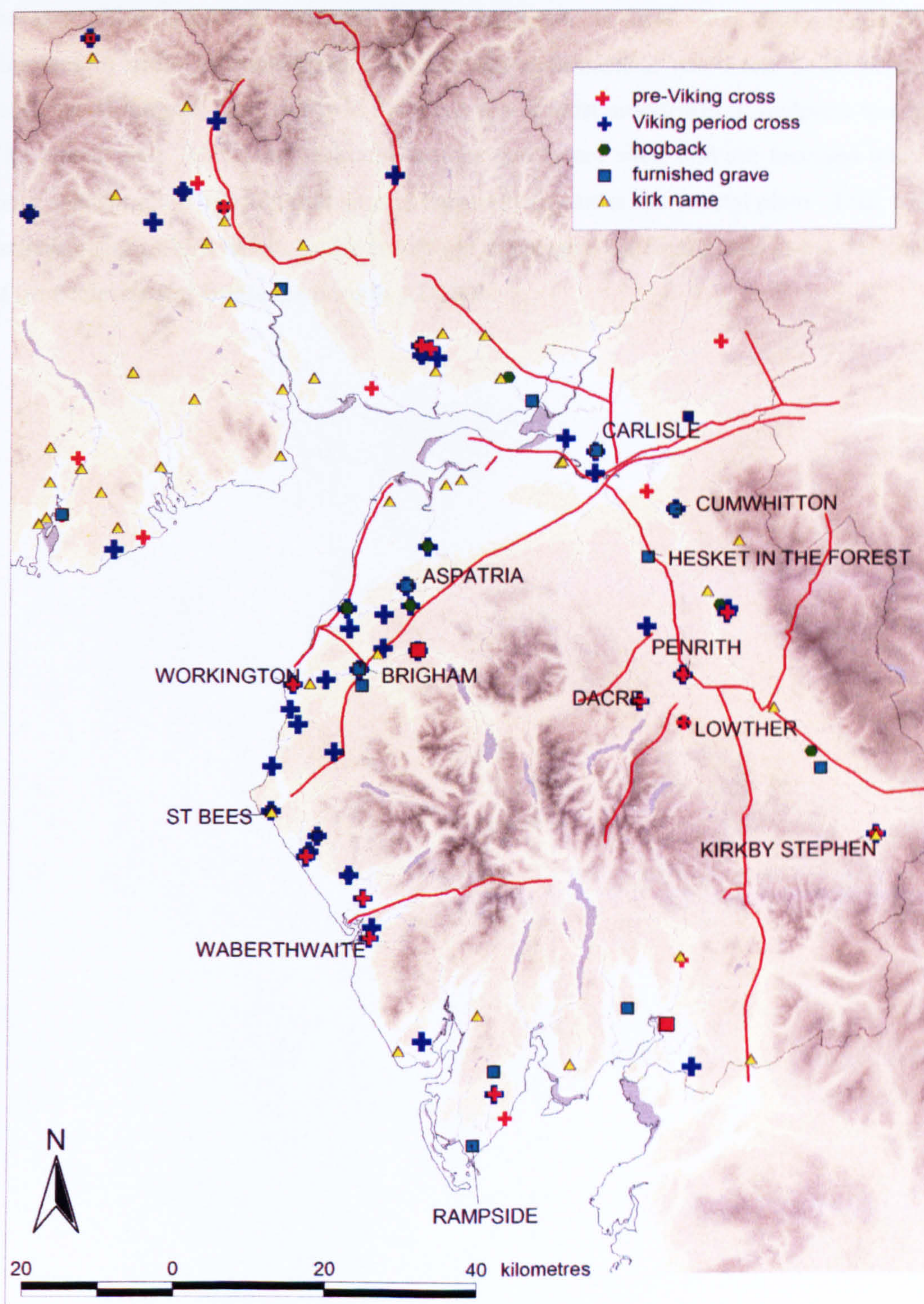


Figure B44: Cumbria PHASE IV

The sculpture of the Viking period demonstrates the same foci for ideological investment as the earlier monuments, notably around the Derwent. Investment is also seen to have been strong in the parallel valley of the River Ellen. The sculpture demonstrates continuity at individual sites from the earlier period, but also highlights patronage at many more sites in the area. This is seen as evidence for secularisation, as local elites patronised their own churches in order to control land and harness ecclesiastical resources. Local schools of sculpture developed, particularly in the areas where most investment in sculpture took place. The 'spiral' and 'Beckermest' schools demonstrate linked sites, and are focussed within the main concentration of sculptural sites in the northern part of the coastal plain. This, with the establishment of kirk names in the landscape, represents the final phase in the development of the ecclesiastical landscape prior to AD1000.