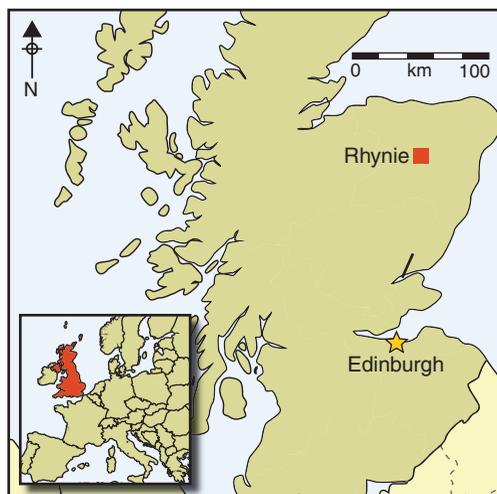


Between prehistory and history: the archaeological detection of social change among the Picts

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The development of small-scale kingdoms in the post-Roman world of north-western Europe is a key stage in the subsequent emergence of medieval states. Recent excavations at Rhynie in north-eastern Scotland have thrown important light on the emergence of one such kingdom, that of the Picts. Enclosures, sculptured 'symbol stones' and long-distance luxury imports identify Rhynie as a place of growing importance during the fifth to sixth centuries AD. Parallels can be drawn with similar processes in southern Scandinavia, where leadership combined roles of ritual and political authority. The excavations at Rhynie and the synthesis of dated Pictish enclosures

illustrate the contribution that archaeology can make to the understanding of state formation processes in early medieval Europe.

Keywords: Scotland, Rhynie, early medieval, kingdoms, hillforts, Picts, sacral kingship

Supplementary material including Table S1 is provided online at <http://antiquity.ac.uk/projall/noble338/>

Introduction

The first millennium AD in northern Europe stands at the interface between prehistory and history. While some regions remain essentially prehistoric, others are informed by documentation that is often sparse, poetic and enigmatic, bringing additional complexity rather than historical clarity. Scotland occupies an especially challenging position, in which

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there are few native documents or historical records prior to the twelfth century, and the archaeological remains, while rich, are hard to date. The imprecision of historical documentation is particularly keenly felt for the Picts, a people associated with one or more eponymous kingdoms that occupied a large swathe of eastern and northern Scotland. First mentioned in late Roman writings as a collection of troublesome tribal groupings north of the frontier, the Picts went on to dominate north-eastern Scotland until the ninth century, when all accounts of the Picts as a people and a kingdom suddenly disappeared (Woolf 2007; Fraser 2009). The archaeological record for this period (*c.* AD 300–900), like the historical record, is diffuse and difficult—giving rise to what was famously dubbed by a pioneering conference of scholars as the ‘Problem of the Picts’ (Wainwright 1955). In spite of these ‘problems’ the scale of archaeological investigation has been frustratingly slight (Carver 2011), and the model of Pictish social formation has largely followed that of other, better documented, British and Irish regions: envisaging a shift from locally based power to more direct regional (and national) control, influenced and stabilised by the adoption of Christianity (Warner 1988: 57; Alcock 2003).

In this paper we address the social and ideological formation of protohistoric Pictland. Our interpretations have been greatly assisted by new discoveries at Rhynie, Aberdeenshire, where recent excavations have identified a sophisticated power centre at a surprisingly early date, and by an extensive programme of keyhole excavation amongst the previously undated hillforts and ringforts in the same region.

The Picts in history

A key question is when northern British society beyond the Roman frontier came to be characterised by more unified social and political identities. Fraser (2011: 27) has recently adopted a minimalist view of Pictish social and political evolution, arguing that Pictish ethnogenesis may have been a phenomenon of the seventh century AD or later and suggesting that in some areas of early medieval Scotland ‘farmer republics’, rather than kings and kingdoms, may have long remained the dominant social and political formation (Fraser 2009: 34, 67). Unfortunately, there is scant historical evidence for the Pictish kingdoms and their genesis to draw upon. The Pictish king lists, one of the few native documents for the Picts, include kings who reigned in the fifth century and at least some of these figures appear to be historical rather than mythical; but again their exact territorial domains or relation to other rulers within Pictland is unknown. The historical record certainly implies that by the early eighth century at the latest there was an over-king of Pictland, but also clearly sub-kingdoms too (Evans 2008: 9). The Pictish king-lists and the twelfth-century *De Situ Albanie* (Anderson 1973) also suggest there may have been seven or more ‘provinces’ in Pictland. Exactly what these provinces represented is uncertain—some of their names coincide with the domains of documented kings (such as Fortriu), but others only appear in the occasional place name (Dobbs 1949: 137; Broun 2000). Similarly, although Christian missions were active among the Picts from the sixth century AD, we have no textual information on the character or significance of pre-Christian belief and its role in early rulership.



Figure 1. Pictish symbol stones; left: with incised images, the *Craw Stane*, Rhynie ('Class I') (image by Cathy MacIver); right: cross and images in relief, cross slab from *Dyce*, Aberdeenshire ('Class II') (image by Meggen Gondek).

The archaeology of the Picts

The Pictish archaeology of northern and eastern Scotland represents some of the most spectacular, yet least researched, archaeological remains of first-millennium-AD northern Europe. The defining monument is the standing stone carrying a variety of symbols, incised or in relief. They offer one way of studying Pictish social and political development (Henderson & Henderson 2004) (Figure 1). The symbols they portray probably represented names or identities of some kind (e.g. Samson 1992; Forsyth 1997; Lee *et al.* 2010), and it could be assumed, as much of the sculpture of this period elsewhere, that the stones were commemorative. This commemorative role was supported by a supposed association between symbol stones and burials (Ashmore 1980), such as the broken example in association with a square cairn and burial at Dairy Park, Dunrobin (Close-Brooks 1980). However, a direct association between burial monument and symbol stone has rarely been unequivocally demonstrated and can be discounted at some sites (see below) (cf. Clarke 2007). The artwork shows an unusually uniform repertory over the Pictish area, implying an element of shared social and ideological identity, and the stones become more iconographically complex through time. The incised stones, presumed to be earlier, show only symbols; the images in relief, assumed to be later, portray the cross and other items of Christian iconography. There is, therefore, a likelihood that a shared early belief system and/or symbolic system was transferred to a Christian one. The later stones also show greater investment of resources, suggesting the desire for a more formal and economically demanding form of monumentality at more concentrated localities through time (Gondek 2006). However, at present it is difficult to carry interpretation any further, the major problems being that archaeological dating and investigation of these monuments remains rare and that few of them stand in their original context.

Burial traditions are another classic way of establishing social hierarchies and stratification in past societies. Cemeteries deemed to be Pictish are generally represented by small clusters of round or square barrows sometimes in association with long cist or dug graves, although



Figure 2. Pictish square barrows under excavation at Forteviot, central Scotland (© SERF Project, University of Glasgow).

until very recently few had been excavated (Figure 2). Unlike Anglo-Saxon areas to the south, the tradition throughout the first millennium AD was for largely unfurnished burial (Maldonado 2011). Many of these cemeteries also lack good preservation, hence there have been no physical anthropological studies of the cemetery populations and little or no modern scientific analyses (e.g. stable isotope studies on diet and mobility). Compounding this is the absence of a full excavation of an extensive cemetery. All of these factors make it difficult to model population trends and dynamics. The settlement record is also problematic. Despite some limited progress through development-led archaeology, only a handful of rural settlements of the right date have been excavated and only one has produced a structural type that might be as distinctively Pictish: the longhouses at Pitcarmick (Cook & Dunbar 2008: 154–56; Barrett *et al.* forthcoming). There are no certain churches and only one Pictish monastery, that at Portmahomack (Carver 2008). However, there are large numbers of undated fortified enclosures that are likely to have been reused, rebuilt or imitated in the Pictish period and these increasingly provide an important dataset for examining Pictish social and political structure.

Enclosures

Understanding the nature of enclosed settlement is arguably one of the most reliable ways of analysing the development of power structures in archaeology (Driscoll 1991; Ralston 2004). From the mid twentieth century a series of diagnostic early medieval hillfort types in Pictland and beyond have been identified and interpreted as chiefly or kingly residences and as early medieval ‘capitals’ (e.g. Stevenson 1949; Feacham 1955). In the 1970s and

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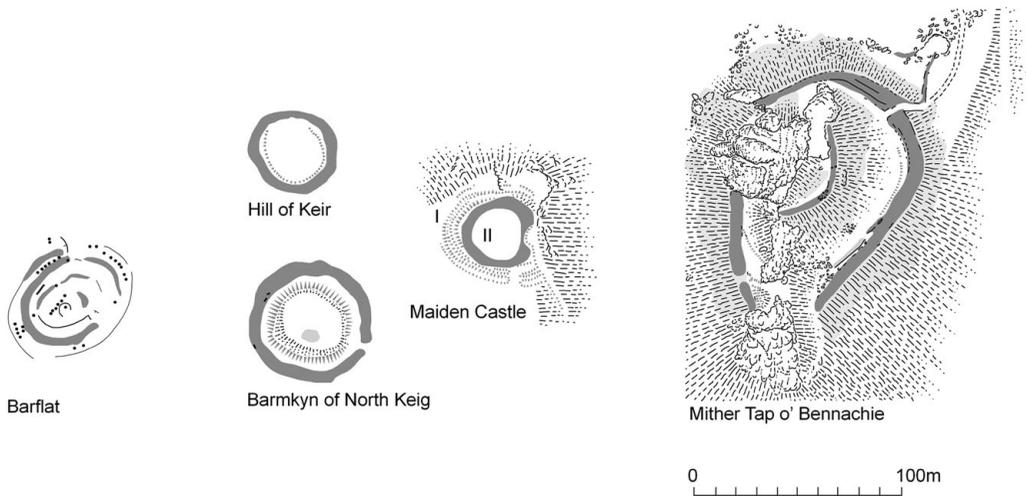


Figure 3. Plans of Pictish enclosed sites showing relative scales of enclosure—the palisade at Rhynie (Barflat); 'ringforts' at Maiden Castle, Hill of Keir and Barmkyn of North Keig; and the 'nuclear' hillfort at Mither Tap. Redrawn from RCAHMS 2007.

1980s Leslie Alcock undertook a series of keyhole excavations at some of these historically documented places, in a programme explicitly aimed at the archaeological endorsement of early royal sites (Alcock 1988, 2003; Alcock *et al.* 1989; Alcock & Alcock 1990). Alcock's thesis was that the high investment in labour and materials in the major hillforts of these regions suggested that these were the seats of *potentates*—important landholding families—their prime roles being as fortifications used to defend important territorial landholdings that in some cases at least formed the basis of the early kingdoms of northern and western Britain. This interpretation drew on the evidence for imports, craftworking, the suggested use of these places for inauguration, and also on the slim historical record (Alcock 1988: 28).

Alcock's excavations were important developments at the time, but the scale of his investigations and many that followed were very limited. What is now clear from recent work is that the scale and range of enclosed or defended architecture in Pictland is much wider than previously recognised. Furthermore, new dating programmes suggest important transitions in Pictish society in the fifth to sixth centuries AD. At least three traditions of enclosed architecture can be identified in the areas of eastern and northern Scotland that encompassed Pictland: hillforts, coastal forts and ringforts. Recent excavations at Rhynie suggest a newly identified fourth form of Pictish enclosure. These are considered in turn below (Figure 3; full details including references are included in the online supplement). Monastic enclosures as demonstrated at Portmahomack also occur, but may date to the seventh and eighth centuries (Carver 2008). One further type of enclosed settlement is the early medieval crannog, which in Ireland can have royal associations (e.g. Lagore; Hencken 1950), but other than a few radiocarbon-dated examples, we know little about these in Pictland.

Hillforts

The classic site type that Alcock and others identified as high status, sometimes with royal associations, is the hillfort. In Pictland the classic hillforts include sites with summit ‘citadels’ and ramparts that define a series of lower enclosures, known as ‘nuclear’ hillforts in the literature (after Stevenson 1949). The best-known examples are Dundurn in Perthshire and Clatchard Craig in Fife, both located on prominent craggy outcrops with multiple ramparts with stone facing and timber lacing. (For references, dating and further details see online supplement, including Table S1.) More recently identified examples include Mither Tap, Bennachie, where occupation dating to the first millennium AD has been confirmed. Other identifications rely on morphological parallels and include East Lomond Hill in Fife and Moncreiffe Hill in Perthshire, both of which show the hierarchical organisation and extensive defences of Dundurn and Clatchard Craig (Feacham 1955; Driscoll 2011: 256). Evidence from the similar ‘nuclear’ fort at the royal site of the Scots at Dunadd in western Scotland suggests that the hierarchical layout grew up over time and reflected an increasingly centralised and hierarchical kingship by the eighth century. Unfortunately, similar detail is not available for any individual site in Pictland (Lane & Campbell 2000). Some Iron Age forts were also reused in the early medieval period in Pictland; these include Craig Phadrig in Inverness-shire and Barra Hill in Aberdeenshire.

Coastal forts

There is also a well recognised, if poorly understood, tradition of coastal forts in Pictland. The most sustained work on coastal forts has been along the northern Moray coast where a number of sites show evidence of the use or construction of defended enclosures in the first millennium AD (Ralston 2004). The most spectacular example is undoubtedly that at Burghead—the largest identified fort in Pictland—although no definite historical reference to this site exists, demonstrating the vagaries of the historical record (Oram 2007). The fort at Burghead incorporates an upper and lower citadel with a series of ramparts cutting off a major coastal promontory. Nineteenth-century excavations showed that the ramparts were of exceptional scale and workmanship. The evidence from Burghead can be set alongside that from a limited number of other coastal sites with secure evidence for construction or use in the first millennium AD, including Portknockie and the reused Iron Age promontory fort at Cullykhan.

Ringforts

One major development of the last five years in the early medieval archaeology of Pictland has been the confirmation as Pictish of a series of smaller defended enclosures that seem to be of a different character to the more spectacular hillforts and coastal promontory forts outlined above. These consist of small hilltop or hillslope fortifications, generally less than 60m in diameter and found at a lower elevation than the major hillforts outlined above. They tend to have slighter ramparts, with hints of internal structures, perhaps houses, within. These enclosures bear some resemblance to the ringfort tradition—the most ubiquitous early medieval settlement form in Ireland (Stout 1997)—and to the stone duns of western

Scotland, some of which date to the early medieval period (Harding 2004: 129–32). The key excavations have been conducted as part of a hillfort dating programme in Aberdeenshire (Cook 2011). They include a small fort at Maiden Castle, with the remains of at least two small successive enclosures, traces of rectilinear internal buildings and evidence of external unenclosed settlement. A similarly sized fort at Cairnmore has also been investigated, dating, like Maiden Castle, to the fifth and sixth centuries AD (Table S1). Parallels for this newly identified tradition of smaller enclosures can be found across Pictland, such as the series of stone-walled enclosures on Turin Hill in Angus. Older excavations in Perthshire at Litigan and Queen's View also suggest early medieval occupation. These clearly represent a newly recognised early medieval site type for the area (Alcock 1988: 41, 2003: 8; Cook 2011).

Rhynie

Recent work has identified a Pictish enclosure of hitherto unprecedented form and character at Rhynie in Aberdeenshire. Rhynie was previously well known for a remarkable series of Pictish carved stone monuments, but like Burghead and many northern Pictish sites, Rhynie is undocumented in the early medieval period. Two seasons of evaluative excavation targeted the *in situ* Pictish symbol stone known as the 'Craw Stane', which stands on a prominent knoll overlooking the Waters of Bogie. Aerial photography had previously shown that the Craw Stane stood in association with a series of spectacular enclosures (Gondek & Noble 2011; Noble and Gondek 2011) (Figure 4). The excavations revealed these to comprise an outer post and plank palisade with foundations some 1.5m deep, suggesting an impressive timber wall at least 4–5m high, and two internal ditched enclosures that may have had associated ramparts. The 2012 evaluation (Figure 5) showed that these enclosures contained a number of buildings including a rectangular structure built with squared timber posts, measuring at least 9m long × 5m wide. A series of slots that had held horizontally laid timber planks, extending for over 20m in length, with transverse settings, may be part of an even larger building, perhaps even a timber hall.

Post and beam settings found near the Craw Stane formed part of an elaborate entrance structure. The Craw Stane was significantly not associated with any burial—the excavations strongly suggest instead that it stood at one of the entranceways leading into the enclosures. A series of radiocarbon dates and Bayesian modelling indicate a short phase of construction and use in the late-fifth to mid-sixth centuries (Table S1). Significant quantities of burnt material across the site suggest it may have been destroyed by fire.

The finds include material that is exceptional for Pictland—sherds of eastern Mediterranean late Roman Amphorae (B ware) along with fragments of imported glass drinking vessels from western France (Campbell 2007). The amphorae, of types LR1 and LR2, can be dated to the earlier sixth century and must have resulted from trading contacts with the Byzantine Empire, most likely via western Scotland. A range of moulds and crucibles demonstrate that high status metalworking was conducted on site. The finds include three bronze items which have parallels in Anglo-Saxon toilet implements, and an amulet, along with amber beads, raising the possibility of contacts with eastern England. Other unusual finds from Rhynie include a complete valve of a small Type H brooch, a type found in Pictish areas as well as in Ireland. These finds further emphasise the exceptional nature of



Figure 4. The palisaded and ditched enclosures at Rhynie (© Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service).

the site and its links with the wider world of the North Sea as well as with Atlantic Britain. They add to the special significance that was already implied by earlier discoveries—above all the two Pictish stones found in the late 1970s in the field in which the enclosure lies. These include the spectacular Rhynie Man, which was discovered during ploughing a short distance downslope from the Craw Stane (Figure 6).

Discussion

The evidence brought together here demonstrates the diversity of forts and enclosures that were clearly an important element of first-millennium-AD Pictland. The pre-existing radiocarbon dating evidence and the important series of new dates (see online supplementary material) clearly demonstrate that all of the enclosure types outlined above emerged in the fifth and sixth centuries AD (Figure 7). Indeed, dating evidence suggests a pronounced period of enclosure building *c.* 440–550 cal AD, with constructional activity becoming less common as the first millennium AD progressed. Fort building seems to have ceased around AD 900. The data also provides an emerging picture of the consolidation of power at a smaller number of sites through time. In northern Pictland, for example, all of the smaller enclosures show clear evidence for construction and use in the fifth to sixth centuries AD, but no evidence for later use, while the larger forts such as Mither Tap and Burghead continue into the seventh and eighth centuries. This suggests that, in some areas of Pictland at least, the smaller enclosures represented more localised power centres, which were superseded in the seventh and eighth centuries AD by an increasing focus on the larger hillforts. This increasing focus on the larger and more elaborate enclosures in northern Pictland can be compared to the appearance from the second half of the seventh century AD of the over-kingship of Fortriú in the Irish chronicle record (Woolf 2006: 193).

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*Figure 5. The 2012 evaluation trench, showing the *Craw Stane* (mid left) just outside the trench, the entrance structure immediately to its right, the inner and outer ditches and the palisade (top). Traces of buildings within the enclosure can also be seen.*

The emergence and proliferation of a range of enclosed sites in the mid first millennium AD mirrors evidence from Ireland, where the ringfort (and crannog) traditions also appear to have originated in the fifth to sixth centuries AD (Stout 1997: 24, 29, fig. 2). In contrast to Pictland, the main bulk of dated sites are later, falling into the period *c.* 650–950 cal AD, and the number of sites is also much greater. The better Irish historical record also makes the connections between kingship and enclosures clear—early Irish law tracts describe some kings' seats to have been univallate, bivallate or trivallate ringforts, and there appears to have been a direct correlation between status and the size of the enclosure (e.g. Stout 1997: 18). As in Pictland, so too in Ireland the landscapes and architecture of power and governance connected to kingship appear to have originated in the fifth and sixth centuries AD and were intimately connected to the creation of defended enclosures. In the Irish case, however, there appears to have been a proliferation of sites through time rather than consolidation (e.g. at Tara and its hinterland; Newman 2011). In southern Scandinavia too, enclosed architecture finds new impetus in the mid first millennium AD in the Migration period. Although it

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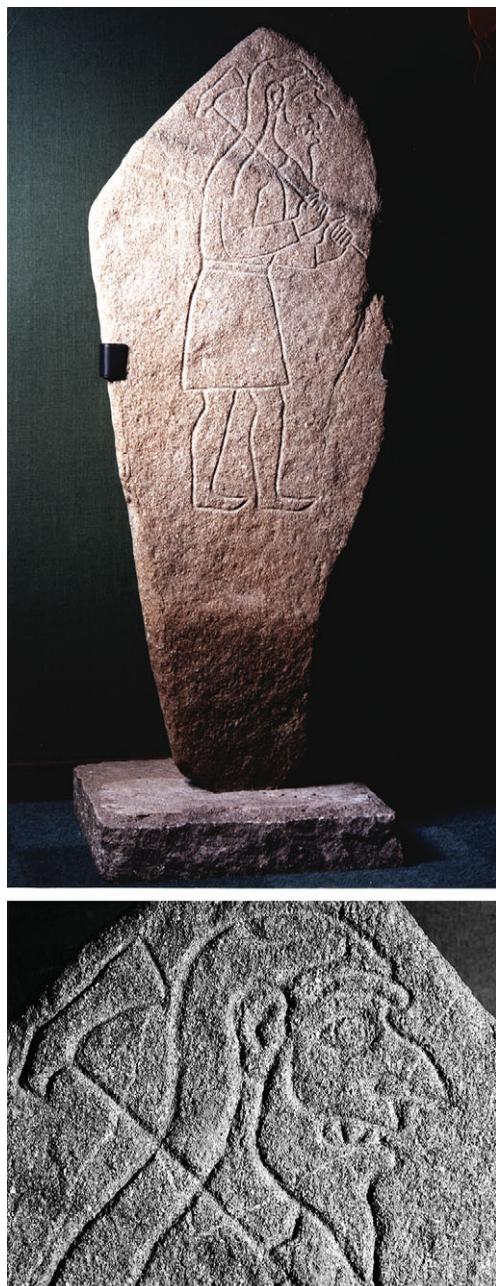


Figure 6. *The Rhynie Man, with close-up of face and axe-hammer* (© Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service).

becomes rarer in the Viking Age, fort building was an important element of rulership as late as the tenth century, during the reign of King Harold Bluetooth (e.g. Näsman 1999: 5; Fallgren 2009). Fort building on the continent in places such as the central Netherlands and at the periphery of the Roman empire in Alamannia played a major role in the Migration period. It became rarer in the latter area at least when that was subsumed by Frankish and later Merovingian early state formation that limited the influence of regional rulers (e.g. Heidinga 1990: 24–28). The evidence from regions peripheral to the Roman empire—Ireland and southern Scandinavia in particular—demonstrates that the construction of forts in the first millennium AD, and particularly in the centuries around AD 400–600, was one unifying trend deeply implicated in the formation of new kinds of society that appeared in the second half of the first millennium AD, albeit in each case these developments took on their own trajectories and character.

Returning to Picthland, while the diversity in enclosed architecture and the main patterns in dating are beginning to emerge, few of these sites have given clear evidence of the nature of early kingship. This underlines the importance of Rhynie in illuminating a period that even in the romanised parts of Europe lacks detailed written evidence, inhibiting our understanding of the development of kingdoms (Halsall 1995: 33–36, 251–52). The name ‘Rhynie’ derives from ‘rhyinoid’, which means ‘a very royal place’, a fitting identifier for this newly discovered site (Watson 2011 [1926]: 34–

35). That the finds described above come only from two small-scale seasons of evaluation underlines its importance. The late Roman amphorae from Rhynie are indeed the northernmost European examples of eastern Mediterranean imports, and lie far outside

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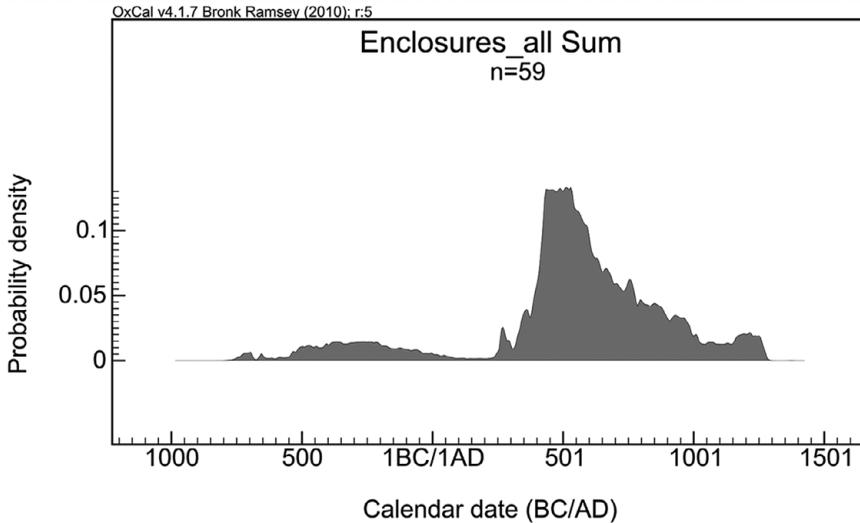


Figure 7. Dating summary. This includes all the refined dates for Pictish enclosures (see online supplementary information for further detail; graph created using OxCal 4.1.7 (Bronk Ramsey 2009)).

the normal distribution of Mediterranean wares within Britain (Campbell 2007: fig. 13). The location of Rhynie more than 40km from the coast is a highly unusual aspect of an import site of the period. It is matched in this respect only by the royal site of Clogher, Tyrone, in Northern Ireland and by Cadbury Castle, Somerset, in south-western England, both major post-Roman power centres. The imports along with the evidence for fine metalworking hence make Rhynie an extremely unusual site: a sophisticated power centre with long-distance contacts at a surprisingly early date (Campbell 1996: tab. 4.1).

As well as parallels with high status or 'royal' sites in western Britain and Ireland, Rhynie also shares features with the similarly low-lying Anglo-Saxon 'palace' and palisaded sites of Northumbria, such as Yeavinger and Doon Hill. The palisade at Yeavinger, known as the 'Great Enclosure' is of a very similar form to that identified at Rhynie and here the association with a royal settlement with many timber halls is well known (Hope-Taylor 1977). The palisade at Doon Hill is a more modest structure, but also encloses a large timber building (Hope-Taylor 1980). The origins of Yeavinger-style palisades at Anglian royal sites have been hotly debated, with some favouring a British origin and others Anglo-Saxon (Hope-Taylor 1977, 1980; Scull 1991; O'Brien 2012). The Rhynie evidence shows that palisaded enclosures with post-and-plank-built rectangular buildings originated in native northern British contexts and occurred far from areas of Anglo-Saxon settlement. That is not to claim that Rhynie was a palace of similar character to Yeavinger or the more modest Doon Hill. Indeed, Rhynie appears to be earlier and has unique features such as the sculpture and the evidence for imports.

Important parallels for Rhynie can also be drawn with the high status first millennium AD 'central places' of Scandinavia. These have rarely been compared to the northern British examples. They emerge around the middle of the first millennium AD and combine a magnate's residence with a hall (*hov* or *harg*) and with production and trading areas.

They may also include cult elements including specialised buildings, sacrificial sites and cemeteries—i.e. they were both residences and places where public ceremonies and rituals were conducted (Brink 1996). These Scandinavian sites have been implicated in important changes in political power in the first millennium AD, notably the transfer of authority from extended kin groups to a monopoly of rulership by leading persons or families (Larsson 2007: 11). Prominent examples include Uppåkra in Scania where excavations have revealed a series of timber buildings, a huge midden and a specialised plank-built structure interpreted as a cult building (Larsson 2007). The site appears to have originated in the third century AD, but the most spectacular finds date from the fifth–seventh centuries AD. They include imports from the Black Sea region and weapon sacrifices that incorporated human and animal bone. Another example is Gudme (‘home of the gods’) in south-eastern Funen, Denmark, which was both a magnate’s farm and a locus of cult and ritual (Nielsen *et al.* 1997). The finds from a number of these central places suggest that ritual formed an important element of political authority (Ringtved 1999: 50; Watt 1999). Indeed, Hedeager (1999: 151) has argued that new types of political authority in fifth- and sixth-century Scandinavia were rooted in a new religious authority where access to the world of the gods was crucial.

The evidence from Rhynie shares resonances with the contemporary situation in Scandinavia. There is the unusual sculpture for one. The Rhynie Man carries a special axe-hammer which can be compared to a very similar axe-hammer found in the Sutton Hoo ship burial—interpreted as an axe for sacrificing cattle and a symbol of sacral kingship in a pagan context (Dobat 2006) (Figure 6). The metalwork from Rhynie also includes a unique miniature iron axe-hammer pin (Figure 8), and the animal bone assemblage from Rhynie includes significant deposits of burnt or cremated bone. The Scandinavian sagas, and increasingly archaeological evidence too, suggest that the conduct of animal (*blót*) sacrifices was central to notions of leadership in a pre-Christian context (e.g. Sundqvist 2002). Rhynie Man, the carved stone discovered in the 1970s, may depict a mythical figure engaged in ritualised activity, representing perhaps a contemporary leader’s role as a figure of both secular and cult authority. Other examples of axe-wielding figures on Pictish symbol stones (e.g. Henderson & Henderson 2004: 125) imply that leadership in cult was a widely recognised element of Pictish rulership.

Conclusions

The evidence brought together here highlights the fifth and sixth centuries AD as a period of rapid proliferation of various forms of hillforts, coastal forts, ringforts and palisaded enclosures in Pictland. Rhynie dates to the earliest stages of this process and provides unique insights into the development of rulership in an early medieval context. The dating evidence is also beginning to suggest an increasing centralisation of power at a number of key strongholds through time. The end of these localised power centres and the demise of Rhynie coincides with the impact of Christianity from the late sixth century onwards and, with the emergence of a documented over-kingdom in northern Pictland, that of Fortriu, in the later seventh century AD (Woolf 2006). At this stage Pictland was increasingly transformed by the establishment of key monastic centres such as Portmahomack, by increasing investment in monumental Christian sculpture and by growing centralisation and compartmentalisation



Figure 8. The Rhynie iron axe-hammer pin; above: as found during excavation; below: X-ray image (by Aberdeen Medical School, University of Aberdeen) showing the axe blade balanced by looped spiral design, hole for suspension, and long thin shaft.

of power (e.g. Gondek 2006; Carver 2008). At the greatest Pictish fort of all, at Burghead, fragments of early Christian sculpture and evidence of an early church suggest that pagan Pictish leadership was quickly transformed into Christian kingship, where there was more of a divide between the royal and the sacred (cf. Warner 1988: 57). The various enclosure forms and the character of their archaeology thus identify them as a key element in tracking the development and character of first-millennium-AD polities in northern Britain. Further work at these sites will undoubtedly produce new and more detailed insights.

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