PERIPHERAL VISION: SCOTLAND IN EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The catalyst for this paper was a review by Richard Hodges of the excavation monograph for the royal Scottish site of Dunadd (Lane & Campbell 2000). Hodges, one of the leading early medieval archaeologists, described early medieval Scotland as 'marginal in European terms', having 'an aboriginal level of material culture', and as an area which 'failed to engage in the Post-Roman rebirth of Europe' (Hodges 2004: 725). He is not alone in this view – Chris Wickham's 2005 monumental survey of early medieval Europe and the Mediterranean, *Framing the early Middle Ages*, deliberately excludes Scotland as being of little interest, one of only three regions (the others being Bavaria and Cyrenaica) to have this distinction (Wickham 2005: 6, n.6; see Barrett 2008: 675 for a critique). The Society for Medieval Archaeology's recent 50th anniversary volume (Gilchrist & Reynolds 2009) barely mentions Scottish archaeology at all in its survey of European medieval archaeology (Campbell forthcoming a). I hope to show this view of Scotland is an old trope, based on the notion that Scotland is peripheral in importance as well as in geography, and to offer an alternative view – if you like, a view *from* the periphery, rather than a view *of* the periphery. My title, *Peripheral Vision*, was chosen because I also want to examine vision in the metaphorical sense of innovation, and make comments on how being geographically peripheral to mainland Europe might have actually encouraged the development of new ways of looking at the world. In a word, because early medieval Scotland is different from the rest of Europe, it does not mean that it is less important. To ignore or sideline Scotland runs the danger not just of bad scholarship, but also of missing important questions which are raised by comparing the achievements of a liminal society with those of an economic core.

On the matter of terminology, this conference is themed on Scotland, but at the period I am discussing 'Scotland' of course did not exist. I will be focussing on the Gaelic-speaking kingdom of Dál Riata, but much of what I say also applies to the wider Gaeldom of Ireland, to Pictland in the eastern part of modern-day Scotland, and the British and Anglian areas of southern Scotland. Of course, there were strong regional differences in material culture within Scotland, though these do not necessarily coincide with the four 'peoples' mentioned by Bede as living in Scotland– the Scots, Picts, Britons and Angles. Within the scope of this

paper these differences can only be briefly alluded to, but further detail can be found in recent accounts (Lowe 1999; Henderson & Henderson 2004; Clarke *et al* 2012; Foster 2014).

VISIONS OF THE PERIPHERY

In the Classical imagination Britain and its outlying islands occupied a symbolic place at the ends of the known world, a remoteness similar to our recent use of Timbuktu or the use of 'Far Cathay' in the 19th century. These lands were as far as you could go before falling into the abyssal Ocean which was imagined to surround the three known continents (O'Loughlin 1997). Roman conquerors of Britain saw the *Orcades* (Orkney) as the furthest habitable part of the world (*Ultima Thule* was not habitable) therefore its conquest symbolically represented that the Empire ruled the whole world (Scully 2005). Both Claudius and Agricola were said to have conquered the *Orcades* – because they were the furthest extent possible of the Empire.

This view persisted into Christian times but was adapted and enhanced, particularly because the Ocean was seen in the Old Testament as the realm of monsters and demons - an untamed region outside the civilised world and therefore a suitable site for spiritual warfare between good and evil. As examples one only has to think of Columba's miracles of calming the waters (VC II.12), and the search for 'a desert in the Ocean' by early monks. So, for example, in the fifth century Patrick says Ireland was 'at the ends of the earth' and thus that the Christian message has reached all parts of the world (O'Loughlin 1997: 14; Hood 1978: 49). In the late seventh century Adomnán described Iona as being 'on the edge of the ocean' (VC III.23). It is here worth remembering that it was Adomnán who established the location of Jerusalem as at the geographic centre of the world (O'Loughlin 1997: 19). As late as the 12th century Giraldus Cambrensis was comparing Henry II to Roman Emperors because he ruled Britain as far as the Orkneys.

When we turn to more recent times we see the rise of the stereotype of the wild and uncivilised Highlander, a view strengthened by reaction to the 18th-century Jacobite rebellions. Dr Johnson in his *Tour of the Hebrides* says that for most people

> [The Highlands and islands] ...are equally unknown with that of Borneo or Sumatra: of both they have only heard a little, and guess the rest (Bray 1986: 13).

Note that in this passage he plagiarises from the work of Martin Martin, a Gaelic-speaking writer whose work he scathingly dismisses. The prejudiced view of the Scottish Highlander was more forcefully put by Thomas Pinkerton, an Edinburgh historian

> [The Celts] have not yet advanced even to the state of barbarism... they are incapable of industry or civilisation... fond of lies and enemies of the truth... For the Celts were so inferior a people, being to the [Scots] as a negro to a European, that, as all history shows, to see them was to conquer them (Pinkerton 1787, quoted in Ferguson 1998: 253).

The Gaelic Highlanders are therefore seen as the Other – and therefore to be feared and destroyed if possible. This 'Great Ill-will of the Lowlander' (Broun & MacGregor 2007) has deep historical roots, and the viewpoint of the Celts as being backward continued to influence scholarship. For example, in his discussion of the Celtic Iron Age torques, Simon Birch describes them as being of excellent workmanship, but despite this they are

> productions of a rude, simple, and unartistic people, and are evidence of their intellectual inferiority to the other great nations of antiquity (Birch 1846, 38).

Similar, though more subconscious, views coloured scholarship up to the modern period. Netzer (2001, 2009) has detailed how the interpretation of Insular manuscript art continued to have a history of nationalist bias until very recently, showing how preconceptions and politics have skewed art historians' reading of the evidence. It is only recently that critical reading of the sparse historical sources has become widespread (Fraser 2009: 6–8), with the understanding that these sources tell us about the period they were written in rather the period they purport to describe. These new readings have revealed biases that have distorted archaeologists' (Campbell 2000: 291) and linguists' (Forsyth 1997: 13) interpretation of their evidence. More generally, there has been a prolonged but recently intensified debate on the whole notion of Celticity (for summaries see Chapman 1992; Sims-Williams 1998; 2012). These debates arouse passions because of individual's self-identification with supposed

ancestral peoples. While the more strident views are easy to spot, the more unconscious biases are less obvious, but just as capable of distorting views of the past, as evidenced by Hodges' view of Scotland as having an 'aboriginal level of culture'.

A VISION FROM THE PERIPHERY

In contrast to these negative views of early medieval Scotland, I would like to present what is I hope a more balanced, or perhaps balancing, view. The core/periphery model of early medieval Europe sees the Carolingian Empire as the ideal of a core, and the monetised and urbanised society there as unproblematic and normative. By comparing what was happening there with contemporary Scotland, both in material culture and intellectual development, it is possible to challenge this viewpoint, as has been done for Scandinavia, an area which has also been seen as peripheral (Geary 2013).

MATERIAL CULTURE

There is no doubt that Carolingian society was sophisticated and economically advanced, and that its material culture shows high levels of technical and decorative skill by artisans, access to exotic materials, and considerable concentrations of wealth, resulting in some outstanding architecture. In contrast, Scotland is almost entirely lacking in stone buildings in the early medieval period. Despite this lack of stone architecture, when we look at Insular art we see an explosion of artistic and technical creativity in the seventh and eighth centuries, where the traditions of Germanic animal art, Late La Tène abstract geometric motifs, Pictish art, and late classical human figurative art become combined to produce vibrant new artworks. Items such as the *Book of Kells* and the *Book of Durrow*; the Hunterston brooch and the St Ninian's Isle treasure; or St John's Cross on Iona and the Nigg cross-slab; all exhibit levels of design and innovation at least equal to that of corresponding artefacts of the contemporary Merovingian/Carolingian world. This is a generalisation, of course, and many works, such as manuscripts, produced in continental Europe were themselves influenced by the Insular tradition (Henderson 1994: 271), and others show equally skilful technique. I should make it clear that I am not talking here about subjective judgements on the merit of Insular versus classical art. What I am saying is that the *innovation* is expressed very differently from that in Carolingian examples. The intriguing question to me is why there is this difference, and why is it expressed only in certain areas of endeavour, particularly metalwork, manuscripts and

sculpture, but not widely in stone architecture? Although the influence of monastic centres such as Iona can partly explain investment in manuscript art and stone crosses, this is not the full story, as secular metalwork also shows these innovative qualities, and monastic centres on the Continent did not always show the same creativity in combining disparate traditions and creating entirely new art forms. I will return to this question in my conclusions after looking at other areas of innovation.

If we look in detail at individual examples of the types of material culture surviving from Scotland (and Ireland), they show a great deal of experiment, assimilation of a variety of artistic traditions, and innovation. Some of these types of artefact, particularly in the fields of sculpture and metalwork, have no close parallels within Francia. For example, the eighth-century Ardagh chalice has a complex construction, using a series of techniques including of filigree panels, *Pressblech* panels, multi-colour enamelling, and wire-inlaid glass studs. The contemporary Tassilo chalice in contrast uses only chip-carved decoration. Although the Insular chalices fall into the general tradition of Late Antique metalware chalices, they differ in details of construction and decoration, showing local craftworkers were experimenting and innovating (Ryan 1989; 1990). In a similar fashion, although techniques of gold filigree work were known and used in Frankish brooches, these tend to be early and simpler in design (Whitfield 1990, vol 2: 25–7) and do not show the types of technical innovation in design and construction found in the Insular examples (Whitfield 1987; 2014). Thus there are no Carolingian brooches with the innovation of the Hunterston brooch, while items of the highest wealth and status, such as the crown of Charlemagne, although exhibiting the display of wealth through the lavish use of gold and precious stones, were relatively poorly constructed. In Francia there are no lavishly decorated stone crosses comparable to the Iona or Pictish monuments, and most sculpture is in the form of decorated capitals and other structural components of buildings. Despite the evidence for Insular innovation in figural sculpture (Henderson & Henderson 2004; Stalley 2014), the Insular material has often been ignored or sidelined in discussions of European art (Stalley 1990). On the other hand, Carolingian ivories are of the highest quality of workmanship, and are unmatched in Insular contexts, though their designs are entirely based on Late Antique exemplars. Carolingian art was directly derived from Late Antique traditions, consciously copying styles and objects from the Mediterranean area. Of course, there is an exception where some manuscript art was directly influenced by Insular developments, due to the presence of monks trained in Britain

and Ireland. In general however, materials and craftsmen were brought from Italy and Byzantium to create what has been termed the 'Carolingian Renaissance'. There was also wholescale importation of building materials such as stone columns, mosaics and marble panelling to build Charlemagne's palace at Aachen and other churches (eg Peacock 1997). Although the results are monumental and imposing, and the dome at Aachen has been shown to be use new construction techniques not seen in Roman and Byzantine domes (Rollason 2015: 446), there is little sign of innovation in the decoration, something that has been noted by some art historians (Webster 2012; Januszczak 2012; Henderson 1994). This is not surprising, as the intention was to re-create a vision of the Roman Empire in north-west Europe.

Architecture is the most apparent area where there is disparity of investment between the Continent and Scotland. We have almost no early medieval stone buildings (other than domestic dry-stone constructions) surviving in Scotland, and most buildings were probably of organic materials. This does not necessarily mean these buildings, such as the timber churches at Whithorn (Hill 1997, 134ff), were not highly decorated or sophisticated structures (indeed contemporary literary references suggest they were highly decorated) – we just don't have the evidence. Tomás Ó Carragáin (2010: 78) has suggested that Columba's chapel on Iona may be the first example of a founder's tomb in the Gaelic world and may date to the mid-eighth century, making it the earliest post-Roman mortared stone building in Scotland, and the Forteviot arch and other Pictish sculptural fragments show that there could have been complex decorated stone church or palace buildings in the ninth century, but these are very scattered pieces of evidence. I suspect it is this lack of 'proper' buildings that particularly influenced Hodges in his view of Scotland's 'aboriginal level of culture', especially given his experience of excavating the late Roman town of Butrint in Albania, and the San Vincenzo al Volturno monastic complex in Italy. This surprising lack of engagement with contemporary Continental trends in stone architecture mirrors the situation in Ireland, where Ó Carragáin (ibid: 143–66) has argued that the particular conditions of churches being seen as repositories of social memory resulted in a conservative approach to church architecture as a conscious choice, rather than as the result of any 'backwardness'. All these examples are intended to show that early medieval Scotland was different from the core of Carolingian Europe, but that does not make it inferior.

Economy

Let us turn to another area where the Atlantic West is seen as being backward: economy and trade. There is no doubt that early medieval Scotland did not have any of the normal markers of a developed economy – markets, merchants, towns and coinage. These did not appear until at least the eleventh century, and some later still, lagging well behind England for example. The inhabitants of Scotland were however aware of these economic aspects – they travelled and read widely, but never adopted these particular practices. But in some ways they were economic pioneers, at least in British terms. From the late fifth century to the later seventh century the Atlantic West was part of a series of trading networks which linked it to the Mediterranean and later to the western Continent. The residue of these contacts can be seen in the pottery containers and glass drinking vessels found on (mainly) high status sites in Ireland, Wales, southwest England and Scotland (Campbell 2007). I have shown that this was the result of direct contact with the eastern Mediterranean in the early sixth century (and Carthage by the mid sixth century). A remarkable example of the extent of this trade has recently been found at Rhynie in Aberdeenshire, where the most northerly examples of sixth-century Mediterranean amphorae in the world have been excavated (Noble et al 2013). An extraordinary effort was involved in transporting these heavy items (weighing up to 50kg when full) some 5000km by sea, then overland up the Great Glen or across the Central Valley and up the east coast, then a further 40km inland. These direct contacts had the potential to serve as conduits for people, objects, stories and ideas from the core of the Byzantine Empire.

Later in the sixth century a new trading system developed from western France (Aquitania), but this time the focus of the trade was in the north of the Atlantic zone, with Dunadd and Whithorn as the two most significant import centres. The characteristics of both these systems of trade are peculiar in many respects and do not fit neatly into the economic systems put forward by Hodges and others. In Scandinavia, similar systems have been described as 'between gift and the market' (Gustin 2004). I have suggested that both systems were driven by imperial or royal agents, and suspect that metals were the economic driving force for the earlier system, and slaves for the later one. These connections gave Dál Riata direct access to the highest levels of European society, and a rapid means of communication with them, creating what network theorists have described as 'a small-world network', where hubs enable long-distance communication of materials and ideas (Sindbaek 2007). But what is

interesting about the system is that it pre-dates the beginnings of organised trade in Anglo-Saxon England, which does not really get going till the later seventh century with the founding of the trading towns of *Hamwic*, *Ipswic*, *Lundenwic* and *Eorfwic* (Campbell 2007: fig 3). There, simultaneously, towns appear, along with silver coinage, a variety of imported pottery types, and mentions of both merchants and taxes in contemporary documents.

But why do we not see towns, merchants and coinage in the Atlantic West? One difference is that the major trading places in the West are situated at royal sites, whereas in England they are at a distance from royal sites and administered by a royal official or reeve. In the west the kings seem to want to keep personal control of the trade – I suspect the exchange still functioned on the level of personal contacts; and the feasting and redistribution of the foreign luxuries to client lords took place on these central sites. It thus falls into what Offer (1997) calls 'the economy of regard', and Bourdieu 'the accumulation of symbolic capital' (1990: 112–121), at least on the Gaeldom side of the transaction. But clearly such exposure to Gallic merchants, their methods and coinage did not inspire emulation. There are only two imported coins of this period (AD 450–700) in the whole of Gaeldom, both from Ireland, so that it seems even hoarding for bullion value was not taking place, as it did later in the Norse period. Writers like Adomnán were perfectly aware of towns, merchants and coinage, and we know that many clerics and others would have visited places like Rome. I would suggest that the decision not to have these 'civilised' attributes was at least partly a conscious one, because personal interaction and social standing was more important than personal gain, rather than because they were too unsophisticated a people to manage to produce them. The view that towns are necessary for civilisation is an old one, and was used to justify the colonisation and eradication of indigenous peoples in North America and other areas. There is surely no place for such views today when we are aware of the complexities of pre-industrial societies.

ADMINISTRATION

One of the most important documents from early medieval Scotland is the *Miniugud Senchusa fer nAlban* (Bannerman 1974; Dumville 2002). This is a highly complex text, repeatedly revised and rewritten and fiendishly complex to interpret, but at its core is a civil survey of the landholders and their wealth (in terms of client households) in Dál Riata. Two major strands can be separated, one part dating to the 640s and another to the 740s, and in it

we see the names not just of kings and whole peoples, but of individuals and their obligations to the king. There is no equivalent attempt to carry out this detailed type of survey anywhere else in northern Europe at this early period – the *Tribal Hidage*, for example, merely gives total numbers of people in a polity rather than individual named persons. The original purpose is now obscure, though my colleague Professor Dauvit Broun (pers comm) suggests that its restructuring reflects periods of change in overkingship in Dál Riata. The important point here, however, is that this survey is not just innovative, but shows both literacy, and some sort of administrative development at a very early period in European terms. The writing, re-writing and consultation of these secular documents pre-supposes someone to produce, store and interpret them in the secular contexts of military service and food renders of clients. I have suggested elsewhere that literacy was more widespread in the Atlantic Insular world than commonly acknowledged (Campbell 2010). This is shown by mention of penalties in the Irish Laws for stopping 'learning' by young people and tenant farmers living on monastic estates; many recorded instances of secular pilgrims and penitents living on monastic sites; failed monks who return to the secular world; the widespread use of ogham including casual use on small objects; as well as direct archaeological evidence of graffiti from secular sites such as Dunadd and Tintagel. I have also suggested that the reconstructed satchel from the secular site of Loch Glashan was a book satchel (Crone and Campbell 2005; Campbell 2010: 141), though this interpretation has been disputed (Clarke 2012: 112).

Another aspect which is well-known but perhaps not receiving just attention in European terms is the creation of the 'Iona Chronicle', possibly as early as the 560s (Charles-Edwards 2006: 8, 58). The Insular annals developed from Late Roman annalistic accounts such as those of Prosper of Aquitaine and Isidore of Seville, which continued into the fifth to early seventh centuries on the Continent, but the concept of keeping a year by year contemporary record of political, social and natural events was a re-innovation by the monastic houses of early medieval Europe. The Iona Chronicle formed the basis of many other annals, particularly the 'Chronicle of Ireland' assembled in the early 10th century, and many insular monasteries kept their own records of this type. Despite debate about exactly when the Iona annals become regular contemporary entries, rather than back-dated accounts from other sources, most scholars agree that it was happening by the 640s if not in the late sixth century (Woolf 2007, 3; Herbert 1996; Evans 2010, 172ff; Charles-Edwards 2006). The Frankish annals in contrast mainly originated in the late seventh and early eighth century (Burgess &

Kulikowski 2009: 172; Scholtz 1970), as was the case with the North British annals (Dumville 1974; 1977). The earliest entries of the Anglo-Saxon annals may belong to the 660s (Swanton 1996). Whether or not Iona produced the earliest examples, it was at the forefront of these new developments. This new phase of record keeping suggests a new way of looking at and ordering the world was developing in Atlantic Britain. Yet, well-known as this is to local historians, general accounts of chronicle writing emphasise the contributions of Isidore and Bede, while tending to ignore the Irish tradition altogether (eg Scholz 1970: 3), or sometimes dismissing these as 'mere annals' (Burgess & Kulikowski 2009: 154).

Learning

Although we are familiar with the idea of monasteries such as Iona being centres of learning, it is not always appreciated just how much they contributed to the intellectual development of the wider European community. This is being established by much new scholarship in recent years, for example by Thomas Clancy, Gilbert Márkus, Thomas O 'Loughlin, James Fraser and many others (Wooding 2010). Convincing arguments have been given for showing the wide variety of books available in the library on Iona by the late seventh century (Clancy & Márkus 1995: 211–22; O'Loughlin 1994), and this library is similar in size and composition to those described for the earliest known Carolingian monastic libraries of the mid to late eighth century (McKitterick 1989: 166–175). Iona is accepted by many scholars to be the production site of illuminated manuscripts, notably the *Cathach* of Columba, the *Book of Kells* and possibly the *Book of Durrow*. These works exhibit great artistic invention, but more important in terms of the intellectual content are the original writings produced in Iona. These include: Cumméne's 'book of the miracles of Columba' in the 640s; Adomnán's *Vita Columbae, De Locis Sancis*, and *Cáin Adomnáin* (the Law of Innocents) in the late 600s; and at least in part, the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, of the early eighth century; as well as numerous poems (Clancy and Márkus 1995). Adomnán was described by medieval commentators on the Continent as 'the Illustrious', the only Gael in the middle ages to achieve this distinction (O'Loughlin 1995), a testament to his learning which expressed itself in the *De Locis Sanctis*, which was repeatedly copied and was the standard work for many centuries (despite Adomnán never leaving these islands). O'Loughlin (2007) has shown that this was not a simple work of description but a sophisticated liturgical and exegical text in which Adomnán felt confident enough to identify the problems with Augustine's solution to the inconsistencies in the accounts of the four gospels, and to provide his own solution. The

Vita Columbae is similarly a complex document showing a sophisticated understanding of biblical sources, commentaries and presenting a subtly directed message to its audience. The Law of Innocents, which sought to guarantee the rights of women, children and non-combatants in times of warfare, can be seen as a precursor to the UN Declaration on Human Rights, and Adomnán managed to assemble over 30 kings from Scotland and Ireland to witness it (Ni Dhonnchadha 1982; Márkus 1997; O'Loughlin 2001). Adomnán has also been claimed to have been the route by which Virgil reached Anglo-Saxon England, as Lapidge has claimed in his analysis of Aldhelm's career (Lapidge 2007). The *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis,* co-authored by an Iona monk in the early eighth century, is also a pioneering work, for the first time codifying the canon law of the Church. This work was the standard for four centuries, and was widely copied in Continental Europe. All these works show that Iona was at the heart of intellectual life of Europe and innovation, and in no sense a backwater or peripheral. It seems that from at least the 640s onwards Iona was a major centre of innovation in learning just as it was in sculpture and art, and that this innovation ultimately contributed to the Carolingian renaissance.

DISTORTED VISIONS

Does all this matter? I think it does, and by way of example I would like to look at a few instances of how a distorted view of the early medieval Scotland as a backward place incapable of indigenous development has distorted archaeological interpretations.

GLASS VESSELS

When I started working on my PhD in the 1980s, the sherds of glass found on western British sites were interpreted as 'cullet' brought in from Anglo-Saxon areas to make trinkets and beads (Harden 1956). Although many complete vessels were known from Anglo-Saxon pagan graves, no-one thought that people in the west could have access to such objects, and documentary references, such as Adomnán's account of the Pictish king Bridei drinking from a glass vessel, were dismissed as anachronisms (Foster 1965: 234), or in the irrefutable case of a surviving complete glass phial from Mullaroe, Sligo, as 'an exception' (Mytum 1986: 376). My own work on the taphonomy of imported glass and pottery from Dinas Powys allowed me to prove that these sherds were in fact derived from complete glass vessels in use on the site, and this interpretation can now be extended to the over 60 sites which have produced this material (Campbell 1995; 2000; 2007). These luxury items, all used for

drinking in the feasting hall or monastic refectory, were in as widespread use as in contemporary European contexts, and some may even have been made in Scottish monastic centres, as there is some manufacturing evidence from Whithorn (Campbell 1997: 314) and Iona (Barber 1984: fig 42, 108, 23). Iona has produced a reticella rod used in the production of highly decorated 8/9th-century vessels, and sherds from these vessels have been found at the ecclesiastical establishments at Inchmarnock (Lowe 2008: fig 6.40), Tarbat (Campbell forthcoming b), and Whithorn (Hill 1997: 314, fig 10.12).

IONA VALLUM

Scotland has not just been written out of European narratives but also Insular ones. Before the widespread use of Insular as a label, older terms such as 'Hiberno-Saxon' specifically excluded Scotland as a locus. The Hunterston brooch, for example, was often referred to as being 'Irish' (eg Youngs 1989: 91), and it was only archaeological evidence of production of similar brooches at Dunadd which revealed Scotland as a possible place of manufacture (Campbell & Lane 1993). The interpretation of the monastic vallum at Iona has suffered a similar fate. I have mentioned Iona several times, but here want to look at the layout of the site. It has always been realised that Iona's vallum was unusual. Unlike all the Irish parallels for early medieval monasteries, the vallum was not circular, but quadrangular or D-shaped. It has been regarded as an oddity, perhaps because it occupied the site of an earlier iron age enclosure. New geophysical work by the National Trust for Scotland has clarified the picture and shown that there are complex multiple versions of this shape of enclosure on Iona. However, I would suggest that the search for Irish parallels is misplaced. When we look at other major Scottish monastic sites it turns out that not one has a circular vallum, and all are similar to Iona, despite repeated attempts to force the evidence into an Irish pattern. All these C- and D- shaped enclosures have the long side open to the landscape, along a scarp, shoreline or river terrace. Examples are now known from aerial photography, excavation and other surveys at Portmahomack, Fortingall, Forteviot, and St Blane's, Kingarth. Previous attempts to impose a circularity on the evidence derived from very short excavated stretches of enclosure ditches at sites such as Whithorn (Hill 1997: 30–35, fig 2.6), Inchmarnock (Lowe 2008: 252, figs 5.9, 9.2) and Dunning (Cook 2008: illus 4) can be shown to be misplaced, and were explicitly based on the notion that Ireland must be the progenitor of monasticism and therefore all cultural traits. In fact, the Iona form of enclosure seems to be the norm for the larger sites in Scotland, though some smaller sites may have circular

boundaries. Interestingly, this layout is shared by some monasteries in Anglo-Saxon areas, such as Hoddom (Lowe 2006: fig 8.11), and probably Lindisfarne (Petts pers comm). At a recent workshop on Iona, organised to prepare for the new museum display of sculptured stones, I suggested that the reason for this relates to the landscape position of these sites. At Iona the open side of the D-shaped enclosure allows an extensive view over the sea and small islands towards the imposing mountains of Mull. Similarly, the other sites mentioned each has a view over an outstanding landscape towards hills, perhaps reflecting Psalm 121 – 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills: from whence cometh my help'. So even at this micro-scale, the attitude was outward-looking (physically and metaphorically), rather than just the inward contemplation of one's sins.

ANGLO-SAXON SCOTLAND

National blindspots can work both ways of course. In the early medieval period much of southern Scotland was under the political and cultural influence of Northumbrian Bernicia. The Anglo-Saxon material culture of this region has been largely ignored by Scottish archaeologists until recent years, perhaps because it was thought to relate to another national narrative, that of the English. Perhaps surprisingly, Anglo-Saxon scholars have also tended to ignore this material and most distribution maps stop at the border (eg Lucy 2000: fig 5.9). Different legal and organisational structures in the two countries compounded this problem; for example, the Portable Antiquities Scheme only covers England (Marzinzik 2011). A particularly perverse example of this is the decision to exclude Scotland from the British Academy's series on Anglo-Saxon sculpture, which thereby excludes one of the finest examples of all Anglo-Saxon sculpture, the cross from Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire (and fine examples from Jedburgh, Aberlady and Hoddom, amongst others). Perhaps it is because the concept of an Anglo-Saxon identity is so tied up with the notion of England – there is, for example, no *Anglo-Saxon Britain* to compare with *Anglo-Saxon England* (Stenton 1971) – that Anglo-Saxon material outside of England is not seen as important by Anglo-Saxon scholars. Recent research by Alice Blackwell has begun to address this issue (Blackwell 2007, 2012). The surprising fact is that there is more high status gold and garnet jewellery from East Lothian than in parts of Bernicia further south (Blackwell 2010, 370). It seems that people in Scottish Bernicia were no less eager to adopt Germanic material culture than those in England. Of course, whether this means there was an invasion of genetically Germanic

peoples is a hotly debateable topic, with several scholars suggesting a more nuanced approach seeing Bernicia as a largely British kingdom which adopted Germanic material culture (Lucy 2000: 174–81; Campbell 2009; O' Brien 2012; Loveluck & Laing 2012).

VISION AND LIMINALITY

In the Carolingian Empire mortared stone buildings seem to have been one of the key modes of expressing material power. In Scotland, the sculptured monuments, set not just in monasteries, but also in the landscape at key points, performed a similar function (Carver 2005; Forsyth and Driscoll 2009), though wooden buildings and drystone forts (Ralston 2006; Noble et al 2013) may have been large and elaborate. Alongside these monuments, personal jewellery was a key means of expressing wealth and position in society (Nieke 1993; Whitfield 2004) – these objects are both at a more intimate scale than the massive buildings of sites such as Aachen. Perhaps this was just because this was a smaller scale society. Certainly, in Scotland the move from a kin-based society to the incipient medieval kingdom took a different trajectory from other areas such as England and the Continent, but this did not prevent the emergence of a unified kingdom in the 9th century, an early date in European terms.

What I think is most important is that from at least the early seventh century we see a process of innovation at work Scotland. This innovation takes place in the practical fields of art (the development of the Insular Art Style at sites such as Dunadd and the Mote of Mark as well as in the monastic centres throughout Scotland), sculpture (the invention of the ringed cross on Iona, Pictish animal art), metalwork (the complex highly decorated brooches and ecclesiastical vessels), but also being at the forefront of new ways of learning (Canon Laws, biblical exegesis and liturgy), and thinking of new ways of ordering the world (annal writing, the civil survey of the Dál Riata, the *Law of Innocents*). This could well be described as the First Scottish Enlightenment. Throughout this period Scotland was in constant contact with other areas – Ireland, Anglo-Saxon England, the Continent and the Mediterranean world. Local traditions were transformed into new art styles and new ways of thinking about the world. I hope the evidence I have presented has shown just how influential and important places like Iona were in the early medieval period in European terms. Yes, Scotland did not

have the normal attributes of a capitalist market economy, but given recent events in the financial world, it is possible to view this as a sane choice rather than an indication of backwardness! I would also like to suggest that it was the lack of a monetised economy which resulted in the diversion of available surplus into the support of artists and craftsmen, with the resulting explosion in output from the later seventh century. Gaeldom also had a social system which privileged people of learning and people of high artistic skill – a poet could have the same honour-price as a king, a master carpenter the same honour-price as a lord (Kelly 1988). A major difference from other areas of Europe was that high status could be gained through acquired skills, and that secular intellectuals were highly valued (Charles-Edwards 1999). The reason for this was that the iron age learned orders were not terminated by Rome, but survived into the early medieval period having been transformed by Christianisation. In this process, these new understandings were written down by the newly literate intellectuals. Thus, paradoxically, Irish vernacular literature and law far exceeds in quantity that of any other area of contemporary Europe, areas which had enjoyed the benefits of Roman civilisation. What I would also like to propose is that Scotland was innovative precisely *because* it was in a liminal, non-mainstream situation; the people were exposed to constantly changing conditions, political, economic and social as well as environmental, making survival imperative on being adaptable, but also allowing native traditions to flourish. Coupled with its geographical position at a crossroads of Irish, Pictish, British and Anglo-Saxon (and later Norse) cultural influences, integration and innovation were perhaps inevitable. Stability does not produce change, by definition.

I hope I have begun to redress the balance in response to the entrenched stereotypes I described in my opening remarks, and that we can appreciate the place of Scotland in early medieval Europe. To ignore the differences apparent in early medieval Scotland is to lose important insights into how relatively small polities managed to transform themselves into medieval kingdoms without the full panoply of political structures often deemed essential to the formation of early states (cf Broun 2013).

I leave you with a quote from another Iona product, the monk Colman Elo writing around 600, which I think illustrates the openness of viewpoint ‘from the edge of the world’, rather than a parochial society unengaged in the Post-Roman rebirth of Europe.

What is best for the mind?
Breadth and humility, for every good thing finds room in a broad, humble mind
(Clancy & Márkus 1995, 206)

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