Proc. Soc. Antiq Scot, 114 (1984), 235–249

Brochs and the Roman occupation of lowland Scotland*

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SUMMARY

This paper examines previous interpretations of lowland brochs, particularly the hypothesis that they were built by mercenaries from northern Scotland and destroyed during the advance of the Roman army in the mid-2nd century AD*: this view is challenged on archaeological grounds. An alternative approach to understanding these structures is offered: a brief examination of anthropological explanations of structural innovation suggests that the adoption of lowland brochs would have been in keeping with local architectural traditions. An attempt is then made to consider the brochs in the context of contemporary settlement, indicating that they may have been one architectural manifestation of wealth. The paper ends with a consideration of the significance of the brochs in understanding the interrelationship between the native population and the invading Roman forces, a relationship which was not static but altered with prevailing circumstances.*

INTRODUCTION

There is a recurring tendency among archaeologists to select for discussion the 'exotica' at the expense of the commonplace (Clarke 1971). Thus, brochs have been singled out from the general mass of settlements of the Romano-British period in lowland Scotland because they appear to be exotic structures of limited distribution, intrusive to the usual forms of domestic architecture in the region. Yet to consider these brochs in isolation is to remove them from the context in which they existed and in relation to which they have to be understood. The tendency to relate native settlement to the historically documented events of the Roman period has resulted in the appearance and decline of lowland brochs being explained solely within the context of Roman military activity in Scotland (MacKie 1982). It is the purpose of this paper to demonstrate that the appearance of these brochs can, alternatively, be related to local social factors, that they can best be understood in their wider settlement context and that the complex relationship between Roman and native affected settlement in general, not brochs in particular.

THE BROCHS[1]

In so far as sufficient data are available, the lowland structures conform to the characteristics of northern brochs (MacKie 1975, 73). They generally have a large wall-base to overall diameter ratio (from 40·7% at Edinshall to 56% at Coldoch), while mural cells and

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stairways often occur. Entrances are typically narrow and guard-cells are occasionally found, as at Torwoodlee, Buchlyvie and Edinshall, although not in the precise clockface positions favoured in the northern regions (MacKie 1975, 77). Although their original heights must remain uncertain, a scarcement was noted at Torwoodlee, while Coldoch survived to some 2 m in height. All are located in prominent or isolated positions, such as on promontories at Buchlyvie and Ardwell, while others overlook main river systems, as at Torwoodlee, Bow and Edinshall.

The interrelationship between brochs and other settlement forms is ambivalent, but there is a demonstrable stratigraphical relationship at a number of sites: for instance, at Torwoodlee the broch ditch cut through the partially silted ditch of the pre-Roman hillfort and the broch wall overlay the hillfort rampart (Piggott 1951, 102), while at Hurly Hawkin the inner rampart of a bivallate promontory fort was levelled to facilitate the construction of the broch whose north wall directly overlay the fort rampart (Taylor 1982, 223). Non-alignment of the broch and hillfort entrances at Tappoch led to the suggestion of non-contemporaneity and it was assumed both here and at Craighill and Laws Hill, Drumsturdy, that the broch was the later structure. While this inferred sequence is possible, probably contemporary external walling has been found with brochs in general (MacKie 1974, 18), while at Leckie there was a post-broch defensive phase. A complex association can be inferred between broch and other structures at a few sites, such as at Edinshall. Here the fort ramparts are overlain both by a bank, possibly associated with the broch, and elements of a probable Romano-British settlement, but there is no demonstrable relationship between the broch and settlement. Nevertheless, the coincidence of alignment between the settlement entrance and that of the broch may be taken to argue in favour of at least partial contemporaneity in their use. A similar problem is faced on Drumcarrow Craig, where the close but distinct siting of hillfort, broch and unenclosed houses invites speculation about their interrelationship. In general, however, the lowland brochs appear to be isolated, albeit defensive, settlement units, rather than elements within a larger complex.

Evidence for pre-broch timber houses was noted at, for example, Hurly Hawkin, where the bank and paving of a timber structure partly underlay the broch wall-face (Taylor 1982, 225) and Buchlyvie, where a posthole structure with a possible conjoining groove was partly dismantled before the construction of the overlying broch (Main 1979, 48). At Torwoodlee only the eccentricity of the broch and internal timber structure could be taken to suggest that they were not contemporary, while differing infills of postholes at Leckie suggested to the excavator that there was an earlier timber structure (MacKie 1982, 61). There is, however, no indication of the length of time between use of these structures and that of the brochs.

Evidence for the date of occupation of these brochs is restricted mainly to the appearance of datable Roman material. Samian ware has been recorded at several sites, such as Hurly Hawkin, Leckie and Torwoodlee, while glass and metalwork have also been recovered, such as the ironwork from Leckie and brooches from the same site, Buchlyvie and Bow. This material is Flavian or Antonine in date, suggesting occupation in the late 1st to mid-2nd century AD at most of the sites, although the plate brooch in the shape of a cock from Bow could be later still. This is supported by the radiocarbon dates from both Leckie (ad 45±120 and ad 110±150; MacKie 1982, 62, 64) and Buchlyvie (ad 80±130; ad 200±50 and ad 210±45; Main 1979, 50), although in both cases the statistical deviations from the central dates span both the late pre-Roman Iron Age and the late Roman period. More precise interpretations have been accorded to the material remains at Torwoodlee and Leckie. In the first case, pre-Antonine construction and use of the broch was proposed, as stratified Roman material was considered to be pre-Antonine (Piggott 1951, 112–13). Yet some of the glasswork could rather have belonged to the later 2nd century AD, which led Stevenson to argue this date as a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the site: he drew

upon a flat rotary quern found in the silted ditch of the earlier hillfort in support of such a late date (1966, 35). There are problems with this interpretation, however: on the one hand, flat querns may have occurred in lowland Scotland north of the Forth at an earlier date (Watkins 1980a, 157–8), while if the site was constructed and used after the Antonine period, one would expect the early Roman material to be accompanied by definite Antonine artefacts. Thus, while the broch of Torwoodlee could indeed have been of brief duration, the evidence presently favours a date in the late 1st and early 2nd century AD, with possible abandonment before Antonine material was widely available. This dating sequence is precisely what has been suggested for Leckie, where the broch has a well-defined destruction deposit. The excavator laid stress on the absence of Roman pottery of the period 110–125 AD in support of his argument that the broch was constructed in the 1st century AD and destroyed at the very beginning of the Antonine period, suggesting that Roman material was only obtainable when the Roman army was in the area (MacKie 1982, 68). His case is, however, negated by the occurrence of Antonine pottery within and beneath the destruction layer itself, for this, by his own argument, could only have reached the site during the Antonine occupation of the area. Thus, the broch may indeed be of late first or early 2nd century construction, but its occupation must have continued far enough into the Antonine period for Roman material to have been utilized on the site.

PAST INTERPRETATIONS

Recognition that the brochs belong to the period of Roman involvement in Scotland has led to the construction of several hypotheses to explain their appearance and function in reference to Roman military activities. While varying in detail, all such hypotheses have adopted a common, pseudo-historical approach which seeks to explain an archaeological phenomenon in historical terms.

It has been suggested that the brochs appeared either in the period following the Flavian withdrawal from Scotland and preceding the Antonine occupation (Piggott 1951, 114; MacKie 1982), or after the Antonine departure (Stevenson 1966, 35). The suggestion has also been made that they were built by northerners invited by the Votadini as mercenary defenders, either against the Romans or against neighbouring tribes, or built by the Romans in order to keep the lowland tribes subjugated (MacKie 1982). It has further been suggested that they represented the buildings of invaders from the north (Hamilton 1968, 108). It is unlikely, however, that the brochs can be explained in terms of Votadinian invitation when a number occur outwith even the most generous estimates of Votadinian territory. Furthermore, the paucity of artefactual evidence from broch sites which is clearly of northern origin – apart from the flat quern from Torwoodlee, which has already been discussed, there is only a fragment of pottery from Bow – makes difficult any belief in the hypothesis of northern invaders or mercenaries. It is, of course, possible to suggest that professional broch-builders were commissioned by elements of the lowland population. Literary references which may refer to a 'class' of architects are known from Ireland (Gillies 1981, 73, 83n, 7), but the topic evokes controversy even in the context of the northern brochs (MacKie 1975, 85–8). The poor quality of construction of the lowland brochs, together with the selection of often unsuitable local materials, makes this explanation difficult to accept in the present context.

The attempts to relate broch construction to specific periods of Roman frontier history assume that the brochs fulfilled an offensive function and would have been perceived as a threat by Rome. Such an interpretation has been reinforced by the evidence of destruction at a number of the sites. At Torwoodlee the broch wall was thrown into the ditch, implying deliberate demolition rather than gradual disintegration, while Bow also provides evidence of dismantling. At Buchlyvie the absence of part of the wall structure, with no trace of later stone robbing

trenches, may also indicate deliberate demolition (Main 1979, 48), and at Hurly Hawkin broch material was used to level the ditch to facilitate construction of the souterrain and was also present in the souterrain itself (Taylor 1971, 12; 1982, 222, 248). At none of these sites, however, is there any evidence of violent destruction, although the possibility that demolition was enforced by the Romans remains. Only at Leckie is there any suggestion of violence being involved (MacKie 1982, 62–4). An intense conflagration is witnessed there by burnt fragments of wattle and daub, and fire-cracked stones. In addition, some of the internal posts were pulled down and the wall tops removed. The excavator interpreted this evidence in terms of Roman firestones destroying the broch, the cracking being caused by the defenders' attempts to douse the blaze, followed by subsequent demolition on Roman orders. The only evidence for destruction by the Romans, however, is the excavator's interpretation of the fire-cracked stones: there is no other indication of a Roman seige, such as ballista bolts or broken weaponry. Furthermore, an alternative explanation can be advanced, that of the accidental firing of a wooden superstructure and internal fittings: attempts to douse the fire could account for the cracking of the stones, while the large number of artefacts recovered could have been destroyed as easily in an accidental as a deliberate fire. In this case, the subsequent demolition of the ruined structure need be no more than the clearing of a destroyed site prior to the construction of a new round-house. The excavator suggests that there was a change in population in the secondary structure, arguing that destroyed artefacts would otherwise have been retrieved (MacKie 1982, 64), but there seems to be no compelling reason to accept this as it seems unlikely that buried and burnt artefacts would have been in particular demand even had their existence beneath the ground been recognized. The evidence of destruction by the Roman army at Leckie is, then, at best ambiguous, while there is nothing which need point to hostile activity marking the end of any of the other brochs.

If the evidence of violent or deliberate destruction at the hands of the Romans can now be rejected, then the appearance of these brochs need no longer be considered solely in the context of Roman military campaigns in the frontier zone. Moreover, the date of demolition of these structures cannot generally be estimated more exactly than some time after the Antonine occupation of lowland Scotland. As previously suggested, Torwoodlee may have been abandoned before the Antonine period, while the suggestion that Leckie was destroyed early in the same period is clearly not supported by the pottery evidence. At most other brochs, Roman material indicates occupation in the mid 2nd century AD, with abandonment possible at any time after this. Lack of post-Antonine pottery does not preclude later occupation as Roman artefacts of this date are not common in North Britain (Robertson 1970, 212), while radiocarbon dates from Buchlyvie could indicate late 2nd or 3rd century AD use of the site. Finally, it should be stressed that there need have been no single historical cause of the abandonment of these sites.

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

It is a preoccupation with unusual or exotic artefacts and structures, combined with a desire to construct historical narrative from archaeological remains, that has been responsible for such previous approaches to the understanding of lowland brochs: indeed such an approach has until recently pervaded much interpretation in prehistoric archaeology. An attempt might rather be made to interpret the appearance of new architectural forms with reference to some more general principles of structural innovation.

The most common suggestion employed to explain the adoption of a novel architectural form in stable communities in the anthropological literature is that its use of space must be compatible with that in the existing structural forms. Behind this lies the assumption that the use of space within a settlement and house both reflects and reinforces social divisions within a

particular group (Bourdieu 1977, 90–1; Hodder 1982, 125; Barrett 1981, 210–5; Hingley 1984). If this general premise is accepted, it follows that external structural forms can readily alter within a social group provided that the internal divisions can still be maintained (Glassie 1975, 88–9): the essential criterion for structural change is that the interior can still be ordered in the traditional manner, and to this extent structural change does not automatically have profound social significance (*ibid,* 111). Such a view implies that, contrary to the assumptions of past interpretations, the appearance of brochs in lowland Scotland need carry no connotation of cultural imposition if they conform to the internal arrangements prevalent in the local architecture.

In North Britain, recent studies have been conducted into the nature of the internal arrangements of both brochs (Carter 1980, 4–5, 7–8; Smith 1981, 14–5, fig 5; Hedges & Bell 1980, 90–2; Barrett 1981) and, briefly, timber houses (Hill 1982a, 27). In lowland Scotland comparison between these two structural forms is generally made difficult by the better preservation in the stone buildings, while the floor levels seldom survive in timber forms. Some redress is, however, afforded by the occasional recovery of timber crannogs which display a high degree of architectural sophistication (Piggott 1953, 139–43). In summary, these studies suggest that the broad internal divisions seen in the ground-plans of brochs can also be found in those of round-houses of the late first millennium BC and early first millennium AD: a circular interior in both groups displays a central focus, frequently with a hearth, surrounded by a series of partitioned areas.

Brochs are generally assumed to be exotic structures, alien to the architecture of lowland Scotland, but large timber houses were an established feature of settlement there in the latter part of the first millennium BC: these can be found both north of the Forth, at Scotstarvit (Bersu 1948) and Newmill (Watkins 1980b), and south of the Forth, at Dryburn Bridge (Triscott 1982, 120). The recognition of sophisticated carpentry techniques in crannogs and the complex reconstructions based on poor ground-plans (Reynolds 1979, 29–45) indicate that timber round-houses were probably as elaborate as their more durable counterparts.

The use of drystone construction was not, however, a major feature of the architectural tradition of south-east Scotland, although it was common in the south-west. Nevertheless, stone had been used consistently as a component in building materials in the south-east: for instance, timber-laced stone hillfort ramparts were quite widespread, occurring both north and south of the Forth (Feachem 1966, 65–8). Furthermore, towards the end of the first millennium BC and the beginning of the first millennium AD, the use of stone seems to have become more and more common in a variety of settlement forms: thus, duns are found in central Scotland and may partly be pre-Roman in date (Aitchison 1983), while the larger souterrains common in Angus and Strathmore, also with their origins in the pre-Roman period, exhibit skilled drystone architecture (Wainwright 1963; Watkins 1980b). Moreover, the settlement form which predominated in the Tyne–Forth region throughout the Roman period (Jobey 1966), appears to have undergone a transmutation from timber to stone construction (Jobey 1973; Jobey 1977). Such evidence clearly demonstrates that drystone architecture, of which brochs are perhaps the finest expression, was being adopted in southern Scotland independent of the brochs themselves.

Brochs should thus no longer be seen as completely alien to the architectural traditions of southern Scotland: their size, architectural sophistication and use of space can readily be paralleled in the existing timber and stone settlement forms. Yet the various mural features characteristic of brochs were not duplicated in the local settlement record and the idea of these could indeed have derived from northern Scotland. The general lack of portable artefacts of types common in the north within the lowland brochs, however, makes it difficult to accept any

immigration from northern Scotland, as a group with a cultural identity strong enough to necessitate the building of their normal settlement forms in new territory is inherently unlikely to have adopted totally different forms of artefacts. Furthermore, in accordance with the principles of structural innovation examined above, these characteristic broch features, being readily adaptable to local architectural styles, could have resulted from contact more casual than immigration.

Nevertheless, some attention may be given to the significance of the adoption of brochs in southern Scotland. The use of material symbols in the legitimation of authority is a recurrent theme in anthropological studies (Bourdieu 1977, 78–81; Hodder 1982, 133). Despite the complex social relations that can be expressed by use of material symbolism, the important point for present purposes is that in most societies there are differential symbolic displays relating to wealth, status and power. In other words, most societies indulge in some form of conspicuous consumption (Haselgrove 1982, 82). While this social imbalance is often indicated by a prestige goods system in which there is a differential ability to obtain and distribute materials rendered valuable by their local rarity, an alternative display of wealth, status and power might be related to architectural form, in which case elaborate or distinctive structural elements will be found. Such symbolism is often alluded to in connection with the embellishment of hillfort ramparts and it reflects the differential social ability to manipulate labour.

Archaeologically it is difficult to evaluate the significance of variations in architectural remains. Size is the most frequent variable, but cannot be considered an automatic indicator of prestige as several other factors can influence the size of a structure, not least its function, or, if a house, the number of occupants (Douglas 1972, 519; Hodder 1982, 155). In an attempt to distinguish between these factors in the present context, brochs must be considered within the overall context of the known settlement pattern of southern Scotland in the late first millennium BC and early first millennium AD: as eastern Scotland is considerably better understood in this respect than the west, the following discussion will concentrate on the former.

Towards the end of the first millennium BC settlement in south-east Scotland was characterized by small, often defended, enclosures such as hillforts (Macinnes 1982, 66–7). The normal settlement unit was no greater than extended family or small village proportions, but a few larger agglomerations occurred in the 'oppida', such as that of Traprain Law: these large settlements suggest a degree of social and political cohesion. The defensive nature of most settlements, together with a preponderance of linear earthworks and a paucity of portable artefacts, supports the view that wealth was closely related to land and stock. This pattern underwent considerable reorganization, however, so that by the 2nd century AD non-defensive settlements had become the norm, with defensive sites becoming less common: that this redevelopment was not linked to population changes is demonstrated by continuity in settlement location in many cases. There are now come slight indications that these changes were taking place before the 2nd century AD, with earlier radiocarbon dates from Upper Tynedale (Jobey 1977, 34) and Broxmouth in East Lothian (Hill 1982b, 169), although the majority of settlements are dated only by the occurrence of 2nd-century Roman material. There is evidence for the continuing use, and probable defence, of Traprain Law (Jobey 1976, 200), but the histories of the other 'oppida' are not known. Both Yeavering Bell and Eildon Hill have produced Roman pottery, but from uncertain contexts, and its presence might best be explained by comparison with Burnswark which was certainly not defended, and, if occupied at all, seems to have been of reduced size, and so presumably importance, in the Roman period (Jobey 1978). In comparison to earlier settlements, those of the Romano-British period produce more evidence of industrial activity and a greater range of artefacts. The provision of field systems (Gates 1982) and

stockyards indicates that mixed farming was common, while there are also indications of a widespread increase in arable exploitation in this period, at least in northern England (Turner 1979).

Between Forth and Tay defensive sites seem also to have been replaced by non-defensive forms (Macinnes 1982, 69–70). North of the Tay, however, there were fewer defensive and more open settlements in the late first millennium BC (Macinnes 1982, 67–9). Radiocarbon dates now suggest that souterrains had begun to form the foci of settlement in some areas towards the end of the first millennium BC: these took a variety of forms, from large single souterrains associated with a single round-house, as at Newmill (Watkins 1980b), large complex souterrains dominating smaller settlement units, as Carlungie (Wainwright 1963, 83–98), or smaller souterrains and smaller houses as at Dalladies (Watkins 1980a). This arrangement continued throughout the Roman period, but some of the numerous undated enclosures in the area probably belong at least partly to this period. Acceptance of a storage function for souterrains (Watkins 1980b, 197–8; *contra* Wainwright 1963, 9–18), together with an abundance of querns on such sites and their location in one of the most fertile regions of Scotland, suggests that there was in this region a systematic exploitation of the arable heartland which settlements with souterrains monopolized. There may have been, then, north of the Forth a high degree of social, economic and political integration.

There are, therefore, several differences in the organization of settlement north and south of the Forth: to the south, settlement was generally enclosed and dispersed, consisting of isolated farming communities, presumably linked in a complex social network. The 'oppida' which had been important in pre-Roman times had apparently declined, with the notable exception of Traprain Law, and it is possible that their decline was linked to a reorientation of economic interests. North of the Forth, similar enclosed and dispersed settlements are also found, but seem to be integrated in some areas with unenclosed nucleated villages.

Within these developing settlement patterns, there occur a number of large, generally isolated, individual houses of high architectural sophistication, either in the form of brochs, crannogs, duns or timber round-houses such as Newmill. Where evidence is available, the inhabitants of such structures seem, like those of other settlement forms, to have been engaged in mixed farming, while both brochs and crannogs produce evidence of industrial activity and a considerable range of artefact types. To this extent, the occupying unit of these large houses cannot be distinguished from that of other settlement types, nor is there any clear functional distinction. It remains, therefore, to examine the relative wealth of brochs and other structural forms.

Our poor understanding of pre-Roman artefacts (Cool 1982) means that it is currently only possible to evaluate the relative wealth of sites in the Roman period in relation to Roman goods.[2] A number of factors makes it difficult to assess the significance of those sites which have not produced any Roman material: differential depositional processes, differential wealth and differing periods of occupation combine to complicate the archaeological record. Nevertheless, the relative amounts of Roman material recovered from different settlement types should provide a guide to the relative wealth of these sites in the Roman period, on the assumption that this novel material would have had some prestige value.

First-century Roman material is found in abundance only on a few native sites.[3] Predominantly these are large, isolated, architecturally elaborate structures, such as the crannog at Hyndford and the broch at Torwoodlee. Neither has produced certainly later Roman material, so that their construction and occupation early in the period of Roman involvement in lowland Scotland seems certain. The large 'oppidum' of Traprain Law also clearly had access to Roman

goods of 1st-century AD date: both the abundance of this early Roman material and the site's long pre-Roman occupation support its continuing use and prominence in the early Roman period. In contrast to these distinctive sites, only very small amounts of 1st-century material have been recovered from other earthworks or enclosures (Robertson 1970, 202–5). This evidence indicates that only certain settlements, especially those of an elaborate structural form, had easy access to Roman goods in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries AD, which is consistent with their interpretation as wealthy sites with the capacity to obtain prestige goods. Thus, the use of architectural distinction as a reflection of social status can be supported at this period.

Second-century Roman artefacts are much more comon on native sites throughout the lowlands of Scotland and cannot be shown to concentrate on particular site types. Pottery, usually Samian, but occasionally coarse wares, occurs in small quantities on many sites of this period, and indeed still acts as the main indicator of date. South of the Antonine Wall other artefact types are found in varying quantities: glass occurs on a number of sites, particularly crannogs, and, most notably, Traprain Law; metalwork is found widely, such as at Earns Heugh, Berwickshire, Bow broch and in numerous hoards, for example Lamberton Moor. It occurs only in small quantities in south-west Scotland, as on Milton Loch crannog. North of the frontier, in contrast to the pottery, glass and metalwork are only rarely found outside that area within range of the Antonine outpost forts. Coins are seldom recovered from native sites, with the marked exception of Traprain Law, while the numerous hoards are of uncertain origin (Robertson 1975, 413–20).

The greater availability of Roman material means that it can no longer have had the same prestige value. Assuming that differential wealth and social status continued to exist, this must have been measured and expressed by some other means. The evidence for the construction and occupation of brochs in the mid-2nd century AD, compared with the few of probable earlier origin, suggests that in the Antonine period architecturally extravagant structures *per se* may have become increasingly indicative of social status. The circumstances which may have contributed to this development can now be considered.

ROMAN AND NATIVE IN LOWLAND SCOTLAND

The methods by which native populations were absorbed into the Roman empire varied in accordance with prevailing circumstances, taking into account such considerations as economy of effort and local resources. An indirect method of exercising control which economized on the use of Roman manpower and gave provincial boundaries some measure of security was the creation of client kingdoms (Luttwak 1976, 21–40). This system capitalized on local social and political conditions, either supporting the ruling element as a method of controlling the general population or installing a pro-Roman ruler. This system could effectively protect the boundaries of a province against small-scale threats and ensured relatively easy future expansion, for such a system was frequently regarded as only a short-term measure. It might be expected that client kingdoms would have relatively easy access to Roman goods and this should be reflected in the archaeological record.

When use was made of the existing tribal system it is likely that there would have been no great change within the settlement pattern, although Roman material should be found on sites relating to the elite members of society through whom Rome dealt. Where burial evidence survives the grave goods may best indicate such elitism, as noted in Germany (Hedeager 1978, 207), but some reflection of this might also be seen on settlements (Hanson & Campbell forthcoming). The relative status of settlements or burials would presumably continue undisturbed from the pre-Roman period, as wealthy sites would remain so.

By the 2nd century AD, Rome had begun delimiting the boundaries of the conquered world with fixed frontiers, both natural and artificial (Luttwak 1976, 55–110). Their purpose was to protect and consolidate the romanized province behind the frontier and to separate these subjugated peoples from their free counterparts beyond it (Birley 1956). Artificial barriers served to regulate movement between those within and those outside the province and to keep the occurrence of hostile infiltration and incursion to a manageable minimum. Systems of outpost forts beyond the barrier itself, and the posting of mobile units within range of the frontier, gave the army the capability to deal with large-scale threats and provided continued mobility to what would otherwise have been a static frontier zone.

Where such a system was in operation Roman goods would have been widely available to those incorporated within the province, with the frontier zone itself perhaps becoming saturated with Roman material of all available types. This would have been effected by a large-scale military presence and the trade or exchange they attracted, as demonstrated by the development of *vici* (Salway 1967, 24). While locally dominant centres might have received the greatest quantity and variety of goods, every site would have had access to Roman material either directly or indirectly. Studies in the Germanies have shown that pottery and perhaps ornamentation achieved the broadest distribution among native settlements, while glass, most forms of metalwork and, occasionally, coins had a more limited distribution (Hedeager 1978, 202). That is to say that 'luxury goods' did not reach all settlements, but were limited by tribal political and social factors. Outwith the province itself the degree to which Roman goods reached native sites may indicate whether there was occasional or regular trade and whether only part of the local population had access to this material. The area beyond the frontier boundary but within the region patrolled by Roman troops may be expected to have had regular contact with the army.

Returning to the evidence from lowland Scotland, the trend outlined above can indeed be detected. In the 1st century AD and early 2nd century AD before the creation of an artificial boundary, Roman material was seen to be restricted to a comparatively few settlements of notable architectural form. The concentration on such elaborate structures as Hyndford and Torwoodlee, and the 'oppidum' of Traprain Law, suggests that only prominent sites had access to Roman goods and thus monopolized early contact with the Roman world. This evidence is consistent with Roman exploitation of the existing native social hierarchy to facilitate their progress northwards. Furthermore, the large quantity of Roman material on Traprain Law suggests that this site, and thus probably the territory of the Votadini, had entered into a client tribe relationship with Rome prior to the construction of the Antonine Wall. Certainly their support, even if only passive, would have eased the problem of campaigning in the more difficult territory north of the Forth in the time of Agricola and provided some measure of security of the northern region outwith the province as later defined by Hadrian's Wall. Such evidence of good relations between the Votadini and the Romans, based on available evidence from a variety of site types, obviously considerably weakens the argument most recently advanced by MacKie that at least some lowland brochs were built by northerners invited by the Romans to keep lowland tribes suppressed in the absence of the army (1982, 68–9).

After the Antonine Wall was constructed Roman material again became more widely available in lowland Scotland. The distribution of this material on either side of the frontier broadly coincides with that outlined for the Germanies (Hedeager 1978, 201–11). South of the Forth, Traprain Law appears to have monopolized trade with Rome. Its quantity of artefacts, the wide range of utilitarian and luxury items, together with metalwork and enamel manufacturing facilities (Jobey 1976, 198–203), suggest that it was the major local centre and of importance in the general distribution of Roman goods. This site manifestly retained its dominance and monopoly of Roman trade evident in

the earlier period, underlying the favourable relationship between the Votadini and the Romans, particularly in view of the existence nearby of the important *vicus* at Inveresk (Richmond 1980) which might otherwise have eclipsed the native centre. Apart from this centre, however, Roman material was not notably concentrated on any particular site type, suggesting that trade and contact with Rome were no longer dominated by the same privileged sections of the population as earlier, but were available to a wider group. Although there has been less widespread excavation north of the Antonine Wall, a similar situation can be detected, with architecturally prominent sites, such as Leckie and Buchlyvie, souterrains and other settlement forms, such as West Mains of Ethie (Wilson 1980), obtaining Roman material. This overall situation precisely corresponds with the trend expected within a frontier zone, as outlined above.

It seems, then, that the Romans made use of particular sections of society to facilitate their initial conquest of lowland Scotland in the 1st century AD, allowing wealthy settlements to monopolize Roman material. After the construction of the Antonine Wall in the 2nd century AD, however, the internal social structure probably played less part in the distribution of Roman goods which became available to a far greater range of native settlements, although the local centre remained predominant. While there is no longer any distinction in the structural types gaining Roman material, the continued construction of large houses of architectural pretention, particularly the brochs, indicates that such structures retained their status, with increased emphasis on architectural elaboration itself.

If the widespread abundance of Roman material in the Votadinian territory south of the Antonine Wall suggests that this region as a whole continued to prosper during the Roman occupation in the 2nd century AD, there may have developed a contrast with the area to the south. Although Roman material is found on many settlements in Northumberland, there is presently nothing to compare with the range on Traprain Law nor with the hoards found in lowland Scotland. It seems likely that, at least by the 2nd century AD, Traprain Law had become the most dominant native settlement in the whole of the Votadinian territory. With the indications that the pre-Roman settlement pattern was undergoing some change even before the Roman period, it is possible that Traprain Law had begun to gain ascendancy over the other 'oppida' before the appearance of the Romans. That settlement in the northern and southern parts of the Votadinian territory did not develop in precisely the same manner is indicated by the absence of brochs to the south, with few large individual houses there at all, and the gradual decrease in frequency north of the Tweed Valley of the Romano-British settlement forms common in Northumberland. Perhaps the Roman presence would have presented an opportunity beneficial both to the northern part of the Votadini, in confirming or strengthening their position within the Votadinian territory as a whole, and to the Romans, in securing part of their frontier. It would then have been natural that settlements in the immediate locality of Traprain Law obtained an abundance of Roman goods while those further from the dominant centre were less successful in this respect.

It can thus be suggested that the development of brochs in lowland Scotland can be considered in the context of a peaceful, rather than hostile, relationship between Roman and native. If there was, indeed, a mutually beneficial relationship between the Romans and part of the Votadini, then the eventual withdrawal of the wealth and support provided by the Romans must have initiated the collapse of the social organization in the tribal area. Destruction of most lowland brochs seems to have occurred, with the specific exceptions already mentioned, some time after the Antonine period, for most have some Antonine pottery but few have certain later material. While it must be stressed that there need be no single cause of the abandonment of these structures, the evidence does point to an upheaval within the social hierarchy at some time after the Antonine occupation of lowland Scotland. Such an upheaval is supported south of the

Forth by the gradual decline of Traprain Law which maintained its contact with Rome until the 3rd or 4th centuries AD (Jobey 1976, 199–201), and north of the Forth by the demolition of souterrains perhaps in the late Roman period (Wainwright 1963, 73–80, 98–106; Watkins 1980b, 199). Late Roman authors also refer to disturbances beyond the Roman frontier, linking these eventually with the Picts (Ammianus Marcellinus 26.5.5; 27.8): indeed, social upheavals and political changes must have been taking place for some time before the eventual emergence of the historical kingdom of the Picts. The processes of change leading to the formation of a single kingdom from smaller groups may provide an appropriate context for the disruption witnessed in the settlement record: the gradual decline of the established order is witnessed by the demolition of both brochs and souterrains and culminated in the final eclipse of the long-lived centre of Traprain Law, perhaps in the 5th century AD (Jobey 1976, 203). In this context, the demolition of brochs attested archaeologically need not be related to Roman military activities, but to internal political factors.

CONCLUSION

The approach adopted in this paper has stressed the importance of considering all structural forms as elements within an overall settlement pattern. Viewed in this way, brochs are not as incongruous as they first appear to be, but become more understandable as an integral part of native society in the Roman period. The fluctuations in their fortunes can be linked not merely to specific historical events but rather to a more general consideration of the complex relationship between Roman and native in North Britain.

NOTES

1 For the sake of clarity in the text, source references to lowland brochs will only be cited where points of interpretation are raised. A list of the main sources for the brochs is presented at the beginning of the bibliography.

2 Discussion of Roman goods on non-Roman sites is based on data presented by Professor A S Robertson (1970): although there is some more recent evidence, it does not invalidate the overall picture presented there.

3 It is intended that the detailed significance of the distribution of Roman material on non-Roman settlements in consideration of the relationship between Roman and native will be dealt with more fully in a subsequent paper.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to record my thanks to everyone who has discussed the problem of lowland brochs with me and commented on earlier drafts of this paper: particular thanks are due to J C Barrett, D J Breeze, S Driscoll, W S Hanson, G Jobey, E W MacKie, M Nieke and R B K Stevenson. While I have tried to take their advice into account, I must assume sole responsibility for the views expressed in the paper. I would also like to thank the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for awarding me the Chalmers–Jervise Prize in 1982 for an essay from which this paper is derived.

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