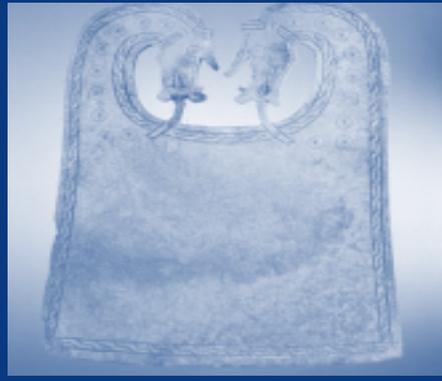
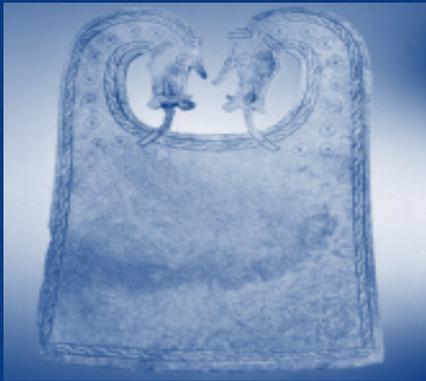




*The*  
**Royal Society**  
*of* **Edinburgh**

# The Vikings and Scotland - Impact and Influence



Report of a Conference  
organised by  
The Royal Society of Edinburgh

20-22 September 2006

***This volume is dedicated to the memory of Dr Magnus Magnusson HonKBE FRSE  
12 October 1929 – 7 January 2007***

This was the last occasion when Magnus was able to address a major public occasion. He was a man of many parts: TV presenter, public servant, scholarly translator of the sagas. He insisted on this occasion that he was “just a story-teller”, and with his accustomed magic, he held the audience in the palm of his hand. Despite his obvious frailty, we did not guess how soon the RSE was to lose one of its most distinguished Fellows.

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Rapporteur: Dr Andrew Heald

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## INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, longships arrived off the coasts of Britain and Ireland carrying Viking warriors from the North. Historical texts suggest that their primary purpose was to raid and plunder - writers document raids on, for example, Lindisfarne in 793, 'all the islands in Britain' (probably the Hebrides) in 794 and both Rathlin Island and the Isle of Skye in 795. This association between Vikings and terror is the canvas on to which many pictures of the Viking period are painted, a perception perpetuated by the modern media. But these Scandinavian peoples had a longer-lasting and far-wider impact on Britain and Ireland. Ambitious for power, looking for land to settle and trade routes to dominate, they took certain areas of Britain and Ireland, drawing these regions into the Viking world, a domain which stretched from Newfoundland to the Middle East and beyond. Certain areas of Britain and Ireland, particularly the Atlantic regions – so often regarded as remote and peripheral in today's society – were at the centre of this maritime world. The Vikings were warriors first and foremost, but also farmers, skilled craftspeople, storytellers, historians and traders. At first pagan, they later succumbed to Christianity.

At the beginning of the Viking Age c.800 A.D., Scotland was divided into four ethnic groups (Britons, English, Gaels and Picts) or three major political units (Northumbria, Pictland and Strathclyde), comprising an untold number of kingdoms and lordships. In the ebb and flow of almost five centuries Scandinavian, British, Gaelic and Anglian cultures mingled and clashed. But what was the real impact and influence on these pre-existing societies and what effects did they have on what was to become Scotland?

Scholars have been pondering such questions for centuries but many remain unanswered. Almost every aspect has proven contentious: when exactly did it happen, where did it happen, and how many people did it involve? Was there contact between the two regions prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> century? Did the indigenous and migrant groups integrate or did the invaders overwhelm and annihilate the natives? What was the impact on the Christian Church? Did the Vikings really play a pivotal role in the creation of Scotland? The Viking story relative to Scotland is not a simple one. The evidence – be it historical, linguistic or archaeological – is scant and varied. Further, any student of Viking history really has to be aware of *all* the sources which can contribute to our understanding. Many approaches to some of these fundamental questions have been broad-brush, resulting in generalist statements and conclusions. Recent work suggests that if we are ever to reach a fuller understanding of this critical period in Scotland's history we require far closer analysis of the data.

But of one thing there is no doubt. The Vikings are a

popular topic, in schools, on television, in tourism; and as a subject for conferences such as the present one for which The Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters brought together the foremost academic scholars and researchers from Scotland, Ireland, England, Norway and Denmark to present their own assessments of the nature of the Viking impact and its consequences on the political, cultural, economic, linguistic and genetic make-up of the country of Scotland which emerged in the post-Viking Age. The scope and theme of the Conference was monumental and encompassed a wide and diverse range of disciplines relative to the topic, including history, place-names, literature, linguistics, and archaeology. This varied, and often problematic, body of evidence has been the foundation for interpretations of Viking Scotland for centuries. But the evidential and interpretative pool is now enhanced by genetics, a key contribution to the field of early population history and one which may play an important role in future consideration of the impact of the Scandinavian invaders on Scotland. This report summarises the main presentations and the conclusions of the Conference.

**The President of The Royal Society of Edinburgh Sir Michael Atiyah (OM FRS PRSE HonFREng HonFMedSci HonFFA)** opened the Conference by welcoming the delegates and audience on behalf of the co-organisers of the conference, **The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE)** and **The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters (NASL)**. Following a note of thanks to the organisations and individuals who organised the conference, particularly Dr Barbara Crawford (Strathmartine Centre for Research and Education in Scottish History, St Andrews) and Dr David Clarke (National Museums of Scotland), Sir Michael outlined how this conference fitted in well with the RSE's and NASL's current exchange programme. He also identified the strong cultural, historical, economic and social links between the two institutions and, more generally the countries of Scotland and Norway. Sir Michael then welcomed the Norwegian Minister for Education and Research, Øystein Djupedal, who stressed that although the initial relationships between Norwegians and the indigenous populations of Scotland in the 8<sup>th</sup> century were not amicable, the subsequent process of interaction, co-operation and learning created strong relationships between the two nations, relationships that are still strong today.

**Professor Christopher Smout (Emeritus Professor, Institute of Environmental History, University of St Andrews)** introduced the Opening Evening lecturer **Magnus Magnusson Hon KBE FRSE** who presented *The Vikings in Scotland: The Northern World and its Significance for Scotland*. In a conference that aimed to assess the impact and influence of the Vikings on Scotland it was fitting that the symposium should be opened by a scholar who has devoted a large part of his life to the

topic. In his informative and entertaining lecture Dr Magnusson outlined the swathe of scholarly approaches and methodologies utilised in the pursuit of understanding the Viking period throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and the different interpretations that emerged from them. In this opening lecture, and the discussion that followed, it was fitting that many of the issues raised would provide the foundations for the whole conference. Were the Vikings saints or sinners? Heroes or villains? Settlers or invaders? Raiders or traders? Pillagers or poets?' Dr Magnusson believed that we were getting nearer to answering some of these questions, mainly through the work of scholars who would be presenting over the following days. Ending his lecture he admitted that he found great solace in remembering that in a time when Ghengis Khan was trying to subjugate the western world by the sword, Snorri Sturluson in his lonely study in the south of Iceland was trying to subjugate the northern world by the power of the word. This allusion epitomised the power of the academic conference, and the studies that followed.

The two-day conference was divided into four sections: *Raids and Impacts*; *Settlement, Trade and Maritime Impact*; *Language and Literary Culture*; and *Political and Religious Development*. Each section comprised four lectures, the speakers asked to speak on specific topics by the conference committee. Historical texts played an important part, particularly the Irish annals and Gaelic literature and nomenclature which have hidden within them evidence for the Scandinavian impact on Celtic areas. The later Latin and Icelandic sources, which comprise further 'historical' evidence for the subject, also played a key role. The place-names which have become imprinted on the landscape of the Northern and Western Isles, the north mainland of Scotland and scattered throughout the Lowlands and Borders, formed another crucial evidential field of Scandinavian influence. Artefacts, runic inscriptions, environmental evidence, graves and settlements uncovered and studied by archaeologists supplemented the sources. A new player in the Viking discipline – genetics – also took centre stage.

### RAIDS AND IMPACT

Sir Michael Atiyah welcomed everyone to the first day of the conference and introduced the **President of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters Professor Ole Didrik Laerum**. Professor Laerum stated that the conference represented a milestone in the study of the relationships between Scotland and Norway, going on to say that Norwegians view Scotland as having a special position, both in its history and in several scientific fields.

The first session – *Raids and Impacts* – was chaired by **Professor Edward Cowan (Director of Crichton Campus, University of Glasgow)**. Two of the lectures dealt with the impact on the Christian Church in northern

Britain and Ireland.

The first lecture by **Professor David Dumville (Chair in History, Palaeography and Celtic, Department of History, University of Aberdeen)** studied the *Impact on the Christian Church* and laid a solid foundation for the remaining conference. Immediately, some of the key issues were confronted head on, in particular appropriate terminologies, methodologies, sources and chronologies.

Professor Dumville focused on our choice of language, arguing that labels such as 'Scotland', 'the Norse', 'the Vikings', 'the Danes', 'the Norwegians' and so forth often carry specific connotations, geographies and/or social, economic and political associations which can mislead. For example, not all Scandinavians were Vikings. And what does 'Scotland' mean in the Viking age? It has a far different history and complexion than the Scotland we recognise today. If we are to progress, Professor Dumville argued, then we need to break free from modern boundaries and concepts.

With this in mind Professor Dumville highlighted how other aspects of our studies can be influenced by modern views. In an age when we are continually asked to apologise for our national ancestors' wickednesses there is a tendency to view the impact of the Vikings from opposing positions. On the one hand we can deny the 'wickedness' of the Vikings and whitewash the topic – Vikings become traders not raiders. Or we can tar every other culture and present them in an equally bad light. Professor Dumville believes that this present dichotomy is not particularly useful or realistic.

Professor Dumville also intimated that we need to be cautious about the chronological parameters that frame the discipline. In recent Scottish writing there is a tendency to shrink the Viking Age, whereby the pre-Viking Age dates to around 793 and the post-Viking dates to just after 793! This schizophrenic view of the Viking Age is causing the very area we wish to study almost to disappear. And when does the Viking Age end? Did the Vikings stop having an impact on the Christian churches?

Professor Dumville then turned his gaze to an issue that recurred throughout the conference – the nature of the sources on which we reconstruct the past. The sources are varied and influence our ability to assess many areas of the Viking world. In particular, our understandings are severely hindered by the lack of written records contemporary with the initial Viking incursions. This has led to a long-standing scholarly problem. Did Viking activity in the 8<sup>th</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> century affect the survival of sources? Import a Viking and lose your written sources? It is only in the 12<sup>th</sup> century that good written records appear but it is an unrealistic expectation to assume that they present clarification for events three centuries prior.

The Viking 'impact' on the Christian Church is assumed

to be damaging. But in order to assess this we obviously have to understand the nature of the entity (in this case the Church) that the Vikings were supposedly having an impact on. Many Viking studies have made assumptions about the nature of the social and political makeup of pre-Viking Scotland that may need to be revised.

Despite these notes of caution, Professor Dumville progressed to assess the impact on the Christian Church in northern Britain. He adopted an approach that, again, was to recur in many of the conference papers – the study of another area where the evidence is more plentiful in order to create an analogy for Viking Scotland. He offered a window of opportunity for understanding the impact on the Christian Church in Scotland by considering Christianity among the Northumbrians, first by the time of the Scandinavian conquest in the period 866-76 and then again by the time of the incorporation of Northumbria into the kingdom of England in 927 and once more in 954.

The question of the nature of the Christian church prior to the Viking period is not an easy one to answer. Our studies demand an appreciation that there was a plurality of churches and cultures and that organisation of the innumerable churches scattered across northern Britain was as complex as the ethnic and political landscape in which they practised. One model will not fit all.

Professor Dumville's analysis was founded on the recent study of the Church in Anglo-Saxon Society by John Blair. He finds Blair's 'Insular Monastic Model' of use, particularly the definition that this represented an infinitely extendable and flexible model. We know that in the 9<sup>th</sup>-century bishoprics were interrupted, relocated or even disappeared through Viking impact, but whilst always appreciating regional variations, we can now identify seven major themes in ecclesiastical history 800 to 1100:

- Laicisation of the church culture – that is, the withdrawal of clerical or ecclesiastical character or status from an institution or building
- Depletion of ecclesiastical settlements
- Strong contrast in experience and outcomes in eastern and western England
- Gradual trend towards secularisation and vulnerability to secular greed
- Seizure of ecclesiastical estates (both by Scandinavian settlers *and* local layman)
- Deposition of rich small find assemblages petered out around 850
- Survival of a high proportion of pre-Viking minsters, but often these are poorer, weaker and less diverse with the passage of time after suffering fundamental and traumatic change in the Viking Age.

This study suggests that although raids had a dramatic effect, we should not view raiding and pillaging as causing the widespread abandonment of churches, even though

that may have occurred in some cases. Instead we should consider a more fluid picture where change and effects (e.g. more impoverished, less diversity etc) play central roles.

Professor Dumville considered whether this model, largely derived from southern and central England, was useful for understanding northern Britain, particularly Northumbria. But before we import the model uncritically Professor Dumville stressed that we first have to be aware of the political situations which may have had an effect on the area. For example, the southern expansion of Strathclyde, the southward expansion of the Kingdom of the Picts after the collapse of the Northumbrian kingdom in 866/7 and the extent of Scandinavian settlement in our study area. Further, we should not downplay the impact of the Vikings. We know that the four kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England were all conquered, put out of business, in the space of 12 years by the Vikings. If this happened in England in 12 years, what happened in Scotland and what were the ecclesiastical consequences?

With all these issues in the melting pot, can we begin to generalise about the impact on the Christian Church in northern Britain?

Professor Dumville referred to historical sources that inform us that in the third quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Provost Aldred came to Chester-le-Street and bought his way into the community. He did this by agreeing to provide intellectual and religious services which the community could not provide for itself. This suggests that the community was not literate and had lost its ability to read the Bible and liturgy. Dumville ponders whether this passage suggests a decline of process of transmission of basic Christian learning in this area and may follow Blair's model for significant decline but not obliteration. When a community was offered someone who could bring Christian learning back to the community it was eager to accept.

There is, of course, far less contextual information for areas outwith Northumbria, but there are records of Viking armies settling on areas of Pictish territory and extracting tribute (e.g. 839, 864-7 – the period when England is beginning to be conquered, and 877-8). These events may have brought significant political change in their wake. In this context we have to suppose that given what we know about the English situation, there would have been severe effects for Church institutions.

Professor Dumville concluded by suggesting that Viking impact on the Christian church was unlikely to be benign – the interactions would have varied throughout the centuries when different situations presented different relationships. In the future we need to ask questions which are informed by the evidence, often from other regions.

Many of the themes introduced by Professor Dumville

were echoed by **Dr Colmán Etchingham (Lecturer, Department of Modern History, National University of Ireland, Maynooth)** during his lecture on the effects of the Vikings on the Church. Although entitled *Impact on Irish and Scottish Society*, Dr Etchingham considered the impact of raiding on the Church throughout the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, primarily focusing on the Irish material and using Scotland as a comparison. Concurring with Professor Dumville, Dr Etchingham prefaced his talk by emphasising the methodological and analytical problems inherent within our studies. In particular, he urged caution in the use of 'broad-brush' narratives, arguing that they were unlikely to produce a realistic assessment of a complex situation. Further, whilst admitting that the Viking raids had some impact, we should not blindly assume that the Vikings were the main catalyst for all political and social change.

Dr Etchingham reiterated the problems of the sources. Much of the information is essentially historical observation and there is a clear imbalance between those relevant to Ireland and Scotland. Moreover, the historical records inevitably provide only a snapshot of a wider picture. The difficulties are well illustrated by the fact that many important sites recently uncovered by excavation, for example, at Tarbat, Scotland and Woodstown, Ireland are unrecorded, and presumably unknown, to contemporary annalists. The problems are compounded by the fact that the Vikings themselves may have influenced the survival of certain sources. And there is a further bias - there is good reason to suppose that the interests of the annalists themselves may have influenced the overall recording of church raiding. A gap in the record or a blank on a map does not necessarily mean that there were no Viking raids. It is also important to note that the annals deal primarily with raids on Church settlements; it is extremely rare to find record of raids on secular settlements - when records relating to settlements exist they are general statements. This does not mean that raiding of settlements did not happen nor does it mean that the Vikings were only interested in churches.

Dr Etchingham stressed that it was very difficult, if not impossible, to assess the impact of Viking raiding in either Scotland or Ireland and for this reason he would be striking an even more pessimistic note and engaging in more deconstructionist theory than the previous speakers. Indeed, Dr Etchingham stressed that he was unable to deal with the question given to him. Instead, he suggested that what the discipline needs to do was clear the decks of speculative interpretation. The primary task is to describe and assess the evidence as we have it and move forward from there.

Dr Etchingham's analysis of the Irish Annals allows opportunities to assess the frequency and geographical spread of Viking raiding in Ireland throughout the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. This suggests that between 795 and 830, raids were intermittent and largely confined to the coasts.

In the following two decades, the raids not only increased but also extended well into the Irish hinterland, with a particular focus in the Shannon-Brosna basin. Around 850-880, the raids declined dramatically and contracted in their extent. Viking raiding resumed in the middle of the second decade of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The activity fluctuates, but not as markedly as in the previous century, although it is at a higher level in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century there is a greater geographical spread into the Irish hinterland and in the second half the raids are more contracted, confined largely to the east of Ireland.

These patterns can be related to the broader purpose of raiding. In the past it was assumed that ecclesiastical metalwork was the main stimulus for Viking raids, due largely to the recovery of Irish Church metalwork from (mostly western) Norwegian grave deposits. However, Dr Etchingham believes that this tells us more about the burial practices of the Vikings than it does about the purposes for their raiding. This is supported by the Irish Annals which tell us that the Vikings wanted slaves and people more than metalwork, suggesting that the gold and silver bullion which has influenced our narratives was of secondary consideration. Indeed, said bullion is not really mentioned in the Annals until the 10<sup>th</sup> century. As far as we can tell, the Vikings were looking primarily for people.

It seems fairly clear that the purpose of raiding changed dramatically during the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century, at the point when raiding declines and contracts. Earlier raids appear to have been ends in themselves, with no purpose beyond plunder. After the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century, raiding became more selective and a deliberate tactic in a more general strategy that involved military or even political goals. In particular, indiscriminate raiding of churches declines with a more purposeful approach to raiding selected churches. Wilful burning of churches almost disappears from the record after the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, as Vikings became settlers, the purpose of raiding was adapted to their wider political ambitions, linked to their Irish alliances. They never attack the churches of their allies; they attack their adversaries.

Some of these essentially historical observations about the impact of Viking raiders in Ireland can be corroborated from the archaeological record, particularly the aforementioned 9<sup>th</sup>-century Norwegian Viking graves with Irish metalwork and the increase in silver and gold bullion during the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Supposed major developments in Irish society have, in the past, been attributed to the activities and impacts of the Vikings, but in Dr Etchingham's mind these may be chimerical. For example, there is no evidence that warfare became more ruthless after the Viking incursions. Similarly, there is no definitive evidence that political power became more centralised during the Viking Age.

The secularisation of the church has also been attributed to the Vikings but, like the previous issues, this appears to be a cyclical process that occurs and recurs through time. Dr Etchingham concludes that although Viking raids took place throughout the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were only two intense periods (830-840; 914-920). Re-iterating the point made by Professor Dumville, Dr Etchingham emphasised that even during these times the Church or kingdoms did not succumb to bouts of Viking aggression. All in all the impact of raiding, at least in an Irish context, seems neither to be far reaching nor long lasting.

Given the problem with the Irish records, and the resulting distribution maps and interpretations that arise from them, what hope then for understanding the Viking impact on Scotland?

Compared to the comparatively rich Irish documentary record, the historian of Scotland, Dr Etchingham told the audience, has to subsist on scraps. There are fewer than ten references to churches. This paucity is compounded when we consider that these citations relate to only three sites: Iona (six entries); Dunkeld (two entries); and Dunblane (one entry). Unlike Ireland, there is no database to even begin discussions. The indigenous chroniclers, together with the Irish annals, provide no more than a fleeting glimpse of Viking activity of any kind in Scotland. They supply no solid foundation, so that little more than conjectures are possible in response to any of the questions we wish to ask. Most basic questions are obscure. Again echoing Professor Dumville, Dr Etchingham stressed that before we can assess impact we have to address the significant gaps in our knowledge of the existing Church structure. How many significant churches were there in Scotland and how many were attacked? At present we simply do not know.

Both speakers concerned with the impact on the Church stressed the need to understand the nature of the entity prior to the Viking incursions. In other words, we have to know what was there before we can assess what impact the Norse had. In the past, scholars have presented an almost unified front where the character of parts of pre-Viking northern Britain were fairly well understood. But in recent times this comfort zone has been shaken, forcing us not only to reconsider pre-Viking Scotland but also the effects the Norse may, or may not have had. This was demonstrated by **Dr Dauvit Broun (Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Glasgow)** who presented a deconstruction of one of the most important standard narratives of Scotland in his lecture *The Norse and the Creation of Scotland*.

Dr Broun told the conference that until the last decade, the standard narrative for the creation of Scotland seemed straightforward. It was generally agreed that Kenneth (Cinaed mac Alpín), the King of the Scotti, succeeded in the year 843 in taking over the kingdom of the Picts.

This, it was held, resulted in a new joint kingdom of Picts and Gaels, or Scots, which soon acquired a new name *Alba* (Gaelic for Scotland). He was the first King of Scotland. In this story the issues of why the Picts capitulated so easily and what happened to them was often ignored. When they were considered, the Norse were at hand as a catalyst for this catastrophe. The *Annals of Ulster* preserves a record of a battle between the Picts and the Vikings in 839, where the heathens – the Vikings – defeated the men of Fortriu, presumed to be in and around Strathearn and its environs. This led to a simple storyline. That a whole Pictish dynasty and a large number of their fighting associates were wiped out by the invading Vikings, leading to a political vacuum which Kenneth was able to fill four years later.

Dr Broun informed the audience that in very recent times this view has been challenged on a number of levels. In particular, there has been a growing unease concerning the role of the Gaels and Kenneth mac Alpín. The contemporary 9<sup>th</sup> century source material, which we would expect to record the aforementioned events, are wholly ignorant of Kenneth's supposed achievements. Moreover, all the relevant sources convey *Alba* as Pictland. For example, a mid 9<sup>th</sup>-century text records that Alba was divided amongst the seven sons of Pictland. In other words *Alba* was not created in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century as a 'union of Scots and Picts', but was simply a Gaelic word for 'Pictland'. Further, it has been suggested that Kenneth (Cinaed mac Alpín) was not of solid Gaelic stock but may actually have been a Pict. In contrast to previous influential interpretations, the important assembly at Scone could be viewed as an act of submission to the king of the Picts not the pronouncement of new laws by a conquering Gaelic ruler and his people. Finally, instead of the kings of Dál Riata dominating Pictland from the reign of Custantin (obit. 820), Custantin may actually have been a Pict whose dynasty dominated Dál Riata. Even more influential is Alex Woolf's suggestion that Fortriu (the principal Pictish kingdom in our sources) was located elsewhere than hitherto thought. Alex Woolf argues that Fortriu is *north* of the Mounth, probably in and around the inner Moray Firth, and probably embracing Moray and Ross, therefore taking in the area in and around the important church site at Portmahomack.

If all this is put together, what emerges is an increasingly powerful Pictish kingship in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century with a strong focus in the north. In other words, there was no vacuum into which Kenneth walked.

These recent thoughts have serious implications for our understandings of Scottish history, let alone our understandings of the impact of the Norse. In particular, it allows the question of the beginning of the Scottish kingdom to be reformulated now in terms of a radical shift in a centre of power within northern Britain. The view of Scotland as a south-centred kingdom which endured throughout the Middle Ages can, therefore, be

defined politically as beginning at the point when Fortriu in the north ceased to be a major force. But when did this happen and what caused the shift?

There can be little doubt that the Norse delivered a fatal blow to the Fortriu dynasty in 839 and although the men of Fortriu are recorded as defeating the Norse in 904, their subsequent decline may be associated with the growing influence of the Norse, particularly the Earldom of Orkney. This may be represented by the subsequent Norse takeover of lands once held by the Picts in and around Moray and Ross. These suggestions appear to be supported by 12<sup>th</sup>- and early 13<sup>th</sup>-century documentary evidence that indicate that Moray was no longer part of the established pattern of high secular and ecclesiastical governance of the Scottish kingdoms. In other words, the Norse did have a significant impact on the creation of Scotland but not in the ways once traditionally thought. The very different political development of Pictland in the Viking Age, which now brings Norse activity in Ross and Moray centre stage, suggests that we have to rethink the ways we interpret the Norse as catalyst.

One of the most significant advances in the study of the impact and influence of migrant peoples across Britain in the last decade - including the Vikings - has been in the field of genetic studies. Put simply, analysis of certain DNA signatures can assess to what degree modern populations descended from specific ancestors. By relating these to distributions of people we can then infer such things as population movements. In other words genetic studies can illuminate who our ancestors were and where they came from. Although brought to public attention by the recent BBC programme *Blood of the Vikings* **Dr James Wilson (Royal Society Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh)** has been studying the genetic impact of the Vikings on different populations for many years.

In his lecture on the genetic impact of Vikings, Dr Wilson presented the results of his recent research with particular focus on the Y-chromosome, a segment of DNA inherited down the paternal line. His discussions were founded on the ability to recognise genetic markers, which can reveal significant differentiation between, for example, Celtic-speakers, Norwegian, and other continental populations. This is, of course, of particular relevance to Viking studies where genetic types in modern day Scottish populations can be apportioned to different ancestries in order to estimate the genetic impact of the Vikings and other invaders in particular places.

Dr Wilson began by outlining his results from Orkney. In the current literature there is a heated debate between two broad schools: those who believe the Vikings integrated with the natives and those who believe the Vikings annihilated the local population. Dr Wilson was interested to see whether genetics could shed light on this complex question. Analysis of paternally-inherited

Y-chromosomes demonstrated a strong signature of Norse influence in Orkney and Shetland, resulting in a population of mixed origin, that is a 'Celtic' and 'Norwegian' population. Analysis of surnames takes the story further. Surnames in Orkney can be divided into an indigenous category (that is, endemic to the Isles) and a Scottish group (names that have come to Orkney from other parts of Scotland). The genetic signature of the indigenous category class shows very strong Viking influence whereas the Scottish group does not. In Dr Wilson's words, the blood of the Vikings does indeed flow strongly in Orkney today. Further, he believes that the genetic results from the indigenous group do not rule out some form of survival of a Celtic or Pictish genetic population, but more detailed research is required to elucidate this point. The potential of genetic studies was clearly shown by Dr Wilson's suggestion that the technique may soon be able to point to the places in Norway where the Vikings in Orkney came from. Current suggestions are that they may have come from in or around Trondheim. In the future we may even be able to pinpoint the fjord from where particular Vikings set sail.

But what was the impact of the Vikings in other areas? Dr Wilson extended his Y-chromosome survey to other parts of the British Isles and the Continent (e.g. Denmark, northern Germany and the Netherlands). The results showed that it was not possible to differentiate between the Danes and the northern Germans, thus making it impossible to assess the individual genetic impacts of the Danes or the Anglo-Saxons on the native British populations. The study, therefore, considered three source populations: indigenous (represented by Irish/Welsh); Danes/Anglo-Saxon (Continental); and Norse.

The survey showed that the Northern Isles stood out in having by far the strongest paternal Norse ancestry, followed by the Western Isles, Durness and the Isle of Man. Areas in the Danelaw such as York and Norfolk have the highest levels of Danish/Anglo-Saxon input. Cornwall, Oban, Pitlochry and Stonehaven have the highest levels of indigenous signatures. The study concluded that the Irish and the Welsh were the paternal descendants of the first inhabitants of the British Isles. But other parts of the Isles also have a large indigenous genetic component. Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon influence differs strongly in certain areas. Interestingly, the Dublin study group and Ireland in general showed very little evidence for Norse blood.

Stressing that the genetic impact of the Vikings was now clear, Dr Wilson moved on to consider other groups, beginning with the Picts and the Scots. He stressed that this was a difficult area and required far higher resolution. But the emerging results are extremely tantalising. Dr Wilson is perhaps beginning to identify ways which will make it possible to recognise a migration of Irish people to Scotland at some point. Could this be the Dalriadic movement into western Scotland in the Early Historic

period? Further, Dr Wilson may be recognising a putative (pre-)Pictish Y-chromosome, with a particular concentration in eastern Scotland. We may even be able to recognise an Anglo-Saxon signature in the future.

Genetic technology is moving at a furious pace. Our insight into the genetic impact of migrant groups and the movements of other ancestral groups can only progress and augment our narratives. The study of genetics has only started to make an impact on Scottish history.

### SETTLEMENT, TRADE AND MARITIME IMPACT

The second session focused on *Settlement, Trade and Maritime Impact* and was chaired by **Professor Christopher Morris FRSE (Professor Emeritus of Archaeology and former Vice-Principal (Arts-side), University of Glasgow)**. Settlement, trade and maritime topics have always figured large in the archaeological domain, archaeologists relying on material - be they houses, artefacts or fish bones - excavated from the earth to construct their narratives. By way of a scene-setter Professor Morris outlined concepts that are current in the discipline today, particularly the movement towards more scientific approaches, with particular emphasis on the environment and the landscape, and the use of absolute dating techniques. These methodologies contrast markedly with those used in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the golden age of Scottish Viking archaeology when the majority of settlements, hoards and graves were uncovered. In today's 21<sup>st</sup> century discipline, there is a strong need for a multi- and intra- disciplinary approach that encompasses a myriad of evidential fields, specialists and thoughts. But as we shall see, at least in the archaeology of Viking Scotland, there is still some progress to be made.

**Frans-Arne Stylegar (Commissioner of Monuments and Sites, Vest-Agder County)** began the afternoon session with his lecture *Excavations at Kaupang and Evidence of Connections with the British Isles*. Ninth-century historical texts record a visit from Ottar, a chieftain-trader from Northern Norway, who visited King Alfred's court. The text also records a trading place in Sciringes heal (Skiringssal), a port where goods were loaded and unloaded and trade and artisan activity took place. The exact location of this site has fascinated historians and archaeologists for centuries. Today, there is little doubt that it was situated at Kaupang in Tjølling, in Vestfold county, south-east Norway. This town is one of the most important in Viking Scandinavia, comparable to Birka in Sweden and Ribe in Denmark, and sits within an important Viking landscape which includes the Oseberg and Gokstad ship burials and the Borre mound cemetery.

In 1850, P.A. Munch, one of the earliest and most famous Norwegian historians, discovered Kaupang when local farmers showed him an immense amount of barrows and objects. But even at this time, a great number of the

mounds had already been removed. When Nicolay Nicolaysen began his excavations in 1867, 50% of the mounds had already gone. Despite this, Nicolaysen undertook a large-scale investigation of over 60 grave mounds. He uncovered a cremation cemetery, largely dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Stylegar suggested that Nicolaysen was disappointed with his findings - he obviously wanted to find the Kaupang mentioned in the historical records, not a cremation cemetery. His disappointment appears to have been carried forward to later, smaller-scale investigations, for example by Professor Gustafson at the turn of the century.

It was only in the late 1940s that modern excavations began, led by Charlotte Blindheim. The site was a life-time passion. Blindheim started excavating in 1947 and her last publication was in 1999. She concentrated on another cemetery, this time of inhumations, and part of the settlement - the so-called 'Black Earth' area where charcoal, ashes and other domestic waste from the town coloured the soil black. During these excavations, Blindheim uncovered traces of houses and jetties and over 10,000 finds. These included Frankish pottery sherds, beads, coins, objects made of iron, lead, bronze, silver and gold, fragments of weaving equipment, spindle whorls, finished products (e.g. cooking pots and moulds), semi-finished products and waste from soapstone (steatite) and a considerable amount of glass sherds and glass rods.

Since Blindheim's work, Kaupang has been known as a seasonal trading site. It is clearly linked to a number of regions right across the Viking world, through trade, gift exchange and/or political alliances. These patterns are visible from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Finds included articles exported from Norway such as soapstone vessels. Bronze objects show contact with Sweden and Arabic coins indicate contact with Russia and the Orient. Glass and pottery illustrate Continental contacts, particularly the Rhine area and the Frankish realm. Others reflect contact with Britain and Ireland. The production/exchange/emporium at Kaupang may have served regional Vestfold chieftains or kings.

In 1997, Professor Dagfinn Skre and his associates (including Mr Stylegar) undertook a new programme of work at Kaupang. The main aim was to gain new insight into the connections with the local area, the hinterland, the North Sea and the Baltic. Initial fieldwalking uncovered over 1000 Viking Age artefacts including evidence of a glass bead maker's workshop. Excavations in another part of the Black Earth revealed plots suggesting that the site might actually be a much longer-lived settlement than previously thought and more than just an emporium. Extensive evidence for various crafts was also recovered.

As Mr Stylegar reminded the audience, the settlement and cemetery at Kaupang creates a problem. The settlement appears to be over around AD900 whereas the cemeteries continue well into the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century. An estimated 1000 burials existed, in the vicinity of which

205 burials have been investigated during different campaigns. The graves are aristocratic, and include richly furnished boat burials and chamber graves, and rich cremation graves. One hundred and sixteen can be dated to either the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, with dominance in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. But the settlement appears to stop earlier in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. Further, other graves and cemeteries situated in similar locations to Kaupang, that is, on the coast, generally end in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. This difference, according to Mr Stylegar, marks Kaupang out as a special place.

Following this review of the site, Mr Stylegar discussed the connections of Kaupang in a local, Skagerrak/Baltic and North Sea perspective. In the earlier phases, both in the settlement and the graves, the artefacts appear to derive largely from the continent, particularly Germany, Frisia and Denmark. This pattern changes in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The grave goods are more-or-less equally distributed between finds from the continent, finds from the British Isles and Ireland, and finds from the eastern world. The speaker believes that the importance of the Insular and Western connections were overstated during the 1950s as was the importance of trade. Mr Stylegar believes that it is hard to argue today that there was a special connection between Kaupang and the British Isles. Such suggestions were probably linked to the political climate of the 1950s where in a post-war era people wished to emphasise western contacts more than southern continental (e.g. Germanic) influences.

There can be little doubt that the rich finds assemblage from Kaupang accrued significant status for the inhabitants in the area. Such links between control of precious goods and crafts are a mainstay of Viking studies where wealth is associated with power and influence.

This topic was explored further by **Dr James Barrett (Senior Lecturer, Department of Archaeology, University of York)** in his lecture on *The Pirate Fishermen: The Political Economy of 'Saga Age' Orkney*. He investigated the socio-economic system that may have underpinned the wealth and influence of the Earldom of Orkney. In other words, he considered how one made a living, particularly as an aristocrat, in Late Viking Age Orkney. Using historical and archaeological evidence, Dr Barrett attempted to address two basic questions. First, was the Earldom of Orkney as wealthy as is sometimes assumed? Secondly, if so, what were the social and economic bases of this wealth and how did these factors change over time? Dr Barrett's main hope was to separate the mythology from the reality of Orkney's golden age.

According to Dr Barrett there are four attributes to a political economy: political power (e.g. who you know; or who you are associated with – kinship etc); economic power; ideological power (ideas that justify the ways things are, such as religion or ritual); and military power. In considering how these four aspects changed through time

Dr Barrett considered three epochs (10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries), the real floruit of the Earldom of Orkney. His conclusions are summarised in the following table:

	<b>10<sup>th</sup> century</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> century</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> century</b>
Political power	Establishment of the Norse elite, perhaps even the institution of the Earldom of Orkney. If you were in that club you were important.	The Irish Annals tell us that the Earldom of Orkney as a recognisable entity exists.  May be important marriage alliances taking place between high power individuals and families in Orkney and other power brokers, particularly the kings of Alba.	Political marriages continue but apparently with petty kings, regional magnates and unsuccessful world challenges. In other words, alliances were not happening at the highest levels of political society.
Economic power	Subsistence for local needs (e.g. not for export) Silver and gold hoards (AD950-1030) associated with a 'plunder' economy.	Enormous boom in fishing, indicating export in fish, particularly cod. Probably exported to elite sites.  Importance of cattle husbandry for dairying, for milk and butter, perhaps to support elite settlements.  Arable farming intensified perhaps shown by the development of infields and man-made manured soils.  Piracy and mercenary – continuation of plunder economy with the wealth presumably ending up with the elites.	Export in fish still important. Contacts with Norway still very important.  Export of grain to Iceland and perhaps Norway.  First direct evidence of trade with lowland Scotland in the form of ceramics (e.g. Scottish White Gritty Ware).  Piracy continued at similar levels – it was a routine part of elite life.
Ideological power.	Brough of Deerness (defenceable stack site, may be a monastery). Mid 10 <sup>th</sup> century Christian chapel the earliest evidence we have for Christian practice in Orkney. Associated with around 30 buildings, many longhouse in form. Is this a small chiefly centre using Christianity as its ideological basis?  Birsay area. The very latest pagan graves' coin dated to the mid 10 <sup>th</sup> century.  Is this evidence of greater variation in Orkney within the 10 <sup>th</sup> century?	Unification of the Earldom under single Christian Earls.  Establishment of the Christian Bishopric at Birsay. This area may have been chosen as it was the last surviving placed with Pagan ideology in the preceding century.	Christianity continued to play a key role with Bishops beginning to be powerful magnates in their own right. Christianity still used by kings to promote their own cause.
Military power	Presume that the elite could muster a considerable army.	Sources indicate notable armies associated with the Earldom.	The beginning of the end of the military power of the Earldom.

In conclusion, Dr Barrett argued that the Earldom of Orkney was a powerful and wealthy polity in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The evidence for the 10<sup>th</sup> century is more difficult to interpret. The sources for this power were varied and diverse. But this worked within a flat, unstable hierarchical pyramid, that is, a heterarchy. Trade appears to eclipse plunder over time but this may not have been too apparent to the people living in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The whole basis for the conference is, of course, the impact and influence of the Vikings. This portrays the group as active individuals who undertook a variety of tasks and exerted influence over groups and areas. Being migrants, these individuals obviously had to have ways and means of getting from one place to another. They also would need shelter and a suitable house site when they arrived. The following two lectures dealt with aspects of these fundamentals, considering settlement and boats.

**Dr Anna Ritchie** (Archaeological Consultant), one of the foremost Viking archaeological scholars currently working in Scotland has excavated and studied *Viking settlement in Scotland*, the subject of her paper.

The evidence for Viking settlement on the ground in Scotland derives primarily from archaeological fieldwork and excavation, the identification of Scandinavian place-names and historical sources, all of which indicate that the most densely settled areas were the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland, Caithness and the Western Isles. Settlement was rural and dispersed in character from the beginning, and only with the development of Kirkwall in the early twelfth century can we be certain of any substantial urban centre, though the presence of two pagan cemeteries at Pierowall in Westray indicates a sizeable village from early Viking times onwards.

As with much of the Viking Age, the date of the beginning of settlement generally is notoriously difficult to pin down in the absence of historical evidence, but Dr Ritchie suggests that we should seek the earliest farms and the earliest pagan burials among the islands closest to Norway: the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland. Looking at the archaeological evidence for the start of colonisation in the Northern Isles, some Norse farms and pagan graves can be dated broadly to the earlier part of the ninth century, while in the Hebrides the pagan graves suggest that colonisation was underway by the middle of that century. Research on placenames in Scandinavia has shown that islands are likely to bear the earliest names, and it is noticeable that the Scandinavian names of Shetland Islands relate to ordinary everyday life reflecting the domestic character of the early settlement. Shetland had an important economic resource that would be attractive to Norwegians in the outcrops of steatite in Unst and in southern mainland, steatite being an easily worked stone with which they were familiar from their homeland. But when the Norse earldom was created in

the later ninth century, its seat lay in Orkney rather than Shetland, probably because Orkney's fertile soils could provide richer estates and because Orkney was closer to Scotland, England and Ireland. Another reason is likely to have been the fact that Orkney had been a power-centre for the indigenous northern Picts, and the new earldom had to be seen to dominate and replace that political power. In the Northern Isles, the earliest farms are likely to be those in easily defended islands, such as Unst in Shetland and those in fertile Sanday and Westray, Orkney, or in promontory situations. The majority of Viking settlements in the Western Isles appear to have been established along the fertile and easily farmed western coastal lands.

In common with settlement elsewhere in the North Atlantic colonies, Scotland's Viking-Age farms consisted initially of oblong hall-houses and barns, the dwelling house kept separate from the barn or byre. Old houses were often demolished and rebuilt on the same spot, and by the eleventh and twelfth centuries extra rooms were being added to the dwelling house, and there is some evidence for the adoption of the true longhouse, in which humans and animals lived under the same roof at either end of one long building. Our most long-lasting settlement, Jarlshof in Shetland, is unfortunately something of a problem in that its detailed chronological sequence is unclear, but it appears to have flourished from around the mid ninth century until the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Most excavated farms were relatively short-lived, and we must assume that the more successful sites lie under later farms.

As well as presenting an outline of the character of the Viking settlement in Scotland, Dr Ritchie broadened the field to consider the wider implications embedded within the stone and turf buildings. In particular she focused on two aspects – were there pre-Viking contacts and what was the effect on the local population? Dr Ritchie dealt with the first issue quickly. Although it is common among both British and Norwegian scholars to assume that there was contact between western Norway and the Northern Isles prior to the conventional start of the Viking Age in the last couple of decades of the eighth century, this is often little more than an assumption. The tools of the trade for recognising contact are dubious. Using high status metalwork as a dating tool is notoriously difficult and the suggestion that Picts in Orkney were importing reindeer antler from Norway for making hair combs is beguiling but unproven.

As stated above, the second issue – what was the impact on the local population – is currently a thorny one. A huge amount has been written in the last thirty years about the social relationship between the Norse and the Picts in Orkney in particular, as a result of excavations of Norse settlements that have produced

native Pictish types of artefacts. However, Dr Ritchie stresses that only one of these settlements has yielded evidence of direct continuity of settlement from a Pictish cultural milieu into a Viking cultural milieu, at Pool in Orkney. Apart from this site, in every case there appears to have been a break in occupation between Pictish and Norse levels. In other words, these Pictish settlements had been abandoned before they were taken over by Norse colonists. Dr Ritchie suggests that a pre-Viking text may hold a clue to the explanation of this.

According to the *Annals of Ulster*, a monastic source which at that time was in fact being compiled at the monastery of Iona, in the year 681 Orkney was 'destroyed' by the Pictish high king Bridei son of Bili. No reason is given for this devastating military expedition but there must have been a very strong political motive for it. Like Dr Broun before her, Dr Ritchie made reference to the recent suggestion by Alex Woolf that the Pictish royal power-centre of Fortriu was actually based in the Moray Firth area. From here a sea-borne campaign to Orkney would have been even more feasible. A catalyst for the attack could have been famine and social unrest. Whatever the reason, this destruction of Orkney in 681 may have had such long-lasting effects that this formerly powerful sub-kingdom of the Picts had not recovered by the time that the Vikings arrived. There is support for this idea in the fact that Orkney lacks any of the elaborately carved cross-slabs that were commissioned in mainland Pictland by wealthy Pictish patrons in the eighth century, an absence that argues for sadly reduced wealth and power among both the secular population and the Church. If the Picts were in a weakened state, they would soon have been assimilated into the new Norse colony and subsequent earldom and their ethnic origins forgotten. The Norse takeover of the Northern Isles may, therefore, have been easier than might have been expected. As to the fate of the remaining indigenous Picts, Dr Ritchie believes that the true answer to the peace or war debate is that they were seen by the Vikings as a source of revenue, comparable perhaps to the relationship between the Norwegians and the Sámi in northern Norway. That the native population of Scotland was regarded by the Vikings as a taxable resource has some historical backing, for the Frankish *Annals of St Bertin* record for 847 that in the Western Isles 'The Scotti, after being attacked by the Northmen for very many years, were rendered tributary and [the Northmen] took possession, without resistance, of the islands that lie all around and dwelt there'.

Dr Ritchie concluded by considering the future of research into Viking settlement which was a sobering experience. Dr Ritchie suggested that whereas other disciplines, such as place-name research (see below) were in a very healthy state and displayed excellent collaboration between scholars in Scotland and Norway, this was in contrast to the archaeological discipline. Indeed, she suggested Viking-Age archaeological research in general is in rather a stagnant state in Scotland currently, partly

because we have been waiting forty years for seminal excavations to be published and partly because the subject is not well covered in Scottish universities. Most of the innovative work is being done by English universities. Few students studying in a Scottish environment study the Viking Age and among the numerous excavations and fieldwork carried out in recent years there are only a few, if important, projects. With a few notable exceptions, artefact studies are also in a stagnant state. Dr Ritchie suggested that we are also lagging behind our neighbours in presenting Viking-Age sites to the public, despite the perennial huge interest in all things Viking and its potential for tourism.

But Dr Ritchie did not end on a pessimistic note. Instead she outlined possible avenues for the future. These included efforts to identify the earliest farms, particularly where they can be linked with contemporary pagan cemeteries, and that a priority, now that we can achieve more accurate radiocarbon dates, should be the creation of detailed radiocarbon chronologies.

#### **Professor Arne-Emil Christensen (University of Oslo)**

closed the first day's session by discussing *Viking Ships and Highland Galleys*. Because of the large number of archaeological finds of ships from the Viking Age, there is a considerable knowledge of what ships looked like in the period 800-1100, reflected in the considerable literature written on the subject. Further, there is still a living tradition of boat building using similar techniques in parts of Norway today which gives a rare insight into old practices.

Professor Christensen began his talk by presenting an illuminating and informative contextualisation of the different types of Viking ships used throughout the centuries. He began by asking what were the precursors to Viking ships? Were there trading and warrior ships and when did the sail arrive in the north? Answering the final question, Professor Christensen stated that although Caesar saw sailing ships in the English Channel in 55BC, the sail does not arrive in the north until remarkably late. In Professor Christensen's view, the Vikings learned from their sailing expeditions and changed their boats accordingly through time. Further, the types of boats built during the Viking Age were affected by the developing and changing social and political structure. For example, as Kings became wealthier they could build warships intended only to carry men and arms. Similarly, during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries pre-urban sites appeared. Such sites would have needed a different type of cargo boat than those used previously, one that can take a larger cargo. Different voyages would have required different boats. In other words, during the Viking Age there is a greatly increased number of boat types that includes a myriad of boats.

Professor Christensen then considered what kinds of boats were used by the people who opposed the Vikings?

Although there are numerous boat finds from the Continent, almost all are river craft and could never have sailed the sea. The finds from Sutton Hoo are related to Scandinavian traditions and there are merchant and freight vessels from 10<sup>th</sup>-century Anglo-Saxon England. Conversely, Irish sources tell us that the Irish used skin boats and nothing else. The same may be true of Scotland. These differences are important not only for our understanding of boats and boat-building techniques but also for wider socio-political developments. Once the Vikings had raided, if they were able get back to their ships they were likely to win any confrontation. Tactics were based on ships.

But who could build a boat in the Viking Age? Did, for example, the Earls of Orkney build their own boats? Of course a necessity of building a boat is the raw materials. When available, oak was the preferred wood, although pine was also used. Iron was used to hold the planks together. But where did the Vikings living in, for example, Atlantic Scotland get these resources? Professor Christensen believes that Orkney and Shetland never had ship-building timbers in the Viking Age and that there is a good chance that many of the boats were built in Norway. This suggestion is supported in the historical texts. The Viking boat, particularly an imported one, is the Viking equivalent of a modern day sports car or a very good race horse! Sources also tell us that small boats were exported to Shetland up until the Napoleonic wars in flat packs and then assembled in Shetland. But this is not to say that there were no boat builders in Scotland – there may be such sites on Eigg and Arran. However, Prof Christensen is in little doubt that the people working there were strongly influenced by Scandinavian techniques.

Professor Christensen argues that the legacy of the Viking ship goes far beyond the Viking Age. In pursuit of this point he considered the Highland Galley. In contrast to the Viking ships there is little modern literature on the topic. The galleys are known from written sources in the Late Middle Ages and through depictions on gravestones, mainly slabs, which are on the west coast in the Inner Hebrides. It is certain that these vessels are troop carriers, used to enforce the law or to raid. Some are remarkably late – a depiction in Rodel Church, Harris dates to 1528. Contemporary with the Mary Rose, it is a modernised Viking vessel on the west coast of Scotland. It tells us that the Lord of the Isles needed and used an old-fashioned, but not obsolete, type of ship which is so similar to Norwegian Viking ships that there must be a connection. Although it is difficult to prove a direct connection the ships are similar in design and technique. The connection may be sealed by consideration of another fascinating detail - the use of animal-headed sterns. This, of course, can be paralleled on Viking ships.

### LANGUAGE AND LITERARY CULTURE

The third section of the conference was concerned with

*Language and Literary Culture* and was chaired by **Dr Doreen Waugh (Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh)**. The session began with a lecture by **Dr Gillian Fellows-Jensen (University of Copenhagen)** whose concern was *Place-names as evidence of Scandinavian influence*. Her main aim was to outline the recent thoughts on Scottish place-names since the beginning of the 1980s and to concentrate on a few of the issues that have come to the fore. In the course of her lecture Dr Fellows-Jensen noted more than 20 scholars who have published in the field over the last 25 years, demonstrating the vibrancy of the topic. This breadth and depth of scholarship was clearly represented in her extensive and detailed lecture.

Dr Fellows-Jensen divided her lecture into four major linguistic zones:

- Zone 1: Shetland, Orkney and North-East Caithness, with names of basically Norse character
- Zone 2: Northern Scotland, embracing Sutherland, Easter Ross, the Western Isles and the western seaboard, where originally Norse place-names were later adopted by Gaelic speakers.
- Zone 3: South-West Scotland with place-names of mixed Gaelic, Norse and Danish character.
- Zone 4: South-East Scotland where scattered Scandinavian place-names occur.

Soon after the initial Viking incursions into Zone 1, Norse became the dominant language and over time developed into the language now generally referred to as Norn, which came to be increasingly influenced by Scots.

Dr Fellows-Jensen informed the audience that the chronology of Orkney place-names has long dominated discussion and this provided a key focus of her talk. Previous scholars, such as Marwick, had assumed that there was a zone of primary settlement, surrounded by secondary settlements, with a final peripheral zone characterised by the development of shielings and stock enclosures. Recent scholars have been reluctant to accept that there was such a fixed chronological scheme and have argued persuasively that many of the Norse generics – on which the scheme is based – were in use there simultaneously rather than consecutively, and that only detailed local investigations of the geographical background of the place-names set against the literary, historical, documentary and topographical evidence will make it possible to fully understand the development pattern of settlement. Berit Sandnes has added light to Orkney place-name chronology by examining toponyms for settlement history. She pointed out that half of the place-names involved in the material examined have toponymic generics and that such a considerable group definitely ought to be taken into account in the history of settlement patterns. Recent work on the so-called *Huseby*-names in Orkney has also been enlightening, and

they can now be seen to belong to the Late-Viking or post-Viking period, perhaps even as late as the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The question of the transition between Norse and Scots place-names in Orkney has also come to the fore. Recent studies suggesting that many of the place-names considered by previous scholars to be Norse are more correctly to be looked upon as Scots, although it is often difficult to be certain about the age of the individual names. Dr Fellows-Jensen also highlighted the excellent work that is being undertaken in Shetland and Caithness.

Before leaving Zone 1 Dr Fellows-Jensen felt obliged to say a few words on the ongoing debate concerning whether the Vikings exterminated the native population. She does not believe that the Vikings wanted to exterminate the native population if only because they would have needed their assistance in their new territories. More importantly, there is evidence from areas such as the Isle of Man and La Hague in Normandy that suggests an almost complete loss of pre-Norse names after the arrival of the Vikings was *not* always necessarily the result of a displaced population.

Dr Fellows-Jensen marked the transition between Zone 1 and Zone 2 by outlining the importance of recent studies concerned with place-name elements such as *bólstaðr*. This element occurs in Shetland, Orkney, Caithness and the Hebrides but not in the coastal stretches of mainland Scotland, on the east coast from Beaulieu Firth to the River Oykel and on the west coast from Cape Wrath to the Mull of Kintyre and Arran. The *bólstaðr*-names in the colonial setting of Scotland seem to have denoted a secondary settlement in areas with a strong agricultural focus, where the settlement structure had had time to become sufficiently well-established to allow for the splitting up of a farm to accommodate one or more dependent units and where the conditions for growing crops and rearing livestock were present.

The absence of *bólstaðr*-names from the mainland coastal areas of Scotland, however, is not due to geographical features but to the fact that in these areas the Norse settlers would have been subject to attacks by the neighbouring Gaelic population. Indeed, a major problem facing place-name studies is how to account for the variations in the phonetic development of, for example, the element *bólstaðr* in the Western Isles, where all Scandinavian elements had passed from Norse into Gaelic and subsequently from Gaelic into English. Dr Fellows-Jensen also stressed how difficult it is for a non-Gaelic speaker to interpret individual place-names of Norse origin. Norse material is likely to be lying half-hidden or completely concealed to the non-Gaelic speaker in the place-names of the Western Isles.

Dr Fellows-Jensen informed the audience that a good deal of research had been done in the last quarter of a century on the various parts of Zone 2 outside the Western

Isles. Starting at the southern frontier of Norse settlement in Easter Ross and working across the northern seaboard and down the western seaboard and ending up in Kintyre, she gave a summary account of the place-name evidence for Norse settlement that has been presented in recent times. The lightning tour along the northern and western littoral of Scotland suggested that in spite of the comparatively sparse archaeological evidence for Norse settlement and the relative rarity of Norse habitative place-names, there must have been permanent Norse settlement in these areas, but that this settlement did not penetrate far inland. Nor was there much time for secondary settlement by the Norse before they were absorbed by the Gaelic population. She stressed that there was no reason to think that habitative place-names were more likely to have marked permanent settlement than were topographical place-names. All that it is necessary to remember is that a habitative name must always have been given to a settlement, while a topographical name may have had a long existence as a name for a topographical feature before eventually becoming adopted as a name for a settlement, a so-called secondary settlement name.

Turning to Zones 3 and 4 Dr Fellows-Jensen emphasised that some place-names show clear links with the Danish settlements in northern and eastern England. Further, the spread of Scandinavian names northwards into Scotland from Cumbria may reflect influence from the Danelaw and she provided examples of this. She alluded to hogback tombstones, a distinctive form of Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, to support a Danelaw origin for the spread of the certain names in *-bý* across the Pennines and into south-western and central Scotland. Stylistic analysis of the tombstones reveals clear affinities between the monuments in Scotland and those in Cumbria. Dr Fellows-Jensen then considered another and probably younger spread of place-names to Scotland from the Danelaw. This is of the group of place-names sometimes referred to as Grimston-hybrids because they contain a Scandinavian personal name and the Old English element *tûn*.

Dr Fellows-Jensen stressed that the important factor to remember when discussing the Scandinavian place-names in southern Scotland is the spread of what has been referred to as norsified English by linguistic scholars but which she would prefer to refer to as nordicised English, as the major influence on northern English was undoubtedly Danish. Nordicised English would seem to have arisen in the Danelaw, perhaps in northern Lincolnshire, where the language had been subject to heavy Danish influence, but at a time when Danish was already going out of use because of the gradual restoration of English rule. The nordicised traits, however, were still being absorbed in the course of the eleventh century not only into the local dialects of the East Midlands and Yorkshire but also into the dialects of Durham and Northumberland, where Danish could not

have been spoken for very long, and also of Cumbria, where there had been Norse place-names before a Danelaw-inspired layer of names was superimposed upon them. After the Norman Conquest the northwards spread of an English language with nordicised traits continued into parts of Scotland, not only into south-west Scotland and Lothian but also further up into the Central Lowlands and the urbanised areas along the eastern coast of Scotland.

Dr Fellows-Jensen concluded her presentation by stating that the distribution in Scotland of place-names containing Scandinavian elements obviously reflects significant contact with Scandinavian speakers but it is clear that it is not all these place-names that imply actual settlement by Scandinavians. She re-iterated the great English historian Frederick Maitland's century-old caution spoken in connection with his discussion of the implications of the Danish settlement of eastern England in the ninth and tenth centuries - 'in truth we must be careful how we use our Dane'. The speaker concurred stressing that we must be even more careful how we use our Scandinavian place-name terminology in the coming years.

For a period of three and a half centuries, the *Orkneyinga Saga* is the principal authority for the history of Scotland. It represents the history of the peoples who established an Earldom of Norway in the Northern Scottish Isles a thousand years ago and whose descendants for several centuries held sway over parts of northern mainland Scotland and arguably the Hebrides. Its importance to Viking scholarship is unquestionable and was referred to at numerous points throughout the conference. Such sources are our critical 'historical' evidence for the period. These valuable tools were explored by **Professor Else Mundal (Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Bergen)** in her lecture *Orkneyinga saga: Its Literary Form, Content and Origin*.

Professor Mundal began her lecture by stressing the things that we do *not* know about the existing *Orkneyinga Saga*. We do not know the name of the author. We do not know exactly when the Saga was written and we do not know where the Saga was written. Further, the text does not exist in its original form, only in a revised version. The *Orkneyinga Saga* we have is not the original, the original is long lost. Further, scholars cannot agree on how much the Saga was changed from the original version.

As Professor Mundal told the audience, most scholars have recorded that the author of the original *Orkneyinga Saga* and the individual who later revised the text were Icelanders. She agrees that the person who revised the saga must have been an Icelander. However, although it is impossible to arrive at a firm conclusion, it is still an open question whether the author of the original *Orkneyinga Saga* was an Icelander or not. In this light

we have to consider what the evidence is for an Icelandic provenance or an Icelandic author. If there are no convincing arguments for an Icelandic link are there indicators in the text which suggest an alternative source or author? Could the Saga have been written in Orkney?

In the absence of the original Saga we, of course, have to turn to the Saga we have. Does this offer any resolution?

The saga text as we have it contains some elements in the text which seem to point towards Iceland as a place of origin. For example, they influenced the Saga of Kings (*Heimskringla*). However, just because the *Orkneyinga Saga* was present in Iceland at the time such Sagas were written does not mean that it too was written in Iceland. The Icelanders are particularly well-known for their export and import of books, particularly from Norway, and Professor Mundal argued that we should presume that Orcadian books were also imported. Further, the fact that all the preserved manuscripts of the Saga seem to derive from the Icelandic revised version is also not a convincing argument for an Icelandic provenance. The weight of statistics does not prove individual cases. Professor Mundal also emphasised that, in contrast to texts that were written in Iceland, for example the Saga of Kings, *Orkneyinga Saga* has remarkably little to say about Iceland or Icelanders. Perhaps, unusually, the connections between Icelandic and Orcadian families are not emphasised. This does not mean that the author was not interested in family connections, far from it. Relations between Orcadian Earls and Norwegian or Scottish families are mentioned very frequently in the Saga. Professor Mundal suggests these patterns are characteristics that do not support a theory of an Icelandic origin for the *Orkneyinga Saga*. In her eyes, Iceland is on the periphery of the author's interest.

As Professor Mundal highlighted, the author's primary focus appears to be on Orkney, Shetland, northern Scotland and Norway. There is also interest in other areas such as the Western Isles and Sweden. The people of Shetland are described as very loyal and helpful as opposed to the people from the Hebrides who are portrayed in an unfavourable light. With this in mind, Professor Mundal considered other elements in the text that seemed to suggest that the Saga was written in Orkney and not Iceland. There is no doubt that the author knew Orkney very well. The text provides a number of place-names, descriptions of landscapes, individuals' names and family connections. The author also has a good understanding of Scotland and Norway, although this is less detailed.

As Professor Mundal stressed, this was not the first time a connection between the author of *Orkneyinga Saga* and Orkney had been suggested. However, in the past people have assumed that the author was still Icelandic but lived in Orkney for a long time and may have finished the Saga in Norway. But Professor Mundal deems it

inappropriate to chase an Icelandic author from land to land. Instead she prefers an Orcadian author who had close connections with Norway and Shetland. This proposition is supported by the source of the oral stories which form important cornerstones for any Saga. In the case of the *Orkneyinga Saga* none of the sources are Icelandic. Instead they are from Orkney, Caithness and the Hebrides. Further, Professor Mundal questions the belief that the influences derived from Skaldic poetry in the Saga necessarily suggest a sole connection with Iceland. Gaelic loan words in the language of the *Orkneyinga Saga* may also indicate an Orcadian tradition.

Professor Mundal concluded her lecture by stating that although it is not possible to prove that the *Orkneyinga Saga* was written in Orkney nor indeed by an Orcadian author there are also strong doubts that the text has an Icelandic origin.

**Paul Bibire (former lecturer, Universities of St Andrews and Cambridge)**, in his discussion of *Orkney's Skaldic Achievement*, dealt with the distribution of recorded skaldic ('court') poetry, only known in significant volume from Norway, Orkney and Iceland. He suggested that this may not have been an accident of transmission, nor due to a 'conspiracy' on the part of Icelanders who wrote the sagas in which skaldic poetry is preserved. On the contrary, historical sagas mostly seem only to have been composed about Norse cultural institutions, monarchies and earldoms, about which poetry was known.

The composition of skaldic poetry in the West Norse colonial communities may have depended on their circumstances of settlement and Conversion to Christianity. In England, Ireland and Normandy, the Norse settlers appear to have adopted Christianity immediately and fully, and they co-existed with pre-existing Christian populations without significant known religious problems. If this appearance is not a mere artefact of ignorance, it could perhaps be partly explained in terms of local or even household religious practice, employing the 'patronage' of local divinities, *bjargvættir*, *landvættir*. In the Norse colonial settlements in Christian lands, the local divine patrons were the local saints, and any incoming settler seeking their patronage would thereby become Christian. Aidan or Cuthbert, or Edmund, may have converted the Norse settlers in England. This might, for instance, explain the production of the Edmund Memorial Coinage in the Viking kingdom of East Anglia, only about thirty years after these same Vikings martyred the royal saint.

Such conversion, as earlier for instance among the Franks and English, seems to have involved 'cultural decapitation' of pre-Christian societies. Learned, Christian, Latin-based 'high culture' largely superseded the earlier high-status and aristocratic cultural practices and art-forms of pagan times, even when, as in Anglo-Saxon England, there was

a determined attempt subsequently to recover or reconstruct a pre-Christian past.

In Iceland, contrastingly, there was no pre-existing and surviving Christian population, and native Norse cultural traditions continued to flourish. After the communal decision of the Icelanders to accept Christianity, their native traditions could be used to express Christian content.

The Earldom of Orkney could be seen as following both kinds of model. There is little or no evidence for a pre-existing and surviving Christian population in Orkney or Shetland, but Norse settlers in Caithness, Easter Ross and Moray must have interacted closely if to different degrees with native, Christian populations. The Orcadian Norse seem to have been converted reasonably peaceably but without the 'cultural decapitation' seen elsewhere. The recorded skaldic poetry of the Earldom seems to reflect this. The earliest poetry, attributed to Earl Torf-Einarr, is brutal vaunting over the death of a son of King Harald Fairhair of Norway; it functions as mockery of the king, and claims the same sort of cultural independence of the Norwegian monarchy as did the Icelanders. The eleventh-century court-poetry of Earl Thorfinn the Mighty makes him equivalent in status to the contemporary Norwegian kings, and the Christian court-poetry of St Ronald of Orkney depicts him as a Christian prince of the twelfth-century renaissance, as much at home with the troubadours of Provence, or the Crusader kings of Catholic Christendom, as with pilgrims at Jerusalem.

**Professor Michael Barnes (Professor Emeritus of Scandinavian Studies, University of London)** then considered another form of evidence for Scandinavian writing in Scotland in his lecture *Runes*. As many speakers before him, Professor Barnes began by highlighting the problems inherent within the material. Considering at first the material from mainland Scotland, he suggested that on the face of it, the corpus hardly makes for fascinating or illuminating reading. Nor does it constitute a large body of material. Were the term Viking to be rigorously defined, there would be less material still. For even if we err on the side of generosity and place the end of the Viking Age at c. 1100, some of the inscriptions still fall outside the period. The corpus is, however, considerably augmented by the inclusion of material from the Northern Isles. But Professor Barnes intimated that anyone expecting exciting insights into the secrets of the Vikings will again be disappointed. The corpus largely constitutes fragments of memorial stones and graffiti for the most part. Orkney can, in addition, boast several twig-rune inscriptions.

As Professor Barnes informed the audience, even with the Shetland and Orkney material above added in, we have still omitted one major corpus. This is the Maeshowe collection, the thirty-three runic inscriptions discovered in 1861 on the walls of the neolithic chambered tomb in

the Orkney Mainland. But these inscriptions are distinct from the other runic material found in Orkney. Their rune-forms and language suggest a date-range c. 1125–75. The references they make to the activities of crusaders indicate strongly they are to be connected with the crusade mounted by Earl Rôgnvaldr Kali, for which men forgathered in Orkney in the autumn of 1150 before setting sail in the spring of 1151. Indeed, it is entirely possible all thirty-three inscriptions were carved that same winter after 'Jerusalem men broke open this mound', as one of the texts informs us. The majority appear to have been Norwegian, and it is highly likely that some of these visitors scratched runic messages onto the walls of Maeshowe. There is at least nothing in the inscriptions themselves that rules out Norwegian authorship, and the runic versatility shown in Maeshowe contrasts strongly with the rather poverty-stricken efforts found elsewhere in the islands.

When studying runic inscriptions, Professor Barnes said that in addition to asking: "What do they say?", we should also concern ourselves with context. Why are they there at all? What gave rise to them? Context can often cast as much light on an inscription as its specific wording. It is important to know whether it comes from a burial, a settlement site, a church, a waste pit, or somewhere other. This both helps in the interpretation of the text, in particular if it is fragmentary, and throws light on the milieu in which it was made. We should also be asking other questions. Apart from the obvious: "How old is it?", we may enquire: "How clearly defined is the text, and so how certain is our interpretation?"; "What range of alternative interpretations is there?"; "How were the runes carved?"; "What information may the inscription imply beyond the simple sense of its words?"; "Is there interplay between wording and layout or artistic design?"; "Does the artefact as a whole offer any clues to social, linguistic or political milieu?". Professor Barnes was aware that in a brief, general lecture of this kind, it would not be possible to subject the whole of the Scottish corpus – however defined – to such searching analysis. He, therefore, adopted a more selective approach, and used different types of evidence to try to place the Scandinavian runic inscriptions of Scotland in the context of the wider Norse involvement in the region.

At the outset Professor Barnes highlighted that runic writing is not static; people used different runes at different times and in different places. Types of runic text also vary according to time and place. To some extent, therefore, it is possible to date and place an inscription not only by its language, but also according to the rune-forms with which it is written and what it says. All the inscriptions from Scotland employ variants of what is known as the younger runic alphabet or younger *fubark*. This was the end-product of a late seventh-/early eighth-century Scandinavian reduction and simplification of the older – and earliest – runic alphabet. There is no way the younger *fubark* can be confused with its precursor, or

with Anglo-Saxon runes, a separate development of the older runic alphabet. From this, Professor Barnes argues, we may deduce that the Scottish corpus as presented here is wholly Scandinavian in origin. That is not to say that all runic inscriptions now within the borders of Scotland are of Scandinavian type. The Ruthwell Cross and the Whithorn stones are carved with Anglo-Saxon runes.

Scandinavian rune-forms, too, vary according to place and over time. It is scarcely surprising to find that the rune-forms of the Scottish inscription agree most closely with those of Norway. Time-wise there are a good number of forms to guide us. About the year 1000, perhaps under the influence of the Roman alphabet which was introduced into the North from the late tenth century onward, Scandinavian carvers began to expand their inventory of runes, principally by adding a diacritic dot to certain characters. Where we find dotted runes – transliterated with the Umlaut sign " – we infer that the inscription concerned was made later than the tenth century. Some dotted characters do not make an appearance until the very end of the twelfth century.

Professor Barnes outlined the different types of objects on which runic inscriptions appear, beginning with commemorative stones. This is the predominant type in Scandinavia and it is clear that large numbers of memorials to dead kinsmen were carved and set up in the period c. 750–1100, with the heaviest concentration in the tenth and eleventh centuries. These monuments carry a fairly stereotypical message, at its most basic: 'NN raised this stone after MM, his/her father (son, brother, etc.)'. Scotland has a couple of fragmentary inscriptions that clearly belong to this type and we should probably be right in assigning these inscriptions to the period of rune-stone raising, i.e. before 1100. The stone from Kilbar stands out within the Scottish corpus. Although assuredly a commemorative stone, its formula differs from the usual. Instead of 'NN raised this stone...' we have 'After NN is this cross raised'. Most striking is the absence from it of the raiser of the stone; only the person commemorated is mentioned. That is a feature of the very earliest commemorative inscriptions, and has led at least one runologist to place Kilbar at the beginning of the tenth century, which could make it among the earliest, if not the very earliest, of the Scandinavian runic inscriptions of Britain. In fact, Professor Barnes thinks that even an early tenth-century date could be an underestimate of Kilbar's age - the Scandinavian parallels are dated in the eighth or ninth centuries. On the other hand, we must ask: How soon after the Norse settlement of Barra is the raising of a commemorative stone likely? There are also certain linguistic features in the inscription suggestive of the tenth or eleventh rather than the eighth or ninth centuries. Other inscriptions are found on recumbent slabs, or, even raised crosses that stood in a socket in a recumbent slab. In Scandinavia the graveslab is a later type of inscription than the raised

commemorative stone, coming into prominence in the twelfth century.

Moving on from the raised commemorative stone, Professor Barnes turned to the Maeshowe corpus. These inscriptions are plainly graffiti, and about half of them say nothing more than 'NN carved' or 'NN carved (these) runes'. Although experience suggests that to record one's presence is a human imperative, it is apparently only in the medieval period it becomes the fashion for Scandinavian rune-writers to engrave their name followed by the otiose statement that they 'carved runes'. This means that (Maeshowe apart) one is inclined to date some Scottish examples, for example from Orkney and Holy Island (in Lamlash Bay, Isle of Arran) to after the Viking Age, a conclusion that the rune forms and language of several of these inscriptions support.

Analysis of linguistic criteria can assist in determining the type of Scandinavian employed, and will often also help with dating. With the possible exception of Danish involvement in an inscription from Iona, most of the runes from Scotland are Norwegian in character. Professor Barnes also outlined linguistic forms helpful in dating inscriptions which include the 3rd person singular present and past tense forms of the verb '[to] be', a short *v.* a long form of the preposition meaning 'after' and the epenthetic vowel just mentioned.

Layout is another aspect of runic inscriptions that must be examined. While casual carvings on wood and bone may often contain features of interest, it is the formal public monuments on stone that tend to follow characteristic patterns. The makers of Viking-Age commemorative inscriptions in Denmark and western Sweden, for example, tend to carve their runes in rows that run up and down the broad face of the stone between framing lines. In eastern Sweden, carvers developed the tradition of setting their runes within the body of a stylised serpent; the inscription normally begins by the head and follows the twists and turns of the body until the tail is reached.

Norwegian rune-stone tradition prefers the narrow edge of the stone, and usually has the runes running upwards in a straight line. All but one of the Scottish inscriptions classified as of (or as likely to be of), raised commemorative type, conform – as far as can be seen – to the Norwegian pattern. The odd one out is Kilbar whose runes run in three rows down the broad face of the stone. Kilbar, however, does not accord with Danish or Swedish tradition either. Its closest analogues are to be found in the Isle of Man, where we seem to be dealing with an offshoot of Norwegian tradition with strong local colouring.

Using the Eshaness slab and the Hunterston brooch as an example, Professor Barnes highlighted how there may also be interplay between layout or artistic design and wording. For example, it seems, the aim of the inscription on the Hunterston brooch was to record ownership of a

valuable brooch, and once *Melbrigða á stilk* had been scratched onto part of one of two undecorated sections of the hoop, the job was done. Perhaps for aesthetic reasons, perhaps to prevent further claims to ownership, the still vacant space was then filled with rune-like symbols – graphs that have the appearance of runes but lack their distinctive features. This example underlines the fact – often forgotten or ignored – that runic inscriptions are more than texts, and that for a proper understanding of them it is essential they be viewed in context.

Professor Barnes also tackled a number of other issues, including the question of who made the inscriptions. He suggested that perhaps a fair proportion of the Scottish runic inscriptions are unlikely to have been made by local residents at all. The genesis of the Maeshowe collection and the likely Norwegian involvement have already been touched upon. An apparently similar case is the Holy Island group, which may be the work of visitors passing by, rather than the local community. That said, the small assemblages of runic material from Birsay and Orphir invite the opposite conclusion. The recovery of several inscriptions from these two well-known and prestigious Norse settlement sites suggests the existence of a runic culture among native Orcadians, as well as Norwegian visitors to the islands. Three of the Birsay fragments appear to belong to raised commemorative stones, or to one and the same stone, implying perhaps one or more local, rune-using families.

Professor Barnes pushed the question of who might have carved a runic inscription and in what circumstances, further. He suggests that we should be aware that the answer may sometimes lead us to the present day. For although runic writing as a genuine tradition had died out in most parts of the Scandinavian world by the late Middle Ages, use of runes has never completely ceased. Modern use of runes, of course, by no means always implies fakery. When, on the other hand, tourists in Orkney scrawl inscriptions taken from postcard illustrations onto ancient monuments, we may wonder whether at least some of them have in mind to fool innocent runologists or museum-folk into believing they have found the genuine article. These naive acts of modern vandalism are of course easy to spot.

However, we are on less certain ground when dealing with artefacts accepted as runic decades ago about which we now grow suspicious. Orkney boasts at least five inscriptions consisting wholly or partly of twig-runes. In other words, a little over 25% of the total Orkney corpus. Professor Barnes stresses that this is a remarkable figure when we consider that of the 600 or so inscriptions from medieval Bergen, less than 2% contain twig-runes or their analogues. It is also striking when we consider that not a single Scandinavian twig-rune is known from any other region of the British Isles. Common to all the Orkney inscriptions of this type are (1) lack of a proper find report, (2) an uncertain context, (3) brevity, (4) the absence of

an obviously recoverable meaning, (5) a find-spot within a six-and-a-half mile radius of Maeshowe. The last may be the most significant factor; for since Maeshowe was excavated in 1861 there has been an awareness of runes in Orkney – and of twig-runes in particular. Two of the most prominent of the Maeshowe inscriptions contain twig-runes, which, unlike their counterparts elsewhere in Orkney, give perfect sense and complement the plain runes they accompany. In the light of this it does not seem too far-fetched to suggest that some or perhaps all of the other Orkney twig-runes were made in modern times in imitation of the twig-rune inscriptions in Maeshowe. The ease with which twig-runes can be produced gives added weight to the suggestion. But there is no incontrovertible evidence one way or the other, only deep scepticism.

Professor Barnes ended his lecture by asking what the inscriptions tell us of the impact and influence of the Vikings on Scotland. Although the sources' suggestion of Norse crusaders foraging in Orkney before setting sail to, for example, the Holy Land receive confirmation from the runic sources, these are individual episodes. More fundamental is the fact that the Norse settlers brought their written culture with them and continued to use it for several centuries, in some places presumably side by side with people employing the Roman and ogam alphabets. On the other hand, if the number of runic inscriptions that have so far come to light is any reflection of the total number carved, the transplanted runic tradition was less than vigorous.

Linguistically, the inscriptions suggest that the bulk of the settlement in Scotland was from Norway rather than Denmark or Sweden, but Professor Barnes stressed that this only confirms what was fairly clear already. There are few signs of influence from indigenous tongues in the Scottish runic material. Most of our inscriptions come from regions in which Scandinavian established itself as the sole or dominant tongue. It is clear that there must have been interaction with Gaelic or other languages, but the runic inscriptions offer little evidence of it. The best evidence for the intermingling of cultures, if not languages, is the raising of crosses rather than stones. In areas where Norse settlers came into close contact with Gaelic culture, the indigenous practice of raising inscriptionless crosses seems to have merged with the Scandinavian fashion for setting up commemorative stones. It is noteworthy that while in Ireland, Man and the Hebrides we find raised crosses with runic inscriptions, in the Northern Isles, as far as can be seen, only plain stones are found.

Professor Barnes concluded by intimating that those who hope that the runic inscriptions might help us determine how long forms of Scandinavian language survived in Scotland will be disappointed. In Shetland, Orkney and north-eastern Caithness, spoken Scandinavian outlived runic writing by a considerable margin of time. Elsewhere

there are too few inscriptions – and those that exist are too early – to offer any indications about language death. The Scandinavian runic inscriptions of Scotland support other evidence of Viking involvement in the area, but add relatively little to the sum of our knowledge. As a Scandinavian cultural transplant, however, and as offshoots of a writing system that served the Scandinavians for some 1200 years or more, they hold considerable interest.

### POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

The final session of the conference was concerned with *Political and Religious Development* and was chaired by **Dr Barbara Crawford (Strathmartine Centre for Research and Education in Scottish History, St Andrews)**.

**Professor Knut Helle CorrFRSE (Professor Emeritus of Medieval History, University of Bergen)** opened the session with a talk on the *Earls of Orkney*. His main focus was how and when the Orkney Earldom came into being and a study of the main developments until the powerful rule of Earl Thorfinn the Mighty (d. c.1065), as seen from a Norwegian point of view.

Professor Helle began by highlighting the problems inherent in studying the establishment of the Orkney Earldom, particularly that there is no direct mention of it in the historical texts until two hundred and fifty to three hundred years later. The oldest relevant historical text is *Historia Norwegie*, probably written in Norway in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. At the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century a somewhat different story was told in the *Orkneyinga Saga* (lost original version) of which we have to rely on the surviving secondary edition which probably dates to around the 1230s. During the early 13<sup>th</sup> century Snorri Sturluson also compiled his *Separate Saga of St Olaf* (1220s) and *Heimskringla* (1230s) which clearly influenced the secondary edition of *Orkneyinga Saga*. Largely, all three vernacular texts give the same outline for the origin of the Orkney Earldom. They also agree with *Historia Norwegie* that the earldom was established in the days of King Harald Finehair of Norway, who is closely associated with the decisive battle of Hafsfjord near Stavanger.

The dating of this battle and of Harald's reign is important for present understanding of the origins of the Earldom of Orkney but is also problematic and open to debate. For a long time it was believed that there was no common chronological system behind the varying regnal periods given to early Norwegian kings in the medieval historical literature of Iceland and Norway, but in the 1960s it was demonstrated that the learned founding fathers of Icelandic medieval historiography had in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century basically agreed on a royal Norwegian chronology, by which Harald was held to have become king when he was ten years old in the year 858, to have

fought the battle of Hafrsfjord in 868, and to have passed away in 931/2. The latter date may represent the best fixed point for his reign, but it is hardly credible that he ruled for more than 70 years, and during the last century there has been a clear tendency among historians to date the battle of Hafrsfjord to shortly before 900.

Posterity has undoubtedly exaggerated Harald's role in the political unification of medieval Norway. Based on a scant tradition in older historiography that he was the first sole ruler of Norway, Snorri Sturluson in *Heimskringla* developed his grand story of Harald's systematic conquest of the whole of Norway in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century. Professor Helle believes that this is an obvious construction. It has no roots in older historical works but has nevertheless influenced much modern scholarship. Again, in recent times its validity has been called into question and today an alternative interpretation of Harald Finehair's territorial expansion seems more reasonable and better substantiated.

There is no safe evidence for Snorri's assertion that Harald started his territorial expansion from Vestfold in the Oslofjord region of east Norway. According to an older saga and skaldic tradition, his father was king of part of interior east Norway and his mother daughter of a petty king of the centrally placed region of Sogn in west Norway. Harald inherited his grandfather's kingdom and made Sogn the point of departure for his territorial conquests, which resulted in permanent, direct control over a west Norwegian core territory stretching southwards to the region of Rogaland, where the Hafrsfjord battle was fought against enemies from the east, and possibly also to the region of Agder in southernmost Norway. Professor Helle points out it is highly unlikely that Harald was able to have permanent, direct control over more than his west Norwegian core territory. To the extent that he made his power felt in other parts of Norway it was probably in the form of a precarious overlordship over other regional rulers, such as the earls of Møre in the northernmost part of west Norway and the earls of Lade in Trøndelag and north Norway. Indeed, the eastern part of modern day Norway did not become a permanent part of the Norwegian kingdom until the 11<sup>th</sup> century. This is the probable Norwegian backdrop to the establishment of the Orkney Earldom.

With these dates and geographical frameworks in mind Professor Helle then went on to examine the extent to which Harald was involved in the emergence of the Orkney Earldom. For the time before and during Harald's reign people were leaving west Norway, for various reasons. Quite a few of them went to Iceland around 890–910, allegedly because of Harald's powerful rule, and he is reported to have imposed a fee on others that emigrated. *Orkneyinga Saga* and *Heimskringla* record that Harald took measures against Vikings from Orkney and Shetland who attacked western Norway. He went on to the Hebrides and then attacked Scotland and the

Isle of Man. In contrast to other scholars, Professor Helle sees no reason to reject the view that Harald undertook western expeditions. With a mind on wider social, economic and political events, there is every reason to suppose that he would have wanted to exercise some control over Orkney and Shetland. That he conducted a west-oriented policy is supported by the fact that his son and successor, Haakon, was later fostered at the English court of King Athelstan.

Yet there is no direct mention in the oldest relevant text, the *Historia Norwegie*, that Harald was behind the establishment of the Earldom of Orkney. Here it is told that certain Vikings, descendants of Earl Ragnvald of Møre, crossed the sea to Orkney in Harald's days and subjected the isles. Since then their descendants had been lords of the isles but bound to pay tribute to the Norwegian kings. By this the author of the *Historia* may have meant to indicate that the contemporary tributary status of Orkney dated back to Harald's days, which would fit in with the account of *Heimskringla* and *Orkneyinga Saga* that the Orkney Earldom was given to the Møre family by Harald. The mention in *Historia Norwegie* that one of Harald's sons – Halfdan Long-Leg – was killed in Orkney would seem to suggest that the author was familiar with the story of the emerging Earldom as it was later told in *Heimskringla* and *Orkneyinga Saga*. Far from the *Historia Norwegie* and the three vernacular texts conflicting with each other, Professor Helle views them as being supplementary, agreeing on the fact that from the beginning the Orkney Earldom was to some extent under royal Norwegian sway.

Professor Helle concluded by suggesting that the Earldom of Orkney was established at the very end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century by members of the Møre family who co-operated with Harald Finehair. Harald gave the earldom some kind of approbation but was not in the long run able to control it to the degree he wanted, as shown by the killing of his son Halfdan Long-Leg at the hands of the legendary Earl Einar, who nevertheless managed to keep the earldom for himself and his descendants.

The saga tradition leaves little doubt that internal rivalry among members of the earls' family shaped the history of the earldom throughout the rest of the Viking Age and into the following Middle Ages. Norwegian rulers did not hesitate to exploit the needs of rivalling earls and pretenders for external support, and were often behind the frequent partitions of the earldom into thirds or halves from the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Norwegian and Icelandic historiography of the latter part of the 12<sup>th</sup> century may well exaggerate the influence of Norwegian Viking Age kings over Orkney and Shetland in order to support contemporary advances towards a more solid dominion over the isles. Yet there is little reason to doubt that from the days of Harald Finehair, Norwegian rulers repeatedly sought to assert themselves as overlords over the Earldom of Orkney, and that they at times succeeded in making

themselves felt as such.

On the other hand it should be stressed that Norwegian kings never appear to have laid claim to sovereignty over the northern part of mainland Scotland, primarily Caithness, which was held in fief by the Orkney earls from the Scottish king, starting with Earl Thorfinn the Mighty in 1014.

**Mr David Sellar (Honorary Fellow, School of Law, Edinburgh University)** next focused on the west in his discussion of *The Kingdom of the Isles*. His presentation covered the area encompassing all the major island groups to the west of the Scottish mainland, both Inner and Outer Hebrides, and also, and crucially, the Isle of Man to the south from around the ninth or tenth centuries up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Like Helle and many speakers before, Mr Sellar stressed that the sources for this period are pitifully scarce, and such few sources as there are can usually be interpreted in more than one way. In addition, these sources have to be gleaned from a wide political spectrum, Scottish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Anglo-Saxon, Irish and Welsh; and from many disciplines ancillary to mainstream history: archaeology, literature (including sagas and poetry), placenames, personal names, legal history and most recently genetic studies. As with many other areas of Viking studies Mr Sellar commented that there is ample room for speculation, and the temptation is to fashion a more coherent narrative than the known facts warrant. Almost every statement made about the kingdom of the Isles from the 9<sup>th</sup> through to the 12<sup>th</sup> century needs major qualification.

Mr Sellar first considered the origins of the Kingdom of the Isles. He stressed that there is very little hard evidence to go on. Such evidence as does exist is often late and of dubious value. Relevant questions here are the disputed date of Scandinavian settlement in the isles and the extent of native survival. The answer to these questions is, in any case, unlikely to be uniform throughout the whole geographical area. Further, did the arrival of the Scandinavian incomers signal a fresh start, with the expulsion or even extermination of earlier inhabitants? Genetic evidence should eventually help to settle this particular controversy. And what was the role of other parties? It has been suggested that the kingdom of Dalriada in its death throes in the ninth century may have helped to breathe life into the new Kingdom of the Isles.

Regarding chronology, Mr Sellar suggested that by looking north to the emergence of the Orkney earldom and south to the establishment of the Scandinavian kingdom of Dublin, it seems likely that the kingdom of the Isles may date from about the same time, that is, towards the end of the ninth century. One guiding thread is the title *Rí Innse Gall*, which appears for the first time in the obit of Gofraid son of Harald in 989. Sixteen years earlier, English

sources name Gofraid's brother Maccus as one of the kings who rowed the Anglo-Saxon King Edgar on the Dee at Chester, and describe him as *rex plurimarum insularum* ("king of very many islands"). Further references indicate that Maccus and Gofraid's field of operation included both the Isle of Man and the Inner Hebrides. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the Kingdom of the Isles was already in existence in some form by the second half of the tenth century. Although it is entirely possible that it may have emerged much earlier, the short answer is that we can not be sure. Mr Sellar suggested that most historians would agree that it is reasonable to talk of an established kingdom by the time of Gofraid Crovan, sometime king of Dublin as well as the Isles, who took power in 1079 and died in 1095.

Mr Sellar then considered some of the characteristics of the established Kingdom of the Isles. He outlined that there are obvious comparisons to be made between the Kingdom of the Isles and the Orkney earldom on the one hand and the Scandinavian kingdoms in Ireland, especially Dublin, on the other. But there are also differences. The ambience of the Orkney earldom, as presented for example in *Orkneyinga Saga*, was overwhelmingly Scandinavian; whereas that of the Kingdom of the Isles was partly Gaelic. The Scandinavian kingdoms in Ireland, on the other hand, like that of the Isles, need to be seen in a Gaelic context as well as a Scandinavian one; but, unlike the Kingdom of the Isles, these were centred on towns and trade – Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Limerick and so forth. There may be some evidence of trade in the Isles, but there is not much sign of a town. These points led Mr Sellar to concentrate on two important characteristics of the Kingdom of the Isles. The first was the hybrid nature of the kingdom, partly Gaelic and partly Norse.

Mr Sellar's starting position was Megaw's thirty-year-old study which set out the Gaelic credentials of the dynasty which ruled from Man, which had been previously overlooked or even denied. On the face of it, the Manx end of the kingdom does have a very Scandinavian look – for example, the names of the kings, the fact that the Isle of Man has more runic inscriptions than anywhere else outside of Scandinavia proper, and the oldest assembly of its kind in Western Europe. Yet after reviewing the available evidence Megaw reached the conclusion that, 'We now see that our "Scandinavian" kings were characteristically Gaelic speakers.' Mr Sellar believes that this conclusion has been generally accepted.

Mr Sellar expanded this topic by touching on the sources used by Megaw - place-names, personal names, or rather by-names, and on poetry – and considered them anew. Although the names of the Manx kings were uniformly Scandinavian, their by-names (nicknames, if you prefer) were often Gaelic. The evidence for this comes partly from the contemporary record and partly from later

tradition. Recent work on the evidence for intermarriage between Gael and Scandinavian in Ireland concluded that it was not unusual to find a mixture of Scandinavian and Gaelic names in Ireland from the later tenth century onwards. The evidence of the Manx runes is even more instructive, and has been noted by several scholars. The inscriptions on the crosses show that Vikings might give their sons Gaelic names, while men with Gaelic names chose Scandinavian names for their children. Genetic evidence also, as outlined to us earlier in this conference, points strongly towards the hybrid nature of the kingdom.

Then there is the evidence of poetry. There is the well-known Gaelic praise poem for Ragnall, king of Man, who died in 1229. Later Gaelic poems in the same genre are the praise poem to Angus of Islay (c. 1250), and the poem to MacSween of Knapdale, written about fifty years later. These poems are important as contemporary witnesses. It is true that they are stylised and bound by convention as to what they can say, but they can yield intriguing nuggets of information. There is, for example, the stanza in the address to Angus of Islay, 'Around thee are Torkell, Ivar and Olaf ... heroes of Dublin of bright hazels'. But perhaps the most significant thing about these poems is the fact that they suggest a long and deep acculturation in the Gaelic learned tradition in their audience. Like skaldic verse, the poems are allusive and are composed according to difficult and intricate rules. They demand a well informed audience familiar not only with the Gaelic language but also with the poetic conventions. It is all the more surprising therefore that these poems, especially that to Ragnall of Man, come not at the end of a long mainstream Irish tradition of writing poems in this genre, nor indeed in the middle, but right at the beginning.

The second important characteristic of the Kingdom of the Isles considered by Mr Sellar was the aspirations of the Kings of the Isles towards a common western European model of kingship. Indeed, he emphasised that the Kingdom of the Isles should not be thought of as existing in some part-Gaelic, part-Norse time-warp: the kings clearly aspired to be up-to-date West European monarchs. He drew attention again to their castle-building activities, their conventional piety - grants to the church, the foundation of monasteries, the creation of parishes and suchlike. They also used some of the other trappings of Western European monarchy: such as charters in standard Latin form, seals and heraldry.

Mr Sellar completed his talk by referring to an article he wrote over forty years ago concerned with the Origins and Ancestry of Somerled in which he tried to assess the veracity of the traditional pedigree of Somerled as preserved in medieval Gaelic manuscripts. This proclaims his ultimate Gaelic ancestry in the male line. Mr Sellar outlined his old position and then recent discussions concerning the topic. In a good illustration of how interdisciplinary research can aid Viking studies, he ended by referring to recent Y-chromosome research conducted by

Prof. Bryan Sykes of Oxford. Somerled's Y-chromosome appears to be of a distinctively Scandinavian type. If this is correct, Somerled's ancestry in the male line was Scandinavian rather than Gaelic. Ironically, the study also suggests, again on the basis of genetic evidence, that the MacLeods, who have always gloried in their high Scandinavian descent in their poetry and their family tradition, are, in fact, of Gaelic descent in the male line. Mr Sellar concluded by saying that one might say that this all goes to show the hybrid nature of the Kingdom of the Isles.

The final two lectures were concerned with the problematic area of religious development and change. **Dr Lesley Abrams (Tutor in History, Balliol College, University of Oxford)** presented first on the transition *From Paganism to Christianity* in Scotland. Dr Abrams began her lecture by revisiting a female Viking grave on Barra found in 1862. The woman was buried with oval tortoise brooches, objects for textile production, a ringed-pin and possible drinking horn. The grave was covered with a mound. Dr Abrams pointed to the Scandinavian and Pagan attributes of such burials. She contrasted this pagan grave with the Kilbar rune-stone from the same island. The stone has a cross on one side and runic inscription on the other. Although we cannot tell how many years separated the burial and the grave Dr Abrams takes these to epitomise one of the biggest changes that early Medieval societies underwent – the transition from Paganism to Christianity.

How did this process happen? Dr Abrams returned to areas discussed previously in the conference, stressing that in order to frame this question we have to consider the effect on the population and settlement patterns during the initial Viking incursions and migrations. She stressed again how these complex processes affect any interpretations, including religious conversion, we have to offer.

Dr Abrams outlined how Christianity could have a dramatic effect on individuals and societies. Aside from giving a moral structure, it also impacted on many other areas of life, for example, what you did with your dead, how you treated your children, when you could work, how you were ruled and where your money went. In Dr Abrams' view Christianity's greatest success was its ability to get into all aspects of life: morality; social control; education, the ideology of rule; patronage; display of social status and political power. All of these eventually came to be manifested in Christianity.

But there are many problems associated with studying Christian conversion and, more particularly, establishing whether it has actually happened. How does one define a Christian in the Conversion period? Is it when people are baptised? Is it when they absorb Christian teaching? Is it when people adopt Christian attitudes and lifestyles? Is it when an individual chooses Christianity or is it only

when the society converts?

Dr Abrams also considered motivation – why did people convert? Universally there would be the Christian message of salvation, but focus has more often been on the practical benefits for elites where religion is equated with power. Christianity brought a cultural package, including books, ideology, ritual, opportunities for monumental display and the like, all attributes that were appealing to elites. In contrast, Dr Abrams suggested that it is difficult to assess the perceived advantages of conversion for people further down the social ladder. Perhaps the Christian obligation of helping the poor brought benefits to such people. Perhaps the elites converted first.

With these considerations in mind, Dr Abrams outlined the two classic models of conversion. The ‘top-down model’, where missionaries make their pitch to kings who in turn convert their families and courts. The kings then use their secular power to encourage or force through conversion which leads to a new social order. This model is supported in historical texts and can often be peaceful. The alternative ‘bottom-up model’ is more difficult to define and recognise. It is where individuals model themselves on their neighbours and they are not compelled to convert. In other words, there is no directing power. The first model has been the one that has long dominated discussions, spurred on largely by historical texts and the fact that societies were obvious hierarchical. But Dr Abrams questioned whether we have to always accept this view and believes that we are simplifying a complex situation.

Taking Scandinavian Scotland as an example she believes that Conversion would have depended on a variety of local circumstances. For example, the ebb and flow of military power and differences in power and social standing between groups and elites, particularly indigenous groups, would all have been influential. The degree of contact with the homeland which was still pagan would also have had an effect. Indigenous regional circumstances were also important – was there a pre-existing Christian population and how dominant was it? Were there inherited Christian institutions and/or Christian cults? Answers to these questions are very difficult to answer. Where there is evidence it is largely confined to archaeology, sculpture, place-names and church dedications. We also have retrospective historical records.

Given this, Dr Abrams wondered if we can say anything definite about the conversion of Scandinavian Scotland. Grave goods may be suggestive. She believes that it is fair to assume that all of the Viking settlers were pagan on arrival, shown by the numerous Viking graves. Although burial with grave goods continued well into the 10<sup>th</sup> century she suggested that cessation of this practice suggests that something had changed in society. Wherever societies were converted to Christianity, by and large they stopped putting objects in graves in this way.

Dr Abrams then considered whether the traditional models offered any insight. She began her analysis in the Northern Isles where conversion has traditionally been explained by recourse to the top-down model. Recently this has been challenged. Scandinavians may have become Christianised long before the Orkney Earldom were forced to accept Christianity, as told in the historical texts. This may be supported by recent archaeological excavations, for example at Deerness, Orkney where a chapel was in use before 995. In other words the first Scandinavian churches in Orkney were private chapels built by chieftains next to their halls and homes. Further, the political factions in Orkney may be mirrored by religious factions, a point Dr Barrett made earlier in the conference. This question, Dr Abrams suggests, can only be solved by an increased programme of excavations.

Dr Abrams then moved her focus to the Hebrides, asking which model fits this region best. This is a problematic area, mainly because it is difficult to recognise two of the entities that form the model – existing churches and elites. Where are the churches which could have orchestrated religious conversion in the Hebrides, or at least exercised some form of religious leadership? Did Iona play a central role? Further, who were the elites – where would, for example, top-down influence have come from, if at all? Indeed, the whole conversion process may have been different from the Northern Isles with less scope for using conversion as a political act. Perhaps conversion was related more to peer-pressure and emulation. Patronage may have been on a small-scale level fostered by local situations. At present, there is little evidence of high profile political conversion or missionary campaigns in the Hebrides. Clearly regional circumstances would have distinguished the experience of conversion.

Moving on from the initial processes of conversion, Dr Abrams then assessed the potential role of influential Scandinavian converts who could have been as important as any Christian survivor. According to later traditions, some of the noteworthy Scandinavian settlers of Iceland came from the Hebrides and they were Christian. Whilst this is recorded in the historical texts, Dr Abrams finds the evidence inconclusive. Perhaps they were used as a form of legitimisation in later times.

Dr Abrams ended where she began - in Barra. Referring to the pagan and Christian evidence, she pondered what would the lives have been like for individuals practising and living these different traditions. She speculated that the people represented by the grave and the cross spoke the same language; lived in the same kind of house and used the same type of pottery. The livelihood of their communities was probably gained in much the same way. But conversion obviously made a difference to their deaths, the ways they were buried and the associated ceremonies. Their families may have been tied into different power structures with different political

allegiances and commitments. Conversion may have opened up a wider social network. Conversion would have caused restrictions, for example people would have to give up sacrifices and divinations. Certain places in the landscape may also have been transformed – a sacred spring becomes a holy well. Conversion also would have affected family values and lifestyles.

**Dr Haki Antonsson (Research Fellow, Centre of Medieval Studies, University of Bergen)** continued the religious theme by discussing *The Uses of Saints' Cults*. He began his paper by emphasising the importance of local saints for relatively recently converted peoples of Christian Europe. In Scandinavia the cults of St Olaf of Norway (1030) and St Magnus of Orkney (d. 1116/17) are representative of the earliest native saints. Dr Antonsson compared these two cults from a variety of perspectives, while also attempting to place them within a wider European context. The principal question he considered was whether a common pattern can be detected in the make-up of native Scandinavian cults.

Dr Antonsson stressed that a key point is that St Olaf and St Magnus were secular rulers and not abbots, bishops or other members of the institutional Church. In the eleventh and twelfth century, kings and princes appear as saints in Scandinavia, as well as in other parts of the so-called European periphery: Hungary, Bohemia and Kievan Rus'. In Scandinavia it is only with the growing independence of the Church, from the second half of the twelfth century onwards, that a shift can be observed towards ecclesiastical figures as saints.

There were undoubtedly both dynastic and national/regional dimensions to the appearance of secular rulers as saints on the Christian periphery. Of course, the two dimensions – the dynastic and the national/regional – overlap and, in a sense, reinforce each other. The national dimension is most clearly encountered in the case of the cult of St Olaf in Norway. From very early on his cult became not only identified with the Norwegian kingship but also with the very notion of Norway as a kingdom. Dr Antonsson believes that comparable sentiments can be gleaned in *Orkneyinga Saga*, which was written in the early thirteenth century, in relation to St Magnus.

The importance of the cults for the Church as an institution, however, should also be emphasised. Thus in Orkney, the cult of Magnus played an important role in the development of the bishopric of the earldom from the late 1130s onwards. Around roughly the same time, the newly established archbishopric of Trondheim/Nidaros (1153) adopted and relaunched the cult of St Olaf with the purpose of raising the see's profile and prestige. The most concrete expressions of this activity are, of course, the construction of the new cathedral in Kirkwall and the great extension to St Olaf's cathedral in Nidaros.

The Latin Legends of St Olaf and St Magnus (the latter

only fragmentarily preserved) were composed roughly in the same period (1170s or 1180s). The hagiographic themes common to both *Passio Olavi* and *Vita Sancti Magni* are intellectual constructs which, one expects, were read and appreciated only by the learned few. But Dr Antonsson argued that they are important intellectual constructs, for they reveal how the earliest writers about Norway and Orkney applied sophisticated discourse in order to integrate the pagan, semi-pagan or Viking pasts of these regions into the divine or salvific history of Christianity. It is noteworthy that similar discourse can be found in the earliest hagiography emanating from Central and Eastern Europe (in particular, in the Lives of St Wenceslas in Bohemia and Boris and Gleb in Kievan Rus'). In the case of St Magnus, a highly educated Englishman was recruited for this purpose, while *Passio Olavi* was composed under the auspices of the archbishop of Nidaros. The short *Passio Olavi*, in particular, is a well-crafted and learned text and, as its manuscript preservation demonstrates, was undoubtedly composed with export in mind. These texts were thus not only written to provide appropriate readings for the feast-days of the saints, but also in order to inform other learned ecclesiastics in foreign lands that these lands in the far North had been fully integrated into the Christian world.

Dr Antonsson concluded that whether the cult of St Olaf influenced that of St Magnus, or vice-versa, is impossible to establish. In the light, however, of the close links between Norway and Orkney in this period, it is reasonable to assume a mutual interaction.

## CONCLUSION

**Dr Barbara Crawford (Strathmartine Centre for Research and Education in Scottish History, St Andrews)** concluded the conference with an assessment of *The Vikings and their Significance for Scotland*. Dr Crawford stressed that the theme of the Conference encompassed a wide and diverse range of disciplines relative to the topic and brought together all the varied aspects of the Viking impact on Scotland: the history, the archaeology, the place-names and the literary and linguistic evidence. In addition we heard the latest contribution to the field of early population history in the form of new genetic studies, an aspect which is going to have a very important role indeed in future consideration of the impact of the Scandinavian invaders on Scotland.

As the Conference had been made aware, the Viking story relative to Scotland was not a simple one. Nor, as we had heard from many of the speakers, was the evidence plentiful. Indeed it is remarkably thin as regards the historical sources. That is why students of Viking history have to be aware of all the sources which contribute to an understanding of the culture and impact of these invaders from the north: of the material evidence dug up from the ground; of the place-names which the invaders brought with them and which have become imprinted

on the landscape of the Northern and Western Isles, the north mainland of Scotland and scattered throughout the Lowlands and Borders; of the Irish annals and Gaelic literature and nomenclature which have hidden within them evidence for the Scandinavian impact on Celtic areas; of the later Latin and Icelandic sources which are our 'historical' evidence. Understanding all this multiplicity of information, and combining it into a synthesis which is intelligible and well informed is no easy task, especially when interpretation of the source evidence keeps changing and new hypotheses challenge our pre-conceived beliefs.

Dr Crawford suggested that for us in Scotland, the impact of the Vikings has started to loom rather larger in the national consciousness than it once did. For one thing, the Vikings are not merely a 'fringe' phenomenon of the Northern and Western Isles, for we now understand that they probably affected the central political development of the Picto-Scottish kingdom. For another, it is better appreciated that they were not merely a destructive force. They came and settled in the islands and north mainland with their own religious and political identity and probably with their own economic agendas. Throughout the conference the audience heard some very new re-assessments of the economic and religious changes which were brought about, and of the very different and controversial political development of Pictland in the Viking Age, which now brings Norse activity in Ross and Moray centre stage, suggesting that it is likely to have been rather influential in the re-shaping of the early medieval kingdom of Alba.

That Norse activity was led by the Earls of Orkney and several papers focused on these northern earls and their military and economic power-base, as well as their important contribution to medieval Christendom and the powerful cult of saints. The wealth of the Earldom underlay the flourishing of skaldic poetry in Orkney, and the production of the Earls' saga was a result of the fame and renown of the Earldom court, where it may indeed have been written (or part of it). One of the longest, finest and most skilfully carved runic inscriptions of the whole northern world is found in Orkney, inside a prehistoric tomb, moreover, which adds to its cultural significance. Were these gifted and creative men of the north also Vikings? It all depends on how we interpret that much over-worked term. The genesis of this literary flourishing certainly lies in the northern culture which the Vikings brought with them, and which contributes so much to the Scotland of today. The Norse-Gaelic culture of the Kingdom of the Isles is also a little appreciated factor, but which, as we heard, is entrenched in historical personal nomenclature and in the praise poems of Hebridean poetic tradition. The Highland galley (and the ship term 'birlinn') is directly descended from the Viking longship and northern maritime technology. Dr Crawford closed the conference by stressing that the delivered papers brought all these aspects – and many more - to the fore

and revealed the varied and long-lasting importance of the Vikings for Scotland. She also highlighted one aspect which had barely been touched on, the role of public assemblies ("things") and the sites of these assemblies in Norway, and in the different parts of the Viking world. Thingvellir in Iceland and Tynwald in the Isle of Man are the best known survivals of this remarkable aspect of Viking legal history but such assemblies were established wherever the Vikings put down roots and created communities. It is possibly in the world of law that the Vikings made their most significant contribution to the social development of the Norse colonies and their neighbouring kingdoms!

## APPENDIX ONE PROGRAMME

### Wednesday 20 September 2006

- 17.30 **Welcome**
- 17.35 **Speaker Introduction By Chairperson**  
Professor T Chris Smout CBE FBA FRSE
- 17.40 **The Northern World and its Significance for Scotland**  
Magnus Magnusson Hon KBE FRSE
- 18.30 **Question and Answer Session**
- 18.50 **Vote Of Thanks**

### Thursday 21 September 2006

- 09.00 **Registration and Coffee**
- 09.30 **RSE and Norwegian Academy Welcome**  
Sir Michael Atiyah OM FRS PRSE Hon FEng HonFMedSci HonFFA  
President, The Royal Society of Edinburgh
- And
- Professor Ole Didrik Laerum  
President, The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters
- Morning Session: Raids and Impact**
- 09.35 **Introduction and Overview**  
Chairperson: Professor Edward Cowan  
Director of Crichton Campus, University of Glasgow
- 09.40 **Session 1: Impact on the Christian Church**  
Professor David Dumville  
Chair in History, Palaeography and Celtic, Department of History, University of Aberdeen
- 10.15 **Session 2: The Norse and the Creation of Scotland**  
Dr Dauvit Broun  
Lecturer, Department of History, University of Glasgow
- 10.50 **Tea / Coffee**
- 11.20 **Session 3: Impact on Irish and Scottish Society**  
Dr Colmán Etchingham  
Lecturer, Department of Modern History, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

**11.55 Session 4: The Genetic Impact**

Dr James Wilson

Royal Society Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh

**12.30 Question and Answer Session**

**13.00 Lunch**

**Afternoon Session: Settlement, Trade and Maritime Impact**

**14.00 Introduction and Overview**

Chairperson: Professor Christopher D Morris FRSE

Professor Emeritus of Archaeology and former Vice-Principal (Arts-side), University of Glasgow

**14.05 Session 5: Excavations at Kaupang and Evidence of Connections with The British Isles**  
Frans-Arne Stylegar

Commissioner of Monuments and Sites, Vest-Agder County

**14.40 Session 6: The Pirate Fishermen: The Political Economy of 'Saga Age' Orkney**

Dr James Barrett

Senior Lecturer, Department of Archaeology, University of York

**15.15 Session 7: Viking Settlement in Scotland**

Dr Anna Ritchie

Consultant Archaeologist

**15.50 Tea / Coffee**

**16.20 Session 8: Viking Ships and Highland Galleys**

Professor Arne-Emil Christensen

University of Oslo

**16.55 Question and Answer Session**

**17.30 End of Session**

**18.30 Evening Reception at Edinburgh Castle**

**Friday 22 September 2006**

**Morning Session: Language and Literary Culture**

**09.05 Introduction and Overview**

Chairperson: Doreen Waugh

University of Edinburgh

**09.10 Session 9: Place-names as Evidence of Scandinavian Influence**

Dr Gillian Fellows-Jensen

University of Copenhagen

- 09.45**     **Session 10: *Orkneyinga Saga*: its Literary Form, Content and Origin**  
Professor Else Mundal  
Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Bergen
- 10.20**     **Tea / Coffee**
- 10.50**     **Session 11: Orkney's Skaldic Achievement**  
Mr Paul Bibire  
Former Lecturer, University of St Andrews
- 11.25**     **Session 12: Runes**  
Professor Michael Barnes  
Professor Emeritus of Scandinavian Studies, University of London
- 12.00**     **Question and Answer Session**
- 12.30**     **Lunch**
- Afternoon Session: Political and Religious Development**
- 13.30**     **Introduction and Overview**  
Chairperson: Dr Barbara Crawford FRSE  
University of St Andrews
- 13.35**     **Session 13: Earls of Orkney**  
Professor Knut Helle CorrFRSE  
Professor Emeritus of Medieval History, University of Bergen
- 14.10**     **Session 14: The Kingdom of the Isles**  
Mr David Sellar  
Honorary Fellow, School of Law, University of Edinburgh
- 14.45**     **Session 15: From Paganism to Christianity**  
Dr Lesley Abrams  
Tutor in History, Balliol College, University of Oxford
- 15.20**     **Tea / Coffee**
- 15.50**     **Session 16: Saints and Their Uses**  
Dr Haki Antonsson  
Research Fellow, Centre of Medieval Studies, University of Bergen
- 16.25**     **Question and Answer Session**
- 17.00**     **Concluding Remarks: The Vikings and Their Significance for Scotland**  
Dr Barbara Crawford FRSE
- 17.30**     **Close**

## APPENDIX TWO

### SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

#### **Magnus Magnusson Hon KBE FRSE** **Former Writer and Broadcaster**

Magnus Magnusson was born in Iceland in 1929, and still retains his Icelandic nationality. He was educated at The Edinburgh Academy and Jesus College, Oxford, where he studied English Language and Literature, and Old Icelandic. He entered journalism in 1953 as a cub reporter on the *Scottish Daily Express*, before joining *The Scotsman* in 1961 as Chief Features Writer and Assistant Editor. Since 1967 he has been a freelance writer and broadcaster, specialising in history, archaeology and the environment. He was the Question-master of BBC1's popular quiz programme *Mastermind* for 25 years (1972-97), and presented on BBC1 a major 12-part series, *Vikings!*, in 1980. He has published more than 30 books, including translations of novels by the Icelandic Nobel Prize-winner Halldór Laxness, as well as several Icelandic Sagas.

#### **Professor Edward Cowan** **Director of Crichton Campus, University of Glasgow**

Ted Cowan taught at the Universities of Edinburgh, Guelph (Ontario) and Glasgow before taking up his present position as Director of the University of Glasgow's Crichton Campus. Professor of Scottish History at Glasgow, he is much in demand as a speaker, journalist and broadcaster. He has published widely on various aspects of Scottish History and has been a Visiting Professor in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. His most recent publication is *For Freedom Alone: The Declaration of Arbroath 1320*.

#### **Professor David Dumville** **University of Aberdeen**

Prof David Norman Dumville. *Educ* St Nicholas GS Northwood, Emmanuel Coll Cambridge (open entrance exhibitioner, sr scholar, MA), Univ of Edinburgh (PhD, Jeremiah Dalziel Prize); Career Univ of Wales fell Dept of Welsh UC Swansea 1976-77, asst prof Dept of English Univ of Pennsylvania 1977-78; Univ of Cambridge: univ lectr Dept of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic 1978-91, reader in early mediaeval history and culture of the British Isles 1991-95, prof of palaeography and cultural history 1995-2004; Girton Coll Cambridge: fell 1978-2004 (life fell 2005-), dir of studies in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic 1978-2004, coll lectr 1978-99, (moral) tutor 1980-82, memb Cncl 1981-82, memb various Coll ctees; external dir of studies in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic: Emmanuel Coll and St Catharine's Coll Cambridge 1978-85, Fitzwilliam Coll Cambridge 1991-2003; prof of history,

palaeography and Celtic Univ of Aberdeen 2005-; visiting prof Sch of Celtic Studies Dublin Inst for Advanced Studies 1996-97; distinguished visiting prof of mediaeval studies Univ o Calif Berkeley 1997, visiting fell Huntington Library San Marino CA 1984; vice-pres Centre Int de Recherche et de Documentation sur le Monachisme Celtique (Daoulas) 1986-; Br Acad research reader in the humanities 1985-87, research assoc Sch of Celtic Studies Dublin Inst for Advanced Studies 1989-; managing ed *Mediaeval Scandinavia* and *Jl of Celtic Studies* 2005-; memb Editorial Advsv Bd: *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 1978-85, *Toronto Medieval Texts and Translations* 1978-, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 1980-93, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 1993-2002; author of numerous reviews and articles in learned jls; memb jt Br Acad and Royal Historical Soc Ctee on Anglo-Saxon Charters 1986-90 and 1993-2003; O'Donnell lectr in Celtic Studies: Univ of Oxford 1977/78, Univ of Edinburgh 1980/81, Univ of Wales 1982/83; FRHistS 1976, FSA 1983, FRSAIre 1989, FSA Scot 1999, *Books Chronicles and Annals of Mediaeval Ireland and Wales: The Clonmacnoise-group Texts* (with K Grabowski, 1984), *The Historia Brittonum: The 'Vatican' Recension* (1985), *Britain's Literary Heritage: The Early and Central Middle Ages c650-c1200 AD* (1986), *Histories and Pseudo-histories of the Insular Middle Ages* (1990), *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural, and Ecclesiastical Revival* (1992), *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England: Four Studies* (1992), *English Caroline Script and Monastic History: Studies in Benedictinism AD 950-1030* (1993), *Saint Patrick AD 493-1993* (jtl, 1993), *Britons and Anglo-Saxons In the Early Middle Ages* (1993), *The Churches of North Britain in the First Viking-Age Europe* (1997), *Councils and Synods of the Gaelic Early and Central Middle Ages* (1997), *A Palaeographer's Review: The Insular System of Scripts in the Early Middle Ages* (2 vols, 1999-2005), *Saint David of Wales* (2001), *Annales Cambriae* (2002-), *The Annals of Ulster* (2005-), *Cain Adomnain and Canones Adomnani* (with P P O Neill, 2003), *Abbreviations used in Insular Script* (2004), *The Early Mediaeval Insular Churches and the Preservation of the Roman Literature* (2004), *Brenhinoedd y Saeson*, *The Kings of the English* (2005-); *Recreations: travel in North America, politics and other arguments*.

#### **Dr Dauvit Broun** **University of Glasgow**

Completed Ph.D. at University of Edinburgh in 1988 (supervised by Dr John Bannerman and Prof. G. W. S. Barrow) and appointed lecturer in Scottish History at University of Glasgow in 1990 (senior lecturer in 2000).

Publications range from 8th-14th cents, and include *The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of the Scots in the 12th and 13th Centuries* (Woodbridge 1999), *The Charters of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland in the Early and Central Middle Ages*, Quiggin pamphlet no.2 (Cambridge 1995); by September should have completed *The Idea of Britain and the Origins of Scottish Independence* (EUP) and the first volume of a new edition (with Julian Harrison) of *The Chronicle of Melrose: a Stratigraphic Edition* (Scottish History Society). Editor (pre-1600) of *The Scottish Historical Review*, and editor (1991-9) of *The Innes Review*. General editor (with Maire Ni Mhaonaigh and Huw Pryce) of *Boydell and Brewer Studies in Celtic History*.

**Dr Colmán Etchingham**  
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Dr Etchingham is a lecturer in the History Department of NUI Maynooth. His research interests cover the history of pre-Norman Ireland. Particular areas on which he has published are the organisation of the church and its role in society, early Irish law, Irish kingship, the evaluation of the annals as a historical source, the Vikings as raiders and settlers and Viking Age relations between Ireland and Britain.

Dr Etchingham's publications include

- 'Les Vikings dans les sources documentaires irlandaises: le cas des annals', in *L'héritage maritime des Vikings en Europe de l'Ouest*, ed. Élisabeth Ridet (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 2002), pp 35-56.
- 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles: the Insular Viking zone', in *Peritia* 15 (2001 [2002]), 145-187.
- *Church organisation in Ireland AD 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999, reprinted 2002). Pp viii + 538.
- 'Preface to paperback edition', in E. A. Thompson, *Who was Saint Patrick?* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999; first published 1985), pp xvii-xxxii.
- 'The idea of monastic austerity in early Ireland', in *Luxury and austerity*, ed. J. R. Hill and Colm Lennon (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1999), pp 14-29.
- 'Early medieval Irish history', in *Progress in medieval Irish studies*, ed. Katharine Simms and K. R. McCone (Maynooth: St Patrick's College Maynooth Department of Old and Middle Irish, 1996), pp 123-53.
- *Viking raids on Irish church settlements in the ninth century: a reconsideration of the annals*

(Maynooth: St Patrick's College Maynooth Department of Old and Middle Irish, 1996). Pp vi + 79.

**Dr James Wilson**  
Royal Society Research Fellow

After graduating in genetics from the University of Edinburgh, Dr. Jim Wilson studied the genetic history of the British Isles as part of his DPhil at New College, Oxford. During his doctorate he demonstrated genetically the predominantly Norse paternal ancestry in his native Orkney and a genetic connection between the Iberians and the Celtic-speaking peoples of the British Isles. The BBC2 series '*Blood of the Vikings*' followed on from this work. After postdoctoral work at University College London on medical and pharmaco-genetics he returned to Scotland and is now a Royal Society Research Fellow at Edinburgh and runs a large-scale genetic epidemiology project looking at risk factors for cardiovascular disease in Orkney. The genetic history of the British Isles is also under further study, using new high resolution data and genetic markers.

**Dr James Barrett**  
University of York

James Barrett is a Senior Lecturer in medieval archaeology and zooarchaeology at the University of York. He has published widely on social and economic aspects of Scandinavian settlement in Scotland and on the long-term development of the European fish trade. He directed excavation of the late Viking Age and medieval settlement of Quoysgrew, Orkney, from 1997 to 2005 and was recently coordinator of environmental archaeology for excavations at Kaupang, Norway. He is currently principal investigator of *The Medieval Origins of Commercial Sea Fishing Project*, funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

**Dr Anna Ritchie**  
Consultant Archaeologist

A freelance archaeologist working in Scotland for the last forty years, Anna Ritchie has been a President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, a Trustee of both the National Museums of Scotland and the British Museum and a member of the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland, and she was awarded OBE for services to Scottish archaeology. Her excavations in Orkney include a Viking settlement and her books include *Viking Scotland* and *Iona*, and research interests have taken her to the Faroes, Norway and Iceland.

**Professor Arne-Emil Christensen**  
University of Oslo

Arne Emil Christensen has worked as an archaeologist at the Cultural Museum, University of Oslo since his

MA in 1963. His PhD was on the medieval boat finds from Bryggen in Bergen. He has excavated and published Viking-Age and Medieval shipwrecks, and worked on Iron Age/Viking-Age tools and craftsmanship. He was Curator of the Viking Ship Museum for 10 years, until retirement in 2005.

**Dr Gillian Fellows-Jensen**  
**University of Copenhagen**

Gillian Fellows-Jensen B.A., Ph.D., dr.phil. Born Manchester. Educated at the Universities of London and Copenhagen. Employed at Copenhagen University's Institute of Name Research from 1962-2003. Still engaged in research into Scandinavian place-names and personal names in the British Isles and Normandy. Member of the Arnamagnæan Commission since 1991. Since 1994 I have been responsible, together with Peter Springborg, for organising nine international seminars on *Care and conservation of manuscripts*. The tenth seminar is due to be held in October 2006. Since 1982 I have been a member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters and in 1999 I organised on behalf of this Academy a joint symposium with the Royal Society of Edinburgh on *Denmark and Scotland: the cultural and environmental resources of small nations* (published 2001).

**Professor Else Mundal**  
**Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Bergen**

Else Mundal, born 1944. Studied history, folklore and Scandinavian languages and literature, including Old Norse, at the University of Oslo 1964–71. Docent of Old Norse at the University of Oslo from 1977, professor of Old Norse at the same university from 1985, professor of Old Norse at Department of Scandinavian languages and literature, University of Bergen from 1994, from 2003 attached to Centre for Medieval Studies at the same university. At Centre for Medieval Studies Else Mundal is the leader of the research project *The Arrival of Writing* which is one of four major projects within the research programme of this centre. She is also responsible for the research training at the centre.

**Mr Paul Bibire**  
**Former Lecturer, University of St Andrews**

Paul Bibire is a former lecturer at the universities of St Andrews and Cambridge.

**Professor Michael Barnes**  
**Professor Emeritus of Scandinavian Studies,**  
**University of London**

Michael P. Barnes, born in 1940, took a BA Degree in Scandinavian Languages at University College London in 1963, followed by a research MA in the same field in 1966. As well as London, he has studied in Norway, Sweden and the Faroe Islands. From 1964 to 2005 he

taught in the Department of Scandinavian Studies, UCL, of which he was Head 1983-98. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Scandinavian Studies in UCL. Michael Barnes has published books and articles on Scandinavian-language topics, including most recently *The Norn Language of Orkney and Shetland* (1998), *Faroese Language Studies* (2001), *Introduction to Scandinavian Phonetics* (2005 – co-authored by Tom Lundskaer-Nielsen and Annika Lindskog) and *The Scandinavian Runic Inscriptions of Britain* (2006 – co-authored by R.I. Page). He was for many years editor of *Saga-Book*, the journal of the Viking Society for Northern Research, and is currently one of the Society's Joint Honorary Secretaries.

**Professor Knut Helle CorrFRSE**  
**Professor Emeritus of Medieval History, University of Bergen**

Knut Helle (b. 1930) is Professor Emeritus of Medieval History at the University of Bergen.

His main fields of research are medieval political institutions, urban history and history of law. His publications include books on topics from all these fields and also comprehensive histories of Norway and the Old World in the high Middle Ages. He has written several articles on Norway's medieval relations with the British Isles and the Norse island communities of the North Atlantic, and was the editor of the first volume of *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia* (2003), to which he also contributed.

**Mr David Sellar**  
**Honorary Fellow, School of Law, University of Edinburgh**

David Sellar is an honorary fellow of the School of Law of the University of Edinburgh. His main interests lie in Scots law and Scottish history. In addition to publications on private law and legal history, he has written on Hebridean sea-kings, the Lordship of the Isles, and the origins of many Highland families, including the MacDonalds, the Campbells and the MacLeods. He gave the O'Donnell Lecture in Edinburgh in 1985, and was a Rhind Lecturer in 2000. He has been a Member of the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland, Chairman of Council of the Scottish History Society, Vice-President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Literary Director of the Stair Society and Chairman of the standing Conference of Scottish Medievalists. He has been Bute Pursuivant of Arms since 2001.

**Dr Lesley Abrams**  
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Fellow and Tutor in History, Balliol College, Oxford, since 2000. Educated at Toronto and Oxford. Previous academic appointments in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, University of Cambridge, and

the Department of History and Welsh History, University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Has published in the fields of the history of the Anglo-Saxon Church, the conversion to Christianity of Scandinavia and Scandinavian settlements overseas, and, more generally, on religious change in the early Middle Ages.

**Dr Haki Antonsson**  
**Research Fellow, Centre of Medieval Studies,**  
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Born in Reykjavik, Iceland 1970. Studied history and Old Norse literature at the University of Iceland, 1990-1992. M.Litt.(1995) and Ph.D.(2000) in medieval history, University of St Andrews. Lecturer in the Department of Medieval History, University of St Andrews, 2000-2001 and in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, University of Cambridge 2001-2004. Research Fellow, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Bergen 2004-. Haki's main interest of research is European influence on Scandinavian society and literature in the eleventh and twelfth century, particularly the cult of saints on which he published a number of articles. A monograph entitled *The Cult of St Magnus Orkney: a Scandinavian Martyr-Cult in Context* will be published by Brill Academic Publishers in early 2007.

## APPENDIX THREE PARTICIPANT LIST

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**Ms Susan Walker**

Cultural Co-ordinator  
Highland Council  
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**Mr Ian Walker**

Norwegian Scottish Association  
Linlithgow

**Mrs Dina Ward**

Glasgow

**Mr Geoff Waters**

Post-Graduate Student  
University of Edinburgh

**Mrs June L. Waters**

Retired  
Milltimber

**Mr Donald H. Waters**

Retired  
Milltimber

**Dr John Watts**

Retired/Writer  
Addiewell

**+Dr Doreen Waugh**

University of Edinburgh

**Mrs Jay Whimster**

Aberdour

**Mr Colin Whimster**

Aberdour

**Ms Alison Wilkie**

Retired freelance radio/tv broadcaster in Scotland  
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**Dr Gareth Williams**

Department of Coins & Medals  
The British Museum  
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Royal Society Research Fellow  
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**The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE)** is an educational charity, registered in Scotland. Independent and non-party-political, we are working to provide public benefit throughout Scotland and by means of a growing international programme. The RSE has a peer-elected, multidisciplinary Fellowship of 1400 men and women who are experts within their fields.

The RSE was created in 1783 by Royal Charter for “the advancement of learning and useful knowledge”. We seek to provide public benefit in today’s Scotland by:

- Organising lectures, debates and conferences on topical issues of lasting importance, many of which are free and open to all
- Conducting independent inquiries on matters of national and international importance
- Providing educational activities for primary and secondary school students throughout Scotland
- Distributing over £1.7 million to top researchers and entrepreneurs working in Scotland
- Showcasing the best of Scotland’s research and development capabilities to the rest of the world
- Facilitating two-way international exchange to enhance Scotland’s international collaboration in research and enterprise
- Emphasising the value of educational effort and achievement by encouraging, recognising and rewarding it with scholarships, financial and other support, prizes and medals
- Providing expert information on Scientific issues to MSPs & Researchers through the Scottish Parliament Science Information Service

Opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of The Royal Society of Edinburgh, nor its Fellows.

## RSE International Programme

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) initiates and supports a wide range of activities which enhance Scotland's involvement in global collaboration. Through events, strategic partnerships and publications, the RSE promotes the reputation of the nation's research, innovation and culture. By forging effective partnerships with equivalent national academies overseas, amongst others, the RSE is helping to:

- Facilitate two-way international exchange programmes, enabling top Scottish-based researchers, in any field, to collaborate with the best of their counterparts anywhere in the world
- Raise awareness overseas of some of the best of the research and innovation being undertaken in Scotland
- Stimulate collaboration between centres of excellence through joint international events
- Provide a forum for discussion of international issues in science, the arts and letters, technology, industry and commerce.

This successful programme, which has grown since its inception in 1998, is delivered in partnership by the Society's professional staff and the International Committee of the RSE, which comprises eminent Fellows of the Society.

### International Events

Examples of other recent International events include:

*Languages in Scotland: what's the problem?* (One-day conference: March 2006) ~ exploring the current state of language learning and teaching in Scotland, considering its impact on the nation's economy and cultural awareness of its people.

*The RSE China Reception* (Evening Reception: February 2006) ~ an opportunity for postdoctoral researchers, based in Scottish research institutions, interested in working with the best of their counterparts in China to gain awareness of the opportunities available through the RSE's bilateral exchange programme with the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

### Agreements with Sister Academies

The RSE has bilateral, or formal agreements with:

- the Chinese Academy of Sciences
- the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
- the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
- the Polish Academy of Sciences
- the National Science Council of Taiwan
- The Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
- The Slovak Academy of Sciences

These agreements set out the basis for cooperation, mainly through bilateral funding programmes and joint events.

The RSE also has informal agreements with:

- the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters,
- the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters
- the Cuban Academy of Sciences.
- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

These agreements establish a willingness to cooperate between the two academies, through the sharing of publications and organising of joint events.



# DET NORSKE VIDENSKAPS-AKADEMI

## Organisation

The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, founded in 1857, is a non-governmental, nation-wide, and interdisciplinary body which embraces all fields of learning. The Academy has 219 ordinary seats for Norwegian members and 183 additional seats for foreign members. The Academy is divided into two divisions, one for the natural sciences and one for the humanities and social sciences. Each division is subdivided into sections for the constituent disciplines. The board of the Academy consists of 9 members, including the President, Vice-President and Secretary General as well as the Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen, and Secretaries of the two divisions. The Academy also has a small secretariat headed by a Director of Finance and Administration.

## Functions

The main purpose of the Academy is the advancement of science and scholarship in Norway. It provides a national forum of communication within and between the various learned disciplines, and it represents Norwegian science vis-à-vis foreign academies and international organisations. The Academy fulfils these functions by initiating and supporting research projects, by organising meetings and seminars on topics of current interest, by publishing scientific and scholarly works, and by participating in and nominating representatives to various national and international scientific bodies. The Academy also has international scientific co-operation agreements with sister academies in the Baltic states, Poland, Hungary and France.

The Academy represents Norwegian research internationally in the "International Council for Science" (ICSU), including its many sub-organisations, and in the "Union Académique Internationalé" (UAI), the "European Science Foundation" (ESF) and "ALLEA" (All European Academies).

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