NORSE CASTLES IN ORKNEY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to research Norse Castles in Orkney. The subject was first approached by the historian J. S. Clouston who published a paper entitled 'Early Norse Castles' in 1931, and this is the key starting point for the present study. A critical assessment of Clouston's 'castle' research and his methodology revealed that there were certain weaknesses within his arguments and his classification system, and that the subject (virtually ignored for sixty years) was in need of re-evaluation and updating. The main themes addressed are the reconsideration of Clouston's six castle sites, the identification of other possible castle sites, the classification of all sites found and the interpretation of these sites, including internal and external influencing factors on the development and demise of these forms of defence.

The subject has been researched in a multi-disciplinary manner using the available linguistic, documentary and archaeological sources. From a survey detailing all the castle place-names in Orkney, nine possible Norse castle sites have been identified. A detailed study of the available sources, especially the *Orkneyinga Saga* has provided basic and text-specific definitions of three separate ON terms: *kastali, borg* and *vigi.* All *kastali* references within the *Orkneyinga Saga* have been thoroughly examined along with other high-status sites mentioned in the text. Certain relevant folklore traditions have also been examined as evidence for the location of possible castle sites. The research format of the archaeological evidence is three-fold; a survey of Clouston's six sites, an examination of related defensive sites both secular and ecclesiastical, and a brief indication of related sites outwith Orkney.

The allocation of two main groups of Norse built defensive sites has been postulated, from the data collected in the above-mentioned sources; small stone keep castles and defensive farmsteads. These groups have then been further examined and put into context. A detailed analysis of the political and social situation within twelfth century Orkney has provided reasons for the development and demise of these sites. Notice has also been given to the external influence of Scotland and Norway on the development of these defensive sites. Finally, a brief consideration of related topics of study is provided.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DEFINITIONS

CASTLE

Clouston does not at any time provide a concise definition of his interpretation of a castle. Although he does indicate that there must be a donjon or keep, that there must be a fortified inner and outer ward, and an enclosing wall. The form of building attributed castle status in this study is comprised of a free-standing keep, in a defensive position, with some form of outer defence although an inner and outer ward are not necessary. Any defensive structure attached to another building will be termed strong-room or stronghold. The function of a castle is purely defensive in nature whilst a defended farmstead, i.e. a farmhouse with strong-room, serves the purpose of a daily living house as well as having the security or prestige of a defended area, and is therefore a different type of fortification.

LATE NORSE

The period from the eleventh century until the thirteenth century; the death of Earl Jon in 1230 provides a key date for the end.

MEDIEVAL

Continues on from the Late Norse period until the fifteenth century which is well beyond the parameters of this study.

ODAL

Privately owned land, originally held freely by unwritten law and divisible among heirs.

ORKNEY EARLDOM

During the late Norse period the earldom often also included parts of Caithness, with Thorfinn the Mighty ruling both Orkney, Caithness and large areas of the north of Scotland. It is also important to realise that the majority of the earls did not have sole rule over Orkney and that it was frequently divided into thirds and halves. It appears that these divisions were quite consistent through out the different earls' rule (Clouston, 1914:33-36; Thomson, 1987:43-45). However, Orkney within this study refers to the present island archipelago, with the castle study being limited to the same area.

INTRODUCTION

Aim & Methodology

The main aim of this thesis is to re-examine and expand the research undertaken by J. S. Clouston (1931) on Norse Castles in Orkney. The methodology will consist of an inter-disciplinary approach using documentary, archaeological and place-name evidence. A thorough examination of Clouston's work including his original notebooks and letters will provide the starting point for the research, followed by place-name analysis, based on assessing the 'castle' place-names within Orkney and looking for other high status indicators. A detailed examination of the *Orkneyinga Saga*, the key text for the period, and other early medieval documentary sources, will provide the relevant historical background, along with folklore and oral traditions. The archaeological evidence will include a survey of the main sites, a search for other possible 'castle' sites and a consideration of other high status structures. These areas will then be considered together in order to obtain a rounded picture of the period and the sites in question.

Chapter Layout

The above outlined methodology will be reflected in the chapter layout of the thesis. Firstly, in chapter one, Clouston's classification of six sites as Norse Castles will be critically assessed. Clouston's other research and his character will also be briefly addressed in order to understand his background and to place him in his context as an early medieval historian of Orkney. Chapter two will deal primarily with the documentary sources. It will be subdivided into three separate sub-chapters. The place-name evidence will be the first area studied in an attempt to establish whether there are other possible castle sites in existence. The main body of the chapter will be a close reading of the *Orkneyinga Saga*, with an emphasis on the use of the words *kastali* and *borg* in the Norse texts and how they have been translated into English. Part three will cover the main folklore evidence associated with castles and towers. Chapter three will consider the archaeological aspects of the research, including a survey of the six sites postulated by Clouston, a presentation of other possible castle sites and some ecclesiastical buildings which may have defensive associations. The main aim of this chapter will be to outline the castle sites, the larger defensive farm sites and ecclesiastical sites. Chapter four will discuss the data collected in the previous chapters and will attempt to provide a more appropriate classificatory system allowing the sites to be groups and yet also to maintain their individuality. The position of Clouston's castles in relation to other important structures within the landscape will also be tackled along with possible reasons for the construction of the castles. Chapter five will then conclude and suggest some areas for further research.

Background

The main time period covered by the study will be the twelfth century. Twelfth century Orkney has been considered a renaissance period in Orcadian history (Crawford, 1988). It was during this century that the Earl's Bu in Orphir was built and the Cathedral of St Magnus in Kirkwall was started. The Orkney earls were independent, widely travelled and highly acclaimed. Orkney was in a pivotal position within the North Atlantic and there was close contact between the island group and the crowns of both Scotland and Norway. This is perhaps best exemplified in the many conflicts over the rule of the Earldom with both Scottish and Norwegian contenders. Therefore, this is a period concerned with power and the constant struggle to maintain the possession and rule of Orkney.

A typical magnate depicted in the *Orkneyinga Saga*, as thriving during this period was the famous Sweyn Asleifson. He managed skilfully to gain power and prestige because he took advantage of the internal and external divisions within the Earldom. He used both his contacts in Scotland and his position within the earldom to acquire ships from the earl when he needed them, and received lenient treatment for his wrong-doings by playing one earl off against the other. However, by the 1230s, the last Norwegian Earl had been murdered and the Earldom passed into Scottish hands. From then until the fifteenth century there followed a gradual process of *scottification* (Wainwright, 1962:190) under the Angus, Sinclair and Stewart Earls, as the old institutions were changed to come into line with those of Mainland Scotland, culminating in a complete change in the economic and ruling structures of society. However, these final years of Norse rule, often regarded as a dark period in history, can be studied and understood. Perhaps not through documentary evidence but through the place-names, the land organisation, the architecture and the archaeology which are all capable of enriching our knowledge of this period.

The first stage in the re-evaluation of Clouston's 'castles' must be a reconsideration of his sites. Especially in the light of the discoveries made in the past sixty years concerning the Late Norse period in Orkney and also taking into account the many changes in interpretation of that period since 1930. It appears that Clouston's classification of the buildings in question stems mainly from architectural similarities; and a consideration of the social and political contexts of these sites may reveal a very different picture. Therefore, chapter one consists of a review of the original research carried out by Clouston.

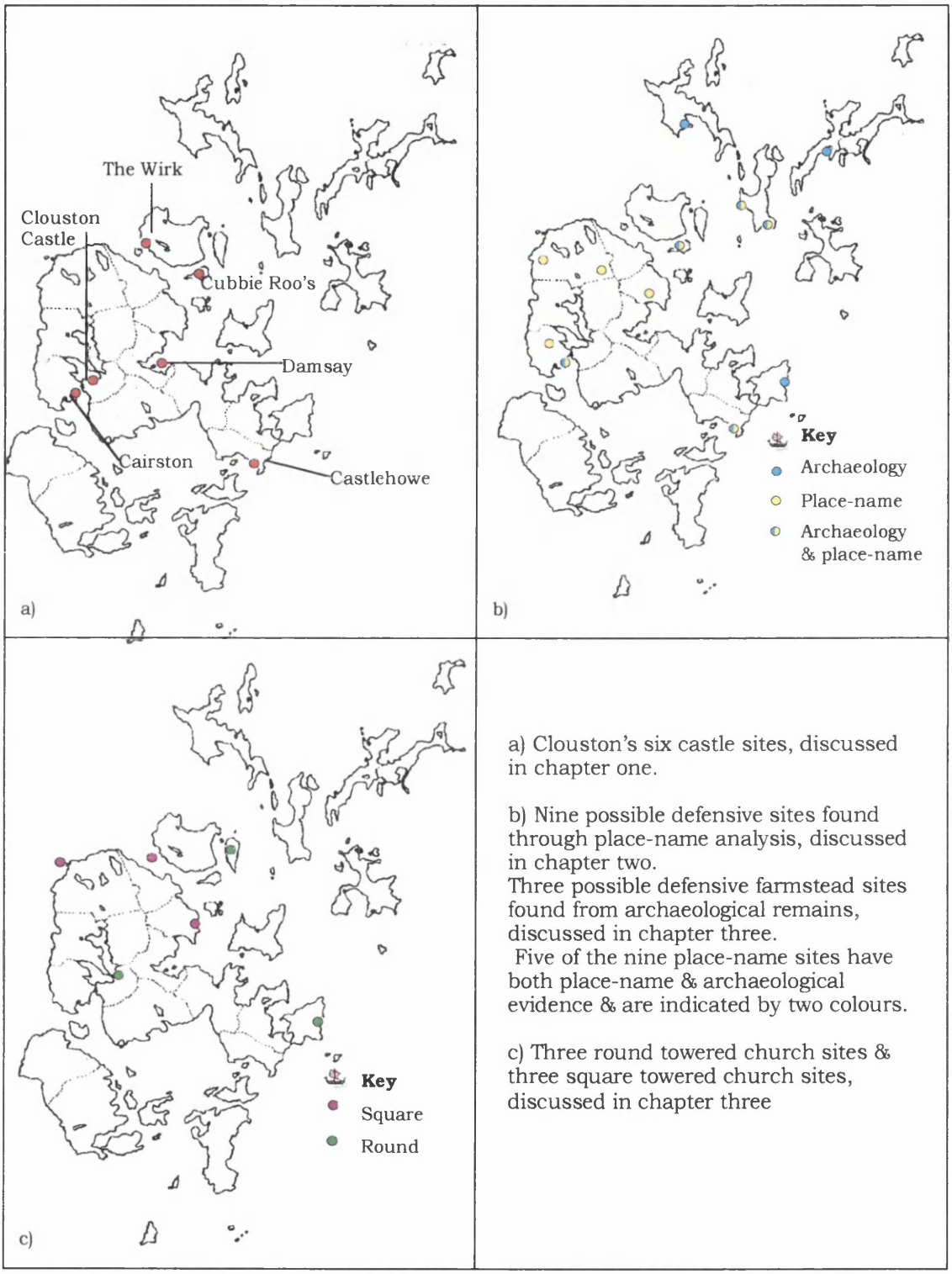


Figure 1.0 Location of Main Sites

CHAPTER ONE
REVIEW OF CLOUSTON

The term 'Early Norse Castles' was attributed by J. Storer Clouston to a group of six sites in Orkney which appeared early in date, defensive in nature, and similar in construction, see figure 1.0a. Clouston subdivided these sites into those of native Norse origin and those of an imported design (1931:42). The conclusions he reached were derived from extensive research into historical records including early rentals, sagas and place-name evidence, as well as research into Norwegian and European sites, and his own excavations.

Clouston was one of three prominent historians in Orkney in the first decades of the twentieth century, studying the late Norse/Medieval period. In addition to being an historian, Clouston was more famous in Britain as a novelist and his writing style was, in many ways, similar to the narrative manner of the saga writers (Marwick, 1944). His background as a lawyer equipped him well for translating and editing the early rentals and documents of Orkney, which was published in 1914. His interest in Orkney history was all encompassing and during his lifetime he covered many areas which had previously been ignored. One of his important early papers dealt with the runrig system within the islands, whilst he was also famous for his genealogical investigations and his work on medieval heraldry and guilds. He was particularly interested in the people mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga* and went to great lengths to trace their families to present day families in Orkney. Although sometimes a little far fetched his genealogies brought the Norse past of Orkney to life for the readers of his papers. Clouston's interest in the land and the people was especially important as his two contemporaries, Marwick and Johnston, were more concerned with the construction of the late Norse institutions than the people who were involved (Smith, ND:4).

Clouston belonged to an era where the authenticity of the sagas was not doubted. His aim in his archaeological excavations was to verify the Saga record. This is exemplified when he writes of Cairston; 'a certain collection of ruinous walls at the farm of Bu of Cairston in Stromness parish, for centuries viewed by uncomprehending eyes (my own among them), might actually be the very *'kastali'* of Cairston mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga*' (Clouston, 1928-9b:57). It is fundamental to realise that archaeology was a tool used in order to bring the Saga to life, which was also the aim with his research into heraldry and genealogy. Although he used later records his 'retrospective' analysis was carried out with caution unlike his contemporaries Marwick and Johnston (Smith, ND:1). It is important to recognise the breadth of Clouston's historical research and to appreciate the many different topics he tackled. The subject of Norse Castles was

far from his only research area and much of his interpretation on the subject stemmed from earlier research into Norse building techniques, the Odal families of Orkney, the origin of the Orkney chiefs, and old chapels in Orkney. A separate bibliography of Clouston's academic work has been compiled, in addition to the reference bibliography, in order to show the variety and extent of his research.

As well as being an adept historian and novelist Clouston undertook several excavations, including those at Gernaness, Stenness, Cairston, Stromness and the Earls Bu, Orphir. These excavations were more akin to antiquarian investigations than scientific research. They were published mainly in the *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society (POAS)*, not as individual reports but generally as part of an interdisciplinary project. Two examples are 'Three Norse Strongholds in Orkney' (Clouston, 1928-9b:57-74), and 'Tammaskirk in Rendall' (Clouston, 1931-32a:9-16) where the excavations were merely one facet of the research project. For more details of his excavations one must consult his notebooks where he discussed interpretations of sites and included early plans.

It is important, however, to bear in mind that at this time Skara Brae had not yet been excavated and Rousay was still being referred to as an island of very little archaeological interest (Marwick, 1923-24:15). Archaeology in Orkney was a relatively new phenomenon and Clouston was an early enthusiast whose methodology and scientific input were of great value. It was the combination of these investigations and his research into the *Orkneyinga Saga* and early Rentals that culminated in his interpretation of six sites as Norse castles and his publication of them, as such, in 1931.

Since Clouston's classification these sites as a group have been, on the whole, ignored. Cubbie Roo's castle in Wyre was excavated by the Ministry of Works in the 1930s and has been credited as the 'earliest datable stone castle in Scotland' (Tabraham, 1986:32). It is by far the most impressive and convincing of the sites, appearing in several textbooks as an early castle. Very little mention is made of the other castle sites proposed by Clouston. Cruden in *The Scottish Castle* mentions Cubbie Roo's castle along with the others suggested by Clouston although he rightly indicates that there is no conclusive evidence to place these in the Norse period (Cruden, 1960:20-21). Talbot also briefly mentions the castles; however, his interest in Cubbie Roo's castle is concerned with the influence behind the ramparts and not with the tower (Talbot, 1974:40). Of the other five sites only the Wirk in Rousay has been re-examined (Morris, 1993:53; Lowe, 1984:9-10). No-one has dealt with these castles in their Orkney context or further researched Clouston's ideas, apart from Morris, (1991:129; 1993:224-226) and Graham-Campbell & Batey (1998:257-260) who provide short descriptions and commentary on

Clouston's theories. Although Talbot's paper was on Norse defensive sites in Scotland, he concentrated more on the Western seaboard.

By examining Clouston's papers it becomes apparent that there is a need for new investigations. This chapter will give a brief summary of Clouston's work and indicate the areas that could benefit from further research.

1.1 CLOUSTON'S GROUP ONE CASTLES.

The next two sections will summarise Clouston's six sites by outlining his excavations and interpretations. The sections have been divided according to Clouston's 'castle' divisions with group one containing the three sites in his native model category and section 1.2, Clouston's group two, containing his imported model examples.

1.1 a : Clouston Castle, Gernaness, Stenness.

The first site excavated by Clouston was that of Clouston castle in Stenness. It is located on a promontory in the Stenness loch known as Gernaness, on the land of Netherbigging, in the old township of Clouston and is named Clouston Castle for this reason. The site was excavated in the summer of 1924 as local tradition suggested it was an early chapel site (Clouston, 1926:282). The excavation revealed a peculiar structure of a curvilinear form that Clouston defined thus: -

> 1. A curiously shaped keep, **K**, rounded on the outer sides and rectangular within the court; three sides being thick walled (6 to 8 ft.) and one quite thin.
> 2. A curved curtain wall, **CC**, 4 ft. thick, with a rectangular projection at one point.
> 3. A remarkable figure-8 shaped hall, **H**, with a fireplace at *n* and the remains of another at *q*.
> 4. A small paved bathroom, **B**, curved without and rectangular within like the keep.
> 5. A mysterious pavement, **P**, with two long curved slits in it. (1931:35-6).

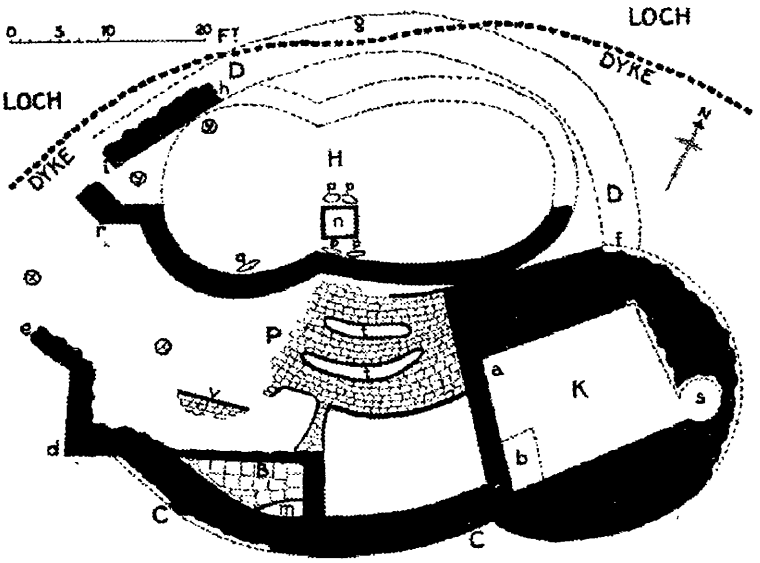
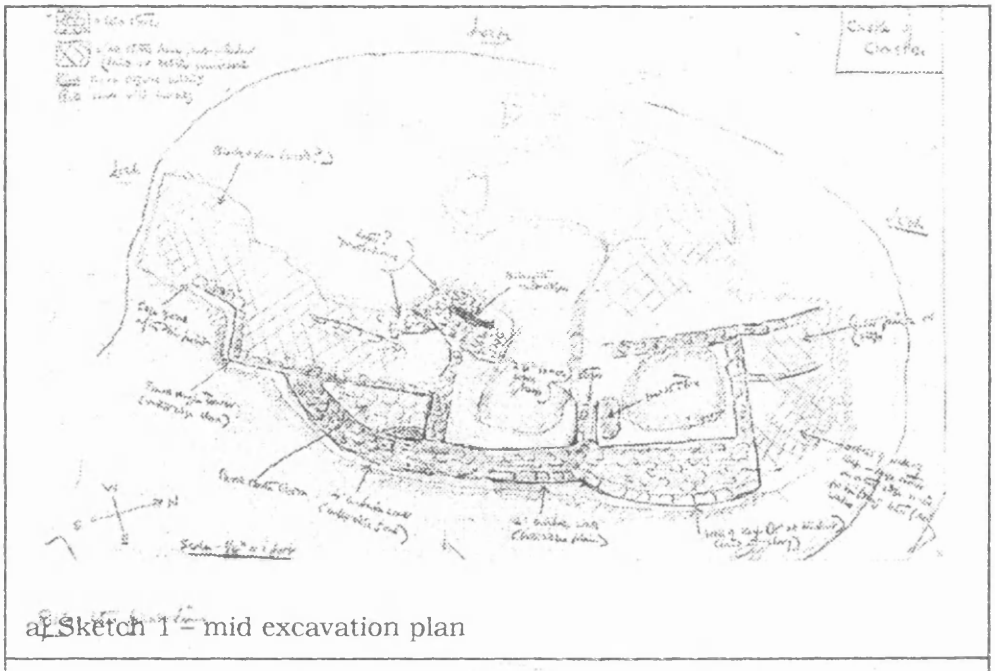


Figure 1.1 – Clouston Castle, Stenness (from Clouston, 1931:fig.14).

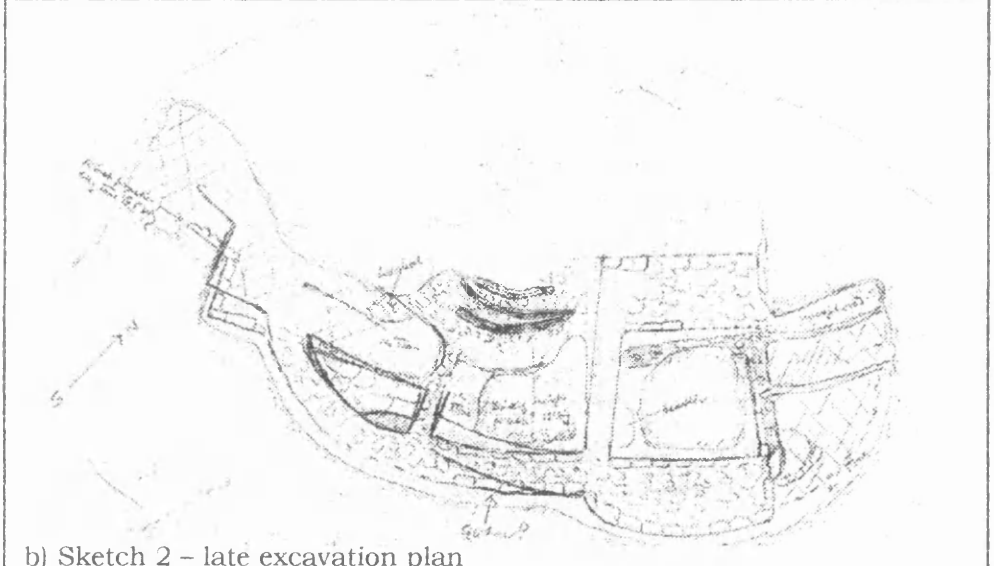
Clouston regarded this unusual structure as a 'fortress...from the situation and the plan, and that it is no prehistoric stronghold...from its dissimilarity from anything prehistoric, and identity in essentials with the general castle principle...' (1931:36). Between 1925 and 1931 his ideas concerning the structural remains of the site changed. He searched for, and discovered, a ditch and bank defence across the neck of the promontory creating the necessary outer ward for his castle classification. After his excavations at Cairston, Clouston believed there to be a stair in the thick NE wall of the keep at Clouston, no longer seeing ***s*** as a stair. The entrance to the keep he concluded must have been from the hall through two doors either side of the stair as at Cairston. This was all conjecture as only the foundation slabs remained at the Clouston site. From drawings contained in his notebook it is also clear that the site was not as simple as the plan he published (see figures 1.2 and 1.3). This final published plan included areas not found in the excavations but interpreted by Clouston and he explained the inclusion of these areas with the following statement: 'It is impossible to reconstruct the hall in its entirety. In the plan I have assumed that the missing walls resembled the surviving and followed the broken lines shown... One has, in fact, a choice of two odd reconstructions, and the one indicated in the plan must merely be taken as the solution which suggests itself to me personally as the more probable' (Clouston, 1926:287). Even with the explanation, the inclusion of these postulated sections in the plan, makes reinterpretation difficult as the additions influence the overall impression.

Clouston interpreted the figure-of-eight hall as a converted pagan temple. He believed that this temple was made redundant with the coming of Christianity, as Gernaness offered no room for a churchyard and so the church was built at the site of the present church of Stenness and not on the pagan site. He included the curving curtain wall and the paving in the earlier temple complex. Clouston used place-name evidence (Clouston, 1926:288) and the descriptions of temple sites in Iceland by Vigfusson, Jonsson and Jonsson from 1882 to 1896 (Clouston, 1926:288), including Hofstaðir (Clouston, 1928-29b:72) to arrive at this conclusion. He corresponded with Professor Olsen who agreed with the identification of the site as a temple (Clouston, 1928-29b:72-73). It should be noted that as shown in figure 1.1 only half of the hall was remaining so the figure-of-eight was an assumption as was the interpretation of the function, this is best exemplified in sketch 1.2c where a bow shaped hall is shown rather than a figure-of-eight.

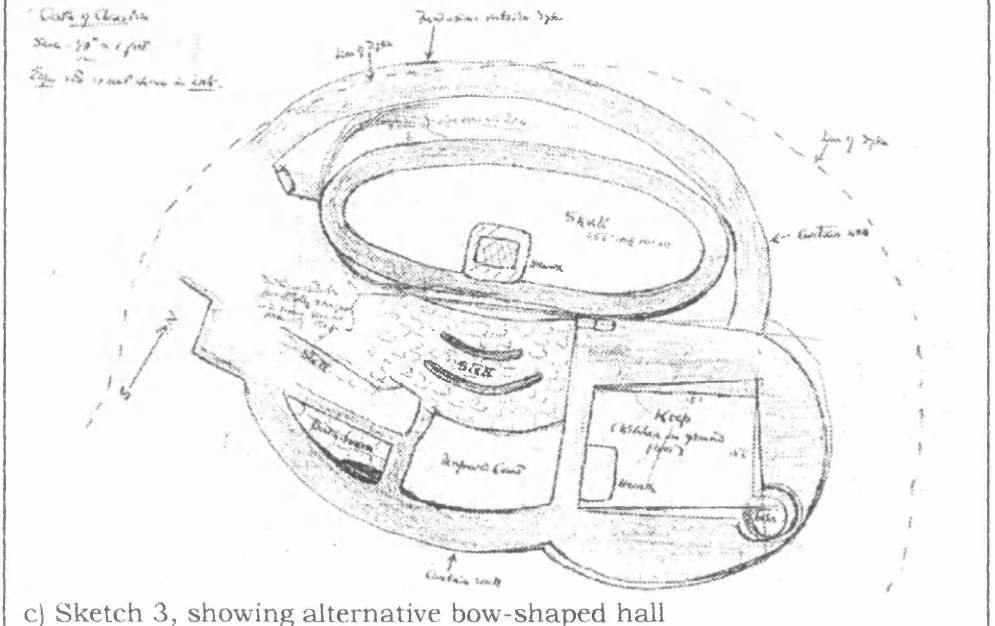
The 'bathroom', he defined, due to the presence of some burnt stones at the top corner of the sloping floor and the small size of the room (12ft. by 5ft. at its widest). 'When one adds to these features the impossibility of there being any other use for such a small, odd-shaped, paved chamber, the nature of this apartment is quite obvious' (1926:285-



a) Sketch 1 – mid excavation plan



b) Sketch 2 – late excavation plan



c) Sketch 3, showing alternative bow-shaped hall

Figure 1.2 Sketches of Clouston Castle (from D23/3/7).

86). From the above it seems that Clouston determined the function of this room through means of elimination rather than hard evidence. He again turned to Scandinavia for evidence to support his interpretation namely the presence of burnt stones as found in Icelandic *baðstofa* (Clouston, 1926:285).

The whole site appears rather unusual and Clouston admitted this, suggesting that the change in function of the site from temple to dwelling and the incorporation of an earlier prehistoric structure, from which the midden still remained at **y**, were examples of this. He saw the semi-rounded keep as one of three defensive towers in the nearby area, including the old Stenness Kirk tower (1928-9b:68-70), and the tower at Cairston, with their segment influence deriving from the remains of internally divided brochs (1931:41). He cited Dun Skudiburgh, Skye and Loch an Duin, Taransay as examples and relates them to Orkney in the eleventh century through Thorfinn's connections with the western Isles as mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga* (Pálsson & Edwards, 1981:61-2). One thing is clear, Clouston was adamant that the site was Norse and it is difficult to assess the extent to which his interest in this particular period affected his final interpretation.

The historical evidence for Gernaness is very limited; there is no mention of the site in the *Orkneyinga Saga.* However, Clouston attributed the ownership of Clouston township to the family named Clouston, and through place-name analysis he connected Clouston to Klostadir, and the only Klo mentioned in the Saga is Hakon Klo son of Havard Gunnason, friend of Earl Hakon. The castle he then interpreted as a defensive structure built for Hakon after he murdered Magnus when he was ruling the whole earldom by force, some time between 1120 and 1150, however, there is no historical foundation for this assumption (see chapter four).

There are two additional points of interest. The first, being the discovery of four gold rings of Norse date in earth taken from the mound which covered the site in 1879 (Clouston, 1926:296). The second point is concerned with the local tradition of a building at Netherbigging which was so high that one could see the sea over the ridge at the back. Clouston suggests that if the keep were around 40ft. high then this could be the building remembered. However, there is another similar tradition recorded of the Palace of Stenness where 'from the top storey ships could be seen in the Hoy Sound' (Leith, 1936-37:41). The Palace is another mystery building of which there is now no trace (see chapter two for details). The question is whether this confused tradition was an influencing factor in determining the function of the keep. It does seem that most of the site has been interpreted on the basis of Clouston's visits to Cairston, and his knowledge of other Scandinavian sites rather than on the excavated evidence.

1.1b : Cairston Castle, Stromness.

Cairston in Stromness was the second 'castle' site excavated by Clouston in 1927. Clouston went here hoping to find the castle mentioned on the 29th September 1152 in the Rolls edition of the *Orkneyinga Saga* (Clouston, 1928-9b:58). However, the identification of a castle site at Cairston is an issue of contention, as there are geographical and linguistic problems with the source, as detailed in chapter two, and there may not have been a Norse 'castle' at Cairston.

The site, as found by Clouston, was serving as a piggery and chicken run, although earlier buildings were still in existence. Clouston identified two phases, one being a sixteenth century manor house belonging to the Gordon family and the second being an earlier defensive site (Clouston, 1928-29b:59). This site had a 70ft. square courtyard with a 4ft. thick clay-cemented curtain wall, with evidence of some lime pointing at the base of the keep walls. The stones used were very large and were built without breaking bond as at other twelfth century sites such as Langskaill on Gairsay, and the Round Church in Orphir (Clouston, 1928-29a:10-11). Clouston believed the keep to be in the NW corner of the enclosure. The E wall of this building was very thin (2'3") and the S wall appears to have consisted of two thin walls with a stair between them. The first three steps of the stair were still in place (as shown in figure 1.4) and it was this stair construction technique which Clouston suggested was used at Gernaness.

The keep appeared to have been entered through two doors one in each of the S walls. Clouston found evidence for a curiously shaped tower in the SE corner of the enclosure as well as there being one other building, which was included because it could not be proven to be of later date, along the W wall next to the keep. There was also evidence of an outer ward reaching out to the shore, a cistern and conduit.

Clouston interpreted Cairston as an early structure because of its primitive construction. He also noted the worn state of the stones suggesting their age, however, the stones were most probably taken from the nearby broch and would therefore already have been worn. Clouston concluded that these were the remains of the twelfth century castle, and suggested a date in the 1130s for construction because of the poor defensive position of the castle and the lack of a free-standing donjon.

Clouston supported his interpretation with saga evidence, suggesting that both Cairston and the castle on Damsay were built hurriedly by Earl Paul in an attempt to defend the naval fleets and vulnerable coastlines of Orkney. This, he maintained was as a result of the discovery that Rognvald was planning a two-sided attack on him in 1136 (Pálsson & Edwards, 1981:119). To Clouston this explained, the sudden addition of a tower to the

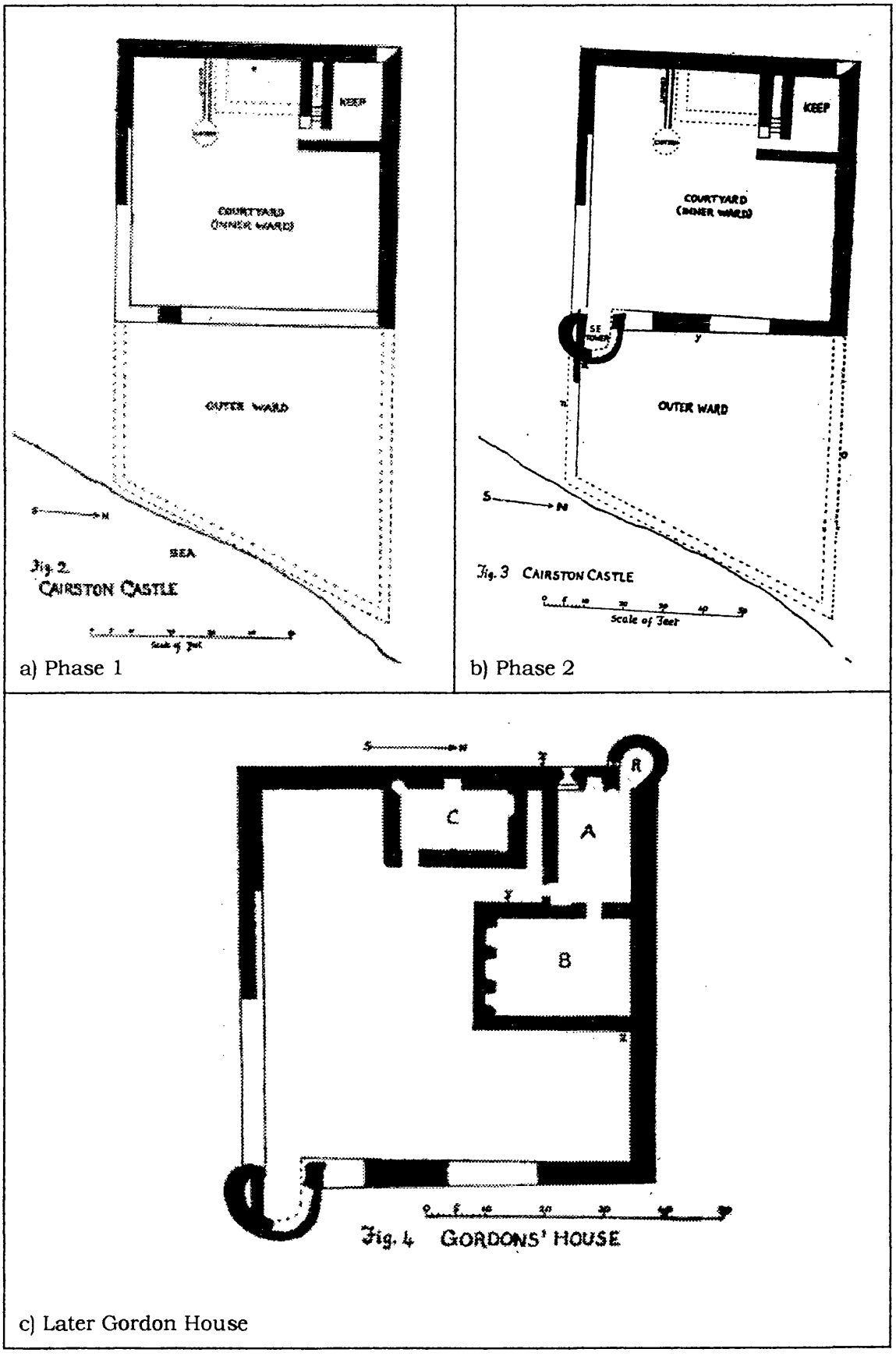


Figure 1.3 Cairston Castle, Stromness, (from Clouston 1928: fig.2,3 & 4).

SE corner of the enclosure and the E wall's varied thickness, as well as explaining why Damsay disappeared (Clouston, 1931:43), as it was built quickly and poorly. His evidence for dating Cairston was mainly derived from the saga literature, as there were no archaeological indicators of date.

1.1c : Damsay.

Clouston does not mention Damsay in any great detail other than to suggest a possible location and to repeat the saga entry of 1136 when Sweyn Asleifson took refuge there for a night (Taylor, 1938:242). However, in his notebooks Clouston sketched a plan of his possible castle site although he never published it, which suggests that he may not have been totally convinced by his evidence, see figure 1.4.

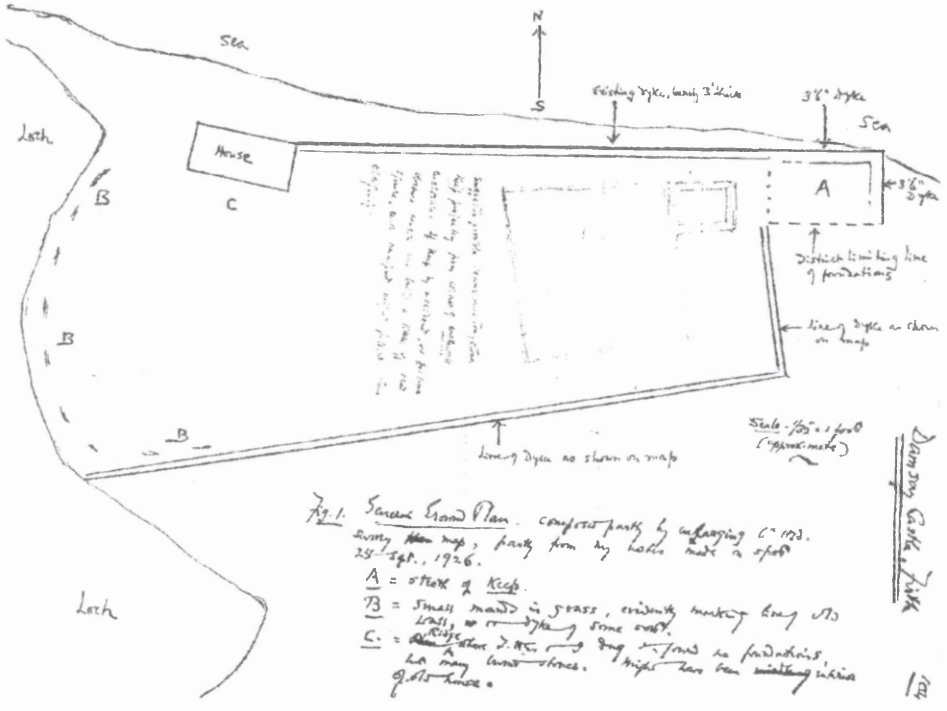


Figure 1.4 Clouston's sketch of Damsay (OA, D23/8/104).

Clouston included the castle in Damsay in a chronology of the castle sites. This chronology was linked to his subdivision of the six sites as mentioned above. Cairston and Clouston both belong to his native Norse stronghold group, characterised by a thin walled keep strengthening a rectangular courtyard, with no separate donjon. He proposed this group to be primitive predecessors of three Norwegian castles constructed during the reign of Hakon Hakonson in the thirteenth century, namely, Ragnhildsholm, the Bishop's Castle and the King's Castle, Oslo. All had rectangular enclosures, lacked any original donjon, and were of limited size. He in turn saw these castles akin to the wooden castles referred to in the sagas, belonging to Sverri, Sigurd and Magnus Barelegs.

Sigurd's castle at Konghelle was built of turf and stone in 1116, and appears not to have had a donjon, whilst Magnus built a *borg* of turf and wood and dug a ditch around it in 1100. Clouston also referred to rectangular fortifications without citadels erected by the Danes in England (1931:12). Clouston also noted the similarity between the semi-round constructions at both Cairston and Clouston and earlier broch defences. He referred to the two brochs mentioned in the saga Mousa and Ness (1931:13), as well as suggesting Yarhouse broch, Caithness as a possible influencing factor (1928-29b:73). Therefore, his proposal is of a combination of Norse and Iron Age influences on these first strongholds.

It would be very interesting to find the alleged castle site on Damsay to discover whether it fits into the classification Clouston proposed. If his calculations were correct then it too would be of native Norse influence.

1.2 CLOUSTON'S GROUP TWO CASTLES.

1.2 a : Cubbie Roo's Castle, Wyre.

The third castle to be investigated was that of Cubbie Roo's on Wyre. Situated on top of a rise this site provides an excellent defensive position. On the land at the base of this rise is the twelfth century church built either by Kolbein Hruga or his son Bjarni, and there is also a large *Bu* farm in the vicinity. The much quoted saga reference tells of Hruga settling in Wyre and building a good stone castle (Taylor, 1938:275). Clouston dates this to between 1150 and 1180 as Kolbein is first noted in Orkney in 1154 and last noted in Norway in 1142 (Clouston, 1931:23). The second reference is in 1231 when Earl Jon's murderer Hanef and his associates fled to Kolbein Hruga's castle and could not be taken (Vigfusson, 1887b:150).

Clouston made preliminary excavations at the site and discovered five main features: -

1. Rectangular layout of courtyard.
2. Donjon with a first floor entrance and two slit windows in the ground floor.
3. Good defensive position encompassing a view of the seaways from the Northern Isles.
4. Added defence in the form of a double bank and ditch, which he considered to be of the motte principle.
5. Substitution of earlier turf and stone walls with only stone. (Adapted from 1931:26).

These excavations were cursory and did not reveal the whole of the site as it is today. However, Clouston established the similarity of the masonry to that of the church nearby and noted the excellent building quality along with the use of lime pointing. He also made the point that the keep was in the centre of the enclosure and not bonded to it and that the entrance was at first floor level. He remarked on the defences being turf banks lined with stone at the north end, whilst the natural slope on the S provided its own form of

protection. His plans of the castle were very thorough and provide a good pre-excavation record of the site, see figure 1.5 below.

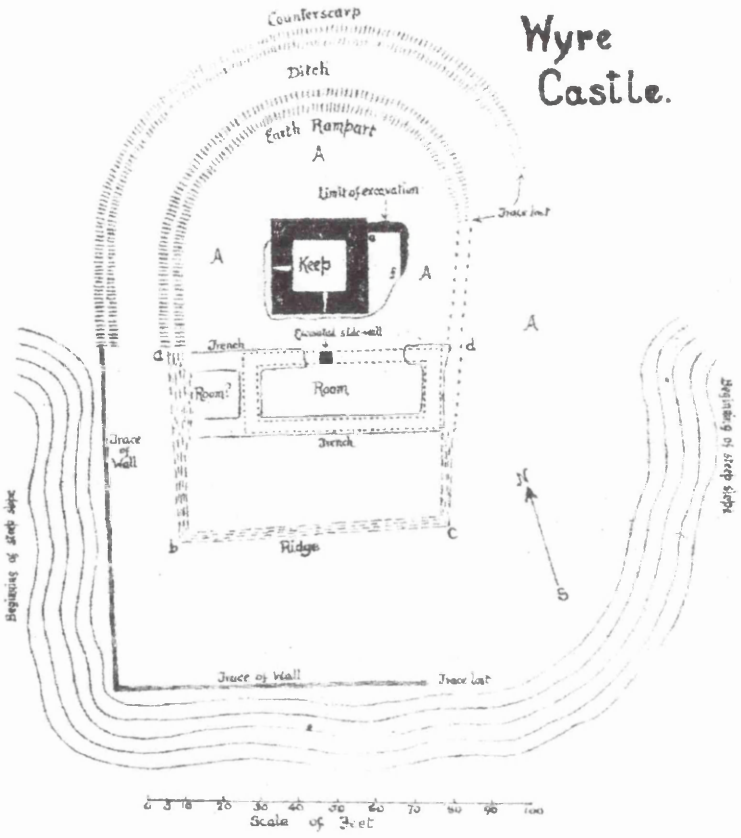


Figure 1.5 Clouston's plan of Cubbie Roo's Castle, (from Clouston 1931: figure 6).

Clouston regarded this castle as the most reliable twelfth century structure in the country. He arrived at this conclusion because of the saga evidence and the lack of any other building on the island which could be given castle status. The evidence for this castle appears almost foolproof, with both the building and the oral tradition remaining to the present day. Clouston relied on later legislation suggesting that the building of castles was prohibited in Orkney from the thirteenth century in order to date the Norse structures to the twelfth century (Clouston, 1931:14-16). There were no finds recorded at any of his castle excavations and the stone work is virtually impossible to date. However, in an earlier publication Clouston suggests that it is possible to identify a late Norse building technique (1928-29a:10).

The later legislation concerns Henry Sinclair's promise undertaken upon his investiture in 1379, to not construct 'castles or other fortifications' in the islands. Clouston believed this promise was made to the king of Norway by all earls of Orkney, after the earldom

was handed over to the earls of Angus. He saw this action as a possible result of the events on Wyre in 1231. Therefore, Clouston hypothesises that all castles in Orkney were either built before 1230 or after 1468. He verified this with the reference from *Hakon's Saga* concerning the residing of the King and his retinue in the Bishop's house in 1263, as had there been an Earls castle then they would surely have stayed there (see chapter four for historical context). He also considered the prohibition of castle building as evidence that all earlier castles were either ruinous or destroyed to prevent a repeat of the Hanef situation.

1.2 b : The Wirk, Rousay.

The fifth of Clouston's 'castles' is the Wirk on Rousay, which is situated on the shore near a twelfth century church. On examining this site Clouston noted the same use of large stones and lime pointing in what was the ground floor of a small keep with very thick walls and a first floor entrance as at Cubbie Roo's. The ground floor was 6ft. 6 inches high and had no windows, although Clouston identified a cistern and a drain. Clouston found evidence for a door in the S wall at first floor height and a turf rampart at the shore side of the keep, to the N and W of the tower.

There were traces of a very large wide building leading off from the keep to the E. Clouston interpreted these remains as a church that had never been completed, this interpretation was due to the ecclesiastical nature of some of the stone sculpture found around the site (Lowe, 1984:10-15). He suggested a later date within the thirteenth century for this tower, considering it to be primarily ecclesiastical, because of the sculpture and from the non-defensive location of the building. The dating of the building was derived from the incorporation of a cistern for holding water in the tower (a feature he attributes to Mediterranean influence), the style of the masonry and the ecclesiastical sculpture (Clouston, 1931:33). His investigations at the Wirk were minimal, consisting of the clearance of debris from around and within the tower and partial excavations to the E of the tower to examine the rectangular building. The tower clearance revealed a passageway between tower and building and the extent of the interior walls. There was no excavation of the turf rampart as he considered it to be a later enclosure as it faced the opposite way from the first floor entrance. A reproduction of his plan of the Wirk is shown in figure 1.6 below.

The Wirk is not mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga* although Skaill is definitely featured, as it was the seat of Sigurd of Westness. This omission from the saga can be seen as an additional factor in Clouston's interpretation of the keep as ecclesiastical and not solely a defensive structure.

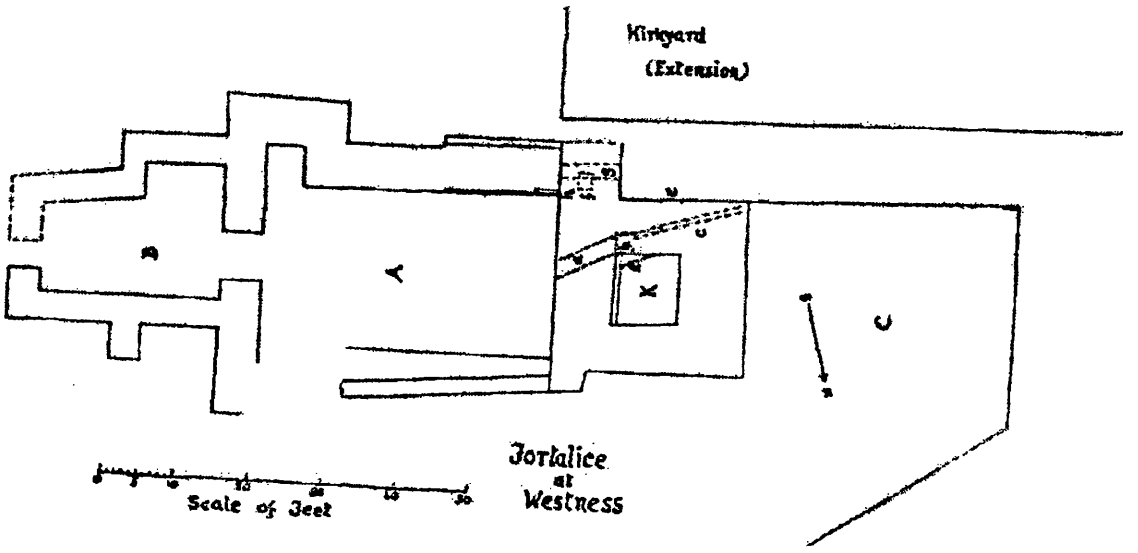


Figure 1.6 Plan of The Wirk, (from Clouston, 1931: figure 8).

1.2 c : Castlehowe, Paplay, Holm.

Clouston's final 'castle' site is that of Castlehowe, situated near the shore on a natural mound and near the parish church. Clayton excavated here between 1929 and 1931 and found the remains of an almost square tower with very thick walls, on top of an earlier prehistoric structure. This tower was inferior in construction to Cubbie Roo's Castle and The Wirk but had traces of lime pointing and used large stones. The tower may not have had a door in the ground floor, and was located on a semi-man made motte (Clouston, 1931:34-35).

Clouston dated this site to the mid-twelfth century and suggested it was the remains of the Bu of Paplay referred to in the *Orkneyinga Saga* as the seat of the 'mighty chieftain' Hakon Karl, half brother of Earl Magnus (1931:33). Castlehowe was a later addition to Clouston's group two and he consequently did not have the same information on this site as the others. The importance of the area in the historical records is apparent in one of his earlier papers concerned with the *Bu* sites in Orkney where Paplay is recorded as an Odal farm (1926-27b:44).

The latter three castles are those of Clouston's imported model group. Clouston maintained that both Wyre and Paplay showed signs of motte construction and had much stronger keeps with less impressive courtyard walls, whilst the Wirk appeared to have no enclosure wall at all. Clouston also added to this the apparent increase in strength between Cairston and Wyre when under attack as evident in the *Orkneyinga Saga* and *Hakon's Saga* respectively. Even in a ruinous state Wyre was impregnable whilst Cairston was almost defeated in a day (Dasent, 1894b:156; Taylor, 1938:308).

Therefore, he suggested that Cubbie Roo's Castle, Wyre and Castlehowe were of later date than the native Norse castles. They were stronger, better built and were influenced by more European styled fortifications.

Clouston continued by explaining the reasons why these later castles were constructed. His first point was that they were private castles from the outset and were not built at the instruction of the earls. The main reason he put forward for their erection was the triangular struggle for the earldom that resulted in a period of warfare between 1152 and 1154 (1931:43). However, his triangular division of the earldom included only Orkney, so this argument is flawed. He also suggested some more general reasons, noting that the islands were always vulnerable to attack and that consequently the inhabitants were organised for defence. The castles themselves were all built by families closely related to the earls' and they may have been an integral part of the earls' defence system, which also included the levies for the fleet and the beacon, expected of each district. This defensive system as suggested by Hugh Marwick and Clouston is perhaps a creation of the historians rather than the Norse earls (Marwick, 1949:1-11; Clouston, 1931-32b:33-42).

Clouston primarily looked to Scandinavia for influences for these castles and found in Norway Hakon Hakonson's examples, however, he found no castles in Iceland, Faeroe or Shetland. He then considered influences already present in the islands and suggested broch fortifications. Finally he looked at the saga evidence for possible external influences in the twelfth century. He noted Earl Hakon's penitential trip to Jerusalem via Rome in 1117-8, Earl Rognvald's private crusade to the Holy Lands via France, Spain, Italy and the Near East, and also mentioned the foreign masons employed in the building of the cathedral. From this Clouston was able to suggest that Orkney could have been influenced from many different areas. Clouston's failure to look for evidence of Scottish influence perhaps provides an indication of his desire to prove a Norse connection as he does admit to there being close contacts between Scotland and Orkney. However, he does not seem to feel that Scotland was influential in a defensive manner, or in any other way, until several centuries later when the Scottish earls began to introduce institutional systems which were familiar to them (Clouston, 1932:215).

1.3 CONCLUSIONS

Overall Clouston provided a convincing argument for his castle classification although as shown there are areas which need to be reconsidered and expanded. He did not consider the place of the castles within society nor their geographical location within the landscape as a whole. His classification also does not allow the investigation of other related structures in the twelfth century such as towers at churches as at Stenness,

Tammaskirk (both excavated by Clouston), Deerness and St Magnus church Egilsay which could be considered in a defensive context as well as purely ecclesiastical. It would be very interesting to see whether these relate in any way to the structures he has considered. This is especially the case with the Wirk as Dietrichson interpreted the site as a detached fortified bell-tower in the Scandinavian tradition, whilst Dunbar interprets it as a strong room on the end of a hall (Morris, 1993:53-54).

Clouston's classification system is another area in need of re-examination. He appears to have used architectural attributes to categorise the sites. However, in other respects the sites are very different from one another. Perhaps by considering their relationship to other structures such as farms and churches; and their location in the landscape it will be possible to integrate these somewhat alienated and forgotten sites into Norse society. Other areas which would benefit from expansion would be the positive identification of the castle site on Damsay, and the identification of other possible castle sites. Clouston's extensive studies into the structures of Norse society make possible the analysis of the upper classes and their estates (Clouston, 1924-5a; 1926-7b). A fresh look at all Clouston's 'castles' would perhaps provide some more information and this will form part of chapters two and three.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SOURCES : PLACE-NAMES, DOCUMENTATION & FOLKLORE

The sources providing information on the existence and nature of fortifications in Orkney can be grouped under the following four headings, place-name analysis, documentary evidence, folklore and archaeology. Runic inscriptions and analysis of the Norn language have not been included, as they provide no relevant information. The sections of this chapter will deal with the first three categories whilst chapter three will cover the archaeological evidence.

2.1 PLACE-NAME ANALYSIS

The study of place-names has much to offer in terms of discovering the extent of Norse settlement and influence, and this is usually shown through the creation of detailed distribution maps. However, place-name studies cannot provide accurate dating information and although often used to form chronological patterns of settlement they are more reliable as indicators of settlement expansion in geographical and hierarchical terms. This is exemplified in the model created for Orkney farm-names by Marwick. Marwick saw this model as showing an outward expansion from areas of 'primary', settlement in the centre to those of more recent settlement at the margins (Marwick, 1952:part III). Thomson has argued that the model is a hierarchy 'based on size, location and tax-paying status' (Thomson, 1987:27), rather than a chronological settlement pattern.

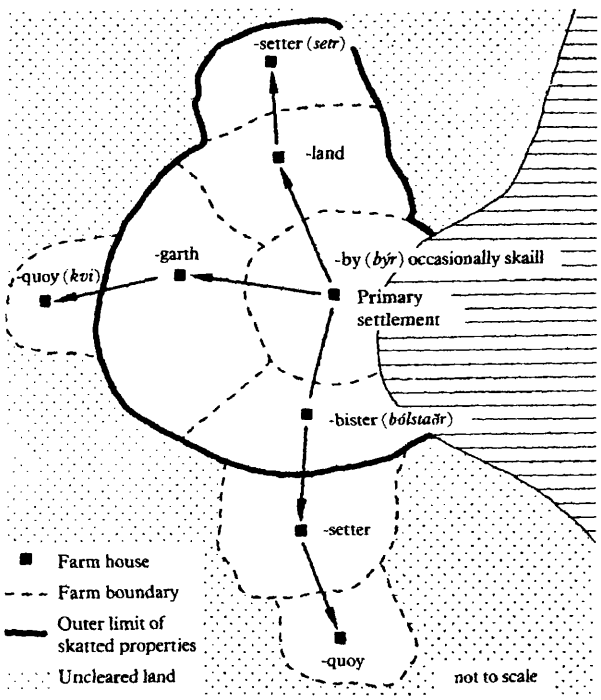


Figure 2.1 Marwick's Model, (from Morris 1993:230).

Other forms of place-name analysis include attributing origins of place-names, for example locating the area of Norway from where Orkney's first Scandinavian settlers came (Jakobsen, 1921:xxx-xxxvi; Brøgger, 1929:68-93). Place-name analysis can also be used to find precise locations mentioned in historical texts, an example being Munch's articles concerning local place-names mentioned in the sagas (Munch, 1845/63)[1].

Place-names are problematic in that it is often difficult to tell whether the current meaning associated with a name is the original, or a later tradition compensating for a lack of knowledge of the original meaning. One example is Howa Tuo, in Papa Westray (Appendix A:71), a tautological name ON 'mound-mound' which has developed wrongly into Howa Tower. Howa Tuo is an example of a name describing a topographical feature; other unexplainable features in the landscape are often attributed names that in some way explain their existence, such as the broch site 'Castle of Snusgar' (Appendix A:77) so called because of the presence of a large mound. This can cause problems with interpretation especially when a legend is created to substantiate the explanation as exemplified by the castle of Bothican, Papa Westray (Appendix A:76), see page 47. However, other names are less complicated such as Langskaill on Gairsay, ON 'long-hall', where there may have been a large Norse building (Taylor, 1938:342; Clouston, OA, D23/8:75-80, 86-94; D23/1/2).

The importance of the place-name evidence for this particular study is in providing evidence of where castle structures may have stood. The study involved the collection of castle references from a variety of sources including Blaeu's map of Orkney (Blaeu, 1654), the first edition OS maps, and the RCHAMS Inventory and Canmore Internet system and the Orkney Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record (OASMR). Where possible the type of site associated with the place-name was found using a combination of archaeological and historical information. The choice of restricting the data to castle and tower references only, was both due to the limited time for analysis and the complicated process of understanding the origins of many names, which appear unrelated to castles or other forms of fortification. All the castle and tower references can be found in Appendix A.

104 castle/tower names were discovered from the various sources consulted. These names were categorised according to the description of the type of site each place-name was related to. These categories were put into groups depending on their probability of being castles with 1 representing the least probable and 5 the most. A summary of the description categories chosen, the group allocations and the number of names in each category can be found in figure 2.2 below.

[1] For a discussion of place-name studies and archaeology see Wainwright, 1962: 38-55, 75-88.

Description	Group	Number of place-names
Coastal feature	1	38
Hill	1	5
House	1	16
Later building	1	5
Prehistoric	1	9
Broch	2	8
Unknown	2	9
Mound	3	6
Possible castle	4	7
Castle	5	1

Figure 2.2 – Summary of Place-name Results.

The table indicates the high number of natural features that have castle/tower place-names. These, along with the houses, the later buildings and the prehistoric sites, are those places least likely to be associated with Norse castles, and consequently are combined to form group 1. Group 2, although potentially describing castles, has been disregarded for two different reasons. The category entitled 'unknown' contains all those place-names that cannot be classified, as there is no evidence to indicate what the names represent. These names were taken from the first edition OS maps (1886) and have not been found in any other documentary sources apart from Marwick's notes. These notes consist of a list of names from the OS map of 1886. The brochs, on the other hand, have been disregarded, as there is no evidence to suggest that they were rebuilt to form Norse castles in the twelfth century. This does not rule out the use of brochs as temporary retreats, or areas of more permanent defence in the Norse period. On the contrary this is quite likely to have occurred, as exemplified in the *Orkneyinga Saga* when Erlend the Younger 'took up quarters in the broch of Mousa' Shetland (Taylor, 1938:311). Of the eight broch sites in the list only Weems Castle (81) has traces of later building in the form of a lime-mortared structure. Although this could point to a twelfth century date there is no evidence to suggest that the structure was a Norse castle, and there are no remains of the structure extant today (OASMR:rn.1836). Although the broch sites have been ruled out as castle sites, it must be stressed that when considering defence in the Norse period brochs must be considered, especially for temporary retreats.

Group 3 is more complicated with several mounds having associated castle traditions suggesting possible castle status, whilst others are definitely not castles. Of the six mounds listed, three can be dismissed, two because of their small size and their location being more suggestive of cists, or cairns (Barbers Tower (91) and Ernie Tooer (95)) and one because it is a mound of ash and stone (The Castle (96)). The four remaining

mounds have either traditions associated with them or archaeological evidence suggesting medieval occupation.

Group 4 comprises seven place-names, which, through a combination of archaeological evidence and tradition have either been given possible castle status by the RCAHMS (Inventory (1946) or Canmore system) or Talbot (1974:37-45). However, from a closer examination of the sites, two appear not to be castles of a Norse date. This conclusion has been reached, as there is a distinct lack of evidence to suggest a twelfth century date for the structures. There are no remains of the alleged Castle Grimness, South Ronaldsay (99) although the continuation of the castle name suggests that there was a strong tradition within the area. Although this could imply that there was once a castle, there is no evidence to suggest that the castle was Norse and because of this Castle Grimness will not be included. Similarly the remains of a structure at the Work in St Ola (103) have been interpreted as a possible castle by Talbot (Talbot, 1974:42), however, Marwick, who saw the remains prior to their destruction credited the site as being that of a broch. From the finds listed it would seem that Marwick's assumption is correct (RCAHMS, Canmore:rn. 2442).

Group 5 comprises one castle name, Castle of Cubbie Roo (104), which is derived from a corrupt form of Kolbein Hruga, the builder of the castle (Robertson, 1923-24:42). Combined with the archaeological (page 54-59), historical (page 37) and folklore evidence (page 45-47) this is the one place-name that can definitely be given castle status.

Therefore, from 104 castle names only nine have possible associations with Norse castles, see figure 1.0b. Castle of Cubbie Roo, Wyre (104); Castle of Stackel Brae, Eday (101); The Castle, Birsay (97); Castle, Rendall (93) and Castle Bloody, Stromness (94) will be discussed in more detail in the folklore section of this chapter. Castlehowe, Holm (100) and The Castle, Cairston, Stromness (102) have already been discussed in chapter one and will be further discussed in this chapter and chapter three. Castle, Eday (98) is associated with substantial stone structures and a medieval pot found in a knoll on a low promontory on the west side of Sealskerry Bay (Lamb,1984:rn.34, 13); the site is traditionally known as Castle, and so it will be further discussed in chapter four. The final possible castle name, Braes of Kastal, Birsay (92) will be discussed in more detail below.

The Braes of Kastal is the only site that relies mainly on place-name evidence for its authenticity. The Braes of Kastal refer to some uncultivated hillocky ground between the farms of Langskaill and Netherskaill in Marwick, Birsay, where there is also a field called The Castle. Marwick has convincingly suggested that the -skaill names (ON *skali* : Hall,

see Marwick, 1952:237-240) represent one of 'the original Norse settlements, which in the course of time was divided' (Marwick, 1970:74). In general these *skali* names represent an enigma as they are situated on good farm land, are associated with the upper echelons of society and yet have a low taxation value (see chapter four for a detailed discussion). One example, Skaill in Deerness, has been associated with Thorkel Fostri, Earl Thorfinn's foster father (Lamb, 1997:14), and Langskaill in Gairsay with Sweyn Asleifson, the great *Orkneyinga Saga* Viking (Lamb, 1997:14). The field named The Castle has slight remains of a mound, which is now much destroyed although large stones were found in the area (J. Gaudie pers.comm.). The combination of these names and the presence of large stones suggest that there was once a building of high status in the vicinity. The place-names are not located in a good defensive position, but in good farmland, and therefore a structure similar to The Wirk is more likely than that of Cubbie Roo's Castle. Although the archaeological evidence is very thin and there are no historical records relating to the site, the combination of the four related place-names suggest that there is the distinct possibility that there once was a substantial structure known as a castle on the site.

2.2 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Prior to any research into the documentary sources it is essential to obtain an understanding of the key terms used in the texts. For the main body of this chapter the Old Icelandic words *kastali, borg* and *virki* will be closely examined. Clouston suggested that *kastali* referred to a new type of stone stronghold found in Western Europe, differing from the 'primitive earthworks' and brochs that were termed *vigi, virki* or *borg* (Clouston, 1926:293). Clouston then expanded this initial definition with reference to *Heimskringla, Hakonar Saga* and *Sturlunga Saga.* He concluded that *kastali, borg* and *virki* had more technical meanings with *kastali* representing a castle with a tower and a curtain wall, and *virki* and *borg* representing an earlier turf and wood fortification or a broch without a tower. Clouston used these sagas in an attempt to attribute origins to the Orkney 'castles' that he had discovered.

However, Clouston's definitions are not without opposition, and Cleasby's *Old-Icelandic Dictionary* provides more complicated and fluid meanings for the three terms. Cleasby and Clouston agree on the derivation of *kastali* from Latin *castellum.* However, Cleasby does not confirm the precise technical definition provided by Clouston, the dictionary listed definitions include a castle, stronghold, a kind of war engine, and a dome-shaped hill. Cleasby's definition of *borg* combines a range of meanings, including town or city, enclosure, small dome-shaped hill and a wall, fortification or castle, whilst *virki* is defined as a work, wall, stronghold, castle as well as a building. It is apparent from Cleasby that the definitions of the three terms overlap. The references given for each meaning are

taken from a wide variety of Scandinavian sources and these source compilers applied distinct meanings to the terms depending on their specific context. With this in mind, the following section of this chapter will examine the *Orkneyinga Saga* and other related texts in an attempt to define these terms within a twelfth century Orkney context, as well as considering castle references in a more general way.

The Orkney Islands themselves have no existing documentary sources for this period; it has been suggested that the *Historia Norvegiae* was written in Orkney around 1200 (Crawford, 1987:3), unfortunately, this is not particularly helpful in relation to this study. There are no surviving Scandinavian documentary sources of relevance before the twelfth century.

2.2 a : The Annals

The documentary evidence relating to Orkney in the Norse period is extremely limited, and neither the Insular nor the Icelandic annals provide any information concerning defensive buildings in Orkney. The Irish Annals have been used in conjunction with the *Orkneyinga Saga* to corroborate events within mainland Scotland, for example the dating of the battle of Clontarf (Crawford, 1987:68). The Icelandic Annals have also been used in this manner concerning events within Scandinavia such as earl Brusi and earl Thorfinn's acceptance of King Olaf as overlord (Crawford, 1987:76). The majority of the recorded events concerning Orkney within both the Insular and Icelandic annals are the deaths of earls and bishops. Although brief these records provide an impression of a period where there is general unrest and a constant struggle for the control and maintenance of power, and the Icelandic sagas enhance this image.

The only record of castle building associated with Norsemen is found in the *Chronicle of Man*, where King Magnus of Norway subdues Orkney and all the islands as far as Man, where he erects castles. Although this entry appears to be concerned with castle construction an examination of the original Latin text suggests otherwise. The passage is translated in ESSH as follows, 'he so held the Galwegians under restraint that he compelled them to cut timbers of wood and carry them to the shore, for the building of the castles,' (ESSH, 1922, vol.i:103). However, in Graham-Campbell & Batey the same passage appears, 'he subdued the people of Galloway to such an extent that he compelled them to cut timber and take it to the shore for the construction of his defensive positions', (1998:109[2]).

The significance of the translation concerns the term castle. Clouston argues that Magnus Barelegs was not recorded building castles (ON *kastali*) in the Scandinavian

sources but rather fortifications (ON *borg*) see page 20. The Latin phrase used in the *Chronicle of Man* is *ad munitiones construendas* which translates as 'construction of his fortifications'. This does not necessarily imply castle construction, which would be termed *castellum*, therefore Clouston appears correct and the slight archaeological evidence of a rampart and timber stockade on St Patrick's Isle strengthen the argument further (Graham-Campbell & Batey, 1998:112). Therefore, the *Chronicle of Man*, although not providing direct evidence has consolidated one of Clouston's arguments.

2.2 b : Later Scandinavian Sources

The King's Mirror, is a didactic text written by a clergyman in the first half of the thirteenth century in Norway. It provides information on how to acquire a career in the higher professions within Norse society. The text is primarily utilitarian but also exemplifies a mastery of the literary art, as well as demonstrating a wide knowledge of other texts and information. Within the section dedicated to service to the king there is a discussion on the besieging and defending of castles. The castles described appear to be large structures holding houses and a tower within their stone walls, (Larson, 1917:220). The building of 'brattices' is suggested for defending castles; these appear to have been timber galleries constructed prior to the use of stone parapets (Larson, 1917:222), a construction technique which would imply a castle of considerable size. From the number of defensive and attacking implements described, it can be assumed that the castles were large and that the author was well versed in castle warfare strategy (Larson, 1917:63). However, this does not imply that this form of warfare was present within Scandinavia. Many of the military weapons within the text were used in southern Europe and the Orient, and there is no evidence that they were common in the North. The text drew upon material from many sources and it is highly probable that the author knew tales concerning crusader castle warfare. Therefore, one cannot assume that these procedures were operational within the North. What it does indicate is that by the thirteenth century the Scandinavians had knowledge of castles and castle warfare, which they could easily have drawn on and used in their own defensive buildings. The importance of knowing how to attack and defend castles was sufficient to merit a section in *The King's Mirror* and for that reason it must have been significant to those who read the text. However, it is apparent that the castles mentioned in *The King's Mirror* were of a much larger scale than the simple keeps associated with twelfth century Orkney, although the terminology used to describe the structures is the same.

Heimskringla, probably written around 1230 in Iceland, records the lives of the kings' of Norway and includes accounts of the building of fortifications. It is recorded that around 1116 King Sigurd built, for the defence of the town of Konghelle, a castle of turf and

[2] This version was taken from *The Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys*, translated by the Rt Revd Dr

stone with a ditch around it (Unger, 1868:680 & Monsen, 1932:624). This castle had houses inside and was termed *kastali,* which differed from the *borg* of turf and wood built by his father King Magnus Barefoot in 1100 (Unger, 1868:650 & Monsen, 1932:596). From this reference and the *King's Mirror* evidence it would appear that the *kastali* were fortifications of a large size with space for other buildings inside and with emphasis on stone as a building material. However, within *Hacon's Saga* Clouston suggests there is a more precise meaning for the *kastali* described (Clouston, 1926:293).

Hacon's Saga, completed in 1265, contains a list of the edifices built in the reign of King Hakon. It is this list which Clouston uses to attribute the more precise definition to *kastali.* In Clouston's discussion he groups the eight fortifications, into four *borg,* one *virki,* and three *kastali.* He continues by arguing that the *kastali* all refer to castles with towers, whilst fortifications without towers were not styled *kastali* but *borg* and *virki* (Clouston, 1928-29b:58). However, in Vigfusson's *Hakonar Saga* the eight fortifications comprise of one *virki,* two *kastali,* four *borg* and one *borgina.* The passage concerning *borgina* is interesting especially in its treatment by Dasent: 'King Hacon let the **castle** at Bergen...and build the **barbican**...' (own stresses, Dasent, 1894b:371) translated from, 'Hakon konungr let al-husa **borgina** i Bjorgyn...ok gora ut **borgina**...' (Vigfusson, own, stresses, 1887b:358). The terminology used undermines Clouston's rigid classification since *borgina* is translated by Dasent as castle and barbican (tower) in reference to a building which should be termed *kastali* if applying Clouston's theory[3]. The two *kastali* references concern towers belonging to large fortifications whilst the *borg* and *virki* edifices are either towns or enclosures, and although this, in part, verifies Clouston, the representation of *borg* as town adds another dimension.

The only detailed *kastali* saga reference relating to Iceland is taken from *Sturlunga Saga,* another thirteenth century text (Sawyer, 1998:11). The passage tells of a surprise attack by Eyjolf Karsson's enemies which leads Eyjolf to run to his house and into the *kastali* that he had there, and from this *kastali* he defends himself single-handed. His enemy, fearing a return attack builds a good *vígi* around his house made of timber, which is later referred to as *virki* (Vigfusson, 1878 vol.1:232). This kastali does not appear similar to the large stone fortifications with towers and buildings mentioned above; it rather seems to be indicative of a small defence associated with the farm complex, whilst *virki* applies to a form of enclosure or palisade.

The references from the above four sources can be summarised as follows: -

Kings Mirror *Kastali* Large structure with stone walls, houses and

---

Goss, with notes by P. A. Munch, 1874.

[3] Clouston translates *borgina* as fortification in reference to the castle of Konghelle (Clouston, 1931:5).

		towers.
Heimskringla	*Kastali*	Large structure of turf and stone, houses.
	Borg	Turf and wood structure.
Hakonar Saga	*Kastali*	Towers within fortifications.
	Borg	town or fortification around town/houses.
	Virki	stronghold.
Sturlunga Saga	*Kastali*	small defensive building associated with a farmstead.
	Virki	timber palisade, enclosure.

It is apparent that contrary to Clouston these sources contain multiple definitions of *kastali* and *borg.* These sources belong to three different categories of Icelandic writing. The *King's Mirror* is a scholastic text whilst *Heimskringla* and *Hakonar Saga* represent sagas concerning king's lives, and finally *Sturlunga Saga* is part of a group of Icelandic histories (Cleasby, 1964:ix-xii). It is interesting that the *kastali* references from the texts which concern kings are large structures or towers belonging to large fortifications whilst the Icelandic *kastali* reference implies a much smaller defensive structure.

The *Orkneyinga Saga* contains *kastali* references and although the saga has been grouped under 'lives of kings' by Cleasby (Cleasby, 1964:x) it is not easily placed within any one classification of Icelandic writings (Taylor, 1933-34:59-62 and Pálsson & Edwards, 1981:10-19). The context of the *kastali* references within the *Orkneyinga Saga* will be considered in the following section along with the different translations of those references.

2.3 THE ORKNEYINGA SAGA

There is one source that deals exclusively with the history of the earldom of Orkney, and although not written in the islands it provides an invaluable insight into an otherwise undocumented period. The *Orkneyinga Saga,* or *History of the Earls of Orkney,* was written around 1200 in Iceland, probably at the intellectual centre of Oddi in the south as it had connections with the islands (Crawford, 1987:8). It belongs to a literary style developed in Iceland for the recording of oral tradition. It deals with the earls of Orkney and records their actions and personalities as well as the politics of the time. The saga compiler relied on skaldic verse along with written and oral traditions to create this work, which makes its classification difficult. For a detailed discussion of the background of the *Orkneyinga Saga* see Pálsson & Edwards (1981:9-20) and Crawford (1987:7-9).

The *Orkneyinga Saga* has all the problems of interpretation associated with saga literature, including those of inaccuracy, political bias and the use of literary models. It

is difficult to deal with these problems although careful use of the saga can allow the source to be used to it's full potential. The saga increases in detail as it progresses and is a fundamental source for twelfth century Orkney. This is the period in which the castles are said to have been built (Clouston, 1931:1) and it would therefore seem essential to check for castle references and to create a general overview of society in the twelfth century from the *Orkneyinga Saga.*

2.3 a : Translations & Editions.

In doing this search eight versions of the *Orkneyinga Saga* were used, Jonaeus (ed.), 1780; Anderson (ed.), 1977; Vigfusson (ed.), 1887; Dasent (trans.), 1894; Nordal (ed.), 1913-16; Taylor (trans.), 1931; Guðmundsson (ed.), 1965; Pálsson & Edwards (trans.), 1981. This was in order to establish when and why the English translations interpreted words in different ways. A brief introduction to each of these editions will help to put them into context and to establish the accuracy of the text.

Jonas Jonaeus, 1780.

Jonaeus based his edition, which was the first printed edition, on two MSS: a MS of Snorri Sturluson's *Olafs saga helga* and a paper copy of *Flateyjarbók*[4]. The text does not include the mythical introduction to the saga and has a shortened version of chapters four through to twelve. The MSS used were late copies resulting in inaccuracies.

Hjaltalín, Goudie and Anderson, 1977.

This text was translated by Jón A. Hjaltalín and Gilbert Goudie, with Joseph Anderson editing, introducing and providing the notes. This first English translation was based on Jonaeus' version of the saga supplemented by an edition of *Flateyjarbók* published by G. Vigfusson and C.R. Unger (1860-1868). This text was quite accurate although some of the errors from Jonaeus filtered through. This was first published in 1783, although the 1977 reprint is used in this study.

G. Vigfusson, 1887a.

The third text, Gudbrand Vigfusson's *Orkneyinga Saga and Magnus Saga* was published for the Rolls series. Taylor regards this edition as a 'brilliant piece of work' (Taylor, 1938:12). However, Taylor continues to list some defects in the work, namely the briefness of the footnotes, incorrect translations of Old Danish into ON and some problems with the MS relationships. It was these defects that inspired Sigurdur Nordal's edition.

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[4] Flateyjarbók contains almost the whole of the Orkneyinga Saga, divided into five sections. Written in the late fourteenth century on Flatey in the North of Iceland, it is valued for its completeness but has inaccuracies in detail, including the spelling of unfamiliar place and personal names.

G. Dasent, 1894a.

Dasent's translation is one of the four items in the Rolls Series of Icelandic sagas. Vigfusson's *Orkneyinga Saga* being another of the four, along with an Old Icelandic and an English version of *Hakonar Saga.* The Rolls Series requires a very accurate translation and Dasent's *Orkneyinga Saga* is a literal translation of Vigfusson's edition, although reasonably accurate in the translation of the prose the poetry translation is where Dasent falls short (Taylor, 1938:124-5).

S. Nordal, 1913-16.

Nordal made a lengthy study of the MSS, and within the text, uses the MS that he believes to be the earliest. He retains the MS spellings of words, which is helpful in the study of place-names of curious origin. He provides many detailed notes at the beginning of the book as well as providing thorough footnotes throughout the text. Nordal's edition 'is the main justification for the existence' of Taylor's translation (Taylor, 1938:13).

A. B. Taylor, 1938.

Taylor uses Nordal's text for his translation, although he does make several of his own amendments from his study of the MSS. This edition is especially valuable because of the extensive notes covering all areas relating to the saga, including historical, textual, cultural, geographical and literary problems. Taylor also provides a comprehensive list of the main *Orkneyinga Saga* MSS and previous editions of the text in his introduction pages 9-13 and 124-131.

F. Guðmundsson, 1965.

This most recent ON edition of the *Orkneyinga Saga* was published in *Íslenzk fornrit,* volume 34. The main text used by Guðmundsson was the *Flateyjarbók* MS, along with sections from a sixteenth century Danish version (also used by Nordal), as well as several other MSS. This is the main text used by scholars today as it is the most accurate and has a considerable introduction and copious notes. Although the majority of the ON editions are very similar, where there are differences this text is usually the most reliable.

Pálsson & Edwards, 1981.

The most recent English translation by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards used Guðmundsson's version for its text and was first published in 1978, and then again in 1981 by Penguin Books. This version has a rather short introduction and no footnotes. It is more interpretative in its translation, creating a more dynamic and readable version although in the process sacrificing some of the literary features of the original texts.

The main ON text used for the present study was Guðmundsson with the English translation by Taylor being used extensively although the others were all consulted when discrepancies occurred between the ON and the translations, and between the three translations.

2.3 b : Kastali References.

There are 29 *kastali* references in Guðmundsson's version of the *Orkneyinga Saga*, which are in connection with five different castles, three from Orkney, one in Thurso and one in Galicia. Pálsson & Edwards' translation has 18 references relating to only two castles, one in Thurso and one in Galicia. In the Orkney instances they have chosen to avoid the word castle and to replace it with either fortress or stronghold (see Appendix B for the list of references).

The first two castle references (Appendix B:1 & 2) in the Guðmundsson version of the *Orkneyinga Saga* refer to a castle on the island of Damsay: -

> *þar var kastali í eyinni.*
> (Guðmundsson, 1965:151)
>
> *ok flutti hann par í kastala.*
> (Guðmundsson, 1965:154)

The events recounted date to around 1135, the first is the introduction of the castle owned by Blann to the saga and the second tells of Sweyn's escape there after murdering Sweyn Breastrope (Taylor, 1931:242, 244). Both Anderson and Taylor translate the ON *kastali* as castle; however, Pálsson & Edwards change the reference to stronghold. In ON stronghold would be more commonly translated as *vígi* as shown in reference 32 and 38 of Appendix B, not *kastali*.

The third castle reference (Appendix B:3 & 38) includes both *kastali* and *vígi* in the same sentence and indicates their interchangeable nature in both ON and English, although maintaining the use of two separate terms.

> *Í þann tíma bjó sá maðr í vigr í Orkneyjum, er Kolbeinn Hrúga hét ok var it mesta afarmenn. Hann lét þar gera* ***steinkastala*** *góðan; var þat oruggt* ***vígi.***
> (Own stresses. Guðmundsson, 1965:192).
>
> At that time there lived [in Wyre in the Orkneys a Norwegian] called Kolbein Hruga, and he was the most outstanding of men. He had a fine stone **castle** built there; it was a safe **stronghold**. (Own stresses. Taylor, 1938:275).

This section is translated by Pálsson & Edwards using the terms 'fort' and 'stronghold' instead of castle, whilst Anderson uses 'castle' and 'strong defence' and as seen above Taylor uses 'castle' and 'stronghold' as does Dasent. All the ON editions use the same

terminology as Guðmundsson. Therefore, in all cases the terms *kastali* and *vígi* are treated separately although referring to the same structure.

Reference numbers 4 to 25 relate to Godfrey's castle in Galicia besieged by Rognvald on the way to the Holy Land. As seen in Appendix B all the English translations have used castle. Although not always a literal translation it is possible to say that Anderson, Dasent, Taylor and Pálsson & Edwards were prepared to accept the Galician *kastali* as a building that could be translated into English as castle.

References 26 and 27 are rather more complicated. This 'castle' has already been briefly discussed in chapter one page 17. The relevant saga passage describes how Earl Harald and his men run from their ships into a building in order to escape Earl Erlend and Svein Asleifson, and the resulting attack on that building by Erlend and Svein is then told (Taylor, 1938:308-309). The problem with this section of the saga is concerned with the identification of the building, the tense of the sentence, and the terminology used. The first area to consider is identification. The saga locates this event at *Kjarreksstoðum*, which is translated in the four English versions as Cairston. However, the saga continues by telling how a certain Arni Hrafnsson leapt from earl Harald's ship and ran to Kirkwall where his shield got stuck in the church door (Taylor, 1931:308). Using the present roads the distance from Cairston to Kirkwall is approximately fourteen miles, which is rather a long way to run. Munch amended *Kjarrekstaðir* to *Knarrarstaðir* (Knarston) which was situated near Scapa to render Arni's flight more credible (Munch, 1860:849). However, Clouston argues that the section about Arni relates to a later battle fought at Knarston where Earl Harald was again put to flight and suffered severe loss. He substantiates this by recalling that the saga writer mentions Knarston and Cairston several times, suggesting that an error resulting in a confusion of the two similar place-names would not have been likely (Clouston, 1926:283). Taylor agrees with Clouston's interpretation, and consolidates it with the identification of a castle at Cairston. This along with the lack of a castle at Knarston is used by Taylor to identify Cairston as the location for the siege (Taylor, 1938:398).

The second area concerning the tense of the sentence and the terminology is of the utmost importance for the understanding of this site. Reference 26, *Kastalann er þar var þa* is translated by Taylor as 'castle that was then there' who suggests this because he believed the author to have been to the site, and when he was there the castle was there (Taylor, 1938:29). However, Pálsson & Edwards translate the same ON fragment as the 'fortress that used to stand there'. This fragment's importance is fundamental to the understanding of the site where there are the ruins of two separate structures. One is a broch and the other is the possible castle identified by Clouston (see chapters one &

three). Depending on the translation used there are several conclusions to be made. Taylor's version identifies Cairston as the site of a Norse castle and the site of the siege because of that castle. However, if the Pálsson & Edwards version is used then Cairston is the site of a ruined broch and one of the main reasons for arguing for the location of the siege at Cairston is lost.

There are problems with both translations that need to be further examined in order to establish which is the more accurate. Taylor's suggestion that the phrase 'that was then there', which is used twice within the *Orkneyinga Saga*, recounts an 'actual visit' (Taylor, 1938:29) seems rather doubtful. However, if the *Orkneyinga Saga* was written at Oddi, then the author could be referring to places his informant had been to, rather than places he had visited himself. It is known that Orkneyman Thorkel Walrus spent a winter at Oddi and he could have recounted the events of the saga (Vigfusson, 1878, vol. I, 212), however, this is merely speculation. The passage could be interpreted to suggest that there was a castle at Cairston at the time of the event but which was no longer in existence when the saga was written. Therefore, the author was informing those in the audience who did not know the area that there was once a castle there. This interpretation seems more plausible than the two previously mentioned.

The discrepancy between the texts cannot be easily rectified as Pálsson & Edwards' translation lacks any notes to explain the use of the past tense. The mistaken identification of the site of Cairston with Knarston does not appear to be a valid explanation for this problematic passage and Clouston's argument appears more convincing than that of Munch. The problems with tense are even more difficult to explain. Taylor provides a literal translation of the ON text and for this reason his translation is generally the more accurate. Pálsson & Edwards reticence to use the castle term within an Orkney context and their lack of detailed local knowledge compared to Taylor and Clouston implies their translation is less accurate and consequently Taylor's version will be used within this discussion.

References 28 and 29 are concerned with a castle in Thurso where Earl Harald and Earl Rognvald arranged to meet to discuss the divisions of the earldom. All the texts translate *kastala* and *kastalanum* as 'castle'. Pálsson & Edwards include castle for a third time in this passage, unlike any of the other texts. 'As evening drew on, Earl Rognvald learned that Earl Harald's troops were armed and approaching the castle,' (Pálsson & Edwards, 1981:194). William I the Lion destroyed the castle at Thurso in 1198 and no trace of it remains (Taylor, 1938:399). However, the authenticity of its existence as a Norse castle is accepted (Taylor, 1938:399; Graham-Campbell & Batey, 1998:260).

The final castle reference, number 30, is the reference that has led to the opinion that there was a castle and a hall on the small island of Damsay. There are two remaining MSS detailing this chapter of the saga and they differ in their terminology for the structure on Damsay. The *Flateyjarbók* MS (see footnote 1) text *daga i kastala einum* differs from the more accurate O MS, a sixteenth century Danish text, which reads *daga i skala miclum.* MS 325: AM 325 I. 4to, an eighteen-leaf fragment copied from the same original as *Flateyjarbók* also reads *skala miklum.* Jonaeus uses the *Flateyjarbók* MS and so terms the structure *kastala einum,* and therefore Anderson translates this as 'large castle'. The other editions and translations use the more reliable O MS and translate this into either 'large' or 'great hall'. Although the O MS version is chosen all the ON versions mention in their notes the *Flateyjarbók* version. It would seem fair to assume that the O MS and the 325 MS are correct and that the compiler of the *Flateyjarbók* MS repeated the earlier description of the castle on Damsay (Appendix B:1 & 2) rather than use *skala.* However, there is no reason to assume that the hall and the castle were separate structures, they could have formed part of the same complex, or, they could just as easily have been independent buildings.

Summarising, it has been shown that there are relatively few references to castles in the *Orkneyinga Saga,* however of the five mentioned only one was out with the Norse earldom. The ON text does not differentiate between those castles found in Europe and those in the North, although there are differentiations made between defensive structures within the earldom, see below. It appears that *kastali,* within the *Orkneyinga Saga,* can refer to both a large European castle and smaller structures from Orkney.

Apart from one instance (30) the four ON editions of *Orkneyinga Saga* are uniform in their use of *kastali,* whereas the English versions differ more frequently. As seen in Appendix B Taylor's translation is the most literal, and as mentioned earlier Pálsson & Edwards have chosen to deviate from the original style of the saga to improve the literary quality of the text for the general reader. Anderson is perhaps a little more dated than the other two translations and lacks the information known about the earldom today. Pálsson & Edwards' reluctance to translate any of the Orkney *kastali* directly to castle is noticeable; perhaps, unlike the *Orkneyinga Saga* author their notion of castle does not include structures such as Cubbie Roo's castle, Wyre.

Although there are castle references relating to Orkney, none of the references describe the castles in any detail. It appears that the structure was not as important as the events that were associated with it. Therefore although the references are evidence that the term *kastali* was known to the compiler of the *Orkneyinga Saga,* there is no clear description given of what the author believed the four earldom *kastali* to consist of. It is

because of this lack of information that the archaeological research in chapter three is so essential. The other terms for defensive structures within the earldom found in the *Orkneyinga Saga* are *borg* and *vígi*, and the next section of this chapter will consider their context, and whether they reveal anything of the structures they represent.

2.3 c : Borg references.

There are many *borg* and *vígi* references within the saga and only those relating to the period and within a similar geographical area have been chosen. Reference 31 indicates the problematic nature of translating the ON *borg* into English. All four Norse editions of the text use *borg* whilst the English translations all use different terms. Anderson does not translate *borg* but italicises it in the text. Dasent uses 'burg', Taylor uses 'fortress' whilst Pálsson & Edwards choose 'stronghold'. References 32 to 37, are concerned with Sweyn and Margad's take over of Lambaborg, a 'fine natural stronghold' (Appendix B:32) in Caithness. The ON examples have identical texts for this passage however, the English versions again display some inconsistencies. Anderson generally repeats the term *borg* when *borg* appears in the text, although he also uses 'stronghold' and 'fort'. His translation of *vígi* is 'strong place'. It is interesting to note that in reference 33 Anderson puts 'castle' in brackets after *borg*, although there is no example of this in the ON text. Dasent is more consistent translating all *borg* words as 'burg' and *vígi* as 'stronghold'; similarly Taylor translates all *borg* related words as 'fortress' whilst *vígi* he translates as 'natural stronghold'. Taylor, in his notes, explains 'the word *vígi* is applied here to the sea-girt rock, and borg to the fortress thereon' (Taylor, 1938:390), but this does not agree with Clouston's interpretation where *vígi* is a built defence. Finally Pálsson & Edwards use 'stronghold' all but once when 'fortress' is chosen, they do not appear to have such a rigid structure for translation and they interchange the words at random.

Taylor always translates *borg* as 'fortress' and this can be verified by the remaining *borg* references in Appendix B. In one instance he translates *borg* as broch but he is referring to the broch of Mousa on Shetland which is commonly known as such. Anderson as mentioned above tends not to translate *borg* and this is even more evident in references 40 to 46 where he even leaves Mousa Broch as *borg*; Dasent also constantly replaces *borg* with 'burg' even in the case of Mousa. Pálsson & Edwards are much more varied in their choice of word. 'Stronghold' is mainly used for Lambaborg, whilst 'fortress' is used for the site near Freswick (references 39 to 41), 'broch' is used for the Broch of Mousa and 'stronghold' again used for the building where Bishop John was found near Scrabster, probably the bishop's palace. There does not appear to be any reason for their preferential choice of stronghold or fortress. It is important that, as with the *kastali* references there is very little interest in the part of the author in describing the *borg*.

Again the people are the important factor and the buildings incidental. This provides a safeguard in several respects, as unlike the problems of bias and political slanting associated with the characters, there would seem little reason in distorting facts about the structures which have no direct bearing on any politically and culturally important matters.

2.3 d : References to Clouston's other 'castle' sites.

So far the analysis has considered all of the *Kastali* references within the *Orkneyinga Saga* and also considered a representative number of the *borg* and *vigi* terms. However, the other three 'castles' suggested by Clouston are also mentioned in some form in the saga and these references should be examined. Westness is the most commonly referred to of the three sites, with six references which help in the understanding of the type of building which was present at Westness, and the status of Sigurd within the community. Present day Westness comprises of the land along the west of Rousay, including the site of the Wirk, St Mary's church and the recently excavated Late Norse farm at Moaness (Kaland, 1993:308-217).

> (Earl) Paul's third daughter was Herbjorg, the mother of Ingibjorg the High-born, who married Sigurd of Westness...The two closest to Earl Paul were Sigurd of Westness...
> (Pálsson & Edwards, 1981:76, 99).

The above reference indicates the importance of Sigurd within the earldom, as both a relative and a close friend of Earl Paul. Sigurd and his sons are later described as three of earl Paul's *gœðingar* (Guðmundsson, 1965:120), members 'of the sub-aristocracy of leading Norse landowners, originally owing their position to kinship with the earl,' (Thomson, 1987:261). It is perhaps significant that several of the men described as *goeðingar* within the *Orkneyinga Saga* are also mentioned in the following passage as being appointed administrative positions. This passage also reinforces the position of Sigurd of Westness within the earldom.

> Then people were appointed to raise levies in different parts of Orkney. Thorstein, son of Havard Gunnason, was in charge of North Ronaldsay. His brother Magnus had Sanday, Kugi had Westray and Sigurd of Westness, Rousay. (Pálsson & Edwards, 1981:123-4).

The reference below is the most informative with two main points of interest, firstly the coastal location of Westness is indicated, and secondly it is revealed that Earl Paul had been feasting (ON *veizlu*) at Westness with his party. This indicates that Sigurd was providing hospitality for the earl, a duty expected of the nobility within the earldom and consequently Sigurd's homestead must have been large enough to provide accommodation for the earl and his party as well as being able to feed and water them.

> When they came closer to the headland, the men there shouted for them to row on to Westness and give Earl Paul whatever they had on board, thinking that they were talking to some merchants.
> Earl Paul had stayed overnight at Westness for a feast at Sigurd's...his party were about to go back to the house for a morning drink.
> (Pálsson and Edwards, 1981: 137-8).

The final passage is included as it indicates that Sigurd was a farmer, and the *Orkneyinga Saga* usage of the ON term *bondi* would imply that he was a free farmer, owning his land outright through Odal law. Taylor retains the ON term *bondi* (Taylor, 1938:258) whilst Pálsson & Edwards translate it as 'the farmer, Sigurd' (Pálsson & Edwards, 1981:139).

> It happened at Westness when the Earl was late in coming home, that Bondi Sigurd sent some men to seek them. (Taylor, 1938: 258).

Obviously the importance of Sigurd is fundamental to the inclusion of Westness in the saga. The key words that are found in the ON text are *Veizlu*, *Gœðingr*, and *Bondi.* These terms indicate that Sigurd was a provider of hospitality, a member of the earl's retinue and a freeholder; such obligations would require a substantial homestead, probably including a drinking hall and a farm with storage space for the collection of food renders (see chapter four for detailed discussion). There is no mention of a tower or any other form of defensive structure in the saga. However, this does not mean that the tower was not contemporary with the saga period, merely that there was no memorable event associated with an important man and the building. The presence of a late Norse farmstead on Westness in addition to the Wirk poses another problem. However, it appears that the Wirk is more likely to date to the late twelfth/early thirteenth century and could thus post-date the late Norse farmstead. The Wirk may well have belonged to one of Sigurd's descendants with the late Norse settlement more likely to have been Sigurd's home.

It is fundamental to appreciate that the *Orkneyinga Saga*, or perhaps more correctly *The History of the Earls of Orkney* is exactly that. The events chosen to be recorded focus on the earls and their achievements and therefore the story is by no means complete. It is a saga of important people, not buildings or places, as has already been shown in the lack of descriptive detail of buildings. The point is also reinforced by the single reference to Stenness within the saga.

> At that time, Earl Havard was staying at Stenness on Mainland.
> (Pálsson & Edwards, 1981:34).

This early reference is not relevant other than indicating that Stenness was known to the saga writer, and that there was somewhere in the township suitable to house an earl.

However, this can also be disputed, Taylor's translation reads, 'Havard was then in Stennis' (Taylor, 1938:146), and Guðmundsson's version *Hárvarðr var þá á Steinsnesi í Hrossey* (Guðmundsson, 1965:21) concurs. The saga proceeds to record a battle and the death of the earl but makes no mention of where he had been staying. Therefore, the most which can be gained from this passage is that the earl fought and died in Stenness.

The final set of references are in connection with Paplay in Holm, where Castlehowe is located; there are four in total of which two tell that Hakon Karl lived at Paplay (Pálsson & Edwards, 1981:128,195) and two term Paplay as *bú í Papuli* (Guðmundsson, 1965:101,103). The term *bú* in the *Orkneyinga Saga* has provoked much discussion, generally it implies a substantial farm with close connections to the earl. This can be corroborated by the fact that Hakon Karl resided at Paplay and his mother was also earl Magnus the Holy's mother.

2.3 e : Conclusions.

In conclusion very little can be gleaned from the *Orkneyinga Saga* concerning the appearance of the Orkney castle sites. The five *kastali* references validate the idea that the Norse in Orkney knew of castles although there is no written indication of how they saw those castles. However, the mention of Kolbein Hruga's castle can be linked quite confidently with the archaeological remains of a defensive structure on the island of Wyre, and extra credence is obtained through a collection of folk traditions associated with the giant Cubbie Roo (pages 45-47). The other castle references all have problems associated with them, but nonetheless must have some meaning.

The *borg* terms are interesting in that a similar pattern in translation can be found between them and the *kastali* names. Taylor is the most consistent translation to follow, with Pálsson & Edwards sacrificing much of the original text in order to provide a sharper read. The reluctance of the latter to attribute the term castle to any of the Orkney *kastali* is also worthy of reiteration.

Finally, the classification of certain sites as *borg*, *vígi* and *kastali* does give credence to Clouston's idea of differing technical terms. However, it is difficult to tell whether the structural elements of each classification are similar in *Orkneyinga Saga* to those in *Heimskringla* due to the lack of detail. What can be gleaned is that the term *borg* can be applied to brochs, such as Mousa, and to undefined cliff-top fortifications, such as Lambaborg, whilst *kastali* can refer to small stone keeps such as Cubbie Roo's on Wyre and the larger Galician castle. From *Hakon's Saga* it seems that Cubbie Roo's Castle was the most defendable accessible place in Orkney in 1231, implying that if any other castles existed they were either less defensible or unobtainable. Given the archaeological

remains of the 'castle' sites the first reason would seem highly probable. Anderson and Taylor consistently translate *borg, vigi* and *kastali* maintaining the distinct nature of each term. Taylor provides the best example with *borg* translated as fortress, *vígi* as stronghold and *kastali* as castle, although his definition of *vígi* as a natural stronghold is not all that apparent. This less rigid, but non-the-less distinct, translation would seem more plausible than Clouston's system where there is no flexibility in the use of the separate terms.

2.4 FOLKLORE

The final section of this chapter will deal with folklore and oral traditions in Orkney associated with castles, towers and related themes. There are many problems in using these kinds of sources, especially those of reliability. However, it is important to consider any traditions that appear relevant, to critically assess them and then to decide their historical viability.

The main themes in Orkney folklore with a connection to the distant past focus on mythical beasts from the shore (the liminal zone where changelings appear) and traditions associated with standing stones and other unexplained features such as mounds. The most frequent explanation for the existence of standing stones and boulders is connected to giants. The notion of giants and trows (trolls) is Norwegian in origin and could well date back to the Norse period (Marwick, 1975:30-31). The typical Orkney giant was quarrelsome, threw boulders, placed rocks in the sea to fish from, hated to get his feet wet and was forever building bridges. However, if he were to stay out too late at night, as he and his kind often did, the morning sunlight would turn him to stone (Marwick, 1975:31).

2.4 a : Cubbie Roo Legends.

The tradition of throwing boulders and building bridges is related to one giant in particular, Cubbie Roo. There are many Cubbie Roo traditions from several of the isles that are of interest here, the first having been recorded by Clouston (1925-26a:12). Cubbie Roo was a giant who lived at Cubbie Roo's castle on Wyre, 'and issued from that fastness to hurl rocks across the sounds at rival giants, and perform other feats worthy of such a monster' (Clouston, 1925-26a:12). The second is a brief note made by Marwick telling of Cubbie Roo throwing a stone from Fitty Hill in Westray to Kearfea in Rousay. The stone fell short and landed in Leean where it still sits near the shore (Marwick, 1923-24:21). The third example is a group of three old Stronsay legends recorded by Marwick (1926-27:71). The first involves the Danes' Pier in Stronsay, which is said to represent a burden of stones dropped by Cubbie Roo when he was attempting to build a bridge over to Auskerry. The second comes from the place-name Cubbie Roo's Leads (loads) for a

group of large stones at Strenziewater on Rothisholm head. The third tells that Cubbie Roo lived at Rothisholm and his brother lived at Kirbuster, the two had arranged an expedition for a particular morning but the brother slept in and Cubbie Roo hurled a rock at him to wake him. This boulder still bears his name and lies on the beach near the house of Banks.

The fourth tradition records Cubbie Roo as a giant and a stone-flinger with an iron hand. He decided to build a bridge between Rousay and Wyre, however, whilst carrying an especially heavy load, of earth and stones in a cubby on his back, he fell and was buried under his burden (Robertson, 1923-24:42). Cubbie Roo's burden is a mound in the south east of Rousay, facing Wyre. The fifth and final tradition echoes the previous one although the places are different. A Sanday man told Hugh Marwick the legend of Cubbie Roo building a bridge to connect the Red Head of Eday and Weatherness in Westray, and the stones that fell, in this tradition, formed the Red Holm (Marwick, 1922-23:27).

These five examples of Cubbie Roo traditions indicate the popularity of this giant within Orkney, and the fact that the legends were still circulating in the twentieth century is testimony to the longevity of the tradition. However, it is the origin of this legend that is of importance here and the name of the giant provides the evidence. Cubbie Roo has been widely accepted as a corruption of the name Kolbein Hruga, the saga figure who built a 'fine stone castle' (Taylor, 1938:275). It is then very easy to assume that the castle on Wyre in the first legend is one and the same as the castle in the saga. Clouston does precisely this: -

> Now, as a matter of actual fact, we know that the castle on Wyre was built by the twelfth century chieftain Kolbein Hruga, and Cubbie Roo of course is a very obvious corruption of this name. And we know also that Hruga meant a pile or heap, implying that Kolbein was a huge and burly man. Hence the germ of the legend that he was a giant; and of course having once made him into a giant, every detached boulder at once suggested a fresh story of some rock-flinging exploit. (Clouston, 1925-26:12)

Although Clouston accepts all the sources of evidence to be accurate, which is not often the case, it can be safely assumed that there were several independent traditions all associated with Cubbie Roo place-names. The information provides two locations for where he lived, one location for where he was buried, three bridges he was building, and four examples of stones thrown by him. In only one case do all these occur in the same vicinity, and that is Wyre and Rousay. In one respect this is because the most detailed legend is based in Wyre, but this in itself may suggest that the Wyre tradition was the best known. For this reason and because of the saga background it is possible to tentatively connect the legend with the historical figure and the archaeological site on Wyre. Therefore, the folklore in this instance has helped to verify the castle's association

with Kolbein Hruga. It must be remembered, though, that the tradition may have arisen through a knowledge of the *Orkneyinga Saga* and not from memory, although this is unlikely as there was little knowledge of the *Orkneyinga Saga* until fairly recently[5].

One thing is certain, these traditions all point towards a builder, the most renowned builder in the islands and this may well be from where the traditions arise. It is very possible that the legacy of Kolbein Hruga's fine stone castle outlived both the castle and himself to form the basis of these widespread traditions.

2.4 b : Tower Traditions.

Tales associated with towers are also common in the folklore. The most important for this study is the tradition recording the name of a site at Westside in Rousay.

> Old people on the Westside knew of this ruin by the name of the Wirk (i.e. O.N. Virki, a fortification), and a legend existed that it was built as a stronghold in which to keep a beautiful woman whom the builder had taken a fancy to and carried away forcibly from her friends.
> (Marwick, 1923-24:17)

This piece of evidence seems particularly encouraging until one realises that combined castle and lady traditions are quite common throughout the isles and the above account is by no means the only such tradition. A similar tale is associated with the mound at the head of Millburn in Gairsay (Appendix A:72), where a beautiful lady was said to have been burnt in a castle by her 'wrathful brother, the famous Sweyn' (Clouston, 1925-26a:11). There is little doubt that this tradition was created to explain the presence of the burnt mound and that the famous saga Viking was the chosen villain, his reputation immortalised in the island tradition.

The final legend associated with castles and ladies is included as a cautionary tale. The castle of Bothican otherwise known as the castle of Millyamay is a mound on the beach at the Bay of Bothican in Papa Westray (Appendix A:76) and is probably a broch. The first tradition associated with the site tells of a battle fought between the Danes and the Orcadians, whilst a queen was in the castle. However, the second tradition tells that a man was buried there who had floated ashore in a barrel which had the following epitaph written on it.

> Arlin Eerlin
> Come from Frislin
> Bound for Iceland,
> Died on the coast of Spain
> Buried in the Castle of Millyamay.
> (Marwick, 1924-25:32).

---

[5] The first English edition of the *Orkneyinga Saga* was published in 1873.

These two traditions are totally different and trying to explain their origins is impossible, since both events could have occurred at the site at different times, or it is perhaps more likely that neither happened at all. Often verse is considered superior to prose in the authenticity of legends, however, this tale seems rather improbable. This example provides an excellent indication of the problems with traditions and is a good reminder that the information they provide is limited.

Lesser castle traditions have been recorded in association with four of the castle place-names listed on page 29. As Sweyn's Castle and the Castle of Bothican have shown these traditions are not foolproof, however, they do merit discussion. The Castle of Stackel Brae (Appendix A:101), has several legends associated only one of which is relevant. Pirate Gow was allegedly held prisoner in the Castle whilst awaiting transport to his trial, however, Gow traditions are numerous in Eday. Nearby Carrick House has a similar tradition with the extra element that after a fight some of Gow's blood dripped through the floorboards into the insulation below, where the stain is still present (R. Joy pers.comm.). There is no suggestion that Gow stayed at the Castle of Stackel Brae and there are no earlier traditions associated with the site. However, the retention of the idea that there was a castle is important, especially when combined with the archaeological evidence (see chapter 3).

The Castle, Birsay (Appendix A:97) is located next to the Burn of Lushan and is one of two mounds on a ledge, the other mound is said to be an ancient chapel. John Spence records that an old man told him the 'castle' mound had long ago been a watch tower for the purposes of alerting Kirk members to any trouble, (Spence, 1915:88). This tradition is interesting especially as it connects tower and church, a subject that will be expanded in chapter four.

Castle Ellibister in Rendall (Appendix A:93) and Castle Bloody in Stromness (Appendix A:94) have traditions associated with the Late Norse period. Ellibister has a brief but quite precise tradition recording the foundation of an old castle in the township over eight hundred years ago. The location is said to be in the field called the Castle, which has a slight undulation in it today, and has produced some stone (Baikie, ND:2). Although brief the tradition, has some weight since because of the insignificance of the mound there would be no reason to explain its existence, and the tradition is widely known within the area. The name Castle Bloody is all that remains of a site associated with a Scandinavian chief who was said to have lived and ruled there prior to the fourteenth century, (ONB 22, 1880:44). This tradition is tantalising and it has been suggested that the site may have been a broch, although again the longevity of the tradition is interesting.

The third and final folklore area deals with the tower recorded by Clouston to have traditionally stood at Netherbigging in Stenness. Clouston included this as evidence for the interpretation of Gernaness as a castle, see page 16. The two traditions in themselves appear perfectly viable however, their geographical proximity betray them as Netherbigging and the supposed Palace site are only about a mile apart. There are only two separate recordings of these high buildings that have been found during this research. The earliest in date is in a letter from Samuel Firth to Clouston where he writes that 'there is a tradition in Stenness that there was a house at Netherbigging from which one could see the sea out by Cairston' (Clouston, 1924-5:13). The second version is much fuller and was written in an article by P. Leith (1936-37:41).

> In a drawing of Stenness Church, made about 1760, we see a building of some size south of the churchyard. All trace of this house has disappeared long ago, but the site is still pointed out as that of the "Palace of Stenness". When the old church was demolished thirty years ago, pieces of red freestone were found, which had been mouldings for windows, so it seems likely that the material of the palace was used up when the church was built. Beyond the fact that there was some kind of mansion house there, we do not know very much about it. I have heard it said that a pipe was laid from the house to the loch for a water supply, and also that from the top storey ships could be seen in the Hoy Sound, a tradition which seems to be noticed by Sir Walter Scott in "The Pirate". (1936-37: 41).

Clouston had written in 1926: -

> An old Stenness tradition relates that there once stood a house at Netherbigging so high that one could see the sea over the ridge of land at the back. Actually, if the keep (at Clouston Castle) were in the neighbourhood of 40 feet high, one could see from the battlements the tidal outlet of the loch (called the "Bush") nearly to the sea itself, and certainly one could see a ship at sea.
>
> (Clouston, 1926:290).

Therefore, there are two instances of indeterminate remains being verified as high buildings because of two very similar local traditions. Again this case provides a cautionary tale about the use of folklore. The site of the palace of Stenness is recorded on a map and the house itself is recorded in court records. Leith suggested that the palace and the manse, mentioned in church records, were one and the same building. The documentary evidence dates at the earliest to 1649 when John Boak hid from the justice in the palace (Leith, 1936-37:43). It would therefore seem that such a building did exist, however, whether this was the original high building is another matter. From the scanty evidence it is probable that the palace of Stenness was a later medieval building, and therefore later in date than the building at Netherbigging which had a rather poor *terminus ante quem* dating to the Norse period, see p75.

Clouston Castle is not found in any documentary sources, although the farm of Netherbigging does appear in the rentals. The archaeology of the site is problematic in that there are no extant remains and Clouston's interpretation is weak in a number of areas (above page 13-16). The lack of any other evidence to suggest whether both of these traditions were known in Stenness weakens the value of the tradition and it is better to treat it with the utmost caution. It should not be used as a main source for the existence of a tower at Gernaness.

2.4 c : Conclusions.

It is fundamental to appreciate that like other forms of historical evidence folklore is conditioned by those who pass on the traditions. It is also affected by popular trends, for instance the giant traditions were probably started after the Norse occupation of Orkney whilst the fair lady and castle traditions probably date to a later period when chivalric images were popular. Therefore the Cubbie Roo traditions are more likely to be early in the development of folklore with the lady and castle combination probably of a slightly later date. The Stenness case study reflects the possible combination of older traditions with more modern ones and how they can also be extremely difficult to untangle. The few traces of information remaining in connection with the castle place-names again could well be relatively modern in creation although in several of the cases there is a hint of a more historically based origin.

The folklore evidence gathered can help in the identification of the castle on Wyre with Kolbein Hruga but only because of the combination of saga and archaeological evidence. The castle place-names with a folklore element also require consideration with the linguistic, historical and archaeological evidence in order to establish their authenticity. The tradition associated with the Wirk along with the recording of the place-name implies that at some point the site was considered to be a stronghold but only with the archaeological remains can one suggest that this may have been the original function of the building (see below p59-65). The Stenness example is more problematic and cannot be used as a credible source because there are too many unknowns preventing the site allocation of the original high building. This clearly indicates that although folklore is an invaluable source it is not reliable enough to affirm castle status without combined analysis with history, archaeology and place-name evidence.

2.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

This chapter has covered a wide variety of sources, which have revealed several important points. These main points are outlined below along with other related issues which have arisen from this chapter.

From a basic castle place-name study evidence for the location of nine possible castles was discovered. These castles, all but one unknown in the contemporary documentary evidence, would not have been discovered were it not for this form of analysis, especially those which have no extant remains.

The three terms *kastali*, *borg* and *vígi* occur frequently in Scandinavian sources. These terms have several different and overlapping definitions depending on the context of the word. This is no different in their use in the *Orkneyinga Saga* where *kastali* is applied to a large European castle, a small tower in Orkney and a possible fortified enclosure in Orkney (Cairston). *Borg* also has more than one definition, from the *Orkneyinga Saga* the term can be equally applied to a broch, a hilltop/clifftop defence or a naturally defensive area. *Virki* represents natural fortifications according to Taylor but in reality appears to include stronghold, as seen when describing Kolbein Hruga's castle (Appendix B:38). The use of three separate terms, however, indicates that there were different forms of defensive site and that in some way the terms were distinguishable.

There are only four castles from the earldom mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga*; one built by Kolbein Hruga, one kept by Blann and the other two with no keepers associated. It is strange that no earl is ever credited with the building or owning of a castle. It can be assumed that Earl Harald owned, or was on friendly terms with whoever owned the castle at Cairston, as he was able to run there and hide (Taylor, 1938:308), and the Bu name at Cairston indicates that the 'castle' was built on earldom land. The castle in Thurso must have been somewhat neutral as the two disagreeing earls met there for peace talks (Taylor, 1938:315). The earls had an itinerant form of rulership as shown from the duty of hospitality provided by the earls *goeðingr*. This would render a royal castle less essential; however, it would necessitate some form of defence at the main hospitality homesteads. However, Sweyn's instruction for earl Erlend to remain on board his ship at night, it would seem that it was safer to be on the sea than on land even in Damsay (Taylor, 1938:319). Therefore, there is some confusion concerning the castles and their role within the earldom, which is further complicated by the lack of any description of the castle structures. The notion of these castles as status or power symbols must also be considered, although again the absence of an earl's castle is noticeable.

The folklore traditions are useful in that they indicate the age and geographical span of certain legends and provide evidence for the location of castles, Cubbie Roo's being the most obvious. However, as shown above the authenticity of traditions should not be presumed, and a careful analysis of any tale must be made before it is used as evidence.

The references to Clouston's other castles especially those relating to Sigurd of Westness highlight three related terms concerning twelfth century Orkney, *bondi, goeðingr, veizlu,* which will be expanded upon in chapter four. These terms define certain social characteristics which may have been important in the context of the 'castle' sites. The social background to the castle constructions will be further explored in chapter four once the archaeological evidence has been discussed, in chapter three.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOURCES : ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Part one of this chapter summarises the results of a survey, carried out over Easter 1999, of the six main archaeological sites discussed in this thesis (OES99). A selection of relevant plans and sections has been included to provide an indication of the sites in their present condition. Included also will be earlier survey and excavation results relating to the sites. Part two will concentrate on two defensive farmsteads within Orkney and then explore the idea of defensive church buildings. Finally part four will focus briefly on other castle sites within the earldom area and the North of Scotland.

3.1 SURVEY.

During four weeks over Easter extensive surveying and planning of the six sites classed as castles by Clouston took place. The survey included the recording of the location of the sites, their current dimensions and state of repair, and where possible plans and sections were completed. The condition of the six sites varied greatly from Cubbie Roo's castle, which is standing to first floor height and is in guardianship, to the rubble pile which is all that remains of Clouston castle, Gernaness.

3.1 a : Cubbie Roo's Castle, Wyre.

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NGR HY 442263

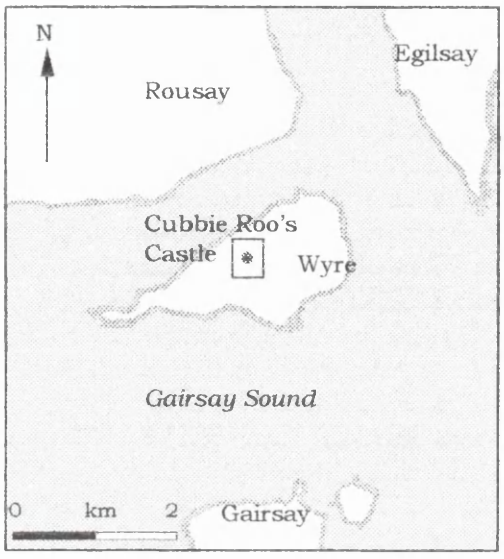
Location

As already mentioned in chapter one the castle is located in the most suitable area on the island for defence, at the top of a fairly steep rise on the W side of the island of Wyre, see figure 3.1 (RCAHMS, 1946:rn.619, 237). This location has an excellent vantage point affording clear views of the Gairsay, Rousay, Egilsay and Eynhallow sounds as well as the Stronsay Firth. The ridge on which the castle is situated has the added defence of a steep slope to the NE.

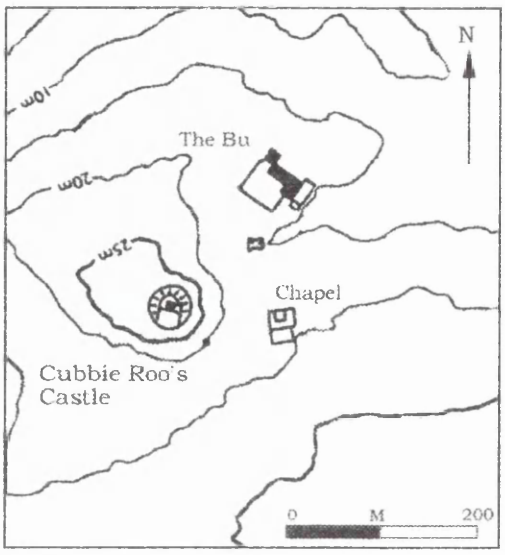
Context.

The castle does not stand in isolation but is close to the twelfth century chapel of St Mary[1] (on the E) and the present day farm 'Bu of Wyre' on the NW, figure 3.1b. The *Bu* element indicates the ancient and important nature of the farm in Norse times (Marwick,

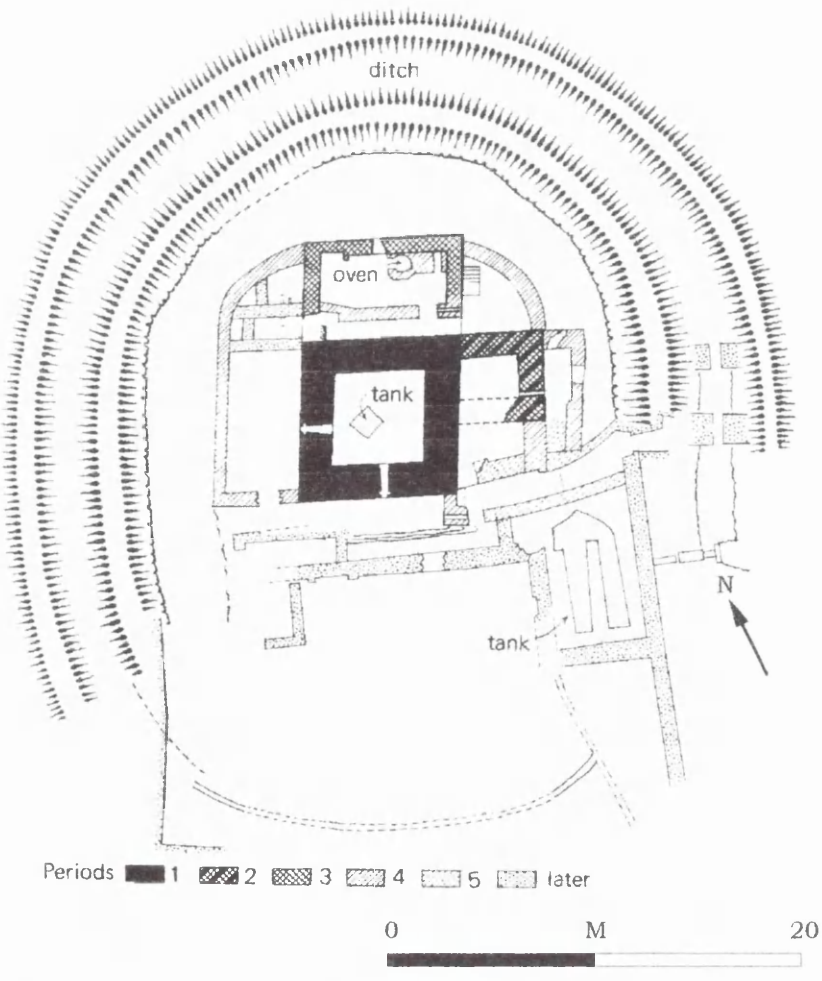
[1] This chapel was also known as Peter Kirk although it appears that the Mary dedication is correct (Morris, 1993:58).



a) Location: Wyre



b) Immediate location



c) Cubbie Roo's Castle: plan (from Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978:64).

Figure 3.1 Cubbie Roo's Castle, Wyre.

1952:73). These sites should be seen as a group making up the homestead of the noble Kolbein Hruga, of which the castle is an integral part.

Previous References.

The building of a castle on Wyre as recorded in the *Orkneyinga Saga* is the first account of this castle (Taylor, 1938:275). The second is found in *Hakonar Saga* where Earl Jon's murderers hide in the castle on Wyre, included in this reference is a description of an outcastle where they kept some cattle (Vigfusson, 1887b:150). Both Wallace (1883:31) and Barry (1805:227) referred to the castle in their separate accounts of Orkney. It appears to have been in a ruinous state although standing higher than today as Wallace writing in 1688 (1883:31) mentions a large door which appears to have been in the first floor of the keep (Marwick, 1927-8:11). Both Wallace and Barry mention the square nature of the tower, the thickness of the walls and the use of lime mortar.

Previous Excavations / Interpretations.

The site, although surveyed by Marwick (1927-8:9-11) and preliminarily excavated by Clouston (1931:23-27) was not fully excavated until the 1930s. The chapel and castle were taken into state care in 1931 with a programme of 'clearance and consolidation' (Cormack, 1989:1) commencing in 1933, which was to prove less than adequate. It appears that there was criticism by local antiquaries of the lack of supervision on both sites and along with other matters of criticism this lead to the suggestion 'that a question might be asked in the House of Commons' concerning the work in Wyre (Cormack, 1989:1-2). Whatever, the criticism of the excavation, there was a very detailed and accurate plan of the site produced in the RCAHMS Inventory (1946:rn.619, 236). Ritchie and Ritchie later revised this plan by summarising the Commission's site interpretation, and changing one area within the castle phasing (1978:64-66), figure 3.1c. One of the main problems with the excavation was the lack of finds and the poor recording of the few finds that were recovered. One example of this problem can be seen in the location of a bronze ornament found on the third of July 1935 '2 inches down from the surface' (RCAHMS: MS/268/2). The complete list of finds from 1935 was five sherds of pottery; three small fragments of bronze; one bronze ornament and a buckle. The most famous find allegedly from the castle was a fragment of chain mail. However, it has been since proved that the mail was found in the floor of the chapel and not in the castle at all (Cormack, 1989:1-6).

The Castle

As ably demonstrated by Clouston, Cubbie Roo's castle is the most secure of the six castle sites from his 1931 paper. The site comprises of three main areas: a small stone

tower, surrounding outbuildings and outer defences consisting of a ditch and bank fortification, figure 3.1c.

The ramparts would have enclosed an oval area of c.23m x 29m. These ramparts are in the form of a bank, ditch, bank enclosure with an inner ditch leaving a platform 14.8m x 16.6m. They are crescentic in form and are most visible at the NE, N and NW sides of the platform. There is only one apparent entrance through the outer defences, it is on the E and is formed by stone slabs resting on two dry-stone piers. The southern part of the outer defences is no longer present. The outer ditch is approximately 1.8m wide at the base and around 1.9m deep. The outer rampart consists of a low mound whilst the inner rampart consists of a 2.2m thick wall surviving to a height of roughly 1.2m. The innermost ditch was dug into the bedrock on the inside of this inner rampart wall. This inner ditch is much shallower than the outer one. It is the limits of this ditch that define the platform mentioned above.

On the platform stand the remains of several phases of outbuilding and the tower. Ritchie (1978:65) and the Royal Commission (1946:237) agree that the tower predates the other buildings on the platform. The tower is virtually square with walls measuring 7.9m (N) x 7.8m (S) x 7.8m (E) x 7.8m (W). The tower walls are expertly built with large cut stones that are pointed with lime-mortar; the walls are also lime-plastered on the outside. They are approximately 1.7m thick at the base and 1.66m thick at their maximum height, which is c.2m. The tower stands only to first floor height with the narrow scarcement still visible on the inner face of the N wall. The ground floor room has no doorway and access must have been through the first floor door described by Wallace. There are two narrow windows one in the S and one in the W wall. These windows are 0.22m wide at the outside and 0.5m in the inside with stepped sills and are rebated to allow the insertion of a wooden frame. The rock floor of the tower has a rock-cut tank in the centre of roughly rectangular shape. There are no other internal features within the tower. The quality and style of stonework utilised in the tower is different from the enclosing defensive wall, but is very similar to that in the nearby chapel.

Both the Royal Commission (1946:237) and Ritchie (1978:66) have attributed five phases of construction to the outbuildings. The first addition to the tower appears to have been built on to the east wall at the NE corner, changing the plan of the tower to an L-shape. This annexe was approximately 4.5m x 3.9m, with mortared walls just over 1m thick. The presence of a garderobe chute in the E wall indicates that this addition was more than one storey high.

Phase two relates to a second and inferior enlargement on the N wall of the tower, it was entered from the E, near the tower wall and had a fireplace and a window in the ground floor. This addition also included an oven of later date and a stairway indicating the presence of a first floor. The walls were much thinner and of smaller stone laid in clay with an internal layer of plaster.

The third expansion was the addition of a building with a rounded corner to the NW encompassing the W side of the tower and its previous addition. This rounded corner was mirrored in the NE where a wall was constructed to join additions one and two. These areas were linked through the construction of a passage in the second addition at the N tower wall. Another wall was built around the outside of the first addition, creating a small room, and terminated at the enclosure entrance. This room was enlarged by a southern extension of the E wall of the first addition.

The fourth building phase was relatively minor. The SE corner of the tower was built up with the wall terminating at the inside of the inner rampart, on the N side of the enclosure entrance. This wall had an opening in the SW corner next to the E wall of the tower. The construction of this wall appears contemporary with the construction of a parallel wall to the S of the enclosure entrance, again with an opening in the SW. Thus a restricted entry was created from the ramparts to the buildings. This fourth phase seems to have been closely connected to the third phase as the additions occur in similar areas and seem to complement each other.

The final building 'phase' is a palimpsest detailing the undetermined and later constructions. Within this phase are the piers that form the access to the enclosure plus a further set of piers whose function is unknown. Also included are four internal divisions within the western addition; a large building to the S of the entrance passage containing two connected tanks; and other later buildings to the S of the tower, which resulted in the destruction of the outer defences in the S.

Interpretation.

The Commission concluded that the stone tower was the earliest construction on the platform. From architectural analysis with related towers in both Scotland, Norway and Europe the conclusion reached by the Commission was far from certain but a mid twelfth century date was considered 'unsafe' (RCAHMS, 1946:rn.619, 238). Contrary to this conclusion it is possible to postulate a twelfth century date for the tower (as Clouston did in 1931). The two saga accounts were written only shortly after the twelfth century events described and are, therefore, considered reliable. The stone work, the lime-mortar and lime-plaster although devoid of any datable features are typical of a twelfth century

construction. The excellent quality of construction of the tower is similar to that found in the cathedral in Kirkwall, begun around 1135 and more carefully executed than other known twelfth century structures, such as the Round church at Orphir.

The outbuildings appear to have been built over a considerable period of time and have seen a change in the context of the site from a wealthy defensive retreat to a poorer less well defended enclosure. This is shown in the reduction of wall thickness, the use of clay rather than lime-mortar bonding, and the destruction of the southern ramparts to allow the construction of extra buildings. The site appears to have lost the high status value that was evident in the twelfth century complex of chapel, farm and castle, perhaps around the same time as the castle was made redundant.

Archaeologically the castle still has several problems. The relationship between the ramparts and the tower has not been established, some of the outbuilding stratigraphy is rather confused; the lack of finds is difficult to explain and there is no evidence for any form of threat to the structure. This may indicate that the construction of the tower was a precautionary defensive measure rather than for a real threat. These points could possibly be addressed through further excavation of the site with modern techniques such as wet sieving to secure small finds and environmental analysis to establish if there are any traces of farming, feasting, or food storage within the enclosure.

3.1 b : The Wirk, Westside, Rousay.

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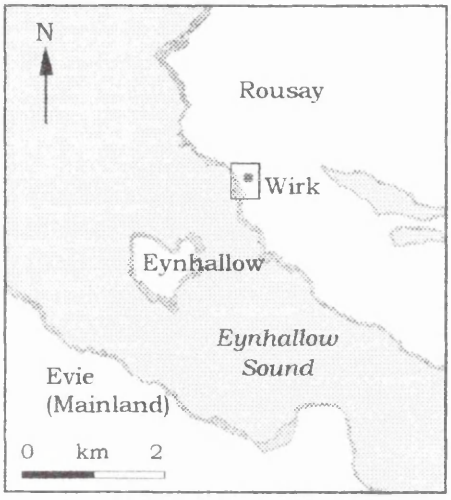
NGR HY 374302

Location.

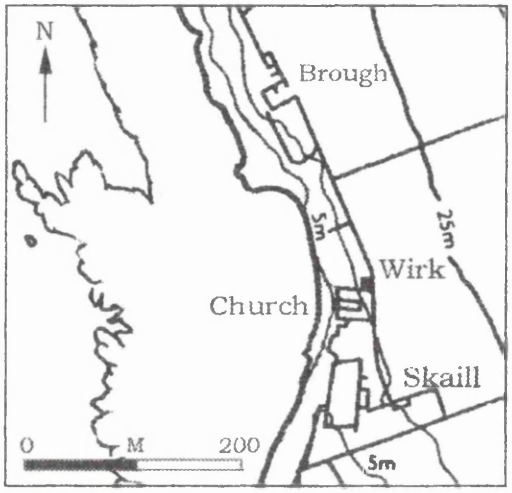
The site of the Wirk is located immediately N of the graveyard wall of St Mary's church, on the shore at the Geo of Skaill, in the district of Westside on the S of the island of Rousay, figure 3.2.

Context.

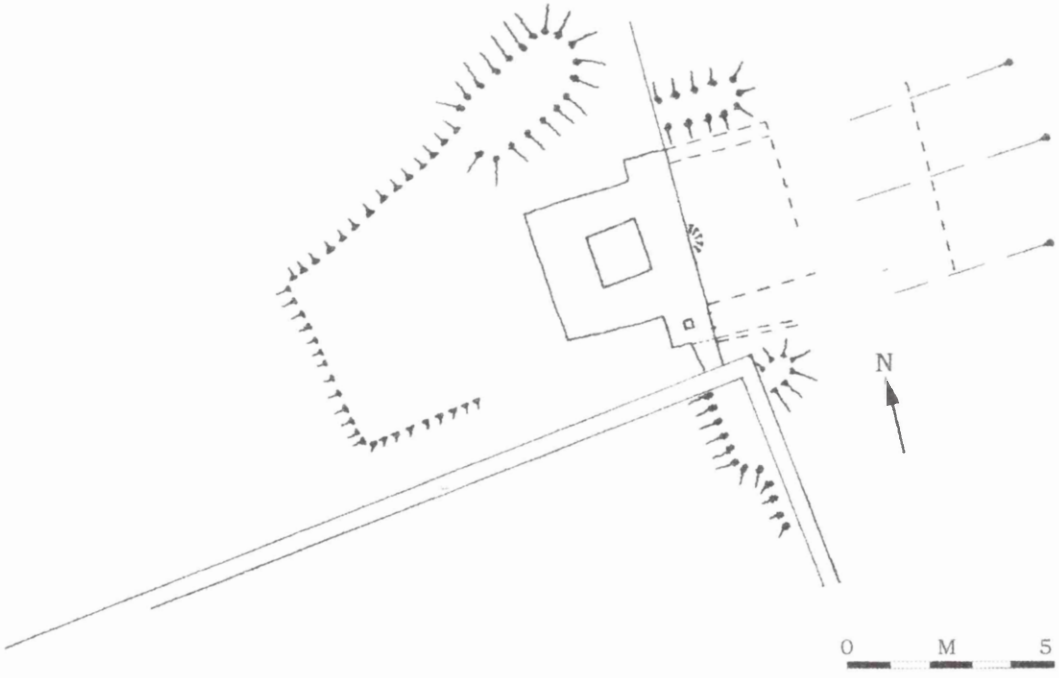
The site of the Wirk lies in a stretch of fertile land occupied from the late Neolithic period to the present day. To the E lies the Pictish / Viking cemetery at Moaness, the late Norse settlement of Westness, a Norse boat naust (Kaland, 1993:308-317), the alleged Norse cist burials at the Knowe of Swandro (Graham-Campbell & Batey, 1998:135-138) and the later ruins of the farm of Skaill (Marwick, 1947:87). To the W lies the house of Brough, the most important house in the island in the 16th century, and further W are the remains of Midhowe broch and chambered cairn. Closest to the Wirk lies the church of St Mary's which appears to date from the 16th century with earlier foundations possibly dating from the 15th century (Lowe, 1984:1). It appears that the settlement focus moved



a) Location: Rousay



b) Immediate Location



c) The Wirk: Plan (OES99).

Figure 3.2 The Wirk, Rousay.

from the late Norse settlement at Westness to the House of Brough and then returned to the present farm of Westness on the E side of the Norse farmstead. The Wirk lies between the Norse settlement and the medieval settlement both topographically and chronologically (figure 3.2b). When considering the Wirk it is important to realise the presence of the Viking cemetery, late Norse farmstead and naust to the E. It is also worth noting the tendency for the focus of Norse settlement sites to migrate over time, for example Skaill, Deerness and Jarlshof, Shetland.

Previous References.

There are no references to the Wirk by name in the *Orkneyinga Saga,* and although the site of Westness is mentioned this is more likely to be associated with the Norse farmstead at Moaness than the Wirk.

Previous Excavations / Interpretations.

Dietrichson in his *Monumenta Orcadica* (1906:29) suggested that the Wirk was a detached fortified bell-tower associated with St Mary's church similar to those found in Scandinavia. Clouston then partially excavated the site in the 1920s (Clouston, 1931:27-33). He interpreted the Wirk as a defensive tower belonging to a large church that was never completed, although he believed the tower was later completed and used as a stronghold (Clouston, 1931:33). The site has since been reinterpreted several times although there is not universal agreement on the purpose of the structure. The Royal Commission who put forward no conclusive interpretation for the site did not mention Clouston's interpretation of the Wirk. They suggest that the ground floor of the tower could have served as a well room and agree with Clouston, that it was part of a larger structure due to the E wall extending out beyond the tower walls on either side.

The first main challenge to Clouston and Dietrichson's ecclesiastical interpretations came from J.G. Dunbar who in 1982 suggested that the Wirk was part of a hall–house. He interpreted the Wirk as a garderobe tower linked through a passageway in the E wall to the undercroft of a large first floor hall now covered by soil creep, similar in construction to the Bishop's Palace in Kirkwall (Morris, 1993:53-54). Lamb concurs with this interpretation (Morris, 1993:53-54).

In 1984 Chris Lowe surveyed St Mary's Church, the Wirk and made a catalogue of the architectural fragments at Westside, Trumland and Eynhallow. He confirmed that the E wall of the tower was the first wall to be built and continued by suggesting that this E tower wall had served as an external wall to the building on the E, prior to the completion of the tower. He dismisses Deitrichson's interpretation of a detached bell-tower for this

reason but does not mention either Clouston or Dunbar's interpretations of the site (Lowe, 1984:9-10).

The Wirk.

The site of the Wirk comprises of the remains of a small square tower, the scant remains of a large structure to the E and slight indications of an enclosure delimited by a turf bank to the N and W of the tower.

The tower is well built using large slabs of stone and lime mortar, similar to the technique used in the construction of the tower at Cubbie Roo's castle. There has been a field dyke built over the E wall of the tower and the ground to the E is used as grazing land and has been much damaged by cattle. The tower has evidence of an external scarcement on the S, N and E walls. The tower measures around 2.8m internally with walls on average 2.1m in the N, S and E with the W wall being 0.4m thicker. The highest remaining part of the tower is the E wall which measures 2m from the scarcement to the highest wall slab, whilst the NE exterior wall measurement is only 0.6m high. There are considerable differences in ground height around the tower as well as the varying remaining wall height. The internal height of the tower varies from 2.8m in the SE corner from the first step to 1.0m in the NE corner where there is the greatest debris build up. The SW interior corner measures 1.7m whilst the NW measures 1.1m. There are only two features within the tower. There is a later built stairway in the NW corner allowing access into the interior from the N wall and what seems to be an original stairway built into the SE corner. This stair connects with a low passageway (1.5m) under the E wall and is rock cut at its lowest point; it appears to connect the tower with the building to the E.

There are hardly any remains of this eastern building above the ground. The E wall of the tower is the W wall of this building and explains why the E tower wall extends both N and S of the tower. There are slight remains of the S wall of this building which is roughly 2.0m wide at its W end, getting increasingly wider. The wall continues for 4m at its external edge and 5.6m internally. There are slight traces of another wall parallel to the S wall although they were too meagre to measure, this would appear to be Lowe's wall 2, which he believed to be the original N wall, shown on figure 3.3a, (Lowe, 1984:10). The N wall, indicated on figure 3.2c, is 0.8m wide and 5.2m long. It is faced with flagstones built on edge on its interior side with the exterior appearing as a turf bank. This N wall is Lowe's wall three which he considers to be of later date and contemporary with the later foundations indicated on the Royal Commission's plan (1946:rn.550, 191). This wall appears to have been built on top of a wider older wall. The Commission's plan shows this later wall to be more skewed than it appears, shown on figure 3.3b. There are

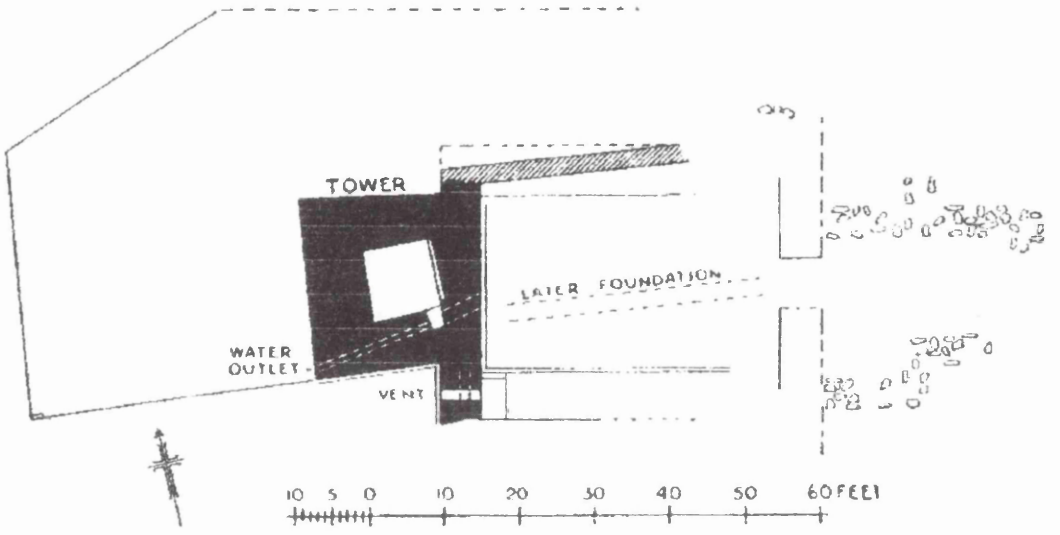
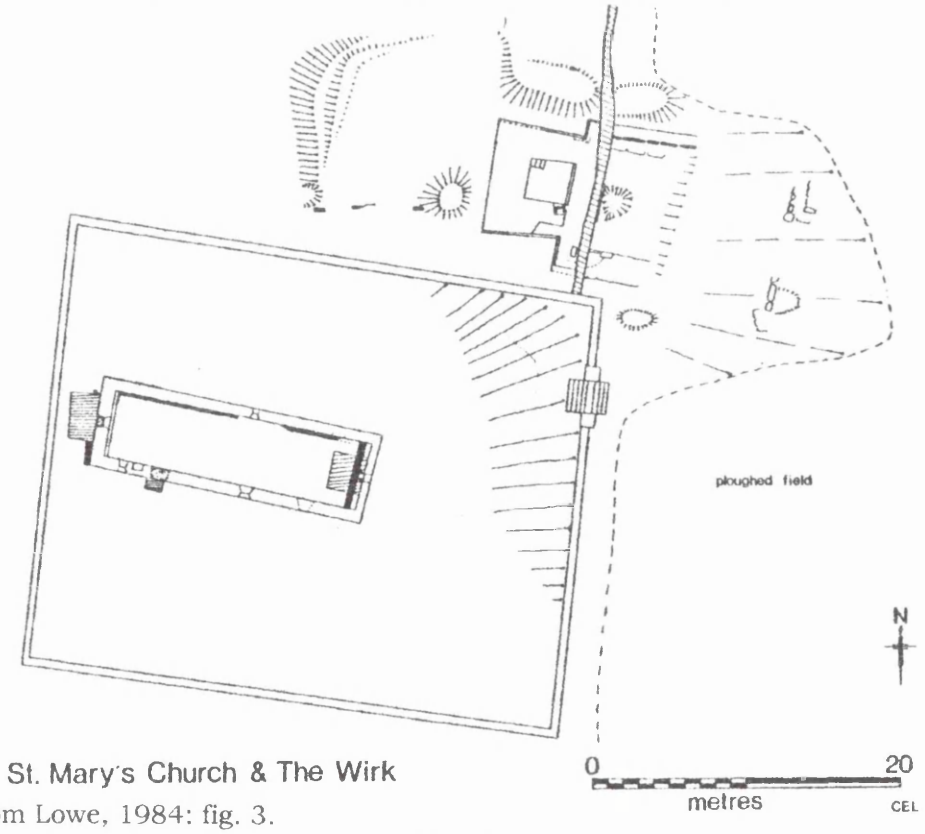


FIG. 272.—The Wirk, Westside (No. 550).

a) From RCAHMS, 1946: rn. 550, 191.



St. Mary's Church & The Wirk

b) From Lowe, 1984: fig. 3.

Figure 3.3 Two Plans of The Wirk.

also the remains of a wall parallel to the W wall of the building, extending from the N wall into the interior, these stones are quite large but mostly buried under the soil. The eastern end of this large building is buried under the sloping hillside. There are slight remains of a stone built edge of some form, as indicated on figure 3.2c although its purpose could not be ascertained.

There is evidence for a drain and a garderobe chute in the S extremity of the eastern tower wall. The chute appears as a rectangular opening in the top of the wall 0.50m x 0.35m, and it can be inferred that it is coming from an upper level. This chute angles down to join the drain which has an outlet 0.5m x 0.5m to the W. This drain continues to the E and is connected to another garderobe chute and can be seen in the construction of the S wall of the building to the E.

The enclosure measures 11.4 m E/W and 11.0m S/N, and is delineated in the N and W by low turf banks and in the S by several stones within a slightly raised area. There are four prominent mounds around the site (figure 3.2c) which appear to be spoil heaps left by Clouston. The mound within the churchyard is less obvious and may be connected with the Wirk. There are also traces of other structures in the same field as the eastern building to the S and near to the derelict farm of Skaill.

Interpretation.

It appears that the tower was always intended to be an integral part of a larger structure, which rules out Deitrichson's interpretation of a free-standing bell tower. Dunbar's interpretation of a first-floor hall-house appears more likely than Clouston's church, although the building seems rather wide for the construction of a roof. The idea of an undercroft is reinforced by the existence of the stairway and passage in the tower that would otherwise serve no purpose. The presence of a garderobe chute and drain also suggest that the structure was more than one storey high. However, Dunbar's interpretation of the tower as a garderobe tower seems less likely considering the defensive nature of the building.

If the site were as Dunbar suggests, a high-status hall-house then the existence of a defensive tower would not be inconceivable, acting as a status symbol, as well as providing a place of retreat if all other means of escape failed. The great thickness of the walls in this tower confirms that it was more likely to have been defensive in nature than domestic, although the location of the house does not suggest defence as the main function. This high-status building is located close to the shore with good views of Eynhallow sound and Eynhallow. It is built near the best farmland on the island and should be considered primarily as a farmstead. The connection with this site and the two

later farmhouses of Skaill and Brough should not be ignored and neither should the proximity to the late Norse farmstead of Westness and the rich Viking burials at Moaness. All these buildings have exploited a rich agricultural area that has been occupied from prehistory until the present day. The rich Westness graves indicate that this was a high-status area in the Viking period, an impression reinforced by the references to Sigurd of Westness in the *Orkneyinga Saga*. As mentioned in chapter two Sigurd would have needed a large hall to entertain the Earl and his retinue and it is very possible that his descendants held his high position after him. It is possible to envisage the Wirk and the building to the E as a form of feasting hall and farmstead with a defensive tower. There is no indication of any date for the construction of the Wirk. The building technique applied is almost identical to that used at Cubbie Roo's castle and for this reason a twelfth century date could be postulated, although there is no reason why the building was not constructed later. However, the defensive nature of the Wirk and its co-existence with the structure to the east seem justifiable.

3.1 c : Damsay.

OS 1:50 000 map sheet 6

NGR HY 389138

Location.

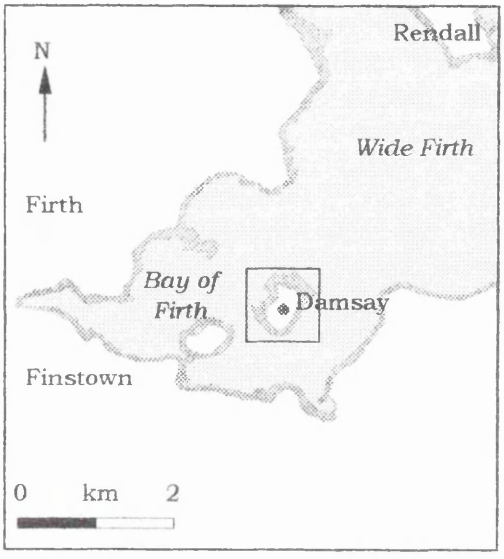
The island of Damsay is the outermost of two holms lying in the Bay of Firth. There has not been any confirmation of a site for the castle on the island. Clouston suggested that the site lay in the N of the island where today there are the remains of a broch that compare to the mound he mentioned. From a survey of the island by students of Julie Gibson, Orkney archaeologist, another possible site, located on the highest point of the island, was discovered. This location has extensive views of the mainland including Orphir to the S, Firth to the SE, Rendall to the E and the inner isles to the N. This central location provides an extremely good view of the seaways around the Mainland and the inner islands, figure 3.4.

Context.

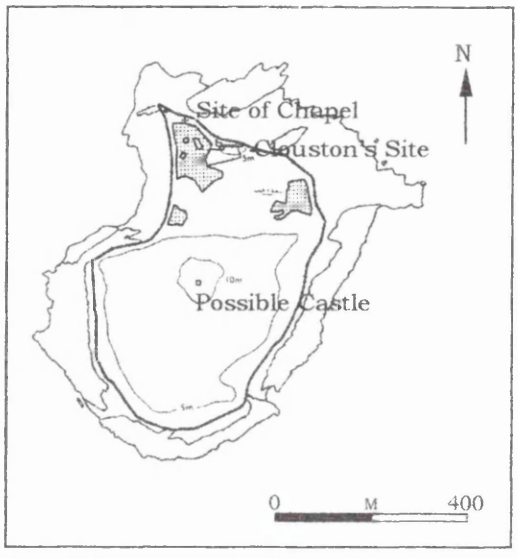
The context of this castle cannot be fully realised, as there is no conclusive proof of a location for the castle. What can be gleaned is that the castle was associated with a hall, although there is no evidence to suggest whether they consisted of one structure or several. The ruins of an early medieval chapel dedicated to St Mary whose ruins are still present on the northern shore of the island (NA, 1883:101).

Previous References.

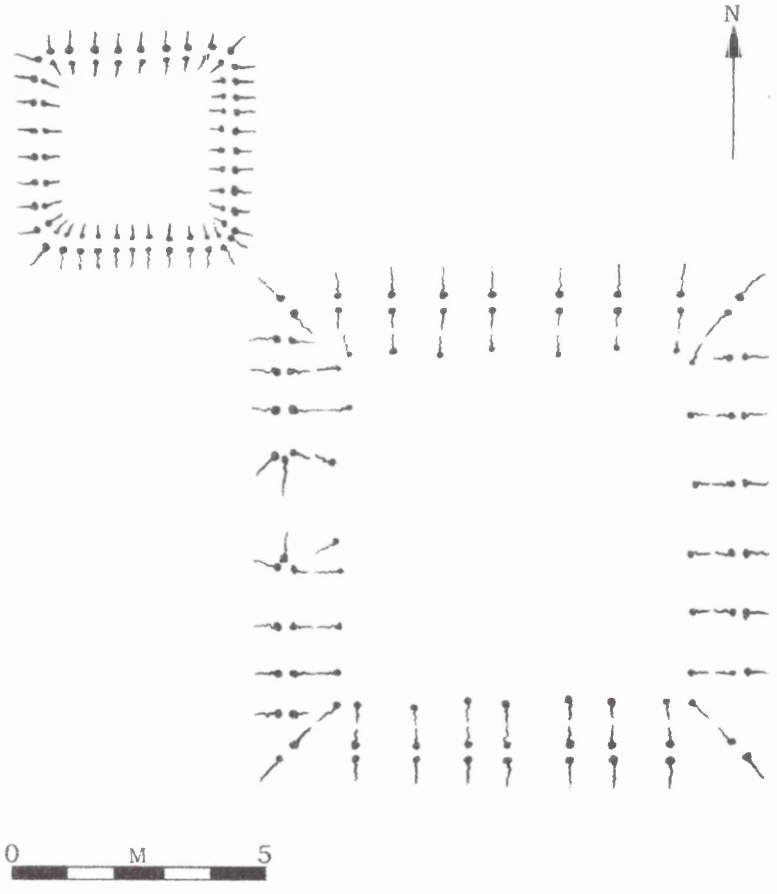
The only references relating to the castle on the island are found in the *Orkneyinga Saga* and have already been discussed in chapter 2. There are other references to the island



a) Location: Damsay



b) Immediate Location



c) Possible Castle Site, Damsay: Plan (OES99).

Figure 3.4 Possible Castle, Damsay.

but these focus on the medieval chapel, the inn next to the chapel and the later farmhouse. There are no mentions of the castle although there is a tradition that a Norse king's castle once stood on the island and that all houses on the mainland which face it are cursed.

Previous Excavation/Interpretation.

Although mentioned in the RCHAMS Canmore database as being home to an alleged castle there has been no identification of a site on the island and they do not discuss the site further. The only archaeological record of the island is found in four vertical aerial photographs of the island. The earliest photograph, taken in 1948, shows a small square feature on the highest point of the island, which is not shown on any of the other photographs.

Damsay Castle.

A field survey of the island undertaken in 1998 located the feature shown in the photograph on the ground. The OS 1:10000 map also shows this feature (HY31 3898 1389). OES99 confirmed the existence of this feature, which takes the form of a slightly raised square on the ground, see figure 3.4c. The $8m^2$ feature resembles a robbed trench with an outer bank some 25cm high and approximately 1m wide. There is a break in the bank on the W side possibly indicating an entrance. The interior of the feature is uneven and at the time of the visit was waterlogged. To the NW of the robbed trench lies another smaller, approximately $4m^2$ feature with no obvious entrance and again merely indicated by the presence of slightly raised banks. See figure 3.4c.

A magnetometer survey of the site by J Gater revealed no indication of any kind, although the final results are not yet complete. This would suggest that there was no fire/hearth present near the site and no deep ditches or pits. It is unusual, if there were a site there, that there was no magnetometer activity.

The rest of the island was field walked and no other site was found in a better location than that mentioned above. Several areas along the shore of the island revealed magnetometer activity akin to that experienced at broch sites, and other areas where burning has been present (Gater pers.comm.). The site suggested by Clouston to be the castle was also examined. It is now a stony mound 2.6m high and 15.8m in diameter, the ground evidence, of which there is little, suggests that this is the ruined site of a broch rather than a castle. There are several large red sandstone blocks built into the walls of the ruined farmhouse at the N of the island. These blocks are not native to Damsay, and are found in most abundance in Eday; they are similar to the plain sandstone blocks used in the construction of the cathedral in Kirkwall.

Interpretation.

The location of the OES99 site provides the best view on the island, and is well positioned defensively. The Clouston site, probably a ruined broch site, does not provide any view to the S, although there is a clear view to the N. Although there are no indications of date, and the remains are so slight that little can be suggested, the OES99 site provides another possible location for the castle on Damsay and so far appears to be the more likely of the two. The site combines a good defensive position with an excellent vantage-point and the dimensions of the structure are similar to that of Cubbie Roo's castle in Wyre. The combination of the Saga evidence, tradition and red sandstone blocks suggest that there was indeed a castle on the island. The location of that castle cannot be confirmed without more thorough survey work and excavation. There is a lack of stone remaining on the island if there was to have been a farmstead and castle present although it could have been removed for use in other buildings on the nearby Holm of Grimbister or the adjacent Mainland. There is very little which can be learned about the castle on Damsay from present archaeological evidence. However, if a site were to be postulated that on the highest point of the island would seem the most likely.

3.1 d : Castlehowe, Paplay, Holm.

OS 1:50 000 map sheet 6

NGR HY 514003

Location.

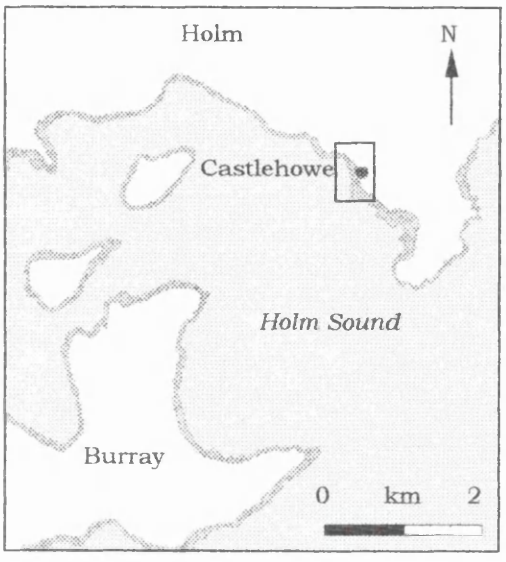
The site of Castlehowe is located on the shore SE of St Mary's parish church. The site is situated on the top of a natural mound close to the shore. It affords a good view of the seaway to the S of Holm and the south isles, as well as being in a good defensive position, see figure 3.5.

Context.

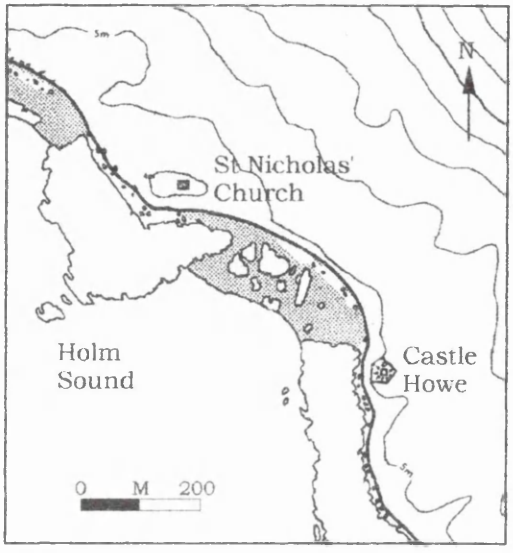
The site is built in close proximity to the church and near to extremely rich agricultural land, whilst the shore is the only suitable place for landing boats in the area, figure, 3.5b. Clouston connected the *bu i papuli* referred to in the *Orkneyinga saga* (Guðmundsson, 1965:101, 103) to the farm Bu of Skaill found in the rentals of which this site was a part (Clouston, 1931:33). The combination of church, large farm and castle name is reminiscent of Cubbie Roo's castle and will be discussed later.

Previous References.

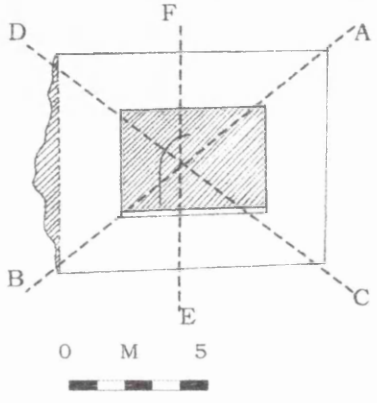
There have been no references to this site by early antiquarians other than Low who describes the site as a 'pights' house' (Low, 1774:52).

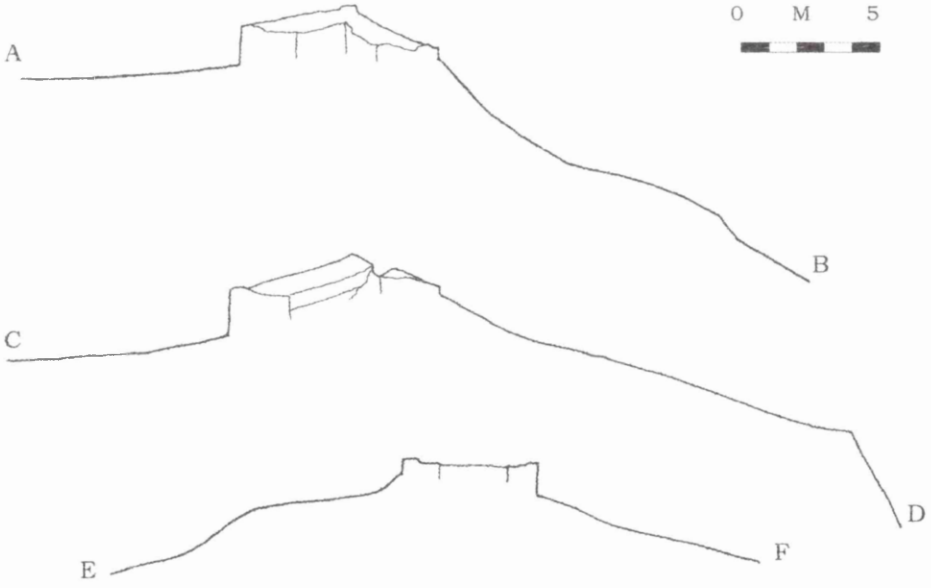


a) Location: Holm



b) Immediate Location





c) Castlehowe: Plan & Sections (OES99).

Figure 3.5 Castlehowe, Holm.

Previous Excavations / Interpretations.

Clayton first excavated the site in the late 1920s and Clouston was the first to publish any form of excavation results. A more thorough description of the site, including plans was detailed in the Royal Commissions Inventory (1946:rn.361, 103-104). There has been no other archaeological survey or excavation on the site since then.

Castlehowe.

The site of Castlehowe is located on one of several natural mounds near to the shore. The natural mound has been built up with stone work to increase its size. The site comprises two structures, one above the other, dating to two periods. The first structure is built well into the mound and can now only be traced on the N side as a d-shaped chamber. The Commission recorded that the structure survived to a height of 1.6m, and was 4.2m long by 2.7m wide. They concluded that the structure was sepulchral in nature and prehistoric in date. This structure is buried by a large amount of stone debris and could not be surveyed, although there were two steps remaining and a curving section of the N chamber wall, this curve is shown in figure 3.5c.

The upper structure is rectangular and was built up at all four corners by Clayton after his excavations so giving a false impression of the remaining height. The structure is orientated E/W with an entrance in the W wall and no windows. There is no evidence to ascertain whether the entrance is original, but Clouston maintained that there was no ground floor entrance (1931:34). The N and S walls of this upper structure are 2.1m thick whilst the E and W are 2.25m, although the exact width of the W wall could not be measured due to the extent of the collapsed stonework. The external length of the E wall is 7.9m, the W 8.1m, the N 9.9m and the S 9.7m. The S wall has a 0.25m step in it approximately 0.9m from the top of the existing wall. The stonework above the step shows signs of lime mortar but below the step there are no traces. This step probably indicates where the upper structure began, although it is possible that the upper structure included the lower structure when it was being used. The S wall is 2m high from the top of the stone rubble within the building. The building material comprises of a variety of shore and quarried stones both large and small. The building appears less well constructed than either Cubbie Roo's castle or the Wirk and has only very slight traces of lime mortar. The rubble within the building includes large stones, probably from the walls and also burnt stone and an ard point. Figure 3.5c shows the plan of the upper structure and three sections of the whole site, indicating the mound as well as the structure, the section indicators on the plan do not represent the true length of the sections.

Interpretation.

The location of Castlehowe is suggestive of a typical Norse settlement site, close to the sea on the edge of a sheltered bay and near to very good agricultural land. The proximity to the parish church is also significant, as there appears to be an association between these defensive sites and early churches. However, neither the Commission nor Clouston mention any finds recorded during the excavation and the building technique, although similar to that used in the Norse period, is not enough to attribute a twelfth century date to the site. Clouston wanted Castlehowe to be the *Bu i papuli* mentioned in the Saga, the home of Earl Magnus' half brother Hakon Karl. The dimensions of Castlehowe are not large enough to accommodate a feasting hall and farmstead. The structure could have been a defensive unit within the farm complex, more akin to Cubbie Roo's castle. Clouston believed that the deliberate extension of the mound represented a motte and that this and the building style combined to suggest a twelfth century date. The motte principle is interesting, although the presence of a sepulchral prehistoric structure could also explain the existence of the mound, as a cairn.

The archaeological evidence reveals a defensive structure. This is seen in the choice of location and the thickness of the walls. The wall thickness also indicates that the structure was probably more than one storey high. The dimensions of the building are slightly larger than Cubbie Roo's castle and the possible site on Damsay, both of which are roughly $8m^2$. However, it is possible to at least consider the site as another defensive site. The lack of any finds, the style of building and the fact that no one knows what this structure was does suggest that the building is of an early date. It is possible to suggest that the upper structure, similar in size and style to Cubbie Roo's castle, may be of similar date. However, the attribution of a late twelfth century date cannot be given with certainty until there is further examination of the area.

3.1 e : Clouston Castle, Gernaness, Stenness.

OS 1:50 000 map sheet 6

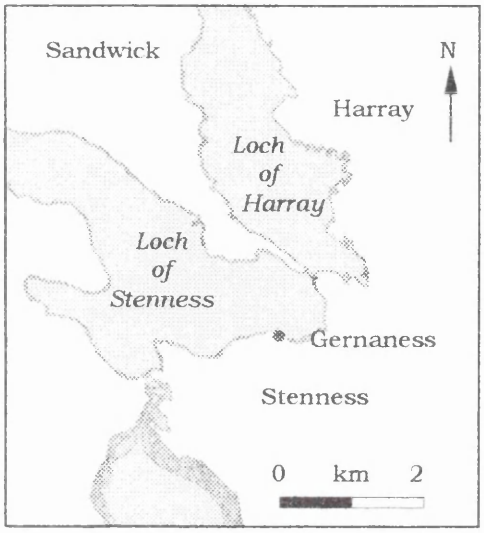
NGR HY 301119

Location.

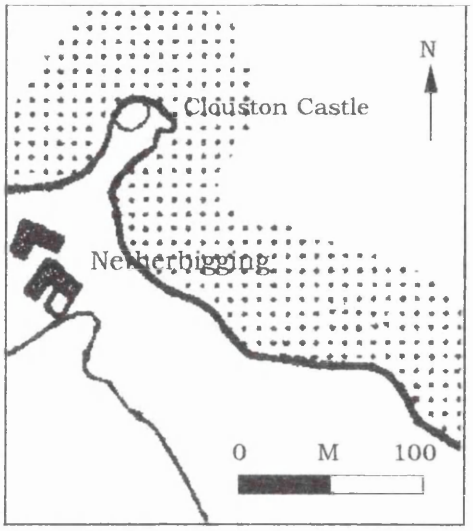
The alleged remains of Clouston Castle lie on the outer section of a promontory known as Gernaness. This promontory projects into the S side of the Stenness Loch and lies only slightly above water level, figure 3.6.

Context.

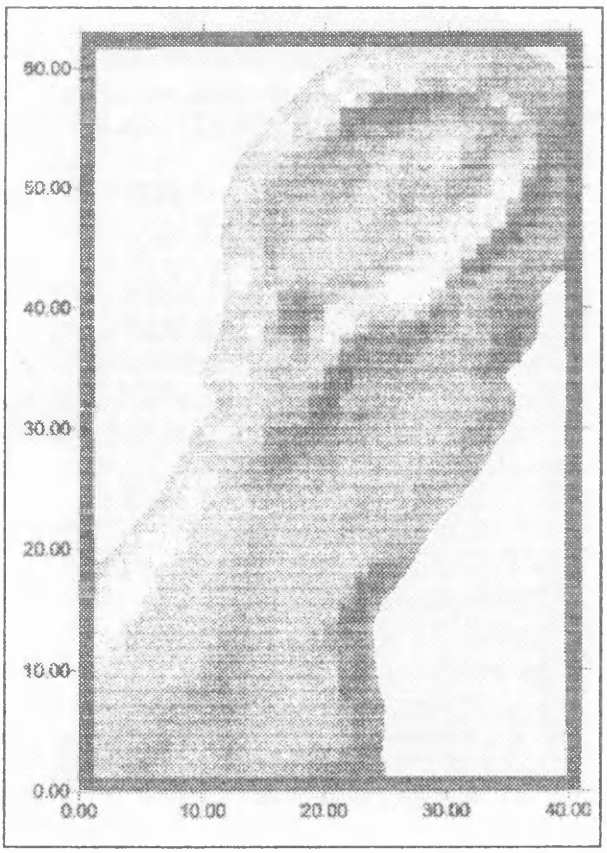
On the landward side of the promontory lies the house of Netherbigging. This house along with its partner formed the twin farm of East and West Netherbigging, and appears



a) Location: Gernaness



b) Immediate Location



c) Clouston Castle: Gernaness Grid Survey, Shaded Surface Relief (OES99).

Figure 3.6 Clouston Castle, Gernaness.

to have been the head house in the township of Clouston (Clouston, 1926:296-97). There are ruins of a sixteenth century farm still present to the NW of the modern house.

Previous References.

There are no previous references to the mound on the point of Gernaness. The tradition associated with the high house has been discussed in chapter two and the only other reference relates to the four Viking age rings, said to have been found in earth taken from the mound in 1879 (Clouston, 1926:296; Graham-Campbell, 1980:rn.238, 65).

Previous Excavations/Interpretations.

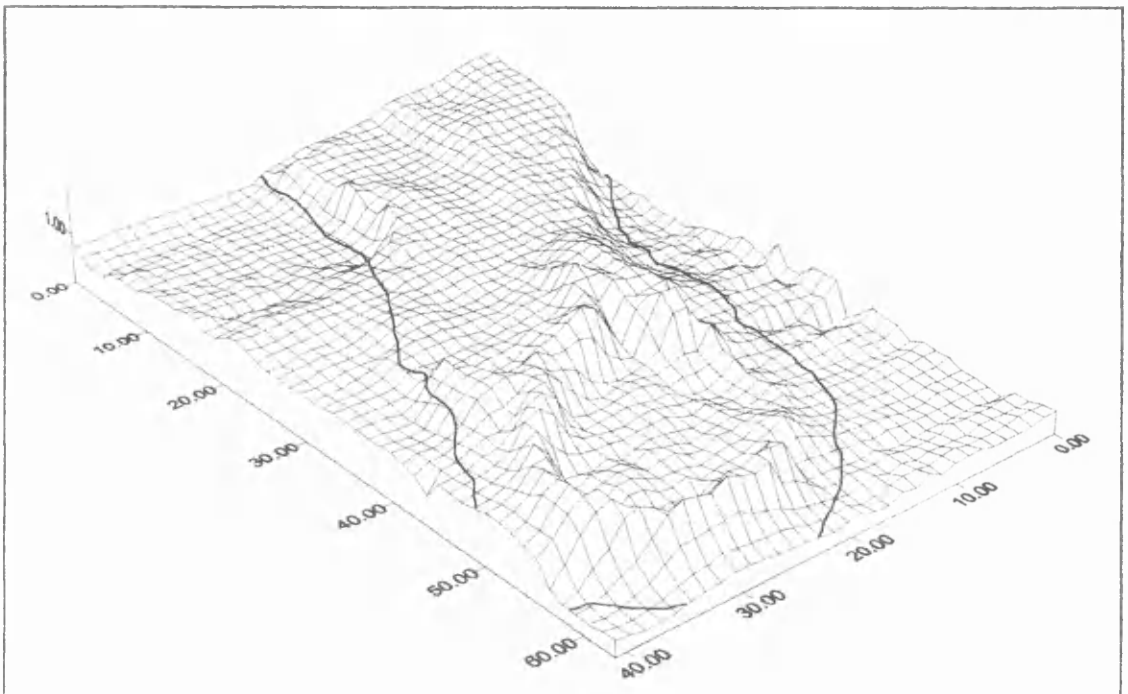
There has been no further examination of the site since Clouston's excavations in 1924-5. Prior to Clouston's investigations the Royal Air Force had used the site as part of an abortive sea plane base in the First World War, and had removed all traces of any structure from the point. The Commission entered Netherbigging in the Inventory under the heading of 'early domestic structure'. Taking a rather more cautious approach than Clouston they conclude that the foundations 'represent buildings of different types, dating partly from prehistoric times, and apparently covering a long period of occupation that was probably not continuous' (1946:rn.874, 298-9). They used Clouston's excavation results to reach this conclusion, however, they did not include his plan in the Inventory.

Clouston Castle.

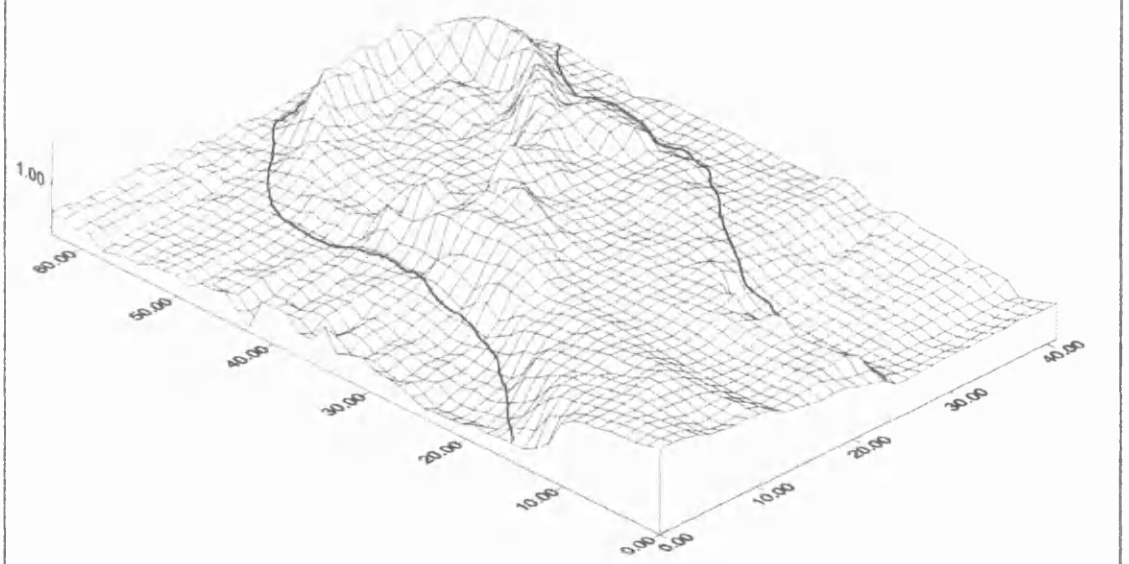
The site today resembles a crater approximately 20m x 22m. There are no traces of any buildings and the site is over grown. The crater edges comprise of large quantities of rubble and it seems likely that they are the remnants of Clouston's spoil heap, surrounding the site. The sea wall described by Clouston is still present. There are slight undulations in the ground surface at the neck of the point where Clouston identified a ditch and bank fortification, but there is nothing substantial enough to measure. A grid survey of the site, at one meter intervals, was the main part of OES99, along with the mapping out of the promontory. The survey results made it possible to get a clearer impression of the site and a general view of the whole point, see figures 3.6c & 3.7. The interior of the crater is very wet and almost at the water level, there are several dips and rises but none can be identified as any of the structures described by Clouston.

Interpretation.

The site of Gernaness is today in such a ruinous condition that any further investigations would not benefit the interpretation of the site. The only evidence for the buildings on the point are Clouston's reports, which, as discussed in chapter one, also have problems associated.



a) Looking South-East



b) Looking North-East

Figure 3.7 Gernaness Promontory Terrain Model, Featuring Castle Site (OES99).

The finds from the site suggest some form of prehistoric occupation, although the Commission ruled out a broch (RCAHMS, 1946:rn.874, 299). The remains detailed by Clouston are unique and are therefore extremely difficult to assign to any specific period. The foundations and floor of the keep appear from Clouston's report to have been well preserved. The presence of a hearth in the ground floor of the keep differs significantly from the other keep-like structures discussed. However, the building technique, using large flat stones and clay bonding, and the thickness of the walls could be interpreted as features common to the type of defensive structures so far discussed. The notion of the hall having developed from a pagan temple is no longer credible, and the examples that he provided as evidence have also been reinterpreted. The famous Hofstadir in Iceland is now more commonly interpreted as a large farmstead including provisions for feasts, possibly associated with pagan worship or community meetings (Jones, 1984:328; Graham-Campbell, 1989:79). It is interesting that Hofstadir included an outside cooking pit in order to cater for large gatherings (Graham-Campbell, 1989:123). The keep hearth at Gernaness showed signs of considerable use and the thick walls would have provided protection from the potentially harmful fire. Clouston also suggests that the ground floor of the keep was a kitchen, with three other floors, two for sleeping and one for a store (Clouston, 1926:290), the lack of ventilation would have been a problem in such a confined space.

Much of Clouston's interpretation was speculative, mainly due to the lack of conclusive evidence provided by the excavations. His reliance on the similarity between Cairston and Gernaness lead to some circumspect conclusions. The suggestion that there were two thin walls in the NW of the keep with a double entrance which lead to the hall was purely established on the presence of such a system at Cairston, as there were no wall traces left at Gernaness. The similarity between the building up of the hearths in the hall and the keep, the similar flooring method, and the foundation construction allow the conclusion that these buildings were probably contemporary to be reached. It is not possible to establish the relationship between the outer surrounding wall and the internal buildings.

The external area of the keep was roughly 8.9m^2 at its greatest, which is of a similar size to Castlehowe, and marginally larger than both Cubbie Roo's and Damsay. However, considering the context of the keep, it cannot be grouped with these other sites. The keep at Gernaness is part of a complex of buildings including a hall and inner court. The only association with the Norse period is found in the four rings which have been dated between the ninth and eleventh centuries (Batey & Graham-Campbell, 1998:230). Allegedly found in the earth covering the site, these rings provide a rather uncertain *terminus ante quem*, of a settlement dating to before the ninth century. However, the

rings would not necessarily have been new when deposited so the upper date for the site could reach into the later Norse period.

The number of uncertainties associated with this site prevents anything other than extremely tentative conclusions. The building method employed, the long hall and the rings suggest a Norse association with the site. Clouston uses the wall location of the hearths to date the hall to no earlier than the end of the eleventh century. He uses the information concerning the alteration of hall fires by King Olaf from the *Heimskringla*, and a description of a feast from *Hakon's Saga* dating to 1247 (Clouston, 1926:289). The archaeological evidence cannot provide any date for the site. The dating factors outlined by Clouston are not conclusive and from the lack of any other form of evidence the site must be treated with the utmost caution. The interpretation ably argued by Clouston is convincing until a close study of the site and the excavations is carried out. It is then possible to distinguish between the real archaeological evidence and the interpretative evidence. The promontory of Gernaness has been occupied since prehistoric times and it is highly probable that the site was also inhabited during the Scandinavian occupation of Orkney. What is not apparent is when that occupation occurred, and whether it continued throughout the whole of the Norse period. The site on Gernaness appears to have been a farmstead with a thick-walled structure used as a kitchen. It is impossible to ascertain whether that structure also served as a defensive tower. The walls are thick enough to support more than one floor, and such a structure would not have been out of place, but that is all that can be safely concluded about Gernaness.

3.1 f : Cairston Castle, Stromness.

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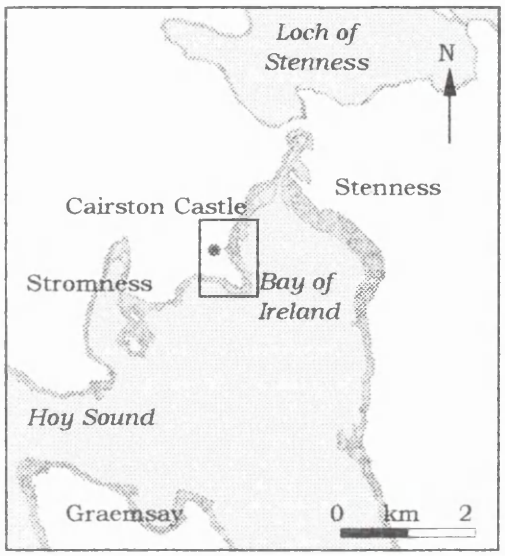
Location.

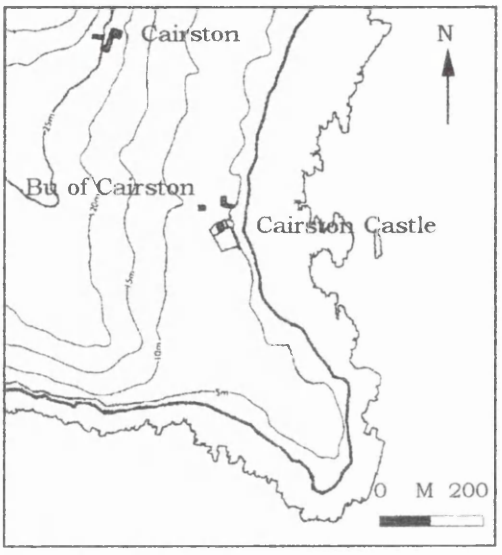
The site of the castle at Cairston is located on the W side of the Bay of Ireland, immediately S of the farm buildings at the Bu of Cairston, see figure 3.8.

Context.

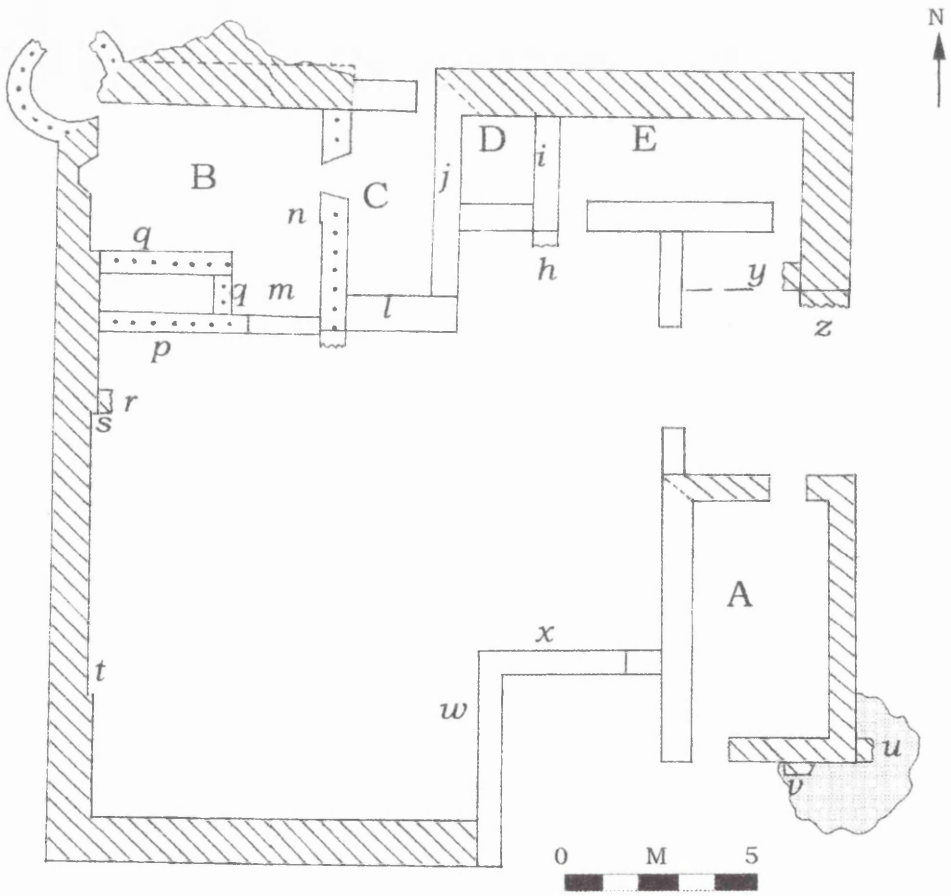
As mentioned above the site lies next to the modern farm of the Bu. To the N of the enclosure, on the edge of the shore lie the remains of a much-destroyed broch. The Commission, based on information from Clouston's 'Old Orkney Chapels II' (1918) recorded the existence of a chapel and graveyard just N of the enclosure. The site is located on the shores of a sheltered bay, with good views to the E and S but very poor visibility to the W due to the steep inclination of the Brae of Howe.



a) Location: Stromness



b) Immediate Location



c) Cairston Castle: Plan (OES99).

Figure 3.8 Cairston Castle, Stromness.

Previous References.

The only reference related to the farm of the Bu of Cairston is found in the rentals. Details of a grant bestowing the estate of Cairston to William Gordon, by Earl Robert Stewart are recorded for the year 1587. This charter included the provision for the 'bigging and beiting of houses' (Clouston, 1928-29b:59), suggesting that there were already houses on the site to be repaired. The Gordons continued to own the estate until 1774.

Previous excavations/interpretation.

The slight excavations by Clouston remain the only investigations of the enclosure, although the Commission surveyed the site for the Inventory (1946:rn.918, 322). The Commission refutes Clouston's claim that the site dates to the twelfth century. They conclude that the buildings and their layout suggest a sixteenth century date.

Cairston Castle.

The enclosure is very overgrown and is out of use, and it was not possible to reach the original ground level without the removal of earth, stones and rubbish. OES99 recorded the present buildings within the enclosure and provided an indication of the sequence of construction. Figure 3.7c shows the results of the OES99 survey, it includes all the buildings that are presently inside the enclosure. The stones used in the original enclosure walls were large and used some clay pointing. It would seem that the stone came from the denuded broch, and so it would have been weathered prior to its use in the enclosure. However, signs of even weathering indicate that the walls were built a considerable time ago.

The original enclosure would have measured 20m EW by 21m NS and is still standing to a height of approximately 2m at the highest corner in the NE. There are clear signs that the walls have been rebuilt although it is possible to see the original walling at the base. This is most evident in the W enclosing wall because of the difference in building material and technique. The wall thickness varies from 1.2m in the NE corner to 1.35m in the E wall. The modern entrance in the E wall does not appear to be original as the footings of the continuation of the E enclosure wall are still in sight (***z***). There are also traces of an early wall footing leading W from the entrance way (***y***). The SE corner of the enclosure has been extensively rebuilt to accommodate a chicken run (**A**), although the N and E walls appear to be original at the base. The W wall of the chicken run is entirely modern, as are the enclosure walls ***x*** and ***w***. The SE turret described by Clouston is no longer present, although there is a large pile of rubble at the SE corner of the chicken run and signs of two wall footings (***u*** and ***v***). The rest of the S wall appears to be original at the

base, again with signs of rebuilding. There has been a fire in the SW corner causing the stone to be blackened.

The W wall has been entirely rebuilt from points ***t*** to ***s***, a distance of 7.4m and it is slightly narrower than the original wall by 0.2m. There are the remains of another wall footing leading E at point ***r***. This inset wall and footing do not agree with Clouston's room **C**, which extended N to the keep wall, and it would appear that this was a later construction than the original enclosure wall. In the NW corner of the enclosure are the remains of the Gordon house/keep (**B** on the plan). The stairs indicated by Clouston are now filled in although the two thin walls, ***p*** and ***q*** are still apparent, along with a cross wall, which joins them, ***o***. There are the remains of a fireplace built into the W wall although the window mentioned by Clouston has been completely filled in. The turret is still standing to a height of approximately 1.8m, the entrance in the N is filled with rubble. The interior dimensions of room **B**, to the inner edge of wall ***q*** are 3.76m x 5.95m. The N wall of house **B** is much collapsed and appears original. Neither wall ***p***, ***q*** nor ***n*** is bonded into the enclosure walls. A later wall, ***m***, has been added to block the south entrance into house **B**.

Room **C** incorporates wall ***n*** and has two new walls, ***l*** and ***k***. The E wall of **C**, wall ***j*** is well bonded with the N enclosure wall, although the building styles differ suggesting that ***j*** is more modern. Room **D** is only 1.92m x 2.25m and has no entrance. There is a footing, ***h***, suggesting that wall ***i***, at one time extended S. The final room **E** was the piggery. It measures 6.15m x 2.25m internally and has two entrances. The interior of the NE corner shows even signs of weathering confirming the late edition of the piggery to the enclosure. The W wall of the piggery butts against the N enclosing wall and no attempt has been made to bond the walls.

The dating of the site was not possible from the remaining structures although a tentative relative chronology has been indicated. The oldest walls were found at the base of the enclosing walls, followed by walls ***p***, ***q*** and ***n***, and the NE turret. All the walls in white on the plan are more recent. The SE corner is very difficult to date. The stones at the base of the E wall are very large and appear to represent a continuation of the original enclosure wall. The area of rubble surrounding the SE corner covers the lower levels of walling and the curious footings ***v*** and ***u*** cannot be explained, although they appear to be built in a style akin to the older parts of the enclosure.

Interpretation.

Although OES99 established a basic relative chronology for Cairston it did not provide any indication of a date for the site. There are certain areas where the survey contradicts

Clouston's evidence and these need to be considered. The inset in the W wall does not concur with Clouston's house **C**, and although the rebuild is later than the original W wall, it would not seem to be modern, from the style of construction. The footing at ***r*** further confirms the idea that there has once been a building located against the W wall. The lack of bonding in the three inner walls of room **B** implies that **B** was built after the enclosure, therefore it need not be an original feature. There was no trace of the SE turret, or of the excavations carried out by Clouston, neither was there any trace of an outer ward, or any lime mortar.

The enclosure at Cairston appears old, the stones are large and weathered, there is only slight signs of clay bonding and the stones are built join above join, which is an old style of construction (Clouston, 1928-29a:9-16). However, this does not equate with a twelfth century date. Room **B** does not appear similar to any of the other suggested keeps, in either size or style. Its inner walls are only 0.75 and 0.5m wide, which does not suggest a defensive purpose. The thick enclosure walls, at their widest 1.35m, conform to a defensive measure, although the lack of knowledge concerning the relationship between the enclosure and the interior buildings prevents any conclusive interpretations of the site being made. The general layout of the enclosure is similar to the castle of Ragnhildsholm, built by King Hakon, which consisted of a rectangular enclosure 40m x 36m, with a series of buildings inside (Clouston, 1931:10). This basic pattern can also be seen at the King's castle and the Bishop's castle, Oslo. Therefore, although the enclosure at Cairston is not similar in plan to any other defensive structure in Orkney it is similar to early thirteenth century Scandinavian fortifications. The allocation of an early date to Cairston would seem plausible considering the rather rough building technique.

The archaeological evidence alone does not provide any conclusive evidence to suggest that the site of Cairston was home to a twelfth century castle. However, the place-name evidence, the status of the land as earldom property, the defensive nature of the enclosure wall, and the saga evidence suggests that there was a high-status defensive element in Cairston's past.

3.2 OTHER DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES.

The sites discussed above, termed castles by Clouston, are not the only defensive structures apparent in Norse Orkney. As mentioned in chapter two brochs provided temporary refuge in times of unrest and ships were also often slept on as a form of defensive measure. It is also possible to identify forms of defence in farmsteads and churches within the earldom. This section will briefly describe two farmsteads that appear to include defensive rooms and three unexcavated possibilities, as well as four churches which feature what could be interpreted as defensive towers.

3.2 a : Defensive Farmsteads.

The first of these farmsteads is the multi-period settlement at Skaill in Deerness. The area was excavated by Peter Gelling in the years 1963-81, and written up by Simon Buteux (Buteux, 1997). The eleventh century house and the medieval structures that superseded it are the areas of interest in this study. The place-name Skaill in Orkney has been regarded as an indication of an important structure (Marwick, 1952:237-240). Although the name *skali* developed in Norway as representing a hut or small shed it appears that within Orkney the term developed a more grandiose meaning. Marwick undertook analysis of the *skali* names within Orkney and it has been much discussed since (Marwick, 1952:237-240; Thomson, 1987:32-33; Lamb, 1997:15). Although there is no conclusive evidence it seems likely that the *skali* name in Orkney represents farmsteads with a special social function. Lamb has suggested that the Skaill names may be associated with the Norse system of *veizlu* or hospitality (Lamb, 1997:15). This would account for the paradox between the low rental value of the properties and the great size of the farmsteads. It is interesting that two of the alleged castle sites have Skaill names (Westness in Rousay, and Langskaill/Netherskaill in Birsay).

Skaill is located in a prime area for the exploitation of land and sea resources, with the Norse settlement lying at the S end of the sheltered Bay of Sandside. Close to the settlement was the now destroyed twelfth century twin towered church described below. Lamb has identified this settlement as the home of Amundi and his son Thorkel, foster father of earl Thorfinn (Lamb, 1997:13). This would make the site a high status residence and the house where earl Einar met his death (Taylor, 1938:156). Although it is often difficult to locate houses mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga* with any accuracy it does seem that Skaill is the most likely location for Thorkel's dwelling.

The Norse period settlement at Skaill included buildings at site 2, site1 (medieval) and site 4, see figure 3.9. A sequence of five superimposed buildings was found at site 2 to span from the end of the eighth century to the eleventh century. The settlement focus then migrated S to site 1, where limited excavations revealed the eleventh century house associated with Thorkel Amundison. There appears to have been a twelfth century first floor hall house built over the eleventh century house. However, site 1 could not be excavated in its entirety due to the construction of the modern byre over part of the site. Site 4 revealed an eleventh century building interpreted by Gelling as a bath house but in all probability it is more likely to have served as a large kitchen, see figure 3.10a (Buteux, 1997:79-80).

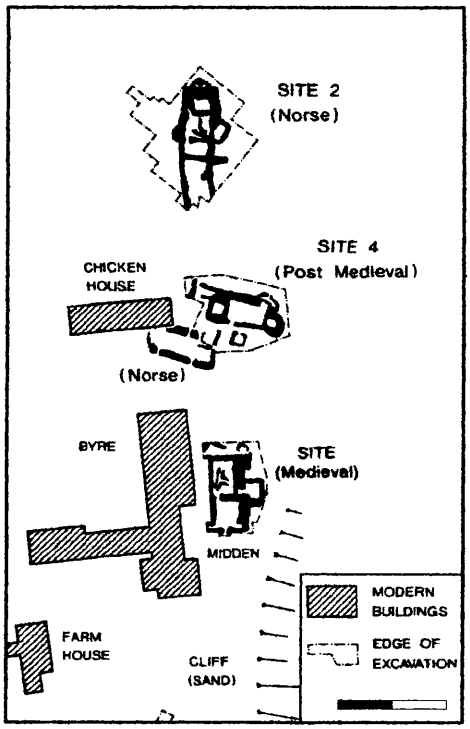
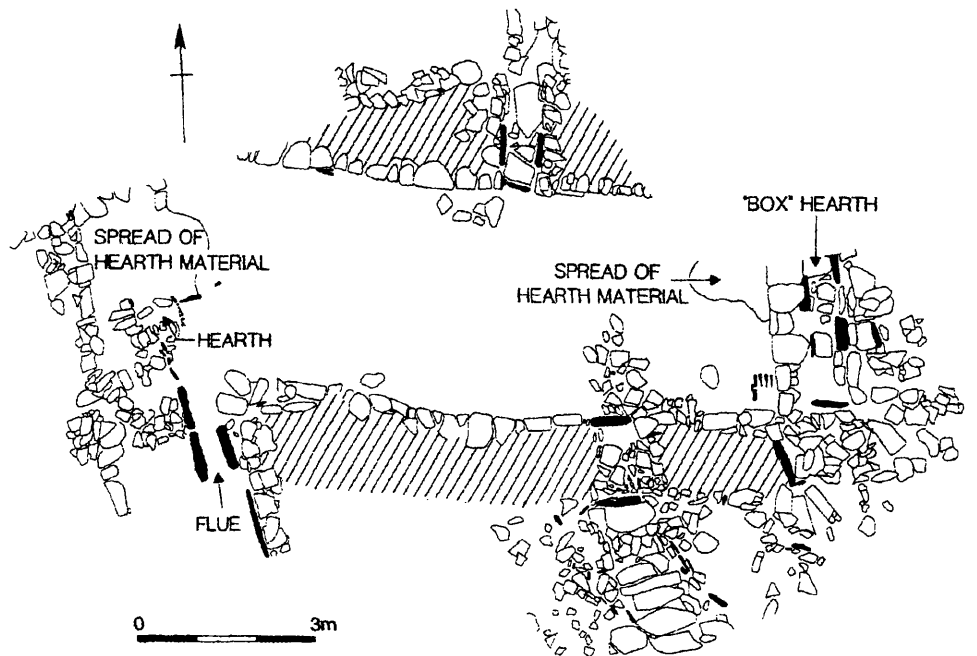


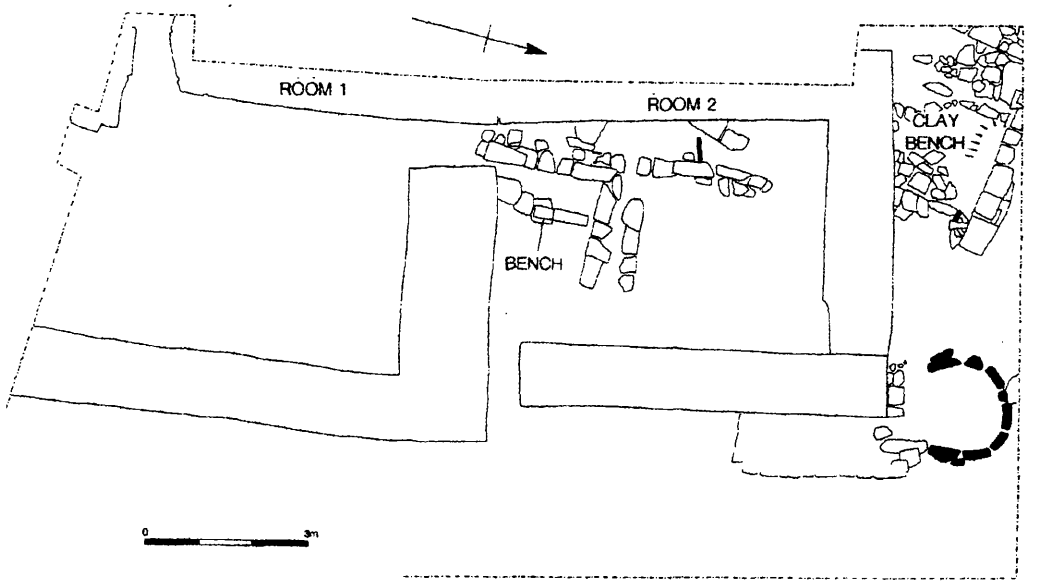
Figure 3.9 Location map of excavations at Skaill, Deerness, (after Buteux:1997:5).

It is unfortunate that only partial excavations of the site 1 could be undertaken, as the fragmentary remains have proved difficult to interpret. The remains revealed five internal wall faces of a well-built house divided into three rooms, see figure 3.10b. Gelling noted that the stones were more carefully selected and better built than in the site 2 houses (Gelling, 1984:35). The presence of benches, floor paving and the apparent complicated structure of this house led Gelling to suggest that it was the most likely contender for the farmstead of Thorkel (Gelling, 1984:38). These features also indicate a late Norse date.

Large walls with a maximum width of over 2m, and surviving to a height of c. 2m were built over the eleventh century house, figure 3.11a. These walls led to the identification of the building as a medieval tower; however, further excavations resulted in the abandonment of this interpretation. The large walls were established as belonging to a room, roughly 5.5m x 6.1m, occupying the NE corner of a larger building. The complexity of this building and the carefully built walls, laid in clay mortar, is again suggestive of a high-status settlement. The strong room had an entrance leading outside in the N wall, and an entrance leading to another room[1] in the W wall. Internal features included a hearth, some paving and three cubby holes. Later editions to this building include the reinforcement of the E and S walls with stone walls laid in lime mortar, and successive hearths. There was also the addition of another room to the N, built with lime mortar and entered from the E, figure 3.11a & b. The E wall of this room was also



a) Site 4: Norse Building, Possible Kitchen.



b) Site 1: Norse Building Underlying Medieval Building.

Figure 3.10 Sites 4 & 1, Skaill: Norse Buildings
(from Buteux, 1997:fig. 7.9 & 7.10)

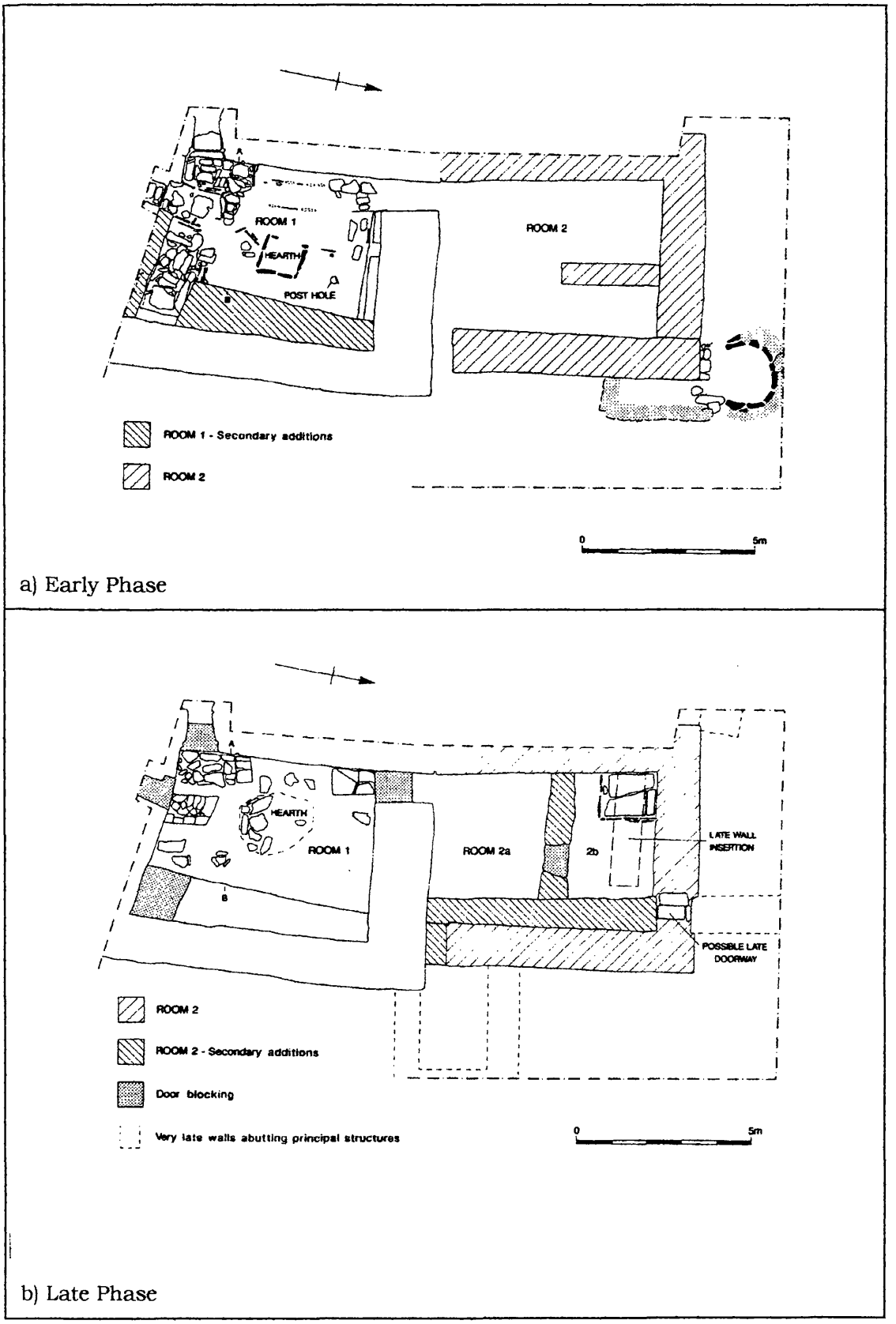


Figure 3.11 Site 1, Skaill: Early & Late Phases of Medieval Building (from Buteux, 1997:fig 16.1 & 16.2).

reinforced and a partition wall was added thus creating two smaller rooms, figure 3.11b. The door in the E wall and the door connecting to room one were also blocked at a later date.

Buteux agrees with Gelling's allocation of a twelfth century date to building (Buteux, 1997: 215). He compares the building style to Cubbie Roo's castle, the Round Church in Orphir and the settlement at Tuquoy. The building appears to have been a first-floor hall-house, similar, if less grand, than that built for the bishop of Orkney adjacent to St Magnus Cathedral. He believes rooms one and two to belong to the first phase of occupation, with room 2 serving as a store. The hall and living area would have been located on the first floor with the remaining walls belonging to the undercroft, similar to that suggested at the Wirk. Buteux also notes the association of house and church stating 'there is little room for doubt, therefore, that in the twelfth century a high-status hall, if not a castle, would have been situated near to the church at Skaill' (Buteux, 1997:216). This association will be explored further below.

The Norse settlement at Skaill and the later medieval buildings appear to represent part of a large and wealthy farmstead. The interpretation of the structure as a first-floor house-hall is convincing especially considering the obligation of hospitality expected from the magnates of the earl. The combination of important secular settlement and ecclesiastical building is also an important feature of this site. The medieval church of Skaill may well have served as the Minster church of the area and consequently the farmstead of Skaill would also have provided hospitality for the bishop (Lamb, 1997:15-16). It seems that at this early time in the development of the bishopric of Orkney the bishop was itinerant in much the same way as the earl. The proximity of the religious settlement on the Brough of Deerness has been noted by Lamb who postulates that Thorkel was creating a similar situation in Deerness as Thorfinn had developed in Birsay (lamb, 1997:16). Thus Skaill represents the farmstead of one of the most important men in eleventh century Orkney and his descendants. The interpretation of a hall-house at Skaill provides parallels with the Wirk on Rousay; however, the presence of successive hearths in the fortified room at Skaill seems to suggest a different function for the strong room, perhaps a kitchen and store. The building complex at Skaill is more closely paralleled at the recently excavated site of Tuquoy in Westray than in any other previously excavated site.

Tuquoy lies in the SW of Westray and was part of a rescue excavation by Olwyn Owen in the 1980s. The find evidence and the externally plastered walls at Tuquoy indicate a high status settlement, on a par with, or perhaps richer than Skaill. The site is located close to the shore and directly W of the twelfth century Cross Kirk, which in turn has

boat nausts to its E. Marwick indicated that the farm of Tuquoy was once part of a large land unit including the farms of Midbea and Air and could well have been one of the lost Orkney *Bus* (Marwick, 1952:34-5). Lamb more recently suggested that the Norse farmstead of Tuquoy was the possible home of Thorkel Flettir. Thorkel is one of three *goeðingr* referred to as living in Westray (Taylor, 1938:218), Kugi and Helgi are said to have lived at Rapness and Pierowall respectively but the home of Thorkel is not mentioned. The independent findings of Marwick, Owen and Lamb fit well together, and although it is not possible to be certain that Thorkel lived at Tuquoy, it is currently the only possible contending high-status Norse site on Westray.

The remains of four substantial walls were seen in section in the eroding shore face. When excavated these walls were discovered to be part of a long rectangular structure, see figure 3.12. The widest wall, 1.42m wide at the W end, was interpreted as a possible entrance, and was dry-stone built with large square blocks and external plastering. The N end of this building extended beyond the confines of the trench and was not excavated but minimum internal measurements of 6.65m x 3.75m were established. The walls were all over 1m thick and there was evidence for three layers of floor paving inside the building. Unlike Skaill there were no internal features identified, although there were fragments of steatite bowls along with high-status bone and metal artefacts found (Owen, 1984:51). The original large building was subsequently altered with the insertion of partition walls on three occasions. A rune stone incorporated in the final partition wall of this building, and a ring-headed pin provided a twelfth century date. This structure was built on poor foundations and it is the opinion of the excavator that it could not have stood higher than 2-3m (Owen, 1983:6), it was severely robbed of stone and this could have been due to its instability.

Another structure of smaller flatter stones succeeded the first building; it also had structural weaknesses and showed signs of vertical joins. This building, built at right-angles to the first, thus blocking the entrance, was over 13m x 5m. The amount of debris associated with this structure could indicate that it was originally quite high. Unlike the first, this structure showed considerable signs of domestic debris, including large amounts of burning, this along with metalworking debris have lead to the interpretation of the building as a smithy (Owen, 1993:328).

Tuquoy is very similar to Skaill in location and building style. The externally plastered walls are also found at Cubbie Roo's castle whilst the size of the structure is similar to the Wirk on Rousay. The connection between the two buildings is unclear and this is unfortunate. The second building was built after the first, however this does not rule out the continued use of the latter. The poor foundations of these structures suggest that

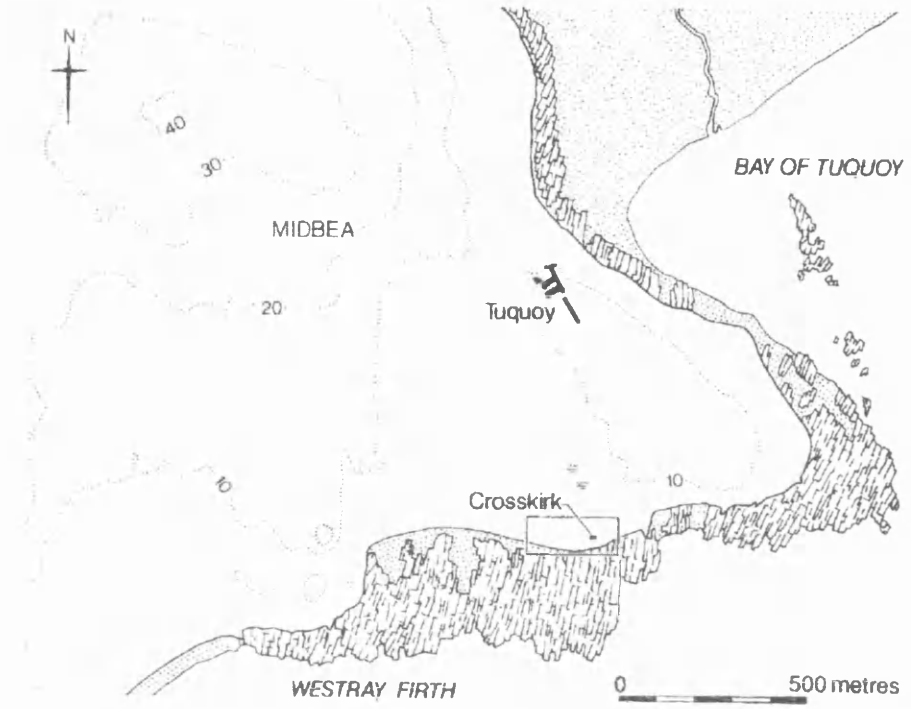


Figure 18.1: The context of the site (C. Unwin).

a) From Owen, 1993: fig.18.1

Tuquoy, Westray, Orkney

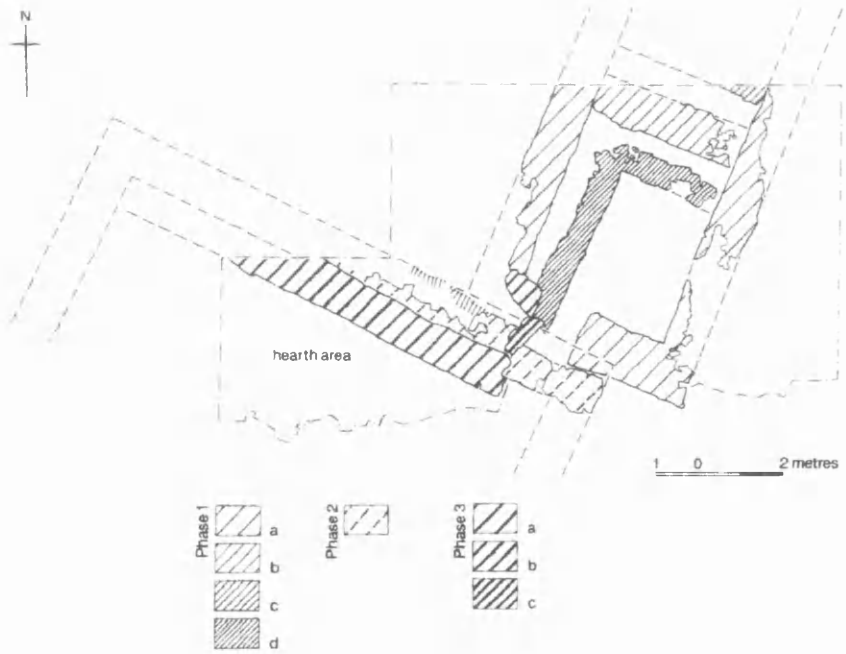


Figure 18.4: The late Norse 'hall' and other buildings (C. Unwin).

b) From Owen, 1993: fig.18.4

Figure 3.12 Context & Plan of Tuquoy, Westray.

they were only one storey although the thickness of the walls in the first would surely have allowed for the presence of a first floor, if only for a limited period. The lack of internal features in the first building has more in common with the strong room at the Wirk than the furnished room at Skaill. The apparent lack of domestic evidence at Tuquoy could be resolved if a feast hall function were postulated with a separate living area whether on another floor or on another part of the site. This would allow building one to serve a similar function to room two at Skaill. A storeroom would explain the need for a paved floor and a large amount of space. From the reports it is difficult to ascertain the quantity of metal working debris associated with building two, and whether some of the many domestic finds were also associated with it. The emphasis on burning within this building and the absence of any hearth in building one is interesting, especially when considering the alleged cookhouse found at Skaill. If the site at Tuquoy is seen as a high-status late Norse/medieval farmstead associated with the nearby church then it could be inferred that hospitality obligations would be expected of the owners as at Skaill. If this farmstead were expected to entertain both the earl and the bishop then considerable catering facilities would be necessary, thus explaining the existence of a large hall and store room with a possible kitchen area.

The three possible defensive farmsteads are both located in Eday and Sanday. The Castle of Stackel Brae, Eday is an indeterminate mound located at the shore at Maltbarn. Coastal erosion has revealed a 37m section of structural remains in association with the mound, which appears medieval in date. The main wall is clay bonded and appears to be of three constructional phases, with the most recent phase showing signs of lime mortar on both faces (Lamb, 1984:rn.29, 12). The remains appear to be similar to those first sighted at Tuquoy although of a smaller scale. There is a midden associated made up of burnt stone and shell. The site is believed to have been the main high-status building in Eday prior to the construction of Carrick House in 1633 (Wilson & Moore, 1996:81). Although the site may be of later medieval date the similarity between the projecting walls and Tuquoy implies that the site may originate in the late Norse period. The second site is located on a low point at the W side of Sealskerry Bay, Eday. The slight remains seen in an exposed section of shore comprise of drystone angular walling with internal features constructed upon midden deposits (Wilson & Moore, 1996:81). There is record of a complete medieval type pot being found in association with a stony mound at the site (Lamb, 1984: rn.34, 13). Although the remains cannot be identified without excavation the association of the site with the name 'castle' and the medieval find imply a large early structure, and cannot rule out a late twelfth century date for the site. The third site is located next to Crosskirk at the E side of Backaskaill Bay, Sanday. Coastal erosion has revealed a large amount of deposits including large walls with a lime plaster similar to those found at Tuquoy. The archaeological evidence is centred between the farms of

Backaskaill and Bea Ness two important place-names indicating rich Norse farmsteads. For this reason it is probable that an important Norse farmstead was located somewhere in the vicinity and the remains discovered could well be the site; only excavation will solve this identification.

It appears that the Wirk, Skaill and Tuquoy (possibly along with Castle of Stackel Brae, Sealskerry Bay and the Earls Bu in Orphir) are representatives another form of defensive structure that was present within twelfth century Orkney. These buildings were farmsteads of the wealthy land-owning class. They functioned as working farms, stores, feast-halls and could also serve as retreats. The presence of the strong rooms suggests that the tower signified power and yet was also considered necessary. The possibility of violence was considered real enough by these men that they included defensive measures within their homes and although the Saga tends to glorify violent acts there is a sense of disruption and uncertainty in the twelfth century. The sources of this disruption will be discussed in chapter four.

3.2 b : Defensive Churches.

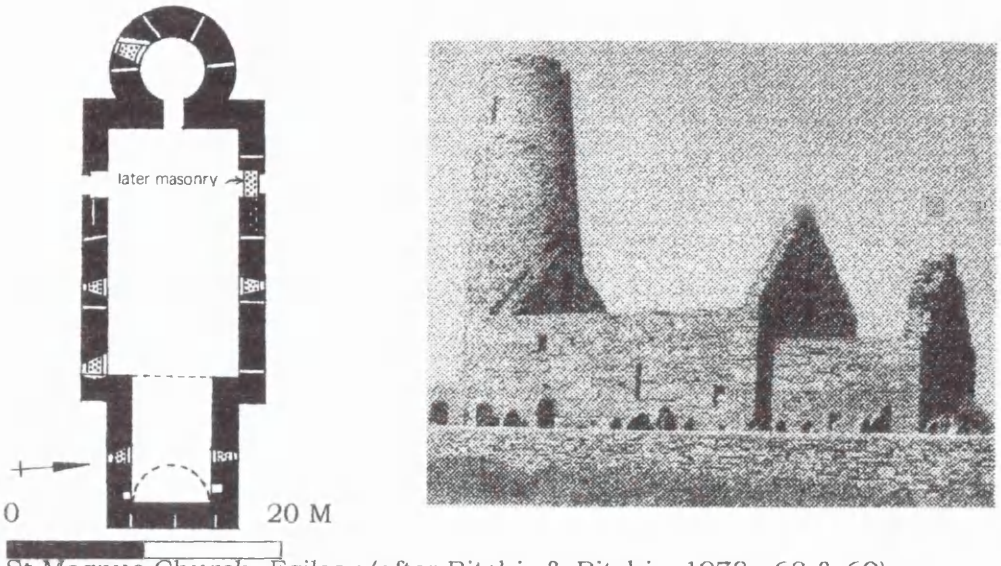
The close relationship between earl and bishop is exemplified in the saga where the bishop often appears as mediator between rival earls and other disputing parties. As mentioned Lamb has suggested that there was an itinerant bishop within Orkney, requiring similar hospitality to the earls. It is fair to assume that this mobility continued after the construction of the cathedral in Kirkwall, as the bishop would have been consolidating his influence within Orkney at the same time as centralising church organisation. One can imagine that the bishop was part of the earls' retinue and so the two may well have expected hospitality at the same time from the various magnates in the earldom.

Within Orkney there are three known twelfth century round towered churches, and possibly several smaller churches also showing signs of square towers. The impetus behind the erection of church towers would generally be considered an architecturally inspired decision, rather than a functional determination. However, Clouston has suggested a parallel between the tower at Gernaness and the tower once on the Stenness church (Clouston, 1928-29b:57), and this architectural parallel could represent a social/functional parallel also. It is for the above reason that the towered churches will be briefly discussed and their function considered. Of the three towered churches only one remains standing although the other two are recorded in early drawings (Low, 1879: xxiv, 54). As with the castle structures a preference for simple stone built chapels results in considerable difficulty in dating the chapels in Orkney.

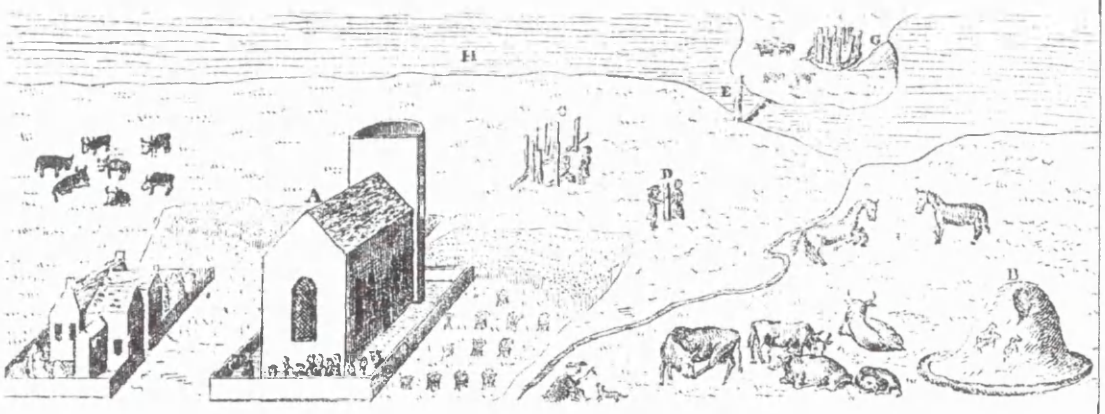
St Magnus Church on Egilsay was once thought to have been the church where St Magnus was martyred in 1116/17, however, it is now considered to have been built in the twelfth century after the martyrdom and once Magnus' sanctity was realised (Fernie, 1988:144), see figure 3.13. The church is located on almost the highest point of Egilsay. It is built of local stone with lime mortar and internally plastered walls, and shows the same failure to break bond in the wall construction as seen in all the previously mentioned Orkney sites in this chapter. The conspicuous tapering round tower is built at the W end of the nave, and stands 14.9m high, although this is not the original height as approximately 4.5m of tower were dismantled in the nineteenth century for safety reasons (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978:68). The walls of the tower appear to be approximately 0.9m wide. There are two entrances in the tower, one in the ground floor and one in the first floor, both from the nave. There are windows in all four surviving levels one S facing, one W facing, one E facing, and four facing the main compass points respectively. The attachment of the tower to the nave has been compared to that at Stenness (RCAHMS, 1946: rn.611, 228). The Commission suggested that the round tower influence came from Ireland, however, it has been more recently been postulated that the round towers are linked by means of the Northern Sea to a north Germanic origin (Fernie, 1988:140-161; Graham-Campbell & Batey, 1998:256).

The old Stenness parish church was included in a drawing of the monuments of Stenness presented to the Society of Antiquaries for Scotland in 1784, see figure 3.13b. This drawing, by William Aberdeen, was annotated 'the Kirk of Stainhouse, upon the west end of which is built in form of a semicircle a steeple' (Low, 1879:xxv). Low remarks that the drawing is 'not very good' (Low, 1879:lv), and Clouston showed this to be correct when he partially excavated the tower in 1928 (Clouston, 1928-9b:68-70). The semicircular tower was built on a rectangular foundation plinth, measuring 4.77m x 3.46m. This foundation was rectangular for c. 0.2m and was ornamented with a chiselled block of red sandstone in the NW corner. The N and S walls of the tower were 1.54m thick and the W measured 1.3m at its widest. The interior chamber was 1.7m x 1.5m, allowing for a 0.6m wide E wall. Clouston suggested that further up the tower the walls would have been thinner creating more interior space. It was postulated that the original church was just over 7m wide with the tower attached to the middle of the W gable. Clouston compared this towered church to French defensive towers that he believed could have been seen by Earl Rognvald when abroad. He believed the tower to have served a defensive purpose although at the same time he acknowledged the ornamental nature of the foundations (Clouston, 1928-9b:70).

The third towered church was described by Low in 1774 as 'the most remarkable country Kirk in these isles' (Low, 1879:54). Skaill church in Deerness was sketched at three



a) St Magnus Church, Egilsay (after Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978 : 68 & 69).



b) Stenness Church, (from Low, 1879 : xxiii).

c) Deerness Church, Skaill, Deerness, (from Low, 1879 : 54).

Figure 3.13 Three Round Towered Churches.

different angles by Low (1879:54), indicating the position of the twin towers on the E end of the church, see figure 3.13c. Dietrichson includes Low's drawings in his *Monumenta Orcadica* although he mistakenly located the church on the Brough of Deerness (1906:19-20). Low described how the right hand steeple was entered from the vault whereupon a turnpike stair led into a small vestry located between the towers, this vestry then led into the left hand tower. This is the only description of the church whose towers are comparable to Egilsay and Stenness. The presence of a hogback burial stone in the graveyard reinforces the possible early date attributed to the church. The indication of a path leading from the settlement at site 1 to the church is further evidence for the presence of a church in that location in the late Norse period (Buteux, 1997:216).

Therefore, there appears to be three similarly designed churches in three separate areas within Orkney. Lamb has postulated three Shetland examples that also conform to this North Sea pattern: Tingwall, Ireland and Papil (Morris, 1993:57). The architectural similarities of these towers can be seen from the above figures, however it is clear that the Stenness tower appears more forbidding and Aberdeen does not show nor mention windows, unlike the other two examples. It is perhaps relevant that tradition recalls the imprisoning of criminals in the tower, so it may have served as a temporary prison, which would fit with the small size of the chamber. The architectural features of the Egilsay and Skaill towers do not indicate a primarily defensive function. The Egilsay church was probably built to commemorate earl Magnus' martyrdom. The inclusion of a large tower would seem a fitting symbol for the dead earl and it is possible that the tower served also as a lookout as indicated by the presence of four windows in the fourth level. The church at Skaill again monumental in construction reflects the wealth of the patron and thus supports the identification of Skaill as the seat of a chieftain. The monumental scale of the twin towered church and the hall-house at Skaill combine to form a statement of wealth and prestige. The farmstead providing the venue for entertainment and the church symbolising the Christian adherence of the owner, it is more probable that the farmstead tower represented a defensive measure than the more ornate and symbolic church towers.

It is perhaps more accurate to consider these round towered churches in conjunction with St Magnus Cathedral and the Round Church at Orphir[2], as twelfth century monumental buildings. St Magnus Cathedral, Egilsay, Skaill, Orphir and, to a lesser extent, Stenness exemplify the wide range of architectural influences affecting the design of buildings within Orkney. These monumental buildings represent the power and wealth

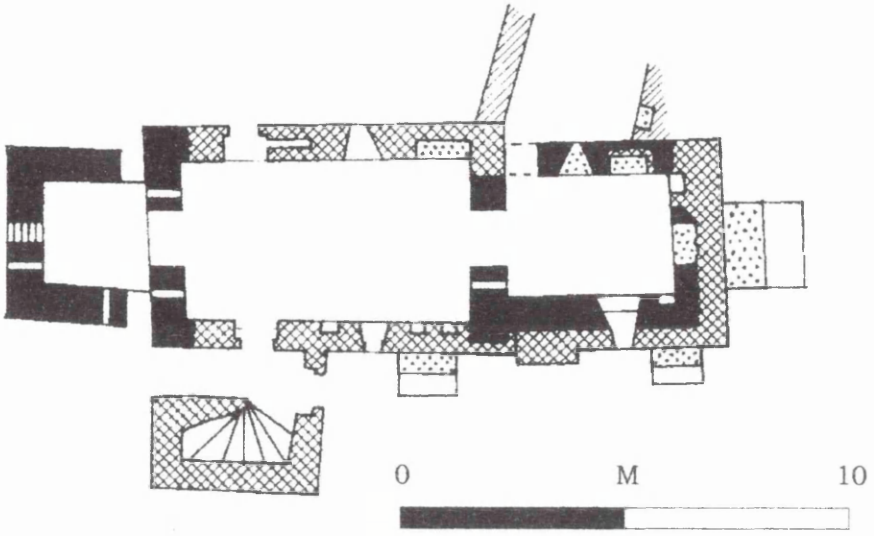
[2] The original inspiration for the Round church was the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, although it has been suggested that the influence may have been Scandinavian (Graham-Campbell & Batey,1998:256), see Johnson, 1903:16-31 for excavation details..

of the aristocracy, however, the thick-walled church towers may also represent a form of defence paralleling the hall-houses rather than merely allowing the tower to be built high.

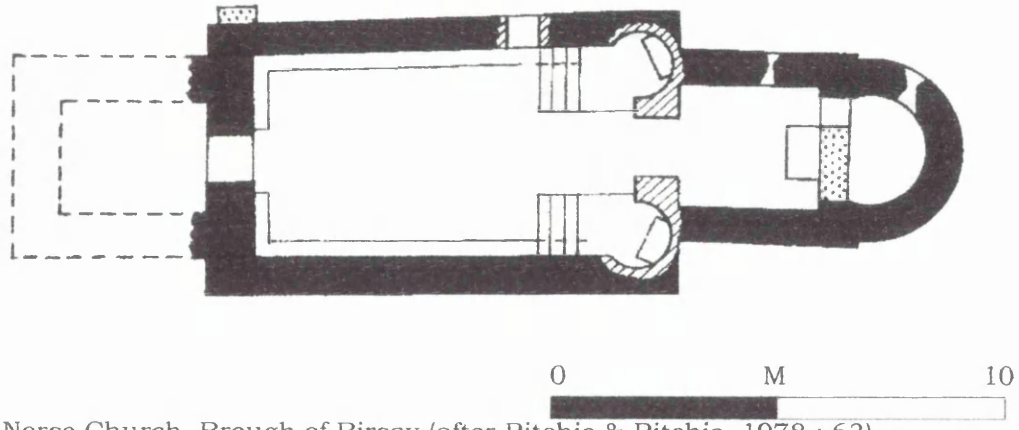
In contrast there are three examples of square towered chapels in Orkney, see figure 3.14. The first is the chapel on the Brough of Birsay, which has traces of what has been interpreted as a tower on the W end. The second tower is found on the W end of the chapel on Eynhallow and is very similar in design to that on the Brough of Birsay. The third chapel is less well documented, known as Tammaskirk, this church on the Rendall shore facing Gairsay was excavated by Clouston in 1930 (Clouston, 1931-32a:9-16). In this instance the chancel walls were over 1.2m thick whilst the nave walls were just under 1m thick. Clouston has postulated that these thick chancel walls, with extra lime, supported a defensive tower of considerable height. The tower was located on the E end of the nave facing out towards the sea. The church appears to have been built into the churchyard wall at the E and N walls. Clouston suggests that the patron of this church could have been Sweyn Asleifson (1931-32a:14-16).

The chapels on Birsay and Eynhallow appear to have ornamental square towers, the walls are not unusually thick and there is no reason to suggest that either chapel (both of which have been associated with monasticism) would have required a defensive tower. Tammaskirk has several features which suggest that there may well have been a tower present. The large width of the chancel walls and the extra lime mortar suggest that the walls were supporting a considerable weight and this can be explained by the presence of extra floors. The nature of these floors cannot be ascertained. The rectangular design differs from the ornate round towers already mentioned and the internal area of the chamber would have been roughly 4m x 2.7m, large enough to serve as a retreat. However, this is merely speculation, the presence of a thick walled tower is highly possible at Tammaskirk, and the defensive nature of that tower cannot be ruled out.

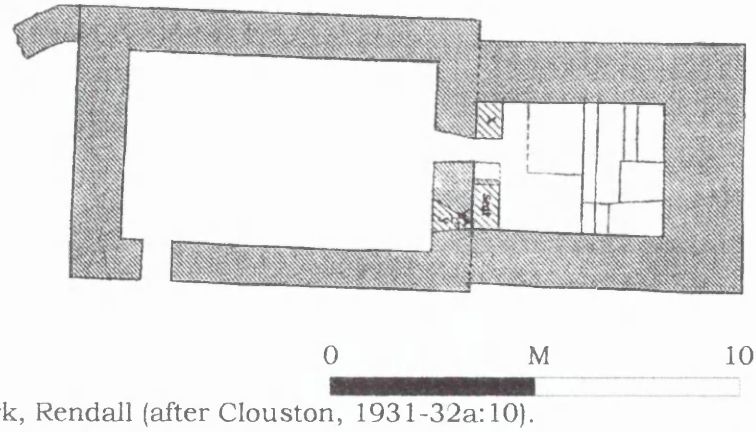
In conclusion the towers mentioned above, apart from Tammaskirk, do not appear to have had a primarily defensive function. The towers are more fitting with ornamental architecture reflecting status and power than provisions for an attack. It is interesting that the churches symbolised status because there are well-built twelfth century chapels associated with almost all the mentioned farmsteads and castles. It may be possible to establish the important social implications of owning a church, as well as the ecclesiastical benefits. The association of Christianity with power is not a new theory, and would complement the tentative suggestions concerning twelfth century society in Orkney. As far as the presence of defensive churches in Orkney is concerned there is little evidence to suggest that this was ever a common feature. Of the many early chapel sites within the islands there is only Tammaskirk to support the notion of a primarily



a) Eynhallow Church, Eynhallow (after Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978 : 70).



b) Norse Church, Brough of Birsay (after Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978 : 63).



c) Tammaskirk, Rendall (after Clouston, 1931-32a:10).

Figure 3.14 Three Square Towered Churches.

defensive tower, and although this instance is extremely interesting it does not validate the opinion that there were many more such buildings within Orkney. The architectural similarity of the tower at Stenness and that at Gernaness appears only to concern the external shape of the tower, and this in itself is questionable, as the archaeology at Gernaness did not extend beyond foundation level. It would seem more appropriate to include Stenness in the group of twelfth century renaissance buildings within Orkney rather than grouping it with the rather dubious towers at Gernaness and Cairston.

3.3 OTHER RELEVANT SITES.

In this chapter only structures within Orkney have been discussed. This is due to the restriction of the study area to Orkney as there is not enough time to amply discuss the whole of the Earldom. However, it is important that other relevant sites are mentioned briefly.

As already stated Lamb has postulated three church sites within Shetland conforming to a similar style of architecture as the round towered examples in Orkney. There are no known examples of such churches from Caithness. Evidence for possible defensive farmsteads such as those at Tuquoy, Skaill and the Wirk can be found in other areas as well. A similar form of building to Skaill, Deerness can be identified in the twelfth century farmhouse at Jarlshof, Shetland. An irregular structure with over 2m thick walls similar to room 1, Skaill has signs of several additions similar to those in room 2 at Skaill (Buteux, 1997:215). The two main farmstead in Caithness, Freswick and Roberts Haven have no indication of defensive structures although the settlements develop in a similar manner and the complexity of the buildings increase through time as at Skaill and Jarlshof. It is interesting that the two Caithness sites mentioned match the locations of the only two *Bu* sites Clouston found within Caithness (Clouston, 1926-27:49). The bishop's palace in Kirkwall is another related structure, although serving as a feasting/entertainment hall rather than a farmstead (Morris, 1993:50).

One of the most relevant castle structures outwith Orkney can be found in Wick. The Castle of Old Wick stands prominently on the seaward edge of a promontory. This simple keep measures 7.4m by 5m internally with 2.2m thick stone built walls. The keep has no diagnostic dating features, and because of the simplicity of the architecture of the site has been argued as dating to the twelfth century (Lamb, 1980:96). On the landward side of the tower there are traces of a ditch and rampart. The tower was entered at first floor level, on the seaward side. In total four floors are marked by scarcements, and there are no internal features although there are two small slit windows on each floor and a latrine chamber in the first floor. There are signs of outbuildings to the seaward side of the castle and an area has also been suggested as a courtyard (RCAHMS, 1911:rn.495). The

similarities between this castle and Cubbie Roo's castle are quite obvious. The site is also similar to Borve castle, Braal Castle and the undated castle at Forse (Morris, 1993:15). Thurso Castle was built by the Norse Earls and was located to the S of the town of Thurso, however, the site was destroyed as mentioned in chapter two by William the Lion and there is no trace left. The identity of Lambaborg has also been sought with its location being suggested at the sites of Broch of Ness and Bucholly castle (Graham-Campbell & Batey,1998:260). It is worth mentioning also the series of castles on the W coast of Scotland (Cowan, 1990:125). These structures were built in an area controlled by the Norse men and it would be interesting to compare them to those in the N.

The main groups of buildings so far discussed are not unique to Orkney, and it is important to remember this. Although this particular study is concerned with the situation in Orkney, the other areas within the earldom should not be forgotten. The above structures strengthen the argument for a simple style of keep dating to the twelfth century; they also highlight the unusual number of Norse structures preserved in Orkney. Chapter four will discuss the social and political context of twelfth century Orkney and will draw on evidence from Scotland and Norway due to the influence both countries had on the ruling of the earldom.

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has provided a detailed analysis of the current archaeological status of Clouston's six sites and has also provided details of other defensive sites within Orkney and outwith Orkney. These sites can be grouped under five headings, castle sites, defensive farmsteads, ornamental church towers, defensive church towers and those sites lacking the physical evidence to be attributed late Norse defensive structures. The structures within each of these groups, except the final group, will be discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTEXT & DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overall interpretation of the sites discussed in the previous three chapters. This discussion will include an examination of the social and political context of the earldom in the twelfth century and how this may have necessitated the construction of castles.

4.1 CLASSIFICATION OF DEFENSIVE SITES

As outlined in chapter three it is possible to group the archaeological sites into different categories. Four of these categories will be discussed below including all the possible sites, although the group of sites that do not appear to be of Norse defensive type will not be included. A map showing the main defensive sites is provided in figure 4.1. There is also brief consideration given to certain other defensive measures taken by the Norse in order to establish that the sites discussed in detail are not the only utilised means of defence.

The Castle site group includes one definite castle, two less conclusive possibilities, and one doubtful site. Cubbie Roo's castle is the only site positively identified as a form of castle, that being an early stone keep with defensive outworks. The remains at Castlehowe may also tentatively be added to this group along with the elusive Damsay site. The reason for attributing castle status to the Damsay site stems from the reference to the site as a *kastali* in the *Orkneyinga Saga* (Guðmundsson, 1965:192) and the traditions associating a castle with the island. The inclusion of Castlehowe in this group is based on the archaeological evidence and the location of the site. The defensive nature of the mound is reminiscent of the position of Cubbie Roo's castle, although to a lesser degree, and the structure is similar in size and shape to the keep in Wyre. The inclusion of Cairston is again based on the *kastali* reference within the *Orkneyinga Saga*, however, the problems associated with the archaeological evidence cannot be ignored and therefore, although the site is given possible castle status here, the presence of a keep at Cairston is still doubtful.

The defensive farmstead group comprises several sites including two of Clouston's 'castle' sites. The Wirk in Rousay, Skaill in Deerness and Tuquoy in Westray are the three most definite sites within this group. However, other sites that could be identified as defensive farmsteads include the Braes of Kastal in Birsay, the Bu in Orphir, Backaskaill in Sanday, Castle of Stackel Brae and Sealskerry Bay in Eday and Gernaness in Stenness. These sites have similar locational patterns tending to be near to the shore,

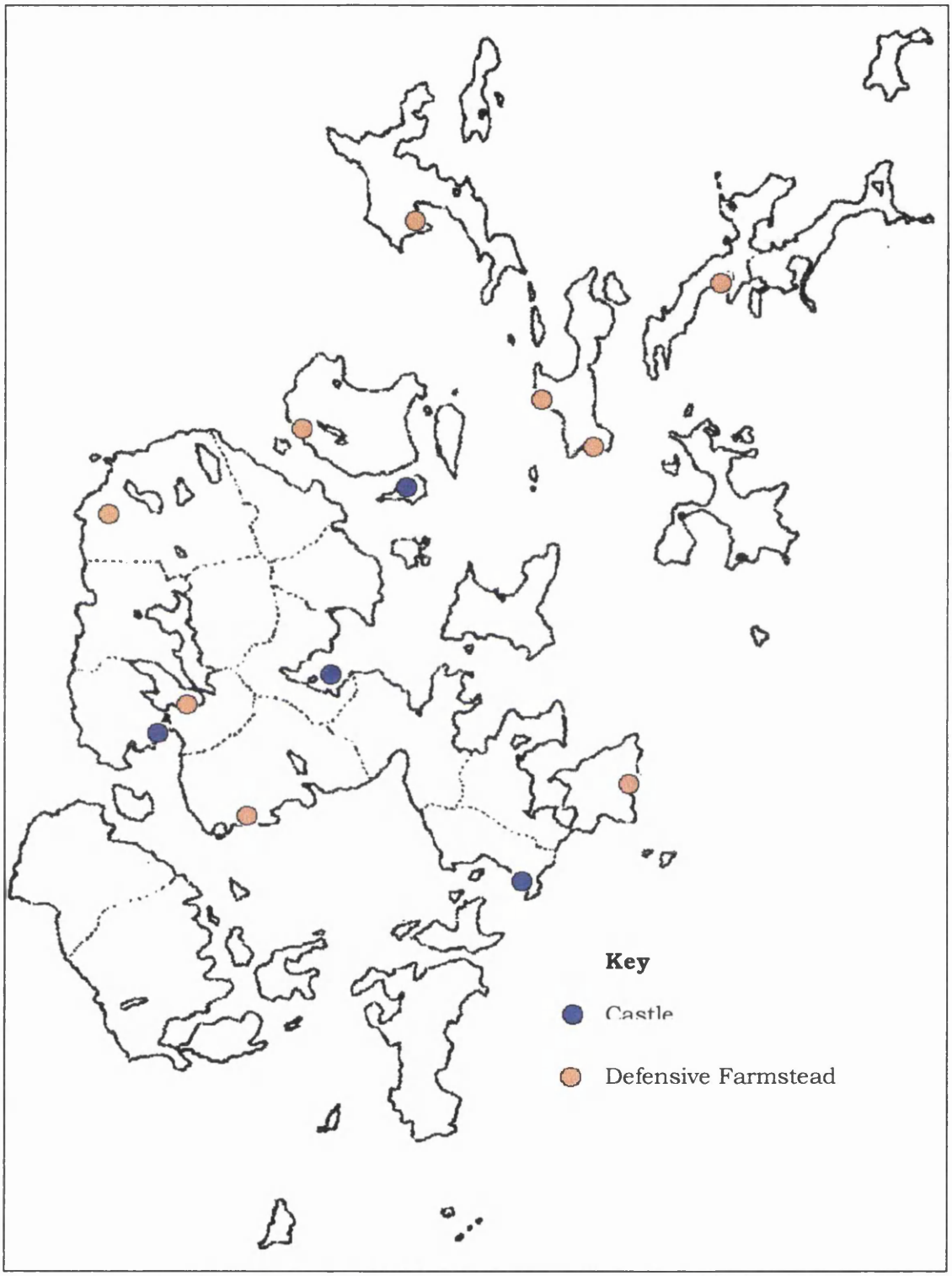


Figure 4.1 Distribution of Classified Defensive Sites.

adjacent to good farmland, associated with early churches/chapels as well as being near large farms of the later medieval period. These sites include several of the high status place-names belonging to the Norse period in Orkney and are considered to be homesteads of the chief farmers in Orkney for the above reasons.

The defensive church tower group includes those towers that appear to have had a defensive purpose other than being built for purely ornamental reasons. The two churches excavated by Clouston, Tammaskirk and Stenness church, are the main sites in this group. Also included are St Magnus church Egilsay as the tower could well have served as a form of lookout, and the alleged castle at the burn of Lushan in Birsay, which is traditionally recorded as a guard tower associated with a nearby chapel. Skaill and Stenness may also have served at watchtowers although their locations were not as important strategically.

The ornamental church towers are included within this chapter along with other non-towered churches and chapels because of their association with high status buildings. St Magnus cathedral and the Bishop's palace is perhaps the most monumental of these building and church partnerships, although the Bu and Round Church in Orphir exemplify another prestigious pairing. The introduction of the church into society was dependent on the acceptance of the earl and it is sensible to assume that the earls' closest men would be the first to endow the church, either at their own instigation or that of the earl.

Prehistoric sites utilised for defensive measures by the Norse should also be mentioned although it is not within the scope of this study to examine them in any detail. Such sites include the occupation of Mousa Broch in Shetland with the possibility of other partially surviving brochs also being used. Iron Age promontory forts are another example of prehistoric buildings that could well have been taken advantage of by the Norse, although there is no recorded evidence of this in the later Norse period.

Consideration should also be given to forms of defence not associated with buildings. The practice of sleeping on board ships appears to have been one of the safest defensive measures, as exemplified by Sweyn Asleifson (Taylor, 1938:325). Other practices included hiding in other peoples houses (Taylor, 1938:322) or even leaving the islands altogether (Taylor, 1938:156); it seems that when the earls were faced with opposition they often headed either to the Scottish or the Norwegian courts (Taylor, 1938:157).

These groups of defensive sites form an integral part of twelfth century society. To study them in isolation is in no way helpful in gaining an understanding of the context of such

sites. It is apparent from the finds from Skaill and Tuquoy, the monumental status of several of these defensive structures, and the references within the *Orkneyinga Saga* that these buildings belonged either to the earls or the main chieftains of Orkney. The most common form of defensive structure appears to have been the farmstead with strong room. From an examination of some of the duties which seem to have been expected of the earls' men and a study of the twelfth century political situation, it is possible to postulate several related reasons for the appearance of these defended farmsteads in the twelfth century. It is also possible to detect where other such farmsteads may have been located although this is speculation.

4.2 THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF TWELFTH CENTURY ORKNEY

In order to understand the institutions which made up Orcadian society, and by the twelfth century it is possible to identify an independent Orcadian social structure, it is fundamental to consider the external contacts of Norway and Scotland. The influence of these newly developed nationally aware countries, to a certain extent, defined the growth and development of the Orkney earldom into two territories with separate feudal allegiances.

The early Norse period in the north and west of Scotland can be summarised as a period of conquest and settlement (Crawford, 1987:39-58). After 1066 many of the opportunities that had been open to the Scandinavians were closed (Crawford, 1987:219) and the island colonies were faced with a different threat from the pirate raids of the ninth and tenth centuries: increasing royal interest in the island territories. This interest was spurred by a desire to introduce a more feudally binding relationship between earl and king. The kings of both Norway and Scotland throughout the twelfth century attempted to manipulate and instigate internal divisions within the northern and western isles in order to assert their own authority. This pattern of increasing royal pressure can be traced through the successive reigns of the earls of Orkney and it can be argued that this pressure in turn affected Orkney society and how it operated. These external pressures must have created an inherent sense of insecurity within the earldom, especially when they came in the form of rival claimants. The external pressures came to a climax from the middle of the twelfth century, which coincides with the construction of the defensive buildings.

A brief understanding of the changes outwith the earldom from the rule of Thorfinn II Sigurdsson until John and David Haraldsson is essential in attempting to interpret the changes within the earldom. Appendix C shows the earls of Orkney and their periods of rule in conjunction with the kings of Norway and Scotland. From this table it is possible to extract a pattern of political change and development for all three areas. The growth

and stabilisation of the Scottish and Norwegian crowns can be seen in the decreasing turnover of kings in both countries. As a consequence of this consolidation of power the kings began to assert authority over the outlying areas of their kingdoms, rather than being wholly tied to the preservation of the central areas. From the mid-twelfth century this interest is apparent in the backing of rival earldom claimants by the Scottish and Norwegian kings. The presence of rival claimants, led to internal divisions within the earldom which the kings supported as internal weakness provided an opportunity for the kings to gain control over the islands. This increase in royal power is reflected in the increasing number of Orkney earls. However, the retention of the earldoms semi-independent status and the long rule of Harald Maddadsson illustrate the internal strength of the earldom. This strength must have come from a stable and competent governmental body able to adapt to and accommodate the many changes within the twelfth century. It is suggested that the strength of the earldom came, in part, from the role of the *goeðingr*, a class of men established by Thorfinn II, which was developed and refined by consequent earls. This body, involving the great men of Orkney may help explain the presence of defensive farmsteads and castles within the islands.

Thorfinn II is perhaps the most famous of the Orkney earls and has been credited as the most successful. However, it is apparent that his success stemmed from the internal struggles within both Scotland and Norway at the time of his rule, and his ability to manipulate those situations to his advantage. During Thorfinn's rule there were five Kings of Scotland and five kings of Norway and Thorfinn's achievements relied on these quick and violent successions (Appendix C). His father's marriage to Malcolm II's daughter allied Thorfinn with the main Scottish dynastic family, however, these connections led to disputes with the earls of Moray who were also contenders for the crown. This alliance and the animosity to the earls of Moray had repercussions that lasted throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, coming to a head during Harald Maddadsson's rule. Thorfinn established a powerful earldom during a period of internal dispute within Scotland and Norway. He increased his territory, established a bishopric, implemented and reformed governmental legislation and travelled widely. His success was possible due to a lack of interest in Orkney by the two parent countries, and Thorfinn's ability as a leader.

Thorfinn's sons succeeded him to the earldom and ruled jointly until the rivalry between their sons forced the brothers to divide the earldom (Taylor, 1938:193). Externally Scotland's king Malcolm III having married Thorfinn's daughter[1] continued the close alliance between the two families, whilst Norway under the reign of Olaf Haraldsson Kyrri was also involved with internal affairs and so the earldom was essentially left alone. In

[1] The *Orkneyinga Saga* records that it was Thorfinn's widow who married Malcolm but it is more

1093 Malcolm III died with no heir apparent and disputes over the crown led to the death of Duncan II and Donald Bán. In Norway at the same time Magnus Olafsson Berfoetr had assumed power and in 1098 decided to consolidate his eastern colonies. Landing in Orkney he shipped earl Paul and earl Erlend to Norway where they died the same year, and took their sons Hakon, Erling (died 1102) and Magnus on expedition with him, placing his son Sigurd, a minor, as nominal king over the islands (Taylor, 1938:198-99). This assertion of Norwegian royal power is a reminder of the ultimate control that the kings could exert over the isles.

The consequences of Magnus' expedition were important in two ways for Orkney in particular. Firstly, his treaty with King Edgar ensured Norwegian sovereignty of the northern and western isles, but did not mention Caithness. Secondly, Magnus Erlendsson fled from Magnus Berfoetr to the court of king Edgar, spending time in Scotland, England and Wales prior to his return home in c.1105, whilst Hakon remained with Magnus Berfoetr. This division of allegiance between Hakon and Magnus is a common feature of the later earldom with one claimant gaining support from Scotland and one from Norway, especially as Caithness was considered part of the Scottish kingdom. As with the majority of the disputes the Norwegian allied claimant, Hakon, gained sole rule of the earldom, at the expense of Magnus' life.

The rule of Hakon Paulsson had been much overshadowed by the sanctity of Magnus. The saga records that the people found Hakon a fair ruler (Taylor, 1938:213) and there is no reason to doubt this. There is also a problem with the alleged notion of Hakon ruling by force after the death of Magnus (chapter one). Although there must have been some ill feeling between Magnus' men and Hakon's men there is no mention of Hakon being threatened by them. After pilgrimage to Rome, Hakon returns to an earldom where there are no apparent signs of dispute and is able to continue governing. As Crawford states, one earl meant less tax and less aggravation for the main farmers who were concerned with their harvests and their prosperity (Crawford, 1987:203). Therefore, it is not possible to assume that Hakon had to enforce his rule on any parts of the earldom, and so the construction of the 'castle' at Gernaness cannot be explained by Magnus' death.

The next external threat came again from Norway when Sigurd Magnusson and then Harald Gilli, gave Kali Kolsson, known as Rognvald, half of the earldom. Rognvald was the son of Magnus' sister and was therefore entitled to a share of the earldom. His arrival in Orkney via Shetland suggests that Shetland although allegedly part of the Orkney earldom was more closely linked with Norway. Rognvald, the instigator of the recognition of Magnus Erlendsson's sanctity, proved to be a capable man and not a Norwegian pawn

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plausible that it was his daughter due to the chronology of events (Thomson, 1987:52).

as perhaps may have been expected. In order to obtain his share of the earldom he agreed to allow Harald Maddadsson (son of Madet earl of Atholl and Margaret, Hakon Paulsson's daughter) a third of the earldom. Harald was given Caithness by David I and became joint earl with Rognvald in Orkney. Harald was supported by David I as a means of asserting Scottish control over the earldom, and to link the North of Scotland with the crown in order to prevent the mormaers of Moray gaining headway. Harald soon dispelled any expectations which David I may have had. Under the influence of Rognvald and the men of Orkney he abandoned his Scottish roots in favour of his ambitions within the earldom and the north of Scotland. This resulted in the recognition of a second claimant with Scottish support, and earl Erlend III Haraldsson was given Caithness by King David in c.1152. His claim was not welcome and needless to say in true saga fashion he was found in shallow water with a spear in his back (Taylor, 1938:320).

Rognvald proved to be a true Renaissance man, reciting poetry, going on Crusade, building the cathedral and being well liked as a leader. Even a successful earl such as Rognvald could not leave the earldom for long, as it was during his journey to Rome that Erlend III decided to claim his share. Although unsuccessful this illustrates, along with the deaths of both Erlend and Rognvald, the fragile position in which the earls found themselves at all times. It is possible to measure Rognvald's success against the lack of external pressure he experienced, and his achievements were in part possible because of the stability of the earldom. The reign of Rognvald coincided with one of the most turbulent periods in the civil wars in Norway and David I and Malcolm IV were rarely involved in affairs concerning the north (Duncan, 1975:192). However, this was to change in the years following Rognvald's death.

By the middle of the twelfth century Scotland was almost completely feudal and under the strong royal authority of Malcolm IV followed by William I. Norway's period of civil war was almost over and by 1177 the ruthless Sverri Sigurdsson was king. Both William and Sverri were expansionists and were determined to exert royal control over Orkney and Caithness. David I had begun this assertion by supporting Erlend however this proved a disappointment. William I began his reign in 1165 and faced problems from king Henry of England, and Galloway (Duncan, 1975:193). However, by the 1190's his attention was on the northern parts of his kingdom, especially after Harald's support for the MacWilliam's of Ross and Moray who rebelled in 1179-87, and because of increasing Norwegian pressure. This pressure was in the form of Sverri who took Shetland as crown property and half the fines from Orkney as compensation for Harald's support of Sigurd Magnusson in the Island Beards' rebellion (Thomson, 1987:73). Both King William and King Magnus (Sverri's predecessor) supported the rival claimant Harald the Younger (Topping, 1983:115). William's support for Harald the Younger was probably as a

consequence of Harald Maddadsson's alliance with the rebels he was promoted to dispel; a course of action very similar to that taken by David, who promoted Erlend after Harald swore allegiance to King Eysteinn of Norway.

Harald faced formidable external pressures from both Norway and Scotland, which culminated in the loss of Caithness and Shetland to the respective crowns, and the loss of Orkney's semi-independent status. In hindsight Harald's second marriage to Hvarfloð McHeth of Moray and his support for Magnus Erlingsson's son Sigurd alienated him from both William and Sverri. Harald's suspected alliance with the mormaers of Moray brought William to Caithness where his army reached as far as Castle Ormlie in Thurso, the furthest north any king of Scots had been (Thomson, 1987:75). The consequent treatment of Harald's son Thorfinn illustrates the reality of William's fear of Harald and the earls of Moray and Ross (Taylor, 1938:348). Likewise, the rebellion against Sverri, in favour of Sigurd Magnusson, which included many from Shetland and possibly Orkney provides an example of Harald's power in the north (Thomson, 1987:73-4). The fact that he retained his title of earl of Orkney and regained his title of earl of Caithness should illustrate his authority, as both Sverri and William had the right to forfeit the respective titles. Therefore, although Harald's rule saw the end of the semi-independent earldom of Orkney it does not indicate that Harald was a weak ruler (Clouston, 1932:140) and that the society was weakened. On the contrary, the retention of Norse administrative elements in later medieval law documents and rentals exemplifies the deep rooted structure of governing which had developed in the Islands throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In conclusion, the twelfth century began with the increase of Scottish interest in Caithness and Orkney and the weakening of Norwegian hold on the islands due to civil war. By the thirteenth century Norway had tightened its grip on Orkney and for several decades Orkney and Norway were in close contact (Thomson, 1987:80). Caithness had been taken under tighter Scottish control although the bishopric had moved further south from Halkirk to Dornoch (Barrow, 1996:68). During the twelfth century Orkney appears to have been an affluent area, governed by astute earls and with international connections. The twelfth century earldom was basically a feudal society, fraught with internal disputes and yet flourishing in architectural and ecclesiastical achievements. It is this period when the defensive sites appear and they should be considered in this context.

The feudalisation of Scotland was begun during the reign of Alexander I and complete by the end of William I's reign. David I erected castles and established feudal fiefs within the heartland of Scotland. His government appears to have been itinerant and most probably

travelled around the newly established units (Barrow, 1996:41). William built, as a defence against a northern attack on Moray, two castles at Redcastle and Dunskeith in 1179. At a similar date, or perhaps slightly later, a series of 22 castles were built along the western seaboard and it is possible that these were of Norse origin (Cowan, 1990:125). Therefore, the erection of a small keep, or perhaps three keeps, in Orkney was not an isolated event. The attraction of castles to the leading men of Scotland was evident by the mid twelfth century and Orkney's proximity to and involvement with Scotland should not be underestimated. The early castles in Caithness (chapter three) should also be considered part of the growing trend for castle construction. The additional defences created by the construction of a keep were perhaps only part of what the castle stood for. The owner required wealth, power, and awareness to built a keep and the keep in turn represented these elements. However, the lack of an earl's castle in Orkney is in conflict with this suggestion, as it would be expected that he would have been the first to build such a structure. Although external influences from Scotland and Europe along with the rise of a more feudally-based society would explain the appearance of the keep in the North of Scotland during the second half of the twelfth century, the lack of an earl's castle is not as easily understood. It is possible that the internal organisation of the earldom did not require an earl's castle. Another unlikely possibility is that the castle has been lost without trace or that it was located under the earl's palace.

4.3 LOCAL ORGANISATION

The organisation of the Norse earldom of Orkney will never be fully known or understood. However, it is possible, from later documents, sagas, place-names and archaeology to gain an insight into the upper levels of society. There are five areas, connected with the topic of study, arising from the saga and archaeological evidence and they will be discussed below.

The earl

The two main areas, in the system by which the earl ruled, relevant to the existence of defensive buildings are the existence of a mobile form of control and the role of the earls' chieftains. The itinerant nature of rulership required large houses to provide accommodation for the earl, situated in all areas of the earldom. The chieftains also required property in order to fulfil their requirements to the earl. These two areas will be summarised below.

The rulership of the earldom developed from a peripatetic form to a more centralised form of power during the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Thomson, 1987:63). The establishment of Rognvald's power base in Kirkwall saw a shift away from the earlier base in Birsay, although Kirkwall had already been one of the earls' seats (Taylor,

1938:183). Kirkwall was more central and formed a nucleus for administrative, ecclesiastical and economic needs; this nucleus allowed the development of these institutions but was not a complete replacement for the earlier more mobile rule of the earl. The itinerant form of control was necessary in the early period for the consolidation of power and, to a certain extent, must always have been necessary for each new earl; even with the centralisation of power the earl was still to be found visiting many areas of the earldom (Taylor, 1938:261, 262, 267, 271, 306, 308).

The earl relied on two bodies of men for support, the first was his military following (ON *hirð)* and the second was his *goeðingr*, a group of independent chieftains, originally related to the earl, responsible for the gathering of his tax (*skatt*), the raising of military levies, and the provision of hospitality (ON *veizlu*). Although the earl relied on these supporters to provide for him, and allowed them to give him guidance the ultimate rule of the earldom lay in the hands of the earl. It is the role of the *goeðingr* and their relationship with the earl that may indicate the function of the defensive buildings.

The *goeðingr.*

The *goeðingr* were a class of chieftain originating from Thorfinn II's rule and developing into powerful chieftains with considerable influence within the earldom in the twelfth century. In the *Orkneyinga Saga* Taylor refrains from translating *gœðingar* (Guðmundsson, 1965:120) into an English word and instead anglicises the ON term to gœdings, (Taylor, 1938: 217). Within his notes he explains that *gœðingr* is an untranslatable term peculiar to *Orkneyinga Saga.* He connects it etymologically to the ON term *gœdi* suggesting that the *gœðingr* were the greater land-owners in the earldom who were also related to the earl, having governmental duties in war and peace (Taylor, 1938:368). *Gœðingr* appears in Zoega's *Old Icelandic Dictionary* (1910, 176) as *gœðingr (-s, -ar)* and is translated as nobleman, chief with the given example being rather fitting, *kongungr ok hans gœðingar.* In the case of the *gœðingr* within Norse Orkney there is reason to believe that there were certain administrative/governmental obligations associated with the term, for a more detailed discussion see Clouston (1933-34:29-30).

These *goeðingr* were gifted large estates by the earl (termed *Bu*) and were thus in a quasi-feudal relationship, performing both military and administrative service in return (Clouston, 1914:159). Perhaps the most famous of the early *goeðingr* was Thorkel Amundisson who was both Thorfinn's tax collector and one of his most loyal warriors (Taylor, 1938:154, 166-68, 184). Originally part of the earls' kindred this class of men continued to be closely related to the earls, often through marriage alliances, for example Sigurd of Westness and Earl Paul (Taylor, 1938:217). The growing influence of the *goeðingr* is indicated in the dispute between Hakon and Magnus; twice there are attempts

to rationalise the situation at public assemblies (Things) and finally the earls' followers insist that one of the earls must die (Taylor, 1938:204, 206, 210). The followers would presumably have consisted of chieftains who were both members of the *hirð* and *goeðingr.* The *goeðingr* were an intermediate class (Crawford, 1987:198) between the earls and the free farmers (ON *bondi*); the influence of the *bondi* as free landholders should not be overshadowed by the presence of the *goeðingr.*

Many of the twelfth century *goeðingr* are mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga* and Clouston has calculated that there were approximately 16 to 18 such men who had a duty to raise one warship for the earl (Clouston, 1932:164-67). The ability to raise a manned warship implies that the *goeðingr* had lesser vassals of their own. Therefore, it is possible to create a hierarchical system whereby the earl is the most important vassal (his lord being the king of Norway), followed by the *goeðingr,* then the *bondi* and then the lesser free man. Although this was not a completely feudal society there are similar allegiances between lord and vassal and similar expectations required of both parties (Lamb, 1997:15). The *goeðingr* were the nobility, related to the earl, serving the earl and being served by others. The *goeðingr* lived on large earldom estates and it is most likely that the defensive sites belonged to them.

Taxation.

The subject of taxation within the Norse period in Orkney is extremely complicated and it is sufficient, for this study, to be aware of the main features of the taxation system and to appreciate the impact of this system on the providers and collectors of the taxes. There was a system of taxation within the islands including provision for naval levies, the upkeep of the earls' household, the obligation of hospitality, and perhaps payment to the King of Norway (Crawford, 1987:85-91; Thomson, 1987:70). This system may have been based on a unit known as the Urisland[2]. The two main forms of taxation, of interest here, are the naval levies and the entertainment obligation. These were two duties expected of the *goeðingr* which would have required taxation on their part, and to this can be added the duty of collecting skatt on behalf of the earl (Taylor, 1939:154).

Clouston postulated that the raising of a manned ship was a duty expected of the *goeðingr* and not a tax-supported levy, like the more complicated *leiðangr* system in Norway was (Marwick, 1934-5:15-30; Crawford, 1987:86). He proposed that Orkney could have raised approximately 16 to 18 ships, one from each *goeðingr* (Clouston,

[2] The Urisland unit (ounceland) originally denoted the amount of land worthy of paying an ounce of money. Appearing as geographical units based on the lay of the land these urislands were roughly equivalent to several small farming communities (Thomson, 1987:116). There is debate over the date of the origin of this unit with one theory being that it was instigated by Sigurd and Thorfinn (Crawford, 1987:90) and another suggesting a pre-Norse origin belonging to a Pictish land-unit known as the *davoch* (Thomson, 1987:117).

1914:163-66). The obligation of manning a ship must have entailed some form of taxation by the *goeðingr* for the upkeep of both ship and crew.

It has also been suggested that the obligation of hospitality would have been expected of the *goeðingr* as an early form of vassalage (Lamb, 1997:15). Although vassalage is a feudal term it is representative of a bond between earl and chief, which appears to have been similar to basic feudal obligations. The ON term *veizlu* (entertainment) is found in the *Orkneyinga Saga* (Taylor, 1938:256, 267). Although it is difficult to ascertain the implications of the term, Lamb has suggested that *veizlu* represented more that mere 'guest entertainment' (Lamb, 1997:15), and that it was an obligation required of a vassal by the earl. This obligation would have been catered for by the imposition of a tax levied on the district. From the 1492 and 1500 Rentals this tax is recorded as *wattle* (derived from ON*veizlu*) and was still expected by the Stewart earls (Lamb, 1997:15). Lamb has further postulated that there was a connection between the obligation of hospitality and the *skali* place-names within Orkney, suggesting that the Skaill farms represented the buildings where the collection of food renders and the hospitality obligation were carried out (Lamb, 1997:15). This theory is reinforced by the *Orkneyinga Saga* where Einar is entertained by Thorkel at Skaill and Paul is twice entertained by Sigurd at Skaill (Taylor, 1938:155, 237, 256). This public function for the Skaill farms would explain their high status as well as their low tax rate. The obligation of *veizlu* could also be applied to the early bishopric system, which would explain the close partnership between head churches and Skaill farms. It is also worth considering that the attribution of hospitality provider to Skaill names does not exclude all other named farms from providing hospitality.

Boer, Skali, and *Bu.*

The castle and defensive farm sites listed above are, all but two, associated with *Bu*, *Skali* or *Boer* names. Each of these Norse place-names has been discussed in detail by Clouston (1932:169-181), Marwick (1952, 237-243) and Thomson (1987:27-33). Although there are differences in opinion concerning the chronology and nature of these place-names a summary of the main characteristics of each name can be made. The *boer* names appear to be one of the oldest land units used by the Norse; they comprised of large tracts of land and were divided early. Thomson has suggested that they may have been formed in the Pictish period and taken over by the Norse (Thomson, 1987:28). *Skali* names, as mentioned in chapter three had a low tax value and average land but were centrally located, associated with churches, and of high-status. There is roughly one *skali* name per district and Thomson has suggested they functioned as public buildings 1987:33), which Lamb postulated to be associated with *veizlu* (1997:15). *Bu* names also appear to represent large farms worked as single units. Clouston had three

classifications of *Bu*: Earldom, Odal and bishopric, however, it appears that all the *Bu* land was once earldom property (Clouston, 1926-27b:41-49). There are at least sixteen early *Bu* place-names evident in Orkney (Marwick, 1952:241) and many of these are associated with *goeðingr* mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga*, the *Bu* and Skaill names are shown in figure 4.2, although the bishopric *Bus* are not included.

The defensive sites of Cairston, Castlehowe, Cubbie Roo's and Orphir are definite *Bu* sites with Skaill in Deerness, the Wirk and Gernaness also possibly being related to lost *Bu's*. Backaskaill in Sanday, St Magnus church in Egilsay and Tuquoy were possibly of the earlier *boer* form whilst Skaill in Birsay is obviously a *skali* name, Damsay, the Castle of Stackel Brae and Sealskerry Bay remain unknown. The association of these defensive farmsteads, castles and churches with characteristically high-status Norse place-names connected with earldom property gifted to the *goeðingr* confirms the assumption that these sites were associated with the Norse nobility and emphasises the close relationship with the earls.

Church and bishopric.

The development of a centralised church organisation appears to have been closely linked with the development of a central secular governing body. Both Thorfinn II and Rognvald Kolsson established grand churches in association with their preferred residences (Taylor, 1938:189, 248, 259). The relationship between church and residence is apparent at most of the defensive sites and thus a quick summary of the development of the church should provide a context for these chapels.

The first bishops in Orkney probably travelled with the earl as part of his retinue as they depended on his support to survive, and had no base of their own. Thorfinn II established the first bishopric in Orkney in c.1050 (Andersen, 1988:59). The bishop associated with this new bishopric was Thurolf and his Norse name implies that he was appointed at the request of Thorfinn and was probably part of the earl's kindred (Crawford, 1987:81).

The establishment of a bishopric was the first stage in the development of a centralised and local ecclesiastical organisation (Andersen, 1988:60). The intermediate stage was partially itinerant involving *veizlu*-seats on prominent farms. These farms would have housed the larger of the private chapels within Orkney and were probably the farmsteads of the chief men. Andersen dates this stage from 1050 until 1137, when he believes the stationary bishopric in Kirkwall was established along with a central and local church organisation (1988:60). It has been suggested that at this time Bishop William began to build the Bishop's palace in Kirkwall as his residence. This building was a first floor hall

with an undercroft. This stone building was of Romanesque influence and a new style compared to the timber building of the north (Morris, 1993:50).

This association with the earl and mobility can be shown in the career of bishop William. He is found in Birsay (Taylor, 1938:213, 220), Norway (Taylor, 1938:219), Shetland (Taylor, 1938:219), Kirkwall (Taylor, 1938:221, 281), Egilsay (Taylor, 1938:244) and the Holy Land (Taylor, 1938:285) and on half of these occasions he is in the earl's company. The association between the larger land units and chapels would be expected as the earl's chief men would have been among the first to erect chapels after the earl. The combination of *veizlu*-houses and *veizlu*-churches, which Lamb has classed as minsters (1997:16), would have been logical, as the bishop and the earl most probably travelled together, although this was not always the case (Taylor, 1938:244). These churches would have probably been the largest and most prominent in the respective districts, and may have been upgraded to parish churches when that system developed. It is therefore possible to assume that the larger twelfth century churches could indicate high-status settlements.

Conclusions

There appears to be a strong connection between the defensive sites, church sites, earldom estates, members of the *goeðingr*, and the organisation of medieval Orkney. The duties of the *goeðingr* involved the collection and storage of food renders, the provision of a warship, the entertainment of the earl and the protection of the earl. These duties required large amounts of land, storage space for food and a ship, room to feast and house the earl and his retinue and some form of defence. It seems probable that the need for defence would have increased with the wealth and power of the *goeðingr* and this may explain the origin of the castles. However, there is no strong impetus for the building of the farmsteads revealed from local organisation, it is perhaps more likely that the decision was influenced by external events such as the erection of defensive buildings within Europe and more importantly within Scotland.

4.4 INTERPRETATION OF THE DEFENSIVE SITES.

The above information provides a background context for the defensive structures. The majority of the buildings have been ascribed dates from c.1130 up to the start of the thirteenth century. It has been established above that by this period the *goeðingr* were a distinct class of men related through close family alliances to the earl and forming an almost feudal relationship with him. The increasing pressures placed upon the earls at this time must have required an increase in some of the military levies exacted over the Islands, whilst the absence of the earls would also have required the *goeðingr* to govern until their return. This would have been especially apparent during Rognvald's journey to

the Holy Land, the tripartite contest for the earldom in the 1150s and during the 1160s – 80s when Harald was closely involved with Scottish politics. Harald's ability to spend so much time in Scotland during those rather disrupted years suggests that there was a competent governing body within the earldom that could operate without his presence.

The nine defensive farmsteads listed above could well represent the homes of some of the *goeðingr*, with the chapels also being part of the homestead. This leaves the four possible keeps which could also have been owned by the *goeðingr* but serving a different purpose. The existence of large buildings, in proximity to churches and the shore, and bearing high-status names equates with the conditions associated with the home of one of the chief men. The defensive element found at the farmsteads could have served at least three different functions. The strong room/tower may have served as a store for weapons or food renders, it may have represented a status symbol indicative of the high standing of the owner, or it may have served as a protection for the earl and the owner. It is also possible that the tower could have served all three purposes. The impression gained from the sources is of a body of high-status structures built to fulfil the requirements of the *goeðingr* in Orkney. The archaeological evidence from Skaill and Tuquoy and the saga references provide enough evidence to back this claim.

In a similar manner to the different constructions of the towered churches these defensive buildings would have varied in accordance with the builders needs, taste and wealth. This is best exemplified in Cubbie Roo's castle, the Bu and the chapel, compared with the fragmentary remains of a smaller thick-walled building at Backaskaill and the much smaller Christ Church nearby. It is possible to attribute the added defensive measure in the twelfth century to an increasing amount of wealth, an increase in the possibility of violence and an increasing uncertainty of the future.

There are faults with the recognition of these defensive sites as belonging to the *goeðingr*. The period covered by the buildings is about fifty years, and although representing a short period in the Norse occupation of the Islands, it is enough time for situations to change. For example, the *goeðingr*, although almost a hereditary class, were earls' men and a change in earl must have affected the position of the chiefs, even if only to the extent that a different set of families were in favour. However, the buildings do not have to be seen as having been built at exactly the same time, rather that they were part of a contemporary design of building. The short period in which these buildings were operational in their defensive form[3] cannot be explained merely by their function as chief farmsteads or their use as status symbols. It would be more acceptable if a pretext could be determined for the origin of this new form of farmstead.

[3] Skaill, Deerness and Tuquoy show signs of alterations shortly after the original building phase

A probable reason would be the increasing possibility of attack. Could the expected invasion of Rognvald have caused Paul to encourage the erection of defensive measures within the Islands? This is certainly the view taken by Clouston who writes 'it would seem tolerably certain that those two castles [Damsay and Cairston] were erected by an earl, under the stimulus of danger from abroad, to defend what one may call in modern language naval bases' (Clouston, 1931:43). Whether Rognvald's invasion plans resulted in the construction of castles is difficult to ascertain, although it cannot be ruled out. The castles of Damsay, Cairston and Castlehowe were strategically placed near good harbours and provided good vantage points over major seaways, and this could well explain their existence. The bay of Scapa would be another location suitable for a naval defence, and the farms of Gaitnip and Knarston lay either side of this bay, though unfortunately there have been no archaeological remains found at either of these places.

As mentioned in chapter one Clouston lists Gernaness as a castle erected because of the threat faced by Hakon after the murder of earl Magnus, but it has been argued above that there is no evidence to substantiate this argument. Damsay, Cairston and Gernaness were Clouston's group one castles, which were early in date and had native building influences. He considered his group two castles of Wyre, Castlehowe and the Wirk to be influenced by imported models and to have been built as private chief's castles. He attributes the tripartite struggle for the earldom as cause for the construction of these private castles. He does not explain why there were only three such castles built.

The interpretation of Damsay, Cairston and Castlehowe as naval defences would explain the presence of a tower, and the location of the sites at large, sheltered harbours furthers the appeal of this theory. However, if the *Orkneyinga Saga kastali* represented naval defences then it would follow that Cubbie Roo's Castle should also have served this purpose. The central location and the extent of the view would certainly indicate that the castle on Wyre could have served as a watchtower for sea attacks. The island is not associated with a good harbour although it is one of the central inner isles and is thus in a good position to survey movements through the archipelago especially from the north. The castle of Kolbein Hruga in Wyre could well represent another naval defence with the additional purpose of asserting Kolbein's status within society. Kolbein arrived from Norway and became the earl's chieftain, his acceptance into society may have been aided by his ability to build a castle and the position he maintained within the islands may have depended on the presence of the castle.

(Buteux, 1997: 210; Owen, 1993:326).

The classification of the majority of the remaining 'castle' sites as defensive farmsteads somewhat reduces the need for a single cause of construction. The twelfth century as indicated above was a turbulent period with increasing external pressure leading to internal disputes. The development of a building with a defensive provision is not out of place under these circumstances and the impetus for the choice of building may have been from south of Orkney rather than North. The structure revealed at Skaill in Deerness was interpreted as a first-floor hall by Buteux who saw the building representing the type of structure arising from the increased wealth and European connections associated with the twelfth century (Buteux, 1997:268). The interpretation of the Wirk, Tuquoy and the bishop's palace as other examples of a similar form, places Skaill within a group of new styled buildings. These would have served the needs of accommodating the earl and storing food renders. The inclusion of a strong room within these first-floor halls is also understandable, considering the association of the buildings with wealthy farmers, who were visited by the earl and his retinue and who also spent periods away from their homes.

These first-floor halls could almost be seen as predecessors to the hall castles found down the western seaboard. These hall castles have been ascribed dates from the late thirteenth century, although at Skipness in Kintyre an early hall castle was found to have existed. The hall castle comprised of a two-storey dwelling with a hall on the upper floor and a single storey chapel, enclosed within a defensive wall (Tabraham, 1997:37). It appears that these structures belonged to the local lords and were constructed with royal approval (Tabraham, 1997:37). The similar nature of the Orkney defensive farmsteads and these hall castles requires further attention; the absence of an enclosing wall and the presence of a defensive room/tower at the Orkney sites would be one area to investigate.

The earls appear to have felt vulnerable when visiting farmsteads for feasts as on at least two occasions they slept on board ships (Taylor, 1938:308, 309). This indicates that the defensive farmsteads were not considered as safe as remaining at sea, and that even the *kastali* on Damsay was not considered safe (Taylor, 1938:319), if one still remained in use on the island at that time. This would suggest that either the strong rooms of the farms was used to store material valuables, or was considered only as a last resort. Thus, the combined function of the tower as a power symbol and a store is more likely than a purely defensive function.

An analysis of the places visited by earl Rognvald reveals that he was in Caithness four times, Kirkwall four times, Knarston twice and once at Rapness, Gairsay, Damsay and Birsay, besides being in Norway and going to the Holy Land. Of the Orkney places only Kirkwall has no evidence of a secular dwelling. It is interesting that the earl is found, so

often, away from Kirkwall especially as it is often believed that Rognvald established a centralised power base there. The presence of Rognvald at several of the main chiefs' houses reinforces the notion raised above, that the earls were still partially peripatetic. If this was the case then the earls did own defensive structures, as the earldom lands held in fief by the *goeðingr* had defensive buildings. However, the entertainment of earls at defended farmsteads does not account for the absence of a castle in Kirkwall. There is mention in the *Orkneyinga Saga* of earl Rognvald spending Yule at Knarston, near Scapa Bay (Taylor, 1938:261), a time normally spent at home, although this farm was held in fief during Rognald's rule by Botolf the Icelander (Taylor, 1938:317). Although there are two references to Things being held in Kirkwall there are no descriptions of where they took place (Taylor, 1938: 259, 309), the only reference to a meeting place in Kirkwall is the peace negotiations held between earl Harald and Sweyn in St Magnus Cathedral (Taylor, 1938:328-9).

Clouston uses the record of King Hakon staying in the bishop's palace as evidence that there was no equivalent earls' residence. The lack of any record of such a residence implies that a king's castle did not exist, although it is by no means certain. It is difficult to imagine that the earl would allow the construction of a castle on Wyre if he did not have one himself in Kirkwall, especially considering that it was the centralised power nucleus of his earldom. The absence of an earl's residence/castle is a problem that cannot be solved from the available evidence. This absence is even more puzzling as the bishop's residence is mentioned in 1263 (Thomson, 1987:87-88), and has been ascribed to the time of bishop William the Old. Is it possible that the bishop's Palace was the only such structure in Kirkwall? Thomson suggests that earl Magnus was absent during Hakon's stay in Orkney as he had failed to follow the King south and feared retribution. This may be another reason why the earls residence was not used although if it were in existence it would still seem the most likely place for the King to stay, with or without the earl. Another theory postulated by Lamb is that the Bishop's palace represented the most impressive residence in the earldom and that the earl was still living in a timber hall. Built in stone and of Romanesque design the bishop's palace was a very different building from the timber building tradition of the north (Morris, 1993:51). This would explain the lack of any remains of an earls hall but does not explains its omission from the saga. The Bishop's Palace has also been compared by Simpson to Hakon's hall in Bergen and so this form of structure was not entirely absent in the north (Simpson, 1961). The existence of the Bishop's palace provides another influence for the defensive farmsteads which in part resemble the palace, although they also include a defensive measure. It is possible to suggest that the construction of the Bishop's Palace was the beginning of a new type of domestic Romanesque architecture in the Earldom.

It is possible to consider whether any other areas could have constructed a defensive farmstead, as there appear to be a number of features common at all the sites so far discovered. A map showing the known *Bu* and *Skaill* sites, the homes of the *goeðingr* mentioned in the *Orkneyinga Saga* and the known archaeological evidence is shown in figure 4.2. This map indicates that the majority of obvious places have already been discussed, although there may have been a similar structure in Rendall, and in, either or both, Rapness and Pierowall in Westray, as all three are mentioned in the saga and are associated with chapels. It should also follow that there was a provision for entertainment on some of the other Isles including North Ronaldsay, Stronsay, Sanday, Papa Westray, Eday, Shapinsay, Hoy, Walls and South Ronaldsay. All these islands are briefly mentioned in the saga and have chapels and large farms although there has been no associated archaeological evidence relating to late Norse farmsteads discovered yet. On the Mainland the parishes of Birsay and St Ola must also have had buildings suitable for the housing of an earl as both were places that the earls were recorded staying at. Both parishes contained earldom land and so the main settlements were probably owned by the earl rather than the *goeðingr.*

However, the features common to the defensive farmsteads appear to be features common to all high-status settlements in the islands and this analysis is perhaps more accurate as a means of identifying possible locations for wealthy farmsteads than defensive farmsteads. Only the archaeological evidence of a strong room would confirm defensive status. If some of the defensive farmsteads were indeed first-floor halls then only the wealthiest of the *goeðingr* would be able to afford such residences. Therefore, the map in figure 4.2 displays the possible locations for the homes of the main *goeðingr,* and cannot be used to indicate the type of dwelling found at each location. The four possible naval defence settlements are also shown on the map, if this was the purpose of these keeps then another possible site would be on Westray, defending the best harbour in the Northern Isles and providing a look out for ships coming from the north.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

From a detailed examination of the evidence and a consideration of the history of twelfth century Orkney several interesting interpretations of these 'castle' sites have developed. The division of the defensive secular sites into two separate forms of settlement associated with the earls' *goeðingr,* defensive farmsteads and keeps has been argued above. Both these forms of settlement are associated with good farmland, high-status place-names and ecclesiastical sites. The close relationship between the secular hall and the church reflects the similarly close relationship between earl and bishop. The further suggestion that the defensive farmsteads are a result of increased wealth and the cultural growth of the twelfth century is also proposed, with the implication that these sites

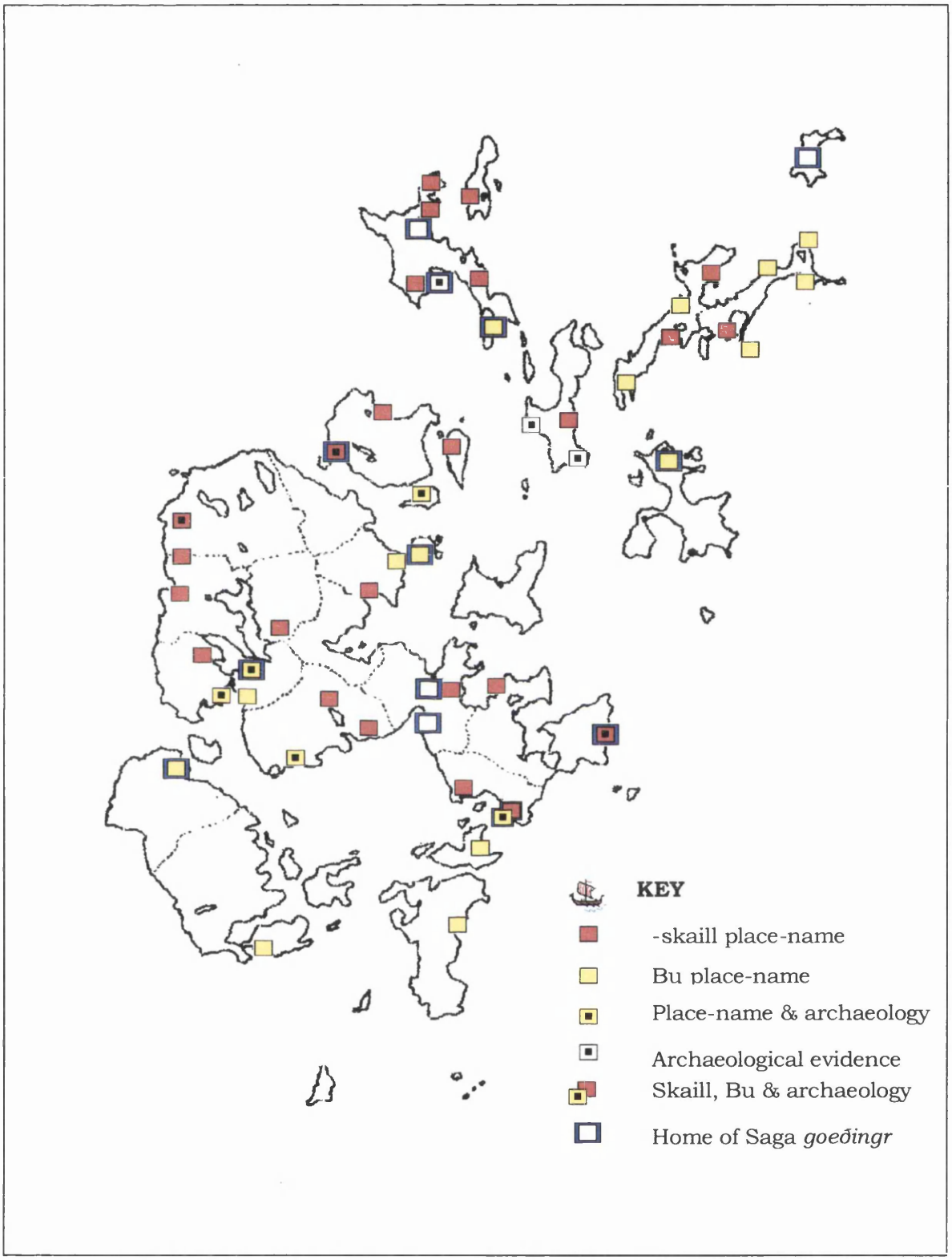

Figure 4.2 Skaill & Bu Place-Names, Goeðingr & Archaeological Evidence.

should be included amongst the many architectural achievements of this period. The increase in the threat of invasion has been tentatively suggested as the cause for the construction of the keeps. The appearance of naval defences at good harbours and the development of the beacon system should be seen together as part of an overall naval defensive strategy, to help prevent the success of unexpected naval attacks on the islands. These interpretations of the different sites concern the three main duties of the *goeðingr*, the collection of food renders and the provision of hospitality, and the raising of a naval levy. It would therefore, seem sensible that the settlements of these chieftains were associated with the duties they were expected to perform.

The similarities between the first-floor hall houses and the later castle halls found in the west of Scotland have also been mentioned and the Norse connection between both sets of nobility should not be overlooked. The suggestion that the farmsteads developed as a result of the feudalisation of Scotland is another theory, less well founded but also worthy of consideration.

The most striking contrast between these interpretations and those of Clouston is the connections highlighted between Scotland and Orkney. Clouston did not mention Scotland when referring to his 'castles' other than noting similarities with prehistoric sites from the Western Isles (Clouston, 1931:39-40). The political context of the twelfth century indicates the degree to which Orkney was involved with Scotland. The connections stretch back from the early Norse period and the reign of Sigurd the Stout, to the more formalised connections of the late Norse period. The defensive buildings within Orkney cannot be paralleled in either Norway or Scotland, although there are examples of similar keeps within the north of Scotland (chapter three) and similar farmsteads within Norway. The style of these buildings is peculiar to Orkney and can be seen as another feature of twelfth century Orkney society. The unusual position held by the earls of Orkney as semi-independent rulers appears to have allowed the creation of an individual form of secular organisation which brought the earldom wealth and prestige. The defensive sites are an example of this prosperity, but by their existence they indicate that the privileged position held by the earls was under threat.

CONCLUSION

This study began with a critical assessment of Clouston's research into six Orkney sites which he termed 'early Norse castles'. After close examination of the available sources a different classification system has been postulated whereby four of Clouston's castles remain categorised as such. Cubbie Roo's castle is the only site given certain castle status although from the evidence Castlehowe, Damsay and possibly Cairston may also be included. Further to these four sites, a castle may also have been located in Westray. These castles, or perhaps more accurately keeps, are suggested to have functioned as part of the islands' naval defences, acting both as watchtowers and retreats.

Clouston's two remaining 'castle' sites have been given a different classification due to their architecture, location and size. The Wirk and Gernaness sit more comfortably in the category of defensive farmstead, where the defensive feature is part of a farm complex in daily use, rather than an entirely defensive building. This category includes many other sites identified through the documentary sources, the place-name analysis, folklore and archaeology. In addition to the above two categories the presence of other defensive sites has been discussed, including the use of brochs and the possibility of defensive provisions within churches. The architectural parallels of the alleged towers of Stenness Church and Gernaness outlined by Clouston, although unverifiable because of the scant remains at Gernaness, indicate the connection between church and settlement. It is highly possible that churches were considered areas of safety and may well have served as retreats, although as stated the architectural properties of the church towers probably out weighed any defensive considerations.

The above sites appear to have been built for several different reasons. The keeps were probably constructed in an effort to improve the naval defences of the islands' during the twelfth century, a turbulent period in their history. Whilst the defensive farmsteads may have been part of a new style of architecture reflecting the need for a form of stronghold within a large farm complex. These reasons suggest that both forms of defence were gradually developed rather than being suddenly undertaken as a reaction to a specific threat. This compliments the connection between the chieftains and the sites as they can both be seen to develop over time and reach their zenith in the middle to late twelfth century.

However, several problems have also been raised, the most obvious concerning the lack of an earls' castle, especially in Kirkwall where the centre of power was located, although the arguments outlined in chapter four suggest some possible reasons for this omission they are not totally convincing. There is also the lack of any later medieval castles, although Clouston's argument concerning Henry Sinclair's investiture is a plausible

reason for this deficit, whilst the loss of the independent status of the islands may have been another contributing factor.

The study has provided several new suggestions concerning the social context of twelfth century Orkney and has provided a background for the 'castle' sites which were previously not considered an integral part of the society. However, the subject has by no means been exhausted and there are several areas which would benefit from further research. The connection between church and settlement, the external influences upon the earldom, the relationship between the castles on the western seaboard and those in the north of Scotland, and the search for an earls' castle are all areas worth considering.

In conclusion the re-examination and expansion of Clouston's 1931 article on 'Early Norse Castles' has updated and redressed the manner in which these sites should be considered. By providing a more integrated consideration of the sites and focusing not merely on the architecture but also the function, location and history of the sites, it is has been possible to obtain a better understanding of the individual sites. This increased knowledge consequently has allowed the sites to be placed within the social and political context of twelfth century Orkney.

Clouston's research was thorough and extremely detailed and without his investigations present knowledge of the Norse period in Orkney would be considerably less. However, as a victim of his time he relied perhaps too heavily on the saga evidence, underestimated the influence of Scotland on Orkney and was overly concerned to rigidly classify his findings. It has been the aim of this thesis to recognise and rectify some of these problems and to update Clouston's conclusions by undertaking further multidisciplinary research into the topic. Although there are still areas which require further research this study has hopefully shown the importance of re-evaluating Clouston's work and the knowledge that can be gained from a detailed reconsideration and expansion of this learned historian.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CASTLE PLACE-NAMES

Specific Abbreviations for Appendix A

Canmore Refers to the RCAHMS Canmore internet system, the number following is the link reference for each site.

HOI Refers to the map featured in the *Handbook of the Islands of Orkney,* 1883, unless a number follows, this refers to a specific page in the book.

OASMR Orkney Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record, the number following is the reference number of the site.

ONB *Original Name Book* detailing sites featured in the RCHAMS, first number refers to the specific book, second to the page reference.

OS First edition Ordnance Survey Maps of Orkney, the number following refers to the map sheet number.

RCAHMS Refers to the *Twelfth Report, Inventory for Orkney and Shetland,* volume II.

Ref No	Name	Location	Description	Reference
1	Bercastle Geo	Fara	Coastal feature	OS - 80
2	Castle	Stromness	Coastal feature	OS - 106
3	Castle	Evie	Coastal feature	OS - 89
4	Castle	Deerness	Coastal feature	OS - 109; HOI
5	Castle Boundas	Birsay	Coastal feature	OS - 88; Marwick 1970:17; Marwick D29/2/10
6	Castle Geo	Sanday	Coastal feature	OS - 77; Marwick D29/2/10; OASMR
7	Castle Geo	Westray	Coastal feature	OS - 80; Marwick D29/2/10; Lamb 1983:39
8	Castle Geo	South Ronaldsay	Coastal feature	OS - 126

9	Castle Geo	Sanday	Coastal feature	OS - 81
10	Castle o' Burrian	Westray	Coastal feature	OS- 80; Marwick D29/2/10; OASMR:890; Lamb 1983:38; ONB 26:265; HOI
11	Castle of Qui Ayre	Yesnaby	Coastal feature	OS - 100
12	Castle of Bothegeo	St Andrews	Coastal feature	OS - 109; HOI
13	Castle of Cams Geo	Helliar Holm	Coastal feature	OS - 102; Marwick D29/2/10
14	Castle of Claisdie	Holm	Coastal feature	OS - 115; Marwick D29/2/10; OASMR; HOI
15	Castle of Clay Rib	St Andrews	Coastal feature	OS - 109; Marwick D29/2/10
16	Castle of Garniegeo	Rousay	Coastal feature	OS - 85
17	Castle of Gullslate	Birsay	Coastal feature	Marwick 1970:21
18	Castle of Hangie Bay	St Andrews	Coastal feature	OS- 109; OASMR:58; Lamb 1987:33
19	Castle of Hoss	St Andrews	Coastal feature	OS - 109; Marwick D29/2/10; HOI
20	Castle of North Gaulton	Stromness	Coastal feature	HOI:130
21	Castle of Oyce	Birsay	Coastal feature	OS - 88; Marwick 1970:20; HOI
22	Castle of Suckrow	St Andrews	Coastal feature	OS- 109; Marwick D29/2/10
23	Castle of the Broch	Deerness	Coastal feature	OS. - 109; Marwick D29/2/10; HOI
24	Castle of Verron	Birsay	Coastal feature	Marwick 1970:23
25	Castle of Yeskenaby	Yesnaby	Coastal feature	OS - 100

26	Castle Skerry	South Ronaldsay	Coastal feature	OS - 126
27	Castle Taing	South Ronaldsay	Coastal feature	OS - 124
28	Grassy Castle	Stronsay	Coastal feature	OS- 93; Canmore:3305
29	Little Castle	Deerness	Coastal feature	OS - 109
30	Muckle Castle	Deerness	Coastal feature	HOI
31	Roanabay Castle	Deerness	Coastal feature	OS - 109; HOI (the castle)
32	Tams Castle also Two Castles	Stronsay	Coastal feature	OS - 99; OASMR:132; Lamb 1984:29
33	The Castle	Fara	Coastal feature	OS - 86
34	The Castle	Sanday	Coastal feature	OS - 81; OASMR; ONB,2,78
35	The Castle	Stronsay	Coastal feature	OS - 98; Marwick D29/2/10; OASMR:134; Lamb 1984:29
36	The Castle	Hoy	Coastal feature	OS. - 112
37	The Castles	Eday	Coastal feature	OS - 80; HOI
38	The Castles (Rutto Castle)	Birsay	Coastal feature	Marwick 1970:16
39	Castlehill	Rousay	Hill	OS - 90; Marwick D29/2/10
40	Erne Tuo, now Tower	Rousay	Hill	Canmore:2720; HOI
41	Tower of Catagreen	Rousay	Hill	OS - 85
42	Tower of Lumashun	Rousay	Hill	OS - 85

43	Twelve Hours Tower	Rousay	Hill	OS - 84; HOI
44	Castle	South Ronaldsay	House	HOI
45	Castle	Rendall	House	HOI
46	Castle Green	St Ola	House	OS - 102; HOI
47	Castle of Folly (Castle)	Stromness	House	OS - 106; HOI
48	Castlehill	Birsay	House	OS - 88; Marwick 1970:53
49	Castlehill	Eday	House	OS - 86
50	Castlehill	Sanday	House	OS - 81; Lamb 1980b,23
51	Castlehoan (Castlehall)	Wyre	House	OS - 90; Marwick D29/2/10; Marwick 1970:73
52	Castles	Eday	House	OS- 80; Marwick D29/2/10
53	Castlewell	Flotta	House	OS - 119; Marwick D29/2/10
54	Fort	Eday	House	OS - 80
55	Newcastle	St Andrews	House	OS - 115
56	Newcastle	Sandwick	House	OS - 94
57	Towerhill	St Ola	House (mounds)	OS - 108; RCAHMS:432
58	Upper Castles	Eday	House	OS - 80
59	Upper Fort	Eday	House	OS - 80

60	Balfour Castle	Shapinsay	Later castle C17 & C19	HOI; Canmore:2399
61	Castle Bervy	Stronsay	Later building, tradition	OASMR:180; Lamb 1984:25; Marwick 1927:74; RCAHMS:989
62	Halcro Castle	South Ronaldsay	Later building C14 C15	OASMR:1854
63	King's Castle	Kirkwall	Later castle C14	Hossack:366; RCAHMS; Peterkin 1822:43; HOI:59; Low 1774:62
64	Noltland Castle	Westray	Later castle C16	Marwick D29/2/10; OASMR 911; RCAHMS:1033; Lamb 1983:38; HOI
65	Castle	Sower, Orphir	Prehistoric, cairn, tradition	RCAHMS:504
66	Castle Bloody	Shapinsay	Prehistoric, chambered mound	OS - 103; Marwick D29/2/10; OASMR:1113; Lamb 1987:9; RCAHMS:786; HOI
67	Castle of Burwick	South Ronaldsay	Prehistoric fort and settlement	OS - 126; RCAHMS:817; OASMR; HOI
68	Castle of Garth	Shapinsay	Prehistoric, burnt mound	OS - 96; Lamb 1987:10
69	Castle of Sands Geo	Copinsay	Prehistoric fort/ cist enclosure	OASMR; Lamb 1987:38; RCAHMS:669; Mooney 1926:26
70	Erne Tuo, now Tower	Rousay	Prehistoric, barrow	OS - 85; Lamb 1982:18; RCAHMS
71	Howa Tuo, now Tower	Papa Westray	Prehistoric tomb	OS - 79; Lamb 1983:24; RCAHMS:1051
72	Site of Sweyns Castle	Gairsay	Prehistoric, burnt mound	OS - 96; RCAHMS:314
73	Tower of Clett	Holm	Prehistoric, burnt mound	OS - 115; RCAHMS:370; HOI
74	Burrian Castle	North Ronaldsay	Broch	OS - 72; HOI
75	Burrion Castle	Sanday	Broch	NSA 1842:104
76	Castle of Bothican	Papa Westray	Broch	OS - 76; Marwick D54/3/11; OASMR:853; RCAHMS:522; Lamb 1983:14; ONB 26:213

77	Castle of Snusgar	Sandwick	Broch	OS - 94; RCAHMS:743; OSA XIX 1791-99:262; NSA 1842:53; OASMR
78	Icegarth Castle	Sanday	Broch, mound	OS- 81; RCAHMS:185; Lamb 1980b,16
79	The Castle	Sandwick	Broch	Canmore:1905
80	The castle, also Knowe of Gullow	Birsay	Broch	RCAHMS:22
81	Weems Castle	South Ronaldsay	Broch, lime mortar	RCAHMS:816; OASMR:1836; HOI
82	Castle	St Andrews	unknown	OS - 115
83	Castle	Graemsay?	unknown	OS - 106
84	Castle Green	Sanday	unknown	OS - 82
85	Castle Hill	Stronsay	unknown	OS - 92
86	Castle Hill	Evie	unknown	OS - 89; Marwick D29/2/10
87	Castle Hill	Rousay	unknown	OS - 85
88	Castle of Deery	Wyre	unknown	Marwick-D29/2/10
89	Castlehill	Birsay	unknown	Marwick 1970:63
90	Doo Castle	Westray	unknown	OS - 75; Marwick D29/2/10
91	Barbers Tower	Sanday	Mound	OS- 81; Lamb 1980:22
92	Braes of Kastal	Birsay	Mound, tradition	Marwick 1970:74, 89; RCAHMS appendix to volume one:1; OASMR: 1710
93	Castle	Rendall	Mound, stone, tradition	OS - 95; RCAHMS:303; OASMR:1199

94	Castle Bloody	Stromness	Mound, tradition	OS - 100; RCAHMS:941,936; OASMR; ONB 22:44
95	Ernie Tooer	Birsay	Mound	Marwick 1970:38; HOI
96	The Castle	Sandwick	Mound	OS- 95; OASMR; RCAHMS:744
97	The Castle	Birsay	Possible castle, tradition	Marwick 1970:87; RCAHMS:137; Spence 1915:87-91
98	Castle	Eday	Possible castle, mound, medieval find	RCAHMS:240; OASMR:736; Lamb 1984:13,15
99	Castle Grimness	South Ronaldsay	Possible castle, tradition	RCAHMS:853; OASMR
100	Castle Howe	Holm	Possible castle, prehistoric	OS - 115; RCAHMS;361; OASMR:81; Low 1774:52
101	Castle of Stackel Brae	Eday	Possible castle, medieval structure, tradition	RCAHMS:241; OASMR:741; Lamb 1984:12
102	The Castle	Stromness	Possible castle, enclosure, tradition	RCAHMS:918; OASMR:1466
103	The Castle	St Ola	Possible castle	OS- 102; RCAHMS: 435; Talbot 1974:42
104	Castle of Cobbie Row	Wyre	Castle C12	OS - 90; RCAHMS:619; Marwick 1927/8:9-11; Barry, 1805:227; OASMR:796; Marwick 1952:73; Wallace 1883:31

APPENDIX B
CASTLE RELATED REFERENCES IN *ORKNEYINGA SAGA*

Ref.	Jonaeus	Anderson	Vigfusson	Dasent	Nordal	Gudmudsson	Taylor	Palsson & Edwards
1	kastali (188)	castle (92)	kastali (113)	castle (117)	kastali (168)	kastali (151)	castle (242)	stronghold (125)
2	kastali (192)	castle (95)	kastala (115)	castle (119)	kastala (171)	kastala (154)	castle (244)	stronghold (127)
3	steinkastala (256)	stone castle (126)	stein-kastala (147)	stone castle (151)	steinkastala (213)	steinkastala (192)	stone castle (275)	stone fort (155)
4	kastalanum (284)	castle (137)	kastala einum (162)	castle (166)	kastala (235)	kastala einum (213)	castle (288)	castle (167)
5	~	enemies (137)	kastala-mennina (162)	men in the castle (166)	kastalamennina (236)	kastalamennina (213)	castle (288)	castle dwellers (167)
6	kastalamenn (284)	castle (137)	kastala-menn (162)	castle men (166)	kastalamenn (236)	kastalamenn (213)	men in the castle (288)	castle dwellers (167)
7	kastalamenn (284)	men of the castle (137)	kastala-menn (163)	castle men (166)	kastalamenn (236)	kastalamenn (213)	men in the castle (288)	castle dwellers (167)
8	kastalann (284)	castle (137)	kastalann (163)	castle (166)	kastalann (236)	kastalann (213)	castle (288)	castle (168)
9	kastalann (286)	to the castle (137)	kastalann (163)	castle (167)	kastalann (237)	kastalann (214)	under the castle (288)	castlewall (168)
10	~	castle (138)	~	~	~	~	~	~
11	kastalann (286)	castle (138)	kastalann (163)	castle (167)	kastalann (237)	kastalann (214)	castle (290)	castle (168)
12	kastalann (286)	castle (138)	kastalann (163)	castle (167)	kastalann (238)	kastalann (214)	castle (290)	castle (168)

APPENDIX B
CASTLE RELATED REFERENCES IN *ORKNEYINGA SAGA*

Ref.	Jonaeus	Anderson	Vigfusson	Dasent	Nordal	Gudmudsson	Taylor	Palsson & Edwards
13	kastalavegginn (286)	castlewall (138)	kastala-vegginn (164)	castle wall (167)	kastalaveggin (238)	kastalavegginn (214)	castlewall (290)	castlewall (168)
14	kastalann (288)	castle (138)	kastalann (164)	castle (168)	kastalann (238)	kastalann (215)	castle (290)	castle (169)
15	kastalinn (288)	castle (138)	kastalinn (164)	castle (168)	kastalinn (238)	kastalinn (215)	castle (290)	castle's (169)
16	kastalanum (288)	it (138)	kastalanum (164)	castle (168)	kastalanum (239)	kastalanum (215)	castle (290)	castle (169)
17	kastalans (288)	castle (139)	kastalans (164)	castle (168)	kastalans (239)	kastalans (215)	castle (290)	castle (169)
18	kastala ferdir (290)	castle (139)	kastala ferdir (165)	castle-garrison (169)	kastala ferdir (240)	kastala ferdir (216)	castle (290)	fortress (170)
19	kastala-menn (290)	castle (139)	kastala-menn (165)	castle men (169)	kastalamenn (240)	kastalamenn (216)	fortress/castle (290)	fortress (170)
20	kastalaveggrin (290)	walls (139)	kastala-veggrinn (165)	castle wall (169)	kastalaveggrin n (240)	kastalaveggrin (216)	castle wall (290)	ramparts (170)
21	kastalanum (290)	attack (139)	kastalanum (165)	castle (169)	kastalanum (240)	kastalanum (216)	castle (290)	ramparts (170)
22	kastala vegginum (290)	walls (139)	kastala-vegginum (165)	castle wall (169)	kastalavegginu m (240)	kastalavegginu m (216)	castle wall (290)	ramparts (170)
23	kastala (292)	castle (140)	kastala (166)	castle's (169)	kastala (241)	kastala (217)	castle (291)	stronghold (170)
24	kastala veggium (292)	castle ramparts (140)	kastala veggi (um) (166)	castle walls (169)	kastala veggium (242)	kastals veggi (218)	castle walls (291)	castle (171)

APPENDIX B
CASTLE RELATED REFERENCES IN *ORKNEYINGA SAGA*

Ref.	Jonaeus	Anderson	Vigfusson	Dasent	Nordal	Gudmundsson	Taylor	Palsson & Edwards
25	kastalann (292)	castle (140)	kastalann (166)	castle (169)	kastalann (242)	kastalann (218)	castle (292)	castle (171)
26	kastalanns (334)	castle (157)	kastalann er par var pa (185)	castle that was then there (188)	kastalann er par var pa (269)	kastalann er par var pa (245)	castle that was then there (£08)	fortress that used to stand there (187)
27	kastalans (334)	castle (157)	kastalanns (186)	castle (188)	kastalanns (269)	kastalanns (245)	castle (308)	fortress (187)
28	kastala (350)	castle (165)	kastala (193)	castle (196)	kastala (281)	kastala (254)	castle (315)	castle (193)
29	kastalanum (350)	castle (165)	kastalanum (193)	castle (196)	kastalanum (282)	kastalanum (254)	castle (315)	castle (193)
30	kastala einum (358)	large castle (169)	skala (kastala) (197)	great hall (200)	skala (kastala)(288)	skala (kastala) (259)	large hall (319)	great hall (197)
31	borg (94)	borg (47)	borg (61)	burg (5)	borg (90)	borg (86)	fortress (192)	stronghold (77)
32	vigi (248)	strong place (122)	vigi (142)	good stronghold	viigi (208)	vigi (187)	natural stronghold	stronghold (151)
33	borgin (248)	borg (castle) (122)	borgin (142)	burg (147)	borgin (208)	borgin (187)	fortress (271)	fortress (151)
34	borgina (248)	stronghold (122)	borgina (142)	burg (147)	borgina (208)	borgina (188)	fortress (271)	stronghold (151)
35	borgarinnar (250)	borg (122)	borgarinnar (143)	burg (147)	borgarinnar (209)	borgarinnar (188)	fortress (271)	stronghold (151)
36	lambaborg (254)	lambaborg (125)	lamba-borg (145)	lambburg (150)	lambaborg (212)	lambaborg (191)	lambaborg (274)	stronghold (154)

APPENDIX B
CASTLE RELATED REFERENCES IN *ORKNEYINGA SAGA*

Ref.	Jonaeus	Anderson	Vigfusson	Dasent	Nordal	Gudmundsson	Taylor	Palsson & Edwards
37	borginne (254)	fort (125)	borginni (145)	burg (150)	borginni (212)	borginni (191)	fortress (274)	~ (154)
38	vigi (256)	strong defense (126)	vigi (147)	safe stronghold (151)	vigi (213)	vigi (192)	safe stronghold (275)	solid strong-hold (155)
39	biorg (340)	cliff (160)	borg (188)	burg (191)	borg (274)	borg (248)	(some cliffs) (311)	fortress (189)
40	borg (340)	borg (160)	borg (188)	burg (191)	borg (274)	borg (249)	fortress (311)	fortress (189)
41	borg (340)	borg (160)	borginni (188)	burg (191)	borginni (274)	borginni (249)	fortress (311)	fortress (189)
42	moseyarborg (340)	moseyjarborg (161)	morseyjar-borg (189)	moussaburg (191)	morseyiarborg (275)	morseyjarborg (249)	broch of mousa (311)	broch on mousa (190)
43	borginna (342)	borg (161)	borginna (189)	burg (191)	borginna (275)	borgina (249)	broch of mousa (311)	broch (190)
44	borginne (414)	borg (196)	borginni (226)	burg (229)	borginni (326)	borginni (294)	fortress (346)	stronghold (222)
45	borgarinnar (414)	borg (196)	borgarinnar (226)	burg (229)	borgarinnar (326)	borgarinnar (294)	fortress (346)	stronghold (222)
46	borginne (414)	borg (196)	borginni (226)	burg (229)	borginni (326)	borginni (294)	fortress (346)	stronghold (222)

APPENDIX C

Summary of Earls of Orkney, Kings of Scotland & Kings of Norway in the Eleventh & Twelfth Centuries

Approximate Date brackets	Kings of Scotland	Earls of Orkney	Kings of Norway
1014 – 1065 (51 years)	Malcolm II (1005-34) Duncan I (1034-40) Macbeth (1040-57) Lulach (1057-8) Malcolm III (1058-93)	Thorfinn II (1014-65) Einar Sigurdsson (1014-1020) Brusi Sigurdsson (1014-c1030) Rognvald Brusisson (1038-1046)	Svein Forkbeard (1000-15) Olaf Haraldsson (1015-30) Cnut the Great (1028-35) Magnus Olafsson Góði (1035-46) Harald Harðraði (1045-66)
1065 – 1098 (33 years)	Donald Bán (1093-4, 94-7) Duncan II (1094) Edgar (1097-1107)	Paul I & Erlend II (1065-98)	Olaf Haraldsson Kyrri (1066-93) Magnus Olafsson Berfoetr (1093-1103)
1098 – 1102 (4 years)		Sigurd Magnusson the Crusader ***N*** (1098-1102)	
1102 – 1123 (21 years)	Alexander I (1107-24)	Hakon Paulsson (1102-23) Magnus Erlendsson (1105-16)	Eysteinn Magnusson (1103-22) Sigurd Magnusson the Crusader (1103-30) Olaf Magnusson (1103-15)
1123 – 1136 (13 years)	David I (1124-53)	Harald I Hakonsson (1123) Paul II Hakonsson (1123-36)	Harald Magnusson Gilli (1130-6) Magnus Sigurdsson Blindi (1130-5)
1136 – 1158 (22 years)	Malcolm IV (1153-65)	Rognvald Kolsson (1136-1158) ***N*** & Harald Maddadson (1138-1158) ***S*** Erlend III Haraldsson (1151-4) ***S***	Magnus Sigurdsson Blindi (1136-9) Ingi Haraldsson (1136-61) Sigurd Haraldsson Munnr (1136-55) Sigurd Slembir Pretender (1136-9) Eysteinn Haraldsson (1142-57) Haraldsson Eysteinnsson (1157-62)
1158-1206 (48 years)	William I (1165-1214)	Harald Maddadsson (1158-1206) Harald the Younger III (1198) ***N***	Magnus Erlingsson (1161-1184) Sverri Sigurdsson (1177-1202) Ingi II (?1202-17)
1206 – 1230 (24 years)	Alexander II (1214-49)	John I Haraldsson (1206-30) & David I Haraldsson (1206-14)	Hakon Hakonarsson IV (1217-63)

ABBREVIATIONS

BAR	*British Archaeological Reports*
Ed(s).	Editor(s)
ESSH	*Early Sources of Scottish History AD 500 to 1286* 2 volumes, Anderson, A.O., 1922. Edinburgh.
HOI	*Handbook to the Orkney Islands,* NA, 1883: Kirkwall.
HMSO	Her Majesties Stationary Office.
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
NA	No Author
ND	No Date
NGR	National Grid Reference
NSA	*The New Statistical Account of Scotland by the Ministers of the Respective Parishes...*
OA	Orkney Archive
OASMR	Orkney Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record
OES99	Orkney Easter Survey of Clouston's six castle sites, 1999
OLM	*Old Lore Miscellany,* 1907 onwards, Johnston, A.W. & Johnston, A.
ON	Old Norse
ONB	Original Name Book
OS	Ordnance Survey
OSA	*The [Old] Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-99, edited by Sir John Sinclair.*
Pers.comm.	Personal communication
POAS	*Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*
PSAS	*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*
RCAHMS	*Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland Twelfth Report Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Orkney and Shetland,* volume two. RCAMHS, Edinburgh.
rn.	Reference number, rather than page numbers
Scot. Arch. Forum	*Scottish Archaeological Forum*
SHR	Scottish Historical Review
Trans.	translation

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