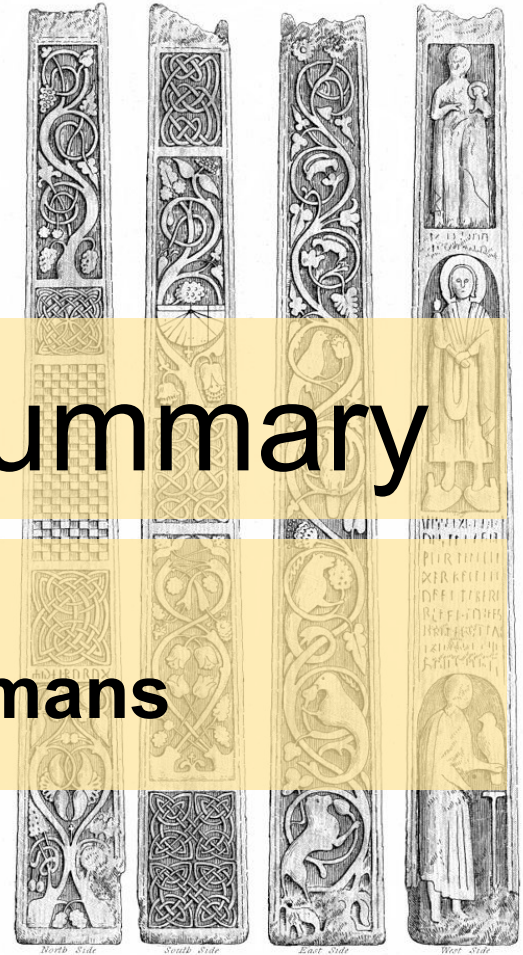


THE FOUR FACES OF RUTHWELL CROSS

identifying the Biblical scenes depicted by the unknown 7th century sculptor.

South Face North Face



Saints, settlers and summary

Christianity and The Borders after the Romans

Roman rule ended in Britain around 410 CE

Many of the Roman military sites around the borders were abandoned in the later 200s CE

But the full picture is not understood

Ultimately some units may have just been forgotten

Evidence from Birdoswald showed some people continued to live a 'war-band' lifestyle after the end of Roman rule

Written evidence about Carlisle ('lives' of saint Cuthbert) show features such as Roman water supply still around in 600s

Very hard to get evidence of this date from sites like Carlisle

Here the landscape was firstly altered by Castle and town wall building from 11th century CE onwards

https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-1416-1/dissemination/pdf/9781848021419_all.pdf

Despite antiquarian interest, industrial and military activity dominated in 1700s-late 1900s

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=16&lat=54.89650&lon=-2.93870&layers=168&right=ESRIWorld>

Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Picts, Scots, Vikings

New arrivals from continental Europe, 400s CE onwards

People on the move across the islands and mainland of Britain

Many seem to have been non-Christian (Pagan)

Many did not have a tradition of building in stone

None left written records but they are referred to by (Christian, later) writers

Sources written in the 800s CE accuse incomers of violent takeover and aggression against Christians

We now know the narrative was more complex

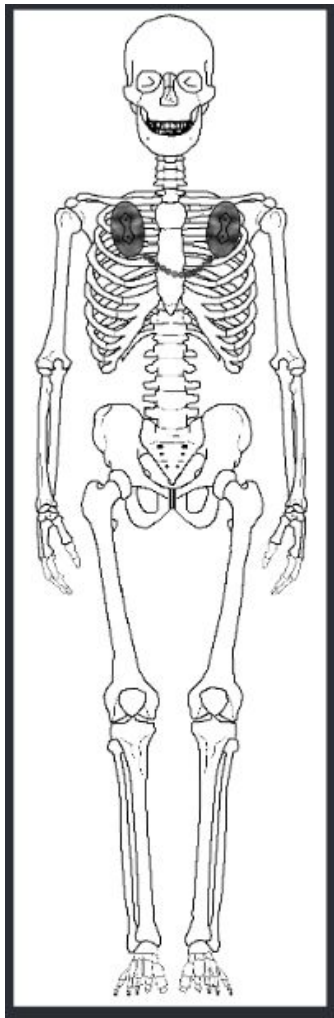
Much of the detail of this period comes from stories of conversion to or resistance to Christianity

Early saints of Roman and Celtic churches criss-cross the area's place names

Aspatria (Patrick), St Bee's (Bega), Santon Bridge (Sancton), Bridekirk (Bridget), Kirkoswald, St Mungo, St Ninian, St Cuthbert

Archaeologically excavated remains are rare, and recent eg

- Trusty's Hill, Dumfries & Galloway, a hillfort
- Cumwhitton about 8 miles SE of Carlisle: Viking age burials
- 1989: missed opportunity at Carlisle Anglican Cathedral cemetery



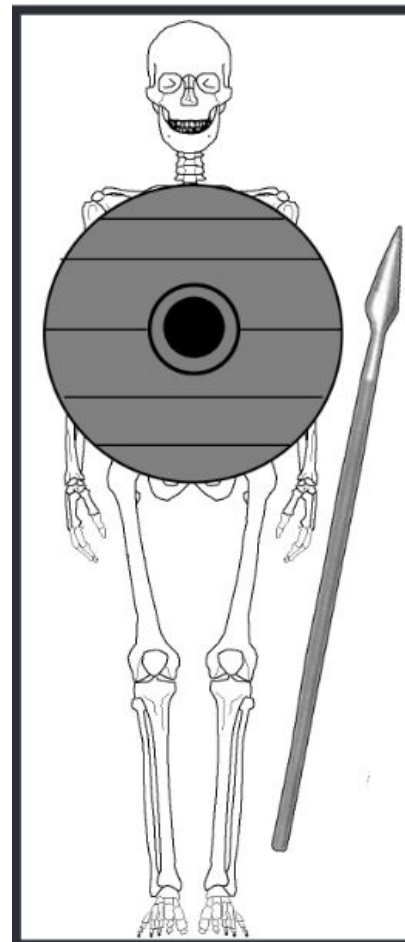
Cumwhitton excavations at Tullie House Museum of six people buried in the 8-900's

Hardly any preservation of bone or wood due to soil acidity

Carlisle Cathedral: most of the uncovered graves were reburied in 1989

18 burials kept for research, in Tullie House collections. Some re-examination in 2013 gives interesting details eg unusually tall females

https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/carlisle_2013/downloads.cfm



Carved stone 'preaching crosses' are one of the most prominent legacies, studied by art historians

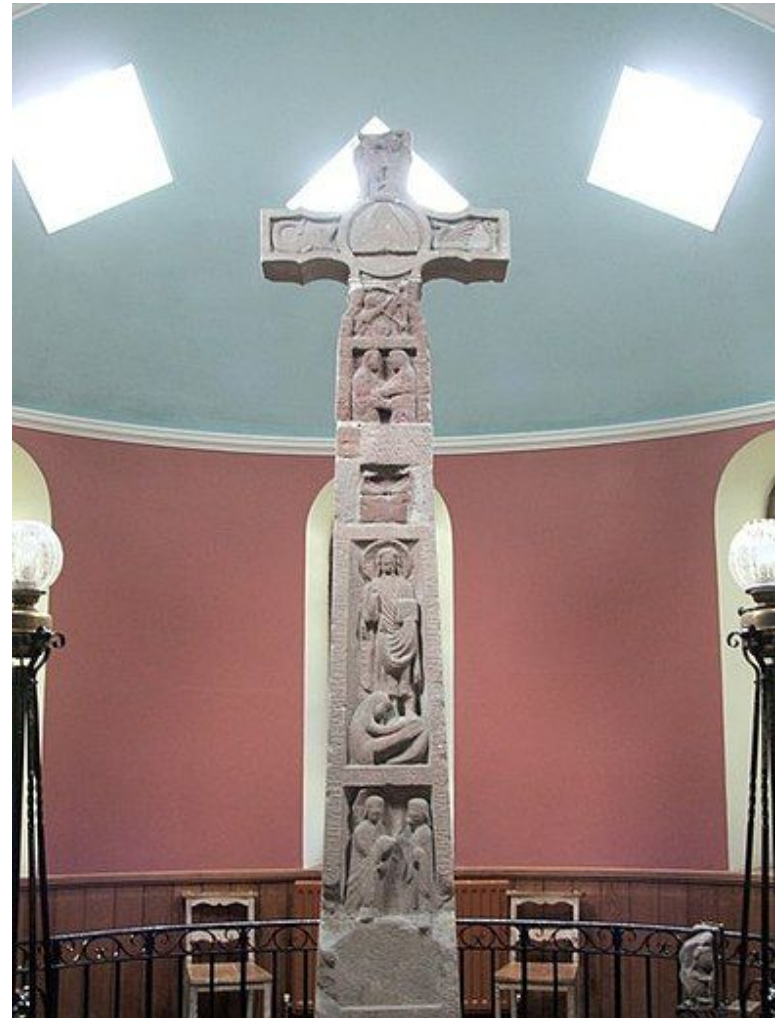
They can be difficult to show adequately in photographs

Ruthwell Cross

5.5m high, dating from 700s CE

Was hacked about during Reformation

Cross-piece is a restoration





A poem, 'the Dream of the Rood' is written on the Ruthwell Cross in runic

□□□□□ □□□ □□ □□□□ □□□□□□ / □□□□ □□□□
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Krist wæs on rodi. Hwepræ / þer fusæ fearran kwomu / æppilæ til anum / ic þæt al bih[eald].

"Christ was on the cross. And there hastening from far came they to the noble prince. I beheld all that."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruthwell_Cross





This kind of vine scroll design probably originated in Coptic Egypt and travelled back to Northumbria with books, scholars and pilgrims

Bewcastle, Northumbrian cross

https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=17&lat=55.06444&lon=-2.68196&layers=6&right=LIDAR_DTM_1m

4m high remains

Inside an unusual Roman military site - for what purpose?

Also an early Christian site used at least from first half of 700s CE



Line drawing [on this link](#)



Book illustrations may have mirrored these designs especially the depictions of the holy people

Eg 'Codex Amiatinus'



CODICIBUS SACRIS HOSTILI CLADE PERVSTIS
ESDRA DO FERVENS HOC REPARAVIT OPUS



At present it is thought that these large painted books were produced 'somewhere in Northumbria'

That is a large area of northern England and southern Scotland

Some have suggested that this figure (left) was inspired by Bede of Jarrow (d.735 CE), who had one of the largest libraries in northern Europe in his lifetime

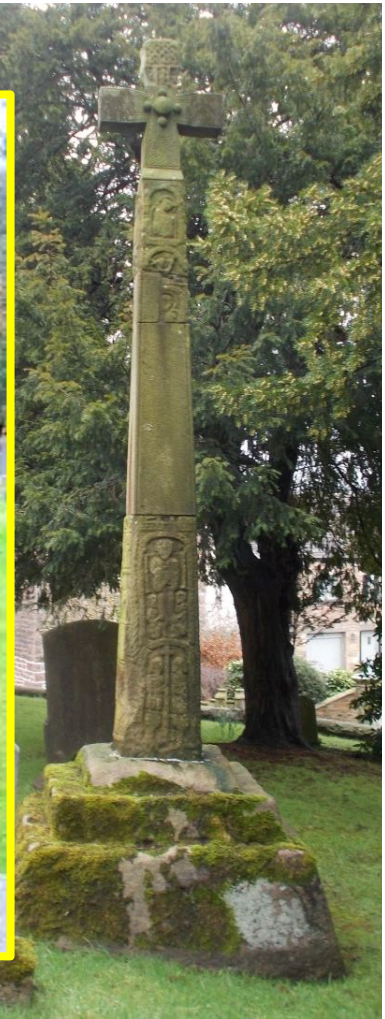
The tradition of carving Christian narratives into stone continued into the Viking period

Halton, near Lancaster - Sigurd and the Dragon

Spot the bellows where the sword is being made by Regin the Dwarf

Sigurd turning the dragon's heart as he roasts it - sucking his burned thumb

The birds in the trees at the top warning Sigurd of Regin's treachery



Did Vikings (800s CE onwards) burn ships for burials?

An account written by an Arab diplomat, Amhad Ibn Fadlan, for the Caliph at Baghdad

Ibn Fadlan had been sent to make links with the 'Rus' Vikings (how Russia got its name)

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/27702690.pdf>

'Hog-back' carved stones were made by these new settler communities

Purpose and iconography is debated

House shape?

Dogs or dragons

'guarding' the gables?

Wider Solway south

area: <http://www.solwaypast.co.uk/index.php/structures-in-stone/13-mem/77-hog-back>

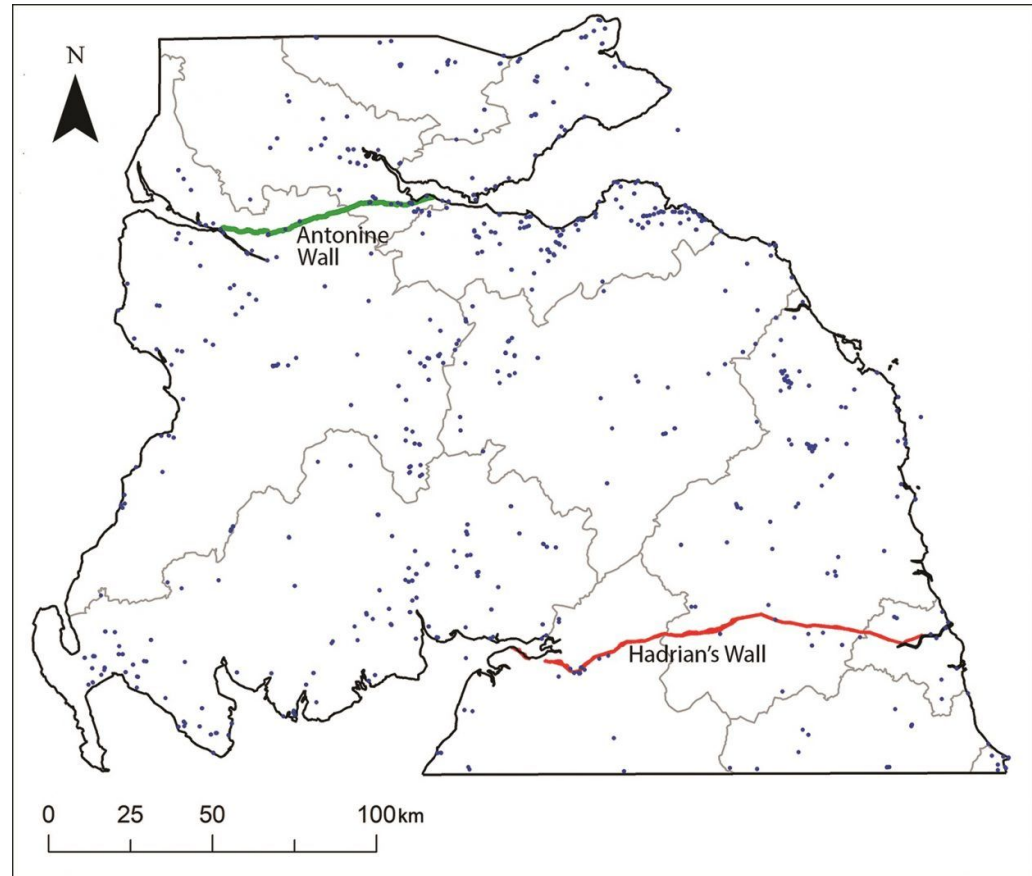


Heysham church

The lands around and between the Roman Walls became a buffer to land-based insurrection or invasion

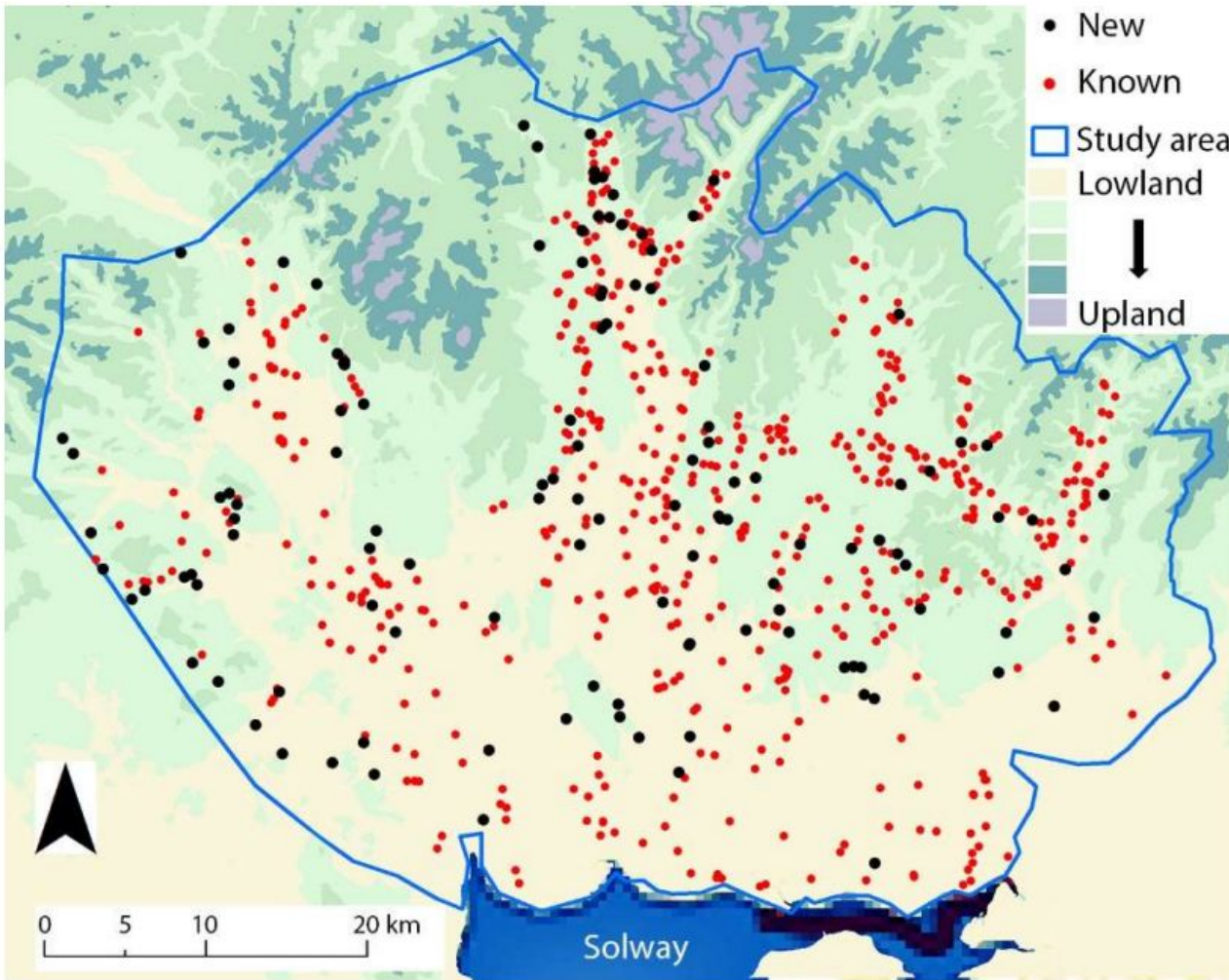
Map shows settlements that have produced a carbon-14 date falling in the Iron Age (750 BCE to Roman arrival)

Work is now in hand to identify sites dating to after the Roman collapse



The Christian Church stepped into Rome's empty shoes

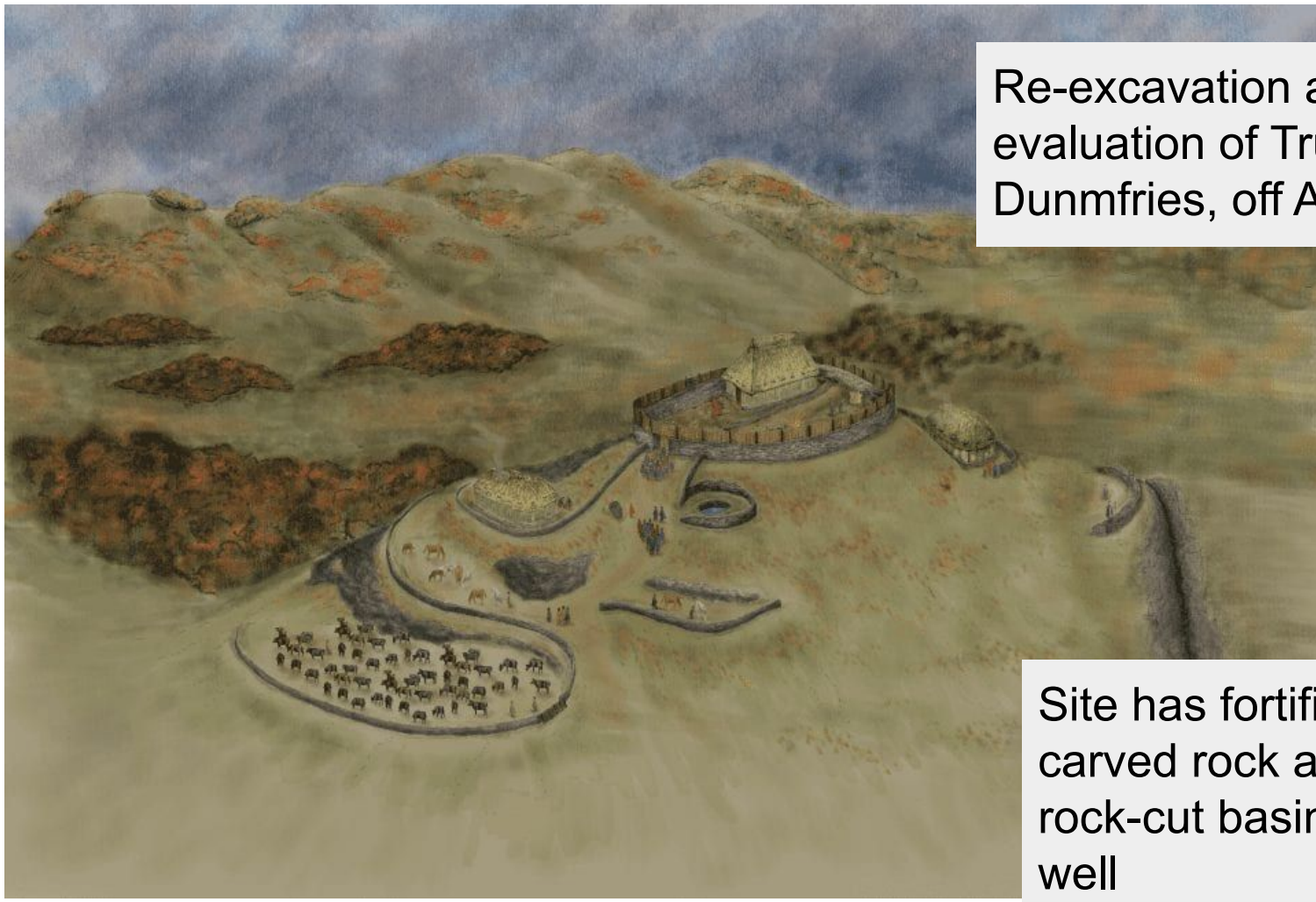
- 330s CE onwards: holding important jobs in government or army subsequently required baptism
- As centralised Roman rule abandoned peripheral zones and finally collapsed, the Christian church remained literate, organised, technically separate from local rulers
- ...and pretty fearless....barefoot monks carried conversion across Europe
- I had a go at mapping out the sites associated with these early missionary monks <https://goo.gl/maps/LbbQnkwqYmz8V1zeA>



2021 and ongoing study by Edinburgh University has added to number of known sites in one area alone

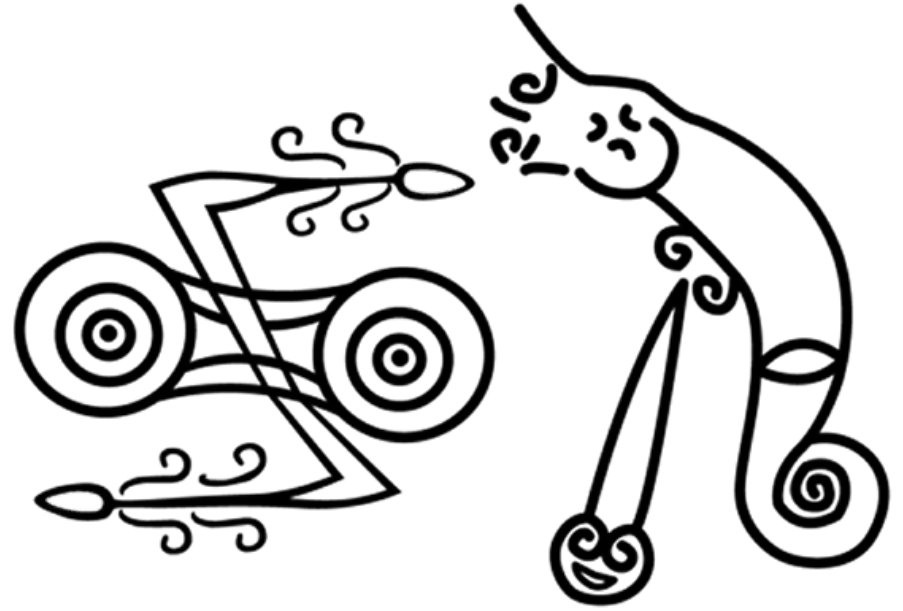
Eg dates needed



An aerial reconstruction of the Trusty's Hill site in Dunmfries, Scotland. The illustration shows a central fortified enclosure with a stone wall and a thatched-roof building. To the left, a large circular enclosure contains a herd of cattle. A winding path or road leads from the central site towards the bottom left. In the foreground, a rock-cut basin is visible, which served as a spring well. The surrounding landscape is hilly and green, with some rocky outcrops. The sky is a mix of blue and grey, suggesting a cloudy day.

Re-excavation and
evaluation of Trusty's Hill,
Dunmfries, off A75

Site has fortifications,
carved rock art, and a
rock-cut basin for a spring
well



The typical Pictish designs have been eroded and graffitied



The Galloway Hoard, found 2014

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/galloway-hoard/sections/the-galloway-hoard-hoards-and-the-viking-age-in-historical-context/>

