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Reader R (2012) Over the ditch and far away: Investigating Broxmouth and the landscape of South-East Scotland during the later prehistoric period. PhD Thesis. University of Bradford.

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Chapter 9. Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This research has sought to link the excavated evidence from Broxmouth to the broadly contemporary landscape and to examine how patterns of deposition, creation and monumentalisation were all intimately linked within Broxmouth's biography. It has combined a variety of methods to document the phenomenon of enclosure, attitudes to enclosed sites and the landscape, and the social relationships that were enacted within it, which ultimately found their expression in the design, creation, maintenance and abandonment of enclosed sites.

9.2 The current state of research

In the "Understanding the British Iron Age" research agenda, the Iron Age archaeology of East Lothian was classed as 'unsorted', with a "fair amount of data relating to Iron Age settlement... however [with] a failure to capitalise on the results of previous surveys or research" (Haselgrove *et al* 2001, 24). This region is now moving towards having an established research framework, due to the publication of old rescue excavations (e.g. Dryburn Bridge (Dunwell 2007)), the publication of more recent rescue excavations (e.g. Fishers Road East and West (Haselgrove and McCullagh 2000); the A1 upgrade (Lelong and MacGregor 2008)) and a long-term research project (i.e. TLEP (Haselgrove 2009a)). Prior to this, the only in-depth study with a landscape approach carried out in this area was MacInnes's work (1982; 1984). This was based on a developing cropmark record and only had a limited number of excavated sites to draw on, with an emphasis on

differentiating hillforts and enclosures. With broader theoretical developments in landscape archaeology and the burgeoning research record of East Lothian, this thesis has had the opportunity not only to draw on the Broxmouth evidence itself but to also utilise the recent results from other projects, to enrich the narrative of the later prehistoric landscape based on my research. Chapter 2 has highlighted how term 'hillfort' has come under increasing scrutiny and the term has been scrutinised in this thesis in order to explore the rich cropmark landscape which characterises East Lothian later prehistory (chapter 5; chapter 6).

9.3 Current Approach

The methods adopted have ultimately derived from the results of the analysis of the Broxmouth boundaries (see Appendix A). The initial GIS analysis of the characteristics of the enclosed sites in East Lothian helped to contextualise Broxmouth initially, although if time had allowed, it would have been preferable to analyse all sites in East Lothian instead of a smaller study area. Some of the analyses could not be taken further forward, for example, comparing Broxmouth to other sites similar in terms of morphology and area size ultimately did not work as few conclusions could be drawn. However it was still important to emphasise that multiple boundaries may indicate long biographies, rather than contemporary creation of all ditches and ramparts.

The decision was taken to combine viewshed analysis with a phenomenological approach because as standalone methods, it was felt that they could not have aided interpretation of the placement of these sites in the landscape. Phenomenology is still a highly criticised method (see chapter 2), however this study has taken

account of this by adjusting the data collection accordingly (chapter 8). Carrying out the study this way produced interesting results with regards to the use of the uplands in transhumance and the apparently deliberate placement of certain sites to create maximum visual impact (see chapter 8).

The combination of excavated data from specific sites and the different approaches to examining the landscape has allowed interpretations on how social relationships were structured and how these were expressed through the creation and maintenance of boundaries. A fresh analysis of the excavated data from other sites in East Lothian (chapter 7) has allowed a broad chronology to be constructed of when enclosures were created and maintained. However there is still a relatively small number of securely dated sites and even these are subject to interpretation (e.g. Sharples 2011; chapter 7). Future research however can begin to address this (see below).

9.4 Results of the Research

9.4.1 Creating and Maintaining Enclosures

Enclosure creation across East Lothian has its origins in the late Bronze Age (Haselgrove 2009a) and was an ubiquitous feature throughout the Iron Age and into the Roman Iron Age (see chapter 7). The vast majority of sites were smaller than 0.5ha and single ditched (see chapter 6), which suggests that most sites would have housed single families (*cf* Innes 2008). However the stratigraphy and silting patterns of the ditches at Broxmouth revealed complex patterns of ditch creation, re-creation and abandonment (see chapter 4). The site began as palisaded before then being defined by ditched boundaries and was redefined over

centuries, with at least six separate definition and re-definition episodes happening over a period of 125-275 years, with boundaries created, on average, every 25-55 years (*cf* Hamilton 2010, 263). It is argued that these were major events, vital for creating and maintaining social relationships, and reinforcing community identity (*cf* Lelong 2008b, 247), with the labour calculations indicating the level of involvement over time by different communities (see chapter 4). Enclosed sites across East Lothian appear to have been re-created on a generational (25-40 years) basis (Hamilton 2010, 263; chapter 7) and evidence for cleaning and maintenance of boundaries was rare, although this may have been carried out on an *ad hoc* basis, by the site's occupants. The visual spectacle of gathering communities together may therefore have been more important than maintaining the boundaries on a more regular basis.

The entrance structures at Broxmouth were found to be unique in East Lothian (see chapter 7) but additional elements of monumentality, including stone revetment, fence lines and deeper ditches emphasised the importance of the threshold elsewhere. The combination of entrance monumentality elements was unique to Broxmouth, however enclosed sites emphasised the threshold in subtler ways, primarily through deeper terminal ditches and revetment (chapter 7). This also suggests that there was a hierarchy of settlements, with Broxmouth placed relatively highly within this in its particular landscape. However there is very little evidence for a highly stratified society and this research demonstrated that exceptionally large sites were rare to indicate a higher status. Multivallate sites appear to have had long biographies and may not have been created in a single episode, as demonstrated at Broxmouth (chapter 4; chapter 6).

Enclosure creation across East Lothian appears to have slowly declined from *c.*400 cal BC and was presumably no longer vital to social reproduction (see chapter 7). Societies may have had a strong sense of identity and no longer needed to declare this coherence through boundary creation. New ways to structure social relationships were taking precedent, however this was clearly a complex process and did not happen wholesale across East Lothian. Rectilinear enclosures were constructed during this period (e.g. Knowes; East Bearford (Haselgrove 2009a); see chapter 7) but they were not a wholesale replacement of curvilinear enclosures nor were they constructed in different areas. However they did tend to avoid conspicuous locations, were smaller in size and rarely multivallate (chapter 6), indicating that there were a relatively short-lived phenomenon.

Boundary creation came to an end at Broxmouth 400-200 cal BC but the ditches were not simply left to silt. The inhabitants had the ability to bring a variety of resources to the site and the midden deposits at Broxmouth probably represent several events. The high percentage of freshly deposited animal bone, some articulated (Cussans in prep; chapter 4) indicates that feasting debris was placed within the ditches soon after it was consumed and symbolically closed the boundaries. Further activity within the relict remains of the ditches suggested that the site's boundaries were slowly removed over time but this was a complicated process and enclosed sites did not simply move from enclosed to unenclosed. This appears to be the case with other enclosed sites, where occupation appears to respect the boundaries (chapter 7). This period also sees the establishment of open settlements (e.g. Phantassie; New Mains) and may also indicate the 'opening'

of the landscape. This eventually led to the re-occupation of Traprain Law, perhaps a focus for several communities.

9.4.2 Upland/Lowland Divide

One striking feature of the settlement analysis is the distinct lack of later prehistoric activity in the uplands (chapter 6). This research has shown that there was evidence for Bronze Age activity in the uplands however the decline in visible activity may be due to a retreat to the fertile lowlands (chapter 5). However it has been argued that this upland landscape was not abandoned and the division in settlement location was attributed to division of land use during later prehistory and the establishment of transhumance into the uplands (chapter 6). Routeways documented since medieval times are closely linked to Bronze Age monuments and it is argued that these would similarly have helped to structure and formalise routeways in the later prehistoric period (chapter 5). White Castle and Black Castle were sited deliberately in relation to routeways into the uplands, further arguing for transhumance practice (see chapter 8).

The exceptional faunal assemblage from Broxmouth suggests that large numbers of animals were kept (chapter 4) and this was probably the case across East Lothian, although the poor preservation at other sites hinders interpretations (chapter 7). Cattle were dominant in the faunal assemblage, followed by sheep/goat and small numbers of pig (see chapter 4). The large numbers of cattle and sheep/goat at Broxmouth show that animal husbandry was practised and the evidence for pit alignments and routeways in the Lammermuirs show that animals could have been put to pasture on the uplands during the summer months (chapter 5). This

indicates a complex relationship between settlement patterns in the lowlands and the use of the 'unoccupied' uplands (chapter 6). There may have been communal rights of access and grazing, although certain areas may have been controlled by people living on the fringes of the Lammermuirs, with earlier monuments used as way finders (chapter 5; chapter 8). The uplands may also have been a major provider of timber although as the clearance intensified, less woodland would have been available post 500 cal BC (Tipping 1994; chapter 5).

9.4.3 The Traprain Gap

Another large gap in the settlement was identified east of Traprain (chapter 6) as has also been highlighted by past research (e.g. Cowley 2009). This research has shown that this was apparently a genuine gap, which cannot be linked to geology, soil type or drainage. Communities may have had shared communal access and grazing rights to certain areas (see above) and the area to the east of Traprain may have been a communal area or a 'no-man's land' between different groups.

9.4.4 Land-Use and Animals

Alongside animal husbandry (see above), communities would have practised arable farming (chapter 7) although it is possible that some communities specialised in meat production and/or breeding or grain growing to allow exchange and to further facilitate social relationships. Communities would have had to define areas of land for growing crops or raising animals and pit alignments would have helped to facilitate this. There is also tentative evidence for field systems, showing other formalised ways of dividing the land (chapter 7). Fish was also a minor part of subsistence, but the presence of deep sea fish at Broxmouth shows that the

specialism and skill was possessed by some people to be able to fish in deeper waters (chapter 4). Shell was collected in abundance and was particularly dominant in the phase 3 midden deposits in the south-west entrance. With the utilisation of cave sites as well (chapter 7), this research has shown that the coast and sea would have been utilised extensively at times (chapter 4).

9.5 Avenues for Further Research

The lack of palaeo-environmental data and for East Lothian has been an issue throughout and has hindered interpretations of past tree cover and extent of agriculture. Whilst general overviews of past climate change and tree cover from neighbouring regions have aided interpretation, there are subtleties like those seen from Tipping's work in the Bowmont Valley (2010) that are absent. Future excavations need to continue systematically sampling for environmental remains and detailed pollen analyses are desperately needed for East Lothian. However the county lacks suitable sample sites due to the extensive drainage and intensive agriculture since the Improvements (chapter 5).

The present research only had time to carry out a settlement pattern study on a small area. In future, this could be extended to all of East Lothian to see whether there are differences in site morphology, area size, entrance orientation and landscape setting with other areas. Further research excavation programmes focused on the area closer to Inveresk would be useful in elucidating whether there are any differences in settlement characteristics closer to an established Roman site. Synthesis of commercial excavations with later prehistoric evidence can further add to the interpretations and discussions of this period. Enclosed sites

excavated in the future should be scientifically dated to help build a chronology of enclosure creation in East Lothian.

More work is needed to address the blank areas observed in the later prehistoric archaeological record, particularly the Traprain Law gap and the Uplands (chapter 6). As mentioned above, pollen data can help to some extent identify the climatic conditions which may have led to the environment today. This would involve extensive survey work, however this would help elucidate whether the Lammermuirs were truly depopulated during later prehistory. Further attempts should be made to establish the presence of large landscape divisions such as field systems and targeted LiDAR, geophysical survey and excavation would aid assessing the date and extent of these. More research is also needed into the development of enclosure and whether it originates as large-scale land division during the Bronze Age, like that observed at Howmuir Farm (chapter 7).

Whether it is an excavation of a later prehistoric site or a study of the wider landscape, it is important to consider how these relate to wider social systems. We need to ask why people were creating certain types of sites during a particular point in time and how they then engaged with that site, the surrounding landscape and other people. Combining different methods can allow for different, and more creative, interpretations and ultimately it encourages further dialogue on why people in the later prehistoric period chose to create boundaries.