Original Study

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Storyways: Visualising Saintry Impact in a North Atlantic Maritime Landscape

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Abstract: This paper presents a new methodological approach and theorising framework which visualises intangible landscapes. The Cult of Saint Magnus of Orkney (martyred c.AD1117 and canonised c.1135) is presented as a case study to demonstrate how spatial and temporal veneration can be explored in the landscape. The transferability of this methodology extends to any multi-source study where memories link to landscape features (past or present). St Magnus dedications, altars and church furnishings in Scandinavia and Britain demonstrate his international recognition, but aside from three Magnus dedicated churches, little is known of his veneration within Orkney. By using GIS to map archaeological, onomastic, folkloric, historic and hagiographic evidence of veneration we have visualised the impact of the Cult of Magnus since martyrdom to recent times for the first time. Furthermore, by visually differentiating between sources, we've distinguished the variability and variety of evidence, thus identifying concentrated pockets of veneration through time. Additionally, by linking evidence locations, we have identified 'remembered' routeways – storyways. In doing so, we have mapped the impact of Magnus as a saint, his value to particular communities and his continuing influence.

Keywords: Landscape, Memory, Mapping, Religion, GIS, Archaeology, Folklore

1 Introduction

On the surface the landscape of the archipelago of Orkney does not appear to bear any great religious significance. However, this belies a rich tradition of toponyms, folklore and memory enmeshed with the physical landscape that presents a very different picture of how the environment was perceived, understood and remembered. The research presented below maps this intangible heritage, not as a means of assessing it's veracity, but rather as a means of exploring the accumulated cultural memories of St Magnus, and the impact that the saint had upon the conceptual formation and use of the landscape of this group of islands in the North Atlantic. In doing so we present a new methodological approach and theorising framework which allows belief to be explored in the landscape. This approach has applicability beyond the medieval North Atlantic to explore story-rich landscapes by amalgamating memories and monuments through time and space.

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2 Materiality and the Cult of Saints

In the medieval world it was widely held that a spiritual power dwelt within the physical remains of saints: not only in the corporeal remains but also in objects belonging to the saint, items the saint had touched, and the places these objects were stored (Robinson, 2011, p. 9). The efficacy of even small material objects was based on the belief that they embodied the divine and that holy virtue could be transmitted through them. It therefore follows that the extent and manifestations of the spiritual power of a saint can be detected in his or her physical remains. Given the definition above extends to include a wide range of reliquary places and spaces beyond the purely material, and as we are dealing with a process of transcendence it is perhaps more appropriate to term the evidence of saintly veneration as ‘cultural remains’ rather than material culture. By looking at the cultural remains of a saint, the creation, retention, loss and reinvention of sacredness through practice can be considered. By doing this one can better understand the character and power of a saint as realised, adapted and memorised by the communities in which he or she was revered. Key to this is the inclusion of a wide range of evidence much of which is more usually treated with scepticism. This also contributes to broaden discussion of the nature of materials in terms of their potential agency and efficacy. Here we are as concerned as much with what things do as their participation in representational schemes.

These disparate elements, most of which are embedded in the landscape (and the social network of community), retain beliefs and practices of those who lived within the sphere of the saint in question. In most instances, these places and objects have biographies that precede and live beyond the popular veneration of the saint. Thus, the reasons and impacts of transformation of place, by and for the saint, can be explored as can the reasons why certain aspects of a saint’s story remain relevant (morphed or otherwise) within communities over time.

The spread of dedications, altars and relics is frequently used to assess the extent of the popularity of a saint, and yet the potential is greater than this. By considering the materiality of a saint as manifest in the landscape, an assessment not just of his or her nature and veneration is possible but also of the particular ways in which the inhabitants of that landscape related to and responded to the saint. Moreover, this approach allows changes in religious practice to be explored and reveals the reciprocal dialogic relationship between place and belief over time. In connection to this, and as relevant, is the application of this approach to the portable objects of a cult. Their movability, seen as a positive factor, allows multiple contexts to be explored, often these are where items were discovered and where they were subsequently deposited. Places of remembrance, curation, discard and all with meaning.

This study deals with a complexity of cultural remains ranging from upstanding ecclesiastical buildings founded for and/or dedicated to St Magnus to a story of Magnus turning a serpent to stone. In between are stone markers physically punctuating the landscape (Mansie Stones), a paired-foot-imprinted stone, a hidden cross-mould, bones and a mysterious cauldron. Aside from the material evidence, and yet intrinsically part of it, are a wealth of traditions, names, stories, and documents that give meanings to the materiality. All link Magnus to places and people for whom that relationship was in some way meaningful. The paper outlines the resources and then, crucially, introduces a means by which they can be evaluated and visualised through a simple GIS.

Whilst this paper is concerned with St Magnus, its application is much further reaching in providing a framework for theorizing/interpreting the relationships between materiality, intangible culture and societal belief through perceived practice in the landscape. For example, in the culturally rich landscapes of Norway there are numerous examples of natural and human-made features, traditions and places associated with Saint Olaf (Klempe, 2015). And whilst there are various projects investigating aspects of this (Stories of Heritage Project, Organising Landscape Research Group), a theorizing framework and mapping methodology as outlined here has potential to enrich understanding through visualisation of the oscillating impact of this saint with respect to belief in his cult and the shaping of national identity.

Our approach builds on previous work exploring the knowledge construction process of archaeological sites (e.g. Bender, 1998; Baines, 2002; Edmonds, 2006), by challenging the (conceited) notion of ‘total explanation’ that reflects 19th century scientific desire (Harvey, 2010, p. 361), and by broadening and questioning what counts as evidence, in order to make space for other voices. As Ingold (1993, p. 153)

observes ‘we should resist the temptation to assume that since stories are stories, they are, in some sense, unreal or untrue’. In broadening what we consider valid sources of cultural knowledge in the construction of geographical *place* (Basso, 1996) we would suggest that our methodology for mapping these intangible cultural and societal beliefs and memories could extend temporally and geographically beyond Christianisation to visualise ‘remembered’ landscapes in any story-rich community.

Figure 1. Location map of Orkney, illustrating global spread of St Magnus Cultural Remains. Note that identification of Magnus Cultural Remains in Sweden is tentative, and that not all Magnus place names in Germany relate to St Magnus of Orkney (Inset map derived from United Kingdom Map by NordNordWest CC BY-SA 3.0).

3 St Magnus Earl of Orkney

The story of St Magnus is well known in the North. *Orkneyinga Saga*, *The Longer Magnus Saga* and *The Shorter Magnus Saga* give detailed medieval accounts of the life and death of Magnus Erlendsson (c.1080–c.1117) and the prominent St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, Orkney (Figure 2) is a permanent reminder of the saint for whom it was founded. St Magnus has been the focus of several detailed studies, namely Mooney (1935), De Geer (1985), Søliland (2004) and Antonsson (2007). Spanning several decades, Crawford’s multiple publications deal with St Magnus and the Earldoms that he ruled (1984, 1987, 1988, 1998, 2012, 2013), Thomson has contributed to the political context of Magnus’ sanctification (2003) whilst Yeoman has brought Magnus into a Scottish religious context (1999). Invaluable collected evidence by Ernest Marwick, includes stories and traditions relating to Magnus (Marwick, 1909–1977, 1945–1977, 1926–1977, 1972 June 1, June 8, June 15, 1991). Likewise, Hugh Marwick’s notes on Magnus-derived place names, such as Mans and Mansie, provide important information concerning the materiality of the Magnus Cult in Orkney (Marwick, 1928, 1920–1950, 1957 January 24, 1957 February 14, 1957 May 9, 1970).

Whilst Magnus has received much attention, the focus has tended to consider the written sources, the wider Scandinavian context and the upstanding ecclesiastical architecture. To this end, there is a wealth of research detailing these aspects of the Cult (Antonsson, 2007, pp. 42–67; Barrett, 2012, pp. 20–22; Crawford, 2003; Imsen, 1999, 2003, 2009; Thomson, 2008). Crawford (2013) and Thomson (2003) have dealt comprehensively with the motivations and circumstances that brought about the canonisation of Magnus in Birsay and his translation to Kirkwall, ultimately to the cathedral built in his name. Crawford

and Thomson again provide the nucleus of interpretation of the process by which Magnus, murdered by his cousin Hakon in an internal ruling feud c.1117, became a saint. Most recently, Crawford (2013, pp. 199–237) dealt extensively with the historical (but also considered the onomastic and architectural) evidence of St Magnus. It is evident from the written sources, and Crawford's analysis of them, that the success of the Magnus Cult owed much to the particular political and ecclesiastical circumstances in Orkney and Scandinavia at the time of Magnus' death and the decades that followed.

In respect to the archaeological remains associated with Magnus in Orkney, the focus has been on St Magnus Cathedral, St Magnus Church Egilsay and St Magnus Church and Christ Church in Birsay (Figure 2). The date of foundation and (re)dedication of the Magnus churches in Birsay and Egilsay is debated. This is mainly due to the difficulties of dating the architecture and interpreting the function of the buildings; and whilst their architecture has been ably described and interpreted these issues have not been resolved. Even the date of the translation of the shrine of Magnus to St Magnus Cathedral (on which this study focuses), for which we have a documented foundation date of 1137, is unknown, although between 1142 and 1145 is generally accepted to be most likely (Cruden, 1988, p. 82).

In addition to interpreting the Magnus dedicated churches in Orkney (2013, pp. 228–237), Crawford, more than anyone else, has shown how communities in the north could have related to the Cult of St Magnus. She regards Shetland as a particular place of Magnus-reverence, has proposed a likely route taken by pilgrims travelling from Scotland to Orkney, and considered the gifts and donations, dedications and altars to Magnus as a means of establishing his cult as 'almost a universal saint's cult in north Europe' (2013, p. 221).

Figure 2. Orkney: Location of the three churches dedicated to St Magnus, and all settlements, parishes, and islands mentioned in the text.

Two studies particularly concern material evidence for St Magnus. Yeoman outlines key features of the archaeological resource of the Magnus Cult, and whilst his interpretation of Mass roads is misleading, other elements are valuable additions to the corpus (1999, pp. 93–99). Yeoman's assertion that the name 'mass gate' was associated particularly with St Magnus is in error. In Orkney Mass or Mess is used to denote tracks to any church (especially parish churches), not just to St Magnus, and they are found distributed throughout the archipelago. For instance, in Sanday, Tankerness and Sandwick (Figure 2). Søliland's multi-disciplinary analysis informs on pilgrimage in a North Atlantic setting and her work on Scandinavian historical material is valuable (2004). Both Yeoman and Søliland demonstrate the potential of the material resource but their studies are not intended to fully explore the Orkney evidence as in both cases they are researching wider aspects of the cult. Resultantly, they identify Orkney evidence for Magnus in moderate isolation without integrating the material into or fully acknowledging the wider landscape of Orkney of which his cult is part.

This paper is therefore motivated by the lack of an engagement with the wide range of evidence, and particularly the folkloric evidence as linked to materiality. Equally it is argued that it is important to situate the analysis in a landscape context to provide the visual manifestations of the physically attested Cult of St Magnus as expressed in the material and intangible. The aim is to present the potential for investigating beyond well-researched and discussed aspects of the cult which have hitherto focused on centrally (and mainly historically) determined elements thus providing a partial picture. By focussing on the cultural remains in their landscape setting the archaeological resource is extensive and informative. Therefore, we can discover valuable insights into the ways in which this holy earl may have been venerated locally, and consequentially discuss the Cult of Saint Magnus grounded in the material conditions of people that lived in Orkney thus demonstrating shared local belief in contrast to external and/or elite cult devotion.

4 Sources and Methodology

The potential of mapping archaeology, place names, memories and stories to create visualised landscapes of belief became evident in 2018 when the authors were discussing SJG's research dataset on Orkney's cultural remains of St Magnus. SJG had created this to provide archaeological and historical information on St Magnus to inform the development of a new pilgrimage route to mark the 900th anniversary of Magnus' death (Orkney Pilgrimage 2019). To accomplish this, she had gathered a rich and diverse body of material concerning the Cult of Magnus in Orkney (outlined below). Much of the evidence was connected to particular places and not just statically but in a manner that linked them, through space and time, through a synergy of action and re-imaginings. Thorough knowledge of Orkney allowed the authors to envisage and discuss these disparate elements together in their landscape setting. This led to the recognition of the potential in a 'mapping of Magnus': a means of seeing movement and focus through time, determined and governed by religious practice, thus having potential to shed light on religious beliefs (Moser & Feldman, 2014). The challenge then was to realise a means of visualising this intangible cultural material, and the conceptual landscapes which it created. In turn such representations would enhance our ability to evaluate and interpret, and provide others, unfamiliar with the settings and stories, with the opportunity to engage with the places created through the remembrance of St Magnus.

To do this, a database of the evidence was compiled and in all, over two hundred entries were identified associated with Magnus. Of these, 85 are from Orkney, there are also multiple entries from Shetland, Caithness, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Scotland and England, and one each from Faroe, Prague, Rome, Aachen, New Zealand and possibly also Sweden (Figure 1). The data was gathered from a range of primary and secondary sources, some focussed on Magnus and others not. The previous studies outlined above were indispensable in this process.

The evidence (shown in Figure 4 and listed in Appendix 1) comprises upstanding buildings; stories (taken from sagas and saint's lives) of martyrdom and sanctification; various documents demonstrating veneration and awareness of Magnus, most of which though previously noted as evidence for the Magnus Cult have not been collated. In addition, traditions, objects, place names, miracles and local stories have been included in the dataset enriching and enlivening it. The inclusion of this data, that often cannot be

dated, provenanced or verified, could be considered imprudent, and yet it is this very material that links the historically recorded Magnus Cult with its veneration in the landscape, and by the community. By not including these elements we are denied insight into local memories of veneration. Why are certain stories told and retold, changed and embellished whilst others are not? Why is there a need to remember Magnus in some places and not in others? We would argue, that the answers to these questions are rooted in the traditions and practices of Magnus veneration and the best means of evaluating this is by mapping it.

An example from the database demonstrates the extent of data underlying certain aspects of the cult and the impact mapping these has on achieving a fuller understanding. There are three medieval accounts of the martyrdom event (Site ID 2); traditions of four martyrdom locations from medieval to modern sources; and two independent flower-themed traditions associated with the place of death (*Longer Magnus Saga* ch. 27; *Shorter Magnus Saga* ch. 32; *Orkneyinga Saga* ch. 54; Scott, 1897, p. 28; Marwick, 1928, p. 25; Marwick, 1926–1977; Mackinlay, 1914, p. 297; Craven, 1901, pp. 25 & 49; Torfæus 1697, p. 89; Gibson personal communications, March 24, 2016; Fynes-Clinton, 1940; Marwick, 1991, p. 460). The multiplicity of traditions and places associated with the martyrdom strengthens the case for the sacredness of this island in relation to the Magnus cult. The memories of multiple martyrdom sites and the living memory of children being warned not to play at one of these places as there had been blood spilled there, demonstrates the strength of the tradition in Egilsay over the past 900 years and the value placed upon this event by the community, past and present. That these traditions have been repeatedly recorded in the past, and by modern scholars, demonstrates a wider interest in the cult of Magnus, and not just from a historical point of view. Pilgrimages made to the island over the years, the building of a cenotaph and an annual church service are indicators of a continuing spiritual power of place. When the martyrdom evidence is mapped alongside other Magnus evidence from Egilsay, an island irrevocably imprinted with Magnus' sanctity emerges (Figure 3).

Most striking, are the remains of a round towered church, architecturally notable yet difficult to date or establish influence for (Site ID 3). As well as broad Northern Sea connections (Ferne, 1988), parallels can be drawn between this church and specific round and round-towered churches in Scandinavia built by returning pilgrims and crusaders as signs of piety and devotion (Wienberg, 2010). Quite possibly this church, as the property of the Bishop, was built in the 1150s, serving the dual purpose of Bishop's sacristy church and pilgrimage church, both as a sign that the founder had been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to mark the place of Magnus' death (as the first of three stations in the Cult). This is supposition but provides an alternative religious influence for the unusual round tower which is worth considering further. It also compliments Crawford's interpretation of towered churches in Orkney and Shetland as specifically linked to St Magnus (2013, p. 229).

The wider landscape of Egilsay too is imbued with traces of Magnus (Figure 3). Manse Loch (Site ID 6) on the east of the island, must surely refer to Magnus (Mans is a historic local contraction of the name Magnus and there is no church building on the island to account for the name so like other places it may have been misspelled by mapmakers unaware of the meaning). A further two places may also originally have been given his name, Mans farm (Site ID 7) and Mines point (Site ID 8) (Orkney Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1879–1880, pp. 187 & 183). The consideration of these elements together with various stories linked to places associated with Magnus gives a sense of a landscape that from the time of Magnus' death was revered and this diffusion of holiness was reinforced by giving other natural and built features his name.

This example, by including the later traditions, stories and place names, shows the veneration of Magnus and the impact of Magnus' death on island life. St Magnus Church in Egilsay is not an isolated architectural reminder of the medieval cult but the most obvious example of multiple remains indicating the recurrent significance of Magnus to the collective memory of the whole island of Egilsay: a significance that was fostered, in part, by antiquarian interest, yet rooted in memories of place.

This detailed synthesis and visual examination (Figure 3) of Magnus evidence in Egilsay establishes how much can be gained. This is further demonstrated below by focusing on the evidence for Magnus stones (known in Orcadian dialect as Mansie or Mans stones/stanes). These are traditionally the resting-places of the coffin and shrine of Magnus as he was transported from his place of death to his first Christian burial in Birsay and then later the procession of his shrine from Birsay to Kirkwall. The tales and place names form connecting elements between key places, thus creating 'Storyways' through the landscape:

linking material culture and memories to visualise an amalgamation of remembered Magnus embodiment on certain routes through time.

Figure 3. Mapping Magnus in Egilsay. OS Mastermap & Terrain 50 Contours © Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

5 Locating Intangible Heritage in Cartesian Space

We would consider our approach here a form of ‘deep mapping’, as a means of embracing and synergising multi-vocality (Kavangh, 2018). Whilst such a broad, performative and interdisciplinary domain should quite rightly avoid becoming too structured (Roberts, 2016) there are practical challenges in applying a Geographical Information System (GIS) to data that is inherently dynamic and possesses a degree of ambiguity and uncertainty. The use of a GIS in the research presented here is primarily a tool for data management and visualisation, rather than modelling. There is however considerable scope in the future for greater use of GIS analytics to explore the dynamics of movement and change over time in the landscapes of St Magnus.

The primary challenge is in locating and placing points within a Cartesian system which represent the various types of evidence discussed above. All sites were geo-located in ArcGIS 10.4 using the British Ordnance Survey grid coordinate system. Base-mapping, terrain data and historical maps were sourced

from EDINA Digimap. Additional cartographic data e.g. the Dundas map (see Figure 10) was geo-processed using Spline transformation in order to preserve local accuracy across the relatively small areas under consideration. Although the results discussed below are considered in 2D, the terrain data will provide scope to explore the affordances and inter-visibility of the Mansie stones in the future.

Some of these sites are clearly locatable within the landscape as they are associated with a particular landscape feature, or are/were well known within the local community. But in other cases, there are multiple sources of sometimes conflicting detail, or uncertainty in location. Where exact locations are unclear but stories centre on a particular place i.e. a house or mound, the grid reference is based on the modern location of said feature. We accept that the location of a current house may not be identical to that associated with the original story, however a visual assessment of these locations when plotted suggested they were consistent with known points.

Some consideration was given to the value of plotting locations as polygons rather than points; in instances such as a story being associated with a particular field or area this would have removed some of the concerns over the precision of the location. In practical terms this would have been problematic given the scale of analysis and presentation. More significantly though the focus of our study is upon *places*. Generally, the definition of a place requires cultural meaning, or memory, as well as some degree of spatial organisation, but not necessarily complete boundedness (Lowenthal, 1975; Ingold, 1986, p. 155; Olwig, 2006). The lack of a tangible, physical thing does not preclude the creation of a place, and as such, the important factor here is being able to approximately locate each of these records within the landscape. It is more appropriate to centre the records on their associated known places than define precise boundaries. We are mapping incidents, memories, and resting places, which require central points rather than boundedness to be evaluated.

In other instances it was necessary to plot several points using the same site identifier. In some cases there were two distinct but equally feasible locations e.g. the location of Christ Church in Birsay (Site ID 23) where Magnus was first buried. A related problem was the variance in degrees of accuracy. This is a product of the stories themselves, remembered locations of now lost features within the landscape, and indeed the quality of the grid references themselves provided by some sources. As an example, there are two recorded locations for the Skippigeo Mansie Stone (Site ID 18), one based on research in the 1990s giving a point to within 100m and a second point based on more recent fieldwork which provides a point to within 10m. In all instances in which sites had multiple potential locations we opted to utilise the same site ID, whilst also allocating a sequential unique record ID. This approach enables us to fully embrace the distribution and dynamic nature of the cultural records. To evaluate one record as ‘correct’ over another, or to employ the most ‘accurate’ grid coordinate, would invalidate our approach, creating a false sense of accuracy and veracity. Instead, we present below a series of figures to convey some of the multivocalities and fuzziness of remembered landscapes which have developed over the intervening nine centuries since Magnus’ sanctification.

Within the tabulated data we also undertook a basic assessment of the relative strength of evidence. As we were concerned with issues of memory and association we did not assess the reliability of different sources, or the validity of particular reports, authors or types of evidence, since for our purposes there was no difference between ‘historical texts’ or ‘folklore’ in terms of value or significance (both were equally weighted). The concern is with recording how well known a particular event or story was. The measure of this was the number of different records of each individual story or place. In many instances, it is clear that some of the later references are a result of authors reiterating earlier reports. Memories such as these can only endure in sustained contexts and cannot be transmitted without continuing revision (Meskell, 2003, p. 36), and thus we would strongly argue that this increased frequency represents the continued significance of these particular sites. Each recurrence being a conscious choice on the part of an author or storyteller to repeat certain elements whilst ignoring or forgetting others, in the process of maintaining and reusing this saintly landscape.

Again this is an entirely subjective measurement of significance rather than an objective evaluation of how reliable a record or story might be. The spatial distribution of the variation in the frequency with which stories and sites are remembered (Figure 4) demonstrates clear patterning, with the strongest groupings

centred upon the three locations – Egilsay, Birsay and Kirkwall – associated with Magnus. Whilst there are a number of sites in more rural areas of Orkney, what is striking is that many of the sites outwith these three key locales, are still recorded with reasonably high frequency, most notably the Ladykirk Stone in South Ronaldsay (Site ID 76) which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Figure 4. Location of sites associated with the cultural memory of St Magnus within Orkney. Records 49–70 are located in St Magnus Cathedral. Duplicate records (e.g. sites 10, 23, 74 see discussion above and appendix) reflect records with multiple possible locations. OS Mastermap & Terrain 50 Contours © Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

As with most studies of this type each record was assigned a ‘Site Category’ and due to their diversity, some records required multiple attributes. Thus St Magnus Cathedral (Site ID 49) is categorised as both a ‘Dedication’ and a ‘Church’. This categorisation provides a means of analysing different elements of the

landscape of Magnus cultural remains, such as the Mansie Stones, which will be discussed later.

With our focus on elements of social memory and association we were concerned with mapping the types of evidence as well as the types of sites, and our assessment of the strength of evidence (Figure 4) suggested that the type of evidence also played a significant role in determining the frequency with which elements of St Magnus' story were recounted. To continue the preceding example, St Magnus Cathedral is recorded as evidence types 'Archaeological', 'Sagas & Vitae', 'Historical Texts' and 'Onomastic'. This provides scope to look at patterns and variation in the distribution of evidence and sites. The usefulness of this is demonstrated in Figure 5, where the range and variety of evidence is seen to flourish at the three key martyrdom sites, with stories and names radiating out from these centres connecting with the wider landscape and each other. In larger or more complex datasets there would be scope for the application of an appropriate hotspot or cluster analysis, to explore the spatial distribution of sites and the potential causes for any such clustering or outliers. However in this instance the clustering is clearly identifiable, and the likely cause, namely association with the key locations of Magnus' murder, burial and shrine are readily identifiable. The two significant outliers, a St Magnus dedication in Stronsay (Site ID 84) and the Stone of St Magnus, in South Ronaldsay (Site ID 76) are both discussed later in the text.

Figure 5. Visualisation of the spatial variation in evidence types. OS Mastermap & Terrain 50 Contours © Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

Table 1. List of attributes assigned to records of the impact of St Magnus upon the landscape.

Site Category	Evidence Type
Artefact	Archaeological
Ceremony	Folklore
Church	Historical Texts
Cult of Magnus	Image
Dedication	Onomastic
Funerary Procession	Sagas & Vitae
Grave	
Holy Place	
Mansie Stone	
Memorial	
Miracle	
Pilgrimage	
Place	
Place Name	
Relic	
Shrine	
Shrine Procession	
Story	

As a general pattern (Figures 5 & 6), records provided from onomastic, and particularly folklore sources were seldom repeated, whilst those based on historical texts, and particularly the sagas and vitae were more frequently reiterated. This is likely a product of the relative value and significance assigned to these evidence types, particularly in the 20th century (see for example Hobsbawm, 1997; Mason, 2000 for rejections of oral histories as unreliable), and highlights the value of those investigators who did record folkloric evidence. The persistence of these traditions also highlights the significance that these stories must have continued to hold within local communities; for stories to be repeated they must retain community value. At the other end of the scale, it is unsurprising that the three elements of Magnus' cultural landscape which are most frequently recorded are the churches in Egilsay and Birsay, and the cathedral in Kirkwall.

This analysis also underlines how significant the intangible evidence of the St Magnus Cult is in populating the landscape of Orkney. The evidence provided by folklore and oral tradition represents 31% of the overall number of references we have for the veneration of St Magnus, with a further 24% coming from onomastic sources. Without these data that have frequently been a lesser focus, and are almost wholly intangible, our ability to represent and investigate the landscape of remembrance would be significantly poorer.

Figure 6. Relative frequency of St Magnus Cultural Remains according to the Type and Strength of Evidence.

6 Exploring Variability Between Scholars

To further explore and critique the understudied folkloric and onomastic data, we assessed records based upon the work of three key Orcadian scholars (all coincidentally with the same surname but unrelated) who were active during the late 19th and 20th centuries. A considerable proportion of the evidence we have for St Magnus' impact within the social memory and landscape of Orkney comes from the work of these three very different men, who shared a common interest in Orkney's culture. In particular, they provide us with the most comprehensive records of Magnus Stones and Magnus Stories.

George Marwick (1836–1912) a local man renowned for telling a good tale, is the source for many of the more outlandish (and fascinating) stories associated with St Magnus. George was born and lived his life in the West Mainland and had a wealth of information going back generations (Muir & Irvine, 2014). He was passionate about place names and although many of his interpretations are spurious, they denote a dedication to seeking the origins of his local area and culture. George's stories need careful consideration, but they preserve otherwise unrecorded elements of folklore, based on information he knew and that he heard from others in his lifetime.

Hugh Marwick (1881–1965) was a place name scholar who collected names from local informants across Orkney leading to several publications including three seminal works: *The Place-Names of Rousay* (1947), *Orkney Farm Names* (1952) and *The Place Names of Birsay* (1970). The data for this last publication largely came from William Sabiston, an inhabitant of Birsay who, not only provided names, but also stories associated with the places. In a series of articles in the local newspaper in 1957 Hugh enquired about Magnus resting places receiving place name information from members of the public. His main interest was collecting names and ascertaining their etymologies and as such he rarely dealt with stories or memories that were not directly related to place names. For simplicity and because he did collect folklore, he is referred to as a folklorist in Table 2.

Ernest Marwick (1915–1977) was a folklorist and historian. The richness and variety of his interests are preserved as meticulous notes in the Orkney Library and Archive, much has not been published but two posthumous collections of his work give a flavour of his research into Orcadian culture (Robertson, 1991; Robertson, Irvine & Sutherland, 2012). After amassing a varied collection of stories about St Magnus, Ernest printed a largely unsuccessful request in the local newspaper in 1972 to find out more information (1972, June 1). His notes and audio recordings of the stories he gathered provide the only source for several of the accounts used in this study. He was well-liked and people enjoyed talking with him and told him things they would not necessarily tell another scholar; therefore, his collection is particularly valuable.

A detailed consideration of the data suggests some trends amongst these three key scholars (see Table 2 and Figure 7) but what is perhaps most notable is that no single sites or place of significance was consistently recorded by all three men. Of the three, Ernest gathered what is arguably the most comprehensive portfolio, with more records relating to St Magnus than George or Hugh, and recognising more of the sites and stories associated with the funerary and shrine processions. Hugh was, perhaps not surprisingly given his academic background, more circumspect producing fewer records relating to Magnus, and no unique records suggesting he placed greater emphasis on multiple sources as a means of determining perceived accuracy. An analysis of the distribution of the records gathered by George confirms that his stories should perhaps be treated with caution as more than half lack any corroboration from other sources. However as previously noted our primary concern in this paper is not to achieve absolute veracity, but rather to consider how St Magnus was remembered within the landscape.

Considering geographical variation (Figure 7) we see that unsurprisingly Hugh Marwick contributed records from the island of Rousay, and from Birsay, based upon his published research of the place names of these areas (Marwick, 1947, 1970). George Marwick is the only person to record sites between Finstown and Kirkwall, and has the most detailed, and uncorroborated, tales of the shrine procession linking the events with the community and even the nicknames given to the parishes (Muir & Irvine, 2014). The visual analysis further confirms Ernest as providing the most comprehensive spread of Magnus memories and associations; likely a reflection of his open-minded approach and willingness to collect a wide range of information. What is also striking is that despite recording many of the sites associated with the funerary

and shrine processions both George and Hugh recorded very few of the actual Mansie Stones. The records for many of the stones themselves come from the latter half of the twentieth century, albeit reflecting older stories, and it seems likely that the formal recording of the stones is also a product of the growing archaeological interest in St Magnus.

Table 2. Breakdown of records provided by three key Orcadian folklorists. ‘Sole folklorist recorder’ reflects evidence only recorded by one of the three Marwicks. Unique records are those for which the respective scholar provides the only known reference. The three columns to the right illustrate the numbers and proportions of sites along the two processional routes that were recorded by the individual folklorists.

	Total Records	Sole folklorist recorder	Unique records	Funerary Procession sites recorded	Shrine Procession sites recorded	Mansie Stanes recorded
George Marwick	15	8	7	3 (20%)	10 (62.5%)	3 (25%)
Hugh Marwick	18	4	0	5 (33.33%)	5 (31.25%)	3 (25%)
Ernest Marwick	29	6	1	12 (80%)	7 (43.75%)	7 (58.33%)

Figure 7. Visualisation of distribution of sites recorded by George Marwick, Hugh Marwick and Ernest Marwick, illustrating overlap and differences in records provided by the three key folklorists. OS Mastermap & Terrain 50 Contours © Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

7 Results

The Cult of Magnus, as noted above, has three places marking martyrdom, elevation and translation: Egilsay, Birsay and Kirkwall. The importance of these has long been acknowledged and comparisons made between this tripartite veneration and that of the three stages of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral of whom there are also literary comparisons (Antonsson, 2007), and of the martyria of Christ (Yeoman, 1999, p. 95). In Orkney these three places are distinguished by architecturally significant (in two instances, and probably three, Magnus-dedicated) churches and it is tempting to imagine them as inviting the pilgrim in (Crawford, 2013, p. 228). That these are the only three churches convincingly dedicated to Magnus in Orkney must be significant. A fourth dedication to Magnus in Stronsay (Site ID 84), shown by Mercator (1595), Hole (1607) and Speed (1610) is one of several unexplainable, and probably erroneous, dedications featured on these early maps. It is likely that Mercator was a major influence on Hole and Speed and so the three occurrences result from Hole and Speed copying Mercator rather than being from an independent source. That being said, the existence of a church dedicated to Magnus on Stronsay cannot be entirely disregarded even though the evidence is slight and there is no church site known in the area the dedication is denoted. Crawford has suggested the lack of Magnus dedications in Orkney was because the cult was deliberately suppressed (Crawford, 2013, p. 224). However, there are more surviving dedications to Magnus in Shetland, Caithness, Iceland and Norway and as such, it seems more likely that the three key cult places in Orkney were exclusively given Magnus dedications in a deliberate act marking out these particularly significant places when the cult was designed. Rather than a suppression this was perhaps a deliberate restriction. Moreover, the mapping evidence here shows that the cult was deeply rooted in Orkney's landscape implying veneration was significant, widespread and long lasting.

The recognised tripartite focus of the cult is embedded, reinforced and integrated through 31 markers remembered as resting places of Magnus when he was transported from Egilsay to Birsay, and subsequently from Birsay to Kirkwall. These markers punctuate the landscape along recognised route ways, such as old drove roads and trackways, and are in most verifiable instances either the same as, or associated with, prominently placed prehistoric monuments (Figure 8). The remembered places are contradictory. The stories often incorporate otherworldly beings and explain features and names in the landscape. The actual locations are often indeterminate, and all of this indicates that Magnus was incorporated into a rich cultural landscape and that his presence was sought after and manifest particularly in the communities most closely associated with the key places of his cult. One tradition records that the stones were anointed with oil and thereafter became and remained sacred (Marwick, 1926–1977, p. 5); holy markers guiding and protecting people through the landscape.

These markers, are in most instances, identified by the name Mans or Mansie-Stane (e.g. Figure 9) and are linked to another deep-rooted Orkney funerary procession custom, also found in Shetland, Norway and Scotland (Søiland, 2004, pp. 26–28). When coffins were carried to parish churchyards for burial, to protect the spirit of the deceased, the coffin was not laid directly on the ground but instead rested at specific elevated points along the way on stones, cairns or mounds. In Orkney these places are identified by the element 'wheel-', deriving from Old Norse *Hvila*, to rest, of which at least 16 names have been recorded (Marwick 1957 January 24, 1957 February 14; Dennison, 1893; Towrie, 2018a). The fact the 'wheel' element is Old Norse indicates the naming occurred prior to the language shift in Orkney thus dating the tradition to before the 17th century. Furthermore, in the North Atlantic, shared funeral customs linked to this tradition and banned by the reformed church can be dated back to the twelfth century and so it seems likely that this is a pre-Reformation, and probably a medieval, tradition (Søiland, 2004, pp. 26–28). Whatever the origin date, places and stories associated with Mansie Stanes are only found on routes between the three St Magnus churches, just as the wheeling stones mark the routes to the burial places of the community. Therefore, for many generations, people have walked these routes and rested at these places. Whether carrying corpses, walking to church, walking to market, these places and the paths connecting them, through practice, formed part of the shared landscape of the community and shaped the memories and identities of that community.

Figure 8. The Funerary and Shrine processions as remembered through the Mansie Stones and stories, and showing reuse of prehistoric mounds and standing stones. See Figure 10 (inset) for a more detailed consideration of the relationships between these sites and the roads and other routes in the landscape. OS Mastermap & Terrain 50 Contours © Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

Although represented as a series of points in the landscape in the above image, it is important to remember that these stones and stories represent the memory of journeys and practices in the landscape. As such we have labelled these two routes as Storyways. The first, demarcating Magnus' journey to Christian burial in Christ Church, Birsay begins with the transportation of Magnus from Egilsay to Evie by boat. There are several stories of this journey, none of which have the body being transported directly to Birsay by sea, even though this was a recognised sea route through the archipelago (Gibbon, 2017, p. 238). The remembered sea journey is from Egilsay to Evie. The stories tell that the resting place of the body when taken from the boat miraculously turned from heather to green grass, echoing the martyrdom place miracle. The exact location is long forgotten, though the Broch of Gurness (Site ID 10) was suggested based on the fact it was the most prominent green mound along the Evie coast (Marwick, 1945–1973; Muir & Irvine, 2014, p. 187).

Another potential landing site further along the coast at the Knowe of Stenso is identifiable from a grouping of place names. There is Stooan, a shore name Old Norse, *stoð*, 'the landing place/naust' implying a particular landing place and a short distance to the north is 'Gressy Geo', grassy inlet. Although at first glance an unusual name (inlets are rarely grassy), when combined with the landing place name, grassy may relate to the landing place miracle. The third name in the grouping is Spithersquoy, in its earliest recorded form 'Spittalisquy', the hospital or hospice enclosure (Marwick, 1952, p. 126). This is the only confirmed example of a spittal name in Orkney (but see ID 80) and it is located near the two aforementioned shore names. This cluster is located on the Mainland shore close to the island of Eynhallow, where there was most likely a medieval monastery.

This hospice, near a good landing place, suggests it was on a communication route and it is tempting to think it may have related to travellers visiting the monastery on Eynhallow or St Magnus Church on Egilsay. When considered together the three names provide a strong alternative location for the landing place previously suggested at Gurness. Both potential landings are shown above, see Figure 8.

Figure 9. Strathyre Mansie Stane (Site ID 33) looking northwest across the Loch of Boardhouse © Daniel Lee – Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology.

The resting places between Evie and Birsay, indicate a route following a similar line (but along higher ground) to the modern road (which was created in the late-nineteenth century and based on existing trackways). Two places, Chrismo (Site ID 13) and Mansie's Grip (Site ID 12) are in boundary locations, between the parishes of Evie and Birsay and at the head of the loch of Swannay; two are on prehistoric barrow sites in skyline locations, clearly visible and ideally placed for 'resting' (Site IDs 14 & 15). There are six stones recorded in the district of Northside in Birsay (Site IDs 16–21) – closest to Christ Church. These mansie stones punctuate two routes that are both historic and still in use today (Figure 10); one along the coastal path and the other a short distance inland following the old road through the township (Sabiston, 1972). These routes, as well as important landmarks such as a standing stone at the Knowe of Crustan (Site ID 15) are illustrated on maps dating back as far as the mid-eighteenth century (Aberdeen, c.1760), and whilst the route may have a much older origin we have no evidence to support, or disprove its presence during the medieval period. Unlike many of the Mansie Stones, there is no evidence that these Northside stones were located on or near prehistoric monuments (Figure 8), and from their descriptions they were low to the ground. The Crowdue stone (Site ID 16) was impeding traffic and so a farmer removed it. The story tells that he did not heed warning that it was holy and died soon after having got a splinter of stone in his finger (Marwick, 1926–1977, p. 5). The ground around the next stone (Site ID 17), was considered Holy and was fenced off and not cultivated. The stone was removed by soldiers during the Second World War who did not know of its significance (Marwick *ibid.*). The stone at Skippiegeo (Site ID 18) was removed to the side of the field in which it stood in the mid-twentieth century to make cultivation easier. These Northside stones are close together, abound with tradition and seem to have been purposely placed for Magnus as they have no other earlier associations. In this respect, and in their general physical descriptions, they stand apart from the other Mansie Stones.

Self-evidently both routes and parallel traditions of Mansie stones cannot be 'correct', and a similar situation is seen in the parish of Harray (see Figure 8) where Mansie Stones (Site IDs 36 – 40) are recorded

on parallel routeways. The final resting place tradition before burial in Christ Church, Birsay is at Mans Well, centrally located at the heart of the medieval earldom estate. If this was the last resting place, it would favour a Mainland location for Christ Church (Site ID 23), rather than on the Brough of Birsay (both potential locations are shown in Figure 10). Given the quality of the data, there is future scope to employ non-reconstructive Least Cost Path analysis (Güimil-Fariña & Parcero-Oubiña, 2015; Fonte, Parcero-Oubiña, & Costa-García, 2017) as a means of analysing the logics behind the development and use of particular routes. This is beyond the scope of the research detailed here but together with a thematic analysis of medieval pilgrimage and religious mobility may illuminate reasons for the positioning of the routes. Regardless of the actual route taken however, what is more significant is that we are, from the maps, able to see continued veneration by the people who dwelt in the landscape, a desire to appropriate the memory and mark routeways with Holy Magnus relics. This could be described as a sacred geography (Park, 1994) with emphasis on connectivity and synergy through space and time.

Figure 10. Northside Storyways, illustrating the organisation of the landscape during the 18th and 19th centuries, in relation to the recorded sites associated with the procession of St Magnus' coffin. Note the two sites for his burial (both Site ID 23) and the two locations of the Skippiageo Mansie Stone (both Site ID 18). 1st edition Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2019). All rights reserved 1881. Dundas Map of 1760 (superimposed) reproduced courtesy of Orkney Library & Archive (D8W20).

The second route maps the procession of the shrine from Christ Church, Birsay to Kirkwall. There are stories and place names of 16 resting places dispersed throughout the four parishes the route passes through (Site IDs 30–47). The range of resting places with Magnus stories (three wells, five single standing stones, seven prehistoric mounds, three places associated by name only and two places with miracle stories) resemble

those on the first journey, being boundary markers and prominent features of pre-medieval origin. Missing from this journey though, are the 'Northside'-type markers, i.e. those with only Magnus traditions and no known earlier existence.

The markers of the shrine procession indicate a (re)interpreting of the landscape by a community selecting to imbed Magnus within their habitus. The sites, in the main, focus on pre-existing burial monuments and so the Magnus stories, particularly the anointing of the stones, could be seen as acts of appropriation similar to Pope Gregory's approach to Christianising the British in 601, where pagan temples were to be converted, not destroyed (Bede, 1990, pp. 91–3). Tilley similarly has suggested this of standing stones (2004, p. 33). However, in instances where the sources are rich the Magnus stories sit alongside stories of other beings and beliefs, and the Magnus attributions do not replace earlier beliefs but are added to them. This is a synthesis rather than an appropriation and as such suggests a nuanced, inclusive and many-faceted belief-scape.

For example, the Wheebin Stone (Site ID 32), a prehistoric standing stone remembered as a halting place when the procession had to decide which way to take Magnus' shrine around a loch, is said to be a petrified giant who once a year, travels to the nearby loch for a drink (Fraser, 1925, pp. 21–2; Marwick, 1970, pp. 41–2; Towrie, 2018b; Muir & Irvine, 2014, p. 188). There are sinister tales of deaths associated with the stone which indicate this was considered a place of danger, yet two nearby farms take their name from the stone, Stanger (stone farm), thus indicating the significance of this stone in the Middle Ages (Tilley, 2004). It is interesting to consider whether Magnus' shrine being rested here is in some way related to sanctifying or blessing the place to protect those that pass it. Prehistoric standing stones have been interpreted as permanent markers of territories or boundaries (Tilley, 2004) and their associations with such landscape features in Orkney is notable. That the Magnus route is marked in places by such stones could be taken to imply that the route, in these places, is based on very ancient pathways and reuses or synergises with some of their significance or symbolism (Bradley, 2003). Similarly, prehistoric mounds in Orkney are often associated with ambivalent beings, be they trowies, broonies, hogboons or other creatures (Gibbon, 2006; Marwick, 2000). The Knowe of Norton (Site ID 34) has such an association, being the winter and spring palace of Knucklavi (a water spirit who once inhabited every loch). That this is remembered as a resting place for the shrine and that an 'insane' (Muir & Irvine, 2014, p. 191) man is said to have been cured here on the day of the procession, suggests the addition of holy spiritual protection to this legendary and perhaps inauspicious place. Conversely some of the Magnus resting places in Harray are still regarded as 'places to avoid' (R. Irvine personal communications, November 24, 2017) demonstrating the complexity of the memories and the beliefs they encapsulate.

This synthesis of memory can be clearly seen at the Well of Whilcoe (Site ID 35), where contrasting practices and beliefs converge. The holy well of St Magnus in Birsay (Site ID 30) has no traditions of healing other than those directly attributed to Magnus; the well was made holy and curative when Magnus was rested there and remained so. In contrast, the well at Whilcoe is associated with a pre-marital fertility ritual (drinking water from the well and laying a bannock on the nearby stone of Whilcoe to invoke a fruitful marriage). The well is also remembered as a resting place for the shrine and whilst resting there a 'ragan' woman was 'silenced' (Muir & Irvine, 2014, p. 192). There isn't a hierarchy or linearity of tradition here, both have coexisted simultaneously in the same place from at least the mid-nineteenth century. Near the well, a boundary stone at Whilcoe marks the meeting of the three parishes of Birsay, Harray and Sandwick. This was located close to a prehistoric stone setting and so this place has been 'marked' out and remembered for many generations being at the same time both central and peripheral.

That resting places are found in two instances on multiple recognised routes through an area (e.g. Northside and Harray) suggest that the people in the areas wanted those routes to be marked out with Mansie Stones. This means that no matter which route was taken it was 'signposted' with Mansie stones. The markers radiate outward from Birsay with those on the Northside being most closely spaced. The further from Birsay, the fewer markers and the greater distance between markers. There is a long stretch between Kingsdale (Site ID 44) and Caldale (Site ID 45) which, given the distance, ought to have at least one or two resting places. However, this section of the route is almost uninhabited with very few roads or tracks and spans an expanse of mostly uncultivated ground. The lack of traditions may be explained by the lack of people living in the locale to maintain the memories and stories.

We have here then, stories and names and stones and mounds that collectively ‘remember’ routes taken to transport Magnus from his place of death to his burial in Birsay and from there to Kirkwall. These routes resonate with, and at times converge with, burial routes but are differentiated by their Magnus attributions. They are therefore simultaneously familiar and yet distinct. The fact these places exist demonstrates local practices and beliefs. It is most unlikely that The Church allocated these places to Magnus. That the Magnus traditions and places have been passed down generationally along with other stories of giants and trows at notable landscape features suggest he is part of a local dominant narrative about the past which has, through socialisation and stability of population, remained. The destruction of two stones in the early twentieth century, one by ‘outsiders’ and another by a local, indicate that the narrative is losing its place in the community memory. In a period of greater social and political upheaval than the islands had previously witnessed this is not unexpected (Moser, 2014). What is perhaps more remarkable is that, in places, the memories survive, albeit partially through the interest of antiquarians and scholars, to the present day. We can therefore see that the Cult of St Magnus was venerated and developed and embedded into the community through the shared social practice of walking the same perceived route that he took (Solnit, 2001, p. 68). Through time, the nature of the memories has changed but the belief in Magnus (whether perceived of as a religious, historical or legendary figure or all three) as a dominant part of the past, can be traced in the topography of the West Mainland, spreading out along the communication routes connecting his churches.

8 The Stone of St Magnus – Anomaly, Appropriation or Historicographic Accident?

The Stone of St Magnus (Site ID 76) is a paired footprint stone (Figure 11) said to have been used as a boat by St Magnus (Gibbon, 2018) and now located in Ladykirk, South Ronaldsay. In total, we identified 15 records associating Magnus with the stone, considerably more than other individual places or artefacts, with only the three churches being more frequently recorded. Equally striking was that this stone was isolated from any element of Magnus’ death, burial, or elevation to sainthood, instead being located far to the south on the island of South Ronaldsay. Why then would such a strength of remembrance be attached to a location apparently distant to the rest of the cultural remains of St Magnus? Was the strength of evidence a product of past recognition, or our own research bias? This provided an excellent opportunity to assess our own methodology and we would postulate three factors which may have contributed to the number of sources for this record; its relative uniqueness when compared to the distribution of Magnus sites throughout Orkney, its location within Orkney with respect to connections with the wider world, and the physical tangibility and curiosity of the stone.

Geographically the stone is distant from the rest of the cultural landscape and storyways of St Magnus. As such, for inhabitants of the island, this locale is perhaps the only means of creating and reinforcing an association with Orkney’s saint. A medieval-originating parish church such as Ladykirk was an important location within local landscapes of identity and religious practice. The church is situated immediately above the shore adjacent to an important harbour, and historically the landing place of those arriving in Orkney from the south (Anderson & Anderson, 1834, p. 677). For both pilgrims, and later scholarly visitors such as Brand and Martin Martin (Martin, 1703, p. 354; Pinkerton, 1811, p. 801), the kirk and the stone would likely have been the first point of interest upon arrival in Orkney. Additionally, unlike many of the intangible elements of the landscape of St Magnus, the stone and the kirk are physical entities which could be visited, viewed and recorded. Such an assessment is borne out by the comparatively detailed records of authors such as Fergusson (1884, p. 93):

We saw a peculiar stone with a peculiar history. Its shape resembles a large snow shoe, and upon one side of it are the prints of two bare feet. It is about four feet long, 2 feet broad, and 8 inches thick. Legend connects it with St Magnus who used it as a ferry boat to sail across the Pentland Firth. By him it was laid up in Lady Kirk as a memorial of the miracle.

Figure 11. Stone of St Magnus, Ladykirk, South Ronaldsay (Site ID 76) © 2018 Frank Bradford Photographer.

The stone, one of four footprint stones from within Orkney, is the only one still in existence, and is comparable to inauguration and saintly foot-engraved stones elsewhere in Scotland, Ireland, and other Celtic areas (FitzPatrick, 2004; Gibbon, 2018), serving to further heighten the curiosity value.

An examination of the rest of the data bears out a general trend of physical artefacts and buildings being better represented within the records. This reflects to a degree the *status quo* of understanding of the veneration of St Magnus. The tangible and frequently recorded elements of the landscape of St Magnus represent those key points, deeply ingrained, repeatedly visited, recorded, reworked and incorporating old and new interpretations. In contrast, those sites with only one or two records, often originating in local knowledge and memory, reflect a much broader landscape in which places may be both physically intangible and also significant to a smaller group of people. They are nevertheless important and as discussed in the previous section highlight the importance of folklore and place names in broadening our knowledge.

9 Conclusions

The exploration of the cultural remains of Magnus has extended our understanding of his cult beyond the upper echelons of society and beyond the medieval. From the examples given the extent of his veneration locally has been shown to be greater and more pervasive than perhaps previously considered.

The persistence of Magnus as patron saint, protector and historic figure from the Middle Ages to beyond the Reformation in Orkney, Caithness and Shetland is witnessed in the varied cultural remains gathered, of which only a few have been presented here. This challenges the idea that Scandinavian saints can only be seen today in ‘fragments of medieval art and writing’ (Tomany, 2008, p. 140). The folkloric, toponymic and archaeological elements that reveal the many Magnus landscape features are integral to the ‘legendary topography’ of that landscape, drawing on the collective social memories of the community which remember and forget social and religious change over time (Halbwachs, 1992; Holtorf & Williams, 2008). When combined with the different ways in which Magnus is perceived (in the miracle stories as healer of the sick, in battle sightings as a ‘National’ martial guardian, in recent and contemporary literature as Orcadian holy pacifist) and represented (as a sword bearing martyr in medieval religious sculpture, a mitred bishop

in later medieval Orkney diocesan bishops seals, as a pacifist and martyr in more recent artwork) a more layered understanding of the changing collective memory is traceable. The adaptability of Magnus is his endurance: remembered in oscillating traditions as saint and earl, he has transcended religious change and been re-formed through social memory to fulfil the cultural contexts of the various presents of the memory creations. This not only meets the present needs of the multiple communities through time, so offering protection to travellers at feared landscape places, but evokes aspirations for the future as seen in his revival as a pacifist in more recent times.

Our methodological approach has provided a means of interpreting elements of the changing relationship between Magnus and the people of Orkney. The cultural memory of St Magnus is only part of a much wider Christian landscape originating in the medieval period and including possible monasteries as well as many churches and burial grounds. In the North Atlantic, there was a proliferation of small churches in the 11th – 12th centuries, and this highlights how the veneration of St Magnus, whilst important, was only one element within a wider religious landscape at district, parish and diocesan levels (Figure 12). We have identified a reciprocal dialogic relationship between place and belief over time that serves as a comparison for other local saints' cults in Christendom. By amassing and interpreting the saintly cultural remains within the context of wider Christian belief and practice, it is evident that from its inception, the

Figure 12. Illustration showing all previously discussed elements of the landscape of St Magnus, alongside all other known medieval ecclesiastical sites (source Gibbon 2006). OS Mastermap & Terrain 50 Contours © Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

cult of saints evolved from existing religious practice and its success was dependent on the ability of the saint and his or her relational communities to adapt to change. The Magnus Cult, at first glance, can be seen as fitting Brown's spread of cults model: 'radically new forms of reverence, shown to new objects in new places, orchestrated by new leaders' (2015, p. 22). However, the cultural remains reveal a more complex development whereby ancient pathways and markers are given new meaning, their multiple histories synthesised to form culturally dominant narratives and newly built churches are founded on or near places with longstanding Christian associations thus embedding the cult into the Christian fabric of society. These two elements, show how the cult is interwoven into existing cultural and religious practice. And, in places with the greatest association with the cult, how thereafter the changing nature and incorporation of that cult into daily life resulted in its survival, albeit somewhat secularised and mythologized, to modern times within the shared accumulated memory of the community. Without the GIS analysis and mapping these complexities would have been incredibly difficult to realise and represent.

The well-recorded and frequently recognised sites discussed above represent a depth of cultural knowledge and veneration within a landscape of St Magnus that extends around the globe. This contrasts with those sites for which there are only one or two references, frequently in the folklore and oral histories of local inhabitants. By utilising a theoretical framework which questions what constitutes evidence, we have moved away from trying to identify 'actual' routes and events. We would argue instead we have addressed more valuable questions concerning the ways in which inhabitants, and visitors have venerated, remembered and reworked stories and places in order to express identity, belief and connection to the past, present and future. We have demonstrated the potential of such an approach to broaden, both spatially and temporally, the evidence for the Cult of St Magnus. This approach has value on a broad scale and is by no means restricted to the North Atlantic nor to the medieval and post-medieval worlds. We could see this adding value to anywhere there are physical remains/features and stories. Our methodology allows the investigation and visualisation of intangible landscapes within any story-rich community.

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Appendix 1 – Cultural Remains of St Magnus Dataset

(Blank coordinates are unmappable records either because their location is unknown or they record evidence that does not relate to a specific place)

Site ID	Name	Where	Easting	Northing
1	Church	Egilsay		
2	Site of Martyrdom	Egilsay		
3	St Magnus Church	Egilsay	346609	1030393
4	Martyrdom Memorial	Egilsay	347010	1030010
5	Magnus Burial place	Egilsay		
6	Manse Loch	Egilsay	347710	1029800
7	Mans/Mines	Egilsay	347991	1030653
8	Mines Point	Egilsay	348090	1031080
9	Transportation of Magnus body for burial	Egilsay to Birsay		
10	Landing place of cortege	Evie, Gurness	338170	1026850
10	Landing place of cortege	Evie, Stooan	336250	1026880
11	Spithersquoy	Costa	335700	1026900
12	Chrismo	Evie/Birsay boundary	331500	1028900
13	Mans Stane/Mansie's Grip/ Mans-kin-dyke	Birsay	330400	1029500
14	Knowes of Lingro	Birsay	328410	1029040
15	Knowe of Crustan	Birsay	327470	1028970
16	Crowdue Mansie Stone	Northside, Birsay	326270	1028570
17	Waspitten Mansie Stone	Northside, Birsay	325650	1028510
18	Skippiegeo Mansie Stone	Northside, Birsay (loc 1)	325000	1028000
18	Skippiegeo Mansie Stone	Northside, Birsay (loc 2)	324950	1028220
19	Mansie Stone	Northside, Birsay	325800	1028700
20	Mansie Stone	Northside, Birsay	325300	1028700
21	Mansie Stone	Northside, Birsay	325200	1028700
22	Resting Place at Mans Well	Barony, Birsay	325650	1027500
23	Burial in Christ Church	Birsay, Brough of	323978	1028512
23	Burial in Christ Church	Birsay, St Magnus Church	324759	1027702
24	Copper pan or kettle	Lyking, Sandwick	327413	1015145
24	Copper pan or kettle	Palace Birsay	324810	1027754
25	<i>Elevatio</i>	Christ Church, Birsay		
26	St Magnus bone cross	Birsay		
27	St Magnus shrine	Christ Church, Birsay		
28	Diocesan recognition of Magnus Feast days	Orkney Bishopric		
29	St Magnus church	Birsay	324759	1027702
30	Mans Well	Birsay	325650	1027500
31	St Magnus Translation to Kirkwall	Birsay to Kirkwall		
32	Wheebin Stone	Barony, Birsay	325310	1026290
33	Resting place at Strathyre	Birsay	326710	1025240
34	Mansie Stane, Knowe of Norton, Greenay	Birsay	328360	1022260
35	Well of Whilcoe	Harray	329360	1020860
36	Kingshouse	Harray	331795	1019159

Site ID	Name	Where	Easting	Northing
37	Knowes of Conyar	Harray	330090	1019310
38	Appiehouse	Harray	332610	1016190
39	The Stone of Hindatuin	Harray	331950	1015670
40	Howina-Wheel	Harray	333820	1016670
41	The Refuge	Harray	333780	1015390
42	Howe Harper	Firth	334560	1014370
43	Guid Mans' Resting Stane	Firth	336010	1013820
44	Kingsdale	Firth	337605	1011761
45	Caldale	St Ola	341272	1010544
46	Corse	St Ola	343960	1010180
47	First Kirkwall shrine location	Most likely St Olaf's Church, Kirkwall	345040	1011160
48	Translation: St Olaf's to St Magnus Cathedral	Kirkwall		
49	St Magnus Cathedral	Kirkwall	344920	1010870
50	C12th St Magnus Shrine location	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
51	Eastern Extension to accommodate pilgrims	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
52	C13th St Magnus Shrine location	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
53	Magnus Relic	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
54	Annual Royal donation from Scotland	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
55	Statue of St Magnus	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
56	Vestments bequeathed	St Magnus cathedral	344920	1010870
57	Cross Mould	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
58	Chapter of St Magnus Cathedral Seal	Kirkwall	344920	1010870
59	Pilgrimage to St Magnus in Orkney	Orkney	344920	1010870
60	Seal of Bishop Thomas Tulloch	Bishopric of Orkney	344920	1010870
61	Supplication for pilgrimage to St Magnus Cathedral	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
62	Gilded chalice	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
63	Donation to St Magnus Cathedral	Orkney	344920	1010870
64	Mass at St Magnus Altar	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
65	Red velvet coat to High Altar	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
66	Bells of St Magnus	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
67	Seal of Bishop Adam Bothwell	Bishopric of Orkney	344920	1010870
68	Seal Of Bishop Sydsenf	Bishopric of Orkney	344920	1010870
69	Seal of Bishop Andrew Honeyman	Bishopric of Orkney	344920	1010870
70	Seal of Bishop Murdoch Mackenzie	Bishopric of Orkney	344920	1010870
71	St Magnus Cup	Scapa, St Ola	344038	1008836
72	St Magnus marble miracle	St Magnus Cathedral	344920	1010870
73	City of St Magnus	Kirkwall		
74	Boniehale Park	Rousay	337860	1031780
74	Magnus Hill House	Rousay		
74	Mansmass Hill	Rousay	337880	1031010
75	Mansie's Knowes	Rousay	342150	1031270
76	Ladykirk Stone of St Magnus	South Ronaldsay	344000	984280
77	St Magnus at the Battle of Summerdale	Stenness/Orphir	334400	1010500

Site ID	Name	Where	Easting	Northing
78	Patron Saint	Orkney & Caithness		
79	St Magnus Sound	Orkney?		
80	The Hospital of St Magnus	Unknown		
81	St Magnus Boat, Wyre	Wyre	344390	1026114
82	St Magnus's Villa	Kirkwall	345164	1010720
83	St Magnus Manse/House	Birsay	324951	1027766
84	St Magnus	Stronsay	364079	1028086
85	Manse/Mense Tower, Kirkwall	Kirkwall	344927	1010825