

<p><b>Institution: University of Chester</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: 17B Geography, Environment Studies &amp; Archaeology (Archaeology)</b></p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Early Medieval Carved Stones And Landscape: Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project (REAP)</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b>          Building on Dr Meggen Gondek's expertise in Pictish stone sculpture, the Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project (REAP) has transformed popular understandings of early medieval stone monuments in northern Britain by: (i) creating a network of outreach activities engaging the public during successive seasons of archaeological fieldwork at a unique collection of fifth- to seventh-century early medieval inscribed stone monuments, (ii) disseminating the research discoveries and results to a range of audiences via traditional and new media, (iii) instigated strategies for the heritage management and conservation of the prehistoric and early historic landscape of Rhynie.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b>          REAP has impacted on local, national and international understandings of the origins of modern Scotland through field-based investigations of place and stone. Co-directed by Gondek (Reader, University of Chester, 2006 – present) with Dr Gordon Noble (Aberdeen), REAP investigates, for the first time using modern methods, a famous cluster of eight Class I Pictish carved stones (traditionally dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) at Rhynie, Aberdeenshire. REAP's success stems from its discoveries but also from its various collaborations, including with Dr Ewan Campbell (University of Glasgow), Neil Curtis (Marischal Museum), Martin Brann (Aberdeen Archaeology Services), Historic Scotland and RCAHMS.</p> <p>REAP investigates the landscape context of Rhynie, focusing on the only demonstrably <i>in situ</i> stone – The Craw Stane – and a series of cropmarks centred on it. As such, REAP is the first modern research excavation targeting an <i>in situ</i> Class I Pictish symbol stone. Phase 1 of REAP (2005–2010) undertook landscape and geophysical investigation in the Craw Stane field to clarify the archaeology visible in aerial photographs. Phase 2 (2011-present) is developing our landscape approach and targeting sites for excavation. Large-scale evaluative excavations of the Craw Stane enclosures in 2011 and 2012 showed the Craw Stane is part of a high-status fortified settlement complex dating to the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, currently unparalleled in Northern Europe, and an assemblage of artefacts equally unparalleled in quality and quantity from northern Britain. Evaluation of other cropmarks near the village in 2013 confirmed a mortuary aspect of the Rhynie landscape when two Pictish period burial monuments were revealed.</p> <p>Inscribed and sculpted stone monuments of the early Middle Ages (c. AD 400-1100) are among the most important and significant (yet much-neglected and frequently misconceived) traces of the societies that emerged following the end of Roman rule in these islands. REAP's primary objective was to investigate, for the first time using modern methods, a famous cluster of eight Class I Pictish carved stones (traditionally dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) at Rhynie, Aberdeenshire. REAP is informed and directed by Dr Gondek's expertise in the study of the archaeology of early medieval stone monuments.</p> <p>The research has led to a series of interim publications in key and high-profile venues, including peer-reviewed book chapters and a high-profile journal article (see section 3.)</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p>Peer-reviewed high-profile publications demonstrate Gondek's active international profile researching early medieval archaeology and commemorative practice in the early Middle Ages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gondek, M. 2007. Pictish symbol stones: caught between prehistory and history, in A. Mazel, G. Nash, &amp; C. Waddington (eds) <i>Art as Metaphor: The Prehistoric Rock-art of Britain</i>, Archaeopress, Oxford, pp. 69-89.</li> </ol>

2. Gondek, M. & Noble, G. 2010. Together as one: the landscape of the symbol stones at Rhynie, Aberdeenshire, in S. Driscoll, J. Geddes & M. Hall (eds) *Pictish Progress: Pictish Studies for the 21st Century*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 281-306.
3. Noble, G. and Gondek, M. 2011. Symbol Stones in Context: Excavations at Rhynie, an undocumented Pictish Power Centre of the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD? *Medieval Archaeology* 55, 317- 321.
4. Noble, G., Gondek, M. Campbell, E. & Cook, M. in press. Between prehistory and history: the archaeological detection of social change among the Picts. *Antiquity* (Dec 2013).

Key Research Grants (2011 – 2012 Phase 2 only)

5. Research Grant, Carnegie Grant (Noble) 2011-2012, £2,100
6. Research Grant, Society of Antiquaries of London (Gondek) 2011, £1,000
7. Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (Gondek & Noble) 2011-2012, £3,775
8. British Academy (Noble with Gondek co-applicant) 2012, £8,877.00
9. University of Chester Research Grant 2011-2012 (Gondek), £1,915.90

Evidence of Quality of the Research

10. Carver, M. 2011. Lost, found, repossessed or argued away – the case of the Picts (Review Article). *Antiquity* 85(330): 1479–1483. On p. 1481, Professor Carver notes specifically the work at Rhynie as one of the leading contributions to new Pictish research saying that it stood as an example of research that was ‘undeniable progress.’

**4. The contribution, impact or benefit**

REAP has undeniably contributed significantly to the understanding of the archaeology and history of Northern Britain in the early medieval period, the wider impact of the research has been on popular knowledge and appreciation of this crucial period for understanding the origins of the kingdoms of medieval Britain. The impact took place during and between the fieldwork and the beneficiaries are multifarious; local communities, regional audiences, and national and international communities interested in the medieval world and those defining themselves in relation to northern British, specifically Scottish, ancestry worldwide. For all groups, the impact has involved an enhanced understanding of post-Roman society in northern Britain.

**Integrated Fieldwork Outreach**

REAP adopted an explicit philosophy and methodology for the generation of academic and popular knowledge and debate through the engagement of the public with early medieval histories in stone *during* fieldwork. Key aspects of the project includes:

- opportunities for local volunteers to participate in the fieldwork
- training undergraduate students in archaeological fieldwork techniques linked to the study of the context of early medieval monuments
- open door policies giving tours to visitors on a daily basis
- open days attracting a wide range of visitors
- primary school groups site tours and school visits
- youth club sites tours
- The REAP website: <http://www.reaparch.blogspot.co.uk/> started in June 2012. As of 02/09/2013 the page had been viewed 8,350 times from all over the world from Europe to Australia and Fiji.

**Popular Media**

Between field seasons, REAP has disseminated results of the fieldwork through a variety of media:

- As well as international peer-reviewed publications and open access online publications (see section 3.), popular magazine articles published include Noble, G. and Gondek, M. 2011. ‘A Dark Age Power Centre at Rhynie’, *British Archaeology* 120 (Sept-Oct 2011),

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36-41; and Gondek, M. and Noble, G. 2006. 'Landscape with Symbols', *British Archaeology*, 87 (Mar-Apr 2006), 16-17.

- Regional radio and television and widely disseminated news articles: e.g. *Past Horizons*, <http://www.pasthorizonspr.com/index.php/archives/09/2013/pictish-burials-found-at-royal-rhynie-site>
- In addition to presentations at academic discipline-specific conferences and seminars including international conferences (Internationales Sachsensymposium, Durham, Sept 2012 and Scotland in Early Medieval Europe, Edinburgh, Feb 2013), public talks by Gondek have been delivered at Queens University, Belfast (Nov 2011), Chester Archaeological Society (Oct 2012), University of Cardiff (Nov 2012), University of Central Lancashire (Dec 2012).

**On-Site Heritage Management and Interpretation**

- REAP is working with Historic Scotland to update and improve the current signs and the display of the carved stone monuments from Rhynie incorporating the results of our work; this includes a bid to laser scan all of the existing carved stone monuments at Rhynie to provide more detailed illustration options and web-based visualisations.
- REAP, in conjunction with Aberdeen Archaeology Services, has laser scanned the Rhynie Man (currently housed in Aberdeen Council Offices) in Nov/Dec 2012. This will form the basis of new in-depth research, new media outlets (e.g. web based visualisations) for dissemination and hopefully a reconstruction of the monument itself to be put back into the village at Rhynie.

**Community and Museum Engagement**

- 2013 saw major investment and interest from the local Rhynie community resulting in a pop-up café/visitor centre in the village linked to the project.
- REAP is working with Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen are planning a new Pictish exhibit based largely on new material from Rhynie in 2013.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

Corroboration of coverage by popular magazine articles:

Noble, G. and Gondek, M. 2011. 'A Dark Age Power Centre at Rhynie'. *British Archaeology* 120 (Sept-Oct 2011), 36-41