

# Freshwater Scottish loch settlements of the late medieval and early modern periods: with particular reference to northern Stirlingshire, central and northern Perthshire, northern Angus, Loch Awe and Loch Lomond

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## Abstract

Freshwater loch settlements were a feature of society, indeed the societies, which inhabited what we now call Scotland during the prehistoric and historic periods. Considerable research has been carried out into the prehistoric and early historic origins and role of artificial islands, commonly known as crannogs. However archaeologists and historians have paid little attention to either artificial islands, or loch settlements more generally, in the Late Medieval or Early Modern periods. This thesis attempts to open up the field by examining some of the physical, chorographic and other textual evidence for the role of settled freshwater natural, artificial and modified islands during these periods. It principally concentrates on areas of central Scotland but also considers the rest of the mainland. It also places the evidence in a broader British, Irish and European context. The results indicate that islands fulfilled a wide range of functions as secular and religious settlements. They were adopted by groups from different cultural backgrounds and provided those exercising lordship with the opportunity to exercise a degree of social detachment while providing a highly visible means of declaring their authority. This thesis also argues that loch settlements were not a lingering hangover from the past, as some have suggested, but a vibrant part of contemporary culture which remained strong until the latter half of the seventeenth century before going into final decline and disappearing as a significant social phenomenon.

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