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Chapter 4

The construction of narratives for Neolithic Scotland

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It is not much of an exaggeration to say that the narratives we use to describe Neolithic Scotland have all been invented elsewhere; usually, but not exclusively, in England. The data available from Scotland have proved insufficient either to generate independent narratives or to modify significantly the explanations imported from beyond Scotland. The consequence of this is that Scotland has been very much at the back of the chorus. For most of the time it has just been a spectator watching larger performances being enacted on distant stages. As Ian Kinnis noted, ‘it seems that Scottish prehistory depends upon a persistent sense of the marginal’ (1985, 15). Hence the comfort of belonging we can all feel now that some 50 cursus monuments have been recognized in Scotland compared with the single identified example of 25 years ago. And, inevitably, there is an equivalent level of angst that causewayed enclosures continue to remain elusive.

Of course, there is no particular reason to link Neolithic with Scotland if by so doing we intend to imply some meaningful relationships between the concepts represented by those terms. For the periods we are here concerned with, Scotland can at best be no more than a geographical description. Clearly, an area that has been defined by political considerations, that in archaeological terms are recent, need provide no convincing arena for the acting-out of narratives about earlier prehistory. The Scottish border is quite simply not a sensible boundary to impose upon Neolithic material. So, in that sense at least, interpretations from the south might offer an appropriate framework in which to locate Scottish information.

But the weakness of such an approach is the consequent homogeneity it imposes upon Scotland. This is quite clearly an unhelpful view of the land-mass we now call Scotland. Harvie-Brown in his Naturalist’s Map of Scotland identified ten major areas that collectively made up the mainland and the adjacent islands. The archipelagos of the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland form three additional areas in this scheme (Harvie-Brown & Bartholomew 1893). Of course, this was primarily Harvie-Brown’s framework for studying the vertebrate fauna of Scotland but the basic structure is constructed on the basis of landscape differences within Scotland. In the south and east, the areas are defined by the great river systems – the Solway, the Tweed, the Clyde, the Forth, the Tay and the Dee. But in the north and west, the areas largely reflect key mountain ridges. Wearing archaeological spectacles this might be seen as Scotland’s version of Fox’s Highland and Lowland Zones although it was proposed a generation before Fox and for different purposes. Certainly, the emphasis that the scheme places on the diversity of landscape, and indeed the fauna that occupied it, is not without relevance for our archaeological narratives. Perhaps such areas might be considered an equivalent of the historians’ country or pays although their size perhaps suggests that this can only be a coarse comparison. But its value lies in the shared basis of the two approaches among the diversity of regional definitions that historians habitually confront (cf Everitt 1979).

In framing our study areas we need to remember that many of our regional perspectives are relatively modern constructs. With all this in mind, Harvie-Brown’s view of Scotland can, I believe, provide an important framework through which we might approach the regional aspects of data from Scottish prehistory.

This suggestion that our sense of regions might be more interestingly determined by factors other than the distribution of archaeological sites and finds is, I realize, contrary to contemporary practice. But that practice has been principally directed towards integrating regional groups into national narratives. An excellent example of this is provided by Niall Sharples in his paper ‘Aspects of regionalisation in the Scottish Neolithic’. Outlining his approach, he said:

It was intended to show that the Scottish Neolithic could be divided into discrete regional units, and the purpose of this discussion was to define these units and discuss their significance. However, on examining the evidence … it became increasingly clear that this was not going to be possible. The most striking features of the Scottish Neolithic appeared to be the lack of similarity between the regions, and the fact that most of the diagnostic regional traits were normally restricted to a very specific locale within each region. This might simply be the result of
differential survival of the evidence and archaeological research, but this seems more and more unlikely. (Sharples 1999, 322)

The ‘diagnostic regional traits’ that are described as having restricted distributions within his regions are primarily chambered tombs and stone circles. But it is interesting that these concentrations are located in regions more widely defined than those of Harvie-Brown. This emphasizes the problems that can be caused when we define regions on the basis of archaeological data without sufficient regard for the landscapes in which they are found. The differences between regions are here a problem for Sharples because he appears to have wanted to create a national narrative that provides a single set of explanations for these variations in the record. And, despite all these differences, he went on to create just such a single national narrative. In so doing he emphasizes that the similarities he discerns ‘should not disguise the many differences’. But for his purposes it is the similarities that are important, not the differences (Sharples 1992, 331).

As an alternative I am suggesting that we stop seeking these over-arching explanations. Instead, we should start from the differences, not similarities, in viewing our regional data. And to do so we will need to develop individual narratives. Such narratives would seek to account for the patterns in any one region without requiring validation from the observed patterns in other regions. So far the only regions with anything like these narratives are some of the outer island archipelagos. But these are areas where there has been a long academic tradition of dismissing local differences as sui generis. In the regional narratives I am suggesting, we should expect that there would be a greater attempt to embrace a much broader range of evidence than is normally possible when there is an immediate recourse to wider interpretations.

The presence of the localized distributions that Sharples noted in his analysis hints at the need for a greater range of narratives. These would be more restricted than those dealing with regions. Two types immediately spring to mind – narratives concerned with local areas within a region and specific narratives about individual sites. What I am advocating, then, is the need for a set of narratives stretching from the wide-ranging interpretations at one end to the unique site stories at the other. What I am not suggesting is that one type of narrative should have precedence in our efforts over another. We need to be simultaneously engaged in developing all kinds of narrative. But the present situation rather reminds me of the Gryphon’s remarks in Alice in Wonderland when the Mock Turtle asked Alice to explain her adventures to show where she came from. ‘No, no! The adventures first,’ said the Gryphon in an impatient tone, ‘explanations take such a dreadful time’ (Carroll 1865, 123).

Our wide-ranging interpretations are the adventures but this sort of pick-and-mix archaeology provides woefully thin explanations. Facing up to the ‘dreadful time’ that providing fuller, more rounded explanations will take is fundamental to what I mean by the construction of narratives. Not that this is at all easy because we have simply failed to order and present our data in ways that enable their ready incorporation in narratives of whatever form in the proposed set. Some time ago Ian Kinnis drew attention to the importance of assembling our information; he himself provided a list of Scottish Neolithic pottery but no-one has updated it (1985, 45–50), although there have been some regional studies (most notably Cowie 1993). Equally, nobody has provided a map of flint knives to replace Richard Atkinson’s effort of 40 years ago (1962, 24, figs 4 & 36–38). These are typical examples of the weakness of our data-set. Audrey Henshall’s monumental work on chambered tombs (1963; 1972) remains an outstanding, but rare, instance of what is required.

Encouraging a belief in the need for multiple narratives that engage with different parts of our data is, of course, central to my purpose. And I want to do this by looking at some of the available information that current narratives disregard entirely or refuse to engage with in a meaningful way.

We can start with what in narrative terms might be regarded as the basic unit, that is the site. As an example I have chosen Skara Brae. Partly, I have done this because it is a site I know rather well and, partly, because it enables me to emphasize that I do not find it easy to do what I am advocating. Skara Brae lies on the west coast of Mainland in Orkney and can reasonably claim to be the best preserved prehistoric village in northern Europe. There is a considerable amount of data available to facilitate our understanding of the site but paradoxically this has expanded the number of possible interpretations, rather than reduced them. It is for sites with limited data that we create single interpretations, however glib or facile, with a spurious sense of surety. For Skara Brae I could confidently offer four different narratives. I do not have the opportunity here to rehearse these in any detail but in outline they are as follows. First, Skara Brae was the home of an early farming community. This is the normative view that sees the houses inhabited by individual families who collectively grow crops and keep domesticated animals, supplementing these mainstays of survival with hunting, fishing and gathering plants from the local environment. Second, Skara Brae was the home of a secular elite. In this interpretation the material that was viewed in the previous story as the product of the community’s daily round of
food production and resource procurement must now be interpreted as primarily tribute. Third, Skara Brae was occupied by a religious community. This was a suggestion first made by Euan MacKie (1977, 184–203; and more recently and obliquely in 1997) but, in repeating it here, I am not relying on the evidence that he adduced in support of the idea, most of which I think is flawed. Here the tribute of the previous scenario has to be seen as offerings. Finally, Skara Brae was the home of a community of craft workers, specializing in objects of skin, bone and stone. In this version the offerings are transformed into the products of exchange. All of these four interpretations can embrace most of the available information but no single view can, in my opinion, encompass all of the data. Now it is clear that the adoption of any one of these interpretations will radically affect the stories that will be told about the site. And these in turn should feed through to influence wider narratives.

I have chosen to focus here on the general issues relating to our understanding of the site. Clearly, we need to commit ourselves to presenting such narratives about sites and including in them the explanations about how we have reached our conclusions. Every site is dug by excavators who initially have a narrative, however fuzzy and misplaced, about the site in their minds. That narrative may change as the information accumulates but it does not render the initial narrative unimportant to other scholars; subsequent narratives can never wholly shake off the legacy of earlier ones. Nor is it sufficient to construct narratives only for explaining the site as a whole. This same sense of narratives, that attempt to conceive of the archaeological evidence in human terms, has to be applied to every context. Excavators have continually to ask themselves, ‘how was this context created?’ And the answers need always to be couched in terms of human behaviour.

The next level in my simple hierarchy would involve narratives explaining local phenomena. As an example of this I want to look at arrowheads of flint and related stones. The Scottish examples have not, of course, been subjected to the detailed analysis that Stephen Green has undertaken for England and Wales (1980). But at a more general level one can see localities where arrowheads have been found in relatively large numbers. In the national collections there are some 1100 arrowheads from Culbin Sands in Moray (illus 4.1), 450 from Glenluce Sands in

4.1 Flint arrowheads from Culbin Sands, Moray. (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)
Wigtownshire and 350 from the dunes at Little Ferry in Sutherland. I am including in these counts fragments as well as complete arrowheads. But these are just the figures for the National Museum; my guess is that the numbers could be doubled if one included other museum and private collections of material from these three sites. That would suggest about 4000 arrowheads from just three restricted locations in Scotland. As an indication of the numbers involved at these sites, the overall flaked-stone assemblage from Culbin is larger than that from the slopes of Windmill Hill in Wiltshire, acknowledged to be ‘one of the largest recorded in southern England’ (Whittle et al 2000, 132–7; Holgate 1988, 236 & 242, table 4).

At present we have no narratives that seek to explain, or even acknowledge, this situation. Only Richard Atkinson has sought to deal with this material (1962, 19–21). His concern, however, was the distribution of leaf arrowheads in relation to arable acreage in eastern Scotland from the Moray Firth to the Border. This meant, of course, that he only discussed the finds from Culbin Sands. These, he thought, were ‘due to the activities of collectors’ since the site was ‘long known as a happy hunting ground’ (Atkinson 1962, 21). But this does not explain the patterns and processes of deposition throughout the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age that led to Culbin Sands being ‘a happy hunting ground’ for flint collectors.

There are two distinct but related issues that will be important in building any explanatory narratives. The first concerns the status of these groups. Are they indicative of the general density of arrowheads across Scotland, brought to prominence only by the optimal conditions they afforded flint collectors? Or do they reflect past concentrations and, if so, how are such concentrations to be interpreted? It is not easy to judge what criteria might be invoked to choose between these alternatives. But the finds from Culbin Sands represent a recovery rate of 78.5 per square kilometre. Extended to the whole of Scotland this would suggest that current Scottish museum holdings should be around six million arrowheads. On this evidence I would interpret them as being genuine reflections of past concentrations.

A second, but related, issue concerns the occurrence of such arrowhead concentrations. Why, for instance, are they present at Culbin, Glenluce and Little Ferry but not at Freshwick or Hedderwick? These sites have produced material of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age date but lack an equivalent abundance of arrowheads. I do not have any interpretations that explain these patterns but the absence of arrowheads in large numbers at some places reinforces my view that where we see them they are meaningful concentrations. There are hints that such concentrations may not be restricted to coastal sand dune sites. Alexander Stewart describes a find below the peat at Ballachulish where ‘within an area of twenty or thirty square yards was disclosed several cartloads of flint chippings, manifestly broken off in the manufacture of flint instruments’ (1883, 231). But, however many of these concentrations there are, they remain local phenomena deserving of local narratives. Only if these narratives are the same for all the sites are we perhaps moving additionally towards creating national stories.

At regional and national levels, narratives have a greater potential to start at one level of explanation and end up in the other. Or alternatively they share a number of levels simultaneously. My final example is concerned with pottery styles and tries to illustrate this crossing over from one level to another. Whatever view one takes of the nature of the Neolithic period it is generally agreed that pottery was one of the main innovations. And it is equally widely acknowledged that pottery styles cannot simply be interpreted as a material expression of ethnic groups. Pots do not equal people, or at least not consistently enough for this to remain the unquestioned assumption that it once was (Thomas 1999, 97). Yet we have been altogether less successful in defining what styles might mean or in establishing agreed criteria for determining between a variety of potential meanings. One plausible role that has been advanced sees pottery as having an important role in the signalling of difference (Thomas 1999, 225–6). But difference embodies such a complex array of meanings at multiple levels that, unqualified, it tells us little. The centre of my concerns, though, is here with the role of pottery, or more accurately the central role that it often plays in the creation of narratives.

It necessitates, of course, a return to Orkney where two pottery styles dominate our perceptions: Unstan Ware, named after the chambered cairn at the south end of the Loch of Stenness in central Mainland, and Grooved Ware. Both styles feature in wider narratives involving chambered cairns, henges and stone settings. But their participation in these wider narratives has been at the expense of acknowledging their roles in variant regional interpretations. Collectively, these regional interpretations point to different narratives from those currently favoured. I want to explore this suggestion by looking first at the pottery styles separately in various regions of northern Scotland and then to look at the Orcadian situation in terms of the relationship between the two styles.

Let us begin with Unstan Ware. In Orkney, Unstan Ware is predominantly from chambered cairns of the Orkney–Cromarty group (Davidson & Henshall 1989, 64–79). But at Knap of Howar on Papa Westray (Ritchie 1983) and less clearly at the foot of Wideford Hill (Rendall 1934) and at Stonehall (Downes & Richards 2000, 161–5) on Mainland, the style is found in domestic contexts.
A number of distinctive artefacts were associated with Unstan Ware at Knap of Howar (illus 4.2). In addition to the well-known bowls with decorated collars, it is suggested that ‘round-based bowls without carinations provide the other main division of Unstan Ware’ (Davidson & Henshall 1989, 77). This may, however, be a suggestion applicable only to Orkney. In the other major area where Unstan Ware occurs, the Western Isles, the style occurs exclusively as a component in the domestic middens associated with settlement sites: on North Uist at Eilean an Tighe (Scott 1951), Loch Olabhat (Armit 1992, 309–16) and Bharpa Carinish (Crane 1993), and on Harris at Northton (Simpson 1976). Here it is not accompanied by uncarinated round-based bowls but by the decorated bowls and jars that constitute Hebridean Ware (Armit in Crane 1993, 371–2). This style appears to be restricted to the Western Isles. In contrast to the Orcadian situation it is only this local Hebridean style, and not Unstan Ware, that is found in the chambered cairns. These are typologically distinct from the Orkney sites (Henshall 1972, 111–57 & 308–10). Intriguingly, this situation is paralleled by Beaker finds in the Western Isles where extensive domestic assemblages contrast with the virtual absence of burials. Finally, we need to look at Caithness and areas further south in mainland Scotland. Although there are Orkney–Cromarty tombs aplenty in Caithness, and in some instances these are closely comparable to the Orcadian examples (Davidson & Henshall 1991), Unstan Ware is a rare phenomenon: a single fragment without precise context from Skitten (Stevenson 1946, 142) and even smaller fragment from the chambered cairn at Garrywhin (Davidson & Henshall 1991, 70, fig 19). Comparable rare discoveries of Unstan ware occur in Sutherland at the Ord North chambered cairn (Sharples 1981, 33–4 & fig 9.6), in Moray at Urquhart (Henshall 1983, 30, 38, no 3.7 & 26, fig 5) and in Aberdeenshire at Easterton (Henshall 1983, 30, 41, no 12.3 & 27 fig 6), Spurryhillock (Alexander 1997, 22–3 & 24, illus 6, SF 2) and Kintore (Ian Shepherd, pers comm). Some of the sherds from Balbridie in Kincardineshire appear related to Unstan Ware (Cowie 1993, 17–18) but are not incontrovertibly so.
The radiocarbon dates from Loch Olabhat suggest that Unstan Ware is present there by the middle of the fourth millennium BC. These dates align well with the early dates from Knap of Howar. But other dates suggest the pottery style runs into the first half of the third millennium BC. As an aside, it is from these beginnings that the Western Isles appear to have the only demonstrably continuous sequence of pottery-making throughout prehistory and early history found anywhere in Scotland. Why this should be is deserving of its own narrative, something more substantive than ‘they behave differently on islands’. But the essential point of this example is that contextually and quantitively Unstan Ware appears to be used quite differently in three virtually adjacent areas of Scotland.

A comparable level of regional diversity exists among finds of Grooved Ware in northern Scotland. But our understanding is dominated by the Orcadian evidence. Several putatively domestic sites, particularly Skara Brae, Rinyo, Barnhouse, Pool and Links of Noltland have produced large pottery assemblages; over 10,000 sherds each in the case of the latter two sites (Longworth & Cleal 1999, 202–3). Like the Unstan Ware sites, these too have a distinctive set of associated artefacts made in both bone (illus 4.3) and stone (illus 4.4). All of the major settlement sites take the form of villages and between some at least there appears to be a good deal of uniformity in terms of the shape and internal layout of the individual houses. In all this our images are heavily influenced by the remarkable preservation at Skara Brae such that small finds of pottery at, for example, Sands of Evie or Dingieshowe (Stevenson 1946, 142–3) are usually interpreted as representing the sites of further villages. Whether this expectation continues to be convincing in the face of the expanding range of discoveries remains to be seen but it is nevertheless clear that village settlements were a significant feature of the social structuring of communities in Orkney using Grooved Ware. Beyond these settlements Grooved Ware appears to be associated with the Maes Howe type of chambered cairns (Davidson & Henshall 1989, 64–84), although the evidence depends on only a few cairns. It has also been found at the henge and stone circle at the Stones of Stenness (Ritchie 1976, 22–5). This spectrum of information stretching from daily life to burial and belief and ritual makes the Orcadian Grooved Ware-using communities unique in the evidence for late Neolithic Britain.

Beyond Orkney, however, this wealth of information becomes a dearth. A solitary sherd from Sumburgh has extended Grooved Ware’s distribution to Shetland (Cowie & MacSween 1999, 48). In the Western Isles, there is only a single vessel from the chambered cairn at Unival on North Uist (Henshall 1972, 533 & 309, fig) and sherds from ten vessels uncertainly associated with the stone settings at Callanish on Lewis (Longworth & Cleal 1999,
From Caithness there are a few sherds from surface collection at Freswick Sands (Scott 1951b, 73) and from Sutherland we have only a single uncontexted sherd from Dornoch Nursery (Ashmore 1989, 70 & 68, illus 6a.3). At Inverness sherds from a single vessel in a pit (Longworth & Cleal 1999, 202) and at Raigmore sherds from some 35 vessels in six pits (Simpson 1999) provide isolated finds in Inverness-shire. Grooved Ware is as yet unknown in the counties of north-east Scotland.1

This rather sparse list of occurrences does, however, omit finds of object types associated with Grooved Ware in Orkney if sherds are not also present. Cowie and MacSween felt that two such finds, at Saever Howe on Orkney and at Keiss in Caithness, should not be regarded as suitable for inclusion in a list of Grooved Ware sites (Longworth & Cleal 1999, 206). Since they provide no explanation for their decision – presumably the absence of pottery was decisive – it is difficult to judge their position. Curiously, they ignored altogether the extensive bone artefact assemblage from Jarlshof in Shetland (Clarke & Sharples 1985, 54) that can only be paralleled on Orcadian Grooved Ware sites. Yet they were prepared to accept finds of ‘reasonably diagnostic lithic material’ as indicative of as yet undiscovered Grooved Ware sites in Caithness and Sutherland (Cowie & MacSween 1999, 54). The position in Grampian is, of course, much more problematic for the level of excavation makes the virtual absence of Grooved Ware less easily explained as merely the vagaries of discovery. Yet this is the heartland of carved stone balls, a type associated with Grooved Ware at Skara Brae. It seems as though pottery need not play in all areas the key material culture role that it appears to in Orkney.

It should already be apparent from this that the situation in Orkney might not provide a useful basis for narratives for even adjacent areas of Scotland, let alone northern Britain. But in saying this I am not signalling a retreat into the mindset that sees Orkney as an archipelago of the far north, forever doing its own thing and consequently having no relevance for narratives rooted in areas farther south. Thomas has elegantly shown how three areas in southern England all require their own narratives and how these integrate with wider national stories (1999, 163–220). Orkney has to be seen in similar terms.

In Orkney it is clear that, for at least part of the time, Unstan Ware is contemporary with Grooved Ware (see Ashmore 1998). Yet the available evidence suggests that these two pottery styles are parts of assemblages that have virtually nothing in common. Of course, the simplest tools like flint scrapers or bone points occur in both assemblages, but the more striking types of objects, those that one might think are more obviously expressions of singular purpose, are, as we have already noted, completely different. Equally important, Grooved Ware is found associated with villages in marked contrast to the apparently isolated farmsteads associated with Unstan Ware. It is important to realize that there is some evidence of overlap between the two groups. Unstan Ware occurs in the primary levels at Pool and is succeeded by Grooved Ware (Hunter & MacSween 1991) but there appears to have been little or no mixing between the two assemblages. And Henshall noted a small number of sherds among the Knap of Howar assemblage that appeared to have ‘Grooved ware affinities’ (Ritchie 1983, 72–3). Similar sparse examples occur in some Orkney Cromarty chambered cairns where the assemblage is predominantly Unstan Ware, most notably Isbister and Unstan (Davidson & Henshall 1989, 77–8). But compared to the size of the assemblages involved, these are very incidental occurrences. So in Orkney we have two distinct groups with different life-styles and, one must suppose, different values co-existing within a single island group.

Understanding what all this means is not straightforward. Presumably it was the implicit problems that led Cowie and MacSween to suggest that the Toft’s Ness assemblage of almost 2000 sherds was the paradoxical plain Grooved Ware (1999, 49–50). I find it difficult to accept that an undecorated assemblage of this size is to be usefully regarded as Grooved Ware. Rather it suggests to me that the narrative of a ‘simple’ dichotomy between later Unstan Ware and Grooved Ware that I have been developing is altogether too glib. Nor do I find it any easier to accept Renfrew’s juggling with radiocarbon dates as a basis for an evolution from Unstan Ware to Grooved Ware (2000). This would, of course, deal with the problem of two groups simultaneously occupying the same archipelago. But anyone who has handled Orcadian Unstan Ware and Grooved Ware knows there are no points of similarity that might suggest one evolved from the other. If there was ‘evolution’ Unstan Ware potters threw away their manuals before beginning to make Grooved Ware. They must similarly have abandoned most of their artefact assemblages and created new ones. If we are going to make progress in understanding the situation we need to start by acknowledging that none of our narratives begins to explain what is going on.

What we might expect is that new narratives will be complex and perhaps dependent on analogies from other areas. Certainly, we see that the presence of different pottery styles within relatively restricted geographical areas does not provoke the same levels of angst as in Orkney (Thomas 1999, 106–25). Of course, in southern England these pottery styles occur in association more regularly than in Orkney but perhaps the essential point
is that these pottery styles seem not to be maintaining a single role. But against this we have to accept that in the case of Grooved Ware other areas just add to the problems. We act as though the widespread distribution of this form of pottery throughout Britain represents a unified type with all the implications that that carries. But in Orkney we see associated artefact assemblages that are mirrored nowhere else in Britain. Outside of northern Scotland associated with Grooved Ware there are no villages, none of the distinctive bone tools, no bone pins, no bone beads, no carved stone objects. Some have tried to say that the Orcadian assemblages are *sui generis*, the products of a remarkable environment. But how can making bone beads from the metatarsals of sheep be determined by the Orkney environment? We need to think again about what we think pottery styles mean. The evidence for Grooved Ware, if indeed it can be regarded as a single type, is that throughout Britain it is used by communities in different contexts to reflect different trajectories. What level of unity that implies is something that the narratives we create will need to unfold, not assume.

I said at the start of these examples that they had been chosen to illustrate some of the many issues that our current narratives either fail to explain or decline to engage with. I did this, of course, in the hope of persuading you that we need multiple levels of narrative. That those stories, constructed to explain broader issues, cannot be expected to enable us to critique and investigate matters of detail even though we need that detailed analysis to help us build the bigger stories. I have talked the whole time about narratives, that is, about stories. It is only when we attempt to explain our data in explicit terms, describing the human behaviour we believe brought that data about, that we can be sure that the jargon is not masking nonsense.

### Note

1. Since writing this, in keeping with all the known laws of perversity, two finds of Grooved Ware have come to light in Aberdeenshire. The first is from the extensive area stripping being undertaken by AOC Scotland Ltd at Kintore and the second from a pit in gravel at Fordaforie, Rathen. (I am grateful to Ian Shepherd for drawing these finds to my attention.)

### References


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