

# The Earliest Barclays

By Tim Barclay, Barclay Historian

As every Scottish historian has recognised, it was not until the reign of David I (1124-1153), trained as a knight under Henry I of England and, as the earl of Northampton and Huntingdon, tenant-in-chief of scores of knights' fees across eleven English shires, that the systemic plantation of Anglo-Normans and Bretons began in Scotland.

While King David did much to reproduce in southern Scotland the pattern of feudal tenure of England, all (but one) of his infefments lay south of the Forth-Clyde line, in Lothian and Cumbria. The familiar names from this first period include Bruce, Morville, Somerville, Corbet, Burneville, Soules, Avenel and Lindsay, as well as the ancestors of the Stewart, Murray and Douglas families, whose extensive acquisitions were not conducted at the expense of the native aristocracy. Not until the reigns of David's grandsons, Kings Malcolm IV (1154-1165) and William (1165-1214), who held themselves by heritage, custom and association to be members of the greater Frankish aristocracy of western Europe, were the Celtic regions beyond the Forth and Tay steadily feudalised. Immigration in this second period was from a wider variety of sources and resulted in numerous small infefments scattered across much of Scotland. Families associated with this period include those of Moubray, Ramsay, Laundells, Valognes, Bissett, Boys and Fraser, and many more besides.

The arrival of the Barclays in Scotland follows this same pattern. Richard de Berkeley, first of the name on record in Scotland, was lord of [Ardrossan](#) in Cunningham (Ayrshire) under the Morvilles and witnessed the foundation of the [Abbey of Kilwinning](#) by Richard de Morville in the early 1160s.<sup>1</sup> He was succeeded at Ardrossan by his elder son, Robert, who also held the lordship of Maxton, in Roxburghshire, via his second marriage to Cecilia, daughter of Liulf and widow of Ralph fitz Willard of Stamfordham.<sup>2</sup> Robert's younger brother, Walter de Berkeley, became Chamberlain of Scotland and acquired an extensive estate including the lordship of [Urr in Desnes Ioan](#), Newton Chamberlain in Roxburghshire and, after Urr was razed in the Gaelic rebellion of 1174, [Inverkeilor](#) on the Angus coast.<sup>3</sup> Their younger half-sister, Agatha de Berkeley, inherited lands at Ardoyne in Aberdeenshire from her mother, but around 1190 she and her Norman husband, Humphrey, son of Theobald de Addeville (son of Humphrey de Albini of Addeville, in the Cotentin), exchanged these with the king for lands at Conveth (now Laurencekirk) and Fordoun in Kincardineshire.<sup>4</sup> The

connection with southern Scotland remained strong though, for Agatha and Humphrey (who adopted his wife's surname) brought at least one Morville tenant family, the fitz Waltheofs, with them to the Mearns and their heiress daughter, Richenda de Berkeley, later married Robert fitz Robert fitz Warnebald, lord of Kilmaurs in Cunningham.<sup>5</sup>

Richenda and Robert died in the mid-thirteenth century with no surviving issue having granted their lands to the community of [Arbroath Abbey](#). The abbey's cartularies record although Humphrey's brother, John, and nephew, Robert, briefly made claims on his portion of the lands in the Mearns, it was instead Richenda's grand-nephew, Hugh Emme, who in 1284 confirmed Fordoun and Conveth to the monks, for which he was correspondingly infeft in the abbey's lands of Letham Grange in Angus.<sup>6</sup> No descendants of John and Robert de Addeville appear claiming rights because none existed and, with Robert and Walter de Berkeley's lands having passed in marriage with their heiress daughters to the families of de Ardrossan and Balliol around 1200, the first Barclays in Scotland became functionally extinct with Richenda de Berkeley's death around 1260.

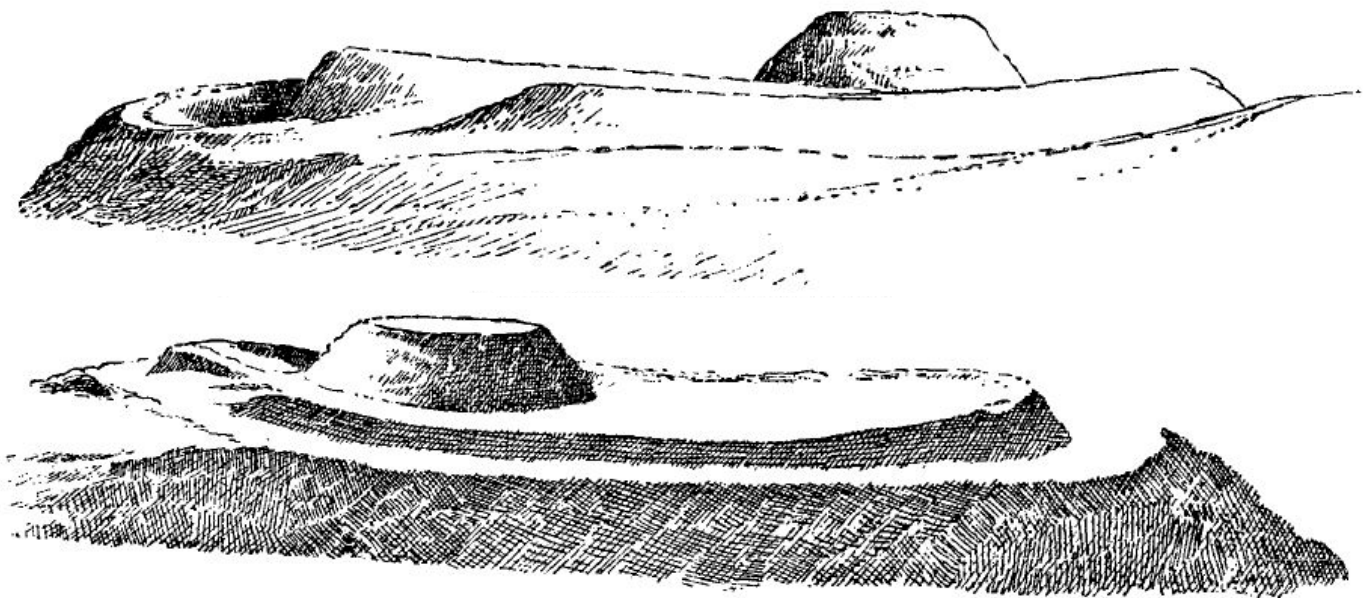


Figure One: [The Motte of Urr](#), west and east elevations.

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<sup>1</sup> J Fullarton, ed., *Cunningham Topographized, by Timothy Pont* (Glasgow: The Maitland Club, 1858), p.11.

<sup>2</sup> *Liber Sancte Marie de Melros, I* (Edinburgh: The Bannatyne Club, 1837), no.90; William Farrer, ed., *Early Yorkshire Charters, I* (Edinburgh: printed for the editor, 1914), p.457.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 200), p.199; G. W. S. Barrow, ed., *Regesta Regum Scottorum, II* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), p.6, nos.171, 185-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, nos.344-5.

<sup>5</sup> John Brownbill, ed., *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey, Volume II Part II* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1916), pp.310-11, 336-7; *British Library*, Add. MS 33245, fos. 146v-147r, 152r-v.

<sup>6</sup> *Liber S. Thome de Aberbrothoc, I* (Edinburgh: The Bannatyne Club, 1848), no. 274; *British Library*, Add. MS 33245, fos. 147r-v, 152r, 153v.