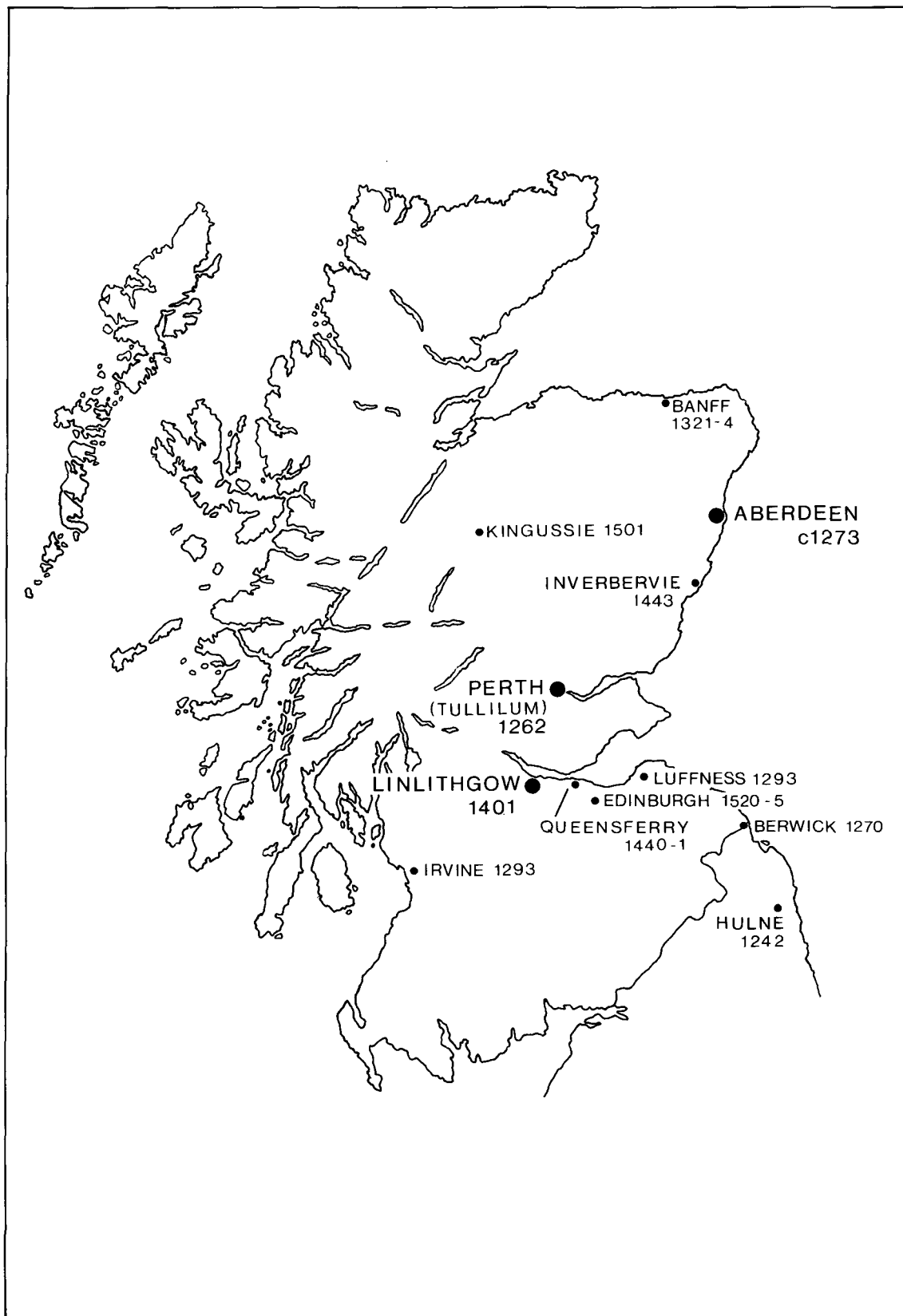

1 INTRODUCTION JA STONES

This volume presents the results of the three excavations which have taken place at the sites of Carmelite friaries in Scotland. It is interesting that of the half dozen or so Scottish friaries which at the time of writing have been the subject of archaeological excavation, three should have been houses of the Carmelite order, which in so many other ways is so little understood.

It was quite fortuitous that after initial exploration at Aberdeen in 1980-1, the site at Perth should have become so quickly available for excavation, and that finally the open nature of the Linlithgow site should have allowed the ground plan of most of the church and claustral area to be examined. However, it should be remembered that all these excavations took place under 'rescue' conditions, often during atrocious weather, and this is inevitably reflected in the extent of the operations undertaken.

Although all were wholly or partially supported by the Scottish Development Department (Historic Buildings and Monuments), the three sites were excavated under the auspices of three different organisations. Aberdeen was undertaken by Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Department, Perth was excavated by the Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust Ltd, while Linlithgow was a freelance project. Until all excavations were completed, there was no intention of publishing the sites in one volume. Hence the recording and the initial post-excavation work was tackled in different ways and only standardised after a definite decision had been taken to publish jointly. This has led to some degree of, mainly minor, inconsistencies in the way in which the material has been presented. For example, Perth has prepared an animal bone report (in fiche), where Aberdeen and Linlithgow have not, indicating simply a different approach by different organisations and individuals. It may be noticed, also, that where Linlithgow and Perth use the word 'context', Aberdeen prefers 'feature' and 'layer': such differences do not, it is felt, detract from the underlying unity of the volume, and they are pointed out where relevant.

It is hoped that the research presented in this volume will throw light on the activities of this little-known order, whose members must once have been a familiar sight in the streets and lanes of one of their most far-flung northern provinces: an order which despite its pragmatic decision in the 13th century to take on the nature of the other, more well-known, mendicant brethren, the Franciscans and Dominicans, perhaps never quite forgot its origins in the hermit cells of Mount Carmel. But it is very erroneous for the historian to write in the past tense of an order which is so obviously alive today, and whose interest in the uncovering of its Scottish background, illustrated by the foreword in this volume, has been one of the most striking and encouraging features of this piece of research.



ILL 1 : Carmelite friaries in Scotland, with Hulne in Northumberland