

The Legacy of Nineteenth-century Replicas for Object Cultural Biographies: Lessons in Duplication from 1830s Fife

Sally M. Foster, Alice Blackwell and Martin Goldberg

Replicas are material culture with a direct dependence on more ancient archaeological things, but they also deserve to be treated as things in their own right. As archaeological source material replicas help to complete the biographies of things; they certainly add to our knowledge even if they might occasionally complicate matters. The majority of such replicas date from the second half of the long nineteenth century when large numbers were produced primarily by or for art academies, individuals, antiquarian societies, museums, and art galleries. The term replica has multiple meanings, often with pejorative overtones or a definition contingent on a perceived reduction in authenticity and value (could even imply deception); we use it in the sense of conscious attempts to make direct and accurate copies (facsimiles). Rather than dismiss replicas, we should consider their nature, the circumstances in which they came about, their impact, their changing meanings, and their continuing legacy. For this reason, our nineteenth-century case studies begin with initial replication, when replicas had great value and were used to disseminate information and stimulate discussion about the objects they replicated. Through this intertwining of original and replica as connected parts of the biography of things, we hope to bring about a new realization of the value of replicas in order to demonstrate their continuing potential as often untapped sources of knowledge.

The power and value of reproductions has been identified in many academic disciplines over the last 150 years or so, and looking at how visual technologies play their part in making meaning is now also part of current scholarship.¹ Perhaps surprisingly, then, with the exception of Jody Joy's study of his grandfather's replica medal — which illustrated how meaning transferred from the empty medal box of his grandfather's lost original to the replica — replicas as such have not yet featured widely in cultural biographical studies of things.² By cultural biography, we mean studies that focus on a specific object in order to explore its changing meanings and the construction of those through time: an approach that lends itself to discovering a hundred worlds in a single object as opposed to the world in a hundred objects.³ New theoretical perspectives, however, present facsimiles in a refreshingly positive light, in which they help to explore the original and to redefine what originality is.

Bruno Latour and Adam Lowe successfully challenge some of the most influential and long-standing views on the perception and reception of copies of things. In rehabilitating reproductions as originals in their own right, they observe that the real phenomenon we must explain is the evolving, composite biography of the (authentic) original and all its (reproduced) originals.⁴ For our purposes there are two main ways of exploring such biographies. The first

¹ See for example S. M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester and London: Leicester University Press, 1992), p. 24; S. Moser, 'Archaeological Representation: The Visual Conventions for Constructing Knowledge and the Past', in *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed. by I. Hodder (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), pp. 262–83; and J. Nordbladh, 'The Shape of History: To Give Physical Form to Archaeological Knowledge', in *Histories of Archaeological Practices. Reflections on Methods, Strategies and Social Organisation in Past Fieldwork*, ed. by O. Wolfhechel Jensen (Stockholm: The National Historical Museum, 2012), pp. 241–57.

² J. Joy, 'Biography of a Medal: People and the Things they Value' in *Matériel Culture. The Archaeology of Twentieth Century Conflict*, ed. by J. Schofield, W. G. Johnson and C. M. Beck (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 132–42.

³ See for example J. Hoskins, 'Agency, Biography and Objects', in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. by C. Tilley, W. Keane, S. Küchler, M. Rowlands and P. Spyer (London: Sage), pp. 74–84. An example of such an approach is H. James, I. Henderson, S. Foster and S. Jones, *A Fragmented Masterpiece: Recovering the Biography of the Hilton of Cadboll Pictish Cross-slab* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2008), ch. 6; this is an interdisciplinary study that explores the complex biography of a major Pictish cross-slab from its creation 1,200 years ago in northern Scotland to modern icon in the National Museum of Scotland.

⁴ B. Latour and A. Lowe, 'The Migration of the Aura, or How to Explore the Original through its Facsimiles', in *Switching Codes. Thinking through Digital Technology in the Humanities and the Arts*, ed. by T. Bartscherer and R. Coover (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 275–97.

involves adopting a vertical axis, mapping what Latour and Lowe describe as object trajectories. Latour and Lowe use the analogy of hydrographers exploring the full extent and catchment of a river rather than just focussing on the original spring. The second entails exploring horizontal axes, the massing of events that identify when trends in the use, or non-use, of replicas becomes visible, and which in turn provides a broader context for assessing and appreciating the significance and meaning of individual objects and their trajectories.

Interest in replicated objects is rising. After a sojourn in curatorial purgatory, plaster casts of sculpture have once again attracted varied forms of scholarly and artistic attention.⁵ That much of the academic subject matter to date is classical is hardly surprising given that this is where the modern interests in obtaining copies first lay. Art historians have for some time been interested in replicas of Irish metalwork material created from the mid nineteenth century and during the Celtic Revival, and that facsimile industry is the subject of a recent, detailed study.⁶ Now contemporary copies made of early medieval sculptures have also been the subject of critical inquiry.⁷ Otherwise, there is no academic overview of the production of replicas of archaeological material of any date, although a few case studies exist.⁸

Here we introduce for the first time what we consider an exceptionally precocious and significant programme of replication of archaeological objects that took place in Fife, Scotland, in 1839. Our simultaneous explorations of the recent biographies of the Norrie's Law hoard (the largest surviving hoard of Pictish metalwork) and the St Andrews Sarcophagus (henceforth Sarcophagus; one of the most accomplished surviving Pictish sculptures) led us to recognize that our different histories are well and truly entangled.⁹ Common to both of our studies is that we have looked in some detail at the fabric of both the early medieval and nineteenth-century material culture for what this can tell us about the replication story and the integrated cultural biography of both original and replica. We have married what we can observe using critical sets of eyes with the benefits of modern scientific technologies/analysis, to inform cultural biography.¹⁰ Each set of objects has the potential to give useful (and perhaps unexpected) insights into the original. The benefit of drawing our two studies together is that we can evidence a documented *programme* of replication involving a tight network of people, and trace the subsequent legacy of this network of relationships. Juxtaposing the replication of the St Andrews Sarcophagus and Norrie's Law hoard allows us to range from the intricacies of two closely related case studies out into the wider implications of studying replicas as things in their own right, as well as integrating them into the cultural biographies of the things they replicate.

⁵ M. F. Nichols, 'Museum Material? An Institution-based Critique of the Historiography of Plaster Cast Sculpture', in *Material Worlds. Proceedings of the Conference held at Glasgow University, 2005*, ed. by R. Moffat and E. de Klerk (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 26–39; *Plaster Casts: Making, Collecting, and Displaying from Classical Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by R. Frederiksen and E. Marchand (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); Edinburgh College of Art, *Cast Contemporaries* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Arts and Social Sciences Academic Press, 2012).

⁶ *Imagining an Irish Past. The Celtic Revival 1840–1940*, ed. by T. J. Edelstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); T. Kelly, 'Commerce and the Celtic Revival: The History of the Irish Facsimile Industry, 1840–1940' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2013).

⁷ E. L. McCormick, 'Crosses in Circulation: Processes and Patterns of Acquisition and Display of Early Medieval Sculpture in the National Museums of Britain and Ireland, circa 1850 to 1950' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2010); E. L. McCormick, '"The Highly Interesting Series of Irish crosses": Reproductions of Early Medieval Irish Sculpture in Dublin and Sydenham', in *Making Histories. Proceedings of the Sixth International Insular Arts Conference, York 2011*, ed. by J. Hawkes (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2013), pp. 358–71; S. M. Foster, 'Embodied Energies, Embedded Stories: Releasing the Potential of Casts of Early Medieval Sculptures', in *Making Histories*, ed. by Hawkes, pp. 339–55.

⁸ Such as N. Curtis, '"The Original May Yet Be Discovered": Seven Bronze Age Swords Supposedly from Netherley, Kincardineshire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (henceforth *PSAS*), 137 (2007), 487–500.

⁹ 'Pict' is the name generally applied to the native people living in eastern and northern Scotland from about AD 300–900.

¹⁰ The sort of approach advocated in A. Jones, 'Archaeometry and Materiality: Materials-based Analysis in Theory and Practice', *Archaeometry*, 3 (2004), 327–38.

Figure 1 summarizes the fortunes of plaster casts and their production through time. Our focus here is replicas of early medieval things. The Victorian interest in such post-Roman and pre-Romanesque material was quite different from the classical and Renaissance material that they and their immediate predecessors copied so avidly. By the end of the long nineteenth century public art galleries and museums throughout the Isles of Britain and Ireland had created large, bespoke displays of plaster casts for wide public consumption that for the first time included what are referred to as Celtic (we would now more accurately if less evocatively say Insular) sculpture, such as high crosses and cross-slabs. The Circulation Department of the South Kensington Museum/Victoria and Albert Museum (henceforth V&A) often provided the necessary fuel; from the 1880s it administered grants to provincial museums that were preferentially for ‘reproductions’ (facsimiles), as well as facilitated cast production through practical advice and support. Driven by South Kensington’s agenda for teaching art, improving manufactures through technical art, and wider educational and social benefits through an appreciation of high art, the focus of interest for the regional museums and art galleries was the decorative panels of regular interlace, zoomorphic, spiral and key patterns, designs that readily lent themselves to an aesthetic that valued symmetry, the abstract and the organic.¹¹

From the mid nineteenth century these museums were one of the key expressions of an emergent nineteenth-century localism and, in all but England, national identity.¹² Substantial collections of casts of local early medieval sculpture appeared in quick succession in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man at the turn of the twentieth century. This activity was at the very tail end of around a century in which museums and galleries strove to create and exhibit large and representative collections of casts of sculptures. The new impetus for the casting of *native* sculpture was driven from the ground and around the Isles — art identified as Celtic was perfect for creating and celebrating cultural resources both common yet distinctive to the countries of the Isles (reflecting contemporary unionist-nationalist tendencies).¹³ Developed mostly from scratch, the new collections of plaster casts are therefore particularly important as snapshots in time of what *local* things people thought to be important. One of us (SMF) has used a provinces-up approach to explore practices on the ground and reveal the underlying subtleties and significance of the work of the Circulation Department with provincial museums. This approach was specifically in relation to the courts of so-called Celtic plaster casts created for the 1901 Glasgow International Exhibition and the museums in Dundee in 1904 and Aberdeen in 1905. Glasgow aimed to promote Scottish history and archaeology to an international audience and was more antiquarian-driven in its selection of material to display. Despite the explicitly South Kensington agendas of the Dundee and Aberdeen galleries, strong linkages emerge that are explained by specific curatorial practices, the emerging professional museum networks and the activities and personal drive of the type of officer of the V&A who is absent from its histories.¹⁴

The tightly defined floruit for the production of Celtic cast collections coincides with the last throes of the V&A Circulation Department’s dogged advocacy of reproductions. The reproductions they commonly funded notably also included fictile ivories — copies usually of continental carved ivories — and electrotypes, usually of metal objects from around Europe but which might also include Celtic metalwork. The main catalyst for the initial production of replicas of early medieval material had been the world’s fairs, beginning with the illustrious

¹¹ Cf. L. Kriegel, *Grand Designs. Labor, Empire, and the Museum in Victorian Culture* (Durham & London: Duke University Press), esp. pp. 127–130, 138–140.

¹² See e.g. A. MacGregor, ‘Antiquity Inventoried: Museums and “National Antiquities” in the Mid Nineteenth Century’, in *The Study of the Past in the Victorian Age*, ed. by V. Brand (Oxford: Oxbow, 1998), pp. 125–37.

¹³ Cf. J. Morrison, *Painting the Nation. Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800–1920* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), ch. 7.

¹⁴ S. M. Foster, ‘Circulating Agency: The V&A, Scotland and the Multiplication of “Celtic Crosses”’, *Journal of the History of Collections* (Advance Access 1 April 2014, DOI: 10.1093/jhc/fhu008).

London Great Exhibition of 1851.¹⁵ At such fairs replicas of sculpture and metalwork were required for display areas and, in the case of jewellery, facsimiles were produced for retail in the manufacturing zones of the fairs.¹⁶ The London exhibition prompted the popularity of copies of the Irish Tara Brooch and related metalwork, while for the Dublin Industrial Exhibition of 1853 considerable efforts went into acquiring suitable plaster casts from around Ireland and Great Britain.¹⁷ By 1856 Celtic Art officially was a distinct, international style.¹⁸ To put this into a slightly wider context, for its own collections the V&A (which established its Cast Courts in 1873) was not very interested in the material from the Isles at all, let alone early medieval material (it did, though, succumb to buying some replicas of early medieval Irish metalwork); and the British Museum was slow in even acknowledging the Anglo-Saxon material.¹⁹ However, by the end of the nineteenth century contemporary observers such as Thomas Greenwood, echoing the views of J. Romilly Allen, called for museums to take an interest in the ‘Christian Archaeology for Great Britain’ from its earliest times.²⁰

Some sixty years earlier, in 1839, attitudes to early medieval material were quite different. Collection of classical objects had just peaked with a ‘sensational flourish throughout the first three decades of the nineteenth century’, although creating replica sculptures was still popular (think of the British Museum’s acquisition of the Parthenon Marbles for their artistic merits in 1816, and their subsequent worldwide replication).²¹ The explicit interest in ‘ancient memorials of a national and medieval character’ that was so obvious from the mid 1840s in the proceedings of the newly formed Royal Archaeological Institute and British Archaeological Association was so often late medieval Gothic, with all its popular ideological associations.²² While interest in the national and medieval was burgeoning, 1839 was exceptionally early days for the understanding and appreciation of early medieval material culture, even though this was the period that many countries considered the foundation of historical and modern nation-states. Figure 2 captures our English antiquarian at the cusp of this change, at the very beginning of the Victorian era and at the same time as our case studies: Joseph Mayer sits in his modern Gothic chair, surrounded by his classical antiquities. Although national and local museums were still very few at this time, from the 1840s onwards archaeological material culture including some replicas became a component of a range of public exhibitions, whether of Mechanics Institutes, Exhibitions of Arts, Manufactures and Practical Science, or the peripatetic exhibitions of the newly formed Archaeological Institute and British Archaeological Association. New technologies such as electrotyping were just invented. Museums such as the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland might ultimately acquire large collections of plaster casts of early medieval sculpture but these were invariably the outcome of donations from individual antiquarians, which was the

¹⁵ Accurate two-dimensional representations of Celtic art in general appeared from the beginning of the nineteenth century: M. Macdonald, ‘The Visual Preconditions of Celtic Revival Art in Scotland’, *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, 13 (2008–09), 16–21.

¹⁶ Edelstein, *Imagining an Irish Past*; McCormick, ‘The Highly Interesting Series’; B. Effros, *Uncovering the Germanic Past. Merovingian Archaeology in France, 1830–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); T. Kelly, ‘“Specimens of Modern Antiquity”: Commercial Facsimiles of Irish Archaeological Jewellery, 1840–1868’, in *The Modern History of Celtic Jewellery 1840–1980*, ed. by S. Walker (Andover, New York: Walker Metalsmiths, 2013), pp. 23–33.

¹⁷ R. Ó Floinn, ‘Reproducing the Past: Making Replicas of Irish Antiquities’, in *A Carnival of Learning. Essays to Honour George Cunningham and his 50 Conferences on Medieval Ireland in the Cistercian Abbey of Mount St. Joseph, Roscrea, 1987–2012*, ed. by P. Harbison and V. Hall (Roscrea: Cistercian Press, 2012), pp. 146–57.

¹⁸ Macdonald, ‘The Visual Preconditions’, p. 19.

¹⁹ MacGregor, ‘Antiquity Inventoried’, pp. 127–36.

²⁰ T. Greenwood, *Museums and Art Galleries* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1888), pp. 222–23; J. R. Allen, ‘A Museum for Christian Archaeology for Great Britain’, *Archaeological Review*, 1 (1888), 191–96.

²¹ F. Herrmann, *The English as Collectors: a Documentary Chrestomathy Selected, Introduced and Annotated by Frank Herrmann* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), pp. 14–15.; C. Whitehead, *Museums and the Construction of Disciplines. Art and Archaeology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Duckworth, 2009), pp. 82–93.

²² A. Way, ‘Introduction. March 1844’, *Archaeological Journal*, 1 (1845), 2–3; D. Westerhall, ‘The Growth of Archaeological Societies’, in *Study of the Past*, ed. by Brand, pp. 28–31.

norm until the end of the nineteenth century. Some but not all of these antiquarian donations, particularly the inscriptions in which there was such an early interest, had first been presented at national and local Society meetings to circulate new findings and promote discussion.²³ This, then, is the context of our Fife case study.

Replication of the St Andrews Sarcophagus and Norrie's Law hoard: birthing partners

First discovered in 1833 during grave digging at St Andrews Cathedral (and now on display in its museum), the mid- to late eighth-century Sarcophagus is a composite monument that survives as a series of finely carved sandstone panels and corner-slabs. Tenons and grooves on their vertical edges indicate these could interlock, traditionally reconstructed in box-form. Multiple plaster casts were made for display between 1839 and 1853, a few of which survive in the National Museums Scotland (henceforth NMS) and the St Andrews Museum (Figure 3).

The Norrie's Law hoard of silver was discovered in 1819 on land belonging to the Largo Estate.²⁴ The vast majority of the hoard was illegally sold as bullion soon after discovery, although the landowner, General Durham, rescued the surviving portion of the material. This portion is preserved in the collections of the NMS and comprises 170 objects and fragments of hacksilver (Figure 4). The first published account of the hoard appeared twenty years after its discovery at which time pewter copies of some objects from the hoard were commissioned. These pewter facsimiles have been central to understanding the biographies of the silver hoard

One man, George Buist (see below), was responsible for the earliest published scholarship on the Sarcophagus and on Norrie's Law hoard, as well as the creation in 1839 of replicas of both for his local archaeology societies.²⁵ Both societies were founded in east Fife, specifically the county town of Cupar and small university burgh of St Andrews, just 15 km away. This flurry of activity took place during the short period when Buist was based in Cupar as the editor of the *Fifeshire Journal* (1837–39).

In Cupar, a group of gentlemen founded the Fifeshire Literary, Scientific and Philosophical Society (henceforth the Fifeshire Society) in late 1837. Within six months a group of leading intellectuals and other leading figures in St Andrews society founded the St Andrews Literary and Philosophical Society (henceforth the St Andrews Society). Primary archival sources survive for these societies in the Cupar Library and St Andrews University Library Special Collections, and contemporary newspapers provide additional detail.

These societies were at the vanguard of the nineteenth-century establishment of county and local societies throughout Britain; it is only in Scotland that a few predate 1830.²⁶ Comparison with related societies shows both Fifeshire and St Andrews to be typical of Victorian societies in having broad and catholic interests, in scientific progress in general matched by strong local interests and loyalties, as well as national sentiments. Each quickly founded a museum promoting, among other things, a sense of corporate duty and shared access. Such museums were a source of pride: hallmarks of the success of a society and its locality.

²³ See for example C. Evans, "'Delineating Objects": Nineteenth Century Antiquarian Culture and the Project of Archaeology', in *Visions on Antiquity: The Society of Antiquaries of London 1907–2007*, ed. by S. Pearce (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 2007), pp. 266–305.

²⁴ J. Graham-Campbell, 'Norrie's Law, Fife: On the Nature and Dating of the Silver Hoard', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 121 (1991), 241–59.

²⁵ G. Buist, *Report by Mr George Buist on the Silver Fragments in the Possession of General Durham, Largo, commonly called the Silver Armour of Norrie's Law, to the Fifeshire Literary and Antiquarian Society* (Fifeshire Journal Office: Cupar, 1839); G. Buist, 'On the Ancient Sculptured Monument Discovered at St Andrews, in 1833', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 1 (1851–54), 234–37.

²⁶ W. Elliot, 'Opening Address, 10 November 1870' and 'List of Field Clubs, Being a Continuation of the Address Delivered December 1870', *Transactions of the Botanical Society*, 11 (1873), 1–41, 192–255 (pp. 242–50); D. V. Clarke, 'Scottish Archaeology in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century', in *The Scottish Antiquarian Tradition. Essays to Mark the Bicentenary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and its Museum, 1780–1980*, ed. by A. S. Bell (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1981), pp. 114–41; P. Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional. Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); D. A. Finnegan, *Natural History Societies and Civic Culture in Victorian Scotland* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009).

Society memberships tend to be very middle-class (and more high-brow in the case of the St Andrews Society), but tradesmen did become involved as well as visit the museums, in Cupar at least, to judge from the album that visitors signed. Networks were an important aspect of the societies, whether among the local landed classes or wider academic community. The societies often promoted this through conferring honorary memberships, in the case of the St Andrews Society to leading scientists of the day with whom its members actively engaged, such as Charles Darwin, John Lubbock and Henry Fox Talbot. To quote Robert Crawford in his history of the St Andrews Society, it was ‘superlatively “networked”’.²⁷ Our impression is that the Fifeshire and St Andrews Societies had relatively few members in common, but Buist was a visible exception. Not only did he assiduously make active contributions to each, but he also sought to involve both Societies in a joint Fife-wide meteorological project. We see his hand behind snippets in the newspaper trying to promote a healthy competition but ‘cordial discourse’ between them: ‘far from becoming rivals [...] each may arouse in the other a feeling of amiable emulation, which may confer additional energies on the operations of both’.²⁸ While the Fifeshire Society is admittedly now obscure, the St Andrews Society is not because through its founder and Vice-President Sir David Brewster its members were actively involved in the introduction of photography to Scotland, immediately after its discovery early in 1839.²⁹ An example of the diversity of the St Andrews Society’s interest and practices is when, prompted by a talk from Buist in June 1838 about the discovery of the Sarcophagus, Brewster moved that the St Andrews Society should add a focus on the study and preservation of St Andrews antiquities to its activities.

Revisiting the biography of the Sarcophagus as part of a wider initiative looking at how replicas multiply the lives of early medieval sculpture led to the realization that previous analysis had under-estimated the complexity and international nature of the story.³⁰ New detective work maps the trajectory of the Sarcophagus to identify what replicas were produced (from what, how and when), and what still survives. It discusses the immediate circumstances of production and to a degree circulation, but leaves the bigger context for here. Figure 5 summarizes key elements of the story.³¹

In 1839, Buist arranged for a local plasterer to produce plaster casts of the Sarcophagus, to form a key element of the Fifeshire Society’s newly enlarged and expanded museum. As its lead curator, he wrote to the St Andrews Society to borrow the early medieval original, which they owned:

There is no modeller or moulder in St Andrews; — but were the slabs removed for a few weeks to Cupar where abundant in-door accomodation [sic] can be provided for these & for those who may be engaged in copying them models in clay or casts in plaster could easily be procured & multiplied ad libetum [sic] without damage to the sculptures [...] by which means a step will have been taken for the expiscation of information in reference to one of the distant and least known branches of Archaeology.³²

²⁷ R. Crawford, *The Beginning and the End of the World. St Andrews, Scandal, and the Birth of Photography* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011), p. 65. Buist only receives a mention here on p. 67 in the context of geological specimens he proposed sending from India in 1842.

²⁸ *Fifeshire Journal*, 13 February 1840, p. 2.

²⁹ Crawford, *The Beginning and the End*, especially ch. 3.

³⁰ S. M. Foster, ‘Discovery, recovery, context and display’, in *The St. Andrews Sarcophagus: A Pictish Masterpiece and its International Connections*, ed. by S. M. Foster (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), pp. 35–62.

³¹ For detail see S. M. Foster, ‘Expiscation! (Un)entangling the Later Biography of the St Andrews Sarcophagus’, forthcoming.

³² ‘Memorial of the Committee of Management of the Fifeshire Literary Scientific & Antiquarian Society to the Council of the St Andrews Literary & Scientific Association’, unpublished manuscript, Undated (probably late September 1839), Muniments of the University of St Andrews UY8528/1/21(a). This document is signed by an unknown figure and George Buist.

Figure 6 summarizes the key events in the biography of the Norrie's Law hoard. The discovery of the hoard in 1819, the illegal sale, and the consequent loss of the vast majority of the silver, followed the subsequent rescue of a portion of the material by landowner General Durham were not publicly known until Buist's involvement in 1839. Buist had been pursuing an interest that primarily focussed on early medieval sculptured stones. It was during this research, and perhaps when visiting the Largo stone in Durham's garden, that his attention was drawn to 'some fragments of silver armour' in the possession of Durham. Buist's interest was sparked by recognition that one of the pieces of the Norrie's Law hoard 'was marked with a symbol characteristic of the cross-stones, and to be found, so far as I am aware, on no ancient relics besides'.³³ This discovery led him to persuade Durham to allow the making of pewter copies of key parts of the Norrie's Law hoard for both of the societies. The preface to Buist's publication about Norrie's Law names Robert Robertson as one of the silversmiths who purchased part of the hoard for bullion and cites him as his source of information concerning the contents of the lost silver and the original size of the hoard when found. An entry in the St Andrews Society's accounts for 11 December 1839 for £1 demonstrates that Robertson was also the silversmith commissioned by Buist to make the facsimiles of objects within the hoard (see Figure 7).³⁴

Overall, the sources demonstrate an enormous fluidity about which of the two societies received Buist's (and thence Durham's) academic and practical favours. There are also some internal contradictions in the sources, possibly complicated by Durham's death in February 1840. The eventual even-handed outcome was that one Society received the Sarcophagus casts and the other the Norrie's Law hoard replicas.³⁵

A key conclusion is that the Sarcophagus and Norrie's Law replicas are highly precocious in the context of the antiquarian production of replicas of archaeological objects that were not classical or Renaissance sculptures (see above), or thought to be classical objects.³⁶ The associated documentation is a rarity, and these and other sources, notably reports on the activities of the societies in contemporary newspapers, suggest that Buist, even for the very brief span of his antiquarian activities in Scotland, deserves more credit for his foray into the study of Scottish early medieval material culture.³⁷

Expiscating the replicas

Expiscation, the process of finding out by skill or laborious labour, encapsulates what Buist saw as the overall purpose of the replicas. A description in the local newspaper that we can confidently attribute to him is telling of his attitude to fidelity, although from the surviving casts we know that the full reconstruction involved many compromises (see Figure 3):

MAGNIFICENT SARCOPHAGUS. — [...] Now stands the sarcophagus, or at least there stands its plaster image, a fac-simile of the original, complete in all its parts, even to the colour of the blocks — a splendid resting-place for some of the mighty of Scotland's earlier days [...] The undiscovered portions have been very judiciously supplied by the Cupar Society, causing duplicates to be cast of those which are entire; not that there is the slightest reason to believe that any two portions of the stone were alike, where variety was so much courted, but that this completes and exhibits at once the form and size of the sarcophagus, without the slightest tendency to mislead — the fact being noted on the descriptive ticket — as a conjectural restoration would have been sure to have done [...]

³³ Buist, *Report*, preface.

³⁴ 'Treasurers Account Book for Literary & Philosophical Society', Muniments of the University of St Andrews UY8527/1.

³⁵ *Fifehire Journal*, 15 August 1838; 15 August, 1 October, 4 and 6 November 1839; 4 February 1840; Muniments of the University of St Andrews UY8525/1, Records of the St Andrews Literary and Philosophical Society April 1838 to 13 April 1861 (1838–1861), f. 37.

³⁶ Cf. Curtis, "'The Original May Yet Be Discovered'".

³⁷ See further discussion of Buist's contribution to the study of Scottish early medieval archaeology in National Museum Scotland's future work on Pictish silver.

The artist (Mr Ross of Cupar) who has executed the cast, deserves the highest credit for the fidelity and beauty of the execution.³⁸

When it came to the Norrie's Law hoard, Buist recognized that the circumstances surrounding its discovery and the nature and quantity of the missing portion might soon be lost, 'perishing altogether by the deaths of the individuals by whom it has been orally communicated'.³⁹ This anxiety informed the dissemination of his researches, showing an awareness of the power of both academic publication and the creation of facsimiles of objects from the hoard. He intended his report,

when put in a form fit for public dissemination, [to be] be the means of expiscating other facts or occasioning the recovery of other fragments of these extraordinary relics; both of which, I have every reason to believe, are still accessible, did we know where to inquire for them. With the same objects in view, I have, by permission of General Durham, caused fac-simile copies in mixed metal to be made for the collections of the Scientific Societies at Cupar and St Andrews.⁴⁰

What we have from Buist in 1839 is effectively an explicit and considered recognition of the value of making replicas for purposes of research, communication, presentation, and interpretation. Buist intended his replicas for community and scholarly benefit, in the very early days of museums designed to meet the needs of a Victorian public increasingly keen to spend their leisure time in educational pursuits. This was also at a time when the production of replicas of archaeological material (other than classical sculpture) was only just emerging, and then in what seems to be a rather ad hoc manner, produced by antiquarians for their individual interests rather than wider public benefits.⁴¹ His selection of material to replicate is an index of what he alone thought to be significant at the time.

In the case of the Norrie's Law hoard, he urgently wanted more information about the missing silver and the circumstances of its recovery, so replication was a practical solution to a specific and difficult case caused by secrecy following initial discovery. In terms of publication, he was particularly concerned about information 'only kept in the insecure treasury of oral tradition'.⁴² Both Norrie's Law and Sarcophagus replicas made material that was essentially inaccessible (because it was in private hands, or in another town) available to a wider audience, that is the members and paying visitors to the museums of the two Fife societies. Buist never uses the word 'authentic' and only used 'original' in relation to his questions about the monument's form, but he does demonstrate a concern with the materiality of the casts. He sought exact copies (the literal meaning of a facsimile), praising Ross for the fidelity of his replication. His attention to detail included that the cast be coloured, but his prime aim was to show people the form and size of the monument, in coffin form as it 'had originally stood', something that it was highly difficult to do when looking at its scattered fragments.⁴³ He was not averse to the 'judicious' use of duplicates to make up the whole (a similar approach was adopted in the 1970s reconstruction of St John's Cross on Iona) and apparently did not realize or did not care that the corner-slabs were reversed in Ross's fabrication of the long side. Significantly, he was concerned that the cast was labelled clearly to indicate that it *was* a conjectural reconstruction.

We also need to consider what part Buist's personal qualities possibly played, and the significance of the vibrant, intellectual context of St Andrews in which he was a player.

³⁸ *Fife Herald*, 19 December 1839, p. 3.

³⁹ Buist, *Report*, preface.

⁴⁰ Buist, *Report*, preface.

⁴¹ Anonymous, 'Appendix, List II. List of Donations Presented to the Society, from 1784 to 1830', *Archaeologia Scotica* 3 (1831), 31–148; and Anonymous, 'Appendix. List of Donations Presented to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, MDCCCXXX–MDCCCLI [1830–51]', *Archaeologia Scotica* 5 (1890), 1–79. These articles provide the best gauge of early replica activity in Scotland.

⁴² Buist, *Report*, p. 4.

⁴³ Buist, 'On the Ancient Sculptured Monument', p. 234.

Buist (1805–1860) was born in Angus, educated in St Andrews and Edinburgh, and after a short career as a minister edited newspapers in both Perth and Dundee before becoming editor in 1837 of the *Fifeshire Journal*.⁴⁴ He rapidly dominated Fife literary and scientific circles, just as when he later arrived in India in 1840 to edit the *Bombay Times*.⁴⁵ He was by all accounts an extraordinary man of ability, persuasion, considerable energy, and wide-ranging interests. Even at a relatively early stage in his career his contemporaries described him as exhibiting ‘unwearied zeal in the cause of science’, being the Fifeshire Society’s ‘most efficient office-bearer’, possessing a ‘zeal [...] to communicate information’, and someone who ‘as a man of science “had not wrapped his talents in a napkin”’.⁴⁶ After 1840 Buist only returned from India twice (on his first visit he was captured in early photography: see Figure 8), and he is best known for his professional activities there; antiquities remained a side interest.⁴⁷

Sources are slight for Buist’s earlier cherished side-line as a Scottish antiquarian. They comprise two published articles, a number of letters to the St Andrews Society that survive in the Special Collections of St Andrews University, extended notices of lectures that he delivered to the St Andrews and the Fifeshire Societies on 4 June 1838 and 6 November 1839 published in local papers and surely drafted by him, the anonymous account of the Sarcophagus published in the *Fife Herald* (see above), and his 1846 *Memoir*.⁴⁸ From the latter we learn that he spent a considerable part of 1838 ‘chiefly employed in historical and antiquarian research’ in the British Library and the libraries of Dublin.⁴⁹ Buist was probably also the author of the more detailed accounts of Society business reported in his newspaper, as well, possibly, as in the *Fife Herald*.⁵⁰

So, as a professional editor, Buist was adept in developing ways of communicating to wide audiences, and fully recognized the merit of this: ‘I know few who is possessed of more varied information of a practical and scientific kind, or more able to communicate it to the public in a popular and pleasuring shape’.⁵¹ Notably, several other contemporaries of the St Andrews Society led the way with popular writing designed to promote public engagement with science.⁵²

The late 1830s heralded what was to become ‘an extraordinary inventive period in experimentation with new visual technologies’.⁵³ St Andrews led the way in terms of photography, but we might also argue (in tandem with Cupar) in replication of non-classical

⁴⁴ Published sources are contradictory about when he was born, and his own published *Memoir* incorrectly says 1803 (although 1805 can be inferred because it states he was 12 when he went to St Andrews University in 1817): G. Buist, *Memoir, with Testimonials, &c. of George Buist, LL.D. Fellow of the Royal Society, London; Fellow of the Royal Society, Edinburgh; Fellow of the Geological Society; Member of the Royal Geographical Society, London; of the Royal Asiatic Society; of the Wernerian Society, Edinburgh; of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries, etc.; of the Royal Society of Arts; of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society; Secretary to the Geographical Society Bombay; Secretary to the Agri-Horticultural Society of Western India; Honorary Member of the Egyptian Literary Institution; Honorary Member of the St Andrews Literary and Philosophical Society; of the Fifeshire Literary, Scientific, and Antiquarian Association, etc. etc. Addressed to his Friends* (Cupar: G. S. Tullis, 1846). His gravestone in Kolkata corroborates this, stating he died 1 Oct 1860, aged 54 10m 5d (‘India, Kolkata, Karaya Road, Scottish Cemetery’, in <www.canmore.rcahms.gov.uk> [accessed 3 August 2012]).

⁴⁵ A. J. Campbell, *Cupar. The Years of Controversy. 1822–1872. Its Newspaper Press* (Dunfermline: Fife Family History Society, 2009), pp. 42–45; K. Prior, ‘Buist, George (1804–1860)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3892 [accessed 25 September 2012].

⁴⁶ *Fife Herald*, 14 November 1839, p. 3; *Fifeshire Journal*, 12 December 1838, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Prior, ‘Buist, George (1804–1860)’; G. Buist, ‘On the Scythian Bowls and Bows of the Ancients, Compared with Those of India’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 1 (1851–54), 237–39.

⁴⁸ Buist, *Report*; Buist, ‘On the Ancient Sculptured Monument’; Muniments of the University of St Andrews UY8528/1/21(a); Muniments of the University of St Andrews UY8528/5, Binder of papers submitted to the St Andrews Literary and Philosophical Society (1814, 1839–29 June 1905); *Fifeshire Journal*, ‘Rhunic Antiquities’, 12 July 1838, p. 3; 14 November 1839, p. 4; *Fife Herald*, 14 November 1839, p. 4. Buist, *Memoir*.

⁴⁹ Buist, *Memoir*, p. ix.

⁵⁰ *Fifeshire Journal*, 19 April 1838, p. 3; 10 May 1838, p. 1.

⁵¹ Rev George Scott, quoted in Buist, *Memoir*, p. 6.

⁵² Crawford, *The Beginning and the End*, ch. 5.

⁵³ Nordbladh, ‘The Shape of History’, p. 243.

archaeological objects for public display. Such innovations were a highly visible way in which societies could ‘compete’ and reinforce their social value. Might the two pioneering initiatives in visual technologies be in some way linked? We have already seen how the meetings and activities of the St Andrews Society, in particular, provided a stage for the key dramatis personae to connect and interact. So did Buist’s work and indeed his personal life — he married the daughter of a St Andrews professor, as did so many other leading members of the St Andrews Society. John Adamson, who became a significant photographer, was the curator of the St Andrews Society’s museum to whom Buist wrote for permission to borrow the Sarcophagus for casting.⁵⁴ It is easy to exaggerate potential resonances here, not least since the discovery of photography was only first announced in early 1839 and the replicas were made at the end of the same year, but we can be certain Buist had exposure to this new technology both intellectually and practically. We can infer from a letter he wrote from London on the eve of his departure for Bombay that he planned to experiment with the tropical sunlight in producing photographs using a lens, photosensitive paper and a light-tight box (‘camera obscura’), which was the height of photographic practice at this time.⁵⁵ Records of any photographers in 1840s India are scarce, and the probability is that Buist sadly did not succeed in photographing the Elephanta Caves, for he would surely have sent the images to the St Andrews Society as he said he intended to do.⁵⁶

The legacy of the act of replication

For such an internationally significant monument, it may seem surprising that the only serious recording and study of the Sarcophagus took place in the mid 1990s. This was the point at which the physical legacy of the casting process on the early medieval original — a distinctive coating of lead white, most obvious on the long panel — was first recognized.⁵⁷ Subsequently, Historic Scotland has now found further chemical signatures evidencing other aspects of the replication process. As presently conserved, the biography of the replication process therefore is writ large in the fabric and biography of the early medieval original. This story, with its implications for the meaning of the original, had been lost sight of.⁵⁸ The wider issue is that important but unrecognized evidence of Victorian and later actions may survive on other authentic original objects and runs the risk of being ignored, mislaid, or misinterpreted. In this instance the coating was possibly to mask damage or discolouration that resulted from the casting process but, with its final resemblance close to more-familiar classical sculpture, the white coating may also be telling of contemporary expectations for what ‘normal’ figural sculpture should look like. We are within a generation of the arrival of the Parthenon Marbles in Britain, of which by the mid-1830s Edinburgh’s Trustee Academy already had an extensive cast collection.⁵⁹

The interpretation of the Norrie’s Law hoard is a cautionary tale indeed since we have recently recognized and been able to prove that some of the material thought to be a Pictish original is in fact authentic Victorian. The most striking legacy of Buist’s commissioning of pewter facsimiles of parts of the Norrie’s Law hoard was his subsequent ‘recovery’ of a second

⁵⁴ Crawford, *The Beginning and the End*, ch. 6.

⁵⁵ For his photosensitive paper, he went to Rudolph Ackerman’s shop on the Strand and purchased the ‘photogenic drawing box’ of material and Fox-Talbot’s instructions for producing ‘photogenic drawings’: ‘I have also taken a parcel of Ackermans photogenic paper purchased of Mr Fox Talbots instructions together with London lenses for a camera obscura – so as to try the effects of the tropical sun. I suppose I shall be the first to make the caves of Elephanta pourtray [sic] themselves — in which, if I succeed I shall send you specimens of the portraiture that you may compare them with Capt. Grindlay’s coloured drawings of which you have a copy in the university library’ (Muniments of the University of St Andrews UY8528/5, 11 February 1840).

⁵⁶ R. Taylor, *Impressed by Light: British Photographs from Paper Negatives, 1840–1860* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), ch. 9.

⁵⁷ R. D. E. Welander, ‘Recent Developments in Conservation and Presentation’, in *The St. Andrews Sarcophagus*, ed. by Foster, pp. 63–70.

⁵⁸ See Foster, ‘Expiscation!’.

⁵⁹ A. S. Naik and M. C. H. Stewart, ‘The Hellenization of Edinburgh: Cityscape, Architecture, and the Athenian Cast Collection’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 3 (2007), 366–89.

and near identical symbol-decorated plaque and handpin. The preface to his 1839 report states that this was as a direct result of his enquiries and particularly the production of the facsimiles:

It must be stated, as an instance of the importance of this inquiry, that the symbol-marked plate and bodkin (Nos. 4 and 5 in Drawing I) were, in consequence of it [making pewter replicas], recovered from hands from which they might, like so much of what preceded them, have passed into the crucible of the silversmith, and have been added to the collection of General Durham, in connection with which they will hereafter be noticed without further distinction from the others.⁶⁰

Buist did indeed make no further distinction between the two plaques and pins, and in this has been followed by nearly all commentators, antiquarian and academic alike (with the sole exception of R. B. K. Stevenson). But the preface makes clear that the second plaque and pin were ‘recovered’ twenty years after the hoard was first discovered, and as a direct and positive result of Buist’s programme of replication and publication.

However, the implications of Buist’s statement are in fact more profound as further distinction between the two plaques and two pins has only recently become apparent during analysis of the surviving Norrie’s Law hoard material.⁶¹ This work has demonstrated that the rescued plaque (NMS, x.FC 33) and pin (NMS, x.FC 30) were direct copies of the original plaque (NMS, x.FC 34) and pin (NMS, x.FC 31). In addition, the rescued plaque and pin had a silver composition that was significantly different to the rest of the hoard: a highly refined silver with very few trace elements that has only been available since the nineteenth century. Buist’s specific reference in his engraving to which of the plaques and pins had been rescued meant we could positively identify the rescued objects with the copied plaque and pin. Buist therefore ‘recovered’ recently (in 1839) made silver copies of the original plaque and pin from the hoard.

The legacy of Buist’s pewter facsimiles, however, lies not just in the recovery of the rescued plaque and pin, but also in their creation in the first place. The manufacture of the pewter facsimiles meant that the silversmith Robertson had access to the original pieces in Durham’s possession in order to take the necessary impressions and create moulds. These moulds could then have been used to produce the silver copies (x.FC 30 & x.FC 33) of the original silver plaque (x.FC 34) and pin (x.FC 31). A unique feature, an engraved Pictish z-rod symbol on the back of both the pewter handpin and the rescued silver handpin (x.FC 30) (but not found on the silver original — x.FC 31) implicates the jeweller Robertson in the making of both the pewter and the silver copies. Robertson had been commissioned by Buist to make pewter facsimiles of the original silver plaque (x.FC 34) and pin (x.FC 31) and did so in every detail except for choosing to add a z-rod to the back of the pewter pin. Buist’s publication makes it clear that Robertson made the pewter facsimiles before the recovery of the silver copies. We know that Robertson added the z-rod to the pewter pin and he must be the prime candidate for then adding the z-rod to the back of the silver copy. His reasons for doing this are unclear, but the symbol bears a passing resemblance to Robertson’s maker’s mark. The pewter facsimiles are therefore intimately entwined with the biographies of the silver material and directly helped inform our interpretation of analytical data that shed serious doubts over the authenticity of the copied silver plaque and pin.

The carved stones from St Andrews have been interpreted since their discovery in 1833 as coming from a single composite monument, a sarcophagus. Buist’s casts, produced within six years of discovery and before the monument was widely known, took its box-like form as a given and actively contributed to the perpetuation of this interpretation wherever they were seen, or their images reproduced.⁶² Subsequent interpretations as a shrine still perpetuate the box

⁶⁰ Buist, *Report*, p. 2.

⁶¹ See M. Goldberg and A. Blackwell, ‘The Different Histories of the Norrie’s Law Hoard’, in *Making Histories*, ed. by Hawkes, pp. 326–38, for details.

⁶² See, for example, J. M. Leighton, *History of the County of Fife from the Earliest to the Present Time* (Glasgow: Brookman and Co., 1840), II, fig. facing p. 177.

form.⁶³ Only now is the single monument, box-like form being challenged,⁶⁴ but the appellation is surely indelible.

A less obvious but insidious consequence of the existence of the Sarcophagus casts, and their distribution, is the frequency with which drawings or photographs of the casts are used to illustrate the Sarcophagus, even in relatively modern scholarship, and this is not always acknowledged.⁶⁵ For example, Wilson included different etchings of the cast of the Sarcophagus in his two editions of *The Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, but does not acknowledge the cast is his source⁶⁶. We are left uncertain whether he, like more recent scholars such as Curle, was actually aware of the significant differences between the early medieval original and the replicas, aspects of which were more obvious than others (see Figure 3).⁶⁷ *Antiquity's* 1936 worldwide readership would have been none the wiser. The practical availability and accessibility of existing professional images to use (e.g. from the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland) was no doubt a consideration. The type of scholarship (art-historical, with a focus on iconography) may also have meant that the use of what is by the standards of today inaccurate material, with different material qualities, was not an issue so long as the motifs were correct. Or perhaps, like in the late nineteenth century, photographs of casts of sculpture were simply deemed to be better than photographs of the originals, even if they were not exact facsimiles.

As we have seen with the pewter facsimiles and silver copies of the Norrie's Law plaque and pin, moulds used to create replicas are often reusable within limits, and objects can be repeatedly moulded from; or moulds can even be created from the original reproductions rather than the authentic originals. An understanding of such pedigrees of production for a given replica matters because: it tells us something about the intrinsic properties of the facsimile (how close it is in form to the original); it identifies why and where we can map connections in the object trajectories; and it helps to populate the replicas' contextual and associative significances through an understanding of the people and places involved in them.

People and institutions had differential access to the originals and replicas of them for purposes of making (further) copies. For the owners of the original or moulds, replicas were marketable or exchangeable cultural commodities.⁶⁸ The availability of existing moulds for reuse to a certain degree constrained what was produced or exchanged, while dependence on others for access to moulds affected what was first created and went into circulation. Late nineteenth-century museums actively marketed copies of material, or facilitated their production for others. The V&A's general lack of interest in casting the early medieval sculpture of Britain and Ireland meant it did not have a large pool of such material to exchange with the museums of Europe, which in turn has a bearing on how others could appreciate the Isles' native culture. This policy has had a lasting and detrimental impact on the wider art-historical appreciation of Pictish art. Foster's study of the Edwardian collections of Celtic sculptures made for Scottish museums illustrates the significances that can emerge from discovering and mapping the intricacies of such networks.⁶⁹

⁶³ See contributions to *The St Andrews Sarcophagus*, ed. by Foster.

⁶⁴ D. V. Clarke, A. Blackwell and M. Goldberg, *Early Medieval Scotland. Individuals, Communities and Ideas* (Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland, 2012), pp. 45, 95.

⁶⁵ Cf. Nordbladh, 'The Shape of History', p. 243, and C. Evans, 'Megalithic Follies: Soane's "Druidic Remains" and the Display of Monuments', *Journal of Material Culture* 3 (2000), 347–66 (pp. 354–55) on the ways in which illustrations in one visual media (2D and 3D) can have dependences and dependencies inherited from another, and the risks of 'naïve acceptance' of representations.

⁶⁶ D. Wilson, *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (1st edn; Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, 1851), p. 503; (2nd edn; London and Cambridge: MacMillan and Co., 1863), vol. II, pl. xiv.

⁶⁷ C. L. Mowbray, 'Eastern Influence on Carvings at St Andrews and Nigg, Scotland', *Antiquity* 10 (1936): 428–40, pls. I–IV.

⁶⁸ See for example McCormick, 'Crosses in Circulation', ch. 3 (esp. pp. 90–94), which scholars and museums were exchanging casts from as early as the 1840s.

⁶⁹ Foster, 'Circulating Agency'.

Private entrepreneurs were also pro-active: jewellers in the generation after Robertson quickly recognized the economic potential of direct, modified, and adapted facsimiles of so-called Celtic jewellery, such as the Tara and Hunterston brooches), and their outputs sold successfully to individuals, museums, and fairs, contributing to the Celtic Revival style. By the 1860s highly accurate facsimiles of a wider range of metalwork specifically for museums also began to be produced.⁷⁰ Copies of and impressions from later medieval seals were certainly marketed from a relatively early date, in Scotland by Henry Laing.⁷¹ Often from Italian families, the best-known *formatori* (plaster workers) worked from major cities (Dublin, Edinburgh, London), but a more varied picture is emerging as craftspeople begin to be studied in their own right.⁷²

In 1830s rural Fifeshire, Buist tasked local craftspeople to make his replicas. While we cannot say if commercial interests motivated Robertson to make his silver replicas of parts of the Norrie's Law hoard, somebody made multiple copies of the Sarcophagus and sold these. It seems that Ross' workshop produced Sarcophagus casts additional to those displayed in the museum in Cupar, and these were widely distributed, in Scotland, England, and Ireland between 1848 and 1853 (see Figure 5). While there are problems in establishing a full and totally coherent narrative, the multiplier effect is clear, as is the extensive network of people and places — indeed sets of dependences — this must have involved. We do not know who sanctioned and organized this, but for reasons outlined in detail elsewhere, the casts may all have been manufactured close to 1839.⁷³ Buist was in India by the time they circulated, but it could well have been a part of his original plan that further copies were created for retail, perhaps to mitigate the upfront costs to the Fifeshire Society. Or did an enterprising Mr Ross recognize their economic potential and market them accordingly? Either way, it is clear that a body of replicated plaster casts was created in a very short period from 1839 and that they were purchased for display in newly refurbished museums (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1848; Edinburgh, 1849) and for an international exhibition (the Dublin Industrial Exhibition 1853 where ongoing entanglement of the Sarcophagus and Norrie's Law hoard continued).⁷⁴

Conclusions

The St Andrews Sarcophagus and Norrie's Law hoard are two of the most important surviving Pictish relics from early medieval Scotland. The entanglement of their later biographies is also of international significance in its own right. This well-evidenced case study highlights how replicas, things that are widely prevalent in Europe and beyond, comprise a relatively unexplored seam of archaeological material culture, one that we ignore at our peril. These particular replications offer new insights into the vision, intellectual and practical energies of early antiquarian societies, and their web of connections across Britain and Ireland. Such a horizontal axis of analysis appreciably expands our knowledge of when and in what pioneering and diverse ways mid nineteenth-century antiquarians created and used replicas, and the sorts of impacts these could have. It is salutary to consider what Buist's impact would have been on British archaeology had he not departed for India. The things that he directly or indirectly caused to be created in 1839 were different from things that had gone beforehand, or indeed were to follow for many years. They were at the forefront of what became standard antiquarian activities over the following half century. They were impressive technical achievements for their time and, if not perfect

⁷⁰ Ó Floinn 'Reproducing the Past', pp. 148, 152–54; Kelly, "'Specimens of Modern Antique'".

⁷¹ A. Way, *Catalogue of the Antiquities, Works of Art and Historical Scottish Relics, Exhibited in the Museum of the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland during their Annual Meeting, held in Edinburgh, July 1856* (Edinburgh and London: Thomas Constable and Co., 1859), p. 153 fn.

⁷² D. Bilbey and R. Cribb, 'Plaster Models, Plaster Casts, Electrotypes and Fictile Ivories', in *The Making of Sculpture. The Materials and Techniques of European Sculpture*, ed. by M. Trusted (London: V&A, 2007). pp. 152–71; *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851–1951* <www.sculpture.gla.ac.uk> [accessed 3 April 2012]; P. Malone, 'How the Smiths made a living' in R. Frederiksen and E. Marchand, *Plaster Casts*, pp. 163–77.

⁷³ Foster, 'Expiscation!'.
⁷⁴ Foster, 'Expiscation!'.

replicas, ones that advanced the standards and expectations of the time, and were perfect enough to be taken at face value. Their production, creation, circulation, and use also have long-term implications for the biography of the early medieval relics and their trajectories (the vertical axis of analysis). We cited five specific examples: the physical legacies for the original; legacies for the interpretation of the original; the confusion of reproductions with originals; the secondary uses of images of reproductions as if the originals; and the extended and fissile trajectories of objects, with their implications for the accuracy of the multiple reproductions. In the case of our early medieval originals, we saw how the pewter replicas gave us an understanding of why the two silver copies that Buist rescued are compositionally different under XRF analysis from the rest of the Norrie's Law hoard. Whether the silver copies were intended to be fakes or whether we now consider them as replicas depends on a value judgement. We also saw how the Sarcophagus still carries both visible and invisible telling evidence for the replication process, material evidence that is now an important, if undersold, part of the monument's biography. In both our cases, misleading images of these replicas, and images based on them, have swept out consciously and unconsciously into the flow of scholarship that these internationally significant relics have generated.

We therefore hope through our interlinked case studies to have given some further insight into the value of examining Victorian and later replicas and including them in the composite biographies of things, and of the sorts of intended and unintended consequences of the intellectual and practical dependences (reliances) and dependencies (constraints) such entanglements create.⁷⁵ There are benefits to the understanding of specific objects, both the early medieval originals and their replicas, which are archaeological artefacts in their own right. In considering the replicas we have developed an understanding of the decisions — compromises, deceits and conceits — that were made by various parties during the copying process, not least the critical role of the craftsperson. In the case of the Norrie's Law hoard these have had very practical consequences, significantly skewing scholarship for 170 years, while we have not been sufficiently critical in our observations and interpretations of the surviving Sarcophagus.

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Figure 1. Summary of the fortune of plaster casts of sculptures.

Figure 2. The antiquarian Joseph Mayer in his study in 1843, painted by William Daniels.

Courtesy National Museums Liverpool.

Figure 3. Schematic reconstructions summarising the form of (a) the St Andrews Sarcophagus as presently displayed in St Andrews Cathedral Museum with (b) the reconstructed Cupar cast, based on the surviving casts and descriptions. *Graphic by Christina Unwin, copyright S. Foster (incorporating photographs in (a) that are Crown copyright RCAHMS and B. Keeling; and in (b) © Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland).*

⁷⁵ Cf. I. Hodder, *Entangled. An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

Figure 4. Material attributed to the Norrie's Law hoard preserved in the collections of National Museums Scotland. © *Trustees of the National Museums Scotland.*

Figure 5. A summary biography of the St Andrews Sarcophagus. *Graphic by Christina Unwin, copyright S. Foster (incorporating images that are © B. Keeling; S. Foster; Crown copyright RCAHMS and Courtesy of RCAHMS (artist Alexander Archer), Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk; Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland and Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Department.*

Figure 6. A summary biography of the Norrie's Law hoard. © *Trustees of the National Museums Scotland.*

Figure 7. Pewter facsimiles of objects from the Norrie's Law hoard, commissioned by George Buist in 1839 and preserved in the collections of St Andrew's Museum. © *Trustees of the National Museums Scotland.*

Figure 8. Dr George Buist photographed during his visit to Scotland in 1845 by Robert Adamson and David Octavius Hill. © *Edinburgh University Library.*