

## **Affective architecture in Ardnamurchan: assemblages at three scales**

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### **Abstract**

This article considers three temporal scales of architecture in Ardnamurchan, Western Scotland: a house built and destroyed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; a Neolithic tomb constructed around 5500 years earlier; and the landscape itself. In each case I draw upon the interrelated concepts of affect and assemblage to examine the way in which they emerged and endured through the interactions of multiple human and non-human actors. These theoretical concepts, drawn from the work of Gilles Deleuze, allow for new understandings of these particular places to emerge.

### **Introduction**

In Swordle Bay on the north coast of the peninsula of Ardnamurchan in Scotland you can find all sorts of different kinds of architecture. There are farm houses and barns constructed in the recent past, holiday cottages old and new. Under the surface (both of the ground and of some of these more recent constructions) older forms of architecture, or at least their residues (sensu Lucas 2012), endure. There are prehistoric monuments and enclosures, barns and houses from the medieval and post-medieval periods, even the buried remnants of a piece of seafaring architecture, a boat, dating to Viking times. This is a landscape replete with architecture that has been built, used, reused, abandoned, destroyed, buried and excavated over nearly six millennia. Indeed as I will argue in this paper, we might be better off thinking of this not as a landscape *with* architecture, but rather of different scales of architecture the largest of which is synchronous with the landscape itself. Here dykes, walls and fences create spaces across fields shaped by sea, scythe and sheep over an even longer time period.

Ardnamurchan is the most westerly point of the British mainland and until recently had seen almost no archaeological research. Since 2006, however, the Ardnamurchan Transitions Project has been working on the peninsula, and in Swordle Bay in particular, to explore the changing patterns of human lifeways from the Early Neolithic to the present day<sup>1</sup>. As such the project has excavated a range of sites including those alluded to above, mapped many others,

and is in the process of building up a detailed, multi-scalar history for this location. In this paper I want to explore the architecture of Swordle Bay using ideas that have been important in my work and speak directly to the themes of this volume: assemblage and affect (e.g. Harris 2009, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, Harris and Sørensen 2010). The former of these provides a theoretical approach that allows us not only to escape from questions over traditional dichotomies of culture and nature, and people and things, it also creates a means for us to embrace authorship of the past in far more interesting ways. Fundamentally, taking an approach where architecture is viewed as an assemblage allows us to think about it as the ongoing outcome – or becoming – of multiple interacting elements, or as relational if you prefer. This can powerfully change how we approach buildings as Pwyll ap Stifin (2014) and Tim Edensor (2011) have shown in different contexts. Affect, in turn, allows us to consider the nature of these relations, the forces they carry with them, the way in which they press into each other, and the way in which they shape and are shaped by the interactions that include human beings (Deleuze 1988, Seigworth and Gregg 2010, Roberts 2012).

In relation to Swordle Bay I want to think about how different kinds of architecture were brought together through, and were productive of, differing kinds of assemblages at differing *temporal* scales. To do this I want to look at three examples. The first two are a house occupied in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was then abandoned and later demolished, and a Neolithic chambered tomb with a much longer history, initially constructed between 3783 and 3656 cal BC. Through the main part of the article I will tack between these two case-studies looking at three different issues. First I will examine how they came into being through the interaction of multiple elements. Secondly, I will consider the extent to which we can see either of them as being ‘designed’. Thirdly I will explore the role of affect within the differing histories of these sites. Once I have examined these architectures operating at distinct temporal scales and in these different ways, I will then turn to a third example: the landscape of Swordle Bay itself. Treating landscape as architecture may seem counterintuitive. However, developing the point Lesley McFadyen (2008, cf. 2007a) has made, once we accept that architecture is not solely the product of the human mind imposed on the world, but rather the outcome of the entanglement of multiple elements, then the landscape too can be seen as a form of architecture. Indeed by pushing this definition to its limits we will see that this is where the very term architecture itself is revealed as an assemblage.

## **Assembling Architecture on Ardnamurchan**

As this volume shows, assemblages are becoming increasingly popular as means of thinking through ideas of how the world constantly comes into being – or how it becomes – both in archaeology (e.g. Conneller 2011, Creese 2013, Fowler 2013, Harris 2013, 2014a, 2014b, Harrison 2011, Jones 2012, Jones and Alberti 2014, Lucas 2012, Normark 2008, 2009, 2010; Olsen et al. 2012, Witmore 2014) and much more widely (e.g. Bennett 2010, Delanda 2002, 2006, Dewsbury 2011, Edensor 2011, Marcus and Saka 2006, Ong and Collier 2005, Roberts 2012). The notion of assemblage primarily emerges from readings of the work of Gilles Deleuze, and particularly his writings in conjunction with Felix Guattari (e.g. 2004). For Deleuze and Guattari (2004, p. 555), assemblage is a term used to describe the coming together of different elements as they emerge in the world. Assemblages are the gathering together of ‘diverse elements of vibrant materials of all sorts’ (Bennett 2010, p. 23), they are combinations of multiple elements that are together more than simply the sum of their parts, but are able to act in particular ways in the world, to exercise certain capacities, to affect and to be affected (DeLanda 2006). An assemblage is a ‘charged, ordered entity arising from complex histories of interaction’ (Fowler 2013, p. 22). Materials within such an assemblage are not passive, awaiting human beings to come along and shape them, but active and vibrant, contributing to the development of assemblages in a variety of ways (Bennett 2010).

A critical element of assemblages as defined by Deleuze and Guattari is that they are tetravalent in form, that is they have four dimensions (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p. 556, Dewsbury 2011). One axis defines how assemblages have both physical and expressive dimensions. This means they both have material associations and connections (dimension one), and ones through language, meaning, metaphor, gesture and so on (dimension two). The second axis recognises that assemblages are both always coming together (territorialising – dimension three) and breaking apart (deterritorialising – dimension four) (Delanda 2006, p. 12). How can this emphasis on the four elements of an assemblage help us think about the architecture of Swordle Bay?

### *House 4 at Swordle Corrach*

<INSERT FIGURE 1 NEAR HERE>

Swordle Corrach is one of three post-medieval settlements known within our study area. Its occupation can be traced back to at least 1667 in historical documents (Tuffin 2011). The particular building I want to examine here was a house constructed fairly late in the history of the occupation of this settlement, probably in the 1830s, known to us as house 4. Measuring 12m by 5m it was a gable ended construction, with two fire places, one of which survived into the present, walls made from mortared limestone and most likely a turf roof (Casella et al. 2010, for information on Scottish rural settlement at this time see Atkinson et al. 2000; Hingley 1993; Naismith 1989). It is one of at least three very similar structures constructed at around the same time. The stone and the mortar were locally sourced; indeed a lime kiln is located less than one hundred meters away. The people living in here would have farmed nearby and owned a few animals, as well as exploiting the sea for seaweed to make fertiliser (Tuffin 2011).

The assemblage was materially linked to places near and far, from quarrying limestone and making mortar only a few metres away, to iron pots and ceramics within the house that show longer distance connections across Scotland, as do the two sandstone slabs on either side of the fireplace (see figure 2). Perhaps four or five people would have occupied this home, according to a historical report from 1851 (Tuffin 2011), forming an assemblage with the house itself that we might gloss as a family. This did not somehow pre-exist this architecture, however. The assemblage was formed by living together, by widows marrying new husbands and bringing them to live with them in their house (Tuffin 2011). The family emerged – or was territorialised – through the processes that involved living in, eating in, cleaning and sleeping in the house itself, in repairing and reworking its turf roof. They emerged both in and through materials and practices (cf. Brittain 2014, p. 264, Lucas 2012, p. 202). Unlike earlier forms of architecture present on the site this was not a space where people and animals lived together; the assemblage here was not territorialised with those animals within the house, except when they were about to be consumed. These distinctions point to the differing expressive elements emerging within the assemblages, the memories attached to this house

for people who lived there, the very sense of family and connectedness that was created through the process of dwelling.

<INSERT FIGURE 2 NEAR HERE>

The people living in Swordle Corrach were behind with their rent, they would have been under pressure to produce more, to make more, to gather more from the sea to sell on. Not long after these houses were built, a report by Thomas Dickson informed the owner of the estate, James Riddell, of the degree of arrears faced by his tenants in Swordle Corrach, and the unlikelihood of any of them being able to repay their rents (Tuffin 2011). Just a few years later, probably in 1853, the houses, including house 4, had their occupants cleared from them, one moment in the wider assemblage we today call the Highland Clearances. This saw numerous tenant farmers cleared off the land across the Scottish Highlands to make room for sheep, and to a lesser extent deer, who were far more profitable (Richards 2007). Here the assemblage of Swordle Corrach saw a rapid deterritorialisation as people were cleared out. This was not the same as the coming and going of a single person, the death of just one former occupant. This architectural assemblage before and after the clearances, was utterly different, going through what DeLanda (2002) refers to as a phase transition (cf. Harris 2014b), when an assemblage radically changes from one thing to another.

Unlike the other houses in the settlement emptied at this time, however, it is possible that house 4 was reoccupied. A small amount of Lino was recovered from the house, something not widely available until the latter half of the 19th century, and the fireplace we excavated was potentially a replacement, as the firegrate did not properly fit the space that it occupied. Was a new assemblage territorialised here for a while then, with new material and expressive dimensions? In any case when the house was finally abandoned the change was rapid, the newly installed fireplace left behind (figure 2), along with valuable iron pots. When people left the other houses they had time to take these kind of material things with them, more than just human beings were deterritorialised from the assemblage. This was not the case with house 4, perhaps at the insistence of the landowner (Tuffin 2011).

### *Cladh Aindreis chambered tomb*

The second piece of architecture I want to discuss is the Neolithic chambered tomb of Cladh Aindreis (see figure 3). In traditional terms we could argue that it was probably constructed in the 38th century cal BC, and then used for perhaps 200 years or so (for details of the radiocarbon dates see Harris et al. 2014, on cairns of this type see Noble 2006, chapter 5). This distinction between construction and use is problematic, however, as we will see further below (cf. McFadyen 2007a). Instead let us consider the different materials that were territorialised into this architectural assemblage. The first to be included was a mixed deposit of charcoal and cremated human remains, deposited in a small hollow a couple of hundred metres inshore from the sea, close to a stream. Other materials gathered to the scene, notably limestone quarried from nearby bedrock. These enhanced the underlying topography of the ground ensuring no boundary existed between ‘cultural’ monument and ‘natural’ landscape. People and stones worked together, each dependent on the other in the construction of the monument (cf. McFadyen 2007a, 2007b, 2014, p. 139). As the stone mound rose other materials became entangled; specific stones were selected to form a long, box-like chamber on one side, perhaps binding expressive connections into the assemblage through their histories, shapes and textures (Cummings 2009, 2012). In here further parts of people were deposited. These were not whole bodies, but rather bundles of bones, potentially deposited in bags (Harris, et al. 2010). Thus it was bone that was incorporated into this assemblage, not flesh or other material elements of human bodies. Here too specific memories, links and feelings emerged in the assemblage, these expressive elements as critical as the material connections between earth, bone and stone. The site itself would have become a material reminder of absence, a force impressing the fact that certain people resided here in a different form. Within the Neolithic, further alterations took place a couple of centuries later, with a ditch being dug around the front of the monument, incorporating flint, quartz and pottery into its fill, and thus into the assemblage of the monument. A tail was added to the monument changing its shape and its broader relationship to the landscape around it. This heterogeneity is important here (Harris 2013, cf. Olsen et al. 2012, p. 165).

<INSERT FIGURE 3 NEAR HERE>

At Cladh Aindreis, one element of the assemblage, the particular interaction of depositing (and potentially removing) bones from the chambers, ended a few generations after the tomb

had first emerged. We cannot be certain what happened to it at that stage, whether people were totally deterritorialised from the assemblage, or whether their engagements with it simply do not leave a trace for us to find. The stones continued to settle, some tumbling off the monument to lie around its edges, potential deposits in the chamber, like the bags that may have held some of the bones, rotted away and separated themselves. The tomb, as an architectural assemblage, endured of course, and in time it was incorporated into other assemblages with people and things in new ways. Perhaps 1000 years later people returned and blocked off the chambers adding earth and a capping of small stones to seal away the human remains inside in what we now call the Beaker period. Later between 1770 and 1620 cal BC a new monument, a Bronze Age kerbed cairn, known today as Ricky's Cairn, was constructed immediately adjacent to Cladh Aindreis (Harris et al. 2010, Harris et al. 2014). This monument territorialised new kinds of material. Different forms of stone were used to define its kerb, to clearly bound it off from the world around it. Human remains from at least two people and beads made of jet tied geographical connections near and far into a central cist (the jet most likely comes from North Yorkshire).

### *Architecture, assemblage and design*

This is by no means the end of this assemblage, and we will return to the later history of Cladh Aindreis below. However, having described the emergence of these two assemblages, let us consider a little further the processes by which both of our architectural sites came into the world, and whether or not we can best understand them as products of design. This critical issue has been raised in many recent discussions of Neolithic chambered tombs (e.g. McFadyen 2007a, 2007b). Are they products of deliberate design, or does their form emerge out of the process of construction? One of the critical advantages of turning to assemblages is that they allow us to deal with this question head on, and not just in the case of our chambered tomb. The typical notion of architecture, both in archaeology but also more widely, posits the idea that there is a pre-existing architect. This person is someone who has an idea in their mind that they then realise, often in the modern world first on paper, and then later in the actual building of the structure (Ingold 2013: chapter 4). Whether a hut, a pyramid or a skyscraper, the free-floating mind behind the design seems everywhere. Yet this need not be the case. Such an approach presumes a hylomorphic approach to matter – that is that it is passive, and awaiting the enlivening touch of someone to bring it to life (Conneller 2011,

Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p. 450-1, Ingold 2013, p. 50, Olsen 2010, Olsen et al. 2012, p. 160). This of course places people outside of the world, somehow apart from materials, which returns us to a world replete in Cartesian dualisms (Ingold 2013, p. 25) and presumes a 'unilinear trajectory from design to end product' (McFadyen 2008, p. 307). I should stress that I do not, for one moment, want to disengage human beings from the process of building, making and using architecture. They are absolutely part of this process, and it seems impossible that we would have the diversity of the range of structures we do without our own species playing a crucial role. However, there is a world of difference between privileging the human alone and denying them any role in the proceedings, and it is precisely this gap that can be explored through the notion of the assemblage.

Perhaps the best example of this comes in a story retold both in lectures and in print by the Deleuzian philosopher, Manuel DeLanda (e.g. 2007, p. 22). DeLanda turns to the work of Frei Otto, a German architect who was interested in lightweight structures and is most famous for his design of the tent-like structures of the 1972 Munich Olympic Arena. In the traditional model, we might imagine Otto picturing the roof in his mind, sketching it out, constructing it and then reflecting on his own genius. However, as DeLanda points out, the story is in fact very different. Otto was not the sole architect of this design, rather he worked in conjunction with a very humble material: soap film. Otto knew that soap film has the tendency to create shapes that minimise surface tension (this is why when you blow bubbles in the bath they form spheres). Using a model of small sticks, and pieces of string, Otto used soap film to calculate the shapes of least resistance (curves technically known as hyperbolic paraboloids) he needed for his tent roofs (DeLanda 2007, p. 22). A story like this does not deny the creativity and input of the (human) architect, but it allows for the active role, the form generating properties (morphogenesis), of other materials as well (cf. Ingold 2013, p. 54-5). In this case it was the territorialisation of an assemblage of soap film, string, stick and human that produced the design – and of course countless more people, materials and events were assembled into the process of the final construction itself.

Of our two examples of architecture I have discussed so far, house 4 at Swordle Corrach, relatively modern in date, is the one that a sceptic would insist must have been designed in the traditional sense. After all, it is one of (at least) three gable ended houses of the same size,

constructed at the same time. Surely here we can see the designer's hand at work, a product of the human mind made material? Of course human plans and ideas are involved in the process of producing this architecture as I acknowledged above, however we also have to give room for the role of the materials, the stones, locally produced mortar and so on. Two particular examples stand out in relation to house 4 that reveals the active role of materials in co-designing the living space. First, when building the house, people had drawn on and used the bedrock to form foundations for the walls (see figure four). Second, just outside house 4 where more of the natural bedrock poked out, people had again worked with this material. By filling in a natural hollow between the rock and covering this with a wooden plank, a serviceable platform had been produced. In both these cases there was no sense of a 'design' by an architect, but rather these were the outcome of people and materials of different sorts (bedrock, smaller stones, wood) working together to configure (or actualise) the assemblage. There are many other examples of this interweaving of 'nature' and 'culture' in the construction of these and older houses on the site (cf. Casella et al. 2010).

<INSERT FIGURE 4 NEAR HERE>

So turning to assemblages opens up the possibility of different ways of thinking about design and architecture. We can rethink the reasons that meant that out of all the multiple possible ways in which materials could be combined together certain ones emerge and not others. Yet there is still more we can gain from this, not least in thinking about how the process of assembly and building is not something that comes to an end, but rather is an ongoing process. As Tim Ingold (2013) has pointed out, we traditionally separate the process of constructing architecture from the actions involved with using it. This implies that a building is finished and complete at some stage, at a mythical moment between the end of its construction and the beginning of its use life. Placing the emphasis on how buildings continue their becoming, however, as both Ingold's use of Deleuze and Guattari and my emphasis on assemblages insist, denies the possibility of this building/living dichotomy.

If we take any one moment in the history of Cladh Aindreis it might be easy in one sense, perhaps, to see its construction and 'final form' as the outcome of human agents' practices, of their decisions, of their design. Considered from an assemblage perspective, however, we can

see how this could only ever be part of the picture. The emergence of the monument was not a single moment; rather it was a continual becoming in the actions of people, in the arrangement of stones, the placing of bodies in the chambers, of their presence there on their return and in the emergent capacities of the materials. Critically with Cladh Aindreis we can trace these interactions both in its initial stages of building/use but also through the way its shape was altered with the construction of a tail and the digging of a ditch. We can also see how the assemblage becomes added to in the Bronze Age with blocking of the monument and the construction of the kerbed cairn. It is impossible, in actuality, to distinguish between the construction, use and alteration of the monument. These three processes are intertwined with one another, and at any moment one can examine different aspects of them. What this also helps to emphasise is that the stability of buildings, such as it is, is always both a product of scale (at both smaller spatial and larger temporal scales buildings are always changing) and a product of the efforts – the work – of all sorts of entities, including but not limited to people (cf. Fowler and Harris 2015). This does not mean that such stability is an illusion – just because something is fabricated does not mean it is false (Latour 1999, p. 115) – but it does mean it is an outcome of ongoing assemblage rather than something inherent, fixed or essential (Olsen et al. 2012, p. 188). Stones help prop up the chamber while micro-organisms eat away at the bones contained within; the tumble of stones down a slope from the kerbed cairn is as much a part of the history of the monument as its erection in the first place. There is no single designer, there is no final form.

Yet for all the power of such descriptions, they remain that, descriptions. Knowing that Cladh Aindreis emerges as a stabilised entity at certain moments and at particular scales through the work of people and things together, whilst at another level it is constantly changing, is important, but in itself insufficient. This helps us enormously with one set of questions, but leaves others, equally critical, unanswered. Why did people go back to Cladh Aindreis time and time again? What was it about this assemblage that pulled people back to it? Similarly why was house 4 reoccupied, and why was it eventually demolished? Can assemblages help us think through these questions about architecture? I suggest they can, but to do so we need to turn to a consideration of affect.

### *Affective assemblages*

Affect is important to this account because it allows us to consider the nature and force of the relations between materials, people, places and so on, and how they endure through time (Deleuze 1988, Spinoza 1996). Affects are the means by which bodies (in the broadest sense) press into one another, they refer to the crucial capacity to affect and to be affected, they are the ways in which boundaries are drawn and crossed, emotions felt and expressed, the sense in which a room can have an atmosphere that you feel rather than read or know (Thrift 2008, especially chapter 8)<sup>ii</sup>. Affects are the means by which assemblages are territorialised, thus the relationships between bricks and mortar are ones of affect, but so is the one that makes a house a home. Affect is ‘an entire, vital, and modulating field of myriad becomings across human and nonhuman’ (Seigworth and Gregg 2010, p. 6; see also Roberts 2012, p. 2517). Using affect allows us to place the mental and the material on an equal ontological footing. Emotions, whose importance is increasingly being recognised in archaeology (Harris 2009, 2010, Harris and Sørensen 2010, Tarlow 2000, 2012), are, in this sense, one set of affects as experienced by human beings (and potentially other animals). Through this recognition we can incorporate emotion into our accounts without having to either posit transcendental feelings, or by identifying an ontological class of experience available to human beings alone. Instead we can explore the potential affects that are generated in particular sets of relationships, and how emotions can emerge through assemblages that include, but are in no way limited to, people.

The assemblage emergent through architecture is one example of what Tim Flohr Sørensen and I have elsewhere referred to as an affective field (Harris and Sørensen 2010, cf. Hamilakis 2013). Affective field, as a term, captures the way in which affects emerge as material bodies of all sorts affect each other. The ability of architecture to affect people, to cause them to behave in certain ways, to feel particular kinds of emotion is not an inherent property; instead it is an emergent capacity (cf. Delanda 2006, p. 10). That is it is fundamentally relational, it works in the conjunction of people, place and materials. By incorporating affect into our understandings of the architecture we can examine not only the physical connections humans were involved in (the way in which people propped up stones, built walls, selected materials and so on) but also the less material ways in which they are

altered and transformed by their engagements. We can also, I suggest, think about history and persistence in new ways.

It is easiest perhaps to begin with affect in the small, intimate becomings of the assemblage of house 4 at Swordle Corrach. On the one hand here we can trace affects in the way in which stone and bedrock pressed into one another, in the way these provided shelter for human beings who in turn managed the mortar that kept the stones in place. Within the house affective fields were generated between people, hearths, flames, heat, warmth, food and pots, as substances and feelings flowed between people and the materials they were enmeshed with, and between differing material things as well; the fires heated the stones as much as they heated people. Recently Hamilakis (2013) has called on archaeology to attend to these affective assemblages, to the sensory world in which the past emerged. The close, confined spaces of house 4 can only be understood in many ways in the light of these kinds of consideration, it is here that the intimate affects of the world played out for a few decades in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Yet this rather cosy image is disrupted, of course, when we return to think about the Clearances. As we have seen, with rent in arrears people were forced from their homes in 1853. Yet house 4 was reoccupied. Here affect helps us think about the developing history, about power, resistance and the socio-political struggles of this period (cf. Hamilakis 2013). Whilst the houses were still standing the assemblage continued to reach out to people, to offer to reterritorialise them as part of Swordle Corrach, to bring new items and materials into the house. This affective connection between this place in the landscape and the people around it, perhaps more than a desire for warmth a desire for the affective qualities of *home*, meant the assemblage persisted despite the efforts of the landlords to destroy it. One more transformation affected this assemblage when the house, along with the others, was demolished. This took place not long after their abandonment, and was perhaps motivated by the fact of house 4's reoccupation. Whilst the houses were still standing the potential that they might be lived in again, that the assemblages might be reterritorialised, continued to exist. Although the people were absent, that absence was an active, affective presence in the landscape through the houses, through their capacities to generate shelter (cf. Fowles 2010 on the affective nature of absence). This affective element of the assemblage, of the possibilities

for communities to return, in the end meant that the landowners required not just the houses to be abandoned but their actual material fabric to be pulled apart, for the assemblage to go through another phase transition, only a few decades after it had emerged for the first time. The landlord understood, if only implicitly, that communities have material elements too (Harris 2013, 2014a). The remnants of the structures survived underground, on the fading maps of the 19th century and in the dispersed historical records of the estate until reterritorialised by our excavations and research (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p. 193).

If affect can help us think about the myriad modulations that called people back to Swordle Corrach in the short-term, can it also help us think about the long-term history of a site like Cladh Aindreis? In the first period of its construction/use the capacity of the stones to endure at a scale greater than the human life span called people back to the site, it affected them and demanded they attend to the assemblage of the monument, to add to it and engage with it, to feed it, to keep it alive. The stones, the bones, the people, the memories, the physical and the expressive elements of this assemblage created a space that reached out and pulled people in, at least for a little while. Here affect operates as memory materialised through engagement with the world, and far more than a simple mental function (Hamilakis 2013). Yet when it comes to the longer history of Cladh Aindreis discussions of memory, and even myth, are inadequate if we want to understand the persistence of an affective geography at this site (cf. Harris 2010). We have already seen the complex history of the architecture as it was built and altered in the Neolithic, and how people returned to it in the Bronze Age. Ricky's Cairn, the Bronze Age kerbed cairn, was constructed *2000 years* after the Neolithic monument was built. Here Cladh Aindreis itself was bound into an assemblage in a new way. Its history, its antiquity, and the affective power this generated was drawn upon in the construction of the new monument. No doubt the earlier structure had the potential to provide this sort of resource for some time, but this is the first moment it was materially drawn upon in this way, the first time a possibility that had previously only been virtual was actualised. Crucial to this reuse was the affective properties of the architecture, and the way they could be drawn out and employed in new affective fields as new forms of architecture emerged alongside them. Other places lacked this potential. Cladh Aindreis' existence, its affective power, was a crucial constituent in the construction of Ricky's Cairn, its material ability to endure in the world, to remain territorialised, played a crucial role in this. We cannot seek to understand this reuse if we look at people alone in ideas of memory, or myth, or persistent place. It is the

materials themselves, their affective powers, their history of becoming in the landscape that plays a critical role here.

And these affective powers persisted for millennia. 1000 years or more after Ricky's Cairn was built, people returned once again, in what we now call the Iron Age, to dig another ditch around the front of the monument, perhaps linked to a structure of some kind, and light a hearth where they burned hazelnut shells. Past this moment, for another 2500 years, the way in which Cladh Aindreis endured in the landscape ensured that people returned to it regularly, continued to territorialise themselves even if only briefly in its assemblage. They connected it with other places by taking stones from it to form dykes, and potentially to fill in a nearby Viking boat burial (Harris, et al. 2012), slowly deterritorialising elements from the cairn. It is certainly more than possible that the occupants of Swordle Corrach wandered over these stones and took some for building. These engagements over thousands of years with Cladh Aindreis – but not with Ricky's Cairn – in the end drew archaeologists to first survey and later excavate the site (Harris et al. 2010).

The continuity of engagement with Cladh Aindreis was part of its becoming that emerged through the way in which prominent piles of stones remain visible in the landscape, able to affect others and draw them to it, allowing the site to be reterritorialised into other assemblages: into maps, into lists of scheduled ancient monuments, into Christian understandings of the landscape (Cladh Aindreis means (St) Andrew's Stone in Gaelic) (cf. Fowler and Harris 2015). Our ability to understand the site as archaeologists however, also emerges from the chemical capacities of the soil, and the way these *affect* the preservation of the bones inside the chamber (very unusually for this part of the world). Thus the assemblage of bone and monument continued to be territorialised over thousands of years thanks to the specific chemical properties of the soil; affects are more than just feelings. The visible presence of the Neolithic monument also led, in the end, to the (re)discovery and excavation of Ricky's Cairn, indeed to the discovery and excavation of all the sites we have dug in Swordle Bay. Thus once archaeologists had become territorialised within the assemblage of Cladh Aindreis new capacities emerged, a new affective field generated new forms of relationships across the bay. In no sense can we attribute this to the agency of any original architect, or even collectively to the people who helped construct this monument 5700 years

ago, or indeed to the archaeologists in the present. The assemblage of the architecture itself, including people from time to time, is what has had these affects.

### **Landscape as architecture**

The final scale of architectural assemblage I want to examine is the landscape of Swordle Bay itself. Now one should acknowledge immediately that I am stretching the concept of architecture considerably here to include landscape. I will return to this below, but for the moment the key point is the fact that both the architectural examples we have discussed above, and the landscape of which they form part, can certainly be understood as assemblages. That is they are a gathering together of a range of different elements including humans, materials, plants, animals and so on, without any sense of an architect or designer being implied. The landscape of Swordle Bay is clearly an assemblage that endures over a much greater timespan than either of the other two examples we have looked at, formed over millions of years by processes including the eruptions of the nearby (now dormant) volcano, the weight of ice-sheets and other events on a geological time-scale (Gillen 2013). Even if we only look at the relatively recent history of the landscape since the last ice age we can trace multiple distinct transformations. As the ice was deterritorialised from the landscape the sea level rose and rushed into to take its place. Slicing in and out this created a flat area of land on the foreshore, what we refer today as a marine-cut terrace. As the land slowly rose (recovering from the weight of the ice, or as the long lasting affects of ice coverage faded) the sea cut new terraces creating a layered effect on the landscape.

<INSERT FIGURE 5 NEAR HERE>

It was into this world that humans became part of the assemblage for the first time, drawn in by the capacities of the landscape to sustain life, the presence of plants, water, stones and shelter. The interweaving emergence of people and landscape from this point on cannot be separated. People, animals, trees, soils, plants and stones all interacted with each other, all emerged and became together (cf. Kohn 2007). This was not simply a dialectical relationship of people shaping landscape and landscape shaping people. Neither one somehow exists as an essential fact prior to encounter, rather both emerged always intertwined. The creating of (physical) fields through the erection of boundaries, the efforts of humans to enclose animals

in these fields and the efforts of animals to graze therein, all played their role in continuing the process through which this landscape emerges – a process that had already been going on for millions of years and continues to the present day. People gathered stones in certain places to build cairns or houses, or to clear spaces for plants, and this allowed new elements to become part of the landscape. At the same time as plants grew and died so people grew and died with them. People no more wander above the world, above the landscape, than plants or animals do. They are not somehow separate from the ecology of this landscape assemblage. In the aftermath of the Highland Clearances there were fewer people but many more sheep in Swordle Bay, a trend that continues to this day. Machines for the first time became part of the assemblage here, connecting this landscape to wider concerns from industry to oil extraction. Some machines have become strongly territorialised in this assemblage, it is hard to see the landscape staying the same if people did not have access to the tractors that bundle the grass for hay, or the cars that allow them to come and go. Others less so. According to local oral histories (a powerful expressive element of a landscape assemblage cf. Casella et al. 2014), previous owners of one of the houses in the bay attempted to turn the land into an organic farm, and to use a marine cut terrace as a landing strip for a light aircraft. Although they have gone, along with their plane, elements of them remain materially territorialised in the landscape in the form of the library of German books in the house they used to own. Recently further materials have become part of the landscape from a new glass fronted house overlooking the bay to an interpretation board close to Swordle Corrach describing the finds of a group of archaeologists. The latter is still present at the time of writing despite the repeated efforts of cows to deterritorialise it.

The affective relations between sea, land, stone, people, animals, plants, politics, economics, universities, charities and others have emerged together, pressed into each other, become through each other. Swordle Bay has had a profound affect on me, and I have affected it. My relationship with Swordle is different to the gamekeepers who live there, to the sheep who graze there, to the Neolithic people who died there, and to the sea which shaped the terraces upon which I walk. All of these relations are ones of affect however, they do not exist on some separate ontological plane where some are considered part of nature and some part of culture, they are all the outcome of the way in which the world goes along together, becoming and emerging as assemblages, and breaking apart and fading away.

Is this landscape really architectural though? One's first reaction is undoubtedly to feel uncomfortable about this. Surely this is stretching the term too far? What use does it have if we can include even landscapes within its boundaries? In the end it does not really concern me whether or not we use the term architecture to refer to landscapes – what does matter is that we treat both as forms of assemblage. Indeed we should be treating all scales of the world, from atoms up to galaxies in these terms. If we insist on retaining a gap between architecture and landscape we risk making this more than linguistic, of making it ontological, and of allowing the bifurcation of nature (Whitehead 1964) in by the back door where architecture is human, produced through anthropocentric ideas of design, and landscape is nonhuman, although conceived of and experienced by people, and transformed by human actions upon it. When we take an approach rooted in assemblages, though, we can finally shift out of this perspective. By exploring the landscape of Swordle Bay in this manner what we see are the local and specific ways that these assemblages come together, the histories of ice, sea, sheep and building that are different here to elsewhere. The detail of the landscape-as-architecture assemblage lies in the particularities and uncertainties of the other scales I have described, in the interaction of the houses and cairns, stones and people, animals and plants that I have discussed. The landscape scale emerges from the specificities and unstableness of assemblages that go all the way down.

We can treat landscape as a scale of architecture, or not, but both are undoubtedly assemblages. Just as some authors have sought to erase the boundaries between material culture and architecture (Love 2013, McFadyen 2006, 2014), so we can do the same between architecture and landscape, in *both* directions (cf. McFadyen 2008). What this reveals then is that the boundaries of the term architecture itself are not hard and fast. There is nothing essential, no essence, to architecture. Instead the term is itself an assemblage and it is brought into being by our use of it and the way we employ it, by the processes of building that it is caught up in. At its margins, at the edges where one field boundary becomes another, where the definable limits become blurred, the term itself deterritorialises.

## Conclusion

Once we open ourselves up to approaching architecture as assemblages operating at multiple temporal and spatial scales, as an ongoing becoming that is always both being produced and decaying away through entropy, erosion and damage, new elements enter our account. Architecture and buildings are no longer statements about human design or our power over materials; buildings are no longer containers for action, or structures that condition experience (ap Stifin 2014). Instead they emerge as active partners in the ongoing creation of the world, tying in humans and non-humans, shaping and being shaped, physical and meaningful, coming together and moving apart. Taking a view of architecture as assemblage further means that the active agents in any given circumstance, the catalysts for historical actions, are not predetermined (ap Stifin 2014). No longer are we in an anthropocentric space alone. Instead, in this domain of more-than-human geographies (Whatmore 2006), we enter the world of post-humanism (Braidotti 2013). Not in the sense of some leaving behind of what was natural about human beings, but rather in the recognition that the bifurcation of humanity and the world (Whitehead 1964), and the idea of a humanist vision of a singular ontologically rarefied category of being, can no longer be sustained in the present *or the past* (see Robb and Harris 2013). We have always been cyborgs, as Olsen et al. (2012, p. 161) rightly argue. Assemblages mean recognising we cannot separate a priori people, architecture, animals, materials and so on; these things are always already entangled.

Archaeologists have been bemoaning the pernicious effects of dualisms for a very long time (e.g. Thomas 1996). One that continues to persist is the notion that behind the construction of any building lies a singular design. This constitutes a gulf between the mental and the material, between mind and body and in the end between culture and nature. As authors like Deleuze and Guattari (2004) and through their reading of them, Ingold (2013) and DeLanda (2002), have shown, this idea fails to capture the capabilities of matter itself to contribute to design – it fails to engage with its morphogenetic capabilities. In this paper by drawing on these authors and others, I have advocated that by turning to the notion of assemblage we can offer a different approach. Instead of separating the construction of a building from its use and indeed its abandonment, we can instead think about how it is constantly brought into being through the efforts of multiple constituent parts (each of which is of course also an assemblage at a different scale of analysis). These assemblages are maintained through the acts that renew them and bring them together, that battle against the inevitable changes that happen through time.

All of these relations are ones of affect, and this term captures the way that assemblages, and the different parts of assemblages, impress upon one another. The affective relations – the affective field – that these assemblages produce endures not only in their interactions with human beings, but through the very materials of which they are constituted and this allows them to persist for thousands of years after they appear to have vanished from use. By taking an approach rooted in affect and assemblage to examine three scales of architecture in Swordle Bay I have been able to think about the way in which materials, people, animals, soils, plants and more interact in their becoming. I have tried to capture some of the ways in which particular types of architecture helped to generate affective fields, some of which had powerful consequences in the short term, others of which endured for much longer, up to and including into the present. As an archaeologist I am interested in the architecture of past worlds in which people lived, and it is people who remain the primary focus of my interest. Yet to understand these worlds in all their glorious complexity we cannot turn this primary focus into an ontological privilege (Lucas 2012: 263), into a world divided between people and the rest. It is in reaching out to a more-than-human history, in exploring the becomings of materials, architecture and landscapes as well as people, that a less dualistic and more open past becomes possible.

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#### NOTES

<sup>i</sup> The Ardnamurchan Transitions Project is co-directed by the author, Hannah Cobb (University of Manchester), H el ena Gray (CFA-Archaeology) and Phil Richardson (Archaeology Scotland). The project has excavated sites from a range of periods including those discussed in this article alongside a Bronze Age enclosure, an Iron Age promontory site, a Viking boat burial, a second post-medieval settlement and more recent clearance cairns. The work is expected to continue for the next few years and full publication will follow the conclusion of the research. In the meanwhile details can be found on our website ([www.ardnamurchantransitionsproject.com](http://www.ardnamurchantransitionsproject.com)) including interim reports for all excavations.

<sup>ii</sup> An interesting question posed by one of the reviewers of the paper was the extent to which affect differs from agency. Affect goes beyond agency in a number of ways; first it sheds any sense in which it might be solely the province of human beings. Second it captures the force or power of relationships in a way in which even Latourian discussions of agency fail to do. Third it allows us to reincorporate emotion into our accounts as embodied relational engagements with the world in a manner that agency does not attend to.

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