

SERF 2008: Report on Landscape Survey

Michael Given, 6 November 2008



Contents

Introduction	1
Project aims	1
Project methods.....	2
The 2008 season.....	2
Historical Maps	2
Previous work.....	3
Oral information	3
Dykes, enclosures and cultivation.....	4
Structures and farmsteads	6
Natural places and visibility: the Grey Mare	7
Recommendations.....	7
Appendix: sites and features in Boghall survey area	8
Bibliography.....	9

Introduction

The second season of the SERF Walkover Survey took place from 12–15 August 2008. The main activity consisted of walkover survey on Boghall Hill, on the land of Montalt Farm, 3 km south-east of Dunning. SERF is very grateful to George Ritchie for his permission to carry out fieldwork on his farm, and for his helpful and interesting information. Thanks also to the teams of students for their hard work and enthusiasm, to Sarah Thomas for her support in directing the fieldwork, and to Chris Dalglish and Tessa Poller for their very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this report.

This report first summarises the aims of the SERF landscape project as a whole, and then discusses the results of the brief walkover season in August 2008.



Figure 1. Walkover survey on the northern slopes of the Knock of Boghall, looking north-east over Forteviot and Strathearn.

Project aims

1. Investigate the relationship between people, their landscape and their environment in Dunning, Forteviot and Forgandenny parishes, at all periods
2. Investigate communication routes along and across Strathearn and the Ochils, particularly in the Neolithic and Medieval periods
3. Investigate the relationship between the Iron Age forts in the Ochils and in Strathearn
4. Document and study the development of agriculture from pre-improvement to improvement
5. Examine changing settlement patterns, and the relationship between settlements, land use and the environment

6. Investigate the later 'biographies' and changing meanings of prehistoric and medieval monuments
7. Provide data for the National Monuments Record of Scotland
8. Provide training and experience for University of Glasgow students and others

Project methods

1. Investigation, visiting and and documentation of the main known sites and features across the study area
2. Systematic and intensive walkover survey of between 5 and 10 survey areas, which provide a representative topographical, historical and environmental sample of the study area
3. Database and GIS analysis of distribution patterns, intervisibility, environmental change, etc.
4. Full integration with all other components of SERF: documentary history, excavations, fieldwalking, geophysics, standing building survey, etc.

The 2008 season

The aims of the 2008 season were as follows:

1. Give the students a one-day taster of systematic walkover survey and site recording
2. Give the students the opportunity to discuss and experience an upland landscape and various approaches to landscape archaeology
3. Look for evidence for Medieval and Late Medieval settlement, particularly small-scale dispersed settlement and structures built of turf
4. Investigate post-medieval enclosure, tathing, and the extension of cultivation into the uplands
5. Carry out preliminary recording of any other features of interest

We worked for three days, each day with a fresh group of students. A team of between 4 and 6 students walked systematically across defined areas c. 20 m apart, flagging any features of interest, and returning to record them on a form and discuss their interpretation. In this way we sampled an area c. 800 x 500 m, and recorded 37 sites. The data on the forms was entered into the project database, and the locations of the features were digitised on the GIS. Ends and corners of dykes were located by hand-held GPS points.

Historical Maps



Figure 2. General Roy's map, 1747-1755.

At the top left is Dinnin (Dunning), Boghall is just below centre, with Woodside (now Woodhead) and Clevisge to the east. National Library of Scotland.

<http://geo.nls.uk/roy/>



Figure 3. James Stobie, *The counties of Perth and Clackmannan*, 1783. Dunning is just off the map to the top left. Note Boghall in the centre. The farm above the label 'Hill of Cleavage' seems to correspond to Montalt, and 'Badds' to Rashie Lees (SF076). Longdrum is now presumably under forestry, just east of our survey area; this is not to be confused with Lowe and Dalland 1998, no. 10 (NO 01 SE36), named as 'Longdrum' but actually called Rashie Lees (our SF076). National Library of Scotland. <http://www.nls.uk/maps/joins/664.html>

Previous work

In 1998 Headland Archaeology carried out a pre-afforestation survey in the same area as our survey, plus a few hundred metres north and west of it (Fig. 4, Lowe and Dalland 1998). They discovered a complex of dykes and enclosures, three definite structures and another two possible ones, a small sub-oval enclosure, a quarry, and a farmstead. We initially surveyed without reference to their findings, which allowed us to work independently. In general, our findings matched up well. We missed two slight traces of structures (Lowe and Dalland 1998, nos. 6, 9), but on the other hand found various other turf banks and possible platforms. They recorded rig and furrow on the north side of Boghall Hill, which we identified as field drains owing to their regularity and very flat profile in relation to their width. This needs to be followed up, as given their proximity to the enclosure system they could be undeveloped rig with a very flat profile. Lowe and Dalland also recorded large clearance cairns and a further structure just north of our survey area (nos. 2, 3).

In addition, the NMRS notes an early tripartite collared urn (NO01SE 6 06 13) and a cup marked stone (NO01SE 5), both from Montalt Farm.

Oral information

The Montalt farmer, George Ritchie, told us that the land we were working on used to be divided between Boghall and Montalt farms. The original Montalt farmhouse was 'Rashie Lees', by the two large trees on the road to the current farm; it is now ruined (our SF076). His father took over Montalt farm in the 1920s or 30s. The stone sarcophagus of one of William Wallace's generals was found under two large stones in a field near the house, and is now in 'Edinburgh Museum' (but is not in the NMRS). There was a large drainage project carried out in the early 19th century to employ veterans for the Napoleonic wars. The drains are still recognisable by the regular spacing and the type of pipe used.

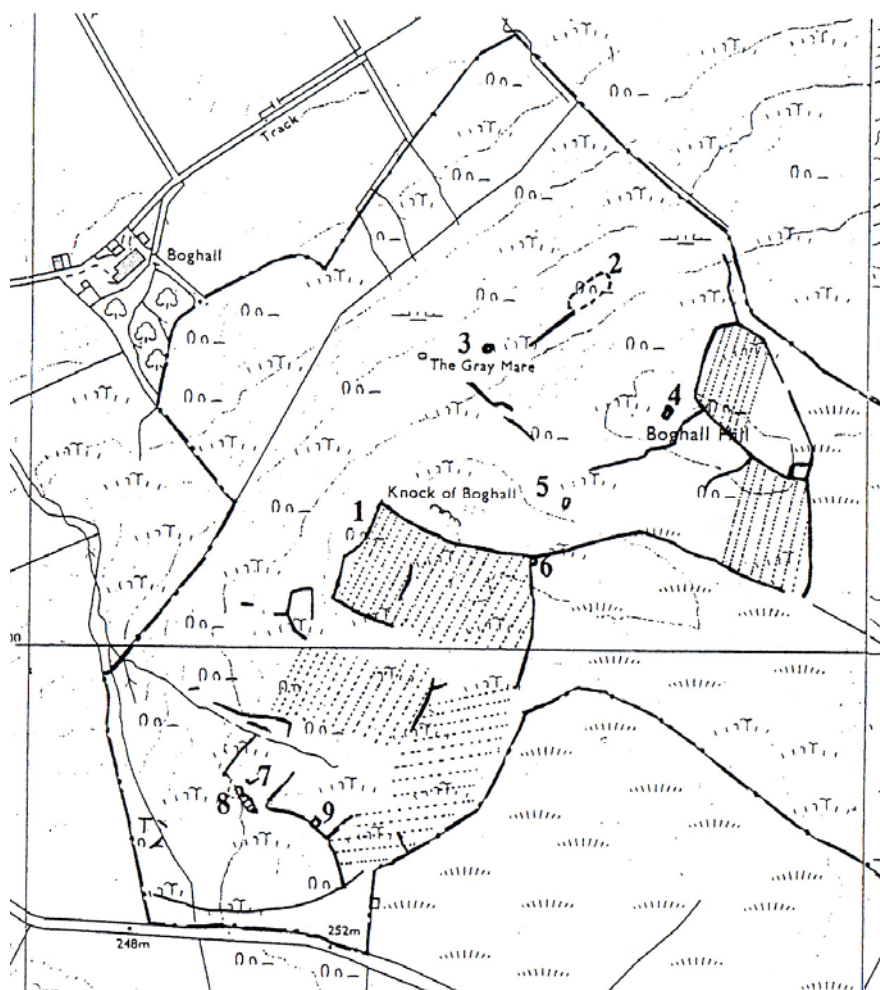


Figure 4. Headland Archaeology's map of pre-afforestation survey on Pitcairns Estate (detail).

Based on OS NO 01 SW & NO 01 SE. Grid square = 1 km. North at top. Solid (as opposed to dash-dotted) black lines are dykes. (Lowe & Dalland 1998)

- 1. Enclosures & rig
- 2. Clearance cairns
- 3. Building
- 4. Enclosure/pen
- 5. Possible structure
- 6. Structure
- 7. Probable structure
- 8. Quarry
- 9. Structure

Key:
 - - - - - Limit of area
 ▨ Area of rig and furrow

Dykes, enclosures and cultivation

By far the most striking aspect of the archaeology of our area was the complex of substantial, almost monumental, turf dykes (Figures 5, 6). The dyke running east from the south-east corner of Knock of Boghall, for example, was 1.5 m wide and 0.5 m high (SF044). Although there are some apparently smaller and more intricate enclosures, these are in general larger and more regular than the ones we investigated on Casken Hill in 2007 (SF005). Our interpretation of the Casken Hill

Figure 5. Intersection of dykes immediately E of Knock of Boghall.

SF044 comes in from above left; SF043 heads off to the right beyond the fence; bottom right is SF070. This is the junction at Site 6 on Figure 4.

The two trees in the distance mark the farmstead of Rashie Lees (SF076)



enclosures was that they were for tathing, the temporary penning of animals to bring marginal land into condition for cultivation (Given 2008: 7-8, with references). The Boghall examples seem to be a very similar complex, though rather more extensive.

The clearest area of rig and furrow (SF061) was immediately south of Knock of Boghall, clearly defined by the dyke along the north and west of it (SF070). We measured the most distinct area, on the east side of this patch. The lines of the furrows were impossible to identify precisely, but to the nearest metre, the widths from centre to centre were (from west to east): 15, 13, 16, 14, 12, 12, 10, 20, 10). The 20 m width is presumably two 10-m rigs whose furrow is not discernible. The average height of the rigs was very approximately 25 cm, and they were distinctly curved in profile. They were not clear enough to see if they had the reverse-S shape in plan, but their width and profile puts them firmly in Halliday's 'broad, high-backed, curvilinear rig' category (Halliday 2003: 70-72). These are very similar to the rig associated with the enclosures on Casken Hill (Given 2008: 7, with references). We found no traces of narrower rig, though Lowe and Dalland report that the rig was typically 3-4 m, with some 1.5-2.0 m (1998: 4, no. 1).

Roy's map of 1747-1755 (Figure 2) shows a patch of cultivation immediately south-east of Boghall Farm (probably the area visible in the bottom right of Figure 8), and nothing in the hills to the south. As the farm is right at the base of the hills, this patch is clearly on the flat and perhaps the lower slopes, rather than up in our area. In Menstrie Glen similar complexes of turf enclosures were used for tathing in the 18th century (Cowley *et al.* 2001: 23), and the Old Statistical Account for Dunning refers to past use of enclosures in the upland area (Statistical 1791-1799: 435). We have apparently found another good example of this practice (see also Given 2008: 7-8).

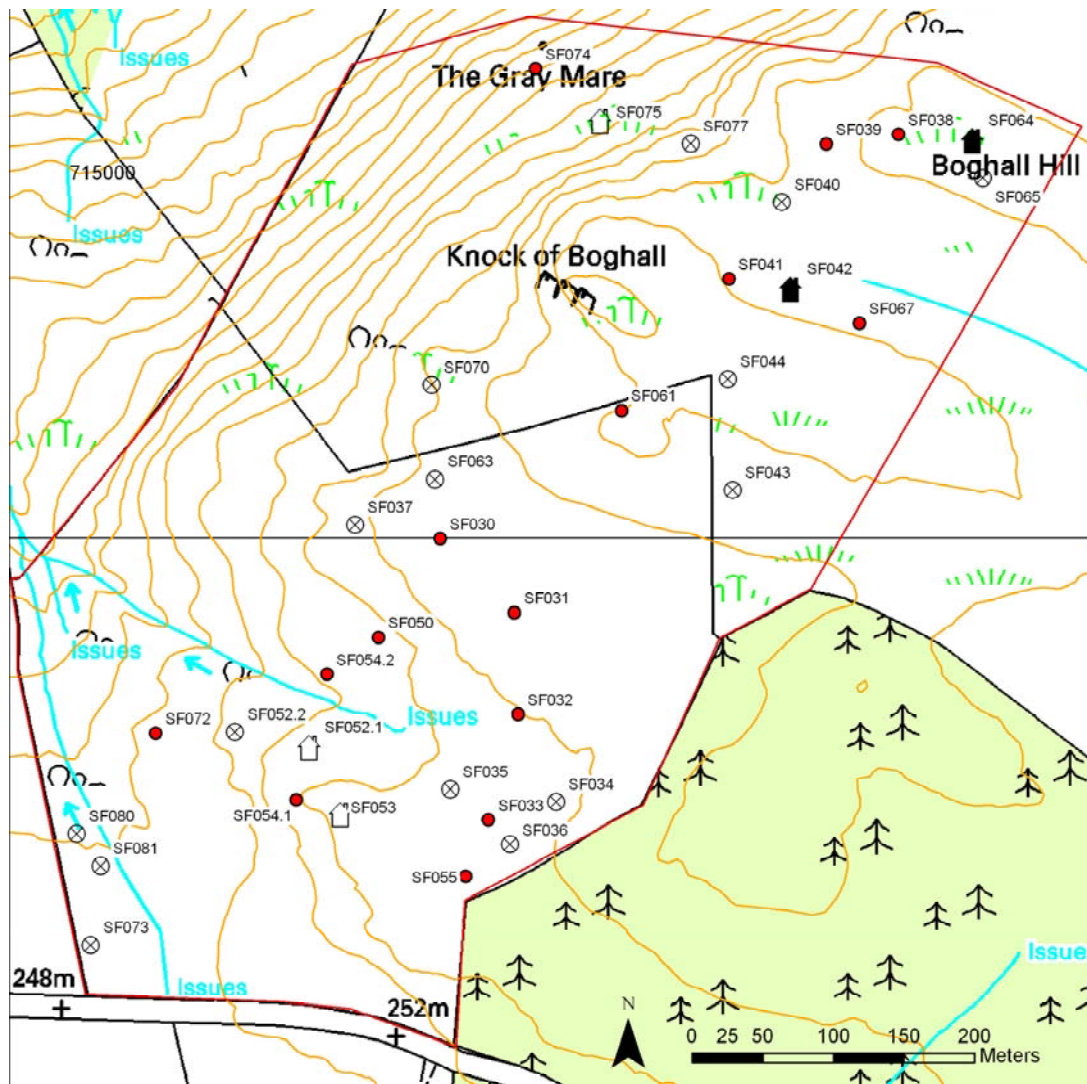


Figure 6. Map of sites discovered in the 2008 season. Dykes are located by their (approximate) centre points; cf. Figure 4. Rashie Lees (SF076) is 800 m south-east of Boghall Hill.

Structures and farmsteads

As on Casken Hill in the Knowes Farm survey area, the turf dyke complexes were associated with small, apparently turf-built structures, normally isolated or in pairs. The dimensions are clearly very approximate, and some of them are possibly natural (SF053 has been removed from this list, as it most likely a natural outcrop). Even so, there is some very interesting regularity in these dimensions, as Table 1 shows. This pattern was only noticed during post-fieldwork analysis, so it could not have influenced our recording.

Location	Site ID	Type	Dimensions
Casken Hill	SF003.1	Structure	6.5 x 2.3 m
Casken Hill	SF003.2	Structure	9 x 3.5 m
Casken Hill	SF014	Platform	9.1 x 6.7 m
Casken Hill	SF028	Platform	6 x 6 m
Knock of Boghall	SF042, Headland No. 5	Possible structure	9 x 6.5 m
S of Knock of Boghall	SF052.1	Possible platform	11 x 3
S of Knock of Boghall	SF054, Headland No. 7	Probable structure	8 x 4 m
N of Knock of Boghall	SF075	Possible platform	3.3 x 2.9
N of Knock of Boghall	Headland No. 3	Building	9 x 5 m (2 rooms)
Knock of Boghall	Headland No. 6	Structure	8 x 2 m internally
S of Knock of Boghall	Headland No. 9	Structure	3 x 3 m

Table 1. Turf structures and platforms in the Knowes Farm and Boghall survey areas. ‘Headland’ = Lowe & Dalland 1998.

These structures are clearly larger and more elaborate than shielings, and do not show the expected clustering of shielings. It is tempting to see this apparent dispersed settlement pattern as a precursor of the familiar nucleated post-Medieval settlements. On the other hand, both at Casken Hill and Boghall they are often associated with broad rig and furrow, which is probably as late as 17th or 18th century. Headland’s No. 9 was built against a dyke (Lowe & Dalland 1998: 7). This is one of the most interesting issues raised by the walkover survey so far, and we intend to focus on it in future seasons. In particular, it would be very interesting to conduct some trial excavations of a sample of these structures, to investigate any possible material culture or evidence for dating.

Thanks to the suggestion of George Ritchie, we investigated the ruined stone-built farmstead that he told us was the predecessor of his Montalt Farm, named Rashie Lees (Figure 7; SF076). Because of pressures of time we were only able to give it a brief examination, so here we use Headland’s description (Lowe & Dalland 1998, no. 10). A substantial yard c. 15 m square is flanked by two buildings: one measures 14.8 x 3.8 internally, subdivided into two rooms; and the other is 6.5 x 3.8 m internally, with an ‘annex’ or lean-to on the southern end. It appears on the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map (1859), and seems to appear on Stobie’s map of 1783 as ‘Badds’. A particularly interesting feature consists of the two tall sycamore trees that stand on its northern side, making it clearly visible across its farmland as far as Knock of Boghall (Figure 5).



Figure 7. Rashie Lees farmstead (SF076).

Western room, looking south with Easter Gatherleys farm visible in the distance. The ‘annex’ is just beyond the seated figures.

Natural places and visibility: the Grey Mare

One of the sites that engendered the most discussion by the students was in fact a natural boulder, labelled on the Ordnance Survey map as 'The Grey Mare' as far back as 1866, but known to George Ritchie as 'The Mare and Foal', because of a smaller stone immediately to its south-east (Figure 8). The Mare itself is 3.6 x 1.7 m, and the Foal 2.2 x 1.0 m.

Its most striking feature was the view from it over Strathearn, and so conversely the view of it from Strathearn. Unless obscured by vegetation, it would have been a highly visible landmark to viewers at Boghall Farm, or to travellers along a putative Medieval route following the base of the range. Its name on the Ordnance Survey maps implies that it has been familiar to local people for two or more centuries. Conspicuous stones commonly had a range of associations, such as acting as a boundary marker in a land charter, marking a place for paying rent or holding a fair, or showing to those in the know where illicit whisky was distilled. It would be interesting to follow up its story in the oral and documentary history of the area.



Figure 8. Recording the 'Grey Mare' or 'Mare and Foal'. Looking NW. Boghall Farm is visible at the base of the hill.

Recommendations

(Most of these are carried over from 2007)

1. Continue these focused walkover survey projects in a range of locations across the study area, ideally doing one each year
2. Investigate and carry out summary recording of as many known sites as possible across the whole study area
3. Use the differential GPS to map the complexes of turf dykes and rig and furrow, both here and at Casken Hill (SF005)
4. Map the rig and furrow across the whole SERF uplands study area by using old aerial photographs, as done at Menstrie Glen (Cowley et al. 2001: 52)
5. Do test trenches at a range of isolated turf structures (see list on p. 6)
6. Integrate Nick Evans' historical data with the survey data (plus Canmore and other SERF data) in a linked database and GIS (this is under way)
7. Carry out detailed and systematic oral history interviews with a range of local people, especially farmers
8. Research the archaeological, theoretical and historical background of the main research questions
9. Invite the Menstrie Glen team to come and talk to us and the students (David Cowley et al.)
10. Meet with the Dunning Parish Historical Society to exchange information

Appendix: sites and features in Boghall survey area

SF001–SF029 were recorded in 2007 at Knowes Farm; see Given 2008. ‘Headland’ refers to Lowe & Dalland 1998.

Site ID	Site type	Easting	Northing	Description	Headland
SF030		04391	12999	Circular turf feature c. 16 m across, perhaps with ditch around it. Possibly animal enclosure.	
SF031		04444	12947	L-shaped turf bank c. 2 m high, with legs 12.6 and 10.5 m long. Width 3.5 m. Livestock shelter?	
SF032		04446	12875	Circular green patch from cattle feeder	
SF033		04425	12800	Large stone embedded in ground	
SF034	Dyke	04473	12813	Turf dyke running E/W, c. 54 m long, c. 30 cm high	
SF035	Dyke	04398	12822	Short turf dyke	
SF036	Dyke	04440	12783	Turf dyke running NW/SE, 27 m long, 2 m wide, 0.8 m high. 3m-wide gap.	
SF037	Dyke	04331	13009	Turf dyke c. 50 cm high. 2 stretches: 24 m; 33 m.	
SF038		04715	13285	Ovoid tussocky patch, 2.0 x 1.3 m	
SF039		04664	12178	Exposed stones	
SF040	Dyke	04633	13237	Turf dyke, 17 m long, c. 10 cm high.	
SF041		04595	13183	Rock with marks	
SF042	Structure	04640	13175	Possible structure with thick turf walls, 9 x 6.5 m.	No. 5
SF044	Dyke	04595	13112	Curved dyke, 1.5 m high, 0.5 m high. Headland: 8 x 2 m turf structure in angle.	No. 6
SF050		04347	12929	Stone with marks	
SF052.1	Platform	04298	12852	Possible platform, 11 x 3 m.	
SF052.2	Dyke	04246	12863	Turf dyke, c. 1 m wide, 0.5 m high, 41 m long	
SF053	Platform	04320	12804	Possible platform, c. 12 x 6 m, on outcrop	
SF054.0	Structure	04310	12904	Turf bank, 1.0 m wide, 10 m long (or 30 m?), with occasional stones. Headland: probable structure, 8 x 4 m.	No. 7
SF054.1	Structure	04289	12815	Second section of turf bank, 7-10 m long, 1 m wide, max height 25 cm.	No. 7
SF055		04409	12760	Tractor tracks	
SF061	Cultivation	04519	13090	Rig & furrow: 9 rigs, 10-16 m wide. Height c. 20-25 cm.	No. 1
SF063	Dyke	04388	13041	Turf dyke, 18 m long, 0.3-0.4 m high.	
SF064	Enclosure	04768	13281	Oval enclosure with turf banks, 10 x 5 m	No. 4
SF065	Dyke	04775	13254	Turf dyke, 120 m long.	
SF067		04688	13151	Modern machine cut drainage ditch	
SF070	Dyke	04385	13108	2 turf dykes forming corner, with rig & furrow inside (SF061). Possible entrance.	No. 1
SF072		04190	12862	Drainage ditch, 25 m long	
SF073	Dyke	04144	12712	Turf dyke, c. 106 m long, 3.3 m wide, 0.5 m high	
SF074		04458	13332	Grey Mare. Large natural rock, 1.7 x 3.6 m. Very visible from valley bottom.	
SF075	Platform	04504	13295	Possible platform, 2.9 x 3.3. Stony	
SF076	Farmstead	05339	12672	Rashie Lees. Stone-built farmstead with two main structures and large courtyard.	No. 10
SF077	Dyke	04569	13279	Turf dyke, 40+ m long, 1.2 m wide	
SF080	Platform	04314	12791	L-shaped corner of enclosure or platform. Widths: 4.5 m, 5.5 m. Extent c. 20 m	
SF081	Dyke	04151	12768	Turf dyke, 11 m long, up to 2.0 m wide.	

Bibliography

Cowley, David, J.G. Harrison, and Strat Halliday

- 2001 *'Well shelterd & watered': Menstrie Glen, a farming landscape near Stirling*. Edinburgh: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

Given, Michael

- 2008 SERF 2007: report on landscape survey. Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Department of Archaeology.

Halliday, Strat

- 2003 Rig-and-furrow in Scotland. In S. Govan (ed.), *Medieval or later rural settlement in Scotland: 10 years on*, 69-81. Edinburgh: Historic Scotland.

Lowe, Christopher, and Magnar Dalland

- 1998 *Pre-afforestation survey: Pitcairns Estate, Dunning, Perthshire*. Edinburgh: Headland Archaeology.

Statistical

- 1791-1799 Parish of Dunning (County of Perth, Synod of Perth and Stirling, Presbytery of Auchterarder). *The statistical account of Scotland, 1791-1799* 19: 434-442.