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William J Watson

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The History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland, by W. J. Watson; published by the Scottish Place-Name Society. The single best reference available on Celtic place-names in Scotland. The link above leads to his introduction; the rest of the work is organized by geographic region: Dumfries and Galloway. Lothian. Scotland North of the Forth. Ayrshire and Strathclyde. The same organization also provides an index to place-name elements in Watson's work, presented as a set of PDF files.

Place-names of Scotland. Printed by Ne'dl & Company. FOB DAVID DOUGLAS. The historical substratum has, of course, been taken chiefly from Dr W. F. Skene's classic history of Celtic Scotland, 3 vols., edition 1886. Would that the learned historian had condescended to explain some more of those difficult early names, about which he has given us a few most useful hints. The writer has to express his personal indebtedness to Dr Skene for more than one communication with which he has been favoured. For things Celtic and things Norse, too, this book owes not a little both to the published writings and to private letters of the Edinburgh Professor of Celtic, Professor Celtic Britain - culture, history and warfare. Who were the Celts and where did they come from? Hill forts The time of the "Celtic conversion" of Britain saw a huge growth in the number of hill forts throughout the region. These were often small ditch and bank combinations encircling defensible hilltops. Some are small enough that they were of no practical use for more than an individual family, though over time many larger forts were built. Golden shields and breastplates shared pride of place with ornamented helmets and trumpets. The Celts were great users of light chariots in warfare. From this chariot, drawn by two horses, they would throw spears at an enemy before dismounting to have a go with heavy slashing swords. Evidence of place names and personal names demonstrates that Insular Celtic languages related to a more southern Brythonic language that was formally spoken in the Pictish area. Throughout history, historians and linguists have looked into the Pictish language. In 1582, George Buchanan aligned the Pictish language with Gaulish, a P-Celtic language, and George Chalmers in the early 19th century considered Pictish and Brittonic one and the same. P-Celtic orthography in the Pictish king lists and place names were predominant in historically Pictish areas. Within Scotland there is a strong concentration of the R1b-S530 group in these areas. The Picts had the largest kingdom during Dark Age Scotland and fought off both of the Romans, Angles, and Vikings to preserve their independence.

The Celtic Place-Names of Scotland. ISBN. 0716521121 (ISBN13: 9780716521129). I have dipped into this book on several occasions. William Watson was a native speaker of Scottish Gaelic who went on to a distinguished academic career. The work is a treasury of toponymics, but it has so much detail that it is difficult to see the wood for the trees, but it deserves five stars because of its incredible number of examples.