1 SUMMARY
Athelstan, having created a united kingdom of England by completing the re-conquest from the Danes, attempted to extend his authority over the northernmost territories of Britain. In response an alliance of British, Scots and Norse under Olaf Guthfrithson invaded England by ship via the Humber. In late 937 Athelstan responded, meeting the invaders in battle at Brunanburh. The joint Mercian and West Saxon army broke, pursued and destroyed the allied forces.

2 ASSESSMENT

2.1 LOCATION
The site of the battle has not been established and a number of alternatives have been suggested. One of these lies in southern Scotland, close to the hillfort at Burnswark, south east of Lockerbie. However, according to Smurthwaite ‘it seems inconceivable that the battle was fought north of the border, particularly if we accept that Olaf landed on the Humber.’ (1)

2.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BATTLE
This was a major battle of great military significance and also political importance, for it reinforced the sense of English national unity.

2.9 POTENTIAL
Given that the location in Scotland is highly speculative and that significant battle archaeology (other than burials) has yet to be demonstrated on battlefields in Britain before the late medieval, the potential of the site would seem to be very low. This assessment should however be reviewed if new information comes to light on the location of the battle, and especially once investigation has been undertaken on one or more well located early medieval battles with good preservation conditions, where the primary issues of battle archaeology for this period can be resolved.

3 REFERENCES
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