

Seismological Bulletin No. 7

Annual catalogues of British  
earthquakes recorded on  
LOWNET (1967-1978)

P. W. Burton and G. Neilson

## Seismological Bulletins

- 1 Eskdalemuir Observatory: seismological readings for 1968
- 2 The seismic data-processing systems of the Institute of Geological Sciences in Edinburgh. D. J. Houlston
- 3 Seismic noise measurements in Yugoslavia and Greece: a survey prior to station installation. S. Crampin
- 4 Seismicity and seismic hazard in Britain. R. C. Lilwall
- 5 Atlas of seismic activity 1909–1968. S. Crampin and others
- 6 The IGS file of seismic activity and its use for hazard assessment. P. W. Burton
- 7 Annual catalogues of British earthquakes recorded on LOWNET (1967–1978). P. W. Burton and G. Neilson

### *Bibliographical reference*

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# Annual catalogues of British earthquakes recorded on LOWNET (1967-1978)

PAUL W. BURTON and GRAHAM NEILSON

## SUMMARY

This report details lists and epicentral maps of those British earthquakes which have been recorded on the LOWNET radio-linked seismometer network in Scotland. The main period covered is the ten years of 1969–1978.

The extent of information obtained on an earthquake using LOWNET recordings varies between earthquakes and so the various methods of epicentre determination and magnitude estimations used are all briefly described.

## INTRODUCTION

There is a growing interest and concern in seismicity, earthquakes and seismic risk. This statement is true for low seismicity areas such as Britain as well as for areas of major activity.

At the turn of this century the seismometers of Milne, and then of Milne-Shaw were deployed in Britain and throughout the world. An initial interest in seismicity in Britain had been triggered by the seismic swarm activity in Comrie and Menstrie, Scotland, but the subsequent global deployment of instruments, the first world wide network, was clearly aimed at observing the major earthquakes within the earth. Despite this interest in global seismicity there has always been a small number of seismologists who have recorded British and Irish seismicity, and amongst these we find O'Reilly (1884), de Ballore (1896), Davison (1924), Dollar (1949) and Tillotson (1974). Some of this earlier work is described by Burton (1978a) and analysed by Lilwall (1976) and Burton (1978a).

The monitoring of British seismicity has at best been haphazard; however, in 1969 a network of seismometers, LOWNET, was installed across the Lowland Valley of Scotland. There are now plans to expand monitoring to include networks in the Midlands of England, extensions into Southern England and extensions northwards into Scotland. The purpose of this report is to catalogue those British earthquakes which have been recorded by LOWNET, mainly during the period 1969–1978.

## LOWNET

LOWNET is centred on a three component short period set of seismometers at the Royal

Observatory, Edinburgh, and is radio-linked to short period vertical component seismometers (Willmore Mk 2) at seven outstations. The network started formally in January 1969 and is described in some detail by Crampin and others (1970). The aperture of the network is about 100 km. Major changes since 1969 are the transition from recording on one-inch to half-inch magnetic tape in August 1977, and the addition of a seventh outstation, ELO, in 1970 at Logiealmond. The present LOWNET sites are shown in Figure 1 and these positions are detailed in Table 1.

Recording at the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh, started in about 1900 with a Milne seismograph system. (Some of these earlier seismograms are now retained in Edinburgh on microfilm.) The next transition in LOWNET is likely to be the removal of the recording equipment (not the seismometers) from the Royal Observatory vault to Murchison House of the IGS, radio-linking the two positions over the short distance of about one half mile.

## DETERMINATION OF THE PARAMETERS OF BRITISH EARTHQUAKES RECORDED ON LOWNET

The major parameters of an earthquake to be reported in these lists, besides date and time, are the position (latitude and longitude) and magnitude (local magnitude  $M_L$ ). The estimation of position or the epicentre of an earthquake will be described first.

### DETERMINATION OF POSITION

There are a variety of ways of determining the position of an earthquake or explosion which has been recorded by LOWNET. Choosing a particular method is usually governed by the distance (and magnitude) of a particular event and by the number of seismometers by which it is recorded. Some of the various location methods available are used only infrequently. The methods used employ:

- i time difference charts
- ii epicentre relocation computer programs
- iii bearing and range — near events
- iv bearing and range, and SPEEDY — distant events

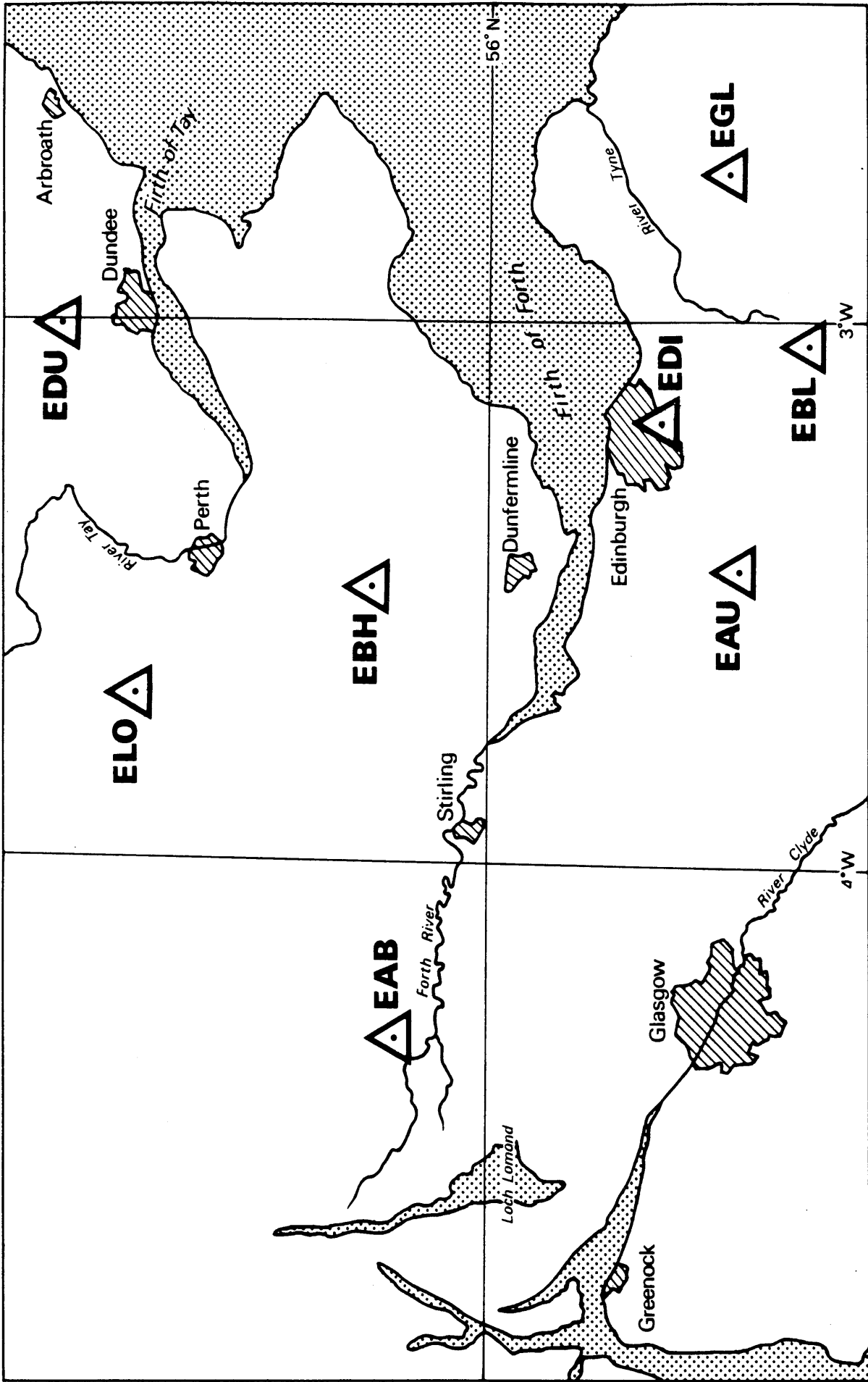


Figure 1 The positions of the eight LOWNET stations in Scotland.

Table 1 Geographic positions of the LOWNET seismometer sites

Code	Site	Co-ordinates	Height above sea level (m)
EDI	Royal Observatory, Edinburgh	55° 55' 24" N 3° 11' 10" W	125
EDU	Craigowl Hill, Dundee	56° 32' 51" N 3° 00' 51" W	275
EGL*	Gala Law	55° 51' 42" N 2° 44' 18" W	245
EAB	Aberfoyle	56° 11' 17" N 4° 20' 24" W	250
EAU	Auchinoon Hill	55° 50' 40" N 3° 27' 17" W	350
EBH*	Blackhill	56° 14' 53" N 3° 30' 29" W	375
EBL	Broad Law	55° 46' 24" N 3° 02' 37" W	365
ELO†	Logiealmond	56° 28' 14" N 3° 42' 43" W	495

\* These co-ordinates redetermined since Crampin and others (1970)

† New site installed since Crampin and others (1970)

#### *Time difference charts*

Most of the events listed in this report were located using time difference charts. The principal of time difference charts is the hyperbola method which is described by Bath (1973). A series of charts showing the locus in space of the time difference between first P arrivals of an event for given pairs of stations in any network can be constructed. At IGS the method has been developed by Banson (1970) and an example of a specimen chart for two paired stations is given by Browitt (1978). Such a set of charts has been drawn for LOWNET, and the analyst, by using a minimum of three such charts (three paired stations), may determine the location of an event and also obtain some indication of accuracy. This method gives a reasonable degree of accuracy and for events with a near surface focus the error is of order a few kilometres. Locating explosions with known source parameters has verified the accuracy of this method. Although this method is usually less accurate than iterative procedures using computer programs it has the advantages that it is fast, and it is often easier to obtain unambiguous epicentres from the poorer quality data. Other measurements can also be included on the charts to assist the location of epicentres; for example S-P time intervals may be used to plot ranges from individual stations, and bearings from EDI may be calculated using the three component set sited there. It should be noted that as the depth of events increases so does the location error inherent in this method, and so the measurement of S-P intervals then becomes more important. Time difference charts are used only to locate events occurring within the network.

#### *Epicentre relocation computer programs*

Well recorded events — those which have clear onsets on the seismograms from five or more stations — are subsequently relocated using a digital computer. For events occurring inside the network the program FAMG (Crampin, 1970) is used and RLOC (Lilwall, personal communication) is used for locating events at some distance from the network. As might be expected the accuracy of hypocentre determination decreases with increasing distance from LOWNET. All locations of events given in this report are those determined instrumentally; hence location errors for events distant from LOWNET may be considerably larger than for the near events. As with the time difference chart method, these computer programs have been calibrated using explosion data and, within the network, a positional accuracy of a few hundred metres is usually obtained. When either program is used, a simple velocity—depth model is assumed. This is:

	Layer thickness in km	P-velocity in km s <sup>-1</sup>
1	0.90	3.00
2	6.28	5.65
3	21.87	6.44 overlying 7.92

Lilwall (1969) describes much of the theory relevant to modern computer practice in determining epicentres. The program RLOC takes account of poorly fitting data by assigning weights to the phase arrivals, and phases later than P may also be incorporated. FAMG calculates travel times along ray paths in a known velocity—depth

structure and has the facility of allowing for local structural variations by incorporating time-terms into the analysis.

#### *Bearing and range – near events*

The above two procedures are the commonest used with LOWNET data. The events not covered by these two methods divide into the last two groups: i events near to Edinburgh, particularly the smaller coalfield events; ii very distant events, the regional earthquakes of the UK. Events near to Edinburgh are located using the three component set at Edinburgh, EDI, to obtain a bearing and range on the epicentre. The latter comes from the S–P interval. There can be errors of up to about 5 km in such locations, the largest error contributions coming from uncertainties in the estimated bearing and a lack of knowledge of travel times and velocities within the near surface sedimentary layer. For events so near, 3 to 10 km, to the station, the sedimentary layer is a large part of the ray path.

#### *Bearing and range – distant events*

These regional events may themselves be divided into two categories using magnitude as an approximate criterion. Events with  $m_b^* \geq 4$  are located using the computer program SPEEDY (Douglas and others, 1974) and smaller events with  $m_b^* < 4$  are located manually by calculating S–P ranges and bearings. The errors in this latter manual procedure are probably the largest of all the above methods; however, it is sometimes also possible to calculate depth for these distant events by using  $P_n - P_g$  separation (Thirlaway, 1963).

### DETERMINATION OF MAGNITUDE

There are four magnitude scales used on LOWNET:

- i  $M_L$  Richter local magnitude
- ii  $m_b$  body wave magnitude determined from teleseismic P waves
- iii  $m_b^*$  a scale which attempts to measure  $m_b$  at short range
- iv  $M_s$  surface wave magnitude.

All of these magnitude scales as applied to LOWNET are described in some detail by Jacob and Neilson (1977). The first three magnitude estimates are obtained from measurements made on seismograms obtained from short period instruments while  $M_s$  is measured from longer period information obtained from the recently installed broad band seismograph system. Of the four scales, only  $M_L$  and  $m_b^*$  are directly relevant to UK earthquakes recorded on LOWNET. A link between  $M_L$ ,  $m_b^*$  and the internationally used scales  $m_b$  and  $M_s$  is of use.

#### *Richter local magnitude scale, $M_L$*

$M_L$  is the commonest scale used on LOWNET. The original scale was designed by Richter for application in Southern California and is described in his

book (Richter, 1958). The procedure on LOWNET is to calculate ground amplitude from the observed maximum trace amplitude, wave period and Willmore Mk 2 seismometer response (Willmore and Karnik, 1970). This value is then multiplied by the gain factor, at the same period, of a standard Wood-Anderson torsion seismometer, thus simulating the amplitude,  $A$ , which might have been recorded on an in situ Wood-Anderson instrument. The magnitude  $M_L$  is then obtained from

$$M_L = \log_{10} A - \log_{10} A_0$$

where the standardising value  $A_0$  is the amplitude which an earthquake of magnitude zero would yield at that same distance. Clearly such calculations are tortuous but confidence in the results is gained as the body of LOWNET data and our knowledge of the local structure both increase.  $M_L$  can be used from 0 km, though as distance increases any discrepancy between Richter's  $A$  values and those that should be used in the UK will have greater impact.

#### *Local body wave magnitude scale, $m_b^*$*

The body wave magnitude scale,  $m_b$ , is usually defined only for teleseismic arrivals, and usually measured then from the first few cycles of P wave motion. (The USSR uses the largest motion within about the first 25 seconds; international efforts are being directed towards a uniform procedure.) However, for local events at distances greater than 200 km the P phase is separately discernible on the seismogram, and  $m_b^*$  may be defined as

$$m_b^* = \log_{10} V + 2.3 \log_{10} (r) - 2$$

where  $V$  is the peak P wave ground velocity measured in  $\mu/s$ , and  $r$  is the distance in km. This equation was adopted for use on LOWNET at an early date (for example, Jacob and Willmore, 1972). It has subsequently been validated by Jacob and Neilson (1977) for UK or overall average European conditions, and a one-to-one correspondence between values of  $m_b^*$  and  $m_b$  has also been demonstrated.  $m_b^*$  is thus effectively linked to the international teleseismic scale, but because of rapid variations in the amplitude of the first P arrival caused by reflected phases in the crust it should not be used for very short ranges of less than 200 km.  $M_L$  is then appropriate.

#### *$M_L$ and $m_b^*$*

It is possible to relate estimates of  $M_L$  to  $m_b^*$ , and thus to the internationally recognised  $m_b$  scale, by means of the formula

$$M_L = 0.72 m_b^* + 1.0$$

which is obtained by Jacob and Neilson (1977) using 43 earthquakes over the magnitude range  $2.0 \leq m_b^* \leq 4.7$ . A further extrapolation giving an indication of corresponding  $M_s$  values can be obtained using Marshall's (1970) formula

$$M_s = 2.08 m_b - 5.65$$

ANNUAL CATALOGUES OF BRITISH  
EARTHQUAKES RECORDED ON LOWNET  
(1967-1978)

Annual lists of earthquakes are attached for the ten years 1969 to 1978 and a few earthquakes are included for 1967-1968. The tabulated columns require only slight explanation. DATE is given as the day followed by the month and TIME is given as three columns containing hour, minute and second. Latitudes and longitudes are given in degrees to the second decimal place and not in degrees and minutes. Listed magnitudes are specified by type which is usually  $M_L$ ; those few entries against MB indicate estimates of  $m_b^*$ . Place names are a rough indication of geographic location and the depth H, when estimated, is given in kilometres. It should be noted that in the annual lists COALFIELD refers to the Midlothian Coalfield.

(There are a small number of parameter estimates which do not follow the previously described method. For example:

i Event of 05/09/1969 is attributed to Knaresborough on macroseismic evidence; but two ranges were available on LOWNET.

ii Event of 09/07/1974 is attributed to South Wales on macroseismic evidence; but  $m_b^*$  is estimated from LOWNET records.

iii Events of 15 and 25/07/1975, and 13 and 19/05/1976, are attributed to Stoke-on-Trent on macroseismic evidence; but  $m_b^*$  is estimated from LOWNET records.)















## MAPS OF EPICENTRES OF BRITISH EARTH- QUAKES RECORDED ON LOWNET (1967–1978)

### ANNUAL MAPS OF EPICENTRES

An annual map of epicentres for each of the ten years 1969 to 1978 is attached, plus a map of a few epicentres during 1967/68. These constitute Figures 2 to 12. The magnitude ranges are represented by different symbol sizes and depth, where known, is indicated by different symbol types. Where magnitude or depth is not known, and is not listed in the annual catalogues, it is assumed to be zero for the purpose of plotting an epicentre. Nearly all of the magnitudes plotted are  $M_L$ , but for those few earthquakes which are over 200 km from LOWNET and for which  $m_b^*$  is estimated this magnitude is plotted. (These epicentres are readily identified in the lists). Figure 13 plots all of the listed epicentres. Figures 14 to 25 correspond to figures 2 to 13 except the geographic boundary is Scotland, rather than all of the UK.

### SPECIAL MAPS OF EPICENTRES

In addition to the basic annual maps of epicentres a few special maps are included:

Figure 26 epicentres around Edinburgh

Figure 27 epicentres associated with the Midlothian Coalfield




Figure 28 epicentres of earthquakes with magnitude 1.0 or greater in Great Britain

Figure 29 epicentres of earthquakes with magnitude  $M_L = 1.0$  or greater in Scotland.

### SYMBOLS USED ON EPICENTRE MAPS (Figures 2–29)

Different focal depth ranges, in kilometres, are represented by different symbol types, and magnitudes by symbol size as follows:

#### Depths (symbol types)

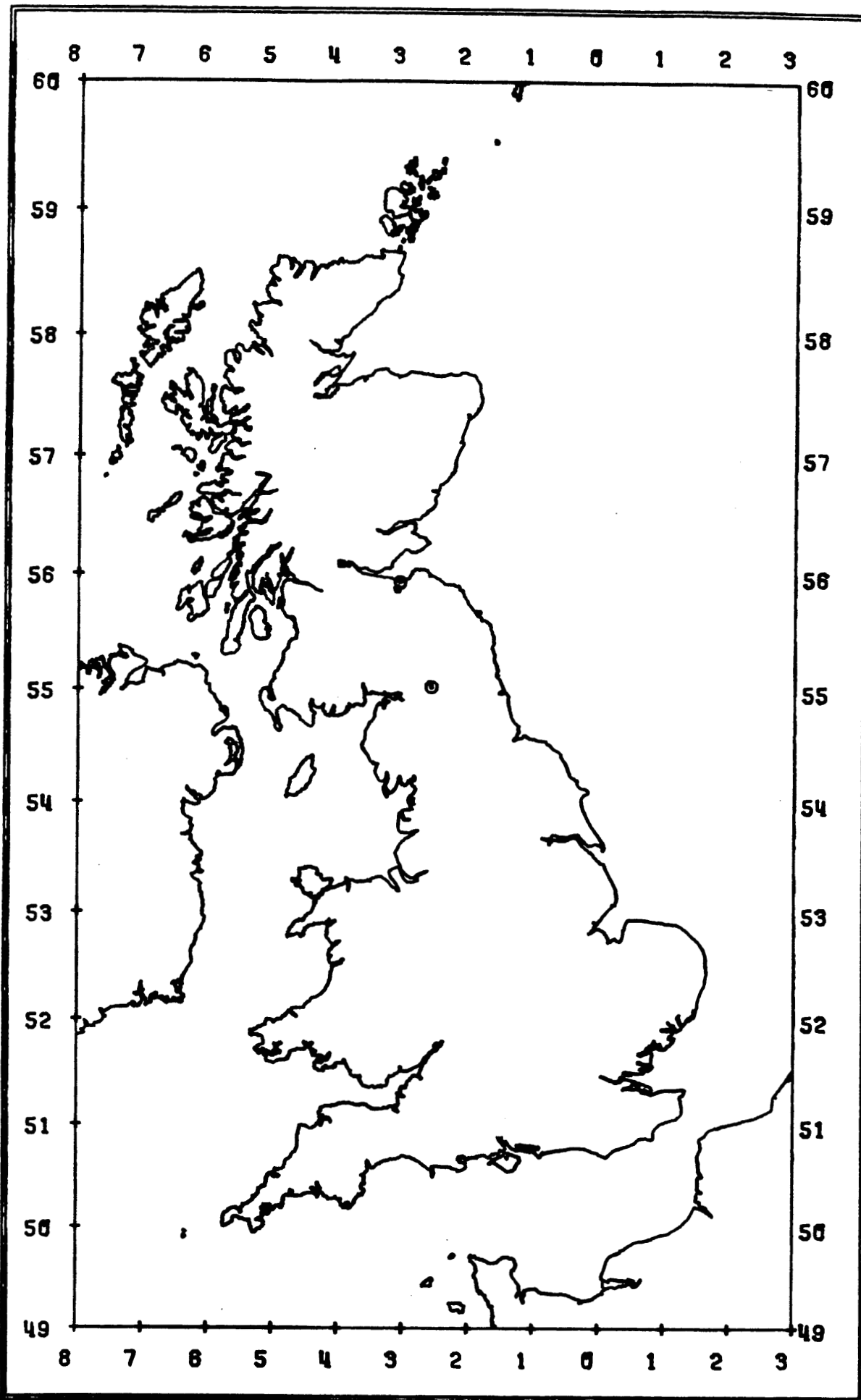
	up to 5.00
	5.01 to 15.00
	15.01 or greater

#### Magnitude (symbol radius)

•	up to 1.00
•	1.01 to 2.00
•	2.01 to 3.00
•	3.01 to 4.00
•	4.01 or greater

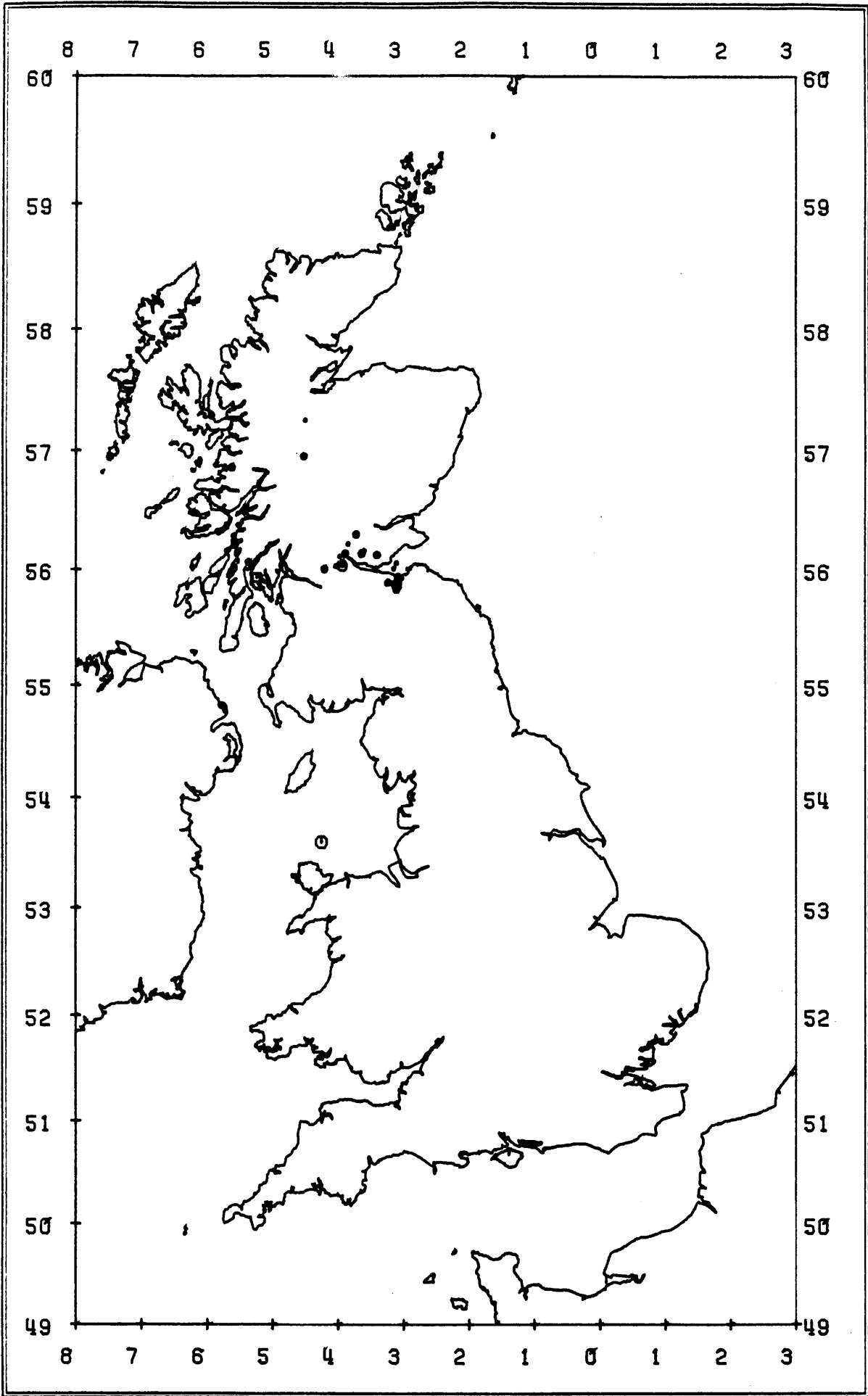
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MERCATOR

Figure 2 Epicentres in Great Britain 1967-1968.

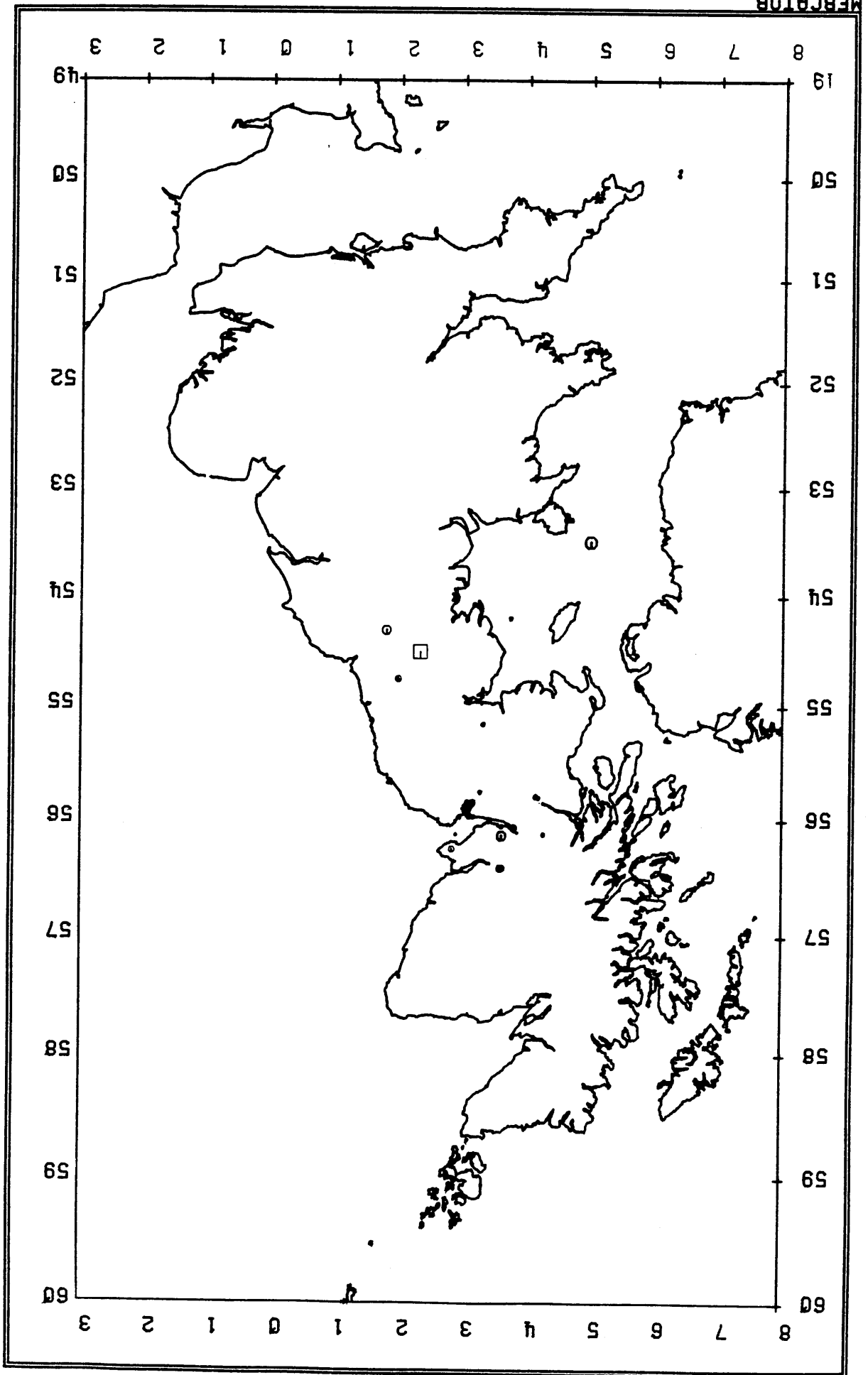


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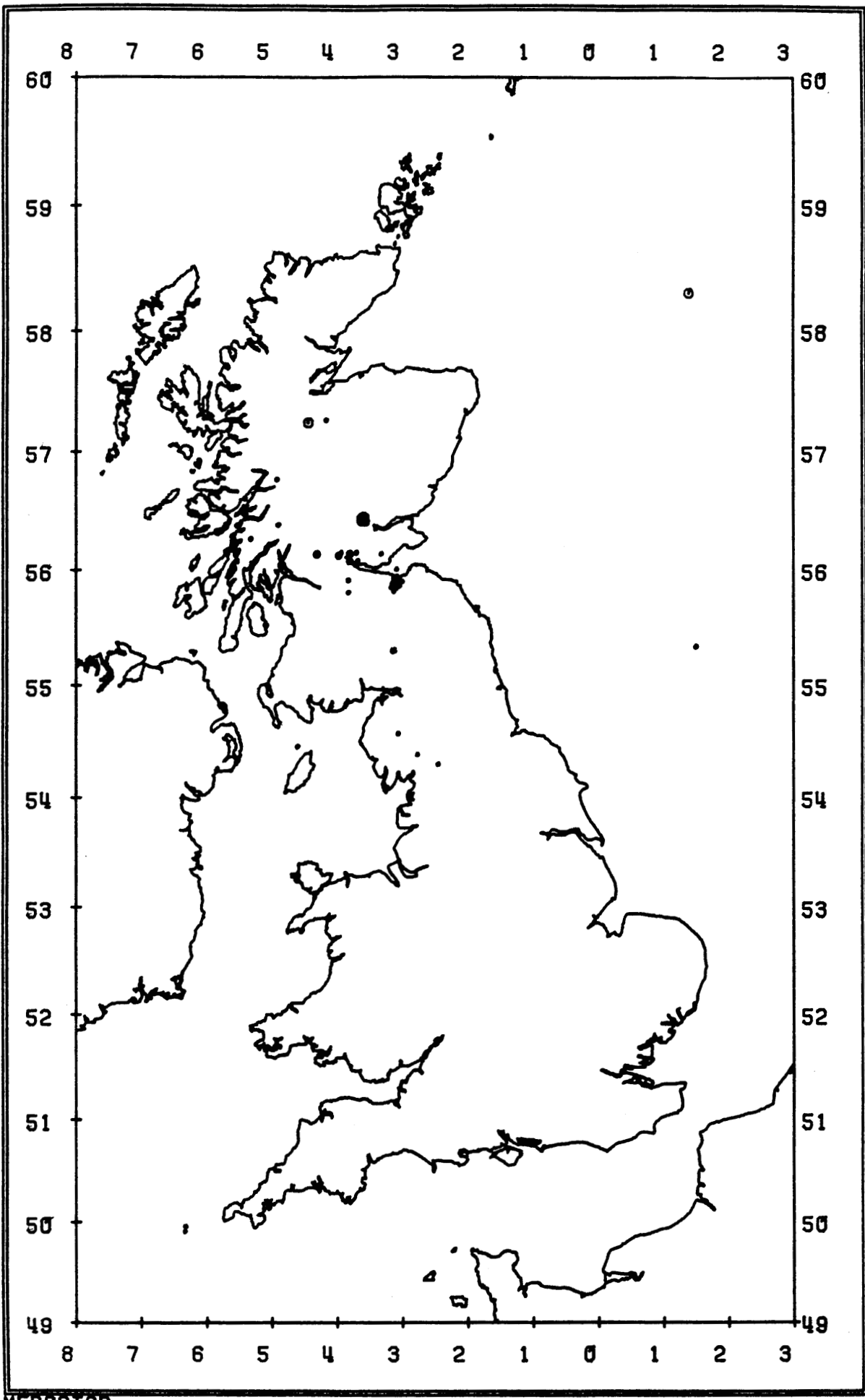
Figure 3 Epicentres in Great Britain 1969.



Figure 4 Epicentres in Great Britain 1970.

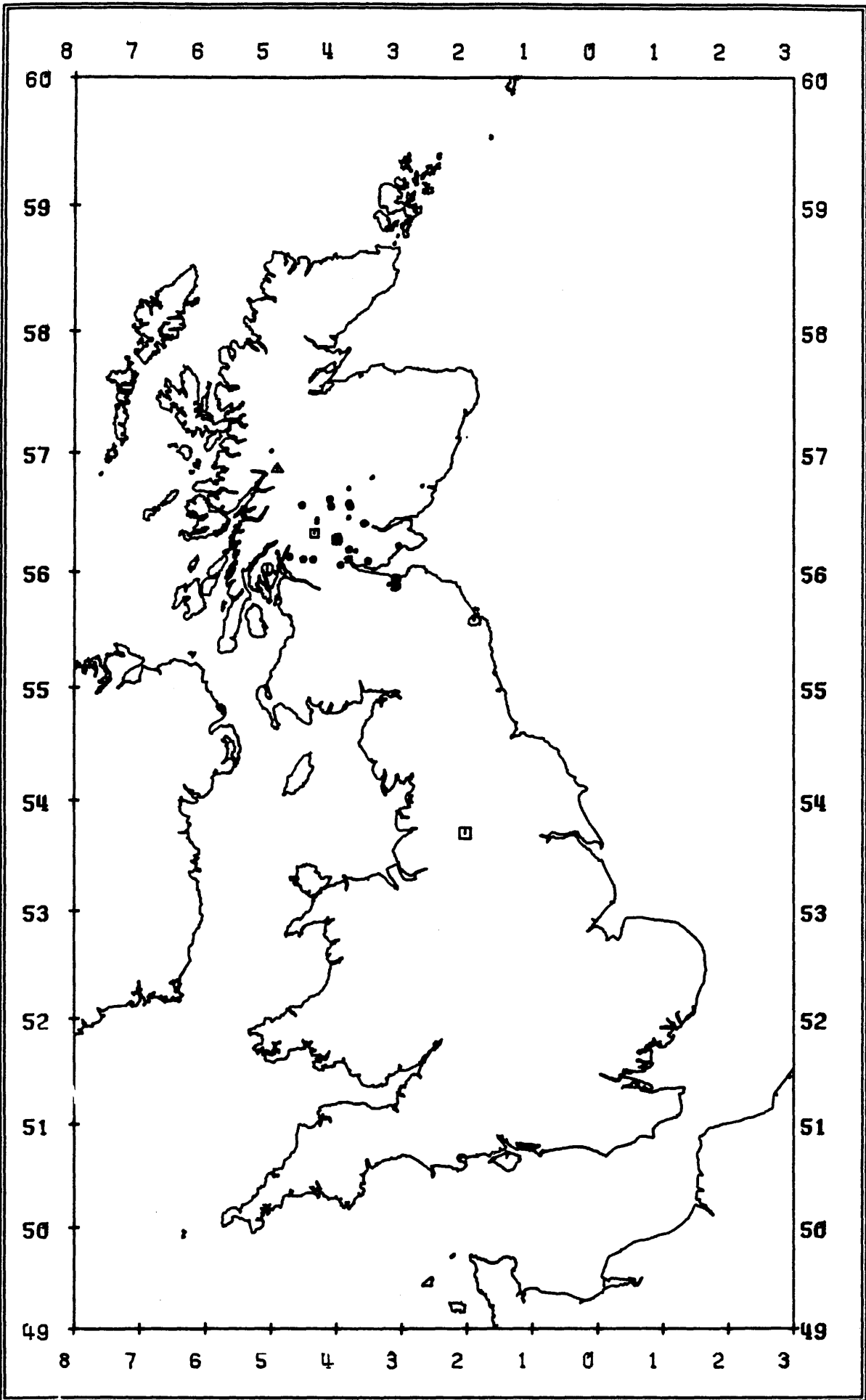


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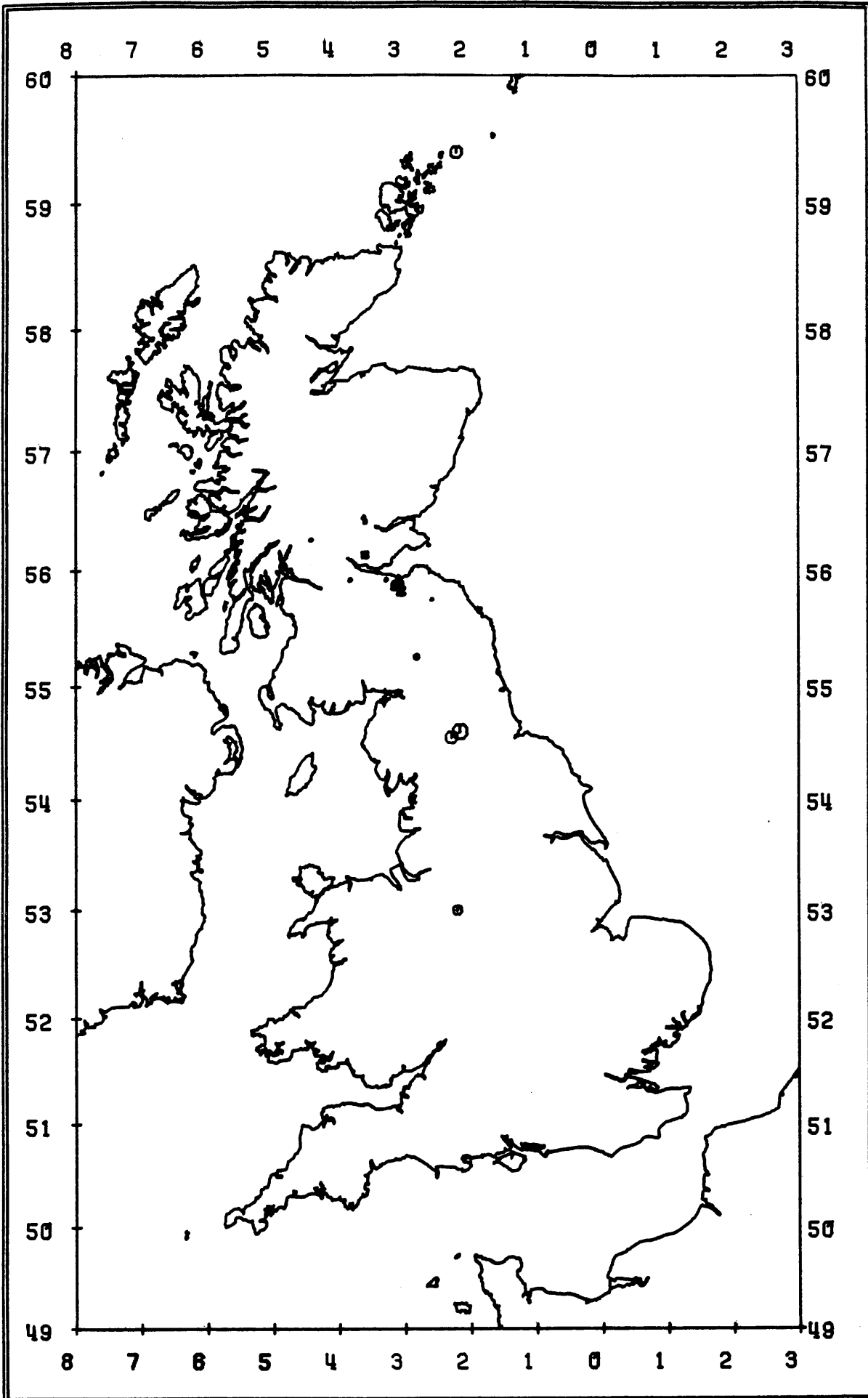
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Figure 5 Epicentres in Great Britain 1971.



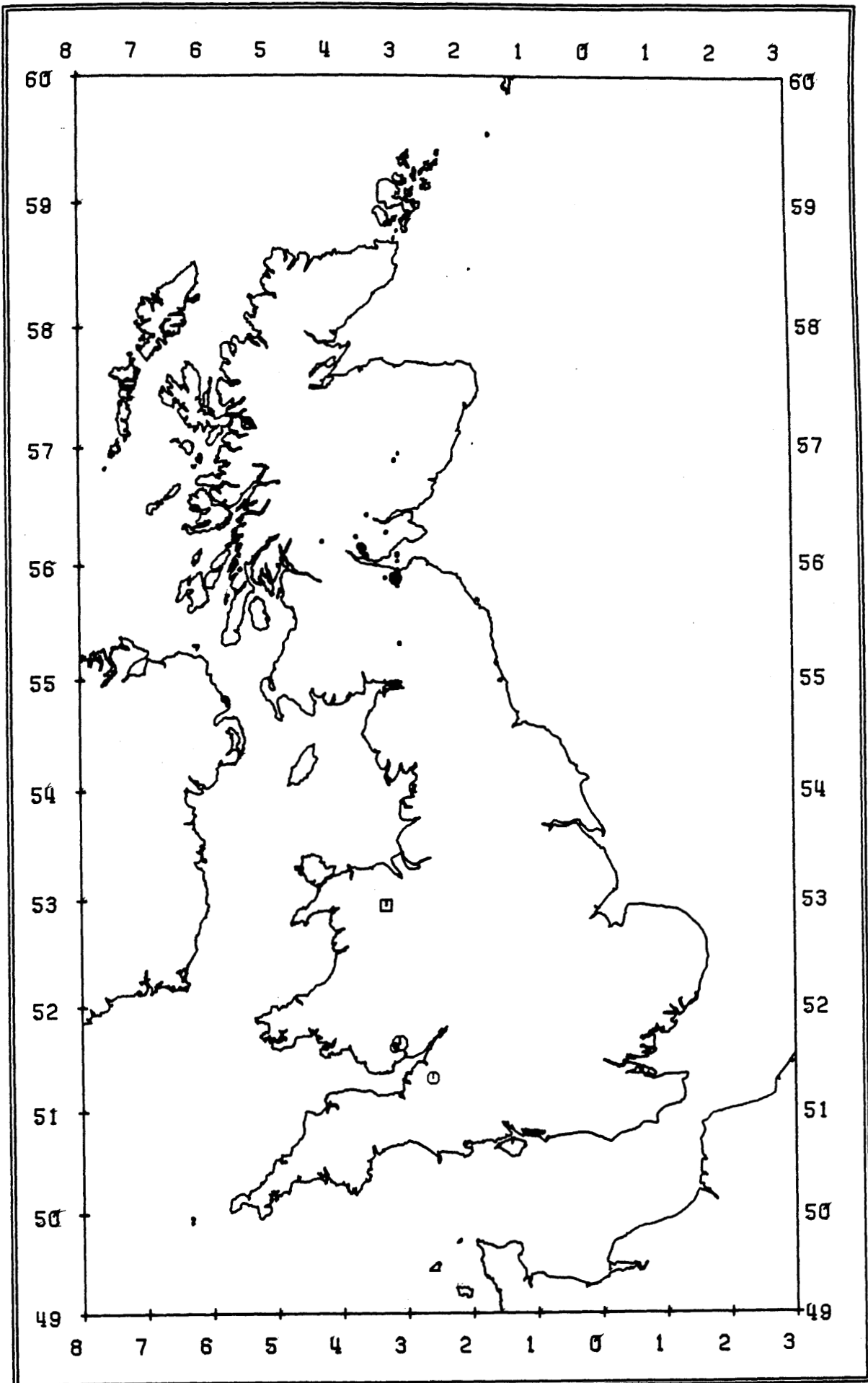
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Figure 6 Epicentres in Great Britain 1972.



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Figure 7 Epicentres in Great Britain 1973.



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Figure 8 Epicentres in Great Britain 1974.

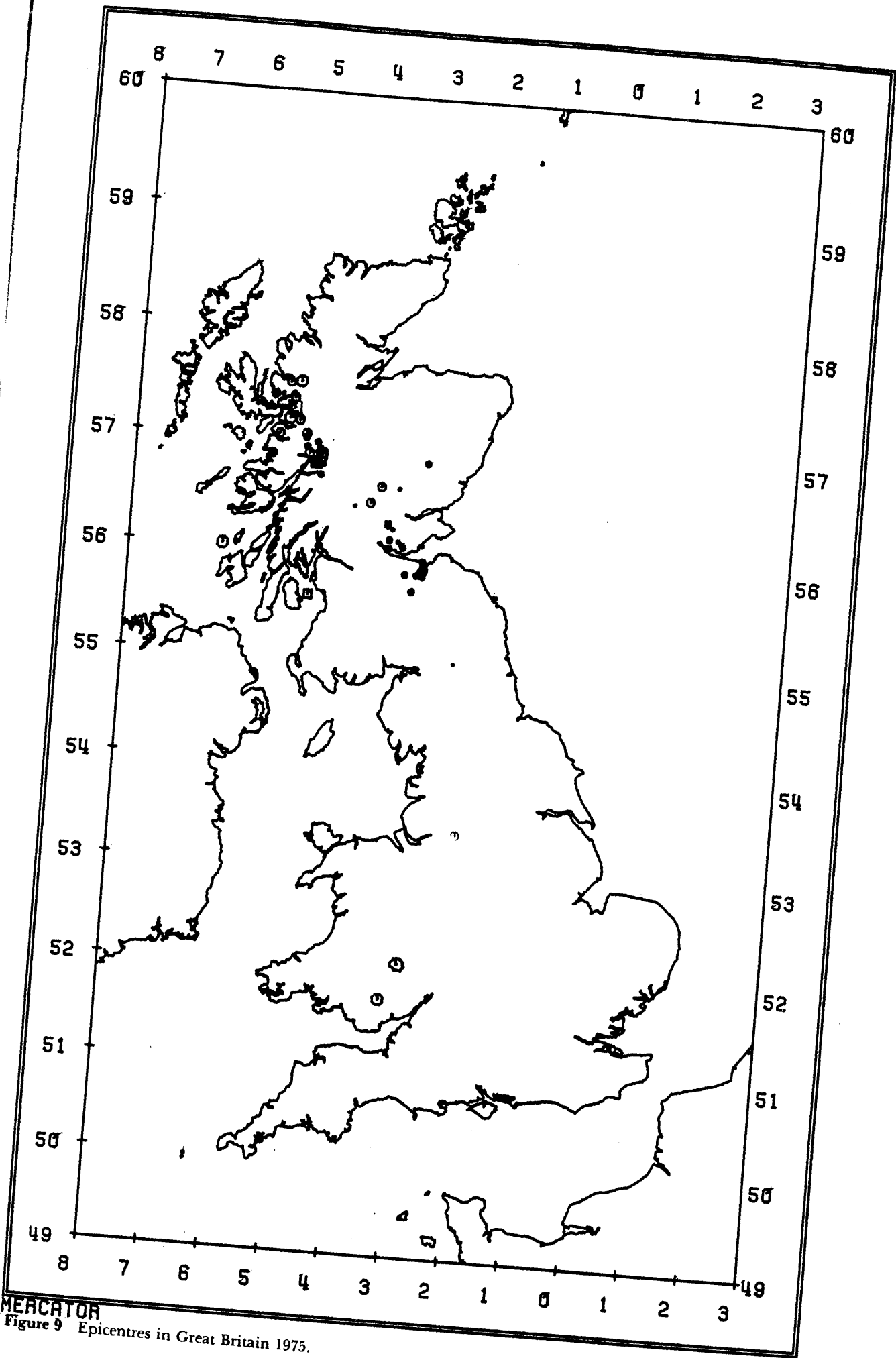
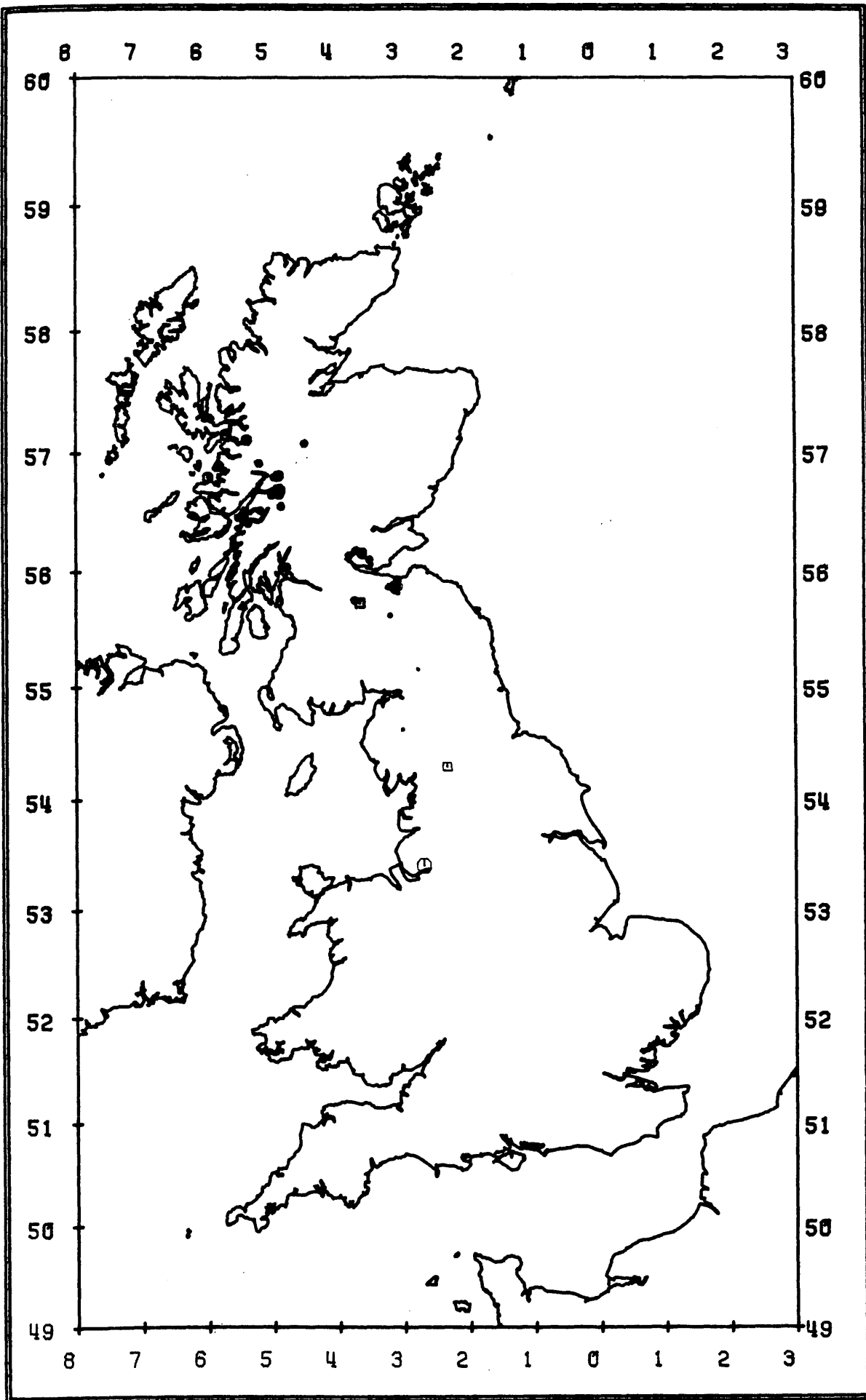
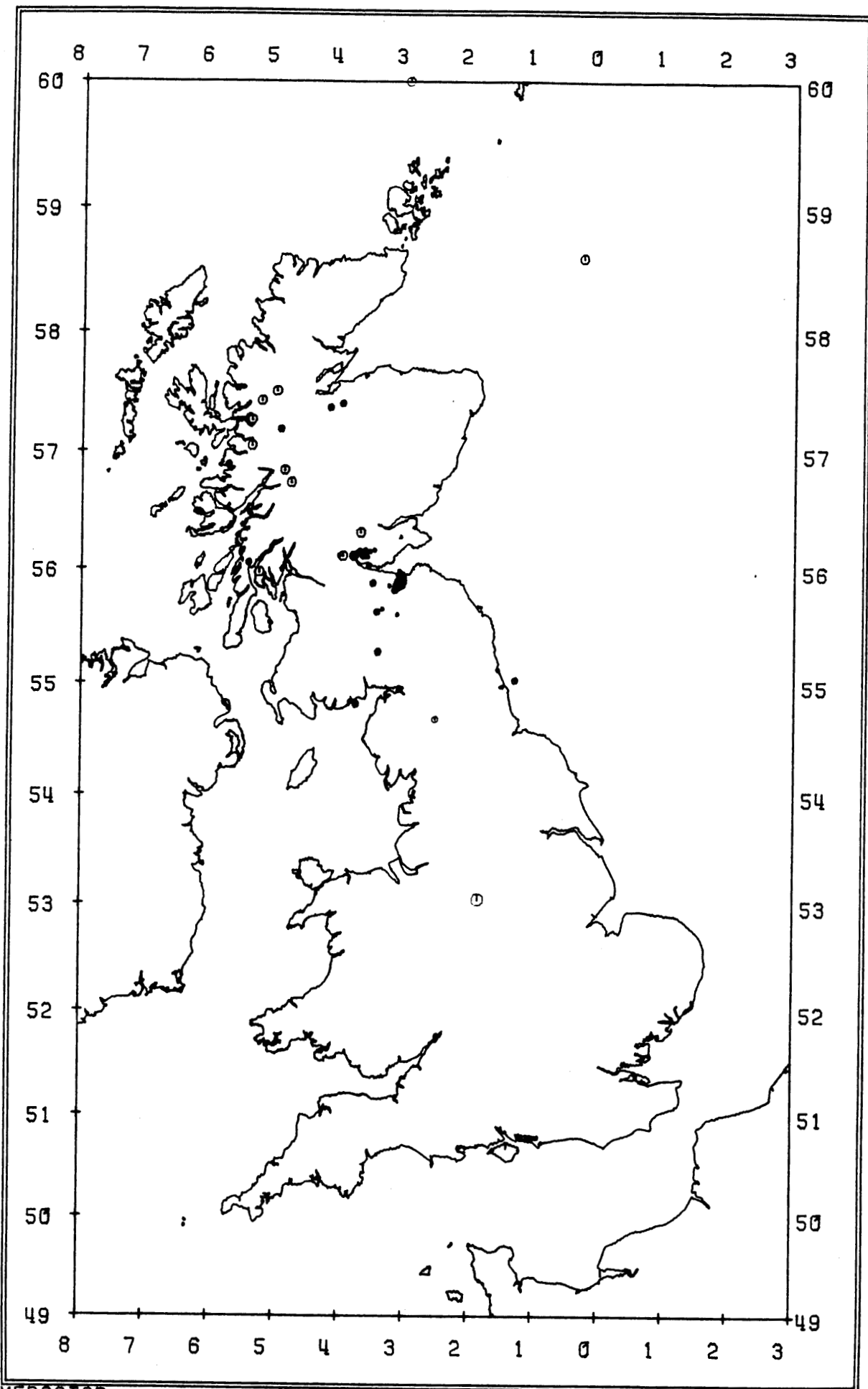


Figure 9 Epicentres in Great Britain 1975.



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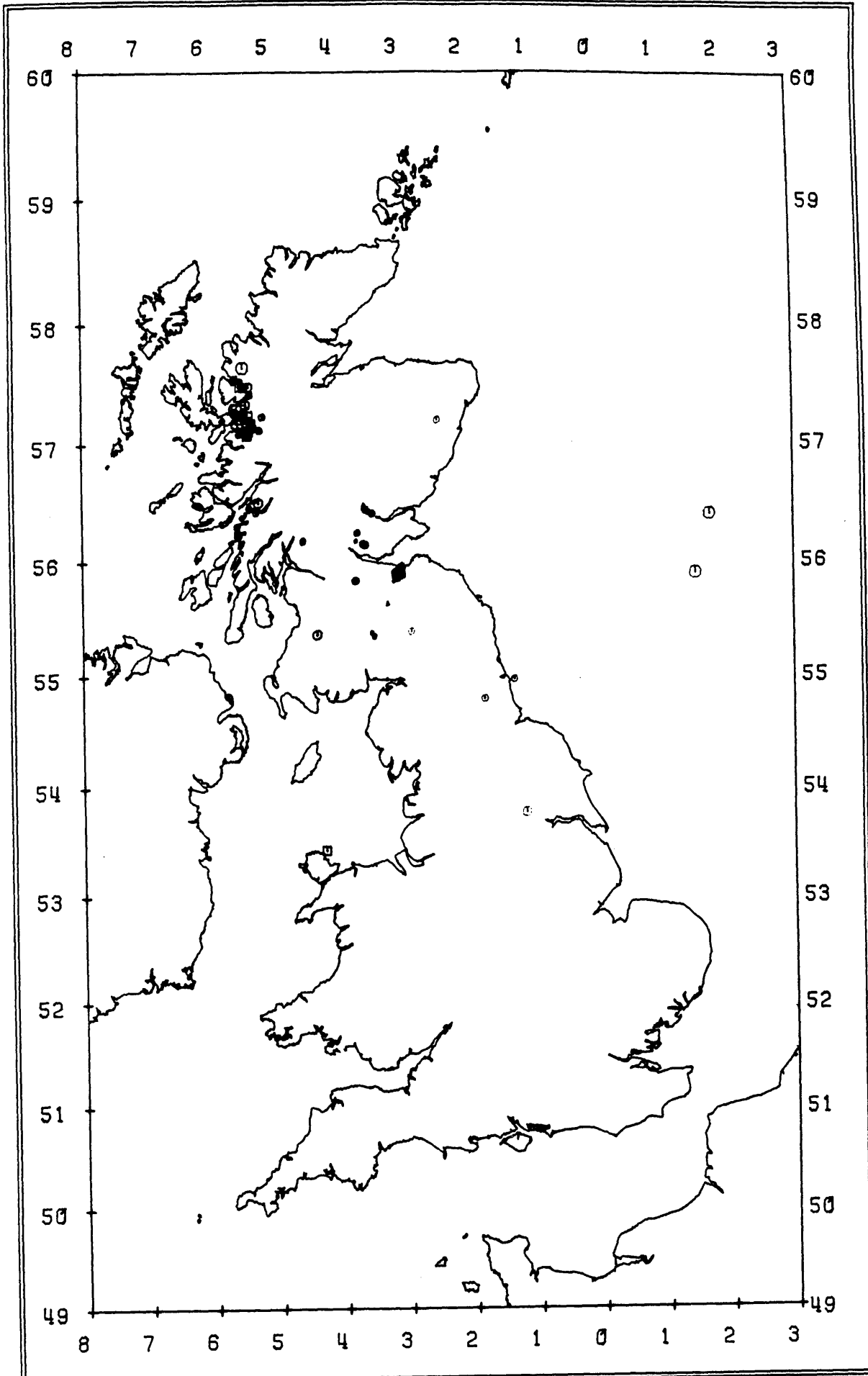
Figure 10 Epicentres in Great Britain 1976.



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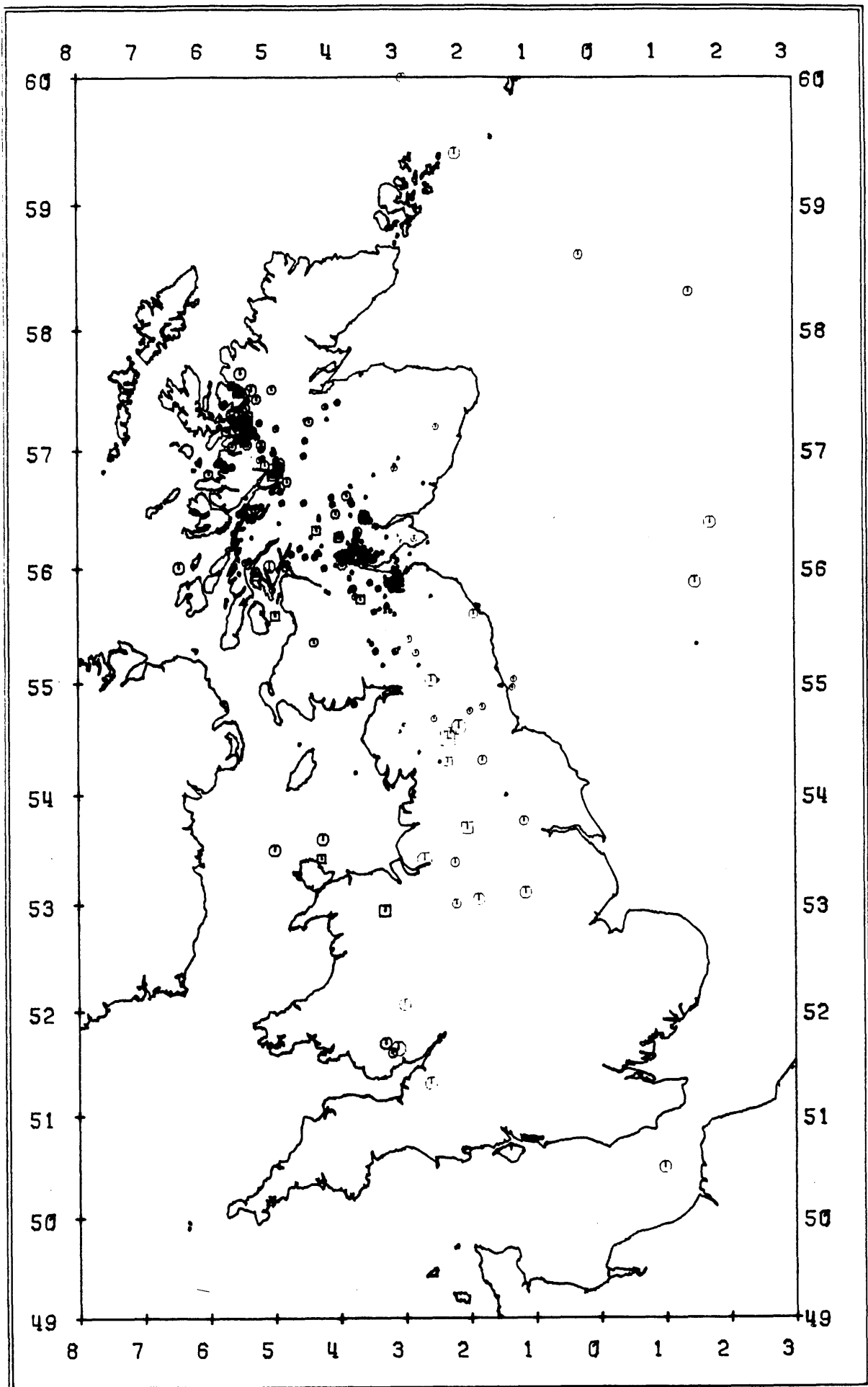
Figure 11 Epicentres in Great Britain 1977.





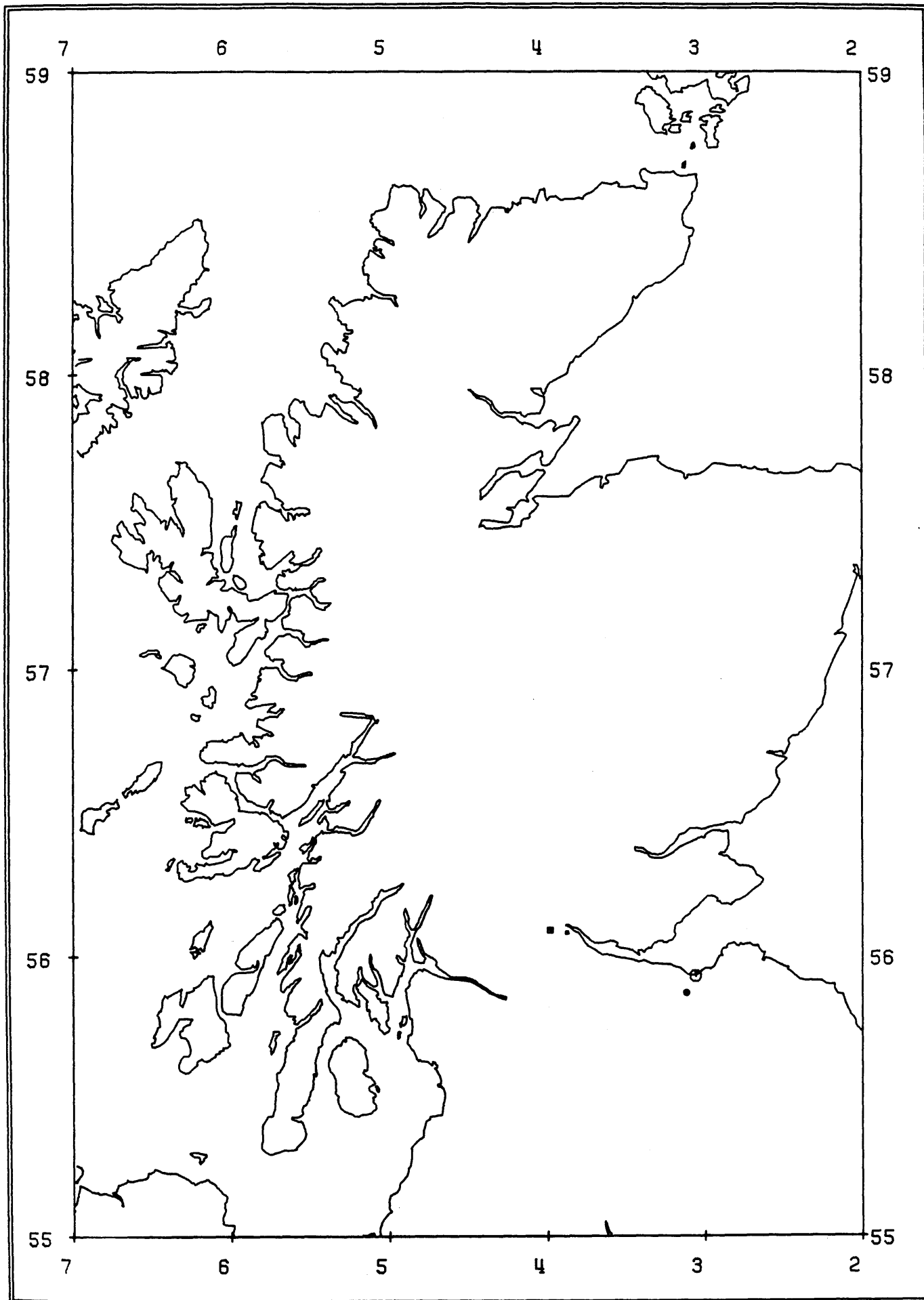
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Figure 12 Epicentres in Great Britain 1978.



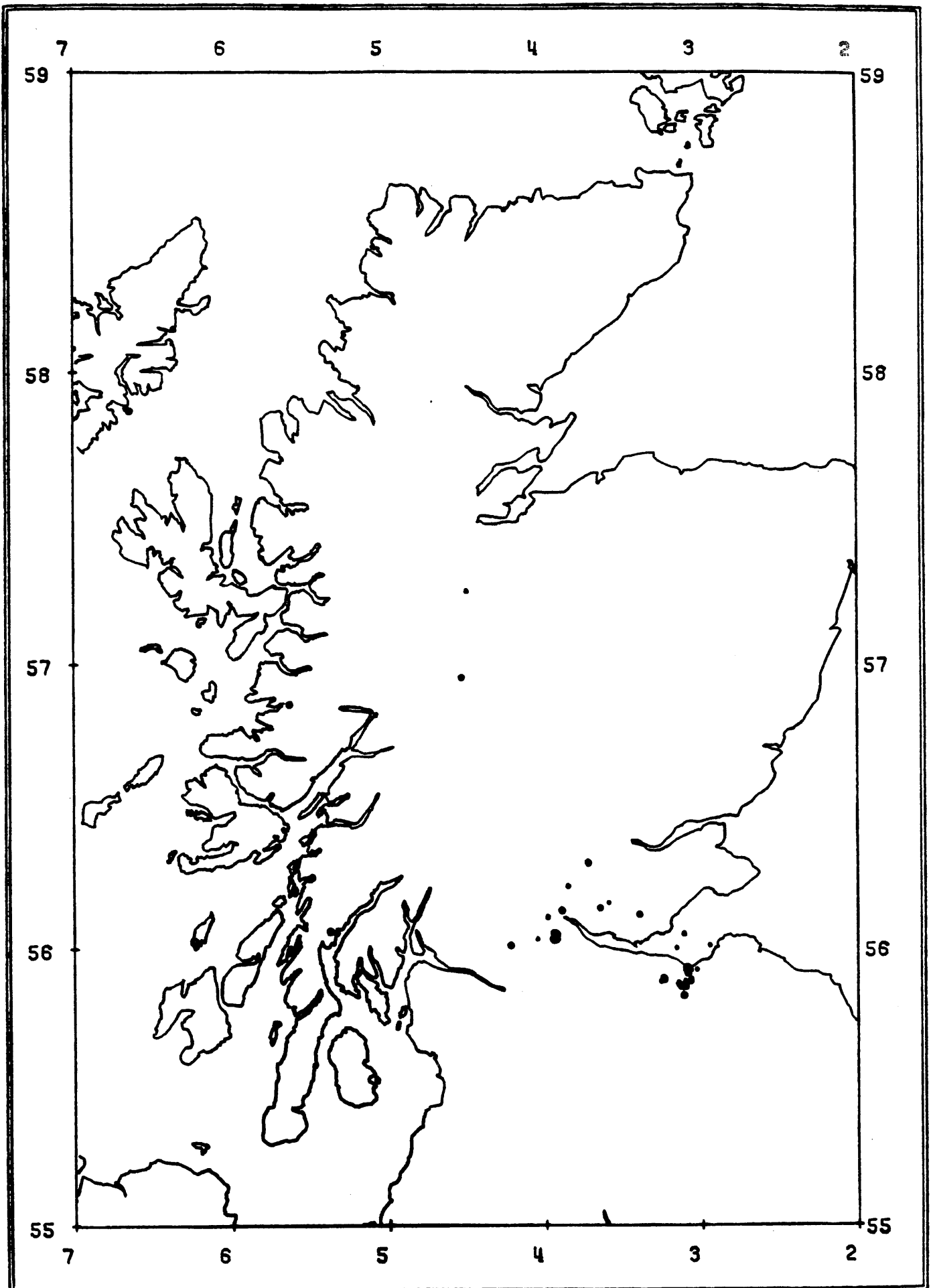
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Figure 13 All epicentres in Great Britain 1967-1978.



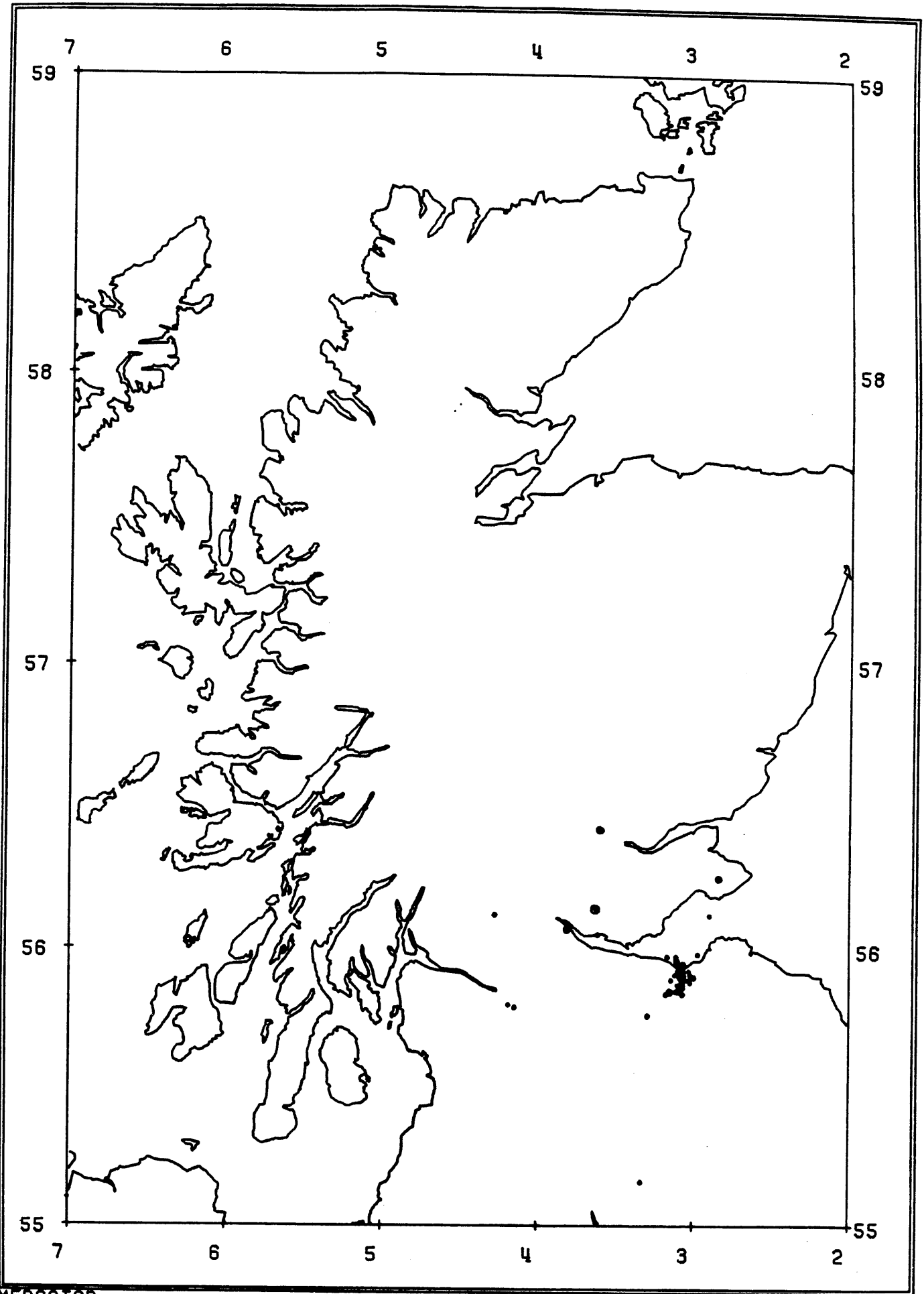
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Figure 14 Epicentres in Scotland 1967-1968.



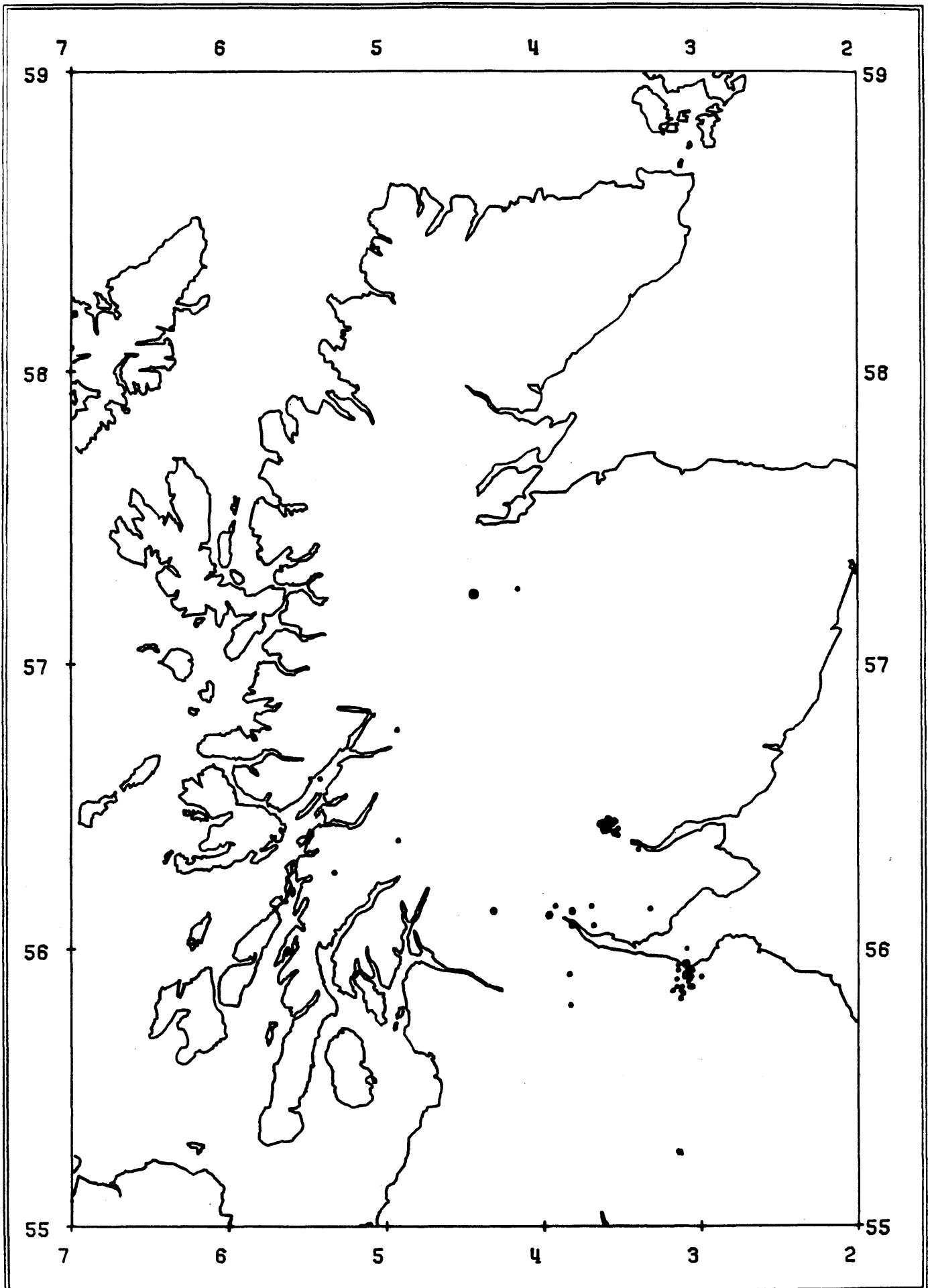
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Figure 15 Epicentres in Scotland 1969.

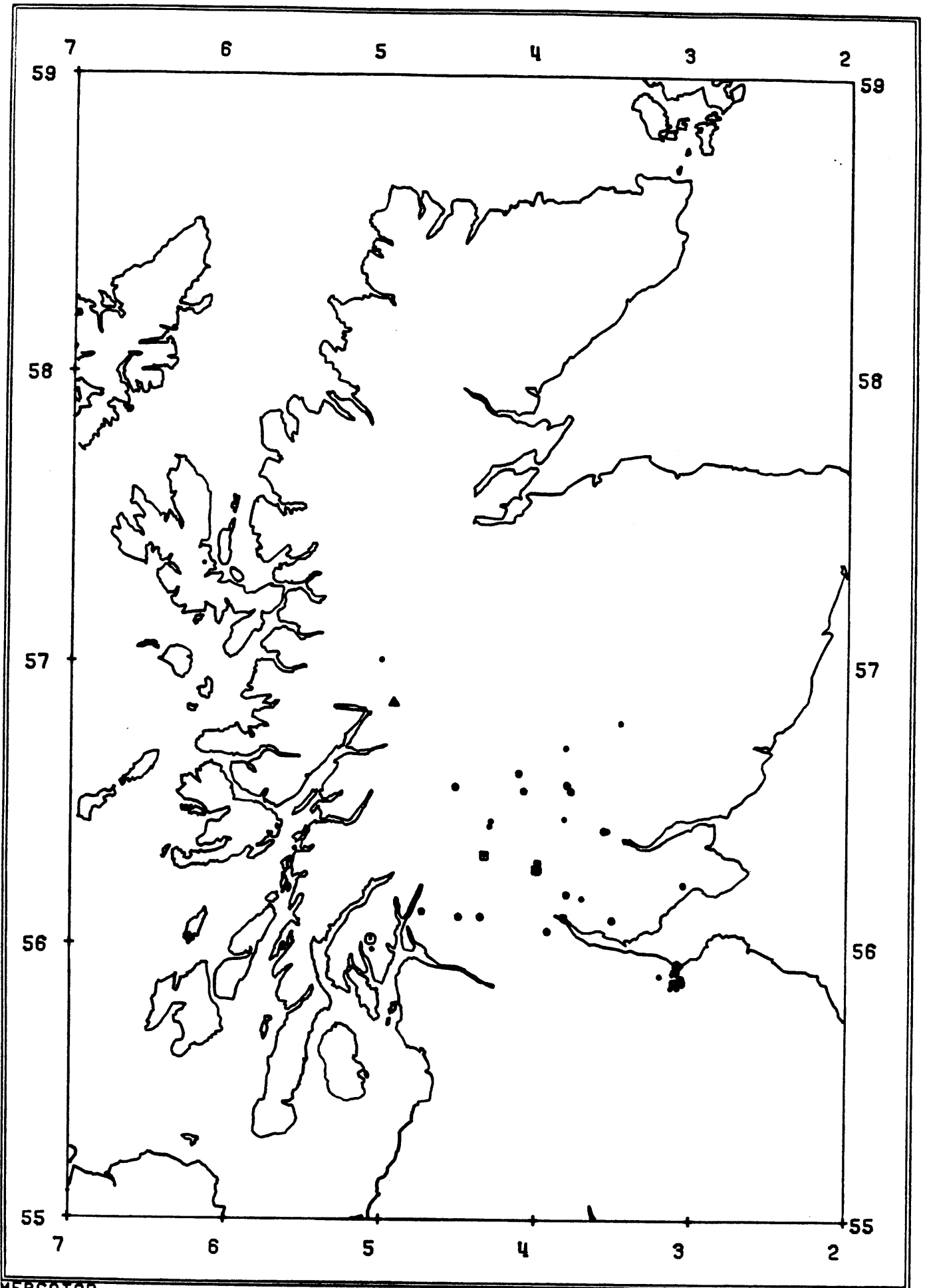


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Figure 16 Epicentres in Scotland 1970.

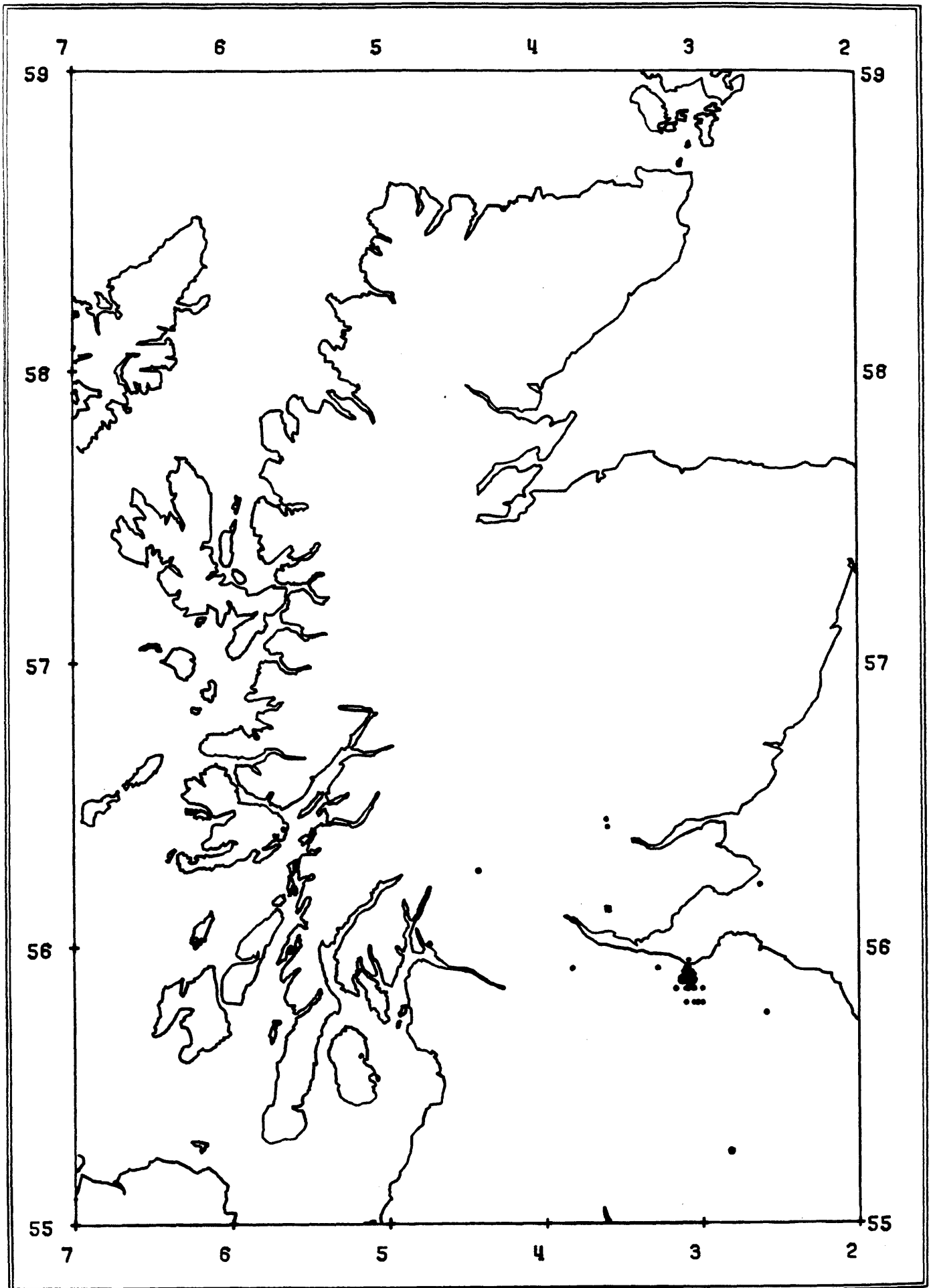


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Figure 17 Epicentres in Scotland 1971.



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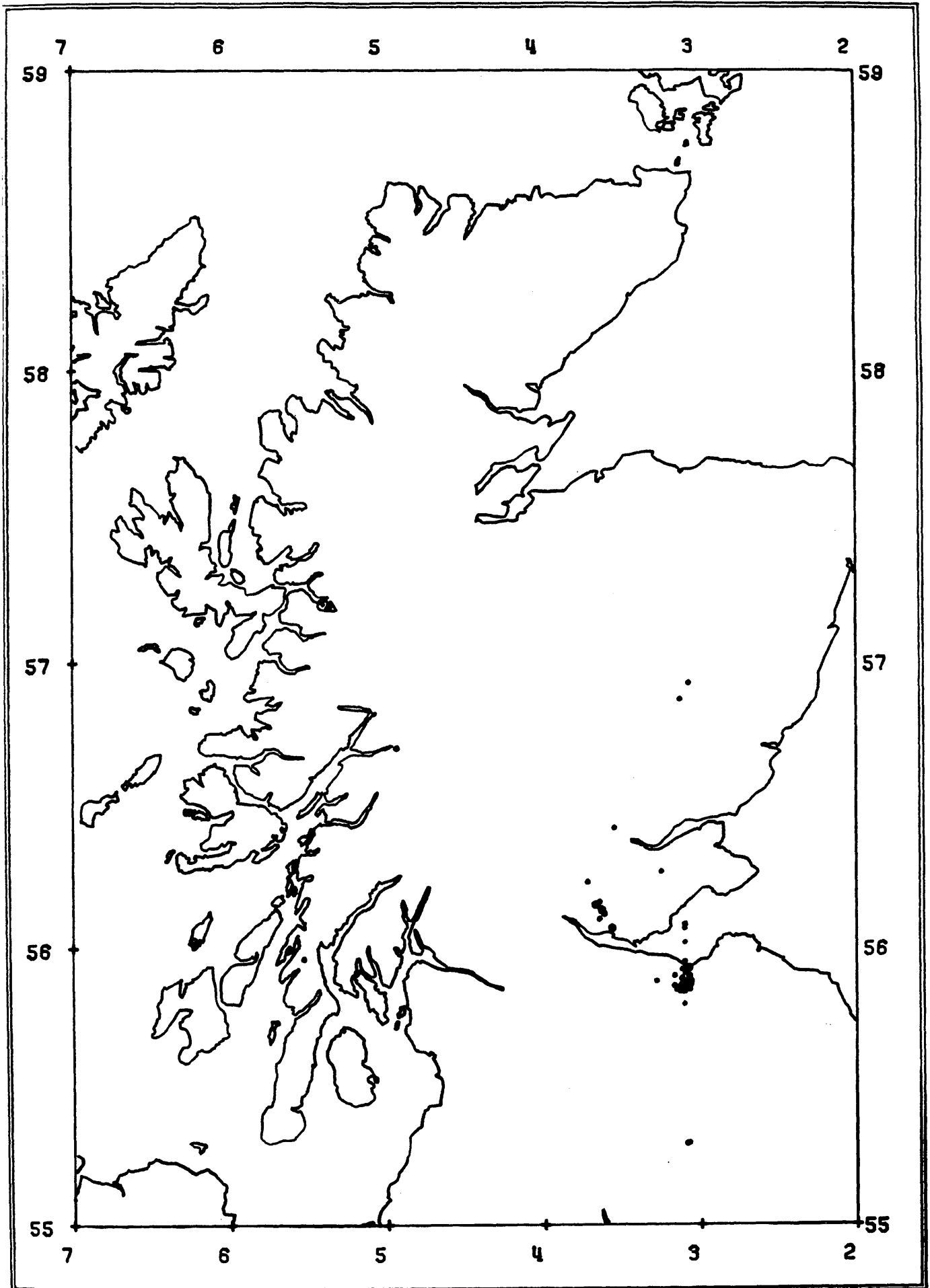
Figure 18 Epicentres in Scotland 1972.



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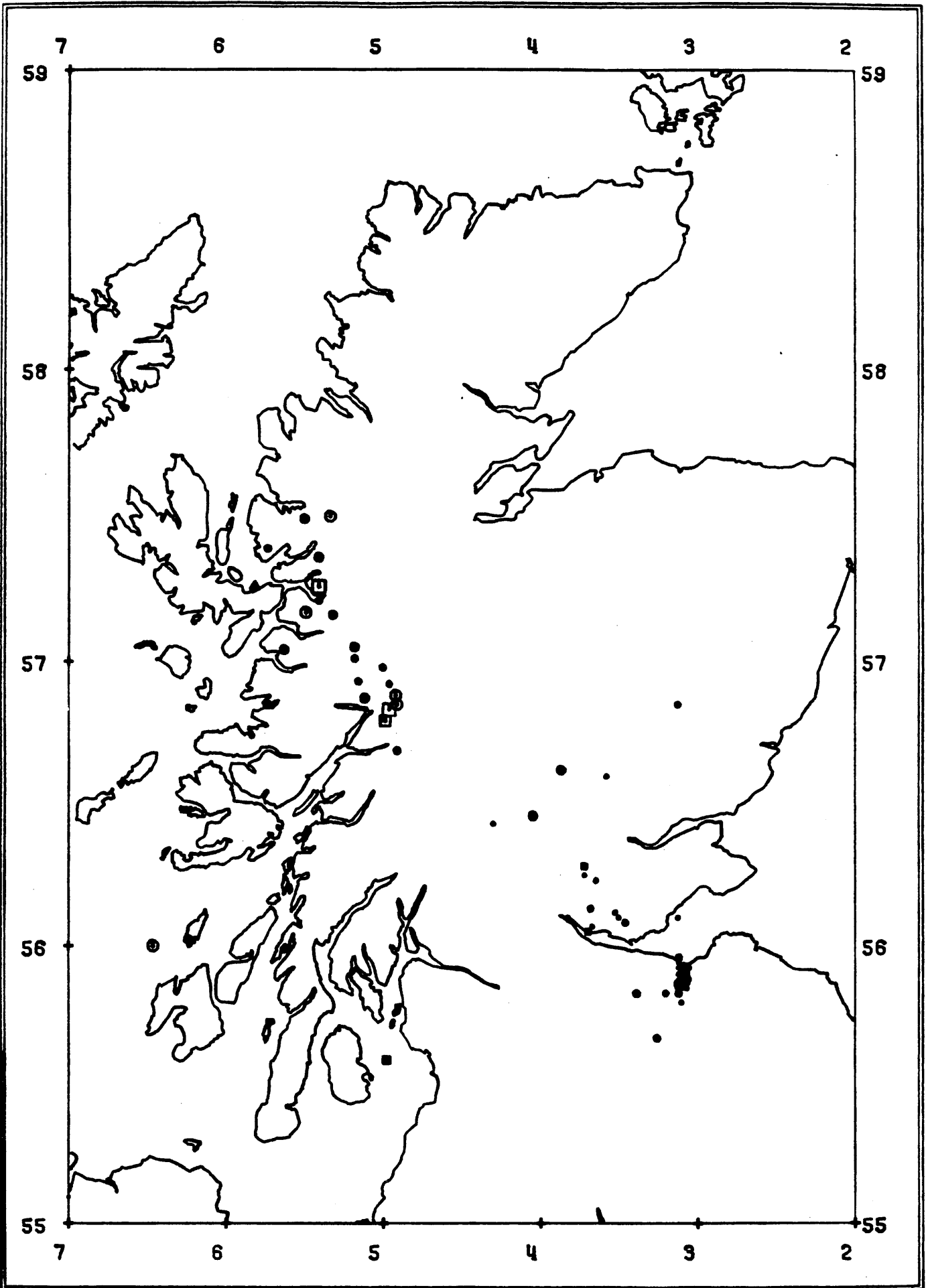
Figure 19 Epicentres in Scotland 1973.





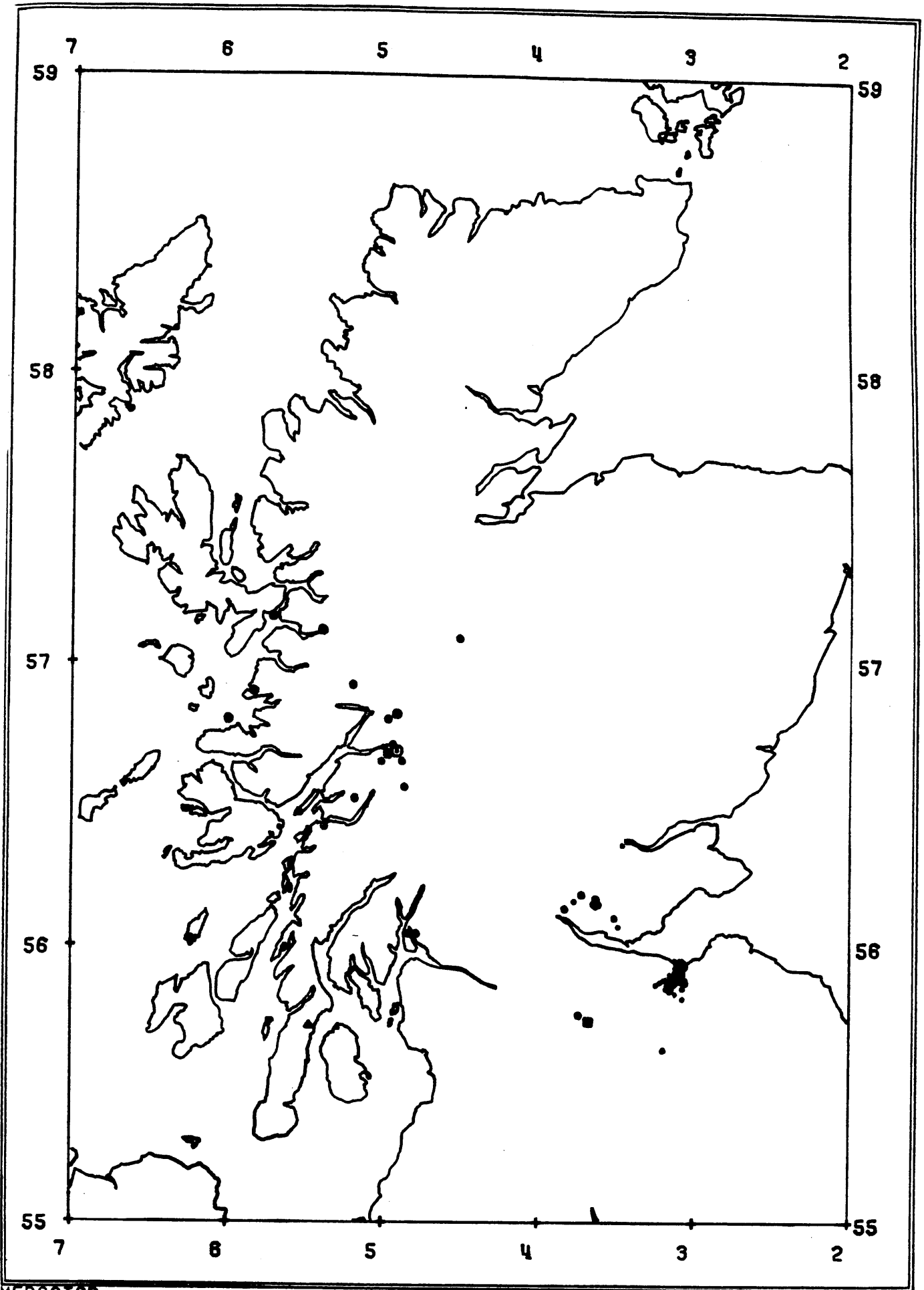
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Figure 20 Epicentres in Scotland 1974.

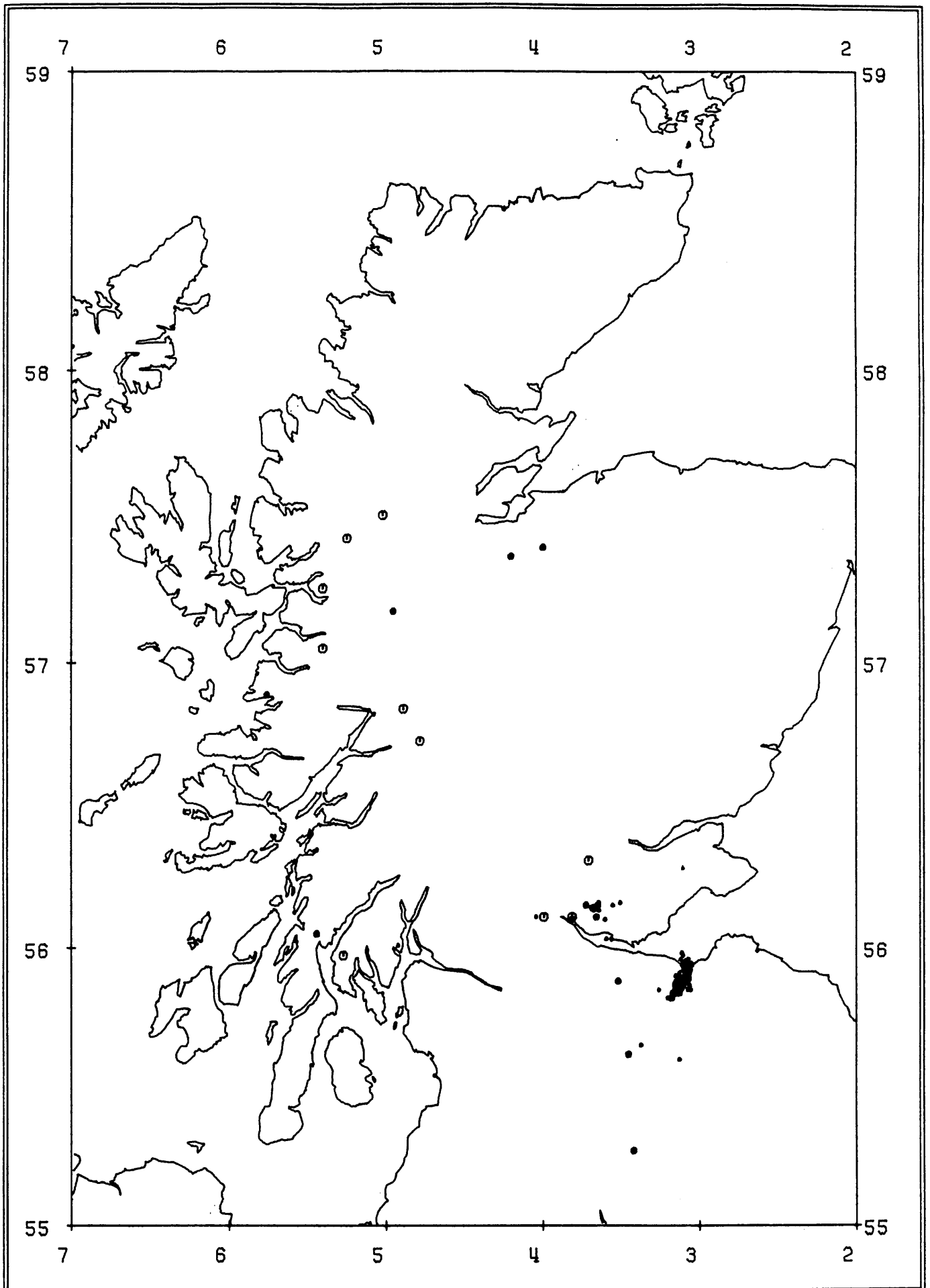


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Figure 21 Epicentres in Scotland 1975.

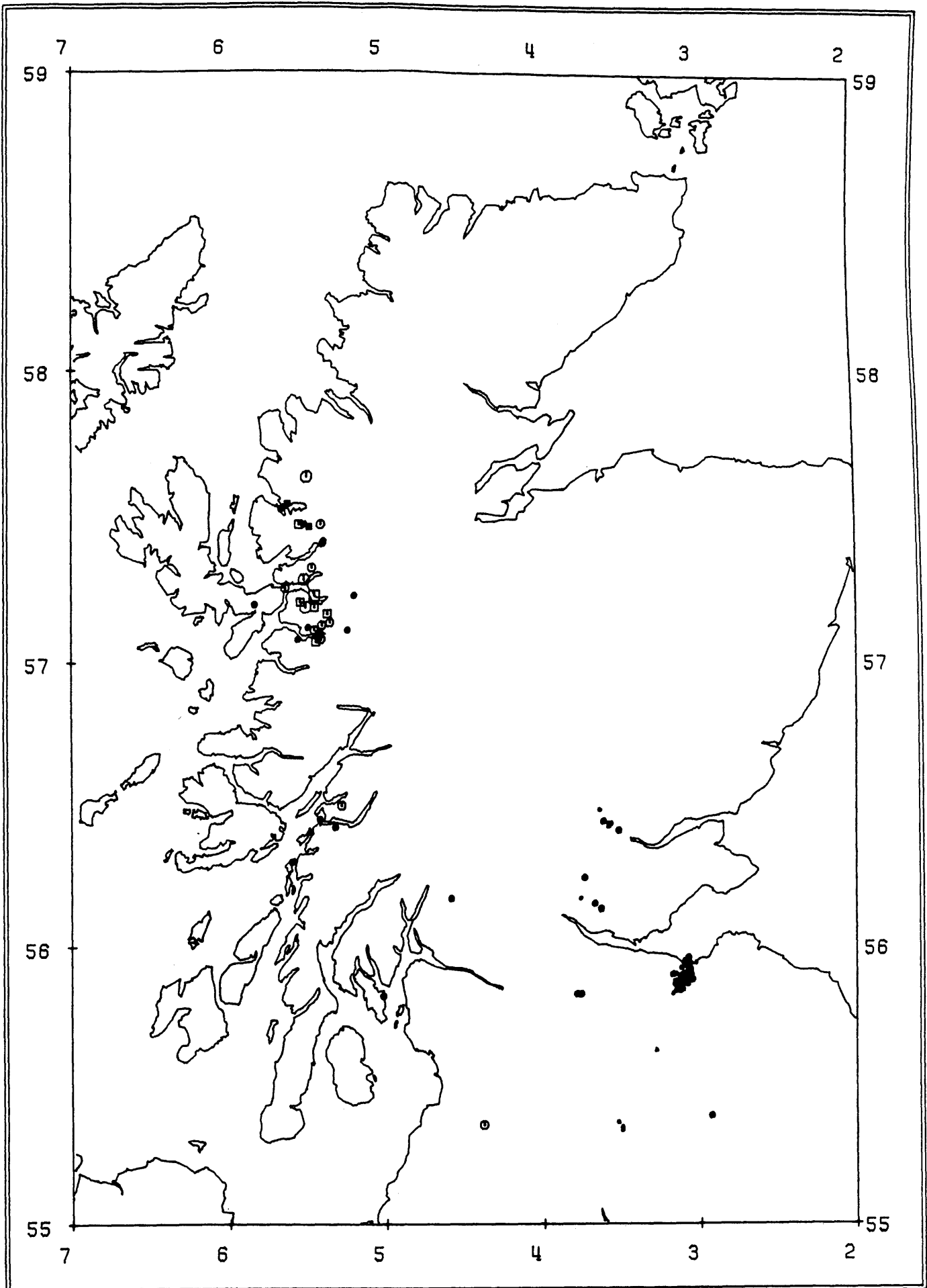


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Figure 22 Epicentres in Scotland 1976.



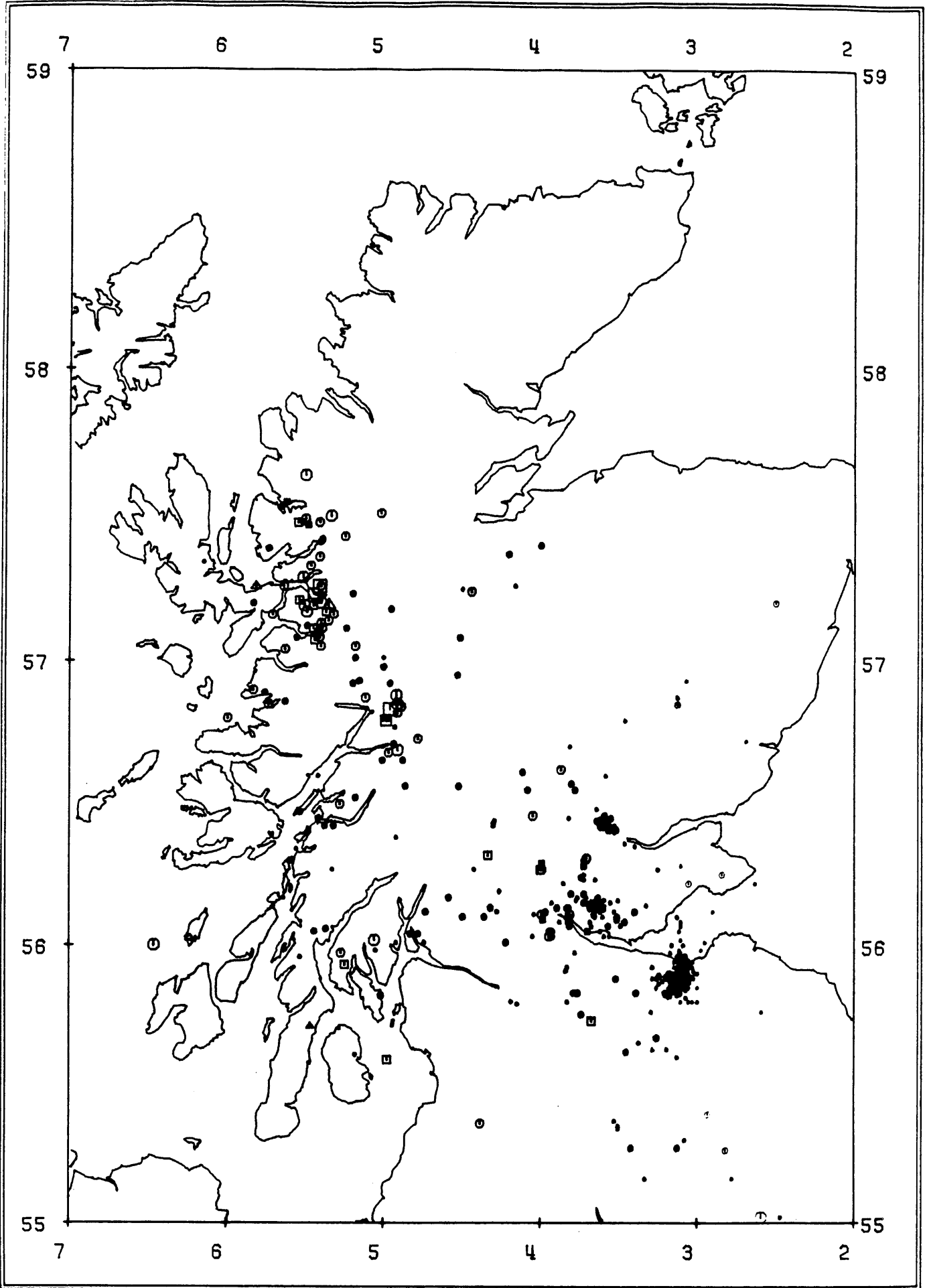
MERCATOR

Figure 23 Epicentres in Scotland 1977.



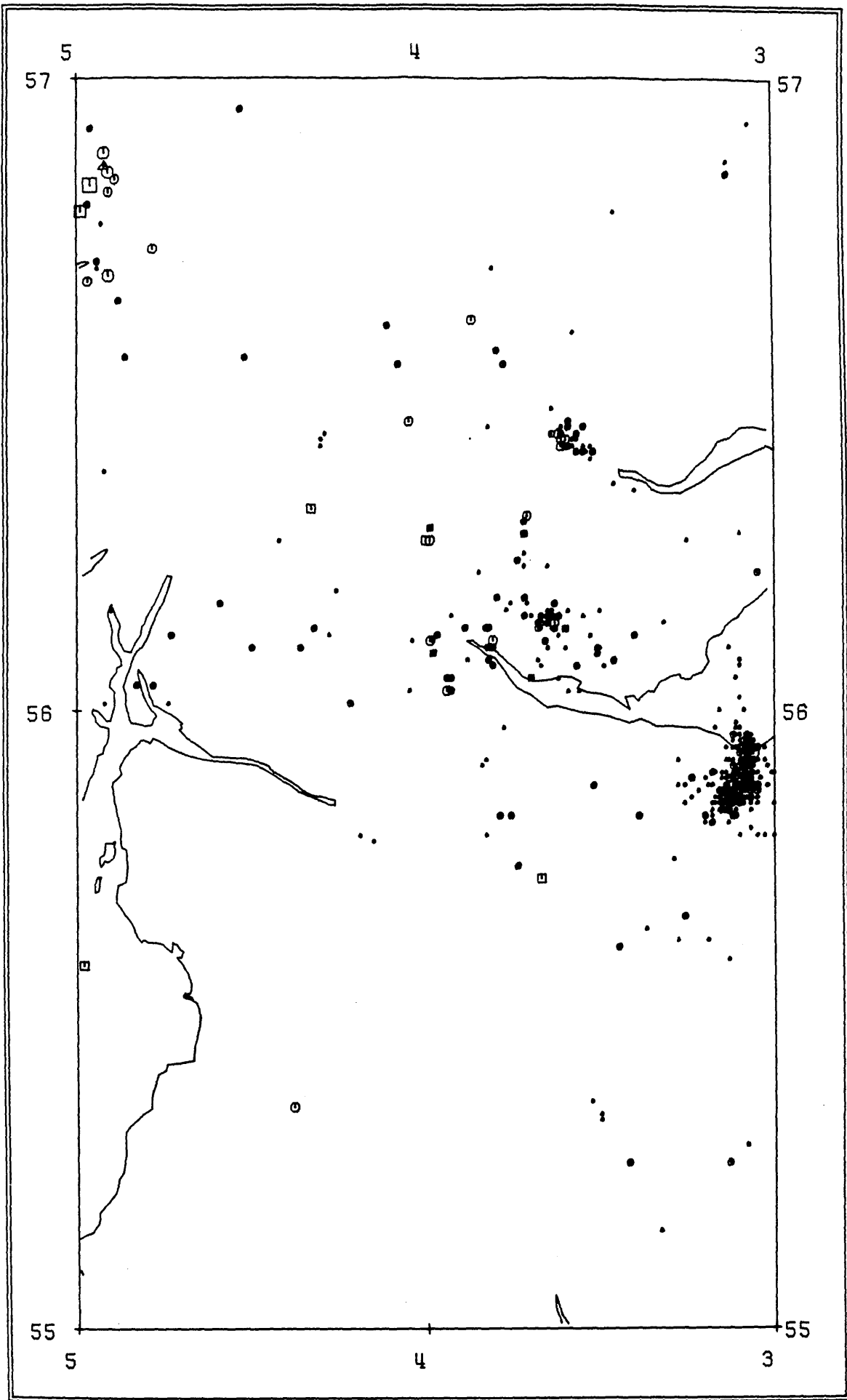
MERCATOR

Figure 24 Epicentres in Scotland 1978.



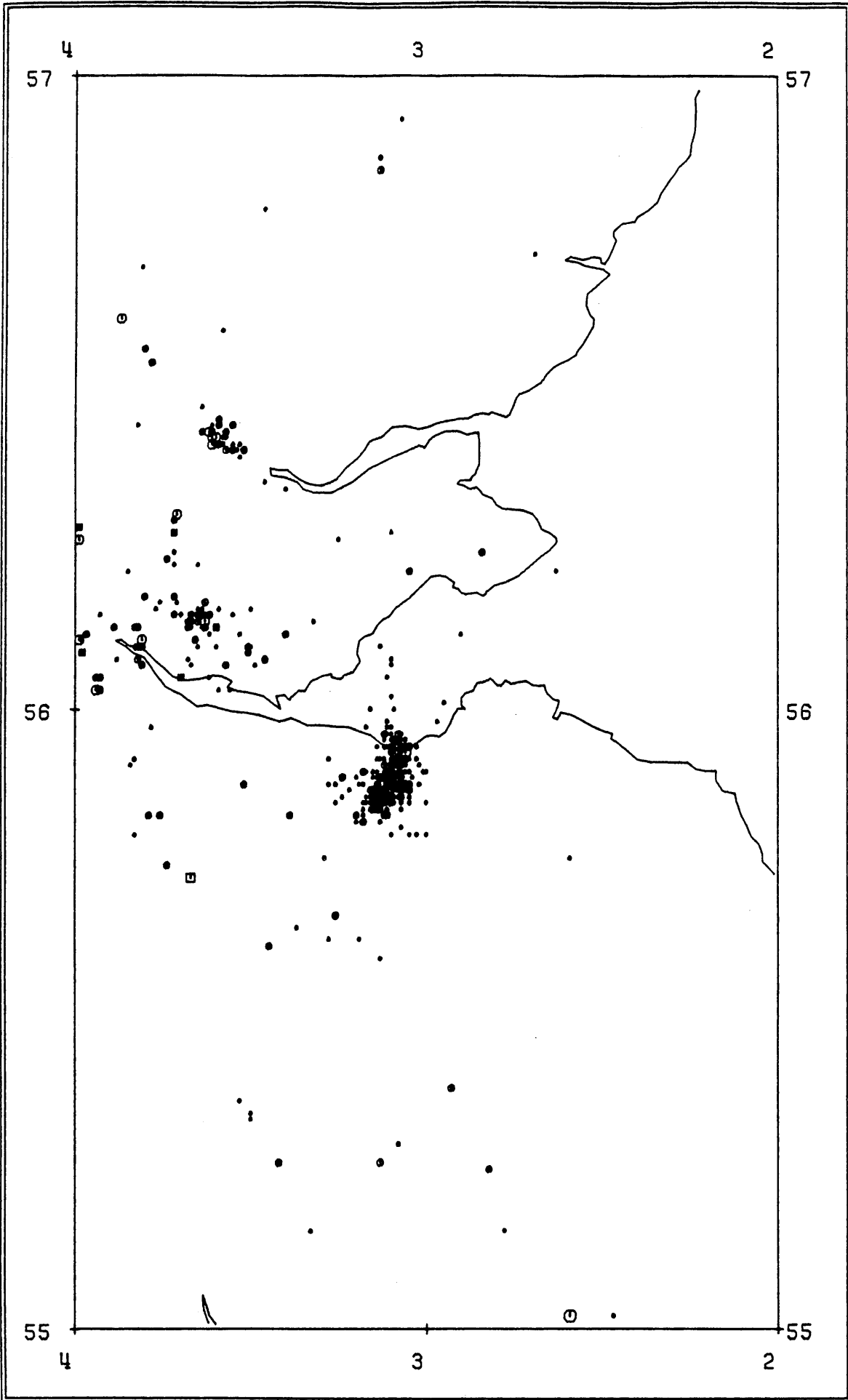
MERCATOR

Figure 25 All epicentres in Scotland 1967-1978.



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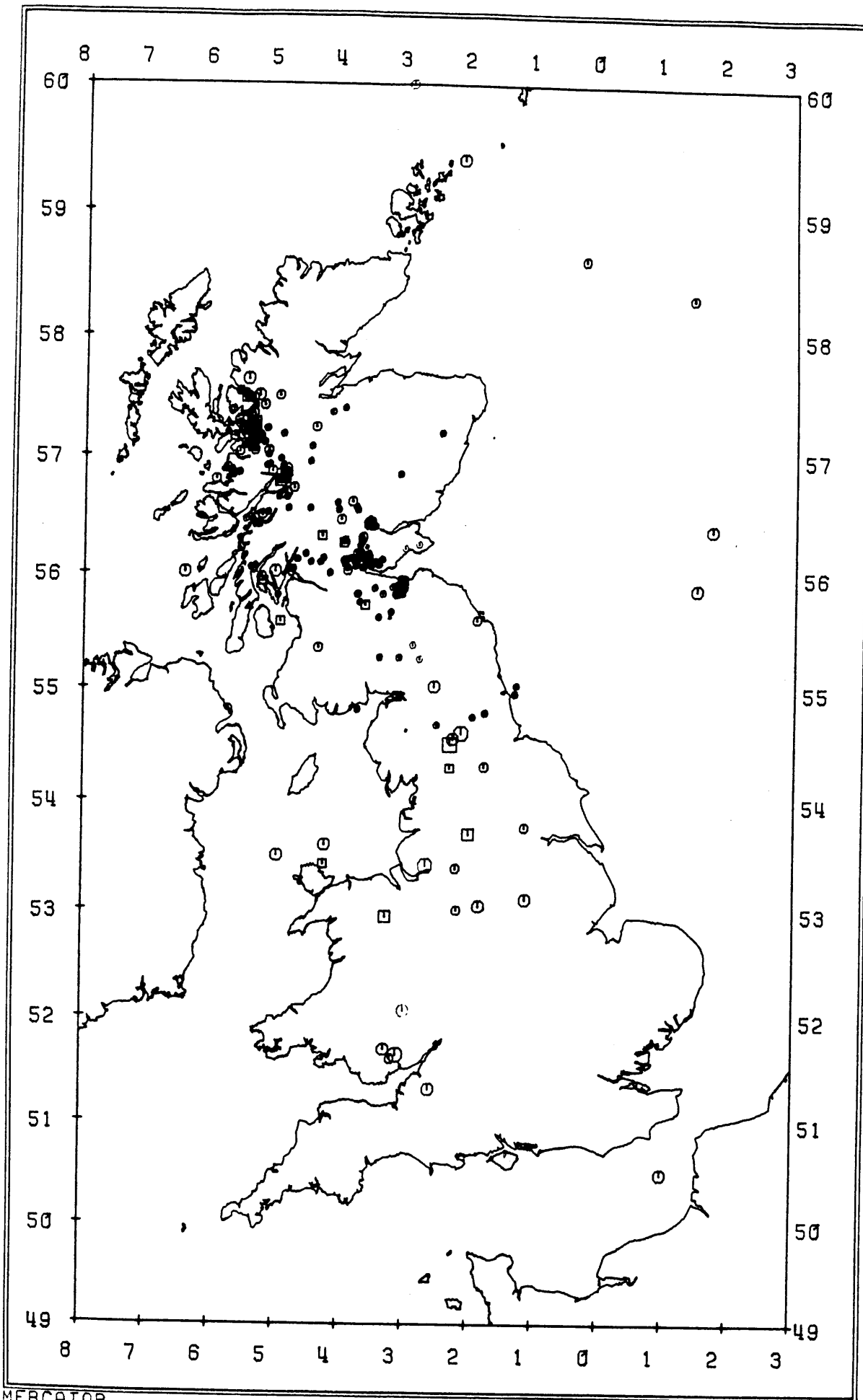
Figure 26 Epicentres around Edinburgh 1967-1978.



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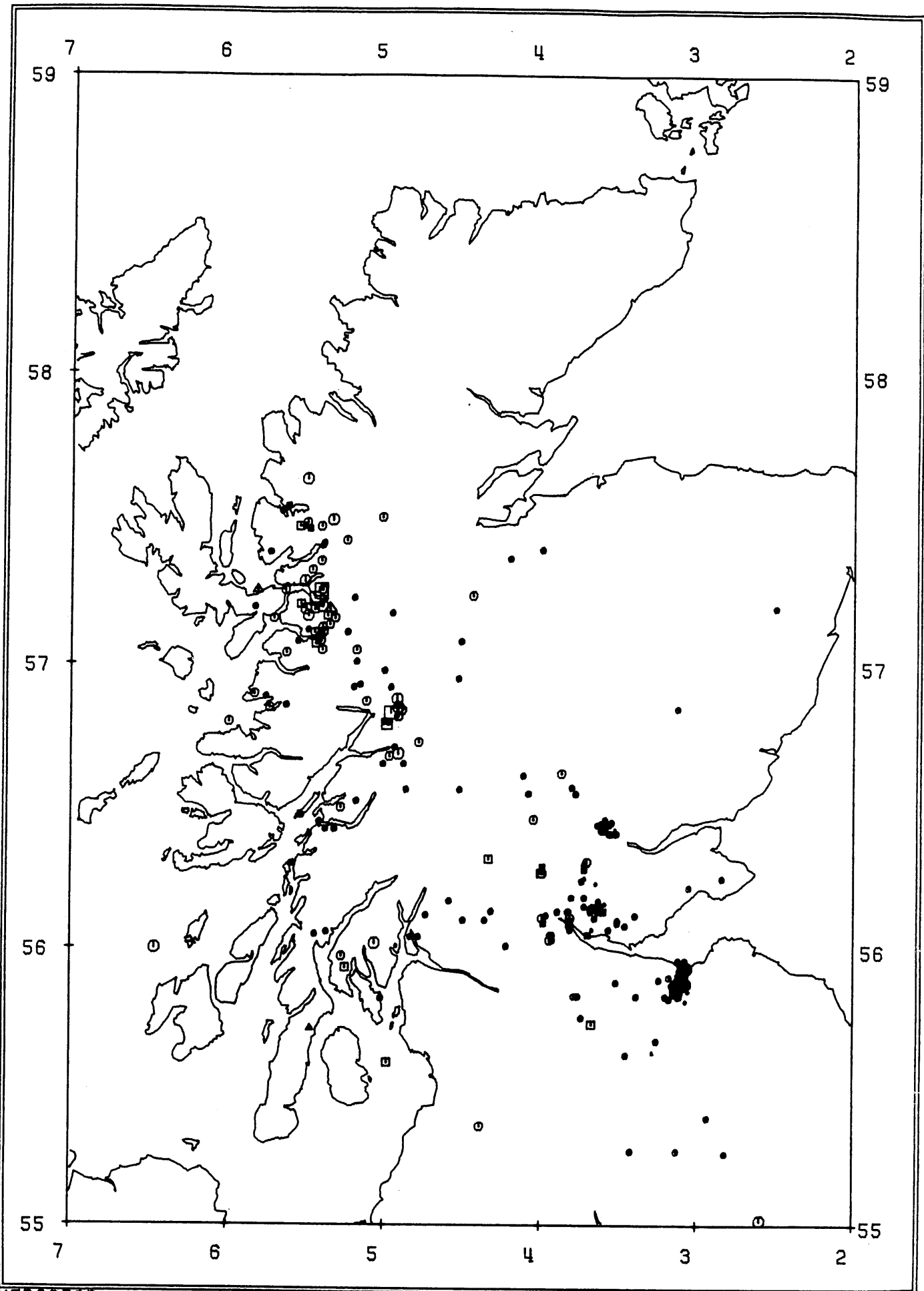
Figure 27 Epicentres associated with the Midlothian Coalfield 1967-1978.





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Figure 28 Epicentres of earthquakes with magnitude 1.0 or greater in Great Britain 1967-1978.



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Figure 29 Epicentres of earthquakes with magnitude  $M_L = 1.0$  or greater in Scotland 1967-1978.