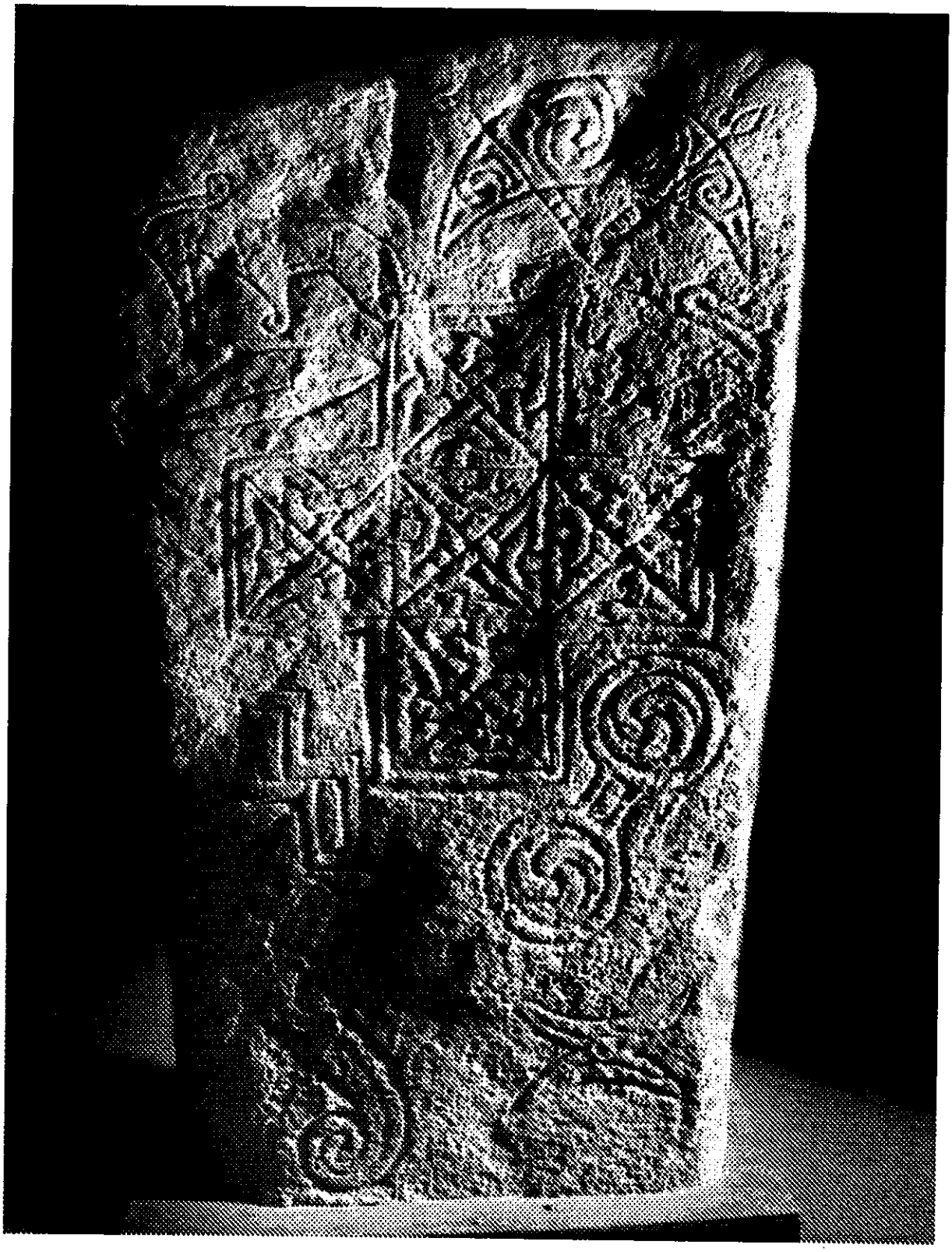
pictish arts society journal 6



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contents

editorial note

Well here it is the long awaited Journal 6. As you may know Niall Robertson, who has been our editor for several years, and who has always done a marvellous job collating and reviewing all the various articles from our members, has recently had to leave our shores to take up an archaeological post in eastern Germany. This has resulted in a long delay to most of the planned PAS publications this session. Journal 7 is almost full, although far from complete, and should now be published around the beginning of 1995. Until Niall returns contributions for Journal 8 should be sent to -

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Cover photograph - Ulbster Cross-Slab (Tom E Gray) Cover Design by Nick Simpson

a Black Cat among the Pictish Beasts?

Some Ideas from Recent Cryptozoology

The names of tribes or peoples in Roman-period Scotland - including those who, north of the Forth-Clyde line, were to become the historical Picti - are preserved in Claudius Ptolemaeus' 2nd-century AD Geography. Allowing for slight confusion in transmission to Ptolemy's base in Alexandria, where he wrote in Greek, most of the names can be explained as Celtic. A very few, like the river-names Bodotria, Ila, Tuesis, and the tribes of the Boresti and Creones, are possibly pre-Celtic and even non-Indo-European.

Some of these ethnic names embody known words for animals. Instances are the Epidii in Kintyre (*epo- "horse"), Caereni of Sutherland (*caero- "sheep") and, behind the name Orcades for Orkney, presumably a tribal name, *Orcoi (*orcos- "young boar"). Tarvedunum, now Dunnet Head, means "Bull's Fort" (*taruos). What these names imply is uncertain. Echoes of former totemic beliefs is one possibility. That these names concealed secret titles of tribal gods is another. It seems unlikely that the Caereni reared and ate only sheep, or the Orcoi only pigs.

The bestiary of later Pictish art, the "Pictish Animals, or Beasts", includes clear lateral representations of horse, boar, bull and probably sheep. It further covers salmon, snake, wolf, both red deer and reindeer (as C A Gordon first pointed out), goose and sea eagle (as I first pointed out). These may not be all. It is conceivable, too, that the tribal name of Cornovii in Caithness contains *corn- "horn (of a stag)", implying perhaps devotion to an animal manifestation of some Cernunnos-like horned deity. This partial link between tribal labels and certain beasts, animals known to have existed in early Scotland, has given rise to suggestions that if Class I symbols had any regular meanings, depictions of beasts on stones might have signified tribal descent or affiliation.

I leave this aside, but draw attention to another tribal name which Ptolemy records (in Greek) as Lougoi, to be found in Latin as Lugi (Rivet and Smith, 1979). Ptolemy's co-ordinates place the Lugi in eastern and coastal Sutherland, a long region south of the Cornovii in Caithness, and a region containing the parish name Loth, older Logh (Ahlqvist, 1975). The root-word may be, not the widespread Celtic divine name Lugus (Lug, Lugh), but an adjective *lugo-s "black, dark". If the Caereni were "the Sheep-Ones" and the Cornovii "the Horn-Ones", then the Lugi might have been "the Black-Ones" - but with no implication, I think, that these people were physically swarthy, or were devotees of the raven (for which another specific Celtic word, *branno-s, is known).

A few of the Ptolemaic place-names, mainly of rivers, have survived down to the present (Clota, the Clyde; Ituna, the Eden; Loxa, the Moray Lossie). In the whole long belt of Sutherland and Caithness, and indeed in Shetland, post-Roman sources provide us with another, non-Ptolemaic, name-element altogether. The oldest name for pre-Norse Shetland was the Old Irish Inse Catt, "Isles of the Cats" (Watson, 1926, 30ff, for these). Celtic cattos was elsewhere borrowed into Vulgar Latin

as cattus, and gave rise to Irish and Welsh cath and indeed the English word 'cat'. Norse Kata-nes "Cat Headland" for the north-east point of Scotland gave rise to Caithness, and must have been taken over from a pre-Norse name. As one goes south (see Fig 1) one finds the oblique-case Cataibh "among the cats" as a generic name for most of Sutherland, Machair Cat for the coastal strip north from Dunrobin, An Caol Catach ("the Catty Narrows") for the Kyle of Sutherland, Braechat ("cat upland") across the river Shin, and a strange "Wilderness of Cats", Dithreabh Chat, around Kildonan. Watson rightly saw this as implying a large tribal-name region "of the Cats", running south from Caithness and embracing eastern and south-east Sutherland.

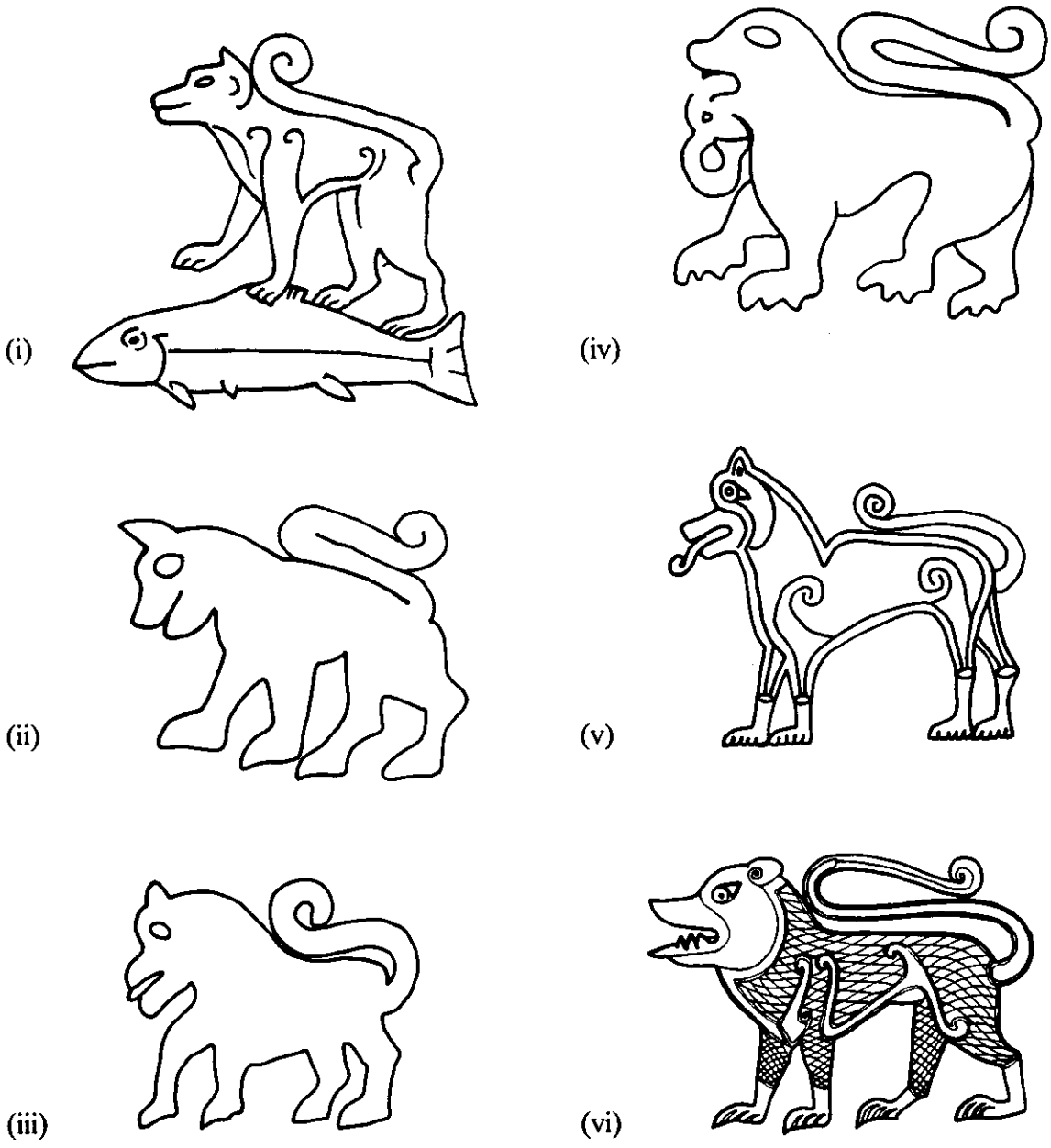

Fig. 1. Depictions of possible felines in Pictish art.

(i) Golspie stone, (ii) Ulbster cross-slab, (iii) Bressay cross-slab (Shetland), (iv) Shandwick cross-slab, (v) Papil cross-slab (Shetland), (vi) The Durrow 'Lion' (Book of Durrow T.C.D. MS A.4.5, fol.191v, late 7th century), here drawn reversed for comparison.

(C. Thomas)

If these sources indicate that the territory of the pre-Norse tribe of "Cat-Ones" was superimposed on the that of the Roman period "Black-Ones", may we suspect - as a working hypothesis - not a radical change of tribal occupancy, but continuous ascription to cats that were originally regarded as distinctive because they were black? If so, whatever kind of animal might we have in mind? I have for some time now began to suspect this, and to believe that the beast in question exists now, and existed then.

There is a peculiar creature shown among the Pictish animal symbols (Fig 1). From Shetalnd, it is usual and probably justifiable to compare the framed left-facing animal on the C8th Papil cross-slab with the right-facing Evangelist's Lion of St Mark in the C7th Book of Durrow; and, ignoring the fact that neither remotely resembles a genuine lion, Panthera leo as known to the Roman world, to suppose that the Papil animal was copied from some similar gospel book introduced to the Northern isles by Irish churchmen. Papil has no teeth, Durrow no tongue and the tails differ somewhat, but otherwise the comparison is tempting. Still in Shetland, another devolved "lion" with Papil-type tail and tongue figures, below the interlace cross and a figure scene on the more ornate, but less finely carved, cross-slab from Bressay, perhaps of the C9th.

Two more beasts from the same enclosure in the Pictish zoo are found at opposite coastal ends of the Cat territory. On the great Ulbster Stone (see map on page 6 and Fig. 1 for these, also illustrated on front cover), which I follow Graeme Cruickshank in seeing as a northern Class I/Class II transitional piece, not fully Class II, the beast is syntactically a full symbol, not an isolated religious motif. On this slab of c700 or so, the central ornate equal-armed cross is surrounded by eight Class I symbols in pairs. The cat, as we can call it, is below the crescent and v-rod, balancing Pictish beast over salmon. Further south, on the complex and regular Class II Shandwick Stone the animal is alone, below one of two framed angels. Leaving aside its sprouting tongue, its claws and tail-shape may suggest (as at Papil) inspiration from some ecclesiastical manuscript or ornamental object, with a date after AD 800.

Now in Dunrobin Castle Museum, and probably found a long time ago near Golspie, we have the famous Golspie Stone. The front bears an elaborate long-shafted relief cross with hollowed angles, surrounded by ornamental panels, and is typically Class II, of some date after 700 (Close-Brooks, 1989). The back, which is really a "transitional I/II" scene (Fig. 2), aptly called exquisite craftsmanship by Isabel Henderson, is a unitary display. An armed grandee, a mature man holding an axe, strides above, and is massively surmounted by a total of seven symbols (not counting the entwined fish-tailed serpents at the base). No amount of speculation about marriage alliances, bride-prices and magical numbers will convince me other than that the Golspie Stone - standing four-square in the wider European tradition - was an individual memorial to the man depicted on it. The Ogham up one edge and round the top, supplied perhaps by some Irish cleric, is of the classic format"(Stone) of A, son of B". Even if the two names, which may not be Celtic, defy explanation, the central word MEQQ (for maic "the son of") can be read securely.

The man's feet enclose one end of a double disc. The enlarged key symbols at top, rectangle over Pictish beast, convey some predominant message about him. Neither is representationally a beast. Opposite the man's outstretched arm is the cat - almond eye, jaws slightly apart (no tongue nor teeth shown), tail forward with terminal bushy curl. Three of its clawed feet are directly upon a fish or

Fig. 2. Golspie stone, Sutherland.
(drawn by Jack R F Burt)

salmon, a pose seen elsewhere with the goose (Easterton of Roseisle) or the sea-eagle (Gairloch). Is this Golspie "cat" our oldest surviving version, in a Class I/II scene - since we have no typologically "earlier" ones from any Class I stone - among the broadly similar carnivores shown here (Fig . 1). I believe it may be. There may be artistic infection from manuscript art, seen in the Papil and Shandwick (claws) and Bressay (tail) animals; but again it is far from clear what models, in what media, inspired the Durrow artist to construct his idiosyncratic non-lion in the first place. Lloyd Laing (1993, 35), citing the current and reasonable view that the Book of Durrow was produced on Iona, sees the Papil lion: ". . not as a Pictish model for the manuscript, but as a Dalriadic design produced under Pictish influence". This hardly excludes the idea that, if the illuminator of Durrow working at Iona wished to depict a lion, he might have been influenced by an extant and earlier, Pictish symbol of an apparent carnivore.

Since I write this paper in my Christmas break, freed momentarily from duller literary tasks, and since the PAS Journal plainly calls for the airing of new ideas, I propose to hypothesise:

(a) that the Golspie animal is a stylised representation of a feline, not a bear, or a wolf, or anything as small as pine marten;
(b) that a slightly earlier, proper Class I, version of the symbol may at some future date be found;
(c) that the cat, as a wild cat, fell within the contemporary Scottish fauna in the same manner as the other Class I animal-depiction symbol models;
(d) that it is no coincidence that Golspie, and to a lesser degree both Ulbster and Shandwick (see map), lie in the territory of the cat people;
(e) that Golspie is probably in the tribal territory of the former Lugi;
(f) that the cat in question, if a wild cat Felis silvestris (grampia), was intended to represent a black cat, and
(g) that thanks to cryptozoology we now have a candidate for this unexpected role.

There are officially two felines in the mainland British fauna. Most of the millions of domestic stock are notionally Felis catus, bred here since Roman times and probably originating in the North African cat Felis silvestris (lybica). The thousands of wild cats, confined to the north of Scotland (for the distribution, see Arnold, 1993), are F. silvestris (grampia), the British representative of the European F. silvestris (silvestris). There has been much interbreeding with domestic escapees, "feral cats", but a minority stock - perhaps 20-25% - of pure F. silvestris remains.

Unofficially it is now fairly certain that one much larger animal, the American puma ("cougar, mountain lion"), Felis concolor, is not only at liberty in several areas of Britain but has been breeding for some generations. Puma stock originated in escapes from zoos or menageries, or the release of embarrassing pets - the puma, when fed and cossetted in captivity, is readily tamed. It would be entirely possible for pumas to live and breed in our "wild". There must be half a million badgers in Britain, but how many people have ever met an adult badger in daylight? Curiously, pumas have been seen by quite a lot of people (cf Shuker, 1989, Pls 2 and 3; Francis, 1983, passim), with paw-marks and even stray hairs identified. The odd North American lynx, Lynx canadensis (lynx), seems also to have escaped (Francis, 1983). Even more unofficially, reports of The Beast of This-or-That - slaying sheep, attacking cars, scaring hikers and ramblers - in terms better suited to a sabre-toothed tiger probably include puma sightings (certainly so in Cornwall and Devon), but may embrace a larger and far more dangerous animal. The so-called "black panther" is the black-coated form of the leopard, Panthera pardus - a common morph in South-East Asia - and one merely hopes that this carnivore has never attained breeding status. An hypothesis (Francis, 1983) that some large black, or tawny, feline the size of a tiger or of an adult leopard has survived in nooks of Britain since post-glacial times, awaiting taxonomic classification, cannot really be sustained.

Where does this leave us? These exotic big cat escapees are of recent date; possibly the odd one pre-1939, but mostly post-1950. On the map, Fig. 3, I show points where over the last decade or so crofters, gamekeepers, ghillies and persons familiar with Scotland's normal fauna have reported sightings of large unidentified felines. Open circles show beasts described as grey or buff or tawny (these must include at least one escaped puma); black circles, the same sort of animal but entirely black.

I make no comment except to suggest that some of the "big black cat" sightings refer, with pardonable exaggeration, to a melanistic (black-coated) morph of the Scottish wild cat F. silvestris. This in itself is a comment that could not have been adduced a decade ago or, if then made, would have been explained as hybridisation between an ordinary wild cat and a black domestic cat. That we can entertain the idea now is entirely due to the courage and persistence of the writer, researcher and practical naturalist Di Francis (1983; 1993a). Having postulated that a population of supposedly melanistic F. silvestris has existed for some time in game-forests south of the Moray Firth - the present type-specimen comes from Kellas, whence the provisional name "Kellas cat" - Ms Francis obtained various shot animals, and finally a small breeding colony (Francis, 1993b). Overcoming formidable obstruction from some sadly closed minds in the scientific community, she has been partly vindicated now by Sir Andrew Kitchener's study of eight such black cats (Kitchener, in Francis, 1993b, 211-3; cf earlier Kitchener, 1991). Their taxonomic range embraced F. silvestris x catus hybrids, some close to domestic stock, one very close to silvestris; and one that is clearly a melanistic wild cat, something

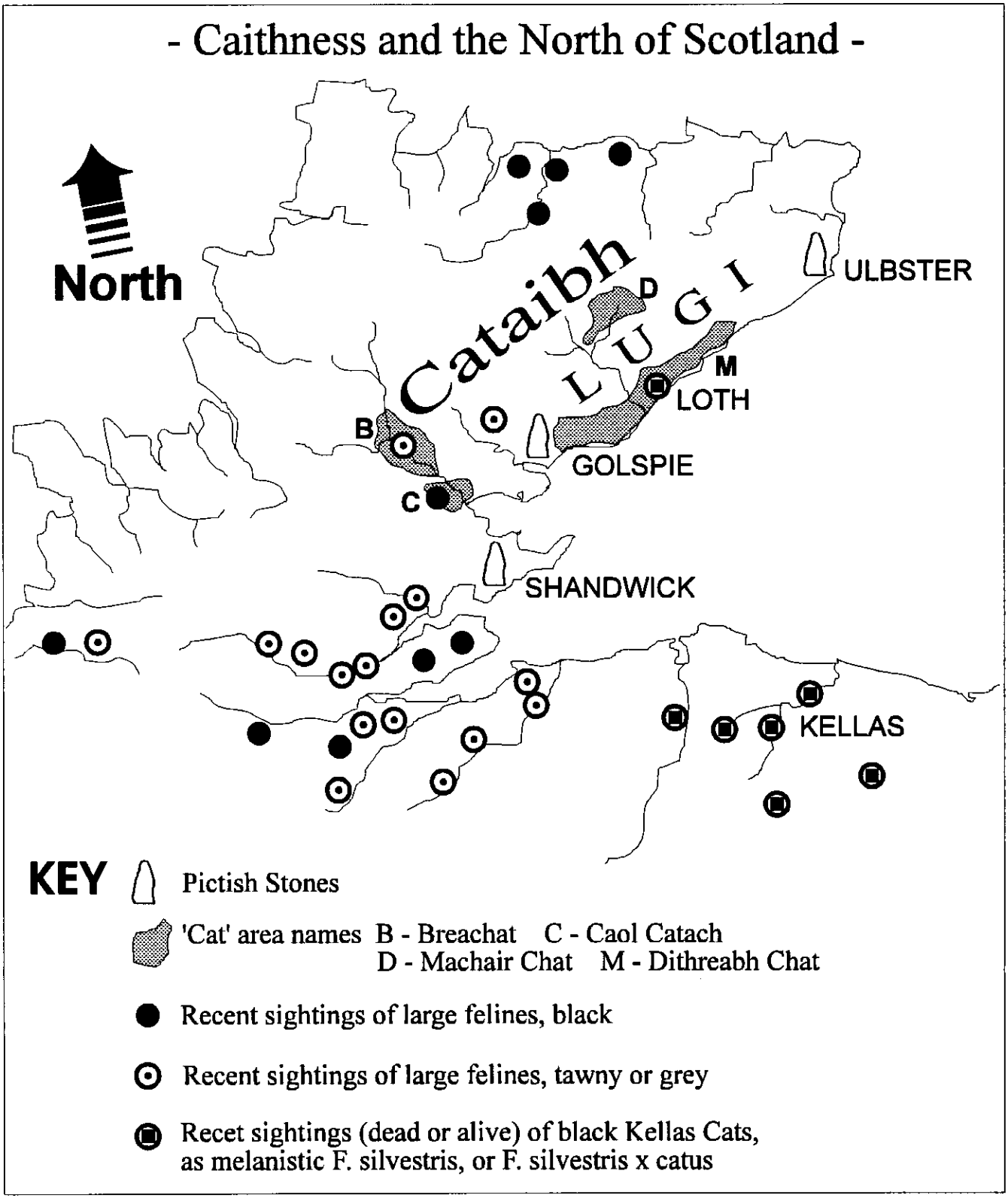

Fig. 3. - Area names and instances of "Cat" sightings in the north of Scotland
(Copyright C. Thomas/Nick Simpson from original drawing by Carl Thorpe)

hitherto regarded as impossible. We may yet see F. silvestris var niger (syn. kellasiensis?) added to our faunal roll. In short, authentic and visibly all-black wild cats exist.

Our postulate is therefore that a former incidence of this variety, alongside a larger population of tabby or striped wild cats, underlay the tribal name Lugi and subsequently an area or tribal label, for much of Sutherland if not also Caithness and a part of Inverness, on the lines of Tir i Cattaibh "Land amongst the Cats". In no sense would this imply that Pictish chieftains kept them as pets. F. silvestris, at any rate the male, seems impossible to tame (Pitt, 1930, and all standard works), and the only recent case was the naturalist Mike Tomkies' ability to rear a female to the point where she would tolerate repeated contact (Tomkies, 1987, Ill). The Kellas cat is a large and ferocious-looking beast. Francis records, from gamekeepers and others familiar with this animal in the wild for some generations, behavioural aspects including swimming in rivers and catching fish. This may be pertinent to the unique depiction, cat over salmon, on the Golspie Stone scene, Fig. 2. Several cryptozoologists (Shuker, 1989, 80; Francis herself, 1993b) point out that an earlier existence of the black cat may be implied by folklore references to the Cait Sith, or "Fairy Cat" (Campbell, 1900, 32) J G Campbell wrote that ". . such are explained to be of a wild, not a domesticated, breed, to be as large as dogs, of a black colour, with a white spot on the breast, and to have arched backs and erect bristles". It should be stressed that "fairy cats" or "giant cats" figure more widely in Insular Celtic legend, but we are concerned now specifically with black ones. The "bristles" are the long distinct guard hairs in the black pelage, and Francis, from personal observation of her specimens, offers valuable comments.

I suggest that the Golspie Stone gives us a devolved and necessarily stylised depiction; the claws, digging into the fish, are there, there is a hint of an open-mouthed snarl, and the bushy tail has been given a conventional form (unlike the Grantown stone's reindeer, a realistic picture of a surviving Rangifer tarandus and probably a semi-domesticated stag, the wild cat is secretive and unlikely to pose for prolonged lateral viewing). If it is F. silvestris, the clues point to it being the black morph, the Cait Sith in Lugi territory. There is just enough material to allow us to entertain the idea that, among the Pictish Class I symbols, there once existed a Kellas cat.

Charles Thomas.

Author's note; I am deeply indebted to Di Francis, for information and discussion over a good few years, to Carl Thorpe for kindly drawing the original Figs. 1 & 3, and to Nick Simpson for re-working them. Also to Tom Gray and Dr. Jack Burt for generously providing the Ulbster Stone (cover illustration) and the essential Fig.2, - the ECMS illustrations of the Golspie stone are not clear.

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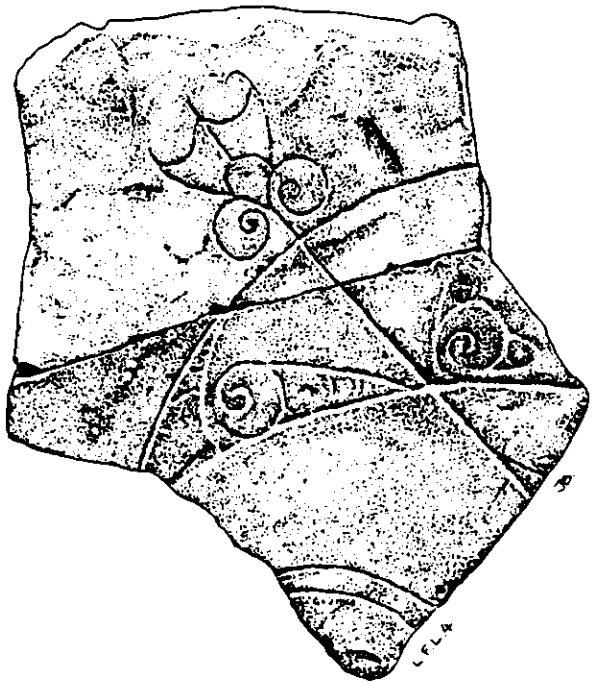

Little Ferry Links 4, Sutherland (both fragments)

Dál Riada and the Golden Age of Celtic Art

It is widely agreed that post-Roman Celtic art blossomed at the beginning of the C8th, and this **floruit** has been seen as primarily an Irish phenomenon. This view stems from the long-held assumption that Celtic art survived in Ireland where there was no Roman overlay, to re-emerge in the C5th and be incubated during the C6th and C7th. During the latter part of this period new techniques and motifs from the Germanic world on the one hand and the Christian Mediterranean on the other brought about the beginnings of the "Golden Age" of Celtic art.

This view has found many expressions, most notably in the writings of Françoise Henry, particularly in her Irish Art in the Early Christain Period to AD 800 (1965), but which has been expressed in one form or another by almost every writer on Early Medieval Celtic art.

I have argued elsewhere that the case for seeing Early Christian period Celtic art as originating in Ireland is misleading; some Celtic ornament survived in Roman Britain to be reinforced by borrowings from the repertoire of late Roman ornamental motifs, which were then transferred to Ireland as part of a wider pattern of "Romanisation" in the C5th (Laing and Laing, 1990, 178-214, Laing, 1990; for the "Romanisation" of Ireland in the C5th see Laing, 1985). In the C5th and C6th there was a common pool of ornament on both sides of the Irish Sea, though increasingly in the C6th local object types and ornamental schemes developed in both regions - in Britain the apogee was reached in the ornament of hanging bowl escutcheons and prints, in Ireland in the decoration of some penannular brooches and other dress fasteners.

It is notable how little exchange there seems to have been between Britain and Ireland in terms of objects as opposed to motifs in the C6th and early C7th. Despite a few recent finds, the hanging bowl series is virtually unrepresented in Ireland, and with the exception of the Bann escutcheon the Irish exemplars can be seen to belong to a very late phase in their development - there is no known hanging bowl that was certainly produced in Ireland before the late C7th or C8th (for hanging bowls generally, see: Bruce-Mitford, 19876; Brenan, 1991; Warner, 1987, which argues for some Irish influence on hanging bowls, while accepting that they are essentially British). Similarly, Irish types of penannular brooch are absent from British sites - leaving aside a couple of brooches from Dál Riada, which are probably C6th/C7th, the only "Irish" brooches in Britain that pre-date the C8th are the example from Pant-Y-Saer, Anglesey (Laing, 1993, no 2), which is not decorated, and the lead die for making brooch moulds from Dinas Powys, Glamorgan (Ibid, no 100), though the lost brooch fragment from Kenfig Burrows in the same county was possibly an Irish import (Ibid, no 19). In short, there is very little evidence for a vigorous trade in the Irish Sea region in art objects in the C5th to C7th AD.

The same may be said for direct trade between Anglo-Saxon England and Ireland. Michael Ryan has reviewed the evidence from Ireland (Ryan, 1991) and has pointed to few items of certain Anglo-Saxon origin; the same may be said for Anglo-Saxon England, where although there are some pieces

of later C8th and C9th date, there is nothing diagnostically Irish that is earlier, with the possible exception of the stud from Camerton, Somerset, and the Roundway Down, Wilts, pin set roundel (for a discussion of these, and whether they were made in Ireland or in Britain, see: Meaney and Hawkes, 1970, 48-9). It is extremely likely, therefore, that any cultural interplay between Britain and Ireland that could have led to Ireland deriving techniques and motifs from Anglo-Saxon England was within a specific milieu which was not connected with regular secular trade.

Thus far we are not on difficult ground, since it is generally accepted that the impact of Anglo-Saxon traditions on Ireland was by way of the monasteries, notably those of Northumbria. This brief review is not the place to discuss the relationship between the Anglo-Saxon monastic world of Northumbria and Ireland; the documentation is extensive, and the subject has been reviewed on numerous occasions (see for example: Moisl, 1984; Smyth, 1984; Cramp, 1986; de Vegvar, 1984). As Ryan has pointed out, the debate about the provenances of manuscripts has confused the issue, and in particular the Book of Lindisfarne has occasioned the attribution of many of its ornamental traits to a Northumbrian origin: "Because it is so accomplished, it is often unconsciously taken as the **fons et origo** of the style in which much of it is painted. It is much better to regard it as the product of a tradition which has other manifestations elsewhere" (Ryan, 1991, 119). Rosemary Cramp has attempted to show to what extent the metalworking represented at Whitby, for example, can be regarded as an "Irish" tradition - her conclusion is that the Whitby assemblage shows little that is distinctively Northumbrain, and that by the mid C8th there were common styles in form and ornament throughout England (Cramp, 1993, 67). She also considered the possibility that some cultural exchanges between Northumbria and the world of Irish craftsmanship had already taken place before monastic workshops started to flourish in the second half of the C7th (Ibid, loc cit).

Given that it is reasonable, therefore, to talk about shared Insular styles in monasteries in England and Ireland in the later C7th and more particularly the C8th, the role of Iona becomes more relevant. That there were close links between Iona and Ireland cannot be disputed, nor can it be disputed that links between Iona and Northumbria were strong, continuing even after the Synod of Whitby in 664.

It is suggested here that Iona was the major intermediary between Britain and Ireland, and was responsible for the dissemination of Anglo-Saxon and Pictish ideas and motifs to Ireland, where they were taken up and integrated with Irish art in the C7th and C8th AD. Through Iona too, ideas and motifs travelled back from Ireland to the Picts on the one hand and Anglo-Saxon England on the other.

To substantiate such a claim, it is of course necessary to establish that Iona had a flourishing artistic tradition. This is complicated by the fact that the monastery was sacked by the Vikings in the later C8th, and by the fact that most of the monastic community, taking it may be assumed most of its treasures with it, was transferred to Ireland in the C9th.

It is likely that Iona was an important cultural centre from its foundation. Adomnán, Columba's biographer, notes that the saint copied a book of hymns for a week in his own hand, and at the time of his death was copying a psalter, which he left unfinished. He also alludes to a third book "written by the dear and holy fingers of St Columba" (Henry, 1965, 59-60). The library on Iona was notably rich - Adomnán's work on The Holy Places was facilitated by the existence on Iona of works on Near Eastern topography, which must have been part of a wider collection of works on eastern hagiography

and Biblical exegesis (Smyth, 1984, 125). We also know of scholars at work on Iona in the time of Adomnán, such as Cú Chuimne (Ibid, loc cit).

To demonstrate the importance of Iona as a centre for Celtic art, it is necessary first to establish which works can be attributed to an Iona tradition, and what features they display may be considered typical of that tradition. Having established this, it then becomes necessary to discuss whether these traits are observable first on Iona, or were taken up on Iona at a secondary stage. This is fraught with problems, given that the only surviving works of any note on Iona are sculptures, and chronology is difficult to establish.

Three major manuscripts have been assigned to an Iona scriptorium, the Cathach of St Columba, the Book of Durrow and the Book of Kells.

The earliest Insular manuscript (as opposed to manuscript written in an Irish monastic foundation abroad) is the Cathach of St Columba. Only 58 pages survive, badly damaged, and decoration is confined to decorative initials in red and yellow. In keeping with some Continental manuscripts, the Cathach displays "diminution", i.e. the letters following the initial become smaller until they merge with the text. Ornament is simple, and comprises peltas, spirals, stemmed crosses and the occasional animal or fish head. It was enshrined at Kells in Ireland probably in the C11th, and traditions set down by Manus O'Donnell in the C16th suggested that it was written by Columba himself. It has been suggested that it was a copy made illicitly from a text of St Jerome that Columba's teacher Finnian brought to Ireland. The palaeography is compatible with a C6th or early C7th date. Henry followed Lawlor in accepting the date (Henry, 1965, 60; Lawlor and Lindsay, 1916, 312). Later commentators have been more circumspect, but it is a technicality whether the book was actually written before Columba left Ireland (as Henry would have us believe) or after he reached Iona. The latter seems a likelier explanation.

The arguments in favour of believing that the Book of Durrow was produced on Iona have been set out by a number of writers, most notably by George Henderson (1987) and by Neuman de Vegvar (1987) and Werner (1990). Most recently, the evidence has been reviewed by me (1994).

In summary:

(a) There are features in the ornament (notably in the treatment of the Evangelist symbols) suggestive of strong links with Pictland, to be expected at Iona.

(b) There is strong Anglo-Saxon influence in some of the animals used as borders, and evidence for Anglo-Saxon-style animals and imports from Anglo-Saxon England are apparent at Dunadd.

(c) It shares with the Book of Kells a distinctive arrangement of the Gospels, not found in other Insular books.

(d) It uses an arrangement of Evangelist symbols grouped together after the order of Irenaeus, again only likely in a monastery with an extensive library.

(e) It uses defective vellum.

(f) Some of the abstract ornamental motifs are found at Dunadd.

(g) It shows a type of tonsure which is unlikely to have been in use in Northumbria after the Synod of Whitby in 664 (though the book may be earlier than that anyway), but which is represented in a cave drawing in Arran.

(h) The Cross-Carpet page shows a knowledge of The Holy Places.

The Book of Kells has similarly been extensively discussed, and again an Iona provenance has been argued strongly by George Henderson (1987) and by Isabel Henderson (1982), and more recently by Mevaert (1989). In contrast to Durrow, most writers have been happy to allow that much if not all of Kells was produced on Iona (cf Brown, 1980, 81; Henry, 1970). Again, the arguments emphasise the Pictish connection in the ornament, the association with Columba, and its concern with the Virgin and Child, as well as its similarity in layout to the Book of Durrow.

The series of carved free-standing crosses of the Iona school are clearly Dalriadic products. They comprise the early crosses from Iona itself, St Oran's, St John's and St Martin's, with the later St Matthew's, and the outlying crosses at Kildalton and Kilnave (Islay), Keills (Knapdale)(Fig 1&2), and the cross at Tarbert (Gigha). There is also an outlier at A' Chill on Canna. For long regarded as an offshoot of the Irish tradition of High Crosses, it was suggested by Stevenson that they preceded their Irish counterparts (1956), and this idea was taken up by the Royal Commission in the Iona Inventory (1982, 17-9), where it was suggested that the inspiration for them came from Northumbria, and that they may have been carved by incoming Picts. Dorothy Kelly has most recently returned to consider the Iona crosses, and expressed the view that they are closely related to the Irish series, and that the debt to Northumbria has been over-rated (1993). Kelly has considered a number of ornamental details which she has seen as linking the West Scottish and Irish crosses; in which area they originated is a subject to which we must return.

Of actual metalwork made on Iona, only a small bronze casting of a head survives (Thomas, 1971, Illus. 37). There is however a glass spiral rod, perhaps for making inlays or beads, a small crucible for casting enamel or metal, and some clay moulds for making glass studs, presumably to inlay in metalwork (Laing and Laing, 1993, 51; Graham-Campbell in Reece, 1981). There is abundant evidence for ornamental metalworking at Dunadd, which has been reviewed in summary in a number of studies (Lane, 1980, 1981 and 1984; Campbell and Lane, 1993; Laing, 1993). The Dunadd metalworking includes clay moulds for a diversity of ornamental castings, crucibles (which included some for gold), and a few ornamental pieces which may or may not have been made there, such as an enamelled interlace-decorated roundel (Laing, 1993, no 190), and a triskele-decorated enamel disc (Ibid, no 189).

The metalworking assemblage from Dunadd helps us to ascribe a few pieces to Dál Riada. The most important of these is the Hunterston Brooch, the Dalriadic origins of which I have discussed elsewhere (Laing, 1993, 6-8). Briefly, the strong Anglo-Saxon or Germanic influence in the Brooch led Stevenson to postulate that it was either made by Anglo-Saxons or by a Celt who had trained in an Anglo-Saxon workshop (Stevenson, 1974, 30; Stevenson, 1983). This fact, and the fact that its general design is matched in the moulds at Dunadd, and its bird heads are similarly matched in the Dunadd mould series and in the Book of Durrow, argues in favour of a Dalriadic origin.

A few other pieces of note can possibly be ascribed to Dál Riada; one of these is a group of pseudo-penannular brooches (some converted into true penannulars) with designs on the terminals in panels which follow the terminal contours. These include the Mull brooches (Laing, 1993, nos 33

and 89), the Pierowall, Orkney brooch (Ibid, no 36), the Bonsall, Derbyshire brooch (Ibid, no 90), the Llys Awel, Clwyd brooch (Ibid, 91), and one from Co Louth (Youngs, 1989, no 194). The terminal design in an ancestral form is found represented among the Dunadd moulds (Laing, 1993, 32). The type is not well represented in Ireland after the time of the "Tara" brooch. Reginald Smith illustrates one in the British Museum (1913-14, Pl XXVI, which he confuses with the Mull brooch already described). The Mull brooch (no 33) has open-mouthed animals of a type not usually encountered in Ireland.

Two other major pieces of metalwork have been seen as Iona products, the St Germain reliquary terminals (attributed to Iona on account of their use of snake bosses and the head of Christ at the end of a scroll as in the Christi Autem page of the Book of Kells), which may have come from a major shrine produced on Iona (for the terminals, see: Hunt, 1958; Henderson, 1987, 171), perhaps at the time of the enshrining of St Columba; the other, less certain, is the Romfohjellen mount (Henry, 1965, Pl 90). This also has a snake boss like motif, though this has recently been shown by Haseloff to have legs (1987, 53).

Two major shrines may also be considered as candidates for an Iona provenance. The first is the Monymusk Reliquary, the only complete or nearly complete house-shaped reliquary in Britain. David Wilson argued that on account of the style of animals that appear on the silver front panels, which can be matched in the St Ninian's Isle silver bowl series, and the use of punched dots for background, that Monymusk is a Pictish product (1973, 128-9). There are arguments against this. The dotted background is found on the Ardagh Chalice and, more significantly, in the Book of Durrow. The Monymusk Reliquary was intended for a major relic of St Columba - it was carried into battle at Bannockburn in 1314. It is much more probable that a reliquary of Columba would have been made on Iona than in Pictland, and we do know that Pictish-style animals were being used in Dál Riada, since they appear on the Iona crosses (though not in quite the same form). The shape of the hinges on Monymusk too is the same as that of the pair of hinges found in a Viking grave at Càrn A' Bharraich on Oronsay (Laing, 1993, nos 245-6), perhaps pointing to a Dalriadic origin.

If Monymusk is Dalriadic, then probably also is the Copenhagen Shrine (Youngs, 1989, 38) and less certainly the later Bologna Shrine (Youngs, 1989; Blindheim, 1984).

Still with shrines, the recently-discovered panels from a small shrine found at Clonore, Co Armagh have a design which at once recalls the ornament on the Kilnave cross (for a convenient illustration of the Shrine, see: Current Archaeology 134, May-July 1993,64).

Dál Riada and her Neighbours

Having thus assembled a corpus of major and lesser works of art that can be assigned to Dál Riada, and more particularly Iona, with varying degrees of certainty, the question of chronology must be addressed. That the Cathach and the Book of Durrow are notably earlier than any of the manuscripts produced in Irish scriptoria that have survived cannot be disputed. Whether of course other manuscripts from major Irish scriptoria, now lost, once existed cannot now be proved one way or the other - but in all probability they did. As far as manuscript art is concerned, all that can be confidently

said about Iona is that from an earlier date than can be proved elsewhere the monastery was producing major Insular manuscripts, with a repertoire of motifs which reflect Pictish and Anglo-Saxon connections.

The question of the pre-eminence of Dál Riada in the field of sculpture is one which needs to be closely considered. That the Iona school sculptures are very closely related to a number found in Ireland cannot be doubted, as has been shown by Kelly (1993); in particular, the relationship of the Kilnave Cross on Islay to those in Ireland is important, since stylistically the Kilnave Cross is the earliest of the Iona school, its ornament being confined (as far as we have it, since much of it has scaled off) to abstract patterns without figural work or animal lacertines. In particular, the Kilnave Cross has

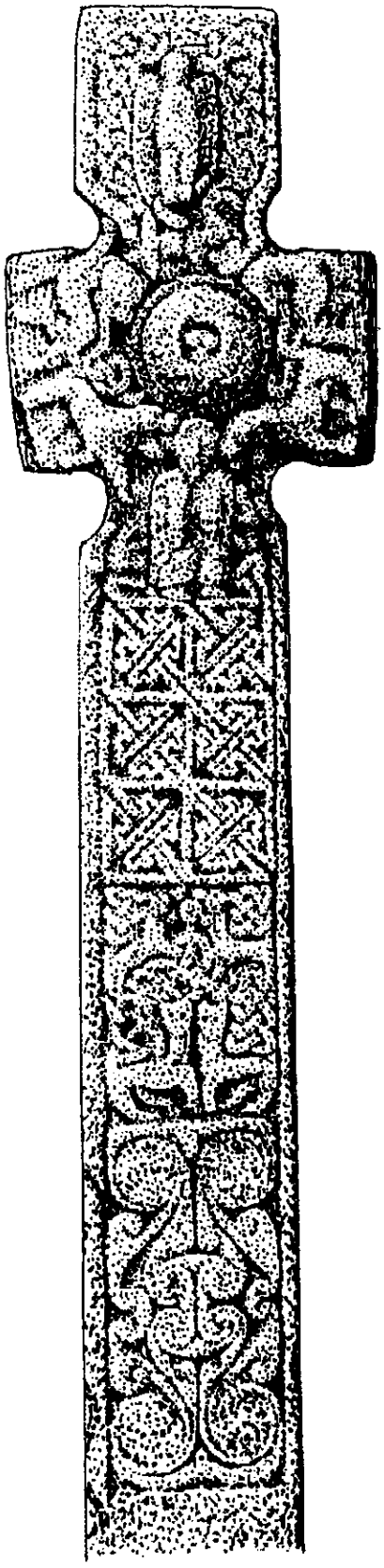

Fig. 1. Keills Cross, Knapdale
(Crown Copyright: RCAHMS)

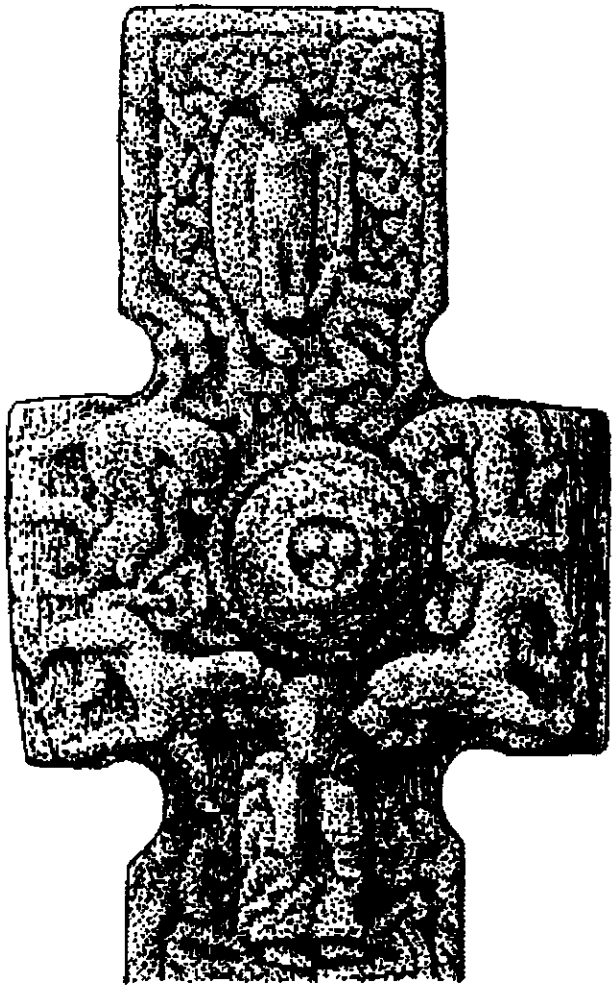

Fig. 2. Keills Cross (detail of cross head).
(Crown Copyright: RCAHMS)

a central boss on its head which is a mirror image of one on the Dromiskin Cross in Co Louth (convenient illustration in Henry,1965, Pl 82). Although the links with Dál Riada are clear on Dromiskin (it has snake boss ornament on its head and it also employs Pictish-style hunt ornament) it is a much more sophisticated monument, and clearly later. The pattern on the roundel on this and the Kilnave Cross both echo a pattern in the Book of Durrow (folio 3v) or on various pieces of metalwork, such as the recently-discovered Lough Kinale Book Shrine (for this, see: Kelly, 1993), or more significantly, the enamelled roundel from Dunadd mentioned above. The same basic pattern is found on hanging bowl escutcheons - eg. the Camerton, Somerset, print (Bruce-Mitford, 1987, Pl IIe) - there are in fact at least twenty hanging bowls with this design (my group I, Laing, 1993, 32), and the design is likely to have originated in metalworking in Britain rather than in Ireland.

This raises the important question of the date of the Iona and Irish High Crosses. In his recent survey of the High Crosses of Ireland, Peter Harbison has expressed the view that all belong to the C9th and C10th, and advances as his evidence that the figural schemes are strongly influenced by Carolingian art (1992, I, passim, especially Chapters V and IX). For our purposes, the key monuments are those of the Western Ossory or Ahenny group. These have been extensively studied by Hicks (1980), Edwards (1983) and Calvert (1978), and by Harbison (1992, 380). Without repeating his summary of the evidence, it may be said that Harbison has advanced a strong case for dating the crosses of the Ahenny group to the C9th rather than later, a date he similarly assigns to the Dromiskin Cross (1992, 381). Edwards however has seen the ornament as related to that on the "boss style" sculptures of Pictland, and accordingly has assigned them to the end of the C8th or the beginning of the C9th (1983, 32).

In the Iona "school" of sculpture, the most significant and distinctive motif is the snake boss. This has been extensively discussed - Curle and Henry (1943), Stevenson (1955, 1956) and Henderson (1987) have all addressed themselves to it, arguing that it was a motif which originated in Pictland and was taken up in Iona. The latest and most carefully argued discussion has however reversed the derivation, and suggests the motif originated on Iona (Mac Lean, 1993). In Ireland snake bosses appear on the arm of the cross at Boho, Co Fermanagh and at Moone, Co Kildare (a Columban foundation), as well as of course on Pictish monuments, notably the Nigg cross-slab and the St Andrews Shrine.

The prominent arrangement of bosses that can be seen at Iona, on St Martin's and St John's Crosses, on the Kildalton Cross and less prominently on the Keills Cross (Fig.1 & 2), are found in Ireland on the Ahenny Crosses, Co Tipperary, the Kilrea Cross, Co Kilkenny (Henry, 1965, Pl 75) and on the South Cross at Clonmacnois, Co Offaly (Ibid, Pl 84).

From Dál Riada a number of devices probably passed into Irish metalworking. Since Hunterston is probably the earliest example of the technique (around the late C7th), the "hollow platform" method of setting filigree may well have been transmitted from Dál Riada to Ireland, to inspire the metalworkers of the Derrynaflan Paten (Fig. 3) and the Ardagh Chalice (Whitfield, 1987, 78). Through Iona could have been transmitted the "Northumbrian" elements detected in the Donore, Co Meath hoard, discussed by Ryan (1991, 120), which also appear on the Lough Kinale Shrine - the arrangement of the latter's ornament has been compared to a carpet page in a gospel, for which the Book of Durrow provides the best model (folio 191v).

Fig. 3. Filigree animals from the Derrynaflan paten, much enlarged.
(Drawn by L Laing)

Ryan has discussed the Anglo-Saxon origin of plant-scroll ornament in Ireland. This device appears on the St Germain reliquary terminals, as Ryan points out (1991, 122).

While not claiming that the Derrynaflan Patten is a Dalriadic product, there are other features in it which might point to a Dalriadic origin. One is its use of interlace, reminiscent of that found in Dál Riada, on die-stamped foils. This interlace is an unusual type, found on some rare C7th pieces in England, most notably on a binding from Taplow, Bucks (Speake, 1980, Pl 14k), on the gold buckle from Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, and on a die from Icklingham, Suffolk (Ibid, Pl 14g). The filigree animals of the Derrynaflan Patten include subjects which look distinctly Pictish, such as the eagle (Ryan, 1983, Motif F), the stags (Motifs G and K), or the kneeling men (Ryan, 1983, colour Pl. 11), while the toothed open-mouthed dragon that appears on the Paten (Motif E) again recalls Pictish animals rather than Irish - seen in a later form on the St Ninian's Isle bowls or on the Monymusk Reliquary. It is particularly notable that the stag in Motif K has hip and shoulder spirals, and the dragons in Motif E have heads like those on some Pictish penannulars, notably the dragon brooch from St Ninian's Isle (Laing, 1993, no 85). Ryan has seen the menagerie of the Derrynaflan Paten as having its origins in Anglo-Saxon art (1991, 124, where he cites as a parallel the Gandersheim casket) - but in point of fact the Pictish analogies are closer. Could it be that the finest works of C8th Irish metalwork were products of Columban foundations? Certainly many of the major pieces have been found in eastern Ireland and particularly in fairly close proximity to major Columban houses.

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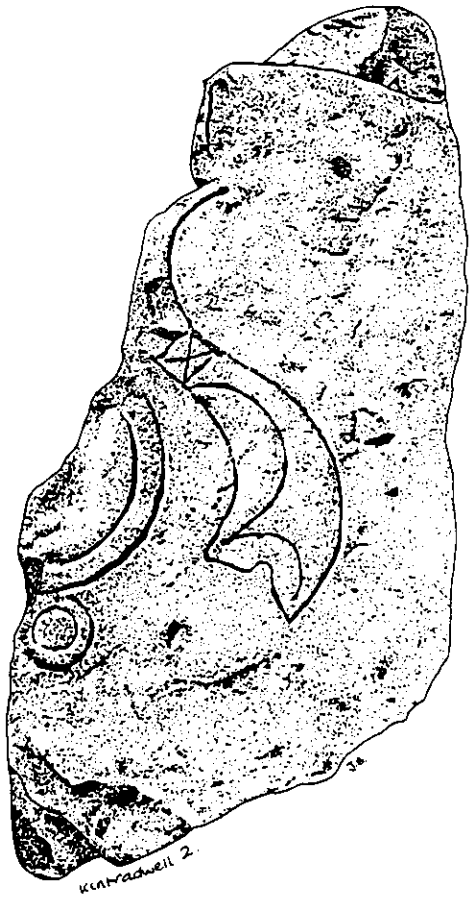

Kintradwell 2, Sutherland

early historic chains of power

One of the most distinctive artefact types found in Early Historic Scotland are the massive silver chains, some of which are decorated with Pictish symbols, but which are mainly found in south-east Scotland, south of the Forth. In a recent study of Early Medieval Ireland, Richard Warner argued that only two types of Early Medieval Celtic artefact could be securely linked with kingship: symbols of office and chains (1988, 65). Chains certainly appear to have been important Celtic religious symbols (Ross, 1959). The poem Y Gododdin from south-east Scotland mentions chains twice, though their presence has sometimes been overlooked (Alcock, 1983, 14), in verses A.48 and A and B.87. Both these references warrant detailed attention. It has been argued that Y Gododdin was not composed until the C10th AD (Sweetser, 1988, 140-1), which would largely invalidate it as a source of evidence for earlier periods, but this late dating is somewhat dubious (Sims-Williams, 1991, 26), and the poem appears to contain genuine C6th and C7th material (Koch, 1988).

There is no doubt, however, that the poem does contain some later interpolations (Jackson, 1969, 46-8; Jarman, 1988, lxi-lxiii), a possible example being verse A.48 which describes the imprisonment of Aneirin, the poem's composer (Ford, 1987). The passage, whilst possibly post-dating the original composition of the poem, could nonetheless quite easily be of C6th or C7th date. The crucial part of the verse is from the fifth to eighth lines:

ystynnawc vyg glin
eb ty deyeryn
cadwyn heyernin
am ben vyn deulin

(Canu Aneirin [henceforth CA] lines 542-45).

This has been translated into English in a number of ways:

my knee is stretched out
in an underground dwelling,
there is an iron chain
around my knees

(Jackson, 1969, 135).

My knees stretched out
in an earthen cell.
an iron chain
around my knees

(Ford, 1987, 42).

Outstretched is my knee
In an earthy dwelling,
An iron chain
Around my knees.

(Jarman, 1988, 32).

Whilst differing in detail, all these translations agree on the crucial point, that Aneirin is imprisoned by a *cadwyn heyernin* or iron chain. *Cadwyn* can mean band, bond, fetter or torc and can be used figuratively for captivity, imprisonment or series (Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru [henceforth GPC], 381). *Heyernin* translates as (made of) iron or iron object; figuratively it means pain or hardship (GPC, 1864).

A similar imprisonment is described in Gildas' complaint against the kings of Britain:

vinctos plures in carceribus habentes,
quos dolo sui potius quam merito proterunt catenis onerantes

they keep many prisoners in their jails,
who are more often loaded with chaffing chains because of intrigue than because they deserve punishment.

Another reference to a prisoner in chains occurs in Adomnán's Life of Columba:

Post cuius trucidationem quasi reus in uinculis retentus sum

After he was killed, I was held in chains, as one condemned

(Anderson, 1991, 154-5).

As there are no mentions of Saxons in verse A.48 it is eminently possible that Aneirin was imprisoned by a Celtic king, similar to those described by Gildas (for a different explanation of the verse's meaning, see: Ford, 1987).

Excavations at the royal crannog of Lagore in Ireland produced three iron collars and some fragments of chain interpreted as having been used to confine prisoners (Hencken, 1950, 115-7), though it has been suggested that they were for hunting dogs (Scott, 1978, 229), or high-status hostages (Mytum, 1992, 144). The finest collar was a two-piece hinged example decorated with applied strips of iron twisted into a herringbone pattern. Attached to the collar was a 3.65m long chain formed from figure of eight links (Scott, 1978, 214-8). There was also a simpler undecorated one-piece collar, a fragment of another decorated two-piece collar and several fragments of chain (Ibid, 218-21). The complete two-piece hinged collar is a particularly fine and ornate piece of workmanship which would not have been out of place restraining a high-status prisoner such as Aneirin, though Scott's hunting dog suggestion is a credible alternative. One problem with this explanation is that the *cadwyn* was placed around Aneirin's *deulin* or knees (GPC, 938), whereas the Lagore chains probably went around the neck. The passage may refer to leg shackles, which are known from Roman Britain (de la Bedoyère, 1989, 128, Fig 76b).

Aneirin was confined in a *deyernin* dwelling which means earthy, terrene, earthen, of earth, hidden or laid or buried in the earth (GPC, 943). This could reasonably be taken to refer to a souterrain (Edwards, 1991, 29-32; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1981, 115-6; Wainwright, 1963), which were used as for storing goods, and possibly as refuges (Lucas, 1975). It is true that the dating evidence for Scottish

souterrains points towards the first three centuries AD, but the evidence is scanty and souterrains were certainly used in Ireland during the Early Medieval period. Whilst holding prisoners would not have been a major function of souterrains, it is one they were admirably suited to and could occasionally have been used for.

The other chain mentioned in the text of Y Gododdin occurs in verses A and B.87 which extol the virtues of Gorthyn Hir from Rhufoniog:

> e hual amhaual afneuet
> y haual amhal afneuet
>
> (CA lines 1056 and 1079).
>
> His chain was filled to capacity
>
> (Jarman, 1988, 56).

This English translation is "very conjectural" (Jarman, 1988, 139), and the meaning of the line is enigmatic. Ifor Williams offered a number of suggestions, favouring the idea that it refers to the prisoners which Gorthyn kept in his chains (1938, 316-7). What is not in doubt is that *hual* means fetter, gyve, shackle, bond(s), hobble or postern. Figuratively it could mean restriction, restraint, check, trammel, hindrance or impediment (GPC, 1904-5). An alternative possibility, which seems to fit the passage better, is that the *hual* in question was not for prisoners but was worn by Gorthyn Hir himself.

According to a Medieval source, Welsh kings prior to the death of Rhodri Mawr (killed 877) wore gold *hual* rather than crowns (Henderson, 1967, 159). Certainly Gorthyn Hir was:

> mab teyrn teithiawc
> mab brenhin teithiawc
>
> (CA lines 1072 and 1095).
>
> Son of a rightful king
>
> (Jarman, 1988, 56).

which would have entitled him to wear royal regalia. This also explains why only one *hual* is mentioned in the poem: as most of the warriors were not royal, they would not have been allowed to wear *hual.*

Gorthyn Hir was one of the "party from north Wales" (Jackson, 1969, 27-8; Jarman, 1988, xxxvi-xxxvii); specifically, he came from the kingdom of *rywynyauc/rywynauc* (CA lines 1059, 1077, 1082, 1100) or Rhufoniog. We are also told that he fought around the river *Amalet* (CA lines 1060 and 1083) or Aled in north Wales and came from the *o dir/o orthir* (CA lines 1077 and 1100) which means uplands. Rhufoniog is one of the lesser known Welsh kingdoms (Davies, 1982, 98) and appears to have been located in *Y Berfeddwlad* ("The Middle Country") between Gwynedd and Powys (Ibid, Fig 38). About all we know for certain about its history is that the Welsh annals record that in 816:

> Saxones montes Ereri et regum Roweynac inveserunt.
>
> The Saxons invaded the mountains of Eryri and the kingdom of Rhufoniog.
>
> (Morris, 1980, 48 and 89).

One link with the kingdom of Gododdin is that Rhufoniog is supposed to have been founded by Rhufon, one of the sons of Cunedda who migrated from Manau of the Gododdin to north Wales (Miller, 1978, 525). More evidence of Gorthyn's high status and links with north Wales is that he is described as:

> yng gwyndyt/ud gwyndyt
>
> (CA lines 1073 ans 1096).
>
> Lord of the men of Gwynedd
>
> (Jarman, 1988, 56; see GPC 1772-3).

Rhodri Mawr ("The Great"), the son of King Merfyn of Gwynedd, inherited his father's kingdom in 844. After the death of Cyngen of Powys in 855, he acquired that kingdom and in 872 he absorbed Ceredigion. This made him undisputed master of all north Wales (Davies, 1982, Fig 40). Rhufoniog, located between Gwynedd and Powys and overrun by Saxons as recently as 816, was almost certainly swallowed up in the expansion of Rhodri's power. The use of the identical term *hual* in both texts and the geographical links between Gorthyn Hir and Rhodri Mawr suggest that Gorthyn Hir wore a symbolic chain of kingship.

In an interesting passage Gildas writes of:

> omnis regni argenti et quod his maius est propiae voluntatis distenecionibus ruptis
>
> the chains of all royal power, gold, silver
>
> (Winterbottom, 1978, 33 and 102).

Are Gildas' chains simply metaphorical, or could he be referring to actual *hual* made of precious metals? Poetic chains are "well imbedded in the Ulster Cycle" (Mallory, 1986, 53). In particular *rond* and *slabrad,* made of silver seem to be an early feature, and these have been linked to the silver chains found in Scotland (Ibid, 53 and 65); are these Scottish chains the physical counterpart of the poetic *hual?* Whilst Y Gododdin does mention *ariant,* silver (GPC 203) several times, in the Reciter's Prologue, verse A.65 and the Gorchan of Cynfelyn, it does not specify what material the *hual* is made of.

Ten silver chains weighing between 22.1oz and 92.5oz made up of linking pairs of rings, sometimes with penannular terminal rings have been found in Scotland (Dunglas and Smith, 1881; Edwards, 1939; Henderson, 1979; Smith, 1874; Stevenson, 1956). That these chains were valuable artefacts is amply demonstrated by the high quality of craftsmanship and their precious metal content, between 76.5% and 92.7% silver (Dunglas and Smith, 1881, 69-70); Ralston and Inglis, 1984, 55). To link them to Gorthyn Hir's *hual* we need to consider their ethnicity, dating and function. All of these are problematical because none of the chains have been found in secure archaeological contexts. Previous attempts to link these silver chains with Y Gododdin have suggested that they were referred to in the poem as torcs (Alcock, 1983, 14; Laing, 1975, 58), but this is not really acceptable, (Cessford, forthcoming).

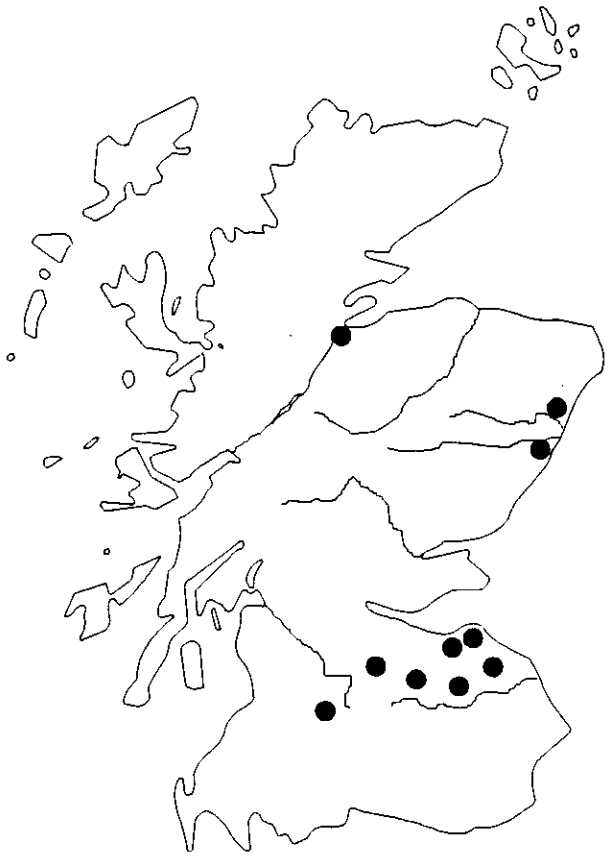

Fig. 1. Distribution of Silver Chains found in Scotland
(Redrawn from I. Henderson, 1979)

On the question of the chains' ethnicity there are two apparently contradictory pieces of evidence. Five of the chains have associated penannular terminal rings and two of these have engraved symbols, filled with red enamel, which are more commonly found on Pictish stones. However, six of the chains come form the territory of the kingdom of Gododdin, one comes from further to the south-west in Lanarkshire and only three of the ten come from northern Scotland (Henderson, 1979, Fig 1). If the chains are Pictish, why have 70% been recovered from southern Scotland, but if they were created by the Gododdin why do some have Pictish symbols? It is noteworthy that the two chains with associated engraved symbols, from Whitecleuch (Lanarkshire), and Parkhill (Aberdeenshire)(Fig. 2), do not come from Gododdin territory, whilst the chains from Hordwheel (Berwickshire), Walston (Lanarkshire) and Whitlaw Farm (Berwickshire) which lie in the Gododdin area and have terminal rings do not have any symbols. Whilst there is no evidence that the two sets of engraved symbols were added at a later date, perhaps after the chains had already moved outside Gododdin territory, this is possible. Another possibility is that the chains not from the kingdom of Gododdin were high-status diplomatic gifts. Y Gododdin records that warriors from Aeron (Ayrshire - A.18, A.21, A.34, A.36, A.37, A and B.66, A and B.67, A.80, B.97 and the Gorchans of Cynfelyn and Tudfwlch) and Pictland (B.22 and B.49) fought in the Gododdin warband. Such friendly military relations could have resulted in gifts of silver chains between respective rulers. These chains could have had symbols specially added, perhaps giving the names of their recipients.

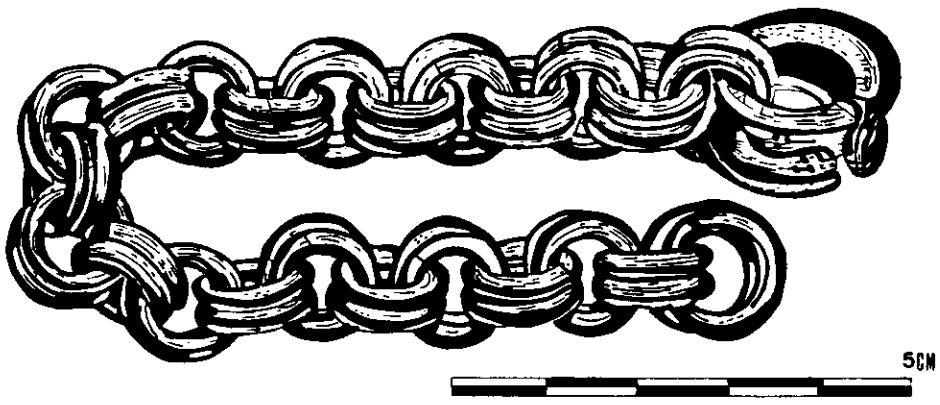

Fig. 2. Silver Chain with Pictish symbols from Parkhill, Aberdeenshire
(PSAS 15, Dunglas and Smith, 1881)

Another point against a Pictish origin is that another chain from the C6th or early C7th Gaulcross hoard (Stevenson and Emery, 1964), which is composed of Pictish metalwork, is of a completely different and more rope-like appearance and was manufactured using different techniques (Ibid, 209-11; Youngs, 1989, 26, Fig 7). This chain is best explained as a piece of Pictish metalwork whose basic idea was derived from the Gododdin chains. We also know from a late Roman hoard at Traprain Law, a site where a chain was found (Edwards, 1939), that Roman hacksilver was available in large quantities in the kingdom of Gododdin (Curle, 1923), and there is evidence of silverworking in southern Scotland at the Mote of Mark (Swindells and Laing, 1977, 123). None of the various quasi-historical explanations of how the majority of the chains ended up in southern Scotland if they were Pictish (eg Henderson, 1979, 22; Laing, 1975, 59; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1981, 173) are very convincing. Most of the explanations involve them being taken as Northumbrian loot, but this ignores the fact that none of them have been found in the Northumbrian heartland in north-east England.

The question of dating the chains has usually been based on dating the Pictish symbols. Unfortunately, it is impossible to date the Pictish stones themselves accurately (Laing and Laing, 1984), so it is problematical to date the chains this way. The symbols on the chains have usually been dated to the C7th and early C8th centuries AD, but a late C6th or early C7th date is equally possible (Ibid; Laing, 1975, 58). If the chains were manufactured in the kingdom of Gododdin, then they must predate the fall of Edinburgh to the Angles after the *obsessio Etin*, recorded in the Annals of Ulster and Tighernach as happening in 635 or 638 (Jackson, 1959), and the ending of the kingdom. Therefore Laing's suggestion of a late C6th or early C7th date, which is supported by the Gaulcross hoard, seems probable.

The question of the chains' function was discussed by Smith (1874), who rejected earlier ideas of ring money or an ecclesiastical function. He proposed that they were worn as symbols of some kind and this is the generally accepted view, which fits well with Rhodri Mawr's *hual*. There is no absolute evidence to support this theory, but it remains the most likely possibility. It has been suggested that the heads on the Sutton Hoo whetstone sceptre (Bruce-Mitford, 1978, 311-93), which is made of Lower Palaeozoic greywacke found in southern Scotland, and may have been carved there, are wearing silver chains (Enright, 1983, 127-8). This is an intriguing theory but the degree of detail on the sceptre is insufficient to be categorical about this. As the chains are quite thick and only around 45cm long, they were probably worn not around the neck but across the chest (Alcock, 1983, 14).

These silver chains were probably manufactured in the kingdom of Gododdin during the late C6th and early C7th AD and worn across the chest as status symbols. They can reasonably be equated with the royal *hual* of Gorthyn Hir and Rhodri Mawr. Chains are only mentioned twice in Y Gododdin, this relative paucity being due to the fact that imprisonment and royal symbols are peripheral to the poem's main sphere of interest, the heroism of the warband of Gododdin. Both the *cadwyn* and the *hual* of the poem can be paralleled archaeologically. Chains, both to restrain high status prisoners and be worn by kings, were important Celtic symbols of power. Indeed, the only fault to be found with Warner's statement about royal artefacts (1988, 65) is that his division between chains and royal symbols of power does not appear to be a real one.

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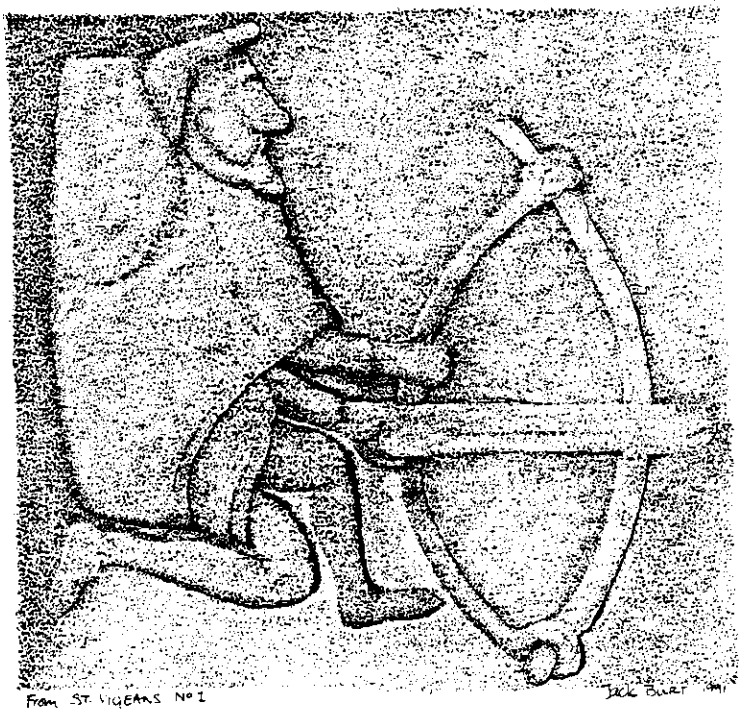

St. Vigeans 1 (detail)

Stilicho, Claudian and the Picts

At the end of the C4th, the western half of the Roman Empire was ruled by the Emperor Honorius, behind whose throne lurked the ambitious half-Vandal general Flavius Stilicho. Also present at the Imperial court was the poet Claudius Claudianus (Claudian), of whose works a number have survived, including several poems which contain references to the Picts. This article will examine these references to discover what significance, if any, they have for Pictish studies.

Since Alan Cameron's major analysis of Claudian's works (Cameron, 1970), we have been in a position to assign each poem a fairly specific date of composition or recitation, and thus the "Pictish references" can be arranged in chronological order.

The first two extracts(*) are retrospective, referring back to successful campaigns waged on the British frontier in the late 360's by Stilicho's old mentor, Count Theodosius.

> [Theodosius] leves Mauros nec falso nomine Pictos
> edomuit Scottumque vago mucrone secutus
> fregit Hyperboreas remis audacibus undas
>
> [Theodosius] tamed the nimble Moors and the not ill-named Picts;
> his roaming sword pursued the Scot,
> his daring oars broke northern waves.
>
> (Poem vii, lines 54ff. Recited January 396).

> [Theodosius] Caledoniis posuit qui castra pruinis,
> qui medio Libyae sub casside pertulit aestus,
> terribilis Mauro debellatorque Britanni
> litoris ac pariter Boreae vastator et Austri.
> Quid rigor aeternus, caeli quid frigore prosunt
> ignotumque fretum? maduerunt Saxone fuso
> Orcades; incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thyle;
> Scottorum tumulos flevit glacialis Hiverne.
>
> [Theodosius], who pitched his camp in Caledonian snows,
> who, helmeted, endured a Libyan summer's heat;
> terror of the Moor, conqueror of Britain's shore,
> equal scourge of North and South.
> What avail the eternal snows, the frozen air,
> the uncharted sea?
> Orkney ran red with Saxon slaughter,
> Shetland glowed with Pictish blood,
> ice-bound Ireland bewailed the burial-mounds of Scots.
>
> (Poem viii, lines 26ff. January 398).

The second group of extracts refers to the reign of Honorius and the consulship of Stilicho.

quantam te principe possim
non longinqua docent, domito quod Saxone Tethys
mitior aut fracto secura Britannia Picto

What can I achieve when you [Honorius] are prince
is not far to seek: conquered Saxon, gentler seas,
broken Pict, and Britain free from care.

(Poem xviii, lines 391ff. Spring 399).

Inde Caledonio velata Britannia monstro,
ferro picta genas, cuius vestigia verrit
caerulus Oceanique aestum mentitur amictus:
"me quoque vicinis pereuntem gentibus" inquit
"munivit Stilicho, totam cum Scottas Hiverne
movit et infesto spumavit remige Tethys.
Illius effectum curis, ne tela timerem
Scottica, ne Pictum tremerem, ne litore toto
prospicerem dubiis venturum Saxona ventis".

Then, wrapped in Caledonian garb,
her cheeks tattooed, her azure train
counterfeiting Ocean's surge to unprint her footsteps,
Britain spoke:
"When neighbouring peoples would have killed me,
Stilicho gave me forts - for the Scot stirred all Ireland against me
and my sea foamed beneath the hostile oars.
[Stilicho] took such care, I do not fear the Scottic javelin
nor tremble at the Pict, nor on all my coast
search each doubtful wind for the approaching Saxon".

(Poem xxii, lines 247ff. January 400).

In this extract, Claudian is speaking of Stilicho's gathering of troops for a battle against the Visigoths in Italy:

venit et extremis legio praetenta Britannis,
quae Scotto dat frena truci ferroque notatas
perlegit exanimes Picto moriente figuras

and there came the legion, shield of the frontier Britons,
check of the grim Scot,
whose men had watched the life leave the tattoos on the dying Pict.

(Poem xxvi, lines 416ff. May-June 402).

Historians have been keen to see the above references as preserving reports of an otherwise unattested campaign which Stilicho waged against the Picts (eg Johnson, 1980, 102-3; Frere, 1967, 363; Morris, 1973, 21). Support for this view has been drawn from the writings of the C6th British monk Gildas, who appears to mention that Roman forces fought and defeated the Picts sometime in the period around 400 (Gildas Ch 15). Under close scrutiny, however, the historicity of Stilicho's Pictish war can be seen to rest on somewhat tenuous grounds.

First and foremost, the poetry of Stilicho cannot be admitted as authentic historical narrative. Claudian was not a historian, but a poet, and a panegyrist poet at that. His role in life was similar to that of the bards of Celtic society, namely to praise the actions of his patrons, and to portray their every deed in a glowing light, thereby strengthening their socio-political position. Claudian was a propagandist, and his patrons were the Emperor Honorius and the general Stilicho. So eager was the poet to enhance the latter's reputation that he devoted an entire poem to the denigration of Eutropius, Stilicho's greatest political rival. We should therefore be wary of assuming that the achievements ascribed by Claudian to Stilicho are not without exaggeration and embellishment. Indeed, the poet's rather rhetorical references to Stilicho's campaigns against the Picts, Scots and Saxons hardly convey any sense that the poet was acquainted with detailed reports of outstanding military successes. The very vagueness of the references seems rather to imply that Stilicho's responsibility for the campaigns was minimal and indirect, or that the wars did not result in major Roman victories. We might even begin to suspect that they never occurred at all.

Any of these explanations can be made to appear plausible. The doubts regarding Stilicho's direct responsibility for leading the campaigns are often sidestepped by suggesting that he may have ordered the campaign, but delegated command in the field to a subordinate. This is, after all, precisely what Stilicho did in the case of an expedition to North Africa in 399 - he even arranged the murder of his able subordinate commander in order to reap the glory for himself (Ferrill, 1983, 94).

The question of whether or not the wars against Picts, Scots and Saxons were successful was addressed by Molly Miller in 1975. Dr Miller concluded that the lack of any real detail in Claudian's verses indicates that the true outcome of the campaigns may not have been a great Roman victory, and hence the details could not be dwelt on for panegyrist purposes (Miller, 1975, 144). As far as the Picts are concerned, Claudian's mention of possible defensive works undertaken by Stilicho ("Stilicho gave me forts") implies that whatever Roman expeditionary forces the latter may have sent to Britain had not been able to pursue any kind of forceful offensive, and had achieved little more than repairing existing fortifications (Ibid).

On the question of whether or not such a campaign ever took place in reality, we can perhaps point to the fact that the overriding goal of Stilicho's career was to secure a powerful position in the eastern half of the Empire. Thus, although he was based in the West, all his energies and stratagems, especially from 399 onwards, remained focused on the East until his dying day (Ferrill, 1983, 94). His obsession with the Eastern Empire even led to his denuding the western frontiers of large numbers of troops for campaigns which he hoped would achieve his primary goal (ibid, 93). It would surely have been out of character for Stilicho suddenly to turn aside from his chosen career path and instead become embroiled in border-wars in Britain, the far-flung outpost of the Western Empire. It is difficult to find any logical motivation for such action on Stilicho's part, other than as an attempt to emulate the successes of Theodosius, who had freed the Roman province of Britain from the Picts and other Barbarians in 369.

Why, then, would Claudian mention the Picts, Scots and Saxons in connection with Stilicho? Perhaps the very remoteness of Britain served the poet as a literary device, which could be employed to give the impression that Stilicho's power truly encompassed the whole Western Empire, even to

its outermost limits (Esmonde-Cleary, 1989, 46)? Or perhaps Claudian sought to place Stilicho on a par with the great Theodosius by crediting him with victories, whatever their basis in fact, which mirrored those of the Theodosian campaign?

Like Claudian, Gildas cannot always be accepted as a reliable authority, especially in his account of the C4th Roman-Pictish wars (Collingwood and Myres, 1937, 294). In fact, without the dubious testimony of Claudian, we would have no specific campaign to which the account of Gildas could be attached.

It was once believed that tiles found near the Roman fort at Pevensey in southern England provided archaeological evidence for Stilicho's involvement in Britain, since they were stamped with the name of the Emperor Honorius (Frere, 1967, 363). However, these tiles have since been shown to be modern fakes (Peacock, 1973). The truth of the matter is that there is at present no archaeological support for Claudian's verses, nor is any such information likely to be unearthed. Even if future excavation at, say, a Hadrian's Wall fort should demonstrate refurbishment in c399-400, it would require a great leap of the imagination to ascribe the work to a Pictish campaign undertaken by Stilicho.

In short, then, there seems little support for the theory that Stilicho waged a historical war against the Picts, still less that he led any such military expedition in person. The most that we can deduce from Claudian's poems is that the pro-Stilicho faction at the court of Honorius sought to show the Roman world that the general's power was so pervasive that even the far-flung Picts lay under his dominance. As far as genuine history is concerned, however, we must allow for the possibility that Stilicho's Pictish war may in reality never have occurred, and that Claudian employed the Picts merely as "poetic padding" (Collingwood and Myres, 1937, 291).

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(*) The Latin extracts and English translations are taken from Molly Miller's 1975 paper (see below).

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hawks and torcs

In PAS Journal 5 Ross Trench-Jellicoe drew attention to the bird that the female figure on the Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab is carrying (1994). He suggested that the bird, like another shown on the St Andrews Sarcophagus, is perched on a "torc". I would challenge the identification of the item at St Andrews as a torc, any similarities between it and the object on the Hilton of Cadboll stone being probably superficial. Judging by the excellent drawing in the article (Fig 4, 5) the "torc" could well be part of a serpent that is being gripped in the bird's claws. The further suggestion that torcs served as both jewellery and bird perches (6-7), while not impossible, seems rather implausible. A better parallel for the Cadboll torc is an item carved on Monifieth 2 (Allen and Anderson, 1903, 229-30) (Fig. 1) which is of similar shape and size and occupies the same position in the centre of the chest of the main (probably female) figure on that cross-slab. This similarity has been noted by Margaret Nieke, who classifies the two items as brooches (1993, 129), but the Monifieth sculpture, like Cadboll, could well depict a torc. The Monifieth figure is not associated with any birds, which weakens the interpretation of the Hilton of Cadboll item as a bird perch. Also, though birds of prey (ravens and eagles) and torcs are both commonly mentioned in Y Gododdin the poem does not link them at all, suggesting there was no connection between torcs and hawking. In any case, if the bird was sitting on the torc surely it would perch centrally rather than near a terminal.

Hawking was undoubtedly a popular pastime of the Pictish aristocracy, just as it was in Anglo-Saxon England (Owen-Crocker, 1991, 220-29) and Medieval Scotland (Gilbert, 1979, 68-72). A woman like the Cadboll figure would have kept her hawk on *jesses*. These were short strips of leather, or in the case of an aristocratic family possibly silk, which were fastened round each leg of the bird. The other end of the *jesses* would be tied to a *varvel* (small ring) worn over a finger. A thick protective glove would be worn on the hand with the *varvel* and the bird would perch on the gloved hand. A horseman on a C10th sculpture at Sockburn in Co Durham is shown holding a hawk by this method (Bailey, 1980, 113, Pl 39). Unfortunately the Hilton of Cadboll stone is rather worn, but it seems likely that the bird is sitting on the woman's hand rather than the "torc". Indeed, a lady with hawk on fist is a common motif indicating nobility in Medieval art.

Trench-Jellicoe suggests that we may be able to recover evidence of hawking archaeologically (1994, 5). Leather or silk *jesses* are unlikely to survive except under exceptional conditions and would in any case be difficult to identify as they were simply strips of material. *Varvels* also present identification problems as it would be difficult to distinguish them from other rings. They have to be larger than normal finger rings to fit over leather gloves, but other rings, e.g. those used in horse harness, could be the same size. Two Medieval *varvels* are known from England, one from Hedingham Castle and a gold example in the British Museum which belonged to Henry IV (Steane, 1993, 155). Gloves are also unlikely to survive and would only be identifiable as hawking gloves because they are thicker than normal. Hoods to cover the eyes were introduced to Western Europe by the Emperor Frederick II, too late for them to have been used by the Picts. Another possibility is the recovery of the bones of birds of prey during archaeological digs, though I am not aware of any examples from Pictish sites. Pictish hawking, and hunting in general, certainly deserve more attention, a good starting point being the list of hunting scenes given in The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland, 407-8.

Fig. 1. Monifeith 2 (back)
(Allen & Anderson ECMS)

Craig Cessford.

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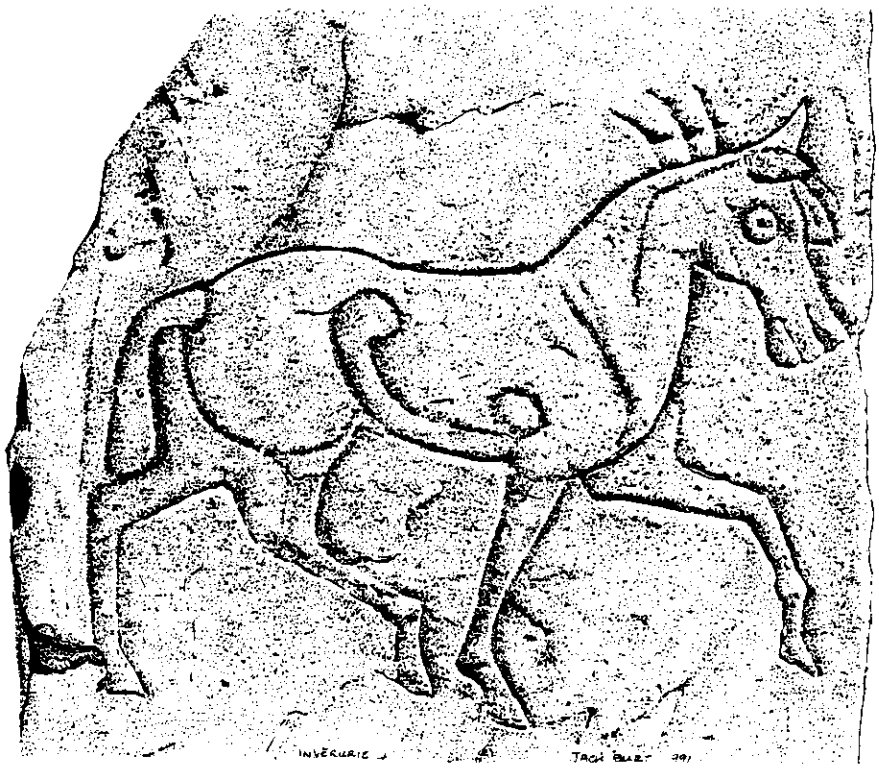

Inverurie 4, Gordon

pictish helmets

As always, Graeme Cruickshank produced an interesting and thought-provoking piece in his article "Did the Picts Wear Helmets?" (PAS Journal 5, Spring 1994, 8-11). Combined with Ross Trench-Jellicoe's article in the same volume, it shows how carefully conceived and complex the imagery of the Kirkton of Aberlemno cross-slab really is. As well as the Balblair Stone which Graeme mentioned, there are a number of other Pictish or Picto-Scottish stones which it has been suggested portray helmets, i.e. Benvie, Dupplin Cross and the Class I symbol stone Congash 2 (Laing and Laing, 1984, 280, Fig 1). All these examples lack explicit detail and are open to other interpretations; the unique symbol incised on Congash 2 could represent a bow and arrow, while the headgear that figures on the other two sculptured stones mentioned seem to be wearing could be ceremonial rather than military, but these stones do imply that possible helmets are rather more common in Scottish Dark Age sculpture than Graeme implies.

There are also another two pieces of evidence from southern Scotland which suggest that helmets may not have been unknown at least to the Picts' neighbours south of the Forth. Five bronze bosses and over fifty fragments of bronze plates were "found together in Dumfriesshire many years ago, the locality being now unknown" (Kinnear, 1906, 342). They were identified as the outer decoration of a ceremonial helmet similar to Continental *Spangenhelme* that reached Scotland either as booty or through gift exchange (de Paor, 1961, 194). Their identification as a helmet has recently been challenged and it has been suggested that the fragments came from a shrine or altar cross (Webster, 1991, 173-5), but the evidence is inconclusive and the helmet theory still has several points in its favour.

Despite Kenneth Jackson's assertion that helmets were not worn by the warriors in the poem Y Gododdin (1969, 32), there is one possible reference in verse 12 (XI A), lines 104-5: *Coch eu cleddyfawr, na phurawr/ Eu lläin*, which is usually translated as: "Blood-stained [or red] were their swords, may their spears not [or never] be cleansed" (Jackson, 1969, 120; Jarman, 1988, 8). *Phurawr* is assumed to be related to *puro* "to cleanse", but this is problematical, and it could well come from the Latin *porus* "crest" or "helmet", as suggested by Ifor Williams (1938, 97-8), which would give us: "Redder were their swords than their crests", which is best interpreted as a reference to helmets with red plumes. When combined with the next line of the verse: *gwyn calch a phedryollt pennawr*, "White were the shields and square-pointed the spearheads" (Jarman, 1988, 8-9), this gives us a list of sword, helmet, shield and spear as weapons which can be compared with other weapon lists such as the spear, shield, sword and knife that belonged to the warrior Heinif in verse 95 (XCVIII B) (Ibid, 62-3). This makes more sense than spears being listed twice which is what happens if one follows the common interpretation.

The Aberlemno sculptor does seem to have used helmets to distinguish the Picts' foes; the identity of the warrior represented as dead on the stone is not certain, but I have equated him with the Northumbrian king Ecgfrith in the past (Cessford, 1993, 185). This need not imply, however, that the Picts did not wear helmets at all. Pictish helmets could simply have been rare (as indeed they seem to have been elsewhere in the island of Britain), or of a different form from those depicted at Aberlemno.

Craig Cessford.

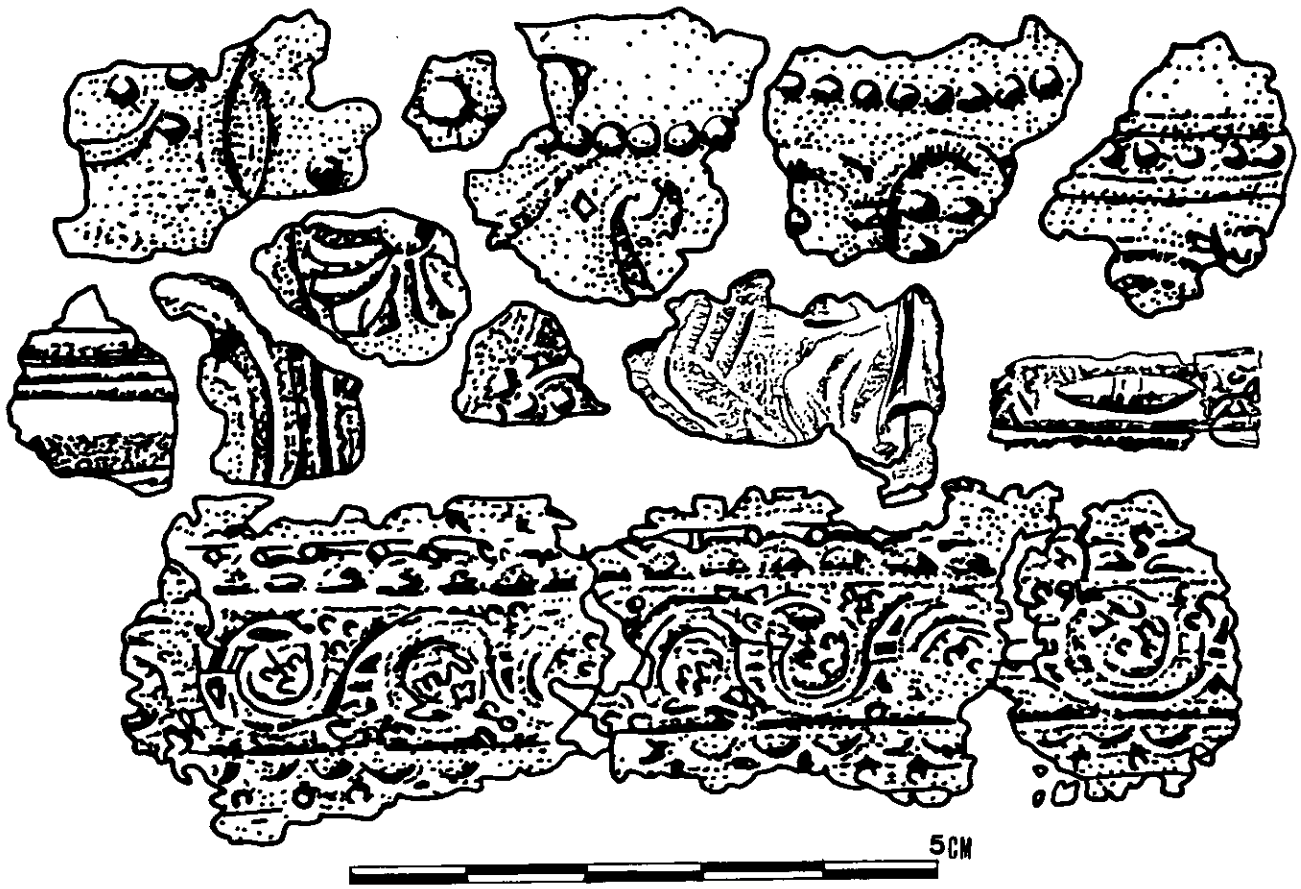

Fig.1. Fragments of bronze plates which were "found together in Dumfriesshire many years ago, the locality being now unknown"
(Liam de Paor, PSAS 1961)

References

Cessford, Craig	-	"Cavalry in Early Bernicia: A Reply" (Northern History 29, 1993), 185-7.
Jackson, K H	-	The Gododdin: Scotland's Oldest Poem (Edinburgh U P, 1969).
Jarman, A O H	-	Aneirin: Y Gododdin (The Welsh Classics, Llandysul, 1988).
Kinnear, N B	-	"Donations to the Museum" (PSAS 40, 1905-06), 342-4.
Laing, L & Laing, J	-	"Archaeological notes on some Scottish early Christian sculptures" (PSAS 114, 1984), 277-87.
de Paor, Liam	-	"Some Vine Scrolls and Other Patterns in Embossed Metal from Dumfriesshire" (PSAS 94, 1960-61), 184-95.
Webster, L	-	"Metalwork, ivory and textiles" in Webster, L & Backhouse, J (Eds) The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900 (British Museum Press, 1991), 167-85.
Williams, Ifor	-	Canu Aneirin (Cardiff, 1938).

The Celtic Brooch, and How it was Worn - a Centenary Review

J Romilly Allen needs no introduction to the members of the Pictish Arts Society; his work on The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland has ensured that his name is well known to anyone interested in the Picts. During the 1890's he was involved in the enormous amount of fieldwork required for ECMS and published a number of important articles in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Although Allen is best known for his work on sculpture, he was also interested in other areas such as metalwork, and in 1894 he published an important article in the The Illustrated Archaeologist entitled The Celtic Brooch, and How it was Worn. The late C19th was a crucial period for the study of Dark Age metalwork and important articles were published in PSAS on brooches, the Norrie's Law hoard and silver chains. Another major study by Allen on metalwork was his slightly later work on hanging bowls (see references below). Allen's articles on metalwork, though not as well known as his other works, have stood the test of time well and are of continuing importance.

After describing how a penannular brooch actually worked, Allen looked at the sculptural evidence from Irish high crosses to show how they were worn. Interestingly, Allen stated that he was not aware of any other instances of figures in Great Britain wearing penannular brooches (1894, 164). In ECMS he identifies a figure on the back of Monifieth 2 as wearing: ". . . a long cloak fastened with a large circular brooch" (1903, 230). Admittedly, the brooch is less clear than the Irish examples, and cannot be conclusively identified as penannular; however, given Allen's involvement with Pictish sculpture at this time, it is unlikely that he would have failed to mention Monifieth 2, (see Hawks and Torcs, 31, Fig. 1) so it seems that he was unaware of the brooch at this date, even though most of the fieldwork for ECMS took place in 1891-92. Allen continues by examining ethnographic parallels of penannular brooches still being worn in Algeria, before describing a number of penannulars from Scotland and Ireland and their development. His article prompted further examination of ethnographic parallels, for example from India (Home, 1895). The suggestion that the Algerian and British brooches derived from a common Near Eastern ancestry and might be linked to C9th "Mahomedan" coins is the one part of the article which is no longer accepted, as penannular brooches now appear to have been invented in Britain in the C3rd BC. Allen concluded that highly decorated brooches were more for ceremonial use than practical purposes, and saw the various developments in penannular brooches as being due to a: ". . . desire to provide more space for the ornamental patterns" (1894, 175). These important conclusions were ignored for much of the C20th because of the treatment of brooches as either: ". . . fodder for a typologist's day dream" (Laing, 1981, 214) or as *objets d'art*. Whilst the construction of typologies is important, it is not an end in itself, though some archaeologists have treated it as such, and the treatment of objects in isolation as works of art robs them of that crucial archaeological concept, their context, which in this case does not mean where they were found but how they were used. Allen's conclusions about the importance of the brooches has recently been echoed by Margaret Nieke (1993), and many of his concerns in the article seem very much in tune with modern archaeological thought.

Allen's use of ethnographic evidence and his concentration on brooches as items that were actually worn, rather than abstract pieces of art or typological developments, makes his work in at least some respects superior to much C20th scholarship. His consideration of how brooches were worn has only been reinforced not replaced. Experimental work has shown that penannular brooches are most comfortably worn with the opening at either the top or bottom (Small et al, 1973, 103). Penannular brooches in Anglo-Saxon burials are also a source of evidence (White, 1988, 6-25), and it is difficult to understand why Allen ignored the examples then known, especially as his slightly later article on hanging bowls was largely based on examples found in Anglo-Saxon burials. Most penannulars have been found in female graves (40 versus 5 in male burials) and the majority occur in pairs, indicating that they were worn in an Anglo-Saxon fashion. A substantial group however (18 female and 4 male) occur singly at the shoulder in the Celtic manner - were these native Britons who had been assimilated and buried in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries?

Allen's reputation as a meticulous recorder of Early Christian carved stones needs to be supplemented by the recognition of his important work in other fields, such as metalwork. The Illustrated Archaeologist, apparently largely Allen's brainchild, soon merged to form The Reliquary and Illustrated Archaeologist which he edited from 1895 to 1906 (Vols I-XII). The journal appears to have been the period's equivalent of Antiquity or Current Archaeology, and its pages contain a host of intriguing articles whose selection sheds considerable light on Allen's character and interests.

Craig Cessford.

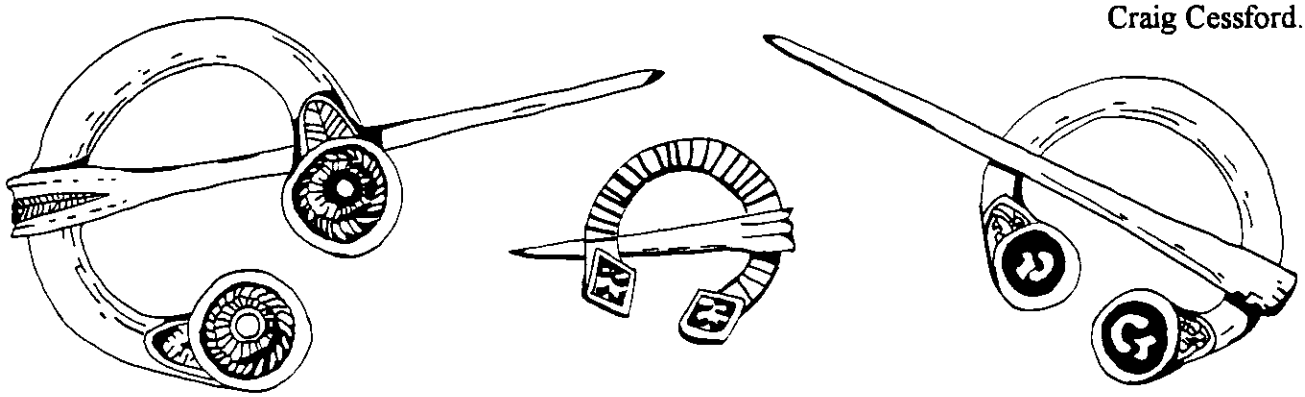

Fig. 1. Brooches based on moulds from the Mote of Mark.
(© L. Laing 1975, Antiquity 49)

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Laing, L - Celtic Britain (Granada, 1981).

Laing, L - "The Mote of Mark and the origins of Celtic interlace" (Antiquity 49) 98-108

Nieke, M R - "Penannular and Related Brooches: Secular Ornament or Symbol in Action" in Spearman, R M & Higitt, J (Eds) The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland (Edinburgh/Stroud, 1993), 128-34.

Small, A, Thomas, C & Wilson, D M - St Ninian's Isle and its Treasure (Oxford, 1973).

White, R H - Roman and Celtic Objects from Anglo-Saxon Graves (BAR British Series 191, 1988).

archive report

A list of suggested reading for the beginner in Pictish studies was included in PAS Journal 5 (Spring 1994). The aim was to list the main works covering Pictish culture - history, art, archaeology, place-names and so on. A supplementary list of more specialised works is now presented.

Eric H Nicoll

Supplementary reading in Pictish Studies

In the following list (A) indicates that a copy of the work is held in the PAS Archive, and PSAS denotes Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, published in Edinburgh.

Alcock, Leslie: - The neighbours of the Picts: Angles, Britons & Scots at war and at home (Groam House Museum, Rosemarkie, 1993)(A).

Places the Picts in the broader context of other barbarian nations of North-west Europe by offering a comparison between them and the other peoples of northern Britain.

Anderson, Alan O: - Early Sources of Scottish History. AD 500- 1286. (Edinburgh,1922; reprinted with corrections, Paul Watkins, Stamford,1990)

Translations of contemporary historical sources relating to Scotland, AD500-1286.

Anderson, Joseph: - Scotland in Early Christian Times, Second Series (David Douglas , Edinburgh, 1881; The Rhind Lectures for 1880)

Looks at decorative metalwork and the art and symbolism of Pictish monuments.

Anderson, Marjorie,O.: - Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland. (Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1973)

The Pictish and Scottish King-lists with historical commentary on the institution of kingship.

Armit, Ian (Ed.): - Beyond the Brochs: Changing Perspectives on the later Iron Age in Atlantic Scotland. (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1990)

Recent review of Late Iron Age Pictish settlement archaeology.

Bain, Ian: - Celtic Knotwork. (Constable, London, 1986)

The author's interest in his late father's work has led him to devise clear principles for the creation of knotwork.

- Celtic Key Patterns. (Constable, London, 1993)

Sequel to Bain's 1986 work.

Driscoll, Stephen,T.: - "Power and authority in early Historic Scotland: Pictish Symbol stones and other documents".in Gledhill, J et all (Eds) State and society: the emergence and development of social heirarchy and political centralization. (One World Archaeology, Unwin, London,1988)

Fojut, N. & Pringle, D.: - The ancient monuments of Shetland. (Historic Scotland, Edinburgh, 1993)(A)

Friell, J.G.P. & Watson,W.G.: - Pictish Studies: Settlement, Burial and Art in Dark Age Northern Britain. (BAR British Series 125, Oxford, 1984)

Important collection of papers on aspects of Pictish culture.

Henderson, Isabel M.: - The Origin Centre of the Pictish Symbol Stones (PSAS. 91,1957-58, pp44-60)

Hypothesis that the origin centre of Pictish sculpture was on the shores of the Moray or Dornoch Firths. An important paper about the "declining symbol".

Henderson, Isabel M.: - The Art and Function of Rosemarkie's Pictish Monuments. (Groam House Museum, Rosemarkie, 1990)(A)

An art-historian's well-researched account of Rosemarkie's stones.

Hughes, Kathleen.: - Early Christianity in Pictland. (Jarrow Lecture, Newcastle, 1970)(A)
Christianity did not influence Pictish aristocracy until the beginning of the 8th century. Symbol stones provide evidence of a non-literate society in the 7th century. The cross-slabs then point to a society which accepted Christianity with a fusion of pagan symbolism and Christian imagery.

Laing, Lloyd R. and Laing, Jennifer: - The date and origin of the Pictish symbols. (PSAS 114,1984, 261-276)
Dates Pictish symbols earlier than other scholars and seems to rely heavily upon a Romano-British origin.

Laing, Lloyd R.: - A Catalogue of Celtic Ornament in the British Isles c.AD 400-1200 (BAR British Series 229, Oxford, 1993)(A)
Includes all known Pictish ornamental metalwork and moulds for its manufacture. Illustrations of all pieces.

Murray, Gordon: - The declining Pictish symbol - a reappraisal. (PSAS 116, 1986, 223-253)
Places the origin of the crescent and V-rod in the far North, the double-disc and Z-rod in Aberdeenshire and the 'Pictish beast' in Angus/East Perthshire.

Smyth, Alfred P.: - Warlords and Holy Men - Scotland AD 80-100 (Edward Arnold, London, 1984, Reprinted by Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1989)
A history of early Scotland. Argues for the existence of an aristocratic warrior elite in the area that was to become Pictland in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Also suggests that Pictish kingship rotated between several tribal dynasties.

Spearman,R. Michael & Higgitt, John (eds): - The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieaval Art in Northern Britan and Ireland. (National Museums of Scotland/Alan Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 1993)
Proceedings of a conference on insular art. Contains articles of directly Pictish interest.

Stevenson, Robert B.K.:- The Inchyra Stone and Some Other Unpublished Early Christian Monuments. (PSAS 92, 1958-59, pp 33-55,Pl III-XI)
Notes on Inchyra, Cullaird, Latheron, Menmuir and other stones with an appendix of relative chronologies of Pictish sculpture.

Stuart, John: - Sculptured Stones of Scotland. (Spalding Club. Aberdeen, 1856)
An excellent work in its day, bringing together a series of lithographs and descriptions. The first nmajor work on Pictish sculpture covering the whole of Scotland.
- Sculptured Stones of Scotland,Volume Second. (Spalding Club, Edinburgh, 1867)
A supplementary volume to cover additional monuments discovered since the earlier version. The examples are not always Pictish, but this is an important study of Pictish art and surrounding uinfluences.

Thomas, A.Charles: - The animal art of the Scottish Iron Age and its origins (Archaeology Journal, 118,1961,14-64)
Suggests that Pictish animal symbols developed from an unsophisticated La Tène animal style and that Pictish art is a developed pictorial "language".

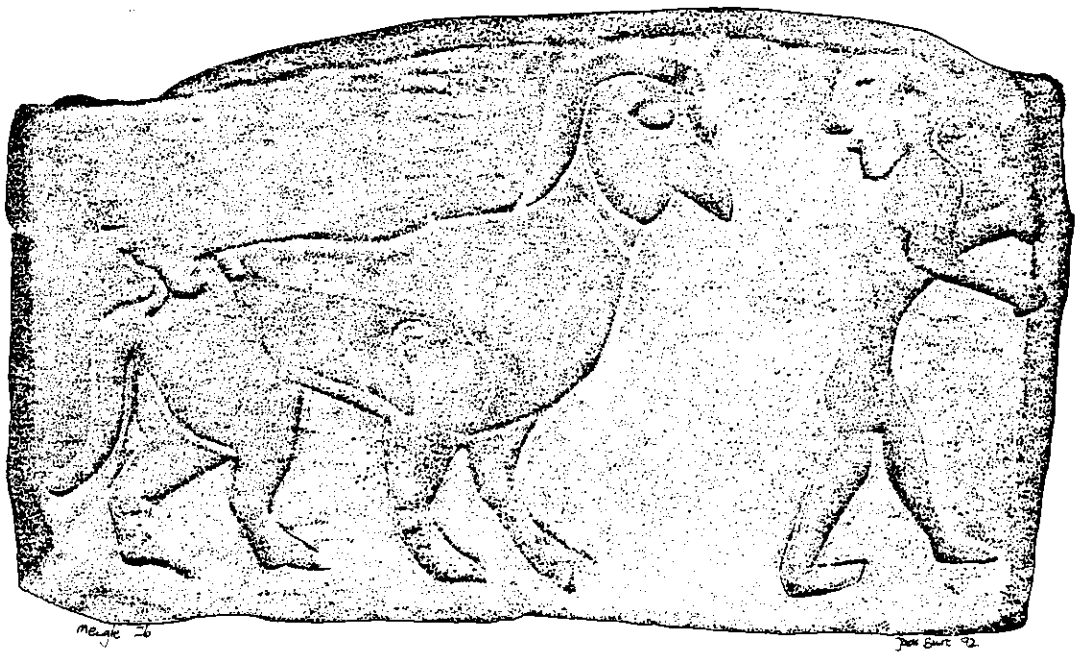
Thomas, A. Charles: - The interpretation of the Pictish symbols (Archaeology Journal, 120, 1963, 31-97)
An analysis of pictish art. The symbols conveyed simple messages, mostly commemorative of the dead.

Thomas, A.Charles: - The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain. (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1971)
The Hunter Marshall lectures delivered at Glasgow University during 1968.

Thomas, A.Charles : - The Pictish Class I Symbol Stones. Reprinted from Pictish Studies: Settlement, Burial and Art in Dark Age Northern Britain, edited by Freill, J.G.P. and Watson,W.G. (BAR, British Series 125, 1984)(A)
Argues that Class I stones are pictorial funerary monuments. Animal symbols allude to membership of tribal groups, and other symbols to personal status or occupation.

Additions to the Library.

Blamires, Steve :	-	The Irish Celtic Magical Tradition. (The Antiquarion Press, London,1892)
Cheyne,Pat:	-	Scotland Long Ago. (Viewing Scotland Series, James Pike Ltd., St. Ives, 1975)
CSA:	-	Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 1993 (National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1993)
Elliott. Ralph,W.V.:	-	Runes, An Introduction. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge,1959, reprinted 1980)
Loomis, Roger,S.:	-	Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance (Constable, London, 1993)
Marsden,John:	-	The Tombs of the Kings. An Iona Book of the Dead. (Llanerch Publications, Felinfach,1994)
Muir,M.:	-	Scottish Churches (Viewing Scotland Series, James Pike Ltd., St. Ives, 1975)
Museum of National Antiquities:	-	A Brief Illustrated Guide (Statens Historiska Museum,Stockholm,1959)
Ordnance Survey:	-	Map of Roman Britain (O.S.,Southampton, Second Edition, 1931)



Meigle 26, Perth & Kinross
(© J. R. F. Burt)

Book Reviews

The Tombs of the Kings: An Iona Book of the Dead by John Marsden
(Llanerch Publishers, Felinfach, 1994). PB; 130 pps. £6.50.

> *Chalum-chille nam feart 's nan tuam.*
> *Columcille of the graves and tombs.*

An appropriate quotation from a Gaelic invocation introduces PAS member John Marsden's study of the Dark Age kings that history and tradition assert were buried on the holy island of Iona, in the ancient burial ground of Reilig Odhráin. The tradition that the Kings of Scots down to Donald Bán were buried on Iona is one of the best-known and most persistent of Scottish historical legends, mentioned in Shakespeare's Macbeth, though treated with scepticism by some, such as Dr Johnston, whose comments on his visit to Columba's isle are quoted in the Preface (7-8).

Tradition is one thing, and history often another, however; the author has undertaken to examine its reality in the light of the earliest reliable historical records, to identify the kings whose burial on Iona can be confirmed by reliable sources, and to give an account of each ruler's life and times.

The Reilig Odhráin itself is dealt with first, with an account of the tradition of the kings through the centuries, the founding of the monastery of Iona and the early kingdoms of Scotland. The extraordinarily Pagan legend of Odhrán volunteering to hallow the island by being buried alive, found in the C12th Irish Life of St Columba, is one of the most striking of Iona's legends, but may be no more than a late attempt to explain the name Reilig Odhráin.

The bulk of the book covers the careers of one Anglian, one Pictish, two Irish, eighteen Scottish and three Norse kings whose burial on Iona is well attested. This is a smaller total than the forty-eight kings of Scots, four kings of Ireland and eight kings of Norway stated to have been laid to rest there by Martin in 1703, but is no bad number, and helps to explain the continuing sanctity of the island in the Middle Ages, when the Lords of the Isles and many other Gaelic chieftains were buried on Iona, many of their elaborate graveslabs still surviving. A chapter at the end of the book gives some details of these later burials.

Legend dubiously records that every king of the Scots from Fergus Mór onwards was buried on Iona, but the first historically attested internment is - ironically - that of Ecgfrith of Northumbria after his death at the Battle of Dunnichen in 685. This being so, it is likely enough that kings of Dál Riada had already been buried there; however, the first Scottish king to be dealt with here is Kenneth son of Alpin. Many of the regal biographies are short indeed, not simply to save space but because there is so little known for sure about many of the early kings except (usually) their descent and how they met their generally violent deaths. The last person with some claim to the title of king to be mentioned here is Uspak, known as Hakon, sea-king of the Hebrides, who died in 1230.

Most names, whether Gaelic, Norse or other, have been Anglicised, which will no doubt make them easier to pronounce for the general reader. I prefer the ancient forms myself, not least on aesthetic grounds. To see the old spellings gives them an extra element of "distancing" that seems appropriate to names from remote times. On the subject of spelling, the *Maetae*, identified here with the southern Picts, should be *Maeatae* (26).

The book is illustrated by some C19th engravings of Iona and its tombstones. It is a pity that not one of the kings whose careers are covered here has an identifiable monument, though conceivably something of the sort might reward the archaeologist's spade in the future. In the meantime, John Marsden's book will remind the reader that the soil of the Reilig Odhráin contains more royal dust than any other patch of Scotland.

Niall M Robertson.

The Book of Deer by Roy Ellsworth and Peter Beresford Ellis
(Library of Celtic Illuminated Manuscripts, Constable, 1994). PB; 79 ps. £6.99.

I have long felt that there must be a market for accessible editions of the lesser known Insular manuscripts to supply the ever-increasing interest in Celtic art among art historians and craftspeople. Everyone has heard of the Books of Kells, Durrow and Lindisfarne, but there are some dozens of other surviving manuscripts equally worthy of detailed study, even if their artistic worth does not rival that of these supreme masterpieces. The Book of Deer is the first in a series of visual analyses of famous Celtic illuminated Gospel books to be published by Constable, and it is to be hoped that more of the obscurer manuscripts will be covered by the other books in the series.

The Book of Deer is a case in point, of which, to paraphrase Tolkien: "many had heard, but few knew where it lay". It undeniably lies a long way off from the Book of Kells artistically, but most PAS members will know that this is a very important work for Scottish Dark Age history and art, as one of the very few Celtic manuscripts whose Scottish origin is undisputed. Its pages contain marginal notes giving priceless historical information which are also the earliest surviving written form of Scottish Gaelic.

The book has three sections: a short introduction to the manuscript itself, The Artwork - line reproductions of the chief illuminations in Deer, and Notes on the Artwork. The text has been written by P B Ellis and the illustrations prepared by Australian-born artist Roy Ellsworth. This edition is much more a picture-book of the art of Deer than an in-depth historical or art historical analysis of its contents, as the author writes (16):

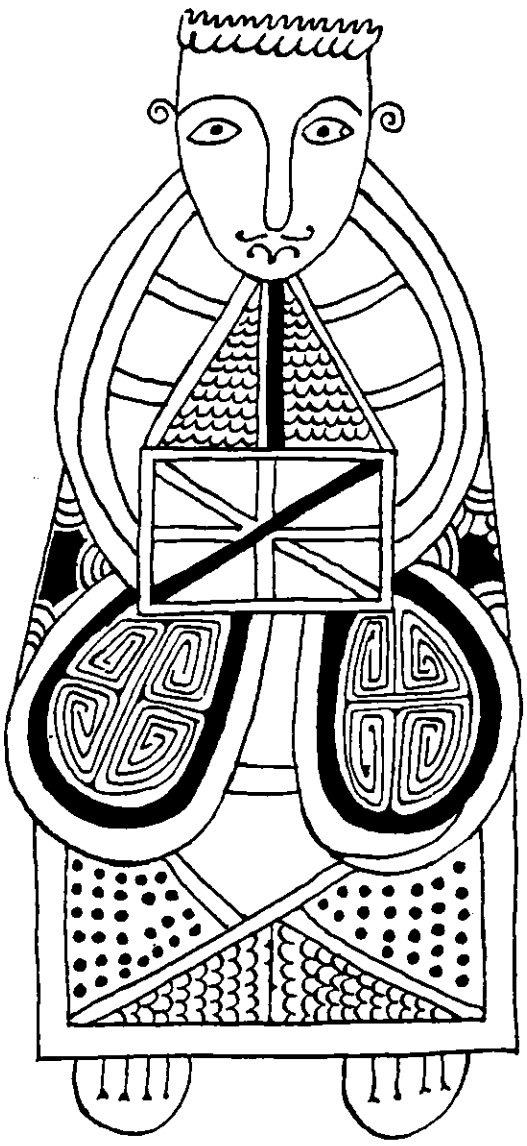
> *The intention of this volume is firstly to provide accurate representations of the illustrations from The Book of Deer and then to provide simplified drawings to demonstrate construction methods and to allow an exploration of one's own colour arrangements using, as a guide, the full colour plates.*

This is perhaps just as well, as the text, though short, contains numerous errors, perhaps betraying haste of composition. The original legend of Deer is recorded in the manuscript, but here the author seems to have confused the place the founding saints Columba and Drostan are first said to have come to (Aberdour, Buchan) with the site of the Celtic monastery itself (11). Bede, the Pictish Mormaer who gave the lands for the foundation, is here called Bruide, in confusion with the Pictish High King mentioned earlier in the text (12). Columba's name is given as Colmcille; I believe Columcille or Colum Cille would be more correct. Cele Dé should be Céli Dé (13). Maol-Callum should be Mael-Coluim (14), at least if it is to represent the ancient form of the name, and the Old Irish Macbeathad, if it has to Anglicised, should at least be spelled Macbeth (with small "b"), so that it does not look like a patronymic.

The history of the House of Moray is gone into in some detail, though Gruoch is incorrectly described as the daughter rather than the granddaughter of Kenneth III (15). That monarch's Celtic name is given here as Coinneach - the modern Gaelic equivalent of Kenneth. I rather think that the ancient form looked back to the Pictish Cináed or Ciniod, at this early date at least. The author is on firmer ground dealing with the later history of the manuscript itself.

It is suggested on pages 12-3 that the manuscript could be the work of native Pictish rather than Irish scribes - a notion well worth considering - and that its motifs can be compared to those on the Pictish stones. It seems a shame, therefore, that in the commentary on the artwork this is a source of artistic parallels that is barely touched on, except in the matter of borders (65). Parallels for human and animal figures are instead sought in Iron Age objects of Celtic or supposed Celtic origin from all over Europe except Scotland, all of which date from centuries earlier than the Book of Deer. The suggestion that the artists - who were after all monks - originally drew the Evangelist figures without feet: ". . following the pagan tradition of depicting gods . . in squatting postures." (59) is a fantasy. Not only does every human figure in the manuscript actually have feet, if Roy Ellsworth's drawings

are any guide, but their undeniably "added-on" look is easily paralleled in contemporary Irish Evangelist portraits and Picto-Scottish sculptured stones. Equally dubious is the comparison of the many figures in Deer shown with raised hands with the postures of much earlier Celtic gods (66-7). Why cast back so far in time when it seems transparently obvious that the Deer figures must be a Picto-Scottish version of Early Christian *orantes*, represented in Roman Britain, and even elsewhere in early Scotland?



Illuminated figure from The Book of Deer
(Copyright R Ellsworth)

Turning to the illustrations, here we seem to be on much firmer ground. Simply to have good drawings of all the major illuminations in Deer is very valuable as a source of reference, as it can be quite hard to get the chance to learn what is in the manuscript unless one has access to the specialised works in a major university library. Here all the Evangelist portraits, decorated initials and borders from the beginnings of the Gospels, and carpet pages are given; first in line drawings whose accuracy can be compared with the three folios reproduced in colour on the covers, then on the opposite page in rationalised form, with the lines straightened and the areas of colour outlined.

The artist has been at some pains to reproduce the variations in tone and density in the colours by hatching, and to follow the wandering lines of the monkish illuminators accurately, and the general effect seems true to the manuscript. The schematised versions naturally show a great deal more interpretation, but there is no danger of taking them for the originals. The three colour photos on the covers are well reproduced, and it is good to have the chance to appreciate the now rather faded simple colour scheme. Unfortunately, the front and inside front covers' photos seem to have been printed back to front.

With the illuminations of The Book of Deer available to a wide public for the first time, we can expect to see use being made of them by craftsworkers and artists. One can look on the originals as enjoyably naive or almost unbelievably crude according to one's taste, though any indication at all of the sort of gospel books that monks in eastern Scotland were producing around the C9th or C10th is valuable art historically. We cannot say what the general level of achievement in manuscript illumination was in Scotland at this time, all the other books having disappeared long ago. Deer may be a hurriedly made "pocket" version of a major gospel book, with the Evangelist portraits only sketched in as rough impressions. What is certain is that it is a miracle it has survived at all, though it would be nice to see it in the National Library in Edinburgh instead of Cambridge University.

In the meantime, this edition will be a useful reference work to the illuminations of The Book of Deer, so long as it is not confused with a serious academic study of the manuscript.

Niall M Robertson.

Exploring the World of the CELTS by Simon James. Published by Thames & Hudson £16.95

This is a lavishly produced work of 192 pages with over 300 illustrations, 59 of them in colour. The layout, the photographs and the varied and interesting graphics are all a very high standard. In particular I was impressed with the reproduction of watercolours from Ramsauers's excavations at Halstatt in the mid-19th century. If only resources allowed today's archaeologists the time to be able to paint finds in situ! The layout of the book, with inset texts, maps, diagrams and illustrated reconstructions is bright, modern and accessible. The book however is also quite remarkably ambitious. To cover from c.500 B.C. to the present day in one volume is a daunting task. Sadly it seems to have been a task beyond the author. Before detailing some of the howlers in this work the general tenor of its approach can be understood by noting that the 2 pages devoted to the Picts are somewhat overpowered by the almost 40 pages devoted to "The Celts and the Classical World". The Romans and Greeks crop up elsewhere extensively too. It could be said that in attempting a general overview of Celtic history in this fashion it is necessary to draw heavily upon Classical sources and thus the Romans and Greeks are of primary importance. Well it seems to this reviewer that the author is still thrilled to the Diffusionist concept of history and I doubt if he has read Colin Renfrew's seminal Archaeology and Language which put Diffusionism to sleep for once and for all.

Perhaps one should be charitable and allow for the scope of the subject and a hangover from the Classical obsession of British historians to give some excuse for the problems in this work. On p. 25 James poses the question "...if Classical culture was so obviously superior, why was its influence confined to a few chiefdoms, quite distant from Classical centres?", while dealing with Halstatt culture. He clearly intends to try and redress the ridiculous idea of "Civilized" Rome and the "savage" barbarians that has bedevilled so much of our historiography. Unfortunately good intentions are not enough. James is on secure ground in dealing with Halstatt, La Tène and the Classical world but his knowledge of the Celtic world is deficient. A small but telling point - in describing the Hochdorf chamber burial he refers to the fact that there are nine dishes and drinking horns and compares it to the ideal number for a Greek symposium or drinking party. Perhaps there is Greek influence but the merest glance at the folklore of the Celtic world would show that nine was a very significant number to the Celts, as well as to the peoples of Scandinavia. While assuming the pose of refusing to accept the superiority of Classical "civilizations" it would appear the idea is so ingrained in him that it must come out. On page 155 he tells us "We are not certain it (Beltain) was celebrated outside Ireland ...". This shows a disgraceful lack of research. When on p128 he refers to Gauls "seeking imperial assistance in their internal squabbles" his language betrays him. This is like his statement on p74 where he refers to the Celtic "love of war" which he seems unable to differentiate from a love of battle. A bit of research would have shown him that the ideal fight for a Celtic warrior was one-on-one, examples of which took place in Scotland as late as the 18th century. And there is the rub. This book with its apparent attempt at trying to redress the balance between the civilizing Romans and the barbarian Celts is just as hidebound by ideas of Classical superiority as so much of the historigraphy of Scotland that we now have grounds for rejecting. In Scotland the last Celtic warrior society which had survived through millennia finally disappeared on the field of Culloden. How much attention is paid in this book on the CELTS to Scottish Highland society? 30 lines. He tells us that Scotland was Christianized from Ireland but makes no mention of Candida Casa. In addition Mr. James tells us that outside of Ireland ogam exists only on the west coast of Britain (sic), usually accompanied by a Latin translation (p.163), that the Picts "spoke a non-Indo-European tongue of unknown affinity "(p170), as well as a form of Celtic, that Irish souterrains exist only in Ulster (p156) - I must have been seeing things on the Dingle peninsula, that the Book of Kells is a Hiberno-Saxon work (p175) and last but not least that I speak a "dialect of English (known confusingly as Scots)" (p171)!

Despite the lavish production and the admirable ambition in attempting such a work this is a book that is strong on the author's areas of speciality - The Celtic Iron Age, the Roman Empire and the Roman army - and is a disgraceful piece of shoddy hack work in dealing with a great many other aspects

of Celtic history and culture. The approach in terms of accessibility, lay-out, illustration etc. is exemplary but for a volume purporting to be a fair representation of the history of the Celtic peoples, as a member of a still (barely) extant Celtic nation I can only say that it both perpetrates past mistakes and adds a few of its own.

Stuart McHardy

Pictish Symbol Stones: A handlist 1994 (RCAHMS, 1994). PB; 32 ps. £3.50.

This is a revised and improved edition of the original Handlist (1985), listing all known Class I and Class II Pictish symbol stones and cross-slabs. Carvings on cave walls and rock faces are also included, but no other classes of Scottish Dark Age sculpture. The student of Pictish art will find this an enormously helpful work of ready reference, with entries for each stone giving the National Grid Reference Number, bibliographical references and short descriptions of those stones discovered since the publication of The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland in 1903.

A useful Introduction goes into the history of the recording of Pictish monuments from the C16th on, and includes a generous mention of the PAS:

> *The formation of the Pictish Arts Society has had an important impact on public awareness about Pictish stones, the vulnerability of many, and their great artistic value, both in the study of the past and as an inspiration to craftsmen today. The archive of material gathered by the Society has been deposited in the NMRS. The compilers of the present list acknowledge the assistance of many members of the Society . . .*

It is notable how many more stones are listed in the 1994 than in the 1985 Handlist, including not only the several "new" stones that have been discovered in the interim, but also certain or possible examples, now lost, found by a trawl through various written sources.

The book is enhanced by fine photographs of individual stones from the NMRS (National Monuments Record of Scotland) archive and an attractive cover, and is a hugely useful and reasonably priced work of reference which I shall have constantly to hand while putting together future editions of the Pictish Arts Society Journal.

Pictish Symbol Stones: A handlist 1994 can be obtained for £3.50 (including postage) from:
The Secretary,
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland,
John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 9NX.

Niall M Robertson.

Perceptions of the Picts: from Eumenius to John Buchan by Anna Ritchie
(Groam House Museum Trust, Rosemarkie, 1994). PB; 30 ps. £4.50.

The Groam House Lectures have been an annual treat for Pictish enthusiasts since 1989; in a way the event combines two lectures in one, since the written text of the previous year's talk is launched the same evening. The present volume, containing Dr Anna Ritchie's 1993 address, is the fourth in the series to be published, and is of the expected high standard. In matters of presentation, it is the best to have appeared so far. The now familiar key pattern border of the front cover - adapted from one of the Rosemarkie stones - is printed in grey against a light yellow background, a bright and attractive effect, with a splendid drawing by Jack Burt of the Eassie cross-slab in the centre. An innovation this year is a slight change in page size.

1993's experiment with colour illustrations has not been repeated - any gain no doubt not being worth the extra expense - and the numerous black and white illustrations, both line/tone drawings and photographs, are notably well reproduced.

In 1993 Dr Ritchie chose to explore the ways ideas about the Picts have evolved over the last seventeen hundred years since the first recorded use of the name by Eumenius in AD 297. One of the striking aspects of Pictish perceptions is the way our Dark Age predecessors seem to have attracted myths almost from their first notice by the ancient authors, myths - such as that of the Picts' red hair, short stature and habit of tattooing - which have not necessarily run their course even at the present day. Dr Ritchie divides the history of ideas about the Picts into four blocks of time: the works of Classical and Early Medieval authors who wrote when the Pictish nation still existed; the period from the C9th up to the C16th, when European contacts with painted and tattooed Native Americans led artists such as John White to depict wonderfully decorated Pictish "Noble Savages"; the beginnings of antiquarian research from the C16th to the C19th, and the period from the late C19th work of Joseph Anderson down to the present day. Each period has had its own way of looking at the Picts, explored here by Dr Ritchie, who touches also on such modern "myth makers" as John Buchan.

The perception of the Picts as tattooed barbarians is a legacy of the Classical authors and their immediate successors such as Isidore of Seville (who, on the strength of the quotation given here, if he had not seen tattooing himself, at least knew how it was done). It is paradoxical that, as the author points out, a custom of tattooing among the Picts is not mentioned by Dark Age authors living in Britain, not even by Gildas, who certainly went as far as he could in portraying the Picts as barbarous savages. Nevertheless, I feel that we do not have to be too sceptical about the early reports. Dr Ritchie suggests that tattooing: ". . was part of the civilised world's perception of a typical barbarian . ." (5). This is clearly true, yet this concept had solid foundations: many of the Greeks' and Romans' "barbarian" neighbours - such as the Scythians, Thracians and Gauls - undoubtedly did practice tattooing as, coming forward some centuries in time, did the Scandinavian Rus. It could therefore be going a little far to refer to tattooing as an "extraordinary custom", as there is abundant evidence that tattooing or body painting - perhaps the most ancient of all forms of art - have been practised over vast swathes of the Old and New Worlds among a multitude of cultures. Maybe the discovery of a Pictish "bog body" will one day shed light on this interesting problem.

In a chapter on "Contemporary perceptions in Britain" Dr Ritchie emphasises how: ". . at this period a writer's perception of the Picts depended upon his political affiliations" (7). The British monk Gildas castigated his people's enemies with undisguised venom, while Adomnán, close friend of the Pictish king and administrator of monasteries among both the Scots and Picts, touched in his biography of Columba on a "pagan but civilised" people (8). The Book of Kells, probably written at Columba's monastery of Iona, has numerous details strongly reminiscent of Pictish art, some of which are reproduced here. The parallels between the crouching warrior on folio 200R and a figure on the Eassie Stone are striking. The author puts forward the delightful idea that a detail from the opening to St Mark's Gospel, showing a very Pictish-looking man who appears to be ". . naked and covered with body-painting" (10) could be a play on the name Pict - a "monkish joke". The brilliant colours of Kells

and other manuscripts may give us some idea of the bright pigments which almost certainly once covered the Pictish carved stones.

Another remarkably Pictish-looking work by a non-Pictish artist is illustrated by a photograph of a detail of an archer from the C14th oak roof of the Great Hall of Darnaway Castle in Moray, a reminder that the Picts would undoubtedly have had a splendid tradition of carving in wood to match the brilliance of their art in stone. The archer's bow - or crossbow - so resembles that on the Drosten Stone, and the beast he is aiming at looks so like numerous Pictish representations, that one wonders if the Medieval craftsman might not have copied the motif from a local Dark Age carving.

The Darnaway carving is included in a chapter on "The Picts' perception of themselves" - the "self-portraits" found in Pictish art that compensate us to a large extent for the disappearance of their written records. Brought together for the first time for comparison are drawings of the vivid Rhynie, Golspie and Mail men, as well as the cartoon-like "cloaked figure" on a stone from Burness in Orkney. This is perhaps the most useful group of illustrations in the book. I was pleased too to see the engraving of the lost slab Meigle 10, probably the most important known to have been destroyed in modern times, with its unique depiction of a carriage. Known only from C19th engravings, this stone should nevertheless not be ignored in any discussion of Pictish art.

Sections follow on "The language and origins of the Picts" and "Pictish symbol stones". Dr Ritchie touches on the numerous controversies that have surrounded these topics, on which the opinions put forward by certain commentators have verged on the eccentric. Some indeed have more than verged on it.

Succeeding chapters discuss "Favourite myths" - "Pictish towers", (i.e. brochs) and the Picts' supposed small stature - endorsed by Sir Walter Scott after creeping through a gallery in the Broch of Mousa. There is also the legend of the Picts of Galloway, now sufficiently exploded by Dr Richard Oram in PAS Journal 4 (a work cited here), but exploited to good effect in a short story by John Buchan. The Leydenfrost illustration of a "troll-like" Pict reproduced here from the story could be a still from a Hammer Horror film.

A final chapter summarises "Current perceptions of the Picts". The preoccupation of the majority of the Pictish population is rightly cited as: "... the arduous business of making a living" (27). Archaeology will gradually increase our knowledge of Pictish daily life, the Ritchies' own excavations having already made a huge contribution, but the last word is reserved for the continuing mystery of the symbol stones, a perhaps insoluble puzzle that will continue to mark the Picts out from the other peoples of Early Medieval Europe.

As a highly readable and attractive introduction to the field of Pictish studies, Perceptions of the Picts could hardly be bettered, and I look forward to the Groam House Lectures continuing this high standard in the future.

Perceptions of the Picts: from Eumenius to John Buchan can be obtained from:
Groam House Museum,
High Street, Rosemarkie,
IV10 8UF, price £4.50, including postage.

Still available at the same price are the first three published Groam House Lectures:
The art & function of Rosemarkie's Pictish monuments by Isabel Henderson.
Curadán, Boniface and the early church of Rosemarkie by Aidan MacDonald.
The neighbours of the Picts: Angles, Britons & Scots at war and at home by Leslie Alcock.

Niall M Robertson.

The Flame Within by Dorothy Macnab Ramsay (Pittenhope Publishing, 1993). £9.50

A Hera's Journey, a hero tale of Pictland.

This marvellous tale of the Pictish Queen Tansen, the second part in Dorothy's trilogy, reaches across time and weaves for us a picture of tragedy and triumph amid rapidly changing times. In the style of all great hero/hera tales, the author has provided our hera with ample fodder for the classic pattern of separation, initiation, and incorporation. Using the historical time and events surrounding the Battle of Dun Nichen in 685 AD, and set against a background of Pagan/Christian conflict, the fabric of the story is both fast paced and eventful.

The story captures the reader from the first page as our hera, Tansen, finds her world torn apart by the raiding Sea-Danes. The raiders destroy her home, kill most of her family, and turn her world into " a wasteland of death where this morning there had been the fullness of life". Her village is destroyed and her hera's journey begun.

A daughter of the line of the Pictish Queen Caterin and with her own dream of Queenship someday, she leaves all that she knows to take a message of brutal and violent raids to the capital at Dalgynch. Her faith in the pagan traditions and patterns of her people is strong as she travels with the sure expectations that the court at Dalgynch will respond with quick action to avenge the wrong and punish the raiders.

Arriving in the capital Dalgynch, she discovers a world not as she expected. A complacent court, a Queen who is more Kentish than Pictish, a King who is unwilling to assist his people, and a Princess who "plots" with dark and evil forces all confront her as she rashly and passionately seeks to be heard. Accustomed to the patterns of life in her village, she is quickly swept into a current of manipulations, deceit, betrayal and rapidly changing alliances with only her quick wits and vision for her people to support her.

Her love for a young prince, Eanfrith, a hated Sea-Dane, is the catalyst that sends her on a journey into North Humbria and great danger. Through a series of quickly changing events and alliances she becomes his bride and follows him into North Humbria and beyond to Gwynedd. There only her wits, her Pagan traditions and her bodyguard Dale, protect her from enemies on all sides. Yet she is not quick enough to protect her beloved Eanfrith, and returns to North Humbria only to see him betrayed and murdered by his own brother Ecfrith. She is captured raped and imprisoned. Her own life in grave danger, she escapes with the aid of a group of Clan Mothers led by her maid Verna. They hide her and help her in travelling north with Eanfrith's milkbrother Wulf who befriends her. She finds herself pregnant with a son but unable to determine which of the two brothers, her beloved Eanfrith or the hated Ecfrith, is the father.

Gone are her dreams of Queenship, but not her determination to find a way to help her own people in driving the deadly enemy from their land. Upon arriving in her own village she finds love and comfort with Wulf, but is rejected by her sister for abandoning them for court, a dream of queenship, and a North Humbrian King. She remains long enough to berth her child, then leaving her newborn son to be fostered by her sister, she and Wulf travel to Burghead where the last of the forces are gathering to stop the increasing tide of invading Angles from the South. Wulf is reunited with his family of stone carvers but Tansen finds that she must continue to fight for her dream of returning the land to the Pretani people.

Kingdoms rise and fall quickly in a time of shifting alliances, devastating raids and general chaos as the Angles advance even farther into the North. She is in the centre of a storm of change that confronts both her faith and her will as she struggles to realise her vision. Caught between the dream of Dale, the Briton of Strathclyde, for a skilled, disciplined army and the wild raiding style of Liath of Caledonia, she relies more heavily on the traditions of her Pagan Pictish upbringing to guide her. Dale of Briton wins out and, with the help of Liath, the hope of ultimate victory returns to Tansen.

Rapidly changing and powerful events catapult Tansen, Dale, Wulf and Liath into building alliances based on the history and tradition of Queen Caterin. Tansen finally accepts the challenge of Pictish Queenship and Dale that of elected Kingship in a powerful alliance of tribes and traditions that

will finally drive the Angles from the land. Leading in the tradition of Queen Caterin, and with some assistance from the heavens, she instills in her people both vision and purpose. The battle plan forged, the Angles are engaged at Dun Nichen and soundly defeated. Yet even in the joy and reality of victory, Tansen knows that the patterns, traditions and lessons of the past that were so much part of her life, will be changing. "She waited for a moment while the future slotted itself into place. It felt right. In the knowing places of her body and mind it felt right".

A finely crafted hera tale, this work takes advantage of the patterns of separation, initiation, and incorporation. Separation occurs for Tansen, in the first pages of the tale, by a violent and brutal act that confounds her life's realities. With this event, she is brutally and unequivocally thrust on her journey.

The initiation phase is fraught with both physical and spiritual conflict as she struggles to understand her role in the fabric of the change that confronts and surrounds her. Yet she has helpers in her task. The patterns and traditions of her Pagan upbringing, her sense of association with powerful unseen forces, her connection to Queen Caterin, and her memories of Grannie Bea, all work to help her maintain her commitment to the path before her. Through a mire of shifting alliances, betrayals, and disappointments, she steers a course for her goal of freedom for her people. Buffeted, battered, and challenged at every level, she ultimately emerged as a strong, visionary Queen for her people. Incorporation for Tansen is bittersweet. While acknowledged by her people as Queen and leader, she knows in her heart that the fabric of tradition that is her strength and courage is being rewoven in ways even she will not know. Yet she turns to engage in the reweaving, a strong and vibrant Queen.

A high quality piece of historical hero/hera fiction and a wonderful read, this tale is well suited to all persons aged 15 through to adults. I look forward to the third part in this trilogy The Harps are Hushed due out in January 1995. Maggie Scheibe, Ph.D

The Flame Within can be obtained from -
Pittenhope Publishing, 1 Rashleigh Court, Glenrothes, Kingdom of Fife, KY6 2NQ
Price £9.50 (+£1.80 p&p).

Book Reviews in Brief

The Picts and the Scots by Lloyd and Jenny Laing (Alan Sutton, 1994). PB; 172 ps. £9.99.

A full review of the 1993 hardback edition of this work was featured in PAS Journal 4, Autumn 1993, 48-9. Appearing now in soft covers in Alan Sutton Publishing's Illustrated History Paperback series, this edition is in a slightly smaller format, with a more attractive cover, and has been improved by the correction of several errors, notably to the picture captions.

Niall M Robertson.

Symbolism of the Celtic Cross by Derek Bryce
(Llanerch Publishers, Felinfach, 1994). PB; 128 ps. £5.95.

This is the second, revised, edition of a book first published in 1989. The author postulates that the ancient pillar stones, Celtic crosses and mercat or market crosses found throughout Britain, Man and Ireland share a basic common symbolism, that of the "world-axis", a link between Heaven and Earth. He derives the wheel-headed or "Celtic" cross - reasonably enough - from the Chi-Rho symbol rather than the Crucifixion.

The book is illustrated by numerous drawings and engravings of stones reproduced from such authors as J R Allen, and has chapters on the following: Pillar Stones: the World-Axis; Market Crosses: Heaven, Earth and the Space Between; The Celtic Church: Early Symbolism; The Ornamentation of Celtic Crosses: Symbolism and Beauty; and Celtic Crosses.

Niall M Robertson.

In Memoriam

Dr. Ian Mervyn Smith, B.A.,Ph.D.,F.S.A.Scot., described as a leading light in mediaeval studies by his colleagues, has fallen to a sudden tragic death early in July while, working on the Isle of Canna with a team from the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. The RCAHMS has been conducting a survey of the rich archaeological remains on the island for the owners., the National Trust for Scotland. He will be remembered by PAS members who attended his brilliant lecture on Pictish /Anglian Settlement in the Borders in the 1992/3 lecture season at the School of Scottish Studies, recalled as being a 'tour de force' by Society secretary Eileen Brownlie.

Ian was an archaeological investigator with the Royal Commission, specialising in the early historic settlement of the Scottish Borders and Medieval church architecture and archaeology. He was a graduate of Durham University, where he took his doctorate under the guidance of Rosemary Cramp in 1990. He worked for the RCAHMS since 1983, and was active in the CSA Churches Committee, The Society for Northern Studies, The Scottish Vernacular Buildings Group, Scottish Archaeological Forum, The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and the Priory Church of St. Mary of Mount Carmel in South Queensferry, where he was a key figure in the many restoration projects, to name only a few. He was a great enthusiast, a Renaissance man who had a great love of the arts, especially music, as well as his chosen profession of the archaeology of Scotland's past.

His last public lecture was in May when he delivered a major paper on 'The Structure of Anglian Settlement in Southern Scotland' at the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland's conference on the Anglians in Scotland, held in Edinburgh. Rosemary Cramp delivered his eulogy in a moving funeral ceremony on the 9th of July in South Queensferry, which was attended by a great crowd of friends and colleagues. He will be deeply missed by all, not least by Scotland itself.

Marianna Lines
Edinburgh July 1994.

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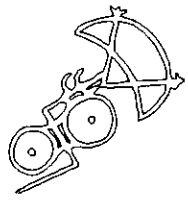

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