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Contributions to the Pictish Arts Society Journal should be sent to: Niall M Robertson, PAS Journal Editor, 22 Letham Road, Perth, PH1 2AP (tel: 0738 21172).

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Cover photograph - Keillor Symbol Stone (Tom E Gray). Cover designed by Nick Simpson.

Hilton of Cadboll's Female Rider and her Gear

The articles by Catriona Black (1993, 37-40; 1993a, 43) and Craig Cessford (1993, 41-2) discussing attributes of the horsewoman in the figurative panel on the Hilton of Cadboll slab have renewed speculation about the scene. The articles were accompanied (on the front cover of PAS Journal 4, Autumn 1993) by a richly detailed and subtle photograph of the Cadboll panel by Tom E Gray, taken using the lighting in the Dark Age gallery in the Royal Museum of Scotland. Perhaps the most tantalising problem concerns the nature of an object which appears at waist level on the female rider, close to the reins; this has hitherto been identified as a penannular brooch for "fastening her cloak" (Close-Brooks and Stevenson, 1982, 32). Black, however, has convincingly argued, on the grounds that the object is "implausibly large" to be a brooch, that it represents a torc (1993, 38).

Few parallels for female riders occur in roughly contemporary Insular illustrations, but two examples, also identified by their side-saddle pose, particularly spring to mind. Approximately a century before Hilton of Cadboll was carved, a sculptor depicted the Biblical motif of Mary carrying the infant Jesus, riding either to or from Egypt on an ass. This scene, in a lower panel of the Ruthwell Cross in Dumfriesshire (Allen and Anderson, 1903, 444, Fig 468B) is now badly damaged, but a heavily moulded carving of the Virgin can be seen with her feet extending beyond her mount. Her outline with the Child is clearly visible and a fringed saddle blanket appears beneath the horse's belly. No reins are apparent and we are perhaps invited to imagine Joseph leading the group from beyond the frame of the scene.

A century and a half or so after the Cadboll carving was created a Viking Age sculptor at Kirk Andreas on the Isle of Man carved a rider in a long kirtle travelling side-saddle, purposefully grasping the reins ([AND 1:131(103)C] Kermode, 1907, 194-5, Pl LIIIB). Unlike other examples, she sits on a saddle with a raised bow before and behind, her head in profile, gazing forward over the horse's neck. This rider is positioned below a tall cross flanked by a variety of animals (a type of scene readily paralleled on Pictish slabs). Behind her head is carved a uniquely decorated relief block. Another "post", decorated with a tendril-twist motif, stands upright before the horse. Below, presumably intended to be hidden below the visible section of the shaft when erected in the ground, appears the head and forequarters of an incised rising dragonesque beast. It is likely that the rider, although deceased, is portrayed ambiguously, as in life, within her grass-covered howe (the symbolic

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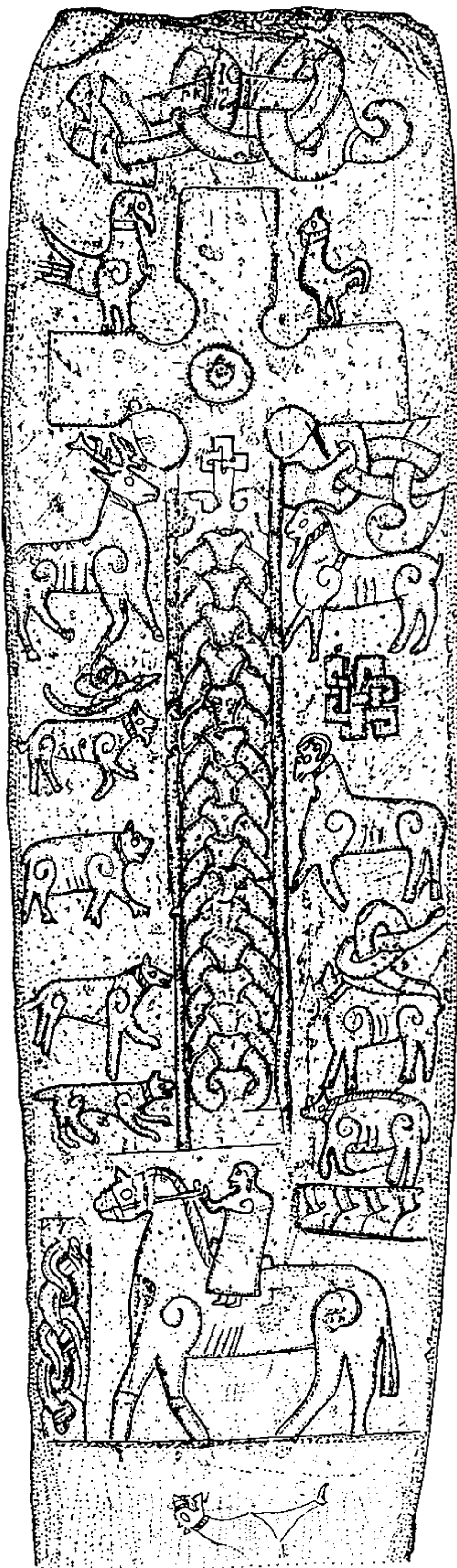

Fig. 1. Cross-slab, Kirk Andreas, Isle of Man (drawn by R Trench-Jellicoe).

decorated block behind her head), which is surmounted by a cross erected on the mound and with the Hell-beast rising from beneath to claim her. The figure quite probably portrays "Arinbiaurk", commemorated as the wife of Sandulf the Black, in the accompanying Old Norse runic inscription on the side of the stone (1).

The Hilton of Cadboll rider, however, is unique (Allen and Anderson, 1903, Fig 59), as she is neither a Biblical figure, nor represented in death, but portrayed as a member of a hunting party. In this scene she is clearly the focus of the panel, on the grounds of her frontality, her near central position at the top of the panel, her size (a head larger than the other riders) and the size and quality of her horse

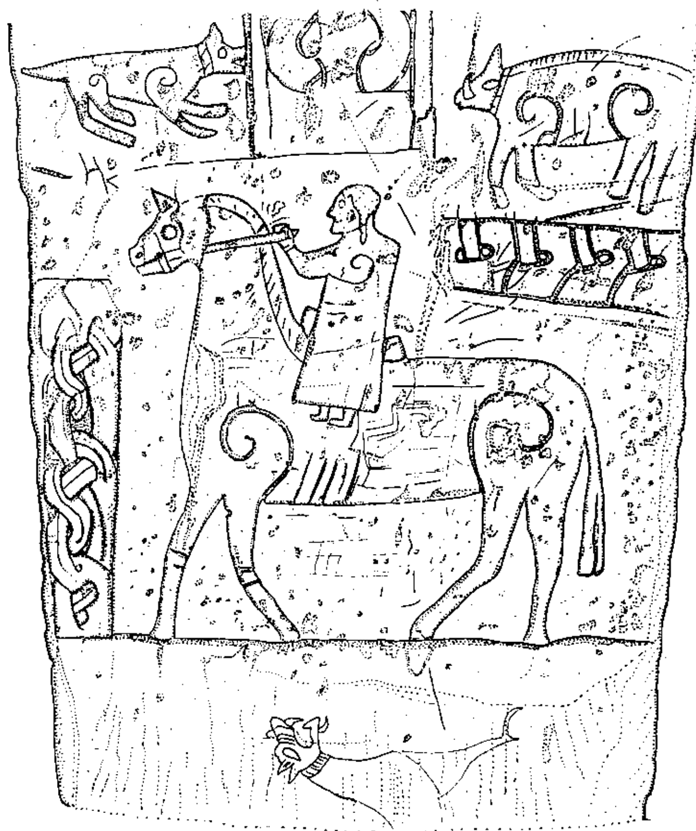

Fig. 2. Detail of Kirk Andreas stone, showing woman riding side-saddle (drawn by R Trench-Jellicoe).

(Beck, 1992, 141). She is also the focus of the musicians who indicate her with their trumpets, and finally she is uniquely marked within the frame of the panel by her juxtaposition with the mirror and comb symbol. The rider masked in her lee is perhaps her husband or groom but there is no absolute certainty that it is not a second female figure. The woman is dressed in deeply folded, flared clothing and wears her hair in a formal style.

The features which appear at waist level on the figure are of primary interest and, because of their extensively worn condition, are also potentially misleading. The lighting of Tom E Gray's photograph reveals that the woman is accompanied by a hunting bird (less clearly visible in other published photographs). It appears not to be carried on the rider's wrist as seen, for instance, on the Elgin cross-slab (Allen and Anderson, 1903, 135-6, Fig 137B), where the hawk seems to be on the point of being flown. The Cadboll hawk seems rather to accompany the rider and a closer parallel, perhaps representing David the Hunter (2) attacked by a rampant lion, is carved on the St Andrews Shrine (Ibid, 351-3, Fig 365). The shape of the bird of prey in this example appears virtually identical with the form at Hilton of Cadboll and there is a further similarity in the portrayal of the heavily folded, loosely draped garments worn by the figure.

The worn state of the carving and the variation in the levels of relief might suggest that the Cadboll bird is carried by the obscured figure behind the woman, but such an explanation is less likely than that she is meant to be carrying it herself for, despite wear, the whole of the outline of the bird seems to be present across her lower chest and waist. But if she is carrying the bird, how is it supported and how may the torc-like object, which appears in front of her chest, figure in this process?

The bird seems to stand near the fore-terminal of the "torc", and it is fortunate that the St Andrews Shrine scene survives to assist in clarifying this aspect. The splayed legs of the St Andrews hunting bird are clearly visible, with prominent talons similar to those incised on the symbol stone from Knowe of Burrian in Orkney and on the St John the Evangelist eagle symbol painted on fol I of Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 197B (Henderson, 1987, Ills 107, 109). A close examination suggests that the left foot of the St Andrews hawk grasps a curved bar of circular or oval cross-section, with an expanded ball terminal lying on the rider's knee. The bar curves beneath and behind the bird until it is lost in the folds of the rider's clothing but seems to reappear to support the hawk's right leg close to another similar ball terminal near the rider's waist. In this instance the object portrayed seems to be a portable perch for the hawk. It is viewed obliquely on the St Andrews panel but resembles closely the

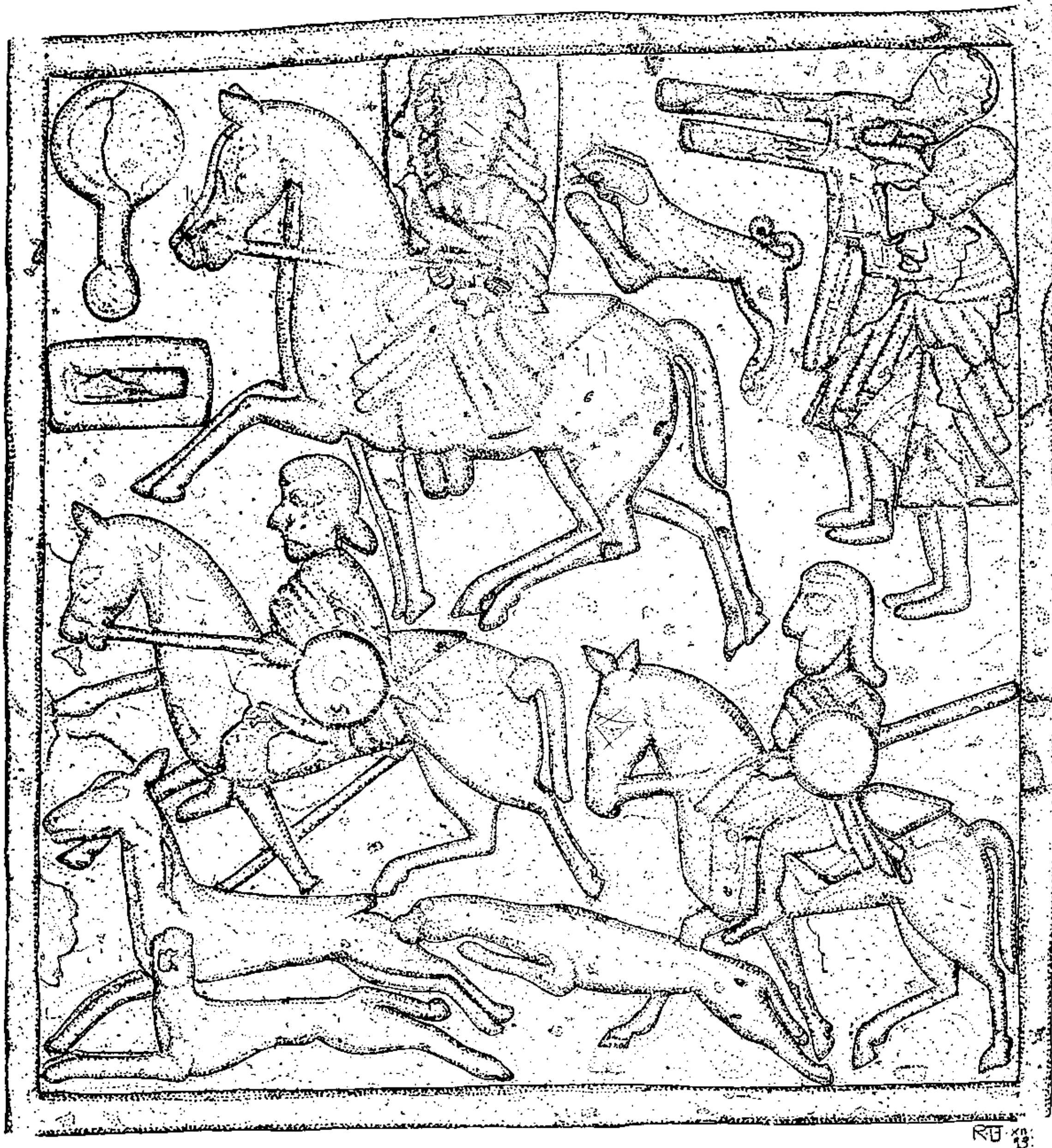

Fig. 3. Figurative panel, Hilton of Cadboll Stone (drawn by R Trench-Jellicoe).

object carried frontally by the Hilton of Cadboll rider. The difference in perspective is unsurprising as the two figures adopt differing riding positions and the Cadboll sculpture must have been taxed in his attempt to realistically portray the object on an almost two dimensional figure viewed from the front. Nevertheless, the Cadboll hawk appears as much attached to its potential perch as the St Andrews bird. Nor ought there to be surprise at the representation of a high status female figure bearing a hunting bird when she occurs within the context of a heroic society.

Time has not permitted further research within the specialised field of Early Medieval hunting paraphernalia and it is hoped that others, better qualified to the task, will undertake the study. It is clear, however, that the anachronistic "torc" of the Hilton of Cadboll

horsewoman may be more appropriately explained as a portable perch which is paralleled on the scene from the St Andrews Shrine frontal. It is exciting that a potential new category of Pictish artefact should be recognised, elements of which may eventually be identified and confirmed amongst the artefactual assemblage recovered by excavation.

As a postscript, attention should be drawn to the possible presence of a third, less firmly contextualised example of a "torc". The Aberlemno Kirkyard battle scene (Allen and Anderson, 1903, 209-14, Fig 227B) is remarkable for having its carving executed both in false relief and in incised technique. Use of the latter is a sculptural device to suggest recession into the background and thereby inject a perspective of depth into the scene. Examples of the technique include the fleeing rider's abandoned sword to the right of centre in the upper register and the spears and offside arms of some of the warriors in the registers below. A

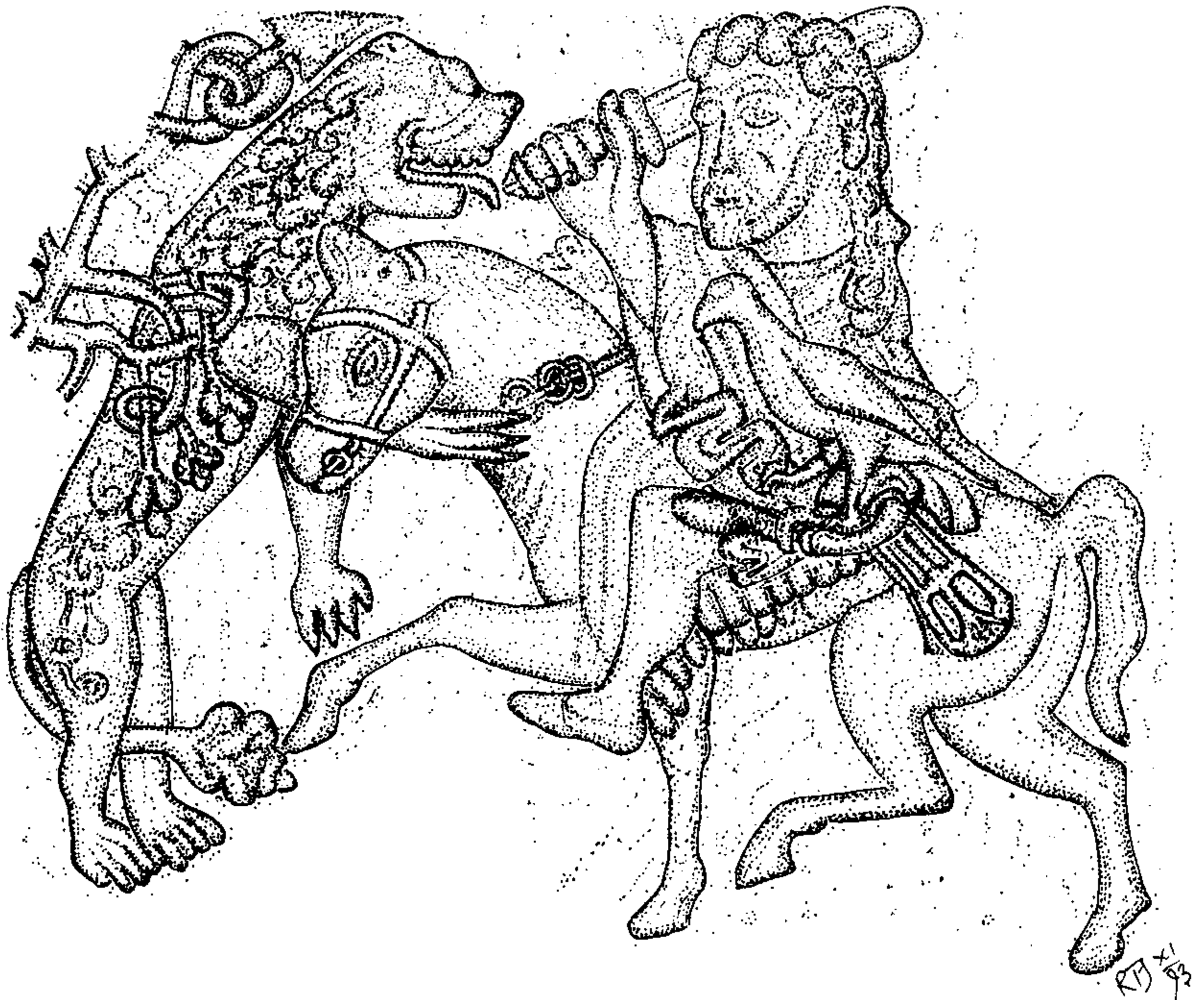

Fig. 4. Detail of St Andrews sarcophagus showing rider bearing hawk attacked by lion (drawn by R Trench-Jellicoe).

more worn and, therefore, fainter incised carving appears in the upper left corner of the battle scene, where a torc-like object has been engraved. This type of carving might be regarded as a graffito, but it is perhaps more logical to associate the feature with the nearby high-status rider - almost certainly the most significant Pictish warrior in the scene (Cruickshank, 1991, 24, Pl II) - and to speculate that the motif may function in this context as a personal symbol identifying the rider or establishing his status. In this it might function differently from the universal qualifying symbols which appear above the panel.

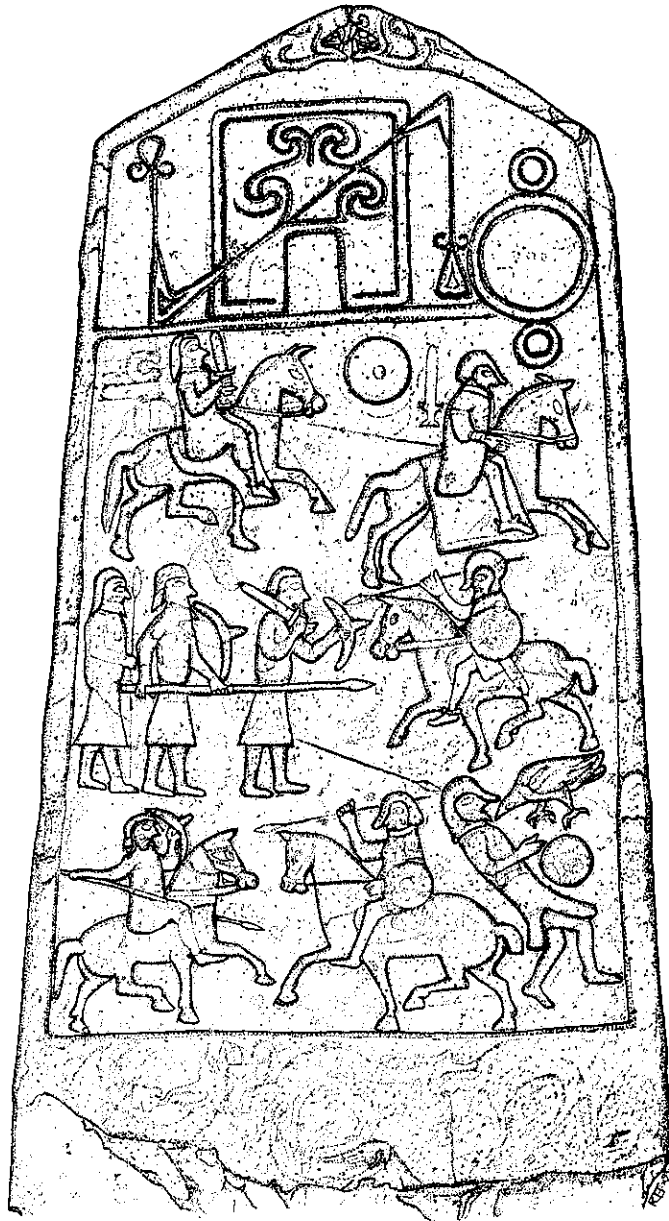

Fig. 5. Aberlemno Kirkyard Stone battle-scene. Possible "torc" in upper left corner (drawn by R Trench-Jellicoe).

The recognition of this feature may contribute towards understanding the operation of symbolism on Pictish Class II monuments. The presence of "torcs" in more than one context permits speculation that they may have had a long-standing function in Celtic society. Perhaps, as hunting with hawks was a high-status sport, the torc became a symbol of high, perhaps aristocratic (Black, 1993a, 43), though not the highest, status. The same torc evolved, when not in use as a portable perch, into an object of ornament indicating status. In this Cessford (1993, 42) may have identified the significance of the gold torcs of the mounted warriors of the Gododdin who rode to Catraeth (Jarman, 1988, 58-9) - light to carry, large

enough to wear as a badge of status in the mead hall but also strong enough to support a hunting bird (3).

These notes arose from observations made during my postdoctoral research into the relationship of the form and decoration of Pictish carved stone monuments with a group of sculptures on Man. I am most grateful to Tom E Gray for generously and speedily supplying a copy of his Hilton of Cadboll print, and grateful also to Niall M Robertson and Marianna Lines for their help and constructive discussion on "the rider". Any inaccuracies are my own.

Ross Trench-Jellicoe.

Notes

(1) The runic inscription reads:
sant:ulf:hin:suarti:raisti:krus:þana:aftir:arin:biaurk:kuinu:sina:
"Sandulf the Black put up this cross in memory of Arinbiaurk his wife".
(2) The identification of the figure as David is discussed by Henderson (1986, 93), although the attribution may now be considered less certain.
(3) As long ago as 1937 Cecil Mowbray (alias Mrs Curle) drew attention to the significant parallels in Sassanid (Dark Age Persian) art for the carvings at St Andrews and Nigg (Mowbray, 1937, 428-40). Sassanid art also represented high-status torc-like artefacts which it is just possible may have influenced Pictish representations (Balty et al, 1993, Pl 65).

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Did the picts wear helmets?

The unique battle-scene on the Pictish cross-slab at Kirkton of Aberlemno poses many questions. One of the most intriguing is: who are the combatants? It is plain that two distinct groups are engaged in the combat; various factors point to this, one obvious difference between the two sides is that one group is bareheaded, while the opposing warriors wear helmets. It may reasonably be assumed that the former are Picts - they look very like many other figures portrayed on Pictish sculptured stones - but is this also true of the latter?

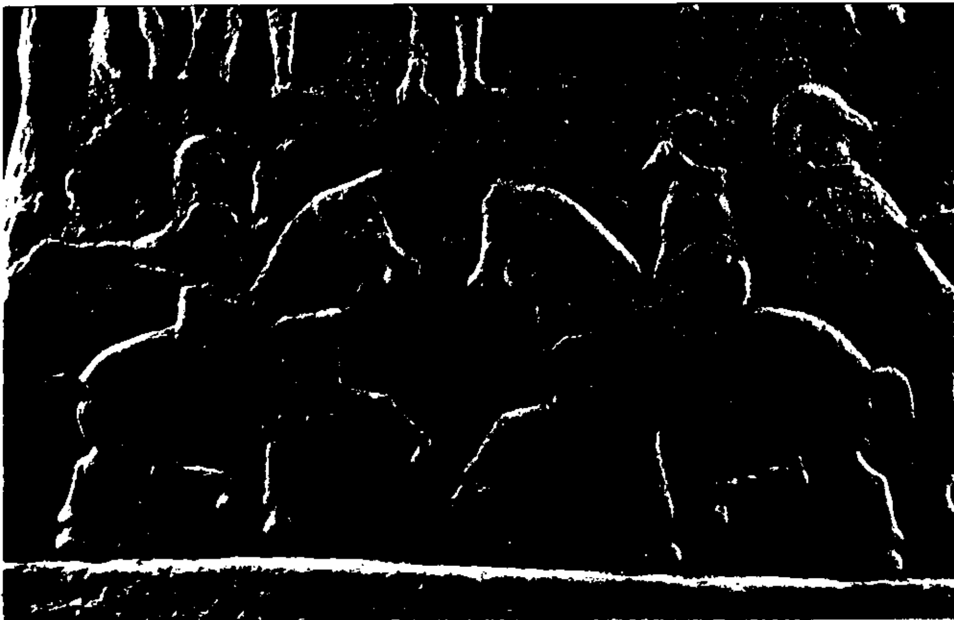

Fig. 6. Detail of battle-scene on Aberlemno Kirkyard Stone showing helmeted and bareheaded warriors (Tom E Gray).

With regard to Pictish helmets, the historical record is silent, and the archaeological record is blank. There are, to my knowledge, only two possible indications that the Picts may have worn helmets. A number of stones show Picts wearing headgear, but this is invariably a type of hood - with one exception. This is the Balblair Stone (if indeed it is Pictish). It bears the single incised figure of a man, who wears a tunic reminiscent of those from Golspie and Rhynie, so it is not unreasonable to presume him to be a Pict.

The Balblair man exhibits a couple of unusual features. He appears to be using a walking stick; whatever it is exactly, it does not seem to be a weapon, and may be a ceremonial staff of some kind. Most interestingly, his head is curiously rendered - J Romilly Allen expressed the opinion that: ". . it looks more like that of a bird than a man" (1903, III, 96) - and it is sometimes thought that he is wearing a helmet. It is doubtless no more than

coincidence, but the beak-like shape does bear a superficial resemblance to the badly-drawn helmets in Alexander Gordon's sketch of the Aberlemno Stone, published in 1726. Nevertheless, just what the sculptor intended this curious appendage to represent must remain open to question.

The uncertainty is exacerbated by the poor condition of the incised artwork at the crucial position on the stone. William Jolly commented in 1882: "Some of the lines on the stone, especially those about the mouth and head, are somewhat difficult to make out, and may give rise to different renderings of the figure" (341). This is indeed what has happened, for published sketches show the "beak/helmet" element in a variety of guises, while in those based on rubbings, the feature simply fades away. All things considered, it cannot be said with any degree of assurance that the Balblair man is wearing a helmet.

There is a possibility that a real Pictish helmet actually existed, and survived into modern times, being reputedly part of the Norrie's Law hoard. The story of the discovery and subsequent maltreatment of this great treasure of Pictish silver is one of the saddest episodes in Scottish antiquarianism. It was chanced upon by workmen digging for sand in Norrie's Law, a tumulus near Largo in Fife, in about 1819; the greater part of it was removed, piecemeal, and sold by a hawker at intervals for its bullion value. Only a few items were saved, and these were donated to the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland almost half a century later. That the hoard was Pictish is confirmed by five symbols (three different ones) engraved on three of the pieces.

There was a local tradition that the tumulus was the tomb of some great warrior, and it was rumoured that he was buried wearing a complete suit of silver armour, together with accoutrements. Sadly, because of the nefarious dealings of the few people who knew about it, no proper records were kept, and it was some twenty years before details of the find (or as much as could then be determined) were written up and published. This took the form of a report by George Buist of Cupar Museum to the Fifeshire Literary and Antiquarian Society. Buist expressed his purpose thus: "The reporter has been anxious to record a set of facts but little known, and to present others hitherto only kept in the insecure treasury of oral tradition" (1839, 2). A laudable objective indeed.

Buist chose to call the subject of his report The Silver Armour of Norrie's Law, no doubt influenced by the aforementioned oral tradition, and he talks of ". . a rich coat of scale-armour, the pieces of which consisted of small-sized lozenge-shaped plates of silver,

suspended loosely by a hook from the upper corner" (Ibid, 1). This unlikely hypothesis was repeated by other writers, but was demolished ten years later by Albert Way, writing in the Archaeological Journal of 1849, who noted that the two surviving "scales" were unperforated, and indeed without any means of attachment or suspension. In a detailed assessment of the hoard in 1881, Joseph Anderson wrote: "The popular notion of 'a warrior buried in his silver armour' (though generally accepted), rests upon no basis of evidence, or even probability" (41). He declined even to mention any of the missing items, and writing on the hoard some three years later, he once more shied away from any reference to the alleged helmet (Anderson, 1884).

Armour or not, other reported grave items indicate the deceased to have been a member of the warrior elite: a shield, a sword-hilt, and - of great interest to the present enquiry - a helmet. As Buist reported, these were said to have been "when found, quite entire", but by the time they were received by a jeweller for melting down they had been "crushed in pieces to permit convenient transport and concealment" (1839, Intro).

Despite their lamentable condition, the jeweller in question, Mr R Robertson of Cupar, is credited with having ". . a peculiarly distinct recollection of the forms of the various portions of the armour procured by him, and gives a most vivid description, in particular, of the rich carving of the shield, the helmet, and the sword handle" (Ibid, Intro). A page of engravings accompanies Buist's report, illustrating nine objects from the hoard: the familiar surviving items, plus a couple of those which had been crushed and melted down, presumably drawn on the basis of Robertson's "vivid description" (of which no details are recorded). Of the three items which Robertson specifically mentioned because of their "rich carving", the two which are illustrated are the shield and the sword-hilt. This treatment, alas, was not accorded to the helmet; why it was omitted is not stated.

Of some slight relevance is the decoration of the shield (reputedly measuring 16 inches by 10 inches, and therefore presumably of ceremonial use only), the sketch of which is reproduced here from Buist's report. It depicts a mounted rider who is wearing headgear, though this can hardly be described as a helmet, having more of the appearance of a cloth cap of the tam-o'-shanter variety; nor is the anonymous artist's work entirely to be trusted, for his rendition of the two animal-headed symbols engraved on the plaques shows them as being considerably different, whereas in reality they are identical. Added to that, the "peculiarly distinct recollection" of Robertson the jeweller must surely have let him down regarding the shape of the shield, for it has the appearance of being Medieval, quite unlike any of the

Fig. 7. Sketch of shield from Norrie's Law hoard, after Buist (1839).

shield-shapes which are to be seen in Pictish sculpture.

From the little we know of the Norrie's Law hoard, it is clear that any martial content was concerned with ceremonial activities, not actual warfare, and so the silver helmet - if it ever existed - should not be taken as an indication that the Picts wore helmets in battle. Moreover, the lack of corroboration regarding the missing items from Norrie's Law renders the account of the helmet of dubious value to any discussion of Pictish helmets.

Thus we are left without any concrete evidence that the Picts ever wore helmets. Robert Stevenson, in The Problem of the Picts, maintained that: ". . the warriors we see at Aberlemno are surely Picts; their helmets with large nosepieces are, like that from Sutton Hoo a century or more earlier, part of the sub-Roman culture of the times" (1955, 114). Such an opinion is quite unfounded, and the proposition is wholly unsustainable. Indeed, the reverse is the case; the clear implication of the lack of evidence for Pictish helmets is that the helmeted troops portrayed on the Aberlemno Stone are not Pictish. Just who they are and why they are fighting the Picts is, as they say, another story.

Graeme Cruickshank.

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the Abers of Perthshire

This detailed study of the Aber settlements of Perthshire is part of a wider study of the Abers, Pits and other possible settlements attributed to the historical Picts in Scotland as a whole. Various theories have arisen from these studies, most of which are at variance with those of the accepted authorities, notably the idea that the Picts spoke a P-Celtic, or even a non-Indo-European language. On the contrary, it is proposed that the establishment of the Abers and associated Pit settlements was a native development, by Gaelic speakers, which originated in Perthshire, and some understanding of the economics and functioning of what appears to have been a planned system of settlements has begun to emerge. These theories will be noted first and may then be tested against the information given in the gazetteer of Perthshire Abers.

1. **Concentration in Perthshire**

Perthshire, and in particular Strathearn, has by far the largest concentration of Aber names in Scotland - fourteen have so far been found - and can therefore be regarded as the source area, the place where the settlement idea or function originated, and from which it spread out into neighbouring areas. This argument is perhaps too familiar to need to be repeated, but it is not always followed by students of place-names.

2. **Establishment by Gaelic speakers**

Since the names of the hundreds of Pit- settlements, apart from the one element Pit- itself, contain conventional Gaelic elements, it is logical to assume that they were founded by Gaelic speakers (Nicolaisen, 1976, 154), and this conclusion appears to be supported by the Gaelic derivations of the Abers. The language of these settlers was, on the basis of their settlements, a form of Gaelic or Q-Celtic. It is a pity that so much time has had to go into refuting the P-Celtic suggestions of Watson and others, but it is hoped that this study may begin to clear the way for a more constructive view of the Picts as an emerging native culture, continuous with the people of the Late Bronze Age and probably earlier peoples too, a view that appears to be supported by archaeological findings. As a tentative theory, it might be suggested that Gaelic was established in Scotland by at latest 500 BC, when it may be identified with the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age settlers who built crannogs, hut-circles and duns throughout Scotland. From that time until the present, the continuity, for those who

wish to see it, is remarkable. Despite the decline of rural areas in the last century, much of the structure of modern Scotland is based on the pattern of settlement established by the Picts.

3. **Meaning of Aber in Scotland**

The element "Aber" in Scottish place-names is taken by many authorities to be the Welsh word meaning "confluence". This, however, is linguistically illogical and is contradicted by the geographical evidence. A study of the Perthshire Abers has clarified the meaning of the word Aber as a component of Gaelic place-names in Scotland.

The first to be studied was Aberfeldy, in Strathtay. It was noted that the suffix -feldy is unrelated to the river (the Urlar) running through the modern town (see the gazetteer below for a suggested explanation of the suffix). Considering the position of the settlement, it was postulated that the Aber was not the confluence of the Urlar and the Tay in low-lying ground some distance to the north, which in fact is avoided, but the relatively level outwash fan of well-drained gravel brought down by the burn and deposited at the point where it descends to the haugh. Aberfeldy's location near the confluence of this burn with the Tay is in fact coincidental.

This suggestion is supported by the sites of Aber(r)uthven, Aberdalgie, Aberargie and Abernethy, all in the basin of the Earn. They are all situated on the alluvial fan of material deposited by a burn where it drops down from higher ground. Some Perthshire Abers may be on burns or near confluences, but it is difficult to find any settlement anywhere in Highland Scotland that is not. None of them is actually on a confluence, nor could they be, in view of the boggy nature of the low-lying land at confluences in this district and the consequent danger from flooding.

This appears to exclude the other meaning often proposed (eg by Diack, 1944, 126-34), that of "marsh", at least for the Abers of Perthshire, which seem to have been, from their foundation, settlements or centres rather than simply geographical features. The word may mean "marsh" in Irish Gaelic or in a modern Scottish context, but this cannot have been the meaning when it was first used. In the interesting example of Aberarder (Ibid, 131), three locations exist close by: the Aber, on well-drained higher ground, the Inver at the confluence, and the Feith or marsh of Arder. Here, as in the Perthshire examples, Aber means a level piece of well-drained ground, which may be named for the burn that formed it, but which just as often has some other descriptive suffix. This meaning will be found to explain all Scottish

Abers, to solve several outstanding problems associated with them (eg Erskine Beveridge's "Inver of the Aber), and to cause no contradictions or problems.

It is possible that the rare Abers of the west, which might be seen to lie in a different linguistic area, outwith the Pictish area proper (ie Lochaber, and the two Abars of Tobermory, Mull) have the other meaning in Scottish Gaelic, which is shared with Irish Gaelic, of "marsh". However, the Perthshire Abers are all settlements, not geographical features and, quite apart from the facts of their actual location, there is a difficulty in accepting that a relatively important settlement would be established as a matter of choice in a bog.

4. **Not at confluences**

Since it is repeated frequently and confidently that Scottish Abers are at confluences, apparently by people who never look at a map, it is perhaps necessary to point out that not one of the fourteen Perthshire examples (and very few in Scotland as a whole) is located at a confluence, in contrast to the typical location in Wales. Erskine Beveridge stated that Aberlednock and Aberturret were at the confluence of Lednock and Earn and of Turret and Barvick respectively; however, their sites have been lost and their anomalous history is discussed below. Many of the others are on streams and may also be near their confluences but they are never actually on them. Aberfeldy, for example, is situated well back from the actual confluence on a site that contrasts with Welsh Abers which, in the different geography of the Welsh valleys, sit right on the spot where two streams meet. The location of the original Aberfoyle is not known, as no settlement with the name is shown by Stobie (1783), though it is shown for the parish as a whole. If it was a Pictish settlement it would almost certainly have been somewhat higher than the existing clachan.

In summary, it may be stated as a fact that Perthshire Abers are not named for a confluence, though in several cases they may be sited near a confluence, not unexpected in a country of rivers large and small. The word means a level, well-drained place, often alluvial in origin but not necessarily so, and it also appears from their geography that this definition may usefully be extended to other Scottish Abers with the possible exception of the examples mentioned above which are not centres and are outwith the main Pictish area.

5. **Gaelic names**

Like the Pit settlements, all the Perthshire Abers have names that can be explained quite validly in Gaelic (see the gazetteer for suggested meanings), though one (Aberlednock)

is obscure, one of several obscure names thought to be stream names in the Loch Tay area (Watson, 1926, 463-4).

6. **The function of Abers**

In view of the development not only of Aberfeldy but of many other Perthshire Abers into centres with historic or continuing importance and the finding that many Perthshire Abers have associated Pit settlements, a further proposal may be made that an Aber was founded to serve as some kind of centre or meeting place, for processing or manufacturing, trading, settlement of disputes and other administrative functions or social events. The current view in this study is that their purpose was probably the practical one of collecting and processing trade goods. If one views certain of the Abers and their related Pits as a unit, as Barrow (1973, 56) does, it may have acquired at some date a formal religious centre, but this is not seen as the initial function of the Aber. Fowlis Wester, for example, appears to be the early religious centre of the Abercairny (also spelled Abercairney) group to the east of Crieff, not Abercairny itself. Barrow's suggestion of continuity into the early Middle Ages is stimulating, and clearly supported by the evidence from Perthshire, though his view (Ibid, 58) of the settlement names as Welsh or at least P-Celtic, while following a well trodden path, gets no support from this study, or the author's work on Pit settlements and other related landscape features.

7. **Centres**

In support of the view of the Abers not as farms but as trading posts or centres for other purposes, it is remarkable that, in contrast to the surviving and probably related Pit settlements, which are almost all farms, only Aberbothrie, in the far east of Perthshire, is now a farm. Ten of the fourteen Perthshire examples are today, or have been at some point, administrative, religious or trading centres, several having been quite important ones in local terms. It is also remarkable that six of the fourteen at one time or another gave their name to a later parish: Aberdalgie, Aberfeldy, Aberfoyle, Abernethy, Abernyte and Aberugle (lost, but near present-day Kinnoull parish). It would appear from this development that the Abers were not selected or established as farms (in contrast to the Pits) but for some other purpose.

The four Aber place-names about which less is known (Aberlednock, Aberturret, Abertechan and Aberugle) are unlocated, though the first three are part of a cluster of Abers which includes Abercairny, Aberuchil and Barvick (which Erskine Beveridge suspected might

be an Aber but which has not been included in the gazetteer yet). These six are in very close proximity, in contrast to other Abers on the map of Scotland, and the possibility exists that the use of Aber in this localised area was not restricted to the Pictish period, and was also used as a geographical term, though with the same meaning, as was deduced above, of a level piece of well-drained ground. Alternatively, these lost Abers may belong to the earliest phase of Aber development, but were badly situated in comparison with neighbouring centres and so failed to thrive. It is also possible that Aberlednock and, perhaps, Aber(r)uchil, near Comrie, are now subsumed in Comrie itself, a place-name which derives from one of the Scottish Gaelic words for a confluence (*comar*, where two large rivers meet; cf *inbhear*, where a small stream runs into a larger one), but this group of Abers is rather difficult to account for in terms of Abers as centres.

8. **Associated Pit settlements**

In support of Barrow's theory about groups consisting of an Aber with several dependant Pits, seven or eight of the Perthshire Abers have associated Pit settlements. However, it is by no means certain that the Abers came first (as Barrow suggested) and were subdivided into Pits. Many Pits are isolated and remote from any obvious centre, particularly further west in Perthshire and in Fife.

The main features of the Perthshire Abers have been collated in the form of a chart.

Aber name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Known old form of name	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*	*		*
Known location	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*				
If known, at a confluence														
Name attached to parish				*	*	*		*	*				*	
Continuing use of site	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*				*
Modern or old centre	*		*	*	*	*		*	*	*				*
Associated Pits	*	*	*	?	*			*	*	*				
Gaelic name	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Named for a river	*						*	?				*		*

Key to chart:

1. Aberargie; 2. Aberbothrie; 3. Abercairny; 4. Aberdalgie; 5. Aberfeldy; 6. Aberfoyle; 7. Aberlednock; 8. Abernethy; 9. Abernyte; 10. Aber(r)uthven; 11. Abertechan; 12. Aberturret; 13. Aberugle; 14. Aber(r)uchil.

This shows two main groups, with some overlap: those that appear to have survived and even developed, and those that have been found with difficulty on scrutiny of the OS 6-inch map. Most of those named for rivers seem to have been transient, perhaps later, sites.

Gazetteer of Perthshire Abers

Names of any nearby Pit settlements are also given.

1. Aberargie (NO 163 157): minor centre; near Bridge of Earn, on the Farg, at north end of Glen Farg where the burn exits from the Ochils; Gaelic *feirge* "wrath" or *feargach* "fierce", *fearg* "anger". Named from the river. Pitnamoor, Pitkeathly to north. Shares Pitcairlie, Pitmedden, Pitmenzies, Pitlour, Pituncarty, Pitgorno and perhaps Pilliloch and Pitlochy to the south, with Abernethy.
2. Aberbothrie (NO 240 463): farm. Perhaps from Gaelic *boidhre* "deaf", but an opinion is sought on "the Aber of the boths" (huts or temporary cattle-pens). On fairly flat land, south of Alyth. Pitnacree.
3. Abercairn(e)y (NN 913 224): estate. From *carnaigh*, genitive of *carnach* "place of cairns", "rough rocky place". Old Gaelic *abar carnach* (Johnston, 1934). Fairly flat site near Crieff in Strathearn. Pitenleean 1 (OSA Pittentian), Pitenleean 2 (from Stobie), Pittachar, Pittenzie, Pittencleroch, Pitlandy and, perhaps, Pitcellony and Petts near Muthill.
4. Aberdalgie (NO 080 203): parish, village and house. From Gaelic *dealg* "thorn, pin", "confluence among the thorns": perhaps with thorny enclosures. Near the Earn but not on a confluence. Not the name of a river. No associated Pits except Pitcairnie Loch on OS map.
5. Aberfeldy (NN 850 495): parish, major centre. Near, but not on, the confluence of Urlar and Tay. The name has nothing to do with the Urlar, nor is it from Peallaidhe, the Lewis water demon, or the even more remote St Palladius, but from *peallaidach* "of the hides or sheepskins", perhaps from hide shelters erected there, or from a trade in hides based there. Other local names must be taken into consideration: Caisteal Pheallaidh in the Den of Moness (a cattle-pen with hide coverings or hide shelters?), Eas Pheallaidh, Glen Lyon, a waterfall which perhaps looked like a sheepskin or was used in processing hides; also Ruidhe Pheallaidh in Glen Lyon "dairy of hides" (MacKenzie, 1931, 119). A nice pastoral scenario. Pitcairn, Pitcastle, Pitnacree, Pitcuril, Pittinie.

6. Aberfoyle (NN 525 010): parish, major centre. Eperpuill in the Irish life of St Berach, in modern Gaelic Obarphuill "confluence of the poll [sluggish stream or streams]", which might be the Forth and the Duchray some way west. Not shown by Stobie except as parish.

7. Aberlednock (Comrie): unknown site unless = Comrie "confluence, rivermeet" itself. Liadnaig in Gaelic, but this is an obscure name like the second elements in Ardtalnaig and Ardradnaig on Lochtayside, "all apparently stream names" (Watson, 1926, 464).

8. Abernethy (NO 187 165): parish, major centre, round tower; Apurnethige in the "Pictish Chronicle" (Anderson, 1973, 247); Malcolm III Canmore met William the Bastard here in 1072. On the Nethy but not at its confluence. Despite Watson's problems with the names - "Nethy and Ythan cannot be explained from Gaelic" (Ibid, 211) - other people see it simply as an early Gaelic word for a burn (Nicolaisen, 1976, 178), cf Nethy, Ythan, Nith, Nyte. Johnston, who does not seem familiar with the site, says: "Aber here is 'the ford' at the confluence with R Earn. Early forms suggest Gaelic *an eitighich*, 'at the narrow opening' or gullet" (1934, 77). This is complete nonsense. There is no ford but there are two ferrymen's crofts shown by Stobie: Boat of Cary and Aitken's Boat. Pitcairlie, Pitmedden, Pitmenzies, Pitlour, Pituncarty, Pitgorno and perhaps Pilliloch and Pitlochy to the south.

9. Abernyte (NO 259 313): parish, minor centre, contains Dunsinane Hill and King's Seat. For meaning, see Abernethy. Near east end of shire, quite high on what is now called the Braes of the Carse of Gowrie, with reference to lower and more recent settlement, above a small confluence, which may be a coincidence. Pitmiddle, Pitkindie, Pitcur, Pitermo.

10. Aber(r)uthven (NN 979 155): minor centre, relics found at Castle Law fort. Ruthven ex Gaelic *ruadh abhuinn* "red rock" (Johnston); not a confluence. Pitcairns, Pitmeadow.

11. Aberterchan (Crieff): no old forms (Watson, 1926, 446).

12. Aberturret (Crieff: Hosh): presumably at or near the confluence of Turret and Shaggie near Crieff, but not in Stobie. Gaelic *tur* "dry", with a diminutive (Watson, 1926, 446). No old forms.

13. Aber(r)uchil (NN 742 210): estate and remains of castle, two miles west of Comrie and the actual confluence of the Ruchill from Glenartney and the Earn. Gaelic *urchaill* "wood-side". In Stobie (1783) on same site.

14. Aberugle (Kinnoull), 1696. Name of a parish (Watson, 1926, 464), but not shown in Cowan (1967).

Postscript

Erskine Beveridge gives an additional Aber: Aberwainie, now Baluain, on (or near) the Garry at Blair Atholl. In view of the importance of Blair Atholl in terms of other Pictish evidence, this is a useful addition to the Perthshire list. A spurious derivation given by the parish minister in the Old Statistical Account from *Ath Bhaird Shuainidh* "ford of Sween's Bard", is shown by Beveridge to be learned nonsense.

Sheila McGregor.

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a hanging Bowl at Ulbster?

Although the majority of complete hanging bowls have been found in Anglo-Saxon burials, there is considerable evidence that some, if not most, of these items were produced in Pictland. The best surviving evidence is the circular clay mould for a hanging bowl escutcheon with two openwork pelta voids found at the vitrified fort of Craig Phadraig in Inverness, and now in Inverness Museum (Stevenson, 1972). This mould matches the surviving escutcheon of the incomplete hanging bowl from Castle Tioram, Lochaber (Kilbride-Jones, 1937), as well as other finds in England and Ireland. Other fragmentary hanging bowls have been found at Aberdour Castle on the south coast of Fife, Tummel Bridge in northern Perthshire and possibly at Clatchard Craig, also in Fife, and Dunadd (Brenan, 1991).

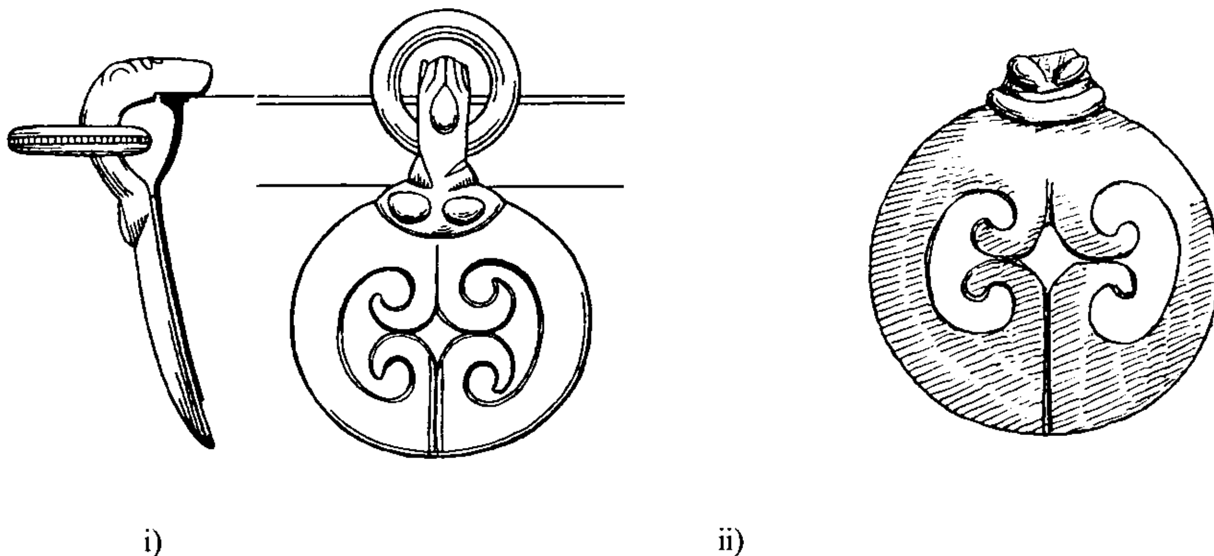

Fig. 8. Hanging bowl escutcheons from northern Scotland
i) Castle Tioram, Moidart; ii) Craig Phadraig, Inverness (impression from mould).

Given the evidence linking northern Scotland and hanging bowls, the decoration on the Class II Pictish cross-slab from a chapel site at Ulbster on the Caithness coast (ND 336 419; now in Thurso Museum) becomes particularly interesting (Allen and Anderson, 1903, III, 33-5). On one side of the slab in the lower left hand quadrant created by the dominant cross is a scene with "two men kneeling with what has been taken to be a cauldron between them" (Ibid, 35). This "cauldron" is, however, markedly different in size and appearance to the other well-known cauldron on a Pictish stone at Glamis Manse (Ibid, 221-3) and does not appear to be linked to the common triple disc and bar symbol which is often identified as a cauldron seen

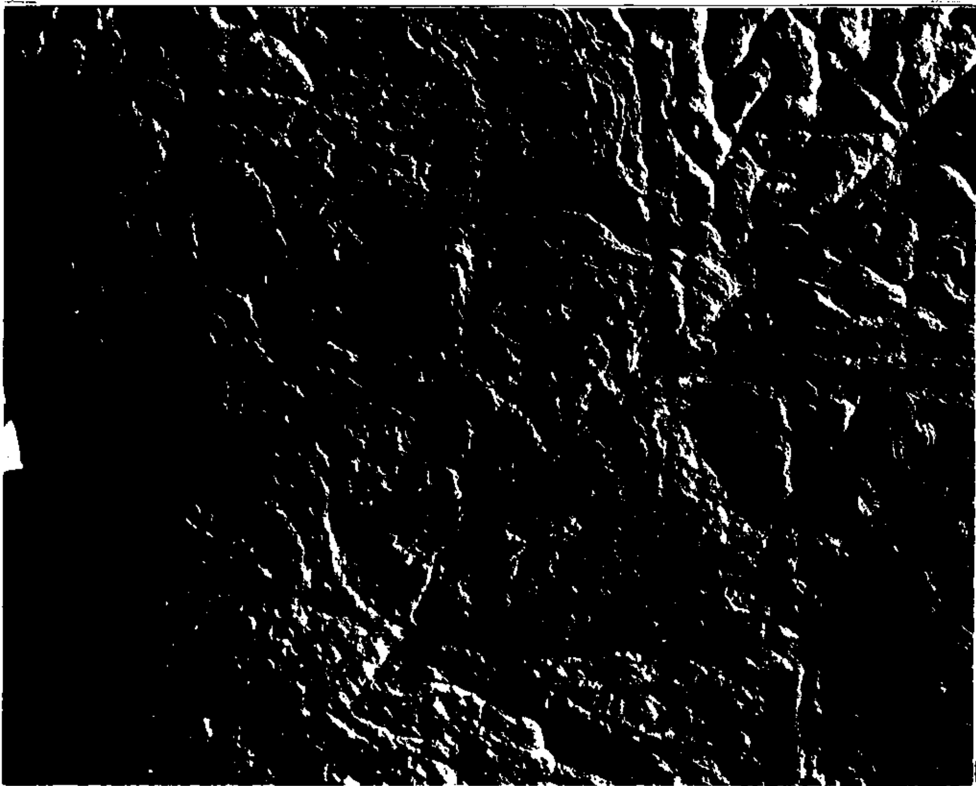

Fig. 9. Detail of lower left hand quadrant of Ulbster cross-slab originally showing two figures kneeling beside vessel (Tom E Gray).

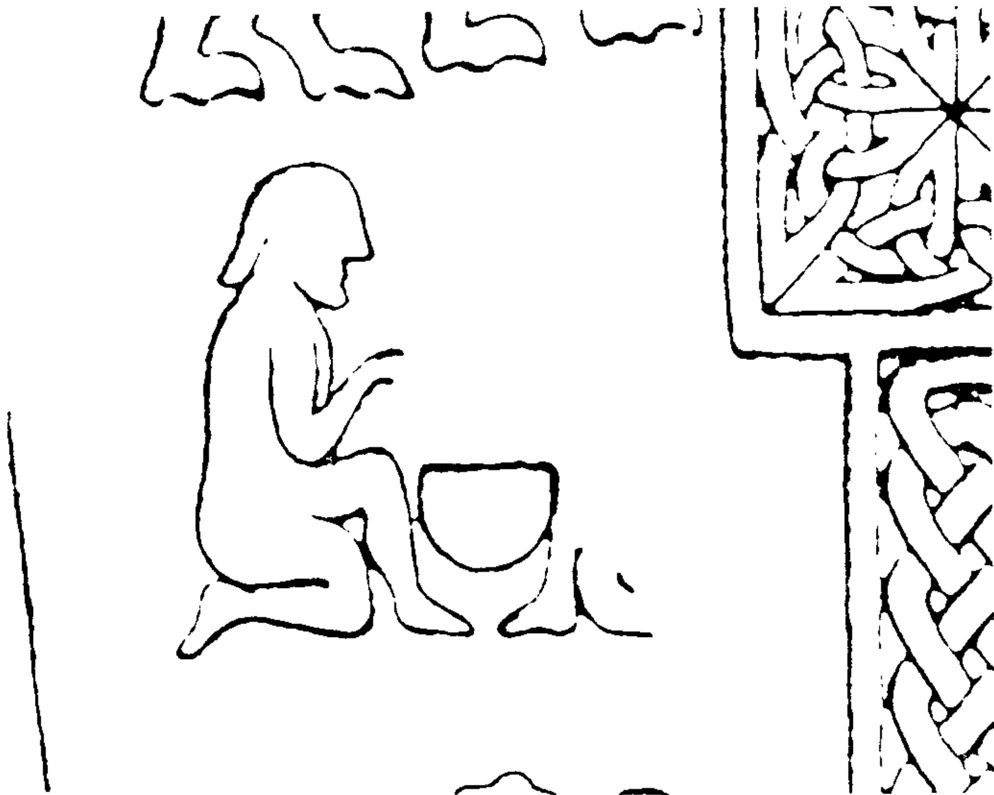

Fig. 10. Interpretation of the above scene (after Allen and Anderson, 1903).

from above (Thomas, 1963, 55). In size and profile the "cauldron" appears to be a hanging bowl. The object depicted does not match any of the bowls or containers made of wood (Earwood, 1990), glass (Harden, 1956), pottery (Thomas, 1990), or silver (Small et al, 1973) known from Early Historic Scotland, though it could be one of the large copper-alloy basins which are related to hanging bowls and have been found in Ireland and Norway (Youngs, 1989, no 127, 133). The size of the object relative to the figures, however, suggests a hanging bowl rather than a larger basin.

The stone from Ulbster probably dates to the mid-late C8th, which is later than most of the hanging bowls known from Scotland. However, the Ulbster Stone is of similar date to the fragment of a hanging bowl from Aberdour Castle, which is likely to be later in date than the C7th (Brenan, 1991, 302) and the silver example from the St Ninian's Isle hoard which was made prior to c700 but not deposited until around 800 (Small et al, 1973, I, 55-7, 147-8). Though the scene shows two figures (one very fragmentary) kneeling on either side of the cauldron or bowl, it is not possible to definitely determine what function the bowl is performing. The most likely explanation is that it is meant to contain some form of food or drink which the figures are consuming. Though the Ulbster Stone is dominated by the Christian imagery of the cross, the Class II stones as a group portray much secular imagery and there is no reason to assume that the bowl is being used in a (Christian) religious context. Communal drinking around large vessels (*drull*), which are likely to have been hanging bowls, is suggested in the C6th-C7th Gododdin poem from south-east Scotland:

> Gloyw ddull i am drull yd gydfaethant,
> Gwin a medd a mall a amucsant.
>
> In bright array around the bowl they fed together,
> They enjoyed wine and mead and malt.

Jarman, 1988, 38-9.

This idea is strengthened by the recent discovery of a complete hanging bowl from Buiston Crannog in Strathclyde (Crone, 1991, 295) which shows that the Britons of southern Scotland possessed hanging bowls at the time Y Gododdin was composed.

The Class II cross-slabs and the hanging bowls are arguably the two greatest achievements of Pictish art, and the Ulbster Stone which links both is particularly important as it is the only known contemporary depiction of a hanging bowl.

Craig Cessford.

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Saxons, Irish and Picts in Y Gododdin

In his article "More on the Gododdin and the Picts" (1993, 27-8) Graeme Cruickshank drew attention to some lines in Y Gododdin which appear to list the Saxons, Irish and Picts as enemies of the Gododdin tribe. Cruickshank states that the Picts must have been fighting alongside the Northumbrians, but says "This is surely an extremely unlikely circumstance" (28). Cruickshank notes that Jarman does not translate this passage, but he does mention it in his notes to his version of Y Gododdin, and makes a similar comment to Graeme, that the passage ". . does not relate easily to the main subject of *Y Gododdin*" (Jarman, 1988, note 443-4, 108). This passage is however not alone, and there is a considerable amount of material in the poem which is difficult to relate to a catastrophic defeat at Catraeth where almost all the warriors of the Gododdin were killed. There are numerous references to living British warriors, border skirmishes and battles in which the Gododdin were victorious. This has led to the theory that Y Gododdin in its earliest form was in fact derived from two sources, a "funeral anthology" of elegies to fallen warriors, and a "Gododdin anthology" which described the deeds of both living and dead warriors (O'Hehir, 1988). The battle of Catraeth with its appalling casualties became the dominant element in the "funeral anthology", but warriors who died in other battles were also commemorated, the more general "Gododdin anthology" recording numerous other events.

This theory can easily accommodate the idea that the Gododdin fought against the Picts. Whilst individual Pictish warriors may have fought at Catraeth, it is unlikely that relations between the two kingdoms were uniformly harmonious, and the Picts were undoubtedly numbered amongst the enemies of the Gododdin at some times. The list of Saxons, Irish and Picts is interesting and there are two possible explanations. It could be a general list of the enemies of the kingdom of Gododdin, but this suffers from the problem of the absence of other British kingdoms, notably Strathclyde and Rheged, which the Gododdin probably fought against as well at times. One way around this problem is to assume that the poem was composed at a time when the British kingdoms were all allied together, so that the listing of them as enemies would have been politically inadvisable. The best example of this is the alliance of four British kings, recorded in the Historia Brittonum, which besieged the Bernician king Theodric (c572-9) on Lindisfarne.

Alternatively, the list may refer to an actual alliance of Saxons, Irish and Picts which the Gododdin fought against. Ammianus Marcellinus (c330-95 AD) records a military alliance between Picts (Dicalydones and Verturiones) and Scots in 360 AD, attacks by Picts, Saxons, Scots and Attacotti in 365 AD and the *conspiratio barbarica* of 367 AD, which was composed of Picts, Attacotti, Saxons and Franks. There is also the Alleluia Victory of Germanus of Auxerre in 429 AD against a joint force of Saxons and Picts. That a member of the Gododdin may have faced an alliance of Saxons, Irish and Picts is thus quite possible. As the poem is partly made up of two anthologies, rather than recording the single historical event of the battle of Catraeth, it obviously contains material of varying dates. There is evidence that the origins of some of the poem lie as far back as the pre-Roman Iron Age (Koch, 1987). It is likely that the Votadini, the people later called the Gododdin, enjoyed friendly relations with the Romans and were virtually a client buffer state of the Empire. Votadini/Gododdin warriors could easily have served in the Roman army in the 360's and taken part in the events recorded by Ammianus. The events recorded in Y Gododdin could alternatively be any other alliance of Saxons, Irish and Picts, possibly one unrecorded by other documentary sources.

Cruickshank also refers to a line mentioning ". . the men of Gwynedd and the northern part . ." (27), arguing that this refers to Picts. The quotation in question actually means that the warrior Gwefrfawr was so proficient that he was able to fight and defeat all comers (Jarman, 1988, note 54, 81). The North used in this sense in Old Welsh poetry is more likely to refer to the territories of the *Gwŷr y Gogledd* "Men of the North" who were the inhabitants of the kingdoms of Strathclyde, Rheged, Gododdin and other lesser-known polities of northern Britain, rather than the Picts.

The poem also contains a number of references (three versions of verse LI which are all fraught with problems and are not translated by Jarman) to the warrior Grugyn who commanded a warband that came across the sea in a ship from Din Dywyd (Jackson, 1969, 99, 107, 136). These warriors are also described as being from just across the border of Gododdin, so they can only have been from that part of Pictland just north of the Firth of Forth (Ibid, 99). Grugyn is described using the imagery of "a slab of rock in cleared land/country" which probably refers to "a great standing stone in an open space" (99). As Grugyn was a Pict and the "slab of rock" imagery is exclusive to him, is it too fanciful to see this imagery as being derived from a Class I Pictish stone? If this is acceptable then it provides a little information about the siting of Pictish stones (ie they occurred in cleared land), and

their dating, as their origin is likely to have been prior to the fall of Din Eidyn (Edinburgh), whose siege (and probable destruction) is recorded in Irish Annals as occurring in 638.

Craig Cessford.

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fife stones news

St Andrews

An interpretive visitor centre was opened beside St Andrews Castle in July 1992, containing tableaux of life sized figures, murals and audio-visual presentations of incidents from the history of the Castle. Three of the Early Christian stones from the large collection in the Cathedral Museum have been put on display here, mounted on a curving black wall with raking top lighting, which brings out their carving well. The stones are as follows:

St Andrews 7 - a cross-slab of the St Andrews "school", decorated with key pattern.
St Andrews 9 - a tapering slab, carved with one of the few figure scenes from St Andrews.
St Andrews 38 - a tapering recumbent slab, incised with key pattern on the top.
(Numeration after David Hay Fleming's St Andrews Cathedral Museum (Edinburgh, 1931)).

Inchcolm Abbey

The hogback which formerly stood on a hill west of the Abbey buildings was moved into the island's visitors' centre last year to preserve it from the ravages of the weather. The hogback is perhaps the oldest known from Scotland, dating from the mid C10th, and is also one of our earliest recorded Dark Age monuments. An eye-witness account appears as long ago as c1535 in the metrical version of Hector Boece's Buik of the Croniclis of Scotland, at which time it was supposed to mark the grave of a "Danish" (ie Viking) chieftain:

> As I myself quhilk hes bene thair and sene.
> Ane corce of stone thair standis on ane grene,
> Middis the feild quhair that tha la ilkone,
> Besyde the croce thair lyis ane greit stone;
> Wnder the stone. in middis of the plane.
> Thair chiftane lyis quhilk in the feild wes slane.

The standing cross associated with the "greit stone" (the hogback), has long vanished, and an excavation on the site in September after the hogback had been moved failed to find any evidence for it. In fact the dig produced no results worth reporting whatsoever, which might suggest that the monument had not lain in its original position, although it seems to have been on the knoll above the Abbey for the past few centuries (information from Peter Yeoman, Fife Regional Archaeologist).

Niall M Robertson.

tarbat historic trust news

prestigious support for tarbat historic trust

The Tarbat Historic Trust's archaeological and preservation project at Portmahomack in Easter Ross has received an enthusiastic endorsement from one of Britain's leading archaeologists, Prof Martin Carver, Head of the Department of Archaeology at York University.

In response to an invitation from the Trust, Prof Carver visited Portmahomack in July 1993. After viewing the Tarbat Old Church site (NH 914 840) - on the site of a probable Celtic monastery - and examining the results of the recent excavation there, the Professor, who has directed many of Britain's most important digs, offered the project his services and full support. He described the site as "capable of providing an exceptional window on a notoriously obscure period".

"I would be happy to contribute from the resources of my Department, " Carver said, adding, "I would count it a privilege to collaborate with such a lively community on such a promising project".

The Professor's commitment is extremely good news for the Trust's organisers, and for the Easter Ross area at large. Originally formed to ensure the preservation of the Grade 1 listed Old Church at Tarbat, with its Medieval crypt, the Trust's focus expanded after the completion of its June 1991 dig. The results of this suggested that the site around the Church had been a Pictish settlement of considerable size well before the arrival of Christianity in the area.* Fragments of Early Christian cross-slabs found in the vicinity also suggest that Tarbat later became an important early monastic site. The Trust recognised, as has Prof Carver, that an ongoing dig, together with an exhibition centre in the Church, would be of great and continuing interest to scholars and visitors alike, and a boon to the cultural and economic life of the locality.

The local community has given enthusiastic backing to the project, with volunteer work and donations having raised over £12 000 so far. On another level, Historic Scotland has shown its support, promising a grant of at least 50% towards the costs of restoring and preserving the fabric of the building. This money is, however, contingent upon the Trust obtaining financial support from the Local Authorities. These have now promised full funding for Prof Carver's archaeological evaluation, which is planned to take place over the next two

seasons, but this does not constitute any financial support for the restoration of the rapidly deteriorating Old Church.

Trust Chairman, Caroline Shepherd-Barron, says: "We are delighted that the dig is to be funded. This will heighten awareness of our project, and perhaps make the task of raising money to repair the Church a little easier".

Tarbat Historic Trust.

* For Jill Harden's preliminary report on the 1991 excavation at Tarbat, see the entry on page 43 of Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 1991, (Council for Scottish Archaeology, 1992).

carved stones - national committee

Various official bodies and individuals have been increasingly concerned by the deterioration in the condition of many Scottish carved stones of all periods. Historic Scotland have taken the initiative and have set up a committee to look at the problems involved in the protection and conservation of these stones, accepting that these aims are best achieved by co-operation with other appropriate organisations. It is accepted that not all of any actions decided upon will necessarily be undertaken by Historic Scotland.

The various groups approached will be represented by the following individuals:

Association of Regional Archaeologists	-	Lorna Main.
Council for Scottish Archaeology	-	Tom E Gray.
Historic Scotland	-	Richard Fawcett, Ingval Maxwell.
National Museums of Scotland	-	Michael Spearman.
RCAHMS	-	Graham Ritchie, Ian Fisher.
Scottish Museums Council	-	Timothy Ambrose.
Society of Antiquaries of Scotland	-	Anna Ritchie.

The first meeting was held on 2 June 1993 in the conference room at Historic Scotland and was chaired by Richard Fawcett, but feelers are to be put out to find a Chairperson who is not a member of the organisations represented. This meeting was purely an informal airing of views on the areas in which it is seen that the committee will be taking an interest. It was considered that the following areas were likely to be important - in brief:

General

(i) Full information exchange, consistent database establishment, consistent style of description and illustration, and standardised glossary, are all areas of prime importance.

(ii) To promote awareness of the existence and needs of all categories of carved stones through local societies, and to draw attention to specific cases of neglect and damage.

(iii) To consider the ethical framework to the range of available solutions for the protection of carved stones.

Specific Categories of Stones

The committee then discussed in broad terms the various categories of stones that would have to be considered, eg Prehistoric rock carvings, Roman, Pictish and Early Medieval, Medieval and post-Medieval stones.

Pictish and Early Medieval Carved Stones

Stated to be perhaps one of the most important groups of monuments forming Scotland's cultural heritage, it was suggested that the scientific monitoring of a control group of stones should be encouraged, and that there might be more general monitoring of decay of stones by Regional Archaeologists, local archaeological and historical societies, and possibly also by Monument Wardens and Friends of the Monuments.

Roman Stones

To encourage the ability to recognise Roman stonework techniques.

Medieval Carved Stones

(i) To identify buildings with architectural sculpture which is at risk, and of which there are inadequate records.

(ii) To consider the ethical and practical problems of removing separable elements of architectural sculpture to more sheltered environments.

(iii) To consider the specific needs of Medieval free-standing carved stones, including monuments and mercat crosses.

Post-Medieval Carved Stones

(i) To encourage local authorities to become more aware of their responsibilities with regard to memorials within kirkyards in their care.

(ii) To encourage Regional Archaeologists and CSA to co-ordinate the efforts of local societies and further education bodies to compile inventories of kirkyard memorials.

Historic Scotland Leaflet

Richard Fawcett submitted the draught of a proposed Historic Scotland leaflet for consideration; it describes the range and variety of carved stones to be seen, and goes into some detail as to how we should meet their conservation needs. It seemed to me to be an

admirable and long overdue production. I look forward to the final printed version, which I am sure will come up to Historic Scotland's high standard of presentation.

The above is a fairly brief summary of a lengthy meeting. The second meeting took place in September, and at a third on 3 December the possibility of a conference on the future of the stones was considered, to be held around May/June 1994.

Tom E Gray.

archive report

Generous contributions to the Society's Library have been received from Eileen C Brownie, David Henry, Adèle Stewart and Niall M Robertson. Moreover, Prof Charles Thomas has offered to present the Society with a copy of Small, Thomas and Wilson's important two volume work St Ninian's Isle and its Treasure (Aberdeen Uni Studies Series 152, 1973).

As promised in PAS Journal 4 (Autumn 1993), 44, a list of suggested reading for the beginner in Pictish studies is presented here. The aim has been to list the indispensable works covering the main aspects of Pictish culture - history, art, archaeology, place-names etc. It is hoped that this list will prove especially useful to the many new members the PAS is now attracting, so most works have brief comments after them giving a bare outline of subject and importance.

Suggested reading for the beginner in Pictish studies

In the following list (to be supplemented in subsequent Journals):
(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.

Eric H Nicoll.

Allen, J R & Anderson, J - The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1903; reprinted with Introduction by Dr I Henderson, Pinkfoot Press, Balgavies, Angus, 1993) (A).

Despite modern discoveries, ECMS remains the "Bible" of Pictish studies, an inexhaustible source of reference to the art of Scotland's sculptured stones.

Atkinson, N K - Pictish Stones of Angus (Angus Libraries & Museums, Forfar, 1993).

Bain, George - Celtic Art: The Methods of Construction (Glasgow, 5th impression 1977).

An indispensable reference book for the Celtic artist/craftsman.

Brooke, Daphne - The Search For St Ninian (The Whithorn Trust, 1993) (A).

Section on the mission to the Southern Picts.

Close-Brooks, J - St Ninian's Isle Treasure (HMSO, 1981) (A).
- Pictish Stones in Dunrobin Castle Museum (Pilgrim Press, Derby, 1989) (A).

Close-Brooks, J & Stevenson, R B K - Dark Age Sculpture (HMSO, 1982) (A).

Basic introduction to the classes of carved stones, with examples drawn chiefly from the national collection in Edinburgh.

Cruden, Stewart - The Early Christian and Pictish Monuments of Scotland (HMSO, 1964).

A general discussion followed by illustrated catalogues of the Meigle and St Vigeans collections.

Cruickshank, G - The battle of Dunnichen (Pinkfoot Press, Balgavies, 1991) (A).

Thoroughly researched account of the Picts' victory over the Northumbrians at the Battle of Dunnichen or Nechtansmere in 685.

Curle, Cecil L (C L Mowbray) - The Chronology of the Early Christian Monuments of Scotland (PSAS LXXIV, 1939-40), 60-116.

Important paper on the classification and chronology of Pictish stones. Well illustrated.

Foster, Sally - The State of Pictland in the Age of Sutton Hoo in Carver, M (Ed) The Age of Sutton Hoo (Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1992), 217-34 (A).

Gordon, C A - The Pictish Animals Observed (PSAS XCVIII, 1964-66), 215-24 (A).

Identifies species represented and suggests that animals in Pictish art represented "magical properties" or "objects of power".

Henderson, I M - The Picts (Thames & Hudson, 1967).

Important art-historian's view of the Picts with a detailed analysis of the art of the sculptured stones. Well-illustrated. Archaeology section now out of date.

Jackson, Anthony - The Symbol Stones of Scotland (The Orkney Press, 1984) (A).

Social anthropological resolution of the problem of the Pictish symbols. Theory that symbol stones proclaimed political alliances through marriage between members of Pictish lineages.

- The Pictish Trail: A Traveller's Guide to the Old Pictish Kingdoms (The Orkney Press, 1989).

Guide with selected routes to follow to visit Pictish stones in the field and in museums.

Laing, Lloyd R & Laing, Jennifer - Art of the Celts (Thames & Hudson, 1992) (A).

Introduction to the art of the Celtic peoples of Europe from C6th BC to C12th AD.

- The Picts and the Scots (Allan Sutton, 1993) (A).

Introductory overview to the Picts and the Scots.

Lines, Marianna - Sacred Stones Sacred Places (St Andrew Press, 1992).

Well illustrated guide to the sculptured stones in selected Scottish kirks and kirkyards.

McHardy, Stuart - Strange Secrets of Ancient Scotland (Lang Syne Publishers, Glasgow, 1989) (A).

Scottish legends, including some told about Pictish stones.

Nicolaisen, W F H - Scottish Place-Names (Batsford, 1976).

Comprehensive and systematic study of Scottish place-names, including useful chapter on P-Celtic examples.

Ralston, Ian & Inglis, Jim - Foul Hordes: the Picts in the North-East and their background (Anthropological Museum, Uni of Aberdeen, 1984).

Illustrated exhibition catalogue with excellent introduction covering far more than the Picts of the north-east.

Ramsay, Dorothy M - Honey in the Mead (Pittenhope Publishing, Glenrothes, 1991) (A).

- The Flame Within (Pittenhope Publishing, Glenrothes, 1993) (A).

Two works of fiction in which the central characters are Pictish princesses of the C6th and C7th.

Rankin, Frank - Guide to the Wemyss Caves (SWACS, 1989) (A).

Ritchie, Anna - The Kingdom of the Picts (Chambers, 1977).

One of a children's teaching series. Shows how archaeological evidence can be used to help unravel the mystery of the Picts. Revised edition in preparation.

- Orkney in the Pictish Kingdom in Renfrew, C (Ed) The Prehistory of Orkney BC 4000-1000 AD (Edinburgh U P, 1985), 183-204 (A).

Historical and archaeological account of the Picts in Orkney, where a disproportionate number of the major discoveries in Pictish archaeology have been made.

- Picts (HMSO, 1989) (A).

Very well illustrated popular guide to Pictish archaeology and art using mainly the sites and stones in state care.

Ritchie, J N G - Pictish Symbol Stones a handlist (RCAHMS, 1985) (A).

Currently being updated.

Ritchie, J N G & Ritchie, Anna - Scotland: Archaeology and early history (Thames & Hudson, 1991).

Overall account of Scottish archaeology from earliest times to about AD 800. Chapter 8 on "The Pictish Kingdom".

Small, Alan (Ed) - The Picts: A New Look at Old Problems (Dundee, 1987) (A).

Papers from a conference held in Dundee in 1985. Place-names, forts, settlements and symbol stones are all studied.

Various Authors - Heron and other stories (Groam House Museum, Rosemarkie, 1993).

Collection of short stories set in Pictish times.

Wainwright, F T (Ed) - The Problem of the Picts (Edinburgh, 1955; reprinted Melven Press, Perth, 1980).

Important collection of papers on matters Pictish; those on archaeology are very out of date, but K H Jackson's paper on "The Pictish Language" is the classic statement on the subject.

Additions to the Library

Allen, J R - Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times (London, 1904; reprinted Bracken Books, London, 1993).

Allen, J R & Anderson, J - The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland (Edinburgh 1903; reprinted with Introduction by Dr I Henderson, Pinkfoot Press, Balgavies, Angus,1993).

Bain, Iain - Celtic Key Patterns (Constable, 1993).

Council for British Archaeology - Discovery and Excavation in Scotland, 1968, 1971-77 (CBA Scottish Regional Group, 1969, 1972-1978).

Ewing, W & Frazer, R (Eds) - A Collace Miscellany (750th anniversary of Collace Church, 1992).

Kaplan, W (Ed) - Scotland Creates: 5000 Years of Art and Design (Glasgow Museums & Art Galleries, 1990).

Laing, Lloyd R - A Catalogue of Celtic Ornamental Metalwork in the British Isles c AD 400-1200 (BAR British Series 229, 1993).

Murray, Nicola - Fife's Early Archaeological Heritage: A Guide (Fife Regional Council, 1989).

Piggott, S - Illustrated Guide to Ancient Monuments Vol VI: Scotland (HMSO, 1970).

Rennie, E B - Cowal: A Historical Guide (Birlinn Ltd, Edinburgh, 1993).

Ritchie, Anna - Viking Scotland (Batsford. 1993).

RCAHMS - Monuments on Record Annual Review 1992-3 (HMSO, 1993).

Book Reviews

Viking Scotland by Anna Ritchie (B T Batsford, 1993). PB; 143 ps. £14.99.

This and a work on Edinburgh Castle by Iain MacIvor are the first to be issued of a series of Batsford publications under the title Historic Scotland, which will be the Scottish equivalent of the successful series of books about English archaeology entitled English Heritage.

This is a handsomely produced volume, copiously illustrated to a high standard on almost every page with black and white and colour photographs, maps, site plans and line drawings. The cover photograph of part of the Jarlshof site is full of the brilliant light and sense of space of the Northern Isles (when the weather's decent), and evokes the marvellous scenery in which many of our Viking sites are to be found.

It is always a pleasure to have another book by Dr Ritchie in one's library, and Viking Scotland comes up to her expected standard of a popular and eminently readable text which is also scholarly and informative.

The book covers the main periods of Viking, Scandinavian or Norse history (the differing meanings of these terms, too often used interchangeably, are brought out in the first chapter), and the main archaeological sites and finds, both upstanding and excavated. Scotland has a splendid heritage of these (and potentially many more to be discovered): "Less than twenty Norse settlements have been identified and excavated, but this is a rich haul compared to other areas of the Norse colonies . ." (9). One of the most useful things about this book is that it summarises and interprets the knowledge gained from the excavated Norse settlement sites, burials, hoards and so on from all over the country. It is very worthwhile having this information gathered together in a single volume, not least because so many of even the most important sites are still unpublished (a problem all too familiar - and even more serious - in Pictish archaeology).

Due weight is given to the interaction between the Viking raiders or settlers and the "Natives" they encountered, the Picts and Scots. The second chapter "Scotland before the Vikings" is in fact a good summary of current knowledge, and perhaps no author before has brought out the probable influence of the Celtic population on the Norse settlers so strongly: it is fascinating to read, for instance, that analysis of the folklore of the Northern Isles shows that it has pre-Norse roots (28), or that Pictish house-types may have influenced those of the Norse settlers (49). Has anyone ever looked for Pictish words in the Norn dialect of Shetland?

The third chapter "Viking Age Scotland AD 780-1100" is a good general introduction to the archaeological evidence for daily life, burials and artefacts. Despite a certain amount of documentary evidence for Norse history, little of it contemporary except the Irish annals, the main source of knowledge about the Vikings is archaeology, supplemented by place-names. This chapter sets the scene for the following three, which look more closely at what has been found, or can still be seen in the field, site by site, in the Northern Isles and Caithness "the Viking heartland", Argyll and the Western Isles and southern and eastern Scotland.

Orkney has been and continues to be the richest area for Viking and later Norse remains. Important finds are made quite frequently, often revealed by coastal erosion, such as the richly furnished boat-grave found in 1991 at Scar on Sanday. A full page is rightly given over to a photograph of the superb C9th whalebone plaque found here, one of the finest Norse artefacts ever found in the British Isles (45), and it appears again in colour on the back cover. Norse Orkney also comes into focus by being the main background to Orkneyinga Saga which, though not a strictly historical work, casts light on what was happening at a large

number of individual sites. One such is Westness on Rousay, Vestrnes in the Saga, the site of important Norse (and Pictish) discoveries, which may be the most complete Viking landscape known in Scotland (52).

Shetland is much less well known, not least because the author of Orkneyinga Saga who, it is suggested, may have been an Icelander based at Thurso (15), was not very interested in it. Mainland Shetland does, however, contain the supremely important site of Jarlshof. It is suggested that the earliest intensive Norse settlement was in the more fertile lands of Orkney, and that Shetland was only settled when the better land further south had been taken, which may explain the continuing tradition of Picto-Scottish stone sculpture in Shetland, for which there is no evidence in Orkney (28).

In Argyll and the Western Isles the archaeological picture is dominated by Viking burials and their often rich grave-goods, which are described in detail here. A small lapdog was found with a female burial at Machrins on Colonsay, and the idea has been put forward that it could have been used not only as a pet but as a living hot-water bottle (85-6). Similar wee doggies seem to appear on some Pictish carvings. Only two settlements in the Hebrides have been excavated, at Drimore on South Uist and at the Udal on North Uist, the latter a site which, if it ever gets published, should have the same impact on all periods of the archaeology of the Western Isles as Jarlshof did on Shetland.

The "Viking fringe" of southern and eastern Scotland, described in the sixth chapter, was less intensely affected by the Norse, although raiding is recorded in the historical sources; the hoards that have occasionally been found in the south could relate to this. This part of Scotland may, however, have been rather more influenced by the Danes settled in northern England; any settlers probably spread north from there, bringing with them the fashion for hogback monuments.

The following chapter on late Norse Scotland deals with a time when the Norse settled in the north and west had ceased to be "Viking" barbarians, and were rather full participants in the civilisation of north-west Europe. The achievements of the Earldom of Orkney, with its far-flung cultural connections, which culminated in the construction of St Magnus' Cathedral in Kirkwall, stand out in this context. On a smaller scale from the churches and castles of the Earls, the Lewis chessmen, perhaps originally a trader's hoard, provide: "The most popular image of Scandinavian Scotland" (106). It is interesting to read that late Norse churches survive in the Western as well as the Northern Isles (110-1), and this is a reminder of just how strong and long-lasting Norse power was over the fringes of Scotland. Runes are also given an airing in this chapter. Isn't it about time someone did a corpus of these? Many of the (quite impressive) number of Scottish examples are very inadequately published.

The final chapter describes the continuing importance, and modern celebrations of, the Norse inheritance. This is followed by a list of monuments and museums to visit, a short reading list, glossary and index.

The book contains several line reconstruction drawings of ancient scenes, clothing etc. An aerial drawing of the first attack on Iona (20) gives a good impression of the layout of the C8th monastery, as far as it is known, with a raven (one of Odin's messengers?) hovering ominously above. A reconstruction of Cubbie Roo's Castle on Wyre (123) shows a tall keep with the surviving chapel nearby, and a large drinking-hall at the Bu beyond - an example of how a convincing representation of the past can be built up from a number of sources.

It seems almost churlish to point out two tiny errors in a work of this quality, but that is part of the reviewer's job: the Gaelic spelling of the site of A Cheardach Mhor ("The Big Smithy") on South Uist (21-2) is not quite correct (it should be A' Cheardach Mhòr), and on page 107 it would perhaps be best (with readers new to the subject in mind) to point out that "the earldom" in question is that of Orkney.

Dr Ritchie has produced a splendid popular introduction to Viking Scotland, which it will be a pleasure to read for years to come, and which perfectly complements B E Crawford's more specialised Scandinavian Scotland (Leicester U P, 1987). I look forward to her second Batsford book on Prehistoric Orkney.

Other books of interest due to be published in the Historic Scotland series will include: Picts and Scots by Sally Foster; Iron Age Scotland by Ian Armit; Stone Age Hunters of Scotland by Caroline Wickham-Jones; Temples and Tombs by Patrick Ashmore; Scottish Abbeys and Priories by Richard Fawcett; Roman Scotland by David Breeze and Medieval Scotland by Peter Yeoman.

Niall M Robertson.

The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland by J Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson, with an Introduction by Isabel Henderson (The Pinkfoot Press, Balgavies, Angus, 1993). PB; 2 cased vols; 1111 ps. £49.00.

It is often said that we know little about the Picts other than what we can glean from their symbol stones, and this reprint of the classic 1903 book on the subject fills a growing need for both academics and the general reader. The original book had a limited print run of 400 and is really only accessible nowadays in research libraries. The new two volume paperback edition produced by PAS member David Henry of the Pinkfoot Press is intended to be of practical use in the study and in the field. This it certainly will be.

Its comprehensive description of all the Early Medieval carved stones known in 1903, their symbols and the methods of construction of many of their intricate and beautiful key, interlace and spiral patterns make the book a must for all those interested in any aspect of Dark Age Scotland, in particular artists and craftspeople who draw inspiration from our ancient Celtic heritage. The accessibility of this great work will probably make many more people aware of just how much the art we think of as Celtic is ultimately derived from the Pictish artists who lovingly created their sculptural masterpieces all over the north and east of Scotland. The descriptions of particular stones and styles are much more detailed than those found in the till now more accessible book by George Bain Celtic Art: The Methods of Construction, on which many (too many) craftworkers have relied since it was first published in 1951. The new ECMS is also lovely to look at, the gold on green cover design including a real spark of modernity while retaining respect for the past. I particularly like the lettering, which has an echo of the flowering of interest in Celtic art that led to the Art and Crafts movement in Scotland a century ago.

With an extensive introduction detailing the creation of the original ECMS by leading Pictish scholar Dr Isabel Henderson, the two volumes contain more than 1100 pages of closely packed information, with a plethora of photographs (their reproduction actually improved by the slight reduction in size necessary in this facsimile) and illustrations describing virtually the entire corpus of Pictish stone art. Even at £49.00 this book will be indispensable for all those interested in Scottish archaeology, history and art.

Stuart McHardy.

A Catalogue of Celtic Ornamental Metalwork in the British Isles c AD 400-1200 by Lloyd Laing (BAR British Series 229, 1993). PB; 262 ps. £21.00.

This is a descriptive and fully illustrated catalogue of the Celtic ornamental metalwork found in or probably originating from Britain in the Dark Ages. It brings together all the pieces known, except for certain categories published elsewhere, which one would otherwise have to seek out in a plethora of books, articles and excavation reports. A full corpus seems to be me to be just what is needed to allow the advance of the study of this aspect of Early Medieval culture, and the book should be as useful in its own field as ECMS and the British Academy's ongoing Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture are in the study of stone art.

The author writes that the catalogue began as a card file some twenty years ago; he had originally wanted to expand to a full corpus of Celtic metalwork, but this intention was abandoned as several classes of artefact are fully published elsewhere. These include zoomorphic brooches and hanging bowls. The latter are merely listed and the principal publications dealing with them cited, while very well-known pieces - such as those from the St Ninian's Isle treasure - are mentioned in brief. However, the author believes the catalogue to be largely complete except for a few poor duplicate mould fragments not worth including.

The first forty pages of the book form an introduction to the catalogue, identifying the roots of Celtic art in metal, the main types represented, their chronology and so on. The small number of kinds of object which were decorated in the Insular Celtic style is striking, though this may be because of the tiny amount of ecclesiastical metalwork which has survived from Britain (in contrast to Ireland). Almost all are variations on a restricted number of artefacts, designed as personal adornment for people (and occasionally horses). Remarkable too is the apparent lack of evidence for any ornamental metalwork at all in large areas of Celtic Britain, at least after the C6th and C7th. The author goes as far as to say: "It is arguable that there was no native tradition of ornamental metalworking in Wales after the Roman period - all the 'Dark Age' metalwork from the principality could easily represent imports from Ireland or Scotland . ." (2). It seems that Dumnonia fared little better, while the tradition seems to have died out in southern Scotland too. It seems a little difficult to believe that this is what actually happened, but the archaeological evidence so far certainly seems to support it.

In happy contrast, the art of the Picts and Scots seems to have flourished up to the Viking period, stimulated rather than repressed by influences from Ireland and Northumbria. The glamour of the great works of the stonecarvers of Pictland and Dál Riada should not blind the Pictish enthusiast to the fact that Scotland north of the Forth and Clyde (certainly on the evidence of this book) produced the great majority of the surviving masterpieces of Dark Age Celtic metalwork in Britain as well. I welcome the author's recognition of a style of brooch that can be definitely labelled "Dálriadic" (7-8). The identification of "national" styles, which this amateur at least is inclined to think did exist, will be greatly aided by a corpus such as this.

The catalogue itself, divided into sections by artefact type, has 263 entries, including all the more informative mould fragments, particularly important for providing exact provenances for styles of object. Every entry is illustrated by a tone drawing (except for a small number shown by old but accurate engravings). These are of variable quality, having been prepared by various volunteers. Several of the major pieces also feature in a section of plates at the end of the book. Thanks for the photo here of the complete Tummel Bridge treasure, probably the least well-known of the Pictish hoards. Each entry has a description of one artefact or mould and lists its present location, dimensions, and condition, along with the principal references to it in the literature. The book's bibliography is extensive, and useful.

In short, as an introduction to the subject of Dark Age Celtic metalwork, and a gathering together of the evidence, Lloyd Laing's book should prove itself one of the indispensable works of reference for years to come.

Niall M Robertson.

Cowal: A Historical Guide by Elizabeth B Rennie (Birlinn, Edinburgh, 1993). **PB**; 121 ps. £5.99.

Cowal, the extensive peninsula lying between Loch Fyne and Loch Long, is one of the more remote and lesser known areas of Argyll. It has, however, a rich heritage of archaeological and historical sites of many periods, which are described in this book, published in association with Cowal Archaeological and Historical Society (CAHS), and compiled by Elizabeth B Rennie, one of its founder members.

All over the country one can find guides to local monuments, many compiled by local societies, of very variable quality. The present volume is distinctly superior to many such efforts for a number of reasons, the chief being that it is comprehensive, attempting to include all monuments of each period, and is based on the latest and most accurate research and sources. Argyll is favoured by being covered by seven RCAHMS Inventories, the last two of which, covering Cowal, were published as recently as 1988 and 1992. Argyll 6 and Argyll 7 were themselves partly derived from the CAHS' database of local sites compiled through field-survey, as a foreword by Dr Graham Ritchie acknowledges. This co-operation between professional and amateur archaeologists is something that should be fostered at all times, and the book has been enhanced by information and site plans provided by the RCAHMS.

The book is divided into sections by period and site-type, with introductory essays to each followed by short descriptions of each site. All are given a National Grid Reference number, thus making them vastly easier to find in the field (there are also distribution maps), and an asterisk marks those which are "worth a visit". Fifteen black and white photographs illustrate some of the more picturesque monuments.

In the introductory essays the author has tried to relate the sites of Cowal to the larger world of Scottish and even European archaeology. She sets out the latest theories, but sometimes takes a more traditional view, for instance of the Celts (28-9). She also introduces some interesting ideas of her own, such as the suggestion, of which there seems to be evidence well worth considering, that the boundary between the Scots of Dál Riada and the Britons of Strathclyde ran through the peninsula. A stone, Clach nam Brettanaich (sic; here, and elsewhere in the book, Gaelic spelling is perhaps a little shaky), "Stone of the Britons" above Lochgoilhead is "traditionally . . said to be the boundary marker" (48). One wonders how ancient such a tradition actually is, but there is evidence as early as the Neolithic and as late as the Middle Ages for a boundary of sorts, whether political, cultural or both, between west and east Cowal.

Another new concept concerns a fairly common but hitherto obscure class of site, "recessed platforms" dug into hillsides; traditionally labelled "charcoal-burning stances", they would appear from excavation to be the stances for Dark Age wooden houses. The author has done more than anyone else in the field of Scottish archaeology to establish their true nature.

Some space is allocated to describing the coming of the Scots to Argyll (but call them Scotti, please, not "Scottis") and to the introduction of Christianity. It would perhaps have been best not to mention any definite date in connection with St Patrick (50), about whose chronology Irish scholars continue to spill rivers of ink. I usually prefer to see proper names given in their ancient form; these things are partly a matter of taste, though, and "Erin" seems a rather Victorian way to refer to Ireland. However, to write the name of the first king of the united Picts and Scots as Kenneth **McAlpine** is an Anglicisation almost as hideous as calling the subject of the Scottish Play **MacBeth**. It is also a bit much to refer to the Uí Néill as "O'Neills" in the context of the C7th (70).

Inevitably in a work of this kind much detail has had to be left out (there is a bibliography for those wishing to pursue matters in more detail). The main problem with this,

from the point of view of the Pictish Arts Society, is that the many carved stones to be found at Early Christian or Medieval church sites are merely mentioned, not described.

Castles and the families associated with them are well covered in the guide, and monuments of recent centuries - townships, industrial archaeology - help to provide, as it were, something for everyone interested in the past. The book concludes with an epilogue on the impact of tourism on Cowal. This book is a kind of symptom of that impact: the simultaneous rise of mass leisure, tourism and a widespread interest in the past have combined to produce a market for this kind of work. The archaeology-minded resident or visitor to Cowal should find it an eminently useful guide to the past of a beautiful area.

Niall M Robertson.

Detail St Vigeans I

Celtic Key Patterns by Iain Bain (Constable, 1993). 88 ps. HB, £12.95; PB, £7.95.

Iain Bain's new book is a detailed manual of the construction of Celtic key patterns, and is also a convenient source of reference about the many variations of key pattern to be found around Britain.

Celtic Key Patterns complements the same author's previous work on Celtic Knotwork (Constable, 1986), and deals simply with the practicalities of construction, steering clear of speculation about any meaning or symbolism behind the patterns.

At first glance the designs may appear complex, but the methods of construction are set out step by step and are illustrated at each stage by clear diagrams. The book can be a rewarding challenge for the contemporary artist or craftsperson working in the Celtic style, and Bain's methods of construction can give satisfying results in terms of new designs. Using the methods described, key patterns can be translated onto any desired surface (see Fig. 11. below), and this introduces many exciting potential uses.

The book is punctuated by colour reproductions of pages from the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells which give examples of key pattern as used by the ancient artists. These provide inspiration for the present day worker, and suggest potential applications for the use of the essentially simple but infinitely variable key patterns. Some black and white photographs of Scottish carved stones decorated with simple or complex key pattern are also included in the text. Some of these photos are of casts rather than originals. The pages from The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland containing J R Allen's still very useful analysis of key pattern are reproduced as an appendix.

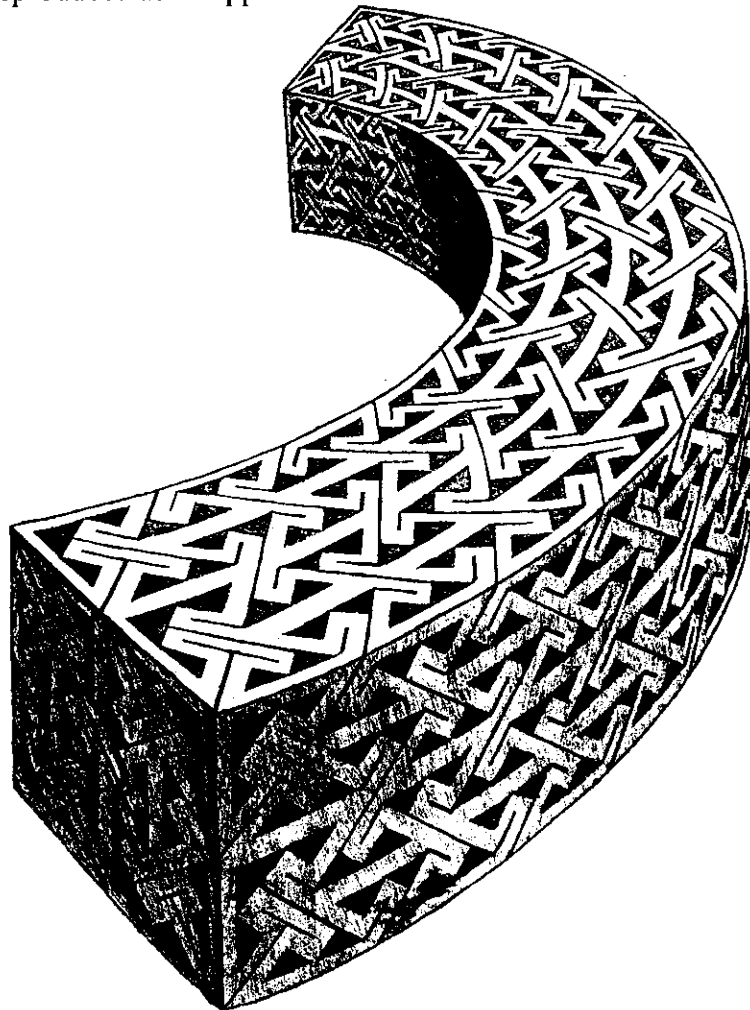

Fig. 11. A modern interpretation of key pattern, using Iain Bain's methods (drawn by J Gillon-Ferguson).

In a short introduction (x) the author confesses to a "nagging doubt" about the use of the word "Celtic" in the title, since: "The Lindisfarne Gospels were written in the monastery of Lindisfarne . . [and there] is evidence that the Books of Kells and Durrow were written there also . .". Lindisfarne is one of the few Dark Age manuscripts whose provenance is certain, but most scholars would now attribute Durrow and Kells to a Celtic scriptorium, most probably Iona. There is further confusion in the description of the related stone carvings in an area ranging ". . from Caithness in Scotland to Humberside and beyond . . [which] huge area was the land of the Picts, which suggests that the Saxons conquered an already cultured race". The historical howlers in this passage hardly need to be pointed out. The author is on much firmer ground when he calls for the creation of original work using his methods: "I earnestly plead . . that non-standard key patterns must be practised once the construction methods are understood". It is indeed time that more original (or at the least historically accurate) work in the Celtic medium was produced, and not tourist trinkets decorated with feeble copies of the motifs in the books on Celtic art by the author or his father.

James Gillon-Fergusson and Niall M Robertson.

Book Reviews in Brief

We have received the following reprints:

Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance by Roger Sherman Loomis (Constable, 1993). HB; 371 ps. £14.95.

Originally published in 1926. The author suggests that the origins of the Arthurian legends and characters lie in ancient Celtic religious myth.

Pagan Celtic Britain by Anne Ross (Constable, 1993). PB; 540 ps. £10.95.

First edition 1967. Seminal study of all aspects of ancient Celtic religion in Britain, with Continental evidence brought in where appropriate. Very well illustrated. Weaker on Britain north of the Roman Walls because of the lack of iconographic and literary evidence. A classic work which subsequent research has augmented, rather than superseded.

Niall M Robertson.

letter

59 Chamberlain Road
Highfield
Southampton
SO2 1PQ

18 September 1993

Sir,

In the Autumn 1993 edition of the Pictish Arts Society Journal Nerys Ann Jones discussed the treatment of horses in Y Gododdin. It was proposed that the Gododdin warriors hurled spears from horseback in battle (3-4 and 9). This view is diametrically opposed to that of N J Higham's 1991 article "Cavalry in Early Bernicia?" in Northern History (XXVII, 236-41) where it was argued that horses were only used to transport warriors to the battlefield. They would then dismount and fight on foot according to Higham. Personally I agree with Mrs Jones that warriors actually fought on horseback and my reasons for believing this will be explained in full in a forthcoming article in Northern History (XXIX). Jones also suggests that the horsemen may have had richly ornamented trappings for their horses (7). A number of pieces of horse gear are known from southern Scotland; however, these are all relatively simple artefacts and do not support Jones' assertion. They include iron snaffle bits from Mote of Mark, Whithorn and Lochlee, and three copper-alloy swivel rings from Glenluce Sands.

Craig Cessford.

contributors' addresses

Cessford, Craig	-	59 Chamberlain Road, Highfield, Southampton, SO2 1PQ.
Cruickshank, G	-	21 Warrender Park Terrace, Edinburgh 9.
Gillon-Fergusson, J	-	11 Cleghorn Street, Dundee, DD2 2NQ.
Gray, Tom E	-	5 Clerwood Park, Edinburgh, EH12 8PW.
McGregor, Sheila	-	8 Greenhill Place, Edinburgh, EH10 4BR.
McHardy, Stuart	-	52 Brunswick Street, Edinburgh, EH7 5HY.
Nicoll, Eric H	-	35 Wardie Road, Edinburgh, EH5 3LJ.
Robertson, Niall M	-	22 Letham Road, Perth, Tayside, PH1 2AP.
Tarbat Historic Trust	-	c/o Caroline Shepherd-Barron, Mains of Geanies, Fearn, Ross-shire, IV20 1TW.
Trench-Jellicoe, Ross	-	101 Sibsey Street, Lancaster, LA1 5DQ.

errata

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Page 37, line 21	-	*for* J Romilly Allen commented . . *read* J Romilly Allen was quoted as saying . .
Page 40, line 12	-	*for* PSAS LVI, 1921-11 *read* PSAS LVI 1921-22.

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