

NOTICE OF A FRAGMENT OF A MONUMENTAL SCULPTURED STONE
 FOUND AT MEIGLE, 1888. BY JOHN J. REID, F.S.A. SCOT., CURATOR OF
 THE MUSEUM.

Being in the neighbourhood of Meigle during the autumn of 1888, I took the opportunity afforded me by Sir John Kinloch, Bart., F.S.A. Scot., of visiting with him the interesting group of early monuments there, to which reference is made by Dr Anderson in his Rhind Lectures on *Scotland in Early Christian Times* (second series, pp. 67-72). It will interest the Society to learn that this remarkable collection of sculptured stones is safely and carefully housed in immediate proximity to the churchyard, where they have all been unearthed. Indeed, so well are they looked after, that I must, with all deference to the opinion of our Assistant Secretary, express a doubt whether they could elsewhere, even in the National Collection, find so appropriate a resting-place.

As we approached the old school-house, now converted into a local museum for these memorials of ancient art, I observed lying outside among some broken pieces of ordinary tombs the fragment of stone which, by the kindness of my host, I am enabled to exhibit on the table this evening. It has obviously formed the upper part of a small upright slab, bearing a cross on the obverse and symbols on the reverse, which must have stood in a socket at the head of a recumbent stone, like others of which examples may be seen at Meigle, or like one from St Vigean's figured in the *Proceedings*, vol. xvi. p. 411. The cross is of distinctly Celtic character, with four circular sunk spaces at the intersection of the arms with the shaft and summit. In the centre there is a circle filled apparently with spirals, whilst the arms and summit have been filled with fretwork.

On the reverse the sculpture is remarkable, and in some respects unique, so much so as to render it well worthy of the engraving which accompanies this notice.

Struck by the peculiar character of the ornamentation, I took a rough rubbing on the spot, and subsequently made a more careful examination of the carving, with the following result:—

The fragment recovered is 8 inches from the highest point to the base, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, with a thickness of $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches. At the highest part there has been some kind of scroll ornament, too indistinct, however, to be made out, and the carvings are in bas-relief on a sunk panel surrounded by a narrow raised border.

The lower portion of the sculpture represents the heads of two conventional animals, somewhat like horses, from whose extended jaws project interlacing tusks, or tongues it may be, giving the effect of a fierce encounter. This kind of imaginary animal, sometimes laceratine at others canine or bear-like in form, is a common feature of this class of monument. Such examples as that figured in Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland* (plate lxxv.), from the lower panel of a

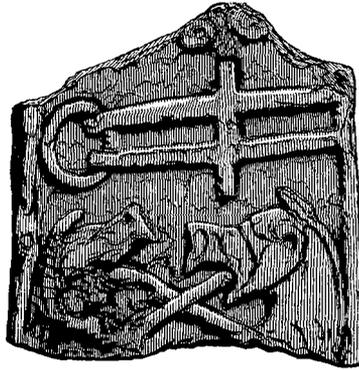


Fig. 1. Fragment of Sculptured Slab found at Meigle, Reverse (8 inches high).

stone at Kirriemuir, or again on the Dupplin Castle Cross, or on a stone at Kettins, Forfarshire, are so similar in their general character, as to place this part of the carving in the same category.

Above these nondescript animals is an object which I can only refer to that curious, almost mysterious, set of symbols found on early Christian work of the Celtic period, as well as upon objects of remote antiquity, having no indication of a Christian character upon them. No doubt these symbols were used by the skilled artificers, alike on their stone and their metal work, for decorative purposes in later days, but surely, I think, as emblematical also of mysteries, now never to be

revealed, connected with the earlier faith, as it was replaced by the forms of an absorbing yet accommodating Christianity. This design may be described as two parallel bars secured at the centre by a cross bar, and at one end only by a ring over which they appear to run. It is a striking looking object in itself, but of its symbolism I dare not venture to offer a solution. No such form has yet been seen on any carved stone or metal work, at least within the range of my knowledge and inquiry, but its character and position on the fragment of the Meigle monument entitle this symbolical object to be recorded and added to our list of these mysterious signs of a past of which so little is known.

MONDAY, 8th April 1889.

J. R. FINDLAY, Vice-President, in the Chair.

A Ballot having been taken, the following Gentlemen were duly elected Fellows :—

ALEXANDER AGNEW, Procurator-Fiscal, Dundee.

HENRY GRIFFITHS, F.S.A., Secretary, Sussex Archæological Society.

WILLIAM J. HARVEY, Melbourne Grove, London.

The following Donations to the Museum and Library were laid on the table, and thanks voted to the Donors :—

(1) By Rev. J. EVAN, Dunino, through Dr CLEGHORN of Stravithie.

Whetstone, being an oval pebble of quartzite, 3 inches in length, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth, and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in thickness, having an oblique groove worn as if by use as a point-sharpener in both of its flat faces—found at the church of Dunino, in Fife.

(2) By J. W. SMALL, F.S.A. Scot., Stirling.

Crusie of wrought iron, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches high at the back—from Montrose, Forfarshire.

(3) By A. G. REID, F.S.A. Scot., Auchterarder.

Stone Whorl, having the initials B. L. cut in one side—from Auchterarder.

(4) By Rev. JAMES MORRISON, Urquhart, Corr. Mem. S.A. Scot.

Arrow-Head of white flint, with barbs and stem, and Scraper of flint—from Urquhart.

(5) By J. T. IRVINE, F.S.A. Scot., Peterborough.

Pair of bronze Spoons (fig. 1), decorated with Celtic ornament—found at Weston, near Bath, Somersetshire, in 1866. They have been described by the late Mr Albert Way, in the *Archaeological Journal*, vol. xxvi. p. 60, along with a series of specimens of similar type, fourteen in number, which have been found in different parts of Great Britain and Ireland, no specimen being known to exist beyond the area of the British Islands. The specimens described by Mr Way are—(1) A single Spoon, with small circular hole in the right side, found in the Thames, and preserved in the British Museum; (2) a single Spoon, also with small hole, in the right side, found in Brickhill Lane, London, in possession of Mr Albert Way; (3 and 4) a pair, found in 1861, at a spot somewhat south of Flynogion, in the parish of Llanfair, Denbighshire, in the course of the construction of the railway between Denbigh and Corwen, and now in our Museum, having been presented in 1863¹ by the late Rev. E. L. Barnwell, F.S.A. Scot.; (5, 6) a pair, found at Penrhyn, Cardiganshire, now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford; (7, 8) a pair, found at Graben, in the parish of Crosby Ravensworth, Westmoreland, in 1868; (9) one found in a turbary in Ireland, and now in the Mayer Museum, Liverpool; (10, 11) a pair, in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy at Dublin; (12, 13) another pair, in the same collection, both found somewhere in Ireland, although their precise localities are unknown; and (14, 15) the pair found at Weston, near Bath, now presented by Mr J. T. Irvine. This latter pair, says Mr Way, are of special interest for the perfection of their workmanship. “The bronze also has assumed the highly polished dark-coloured patina,

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. v. p. 110.

resembling that of objects of classical antiquity, and rarely, if ever, equalled on the other relics under consideration. The dimensions are as follows—length, $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches ; diameter of the discoid handle, nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$



Fig. 1. Bronze Spoon, one of a pair found at Weston, and Ornamented Backs of the discoid Handles of the pair.

inch; of the bowl, rather over $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The ornament presents slight variations, which seem to prove that the two objects were not produced

from the same mould, although they closely resemble each other. The curiously involuted designs on the reverses of the handles are not identical. In execution they are peculiar; there is only a very slight degree of *relievo* in the ornament; in some parts only the field is slightly depressed, in others the effect is assisted by a certain slight rounding off of the edges of the design, a process frequently made available by artificers of a much later period, and wholly distinct school of metallurgical manipulation." The spoons were found at a depth of 7 feet, in the course of the removal of the surface deposits from a lias quarry near the village of Weston. They lay near a stream, in the ancient course of which the earth had doubtless gradually slipped down the sloping cultivated bank, at the upper part of which there was only a layer of 12 or 18 inches in depth covering the lias rock. They have been exhibited by Mr Irvine in the Museum since 1870,¹ and their presentation now secures them in perpetuity to the Scottish National collection.

In an interesting and learned paper in the *Journal* before referred to, Canon Rock discusses the probable uses of these wide shallow Celtic spoons of bronze which so often occur in pairs, are occasionally found at springs of water or in rivers, and are distinguished from all other objects of the same kind by the presence in one side of one of the pair of a small round hole (as in fig. 2), and in the hollow part of the bowl of the other an incised cross. Although they could never have served either in the Latin or in any of the Oriental liturgies for the distribu-



Fig. 2. The other Spoon of the pair, found at Weston.

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. viii. p. 360.

tion of the Eucharist to the laity, as some have supposed, Canon Rock is of opinion that they may have been used in the sacrament of baptism—one for holding the oil of the catechumens, the other (the one with the small hole) for holding the oil of chrism, which was poured through the small hole upon the head in the form of a cross.

(6) By W. SCOTT ELLIOT, through JAMES TAYLOR, F.S.A. Scot.

Spear-Head of chert, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length by 1 inch in greatest breadth, neatly made with parallel flaking, serrated edges, and indented on both sides at the base for fastening to the shaft.

Spear-Head of chert, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length by $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in breadth—both from Utah.

(7) By HUGH MILLER, F.S.A. Scot., H.M. Geological Survey.

Fragment of a Sculptured Stone, 9 by 6 inches, with Celtic ornamentation of double spiral patterns in relief—found at Tarbat, Ross-shire.

Fragment of a Sculptured Stone, with Celtic ornamentation—found at Tarbat Ross-shire. [See the subsequent communication by Mr Miller.]

(8) By Mr T. REID NICOLL, through J. DAVIDSON, F.S.A. Scot., Kirriemuir.

Oval Pebble of schist, partially bored on both sides, as if for a stone hammer-head—found at Littleton, Lindertis, Airlie.

(9) By Rev. J. H. POLLEXFEN, M.A., Middleton Tyas, Richmond, Yorkshire.

Bone Handle of an implement, two Whorls and Disc of sandstone, portion of Vessel of steatite, and part of tubular Handle of an earthenware Porringer—from a mound at Howe, near Stromness, Orkney.

(10) By the EXECUTORS of the late THOMAS S. MUIR.

Seventeen Rubbings from Scottish Sculptured Stones, viz.:—Of six stones from Iona, one from Dalmally, one from Kilbride, one from Kilchrenan, one from Skipness, one from Kilmartin, one from Killean, one from Meigle, one from St Vigean, two from Roslin, and one from Ratho.

Six Rubbings from Stones in England, viz. :—One from Blundland, one from New Monkton, one from Catenel, one from Wycliffe, one from Tintern Abbey, and one from Llantwit.

Twenty-seven Rubbings from Memorial Brasses and eleven miscellaneous Rubbings—chiefly from England.

(11) By A. B. RICHARDSON, *Curator of Coins*.

Farthing of Alexander III. ; Twenty Pound Piece of James VI. (1575), from the Duke of Devonshire's Collection ; two Pennies of Stephen.

(12) By W. GILLIES SMITH, through A. B. RICHARDSON, *Curator of Coins*.

Two early British Coins of Tin.

(13) By ROBERT WHITE, 86 Marine Parade, Brighton.

Autograph Letter of Rev. Dr David Livingstone, the African Traveller.

(14) By Rev. CHARLES ROGERS, D.D., LL.D., F.S.A. Scot.

Scottish House of Gourlay ; Scottish Family of Glen ; The Book of Wallace. Vol. I. Grampian Club.

(15) By Rev. W. LOCKHART, M.A., F.S.A. Scot., the Author.

The Church of Scotland in the Thirteenth Century : Life and Times of David de Bernham. Edinburgh, 1889. 8vo.

(16) By the DEACON AND HALL BRETHERN OF THE HAMMERMEN INCORPORATION, PERTH.

The Perth Hammermen Book (1518–1568), with Introduction by C. A. Hunt. Perth, 1889. 4to.

(17) By J. M. HOWDEN, F.S.A. Scot., *Hon. Sec. for Scotland*.

Catalogue of the Stuart Exhibition, London, 1889.

(18) By GEORGE WILLIAMSON, F.S.A. Scot., the Author.

Old Greenock. Second Series. Paisley, 1889. 4to.

(19) By ROBERT PRINGLE STUART.

The Scottish Highlanders (Macleay). 2 vols. folio. Map of Culloden Moor, with Plan of Battle, &c.

(20) By Miss A. M. EYTON, Hawley, Farnborough.

A Key to Domesday, London, 1878. 4to. Domesday Studies, by Rev. R. W. Eyton, London 1888. 2 vols. 4to.

(21) By Lieut-General A. PITT RIVERS, F.S.A. Scot., the Author.

Excavations in Cranbourne Chase, 1880-88. 2 vols. 4to. Privately printed.

(22) By CHARLES HOLLAND WARNE.

Ancient Dorset. By Charles Warne. 1872. Folio.

(23) By R. CARFRAE, F.S.A. Scot.

Smyth's Catalogue of Roman Imperial Large Brass Medals. Bedford, 1834. 4to.

(24) By WILLIAM HUNTER, F.S.A. Scot., the Author.

Incidents in the History of the Lodge of Journeymen Masons, Edinburgh, No. 8. 1884. 8vo.

(25) By Rev. W. MASON INGLIS, F.S.A. Scot., the Author.

Annals of an Angus Parish. 1888. 8vo.

(26) By GILBERT GOUDIE, *Treasurer*.

Poems, &c., in the Shetland Dialect, by the late B. R. Anderson. Edited by Jessie M. E. Saxby, with Glossary by G. Goudie.

The following Communications were read :—