

I.

REPORT ON THE SCULPTURED STONES OLDER THAN A.D. 1100,
WITH SYMBOLS AND CELTIC ORNAMENT, IN THE DISTRICT OF
SCOTLAND NORTH OF THE RIVER DEE; OBTAINED UNDER
THE VICTORIA JUBILEE GIFT OF HIS EXCELLENCY DR R. H.
GUNNING, F.S.A. Scor. By J. ROMILLY ALLEN, F.S.A. Scor.

Having had the honour of being appointed to the Gunning Fellowship by the Council of the Society of Antiquaries, with a view to making an archæological survey of the early sculptured stones of Scotland, I beg to submit the following report of the work I have done during the past year. As a necessary preliminary I compiled a list of the sculptured stones older than A.D. 1100, with symbols and Celtic ornament, which have been already described and illustrated in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, and in the late Dr Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, published by the Spalding Club. In this list were included three classes of monuments—(1) those with incised symbols; (2) those with symbols and Celtic ornament sculptured in relief; and (3) those with ornament in relief, but without symbols. The object of the list was to give, as concisely as possible, sufficient particulars to identify each stone by stating its exact geographical position, and adding a reference to the work in which it was illustrated, thus forming a basis for future operations. The preliminary list was circulated by the Council of the Society amongst archæologists in different parts of Scotland, with the view of eliciting further information about unpublished stones, and correcting any inaccuracies that might have escaped the notice of the compiler. The names of the following persons, who have offered most valuable assistance in reply to this appeal, should be gratefully mentioned:—Rev. Dr J. M. Joass, Dr A. Sutherland, Rev. J. G. Michie, Mr J. Macdonald, Provost A. Ross, Mr W. Mackay, Mr R. Barclay, Mr Hugh W. Young, Mr A. Hutcheson, the Right Hon. the Earl of Southesk, Mr W. C. Joass, Rev. Dr G. Gordon, Dr A. Macnaughton, Dr D. Christison, Mr R. C. Graham, Miss Russell, and Miss Maclagan.

The intention of the Council in appointing me to the Gunning Fellow-

ship was that I should collect materials for a full descriptive catalogue of the sculptured stones of Scotland, illustrated by correct outlines, to as uniform a scale as was practicable, of the monuments and the designs upon them.

Since Dr Stuart's great work on the subject was published by the Spalding Club, several new stones have been discovered, which require to be added to make it complete, and, invaluable as Dr Stuart's volumes must always be, many particulars are omitted in the descriptions that might easily be obtained. The plates in Dr Stuart's book are not uniformly accurate, especially as regards the minor details, on which so much often depends. The invention of photography has been followed by a much higher standard of excellence in the representation of archaeological subjects; and an advance in our knowledge of the technical minutiae of Celtic ornament obtained from a study of the illuminated MSS. has enabled us to draw the patterns on the stones more correctly. It was suggested that I should make a tour of inspection of the sculptured stones of Scotland, in order to ascertain the present positions of those monuments that have been moved in recent years; to get the particulars omitted by Dr Stuart; to compare all his plates with the originals, so as to gauge their reliability; and to make drawings of stones not yet illustrated. Having made the proposed survey of the stones in the part of Scotland north of the River Dee, I now lay the results before the Society.

My method has been to make sketches of the stones, with all the necessary dimensions and notes, supplemented by rubbings of the sculptured designs. After outlining the rubbings in ink, I have had them photographed to a scale of $\frac{1}{3}$ full size. The photographs are then traced, and the necessary additions or corrections made by help of the sketches.

During the months of July, August, and September last year (1890) I visited most of the localities (60 or more in all) included in the northern and north-eastern sections of the preliminary list, which comprise the district of Scotland lying north of the river Dee. It was unnecessary for me to go to Shetland, Orkney, the Hebrides, or any of the islands, as, with the exception of the cross on the island of Canna, all the stones have

been removed to Edinburgh: My labours were therefore confined exclusively to the mainland, and my plan of operations was to commence at the furthest point north and gradually work southwards.

I arrived at Thurso by train from London on the evening of Monday, July 7th. Here I saw the stone from Skinnet Chapel, now in the Thurso Museum; and the Ulbster stone, now standing in the grounds of Thurso Castle. The former was broken into several pieces, which were piled one above the other, and stowed away under a table in the middle of the so-called museum—if an ill-kept lumber-room can be dignified by such a name. When the fragments were brought to the light, and a thick coating of clay removed from the surface, I was fortunate enough to discover that the back was ornamented with symbols, the existence of which does not appear to have been previously known.

One of the symbols is particularly interesting as being the same which occurs on the stone at Sandside, in Reay, although other instances have not been observed elsewhere.

The Ulbster stone has been very barbarously defaced by having its name cut upon it right across one of the sculptured faces, and is placed on the top of a mound in the most exposed position possible.

From Thurso I took the mail-cart to Bettyhill, a distance of about 30 miles along the north coast of Caithness, returning the next day. On the way to Bettyhill I stopped at Reay, where there is a fine cross-slab in the old churchyard that has not yet been illustrated. At Bettyhill I visited the Farr stone, and found it to be a much more beautiful work of art than would be supposed from the plate in Stuart.

I left Bettyhill on July 11th, going, *via* Thurso, to Golspie, where I spent a day in taking notes of the stones in the museum at Dunrobin Castle. This collection is housed in a separate building in the grounds of the castle, and has been admirably arranged by the Rev. Dr Joass. All the Sutherland stones are now placed in the museum, except the one at Farr, and the pillar in the garden of the castle. I need only mention the monuments that have not been hitherto described. They are 11 in number altogether; 8 belonging to Class I.—from Kintradwell 3, Little Ferry Links 4, and Clyne Churchyard 1; and 3 belonging to Class III.—from Clyne Church 1, Collieburn 1, and Loth Beg 1. The

stone from Collieburn is the lower part of a large upright cross-slab, ornamented with fine circular knotwork and key patterns. On the blank space at the bottom there is a Swastica cross incised. The small cross-slab from Clyne Church has some beautiful spiral designs upon it. All the localities where the stones near Golspie were found are situated near the sea-shore, in a district abounding with traces of the ancient inhabitants, such as brochs, underground houses, &c. Little Ferry Links is a wild tract of land on the site of a raised sea-beach, from which a vast collection of worked flints has been obtained for the Edinburgh Museum of National Antiquities. The gem of the Dunrobin Museum is undoubtedly the Ogham inscribed upright cross-slab, which came originally from Craigton, and for a long time subsequently stood in Golspie churchyard. I was considerably surprised to find it so large, having in my mind's eye Stuart's plate, as in other instances¹ I have found original stones much smaller than I expected. The reason of this is that Stuart's plates are drawn to all sorts of extraordinary scales, in order to fit the size of the stone to the page; and it emphasises the importance of adopting as much as possible a uniform scale for a work of the kind. In Stuart's plate of the Golspie stone, the broad face with symbols, and one of the narrow edges with spirals, are shown as if in one plane, which is very deceptive unless some explanation is given.

Before leaving Golspie, where I received so much kindness from the Rev. Dr Joass, I was shown by him a sketch taken many years ago of a small inscribed stone built into the wall of the manse garden at Tarbet, and I at once recognised that the letters were Hiberno-Saxon capitals, similar to those in the initial pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels and other MSS. of the same period. The first thing therefore that I did on arriving at Tain, on July 14th, was to hire a trap at the hotel, and drive off to Tarbet in search of it, but without success. Two days afterwards, however, when visiting Invergordon Castle with Dr A. Sutherland, I had the good fortune to find the identical stone lying outside the front door, with another fragment of a sculptured stone and some geological specimens. It had probably been removed from Tarbet by the late A.

¹ Kirriemuir, for one case in point.

M'Leod of Cadboll. The present owner, Captain M'Leod, has been asked to present the stone to the National Museum of Antiquities, but finds himself unable to do so for family reasons.

What remains of the inscription is nine lines, each containing about five letters. Paper casts have been submitted to Professor Westwood and other experts, with somewhat doubtful results as to the meaning.

It seems to commence with the words "In nomine I Ð U XPI crux XPI." The diamond-shaped O, which occurs on the Saxon coins of Offa and the Ardagh chalice, the N like an H with a sloping cross stroke, and the M with three vertical strokes, can be clearly distinguished, the letters being in relief instead of being incised is a unique peculiarity in the case of lapidary inscriptions of this period.

Whilst at Tain I visited also Nigg, Shandwick, Edderton, Kincardine, and Roskeen. The stone at Roskeen is a new one discovered by Dr A. Sutherland. At Nigg I was most kindly received by the minister, the Rev. John Frazer. The monument in his churchyard is quite the finest work of Celtic art in sculpture which I have seen, not excluding the high crosses of Ireland.

In the arrangement of the design it approaches more nearly to the ornamental pages of the Irish books of the Gospels than any other, the broad panelled border surrounding the whole like a frame being specially characteristic of the illuminated pages. It would be very desirable to have a cast taken of this wonderful monument for the Edinburgh Museum, so that its extreme beauty might become more widely known. The spiral ornament on the Ross-shire stones is particularly well executed, and reproduces all the features of the same class of work in the MSS., such as the almond-shaped spots in the background between the spirals. One of the most perfect examples is a specimen recently obtained from Tarbet for the Edinburgh Museum.

I visited Dingwall on July 18th on the way from Tain to Inverness. Here I was courteously entertained by Mr Joass, the architect, and brother of the Rev. Dr Joass. He showed me an undescribed stone he had discovered when restoring Dingwall church. We afterwards saw the stone at Strathpeffer which Dr Stuart calls the Dingwall stone, although it is not at Dingwall at all.

Whilst at Inverness I went to Rosemarkie and Knocknagael. I also called on Provost Ross and Mr W. Mackay, who have been good enough to send me photographs and rubbings of three undescribed stones—two from Ardross, now in the Inverness Museum, and another in Mr Frazer Mackintosh's garden at Inverness. I have received a paper cast of a fourth new stone from the Rev. Dr Joass, which was found on Torgorm Farm, near Conan Railway Station, and is now in a rockery at Moniack Castle.

When on my third visit to Rosemarkie I succeeded in finding the slab with key patterns on it, which I had been unable to trace on former occasions. Its position was shown me by the minister, the Rev. J. McDowall, in the middle of the churchyard, turned with the sculptured face downwards, on the grave of Donald Bain. This is an instance of the way a valuable stone may get forgotten, then overgrown with grass, and finally completely lost.

I stayed at Nairn from July 21st to the end of the month, during which time I examined the stones at Wester Delnies (a new one, told me of by the Rev. Dr Joass), Glenferness, Burghead (one new stone), Brodie, Altyre, Forres, Inverallan, and Congash.

At Burghead I received much civility from the owner of the place, Mr Hugh W. Young, of Kincorth, near Forres, whose able papers on his explorations of this remarkable fortress have been recently placed before the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. He has within the last year found an undescribed stone in the churchyard, with a small piece of interlaced work upon it, and two grooves at the sides, as if it had formed part of an altar-tomb or sarcophagus. Of the other stones seen whilst at Nairn, the two at Congash appeared to me of the greatest interest, as being *in situ*, and forming the jambs of the entrance to a small enclosure, which, from the name of the field, "Parc an Chapel," was probably an ancient burial-ground. The place would be well worth exploring thoroughly.

From August 1st to 7th I stayed at Elgin, and visited the stones in the Museum and Cathedral there; and those at Birnie, Upper Manbean, Mortlach, Arndilly, Inveravon; and the Covesea caves.

At Inveravon there is a small undescribed fragment built into the

wall of the churchyard. The cave with incised symbols at Covesea is inaccessible at high water, except by some steps cut in a narrow cleft of the rock. It is situated at the top of a grassy slope at the foot of the cliff, the entrance being quite 20 feet above high-water mark. The entrance is double, consisting of two passages about 6 feet high by 8 feet wide and 20 feet long, leading to an inner chamber, which extends about 30 feet further. Between the two passages is a solid rectangular mass of rock, supporting the superincumbent cliff. The symbols are carved on the side-walls of the passages by which the cave is entered. The floor is of coarse gravel to some depth, and appears to have been disturbed by explorers. Quantities of limpet shells are to be seen amongst the gravel at the mouth of the cave.

I left Scotland in August, and returned at the beginning of September to complete my work for the year by seeing the Aberdeenshire stones.

From *Huntly* I visited Tillytarmont, North Redhill, Rhynie, Percylieu, Clatt, Newbigging Leslie, Inch, and Newton; from *Inverurie*, Kintore, Monymusk, Kinellar, Crichtie, Logie Elphinstone, the Maiden Stone, Drummies, Fyvie, Daviot, and Bourtie; and from *Aboyme*, Mill of Newton, Migvie, and Tullich.

I have to express my indebtedness to Mr Macdonald of Huntly, and the Rev. J. G. Michie, minister of Dinnet, for the valuable assistance they afforded me in tracing stones which had been removed, and in many other ways. I should like also to mention how useful I found a paper of Mr J. Gurnell's, read to the members of the Huntly Field Club, on "The Standing Stones of the District," containing a table giving particulars of each of the sculptured stones. Had other districts been similarly dealt with, I should have been saved much unnecessary trouble. The only new stones I saw in Aberdeenshire were at North Redhill and Fyvie, but I found that several monuments had been removed from the positions they occupied when Dr Stuart's book was written, amongst which are the following:—

Clatt, now at Knockespock House.

Daviot, now at Mounie Castle.

Mill of Newton, now at Tillypronie House.

Percy lieu, now at Cransmill.

Monymusk, now at Monymusk Castle.

At Crichtie, near Inverurie, there is a very remarkable monument with incised symbols that formerly stood near an intrenched circle of standing stones, in which sepulchral remains of the pagan period were found. It has now been erected inside the intrenchment, as if it formed part of the circle of standing stones. I have not yet been able to ascertain who was responsible for this ingenious method of falsifying archaeological evidence for the benefit of posterity.

It is gratifying to know that only one stone (at Rhynie) has been lost altogether, so that it is not yet too late to take means for the preservation of this class of remains, a matter which I believe the New Spalding Club intends to take up.

I exhibit a map showing the localities of the three classes of sculptured stones, for which I propose to use the following symbols:—

Class I. S Class II. S+ Class III. +

With regard to the positions now occupied by the monuments in Scotland north of the river Dee, the following table will show the relative numbers of each:—

IN CHURCHES OR CHURCHYARDS (28).

Sandness, Shetland.	Elgin, Elgin.
Reay, Caithness.	Inveravon, Banff.
Farr, Sutherland.	Bourtie, Aberdeen.
Dingwall, Ross.	Old Deer, Aberdeen.
Rosemarkie (2), Ross.	Dyce (2), Aberdeen.
Edderton, Ross.	Fetter-Angus, Aberdeen.
Kincardine, Ross.	Fyvie (2), Aberdeen.
Nigg, Ross.	Inverury (4), Aberdeen.
Tarbet (1), Ross.	Kinellar, Aberdeen.
Inverallan, Inverness.	Kintore, Aberdeen.
Canna, Inverness.	Rhynie (2), Aberdeen.
Birnie (4), Elgin.	Tullich, Aberdeen.
Burghead (2), Elgin.	Tyrie, Aberdeen.
Knockando, Elgin.	Migvie, Aberdeen.

IN PRIVATE HOUSES OR GROUNDS (31).

Sandside House (from Cnoc Stanger), Caithness.	Knockespock House (from Clatt), Aberdeen.
Thurso Castle (from Ulbster), Caith- ness.	Mounie Castle (from Newton of Mounie), Aberdeen.
Duurobin Castle, Sutherland.	39 Torry Street, Huntly (from Leys of Drummuie), Aberdeen.
Invergordon Castle (from Hilton of Cadboll), Ross.	Keith Hall (from River Don), Aber- deen.
Invergordon Castle (from Tarbet), Ross.	Logie Elphinstone, Aberdeen.
Moniack Castle (from Torgorm), Ross.	Newbigging Leslie Farmhouse, Aber- deen.
Moniack Castle (from Balblair), Inverness.	Newton House, Aberdeen.
Balmacaan House (from Drumbuie), Inverness.	Tillypronie House (from Mill of Newton), Aberdeen.
Provost Ross's house at Inverness, Inverness.	Park House, Aberdeen.
Mr Frazer Mackintosh's house at Inverness, Inverness.	Cransmill Farmhouse (from Percy- lieu), Aberdeen.
Glenferness House, Nairn.	Rothie Brisbane House, Aberdeen.
Burghead Harbour Office (from Burg- head), Elgin.	Tillytarmont Farmhouse, Aberdeen.
Brodie Castle, Elgin.	Aboyne Castle (from Formaston), Aberdeen.
Altyre House (from Duffus), Elgin.	Aboyne Castle (from Loch Kinnord), Aberdeen.
Arndilly House, Banff.	Monymusk House, Aberdeen.
Logiemar House, Aberdeen.	

IN OPEN FIELDS, BY ROADSIDES, OR IN PUBLIC STREETS (21).

Edderton, Ross.	Forres, Elgin.
Shandwick, Ross.	Balneilan, Banff.
Rosskeen, Ross.	Mortlach, Banff.
Strathpeffer, Ross.	Crichie, Aberdeen.
Congash, Inverness.	Drummies, Aberdeen.
Dunachton, Inverness.	Fyvie, Aberdeen.
Knocknagael, Inverness.	Huntly, Aberdeen.
Lynchurn, Inverness.	Insch (Myreton Farm), Aberdeen.
Wester Delnies, Nairn.	Rhynie (Craw Stane), Aberdeen.
Upper Manbean, Elgin.	Maiden Stone, Aberdeen.

IN MUSEUMS (29).

<p><i>At Edinburgh—</i> Bressay, Shetland. Papil, Shetland. Firth, Orkney. S. Ronaldsay, Orkney. Flotta, Orkney. Rosemarkie, Ross. Tarbet, Ross. Dores, Inverness. Findlanrig, Inverness. Benbecula, Hebrides. Pabbay, Hebrides. Kilbar, Hebrides. Burghead, Elgin. Grantown, Elgin. Kintore (2), Aberdeen.</p>	<p>Craigton, Sutherland. Dunrobin, Sutherland. Kintradwell (4), Sutherland. Little Ferry Links (4), Sutherland. Golspie, Sutherland. Collieburn, Sutherland. Lothbeg, Sutherland.</p>
<p><i>At Dunrobin—</i> Clyne Kirkton (3), Sutherland. Clyne Milton, „</p>	<p><i>At Thurso—</i> Skinnet, Caithness.</p> <p><i>At Inverness—</i> Ardross (2), Ross.</p> <p><i>At Elgin—</i> Burghead, Elgin. Drainie, Elgin.</p> <p><i>At London (British Museum)—</i> Burghead, Elgin.</p>

It appears from the above that out of stones from something like 110 localities in the northern half of Scotland, those from about 30 are in churches or churchyards, those from 30 in private grounds, those from 30 in museums,¹ and those from 20 standing in open fields or by roadsides.

The motives which have actuated owners in removing the monuments into their private grounds have been in most cases, let us hope, a desire to give them better protection than is afforded when standing in the open fields, but it will be observed that the fact of an owner doing as he pleases with the stones shows that he considers they are part and parcel of his property, and, like the serfs in olden times, can be sold with it. It seems monstrous that such a state of things should be allowed to continue, and it is high time that the monuments should be acquired for the nation by a compulsory Act.

¹ The museums are all public except the one at Dunrobin, to which, however, there is no difficulty in obtaining admission.