

V.

EXHIBITION OF MASON-MARKS COPIED FROM MELROSE ABBEY,  
DRYBURGH, JEDBURGH, &c. &c. BY JOHN ALEX. SMITH, M.D., SEC.  
S.A. Scot. (Plate XXI.)

Mason-marks, I need scarcely say, are the short-hand signatures or markings (generally formed of combinations of finely cut straight lines,

touching or crossing one another at various angles, and from one to four or more inches in length), which masons have for centuries been in the habit of cutting on the stones wrought or hewn by them. These marks vary much in character and shape, but may be all included in two classes; the false or Blind mark of the apprentice, displaying an equal number of points; and the True mark of the fellow-craft or passed mason, which always consists of an unequal number of points. Two marks not unfrequently occur on the same stone, showing it had been hewn by the apprentice, and finished or passed as correct by the mason, who places on it, in addition, his own distinctive mark. By means of these marks it would of course be easy to know which mason had hewn any particular stone, as well as the number of stones finished by each.

The masons of the present day still use a similar class of marks, and have them also frequently cut on the various tools of their trade. The marks are, however, not so commonly seen on modern buildings, as they are now generally cut on the bed of the stone, which is hid in the completed building; and not on the exposed and polished surface of the finished hewn stone, as seems to have been generally the case in older buildings. These marks were often hereditary in the families of masons, descending to the youngest son, and if the mark was adopted during the lifetime of his father, he added for difference, other points, straight lines, or angles to his father's mark. I have had pointed out various marks which have been used and added to in this way. The marks were (and I believe in some cases are still) given to the individual apprentice and mason by the lodge of Free Masons to which they belonged, and duly registered in its records; they are, therefore, rarely changed by the individual, except from the apprentice, to that of the fellow-craft or master-mason.

Collections of these mason-marks, taken from any ancient building, are interesting for comparison with those of other old buildings, believed to be of the same age. As it is supposed that the masons employed on many of our ancient edifices were comparatively few in number, and travelled from one place to another, when the building on which they were engaged was completed, the occurrence of similar groups of mason-marks, might therefore help to indicate a nearly contemporaneous age in different buildings. From their similarity over the whole of any particular building, or their total dissimilarity in particular parts, these marks

might also tend to prove that the entire building had been executed by the same group of men at the one time, or that particular parts of it had been erected by another body of men at a different period.

Several years ago, with the assistance of my friend, Mr Adam Smith, I copied a number of the mason-marks on various parts of Melrose Abbey, principally from the interior of the building, where it has been less exposed to the action of the weather; and I have since added to this collection. I was anxious to learn whether the same mason-marks were repeated over the whole of the present ruins, or whether they could be divided into groups corresponding in any way to the parts of the building which seem to show a different style; and therefore probably a different age in the architecture. It might also be curious to compare a collection of these marks with those on other ancient buildings in the district; and with the different churches mentioned in the Memorial Tablet to JOHN MOROW, in the south transept of Melrose Abbey, to learn, if possible, what may have been the extent of the repairs made while the mason-work was under his care, as shown, it might be, by the existence on any of these buildings of similar groups of mason-marks, which would thus seem to connect any repair, with the lodge of masons who worked at the restorations of Melrose. No doubt the "kepyng" referred to in the tablet might mean little more than a mere charge or superintendence of the finished structures, which seem to be arranged in the rhyme of this memorial inscription, simply in the order of their ecclesiastical precedence:—

John : morow : sum : tym : callit  
 was : k : and : boru : in : parysse :  
 certainly : and : had : in : kepyng :  
 al : maloun : werk : of : fantan  
 drops : ye : hpe : kyrk : of : glal  
 gw : melros : and : pallay : of :  
 nyddpdayll : and : of : gallway<sup>1</sup>

I also exhibit sketches of the mason-marks of Dryburgh Abbey and Monastery, which were copied in the summer of 1861; and may state,

<sup>1</sup> ("Nithsdale and of Galloway,") Proceedings, vol. ii. p. 166.

in passing, that the destruction of this church seems to have been greatly caused by its hewn stones being quarried out in masses, for the purpose of being used in the construction of other buildings.

Various contributions of mason-marks have been forwarded to me by different friends. Alexander Jeffrey, Esq., F.S.A. Scot., Jedburgh, sends several copied by him from the old Abbey there.

To Dr Arthur Mitchell, Corr. Mem. S.A. Scot., I am indebted for various curious examples, collected by himself, from different buildings in Fife, &c.

Lastly, I must refer especially to our valued Corresponding Member, Andrew Jervise, Esq., Brechin, who has forwarded to me, from his antiquarian collections, a series of mason-marks from a number of ancient buildings in his own and the neighbouring districts of Scotland.

These various examples of Mason-marks now exhibited, I have the pleasure of adding to the collections of the Society. (See Plate XXI.)

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MONDAY, 9th June 1862.

The HON. LORD NEAVES, Vice-President, in the chair.

Upon a ballot, ANDREW GILLMAN, Esq., S.S.C., was elected a Fellow of the Society.

The following Donations were laid on the table, and thanks voted to the several donors:—

Clay Sepulchral Urn or "Drinking Cup,"  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height, partially broken. The urn is contracted a little above the middle, and expands upwards to a wide-shaped mouth; it is richly ornamented with alternate bands of short perpendicular and crossing lines, and was found in the year 1810 under a cairn of stones on a hill in the parish of Carluke, Lanarkshire.

By JAMES H. SANDERSON, Esq., George Street.

Irregularly shaped Stone Slab of Chlorite Schist, measuring 2 feet  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, by 12 inches in its greatest breadth; it displays on one side an incised Latin cross 13 inches in length. The stone shows marks

of having been partly buried in the ground, and was probably a tomb stone; it was found on the island of Eilean-more, Argyleshire.

By Professor J. Y. SIMPSON, M.D., F.S.A. Scot.

Collection of Mason-Marks copied from Ancient Buildings in various parts of Scotland (see Communication, p. 548); and

Roman Bronze Patella, dug up on the farm of Palace, Roxburghshire, in December 1849. (See Communication, page 597.)

By JOHN ALEX. SMITH, M.D., Sec. S.A. Scot.

Pair of small Brass Compasses,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length; each limb is bent into a semicircle at the upper part, and passed through the opposite one; and

Five small Portions of Green, and two of Blue-coloured Window Glass, showing remains of scroll patterns painted in red. Found at Lindores Abbey.

By CHARLES LEES, Esq., R.S.A., and F.S.A. Scot.

Bronze circular Ring Brooch,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter; and Rude Brass Seal, one inch in length, displaying an acorn, with stalk and leaves. Found in Dumfriesshire.

By the Rev. J. RODDICK, Kirkinner, Wigtonshire.

Portion of Double-edged Sword, with part of Iron Guard or Basket Handle attached. Found in a moss near Lauder. By Mr D. HASSACK.

Green Cloth Table-Cover from the Session-room of St Cuthbert's or West Church, Edinburgh, measuring 17 feet long by 4 feet wide, with an inscription, embroidered in yellow silk, round the edges, in letters 2 inches long, being the first, and portion of the second verse of the twenty-third Psalm, Sternhold and Hopkins' version:—

THE LORD IS ONLIE MY SWPORT, AND HE THAT DOETH ME FEID,  
HOW CAN I THEN LACKE ANIE THING WHEREOF I STAND IN NEIDE.

HE DOTH ME FOLDE IN COATES MOST SAIFE, THE TENDER GRASSE FAST BY.

4TH MAY 1641.

By the KIRK SESSION OF ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH.

Oak Moulding, with the following inscription cut in relief: 16 FOR THE CRAIG END 56 (it formed part of a pew in South Leith Church);

Specimen of Grape Shot from Admiral Nelson's ship "Victory," 1805; Specimen of Canister Shot; and Portion of a Musket Barrel, with Flint Lock, partially melted in the fire which took place in the Tower of London in the year 1841;

Act of Parliament for Erecting a Bank in Scotland. (To be designated The Bank of Scotland.) Edinburgh, July 17th, 1694. Small folio, pp. 8; the Edinburgh Gazette, No. 310. March 26, 1702. Pp. 2, folio; and Rectified Table of the Custom of a Merk on the Pack of all English and Foreign Goods brought into Edinburgh. 7th November 1720. Folio, pp. 2.

By D. H. ROBERTSON, M.D., F.S.A. Scot.

Silver Double-cased Watch, with silver face (*Roumieu, Edinburgh*), with a pinchbeck triple chain, having attached two bodles of Charles I., and flat-shaped swivel seal displaying antique head. (See notice of Roumieu in vol. iii. page 435, of the Proceedings.)

Bequeathed by the late Mr CHARLES BRAND, Engraver, Edinburgh.

Lady's Pair of Blue Satin High-heeled Shoes; Small square-shaped Iron Padlock, with spring cover for keyhole, and chain and key;

Five Edinburgh Burgess and Guild Brother Tickets, written on vellum, in favour of the late Mr David Stewart, merchant, Edinburgh, and of his progenitors, the date of the first is 1699, and of the last 1807; and

Diploma of the Edinburgh Revolution Club, on vellum, dated 11th November 1788, in favour of Mr James Stewart, with seal of the Club attached.

By Mrs DAVID STEWART, Hailes Street.

Branch of Yew (?), 3 feet 4 inches long, pierced with oval openings at each extremity 3 inches in length. It was found in a moss at Auchmeddan, Aberdeenshire, and is stated by the donor to have formed part of a crossbow. (See Communication, page 591.)

By ALEXANDER MURRAY, Esq.

Leaf-shaped Arrow Head of light-coloured flint, 1½ inch in length, from Ross-shire; Bronze Medal of George II. on the proclamation of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, 2d Feb. 1748; and Plaster Cast from the Bust of Sir Walter Scott, Bart., by Chantrey.

By Mr W. T. M'CULLOCH, Keeper of the Museum.

Small triangular-shaped Iron Padlock; and Birmingham Threepenny Token, 1813.

By W. F. VERNON, Esq., Dentist.

Penny of Richard II. of England, of the York mint; two German Bracteate Coins; and two Arrow or Spear Heads, one of dark and the

other of light-coloured flint. The latter measures 7 inches in length, the former is broken, and shows a serrated edge, from Copenhagen.

By WILLIAM DOUGLAS, Esq., R.S.A.

Original Subscription List for the Proposed Building of the Royal Exchange, Edinburgh, in 1752; MS. (See Communication, page 593.)

By WILLIAM SKINNER, Esq., W.S.

Biggar and the House of Fleming: an Account of the Biggar District, Archæological, Historical, and Biographical. By William Hunter. 8vo. Biggar, 1862.

By ADAM SIM, of Coulter, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla na Naomh O'Huidhrin. Edited by John O'Donovan, LL.D. 8vo. Dublin, 1862.

By the IRISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND CELTIC SOCIETY.

Jahrbücher des Vereins von Alterthumsfreunden in Rheinlande, XXXI. 8vo. Bonn, 1861; and Das Bad der Roemischen Villa bei Allenz. Erläutert von Professor E. AUS'M WEERTH. 4to. (pp. 20.) Bonn, 1861.

By the SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF RHINELAND, BONN.

Ueber eine seltene Erzmünze, mit dem Monogramm des Achäischen Bundesgeldes. Von Dr Chr. F. Bellermann. 8vo, pp. 16. Bonn, 1859.

By the AUTHOR.

Annaler for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie, &c., for the years 1855 to 1858. 4 vols. 8vo. Copenhagen, 1855-1858.

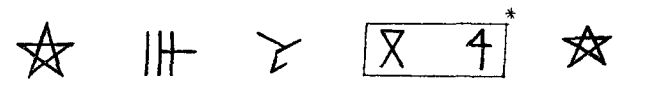
By the SOCIETY OF NORTHERN ANTIQUARIES.

The following Communications were read:—

MELROSE ABBEY

From South Transept Door to West (Inside): -

DOORWAY -



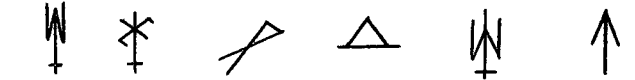
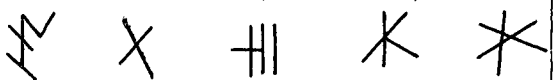
- SOUTH WALL



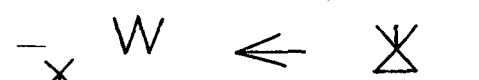
WEST WALL -



CHOR AND CHAPELS -  
(south side of Nave)



WESTMOST CHAPEL TO WESTMOST WALL -



(Outside) -

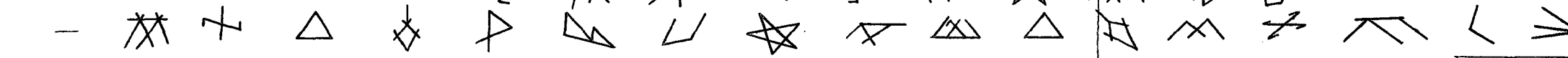


From South Transept Door,

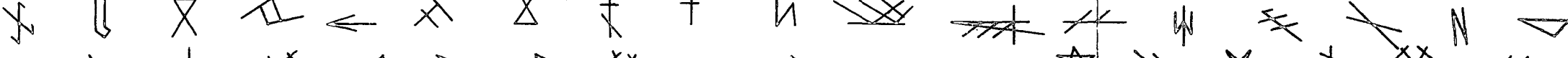
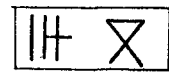
to East (Inside): - EAST WALL & CHAPELS -



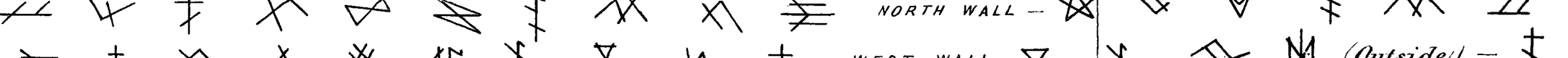
CHOR (East-end) -



North Transept - EAST WALL AND CHAPELS -



NORTH WALL -

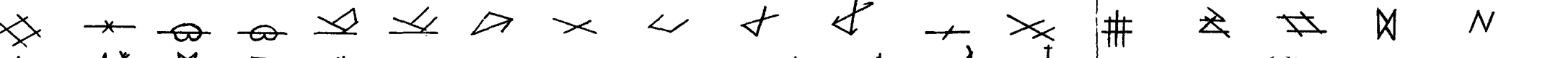


WEST WALL -



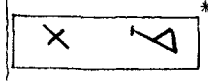
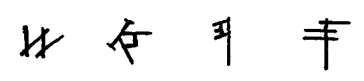
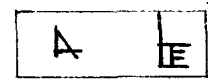
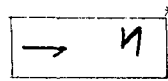
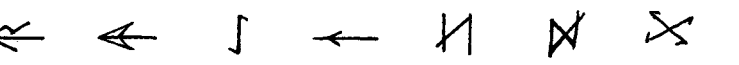
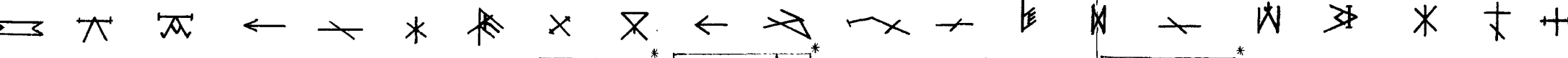
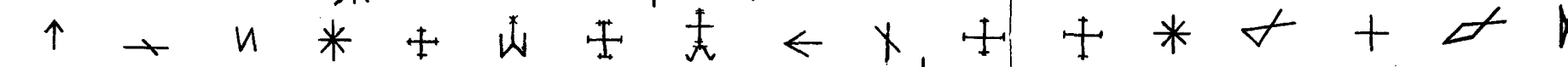
(Outside) -

DRYBURGH ABBEY -



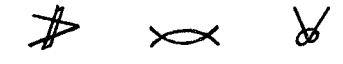
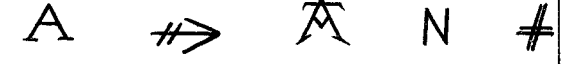
Adjoining buildings

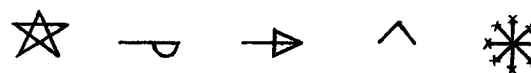



OR MONASTERY


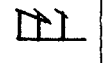





\* On one stone


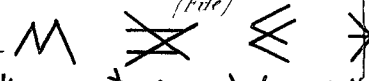



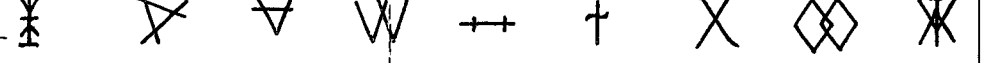
**JEDBURGH ABBEY** - *On South & North Sides of Choir (oldest Part of the Abbey)*  



   


**ON SHAFTS OF NAVE** -  **WESTERN GABLE** -  **NEW PILLAR SUPPORTING** 

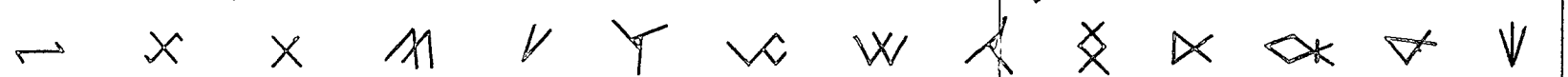
**ARCH OF CENTRAL TOWER** -  **LEUCHARS CHURCH** - 

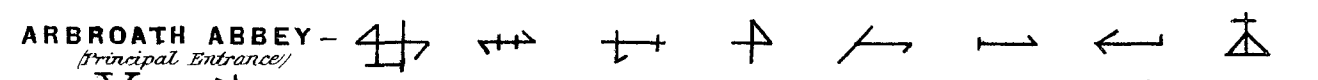

 *(South Wall taken down in 1852)* -  **ON CHANCEL** - 

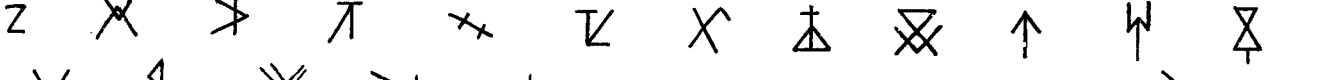
**PARISH CHURCH OF ST ANDREWS** - 

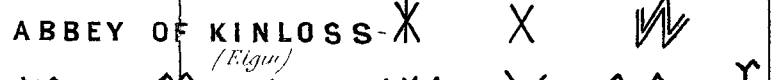
**OLD CHURCH OF ARBUTHNOT** -  **MARS WARK, STIRLING** - 


*(about 1570)* 

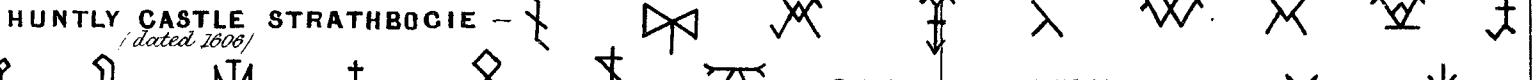
**DUNFERMLINE ABBEY** - *(CRYPT)* 

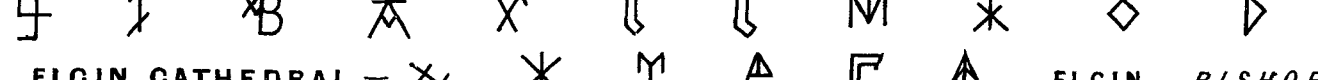
**ARBROATH ABBEY** - *(Principal Entrance)*  **INVERQUHARITY CAS.** - 

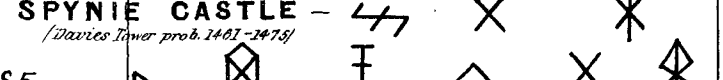
*(End of 15<sup>th</sup> or beginning of 16<sup>th</sup> Cent)* 

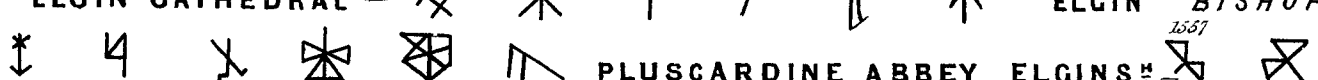
**ABBAY OF KINLOSS** - 



*(Elgin)* 

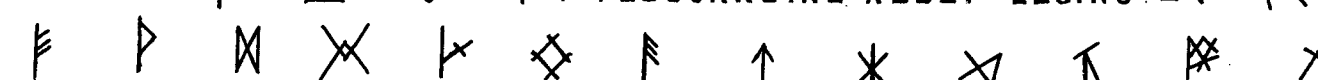
**HUNTLY CASTLE STRATHBOGIE** - 

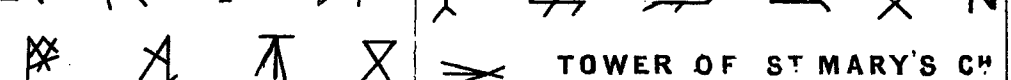
*(dated 1606)* 

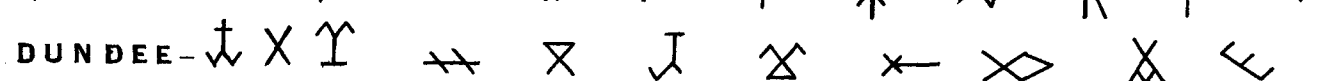
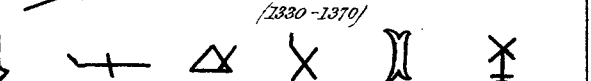
**SPYNIE CASTLE** - 

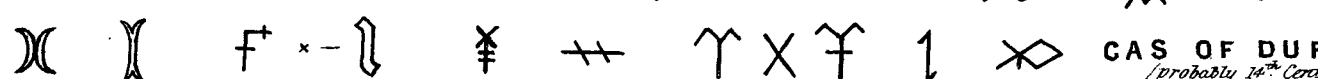
*(Davies Tower prob. 1461-1475)* 



**ELGIN CATHEDRAL** -  **ELGIN BISHOPS' HOUSE** - 


*1557* 

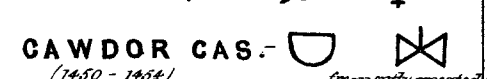
**PLUSCARDINE ABBEY ELGINS** - 


 **TOWER OF ST MARY'S CH** - 

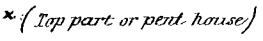
*(1330-1370)* 

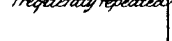
**DUNDEE** -  **CAS OF DUFFUS** - 

*(probably 14<sup>th</sup> Cent)* 

**CAWDOR CAS.** - 

*(1450-1464)* 

*\* (Top part or pent. house)* 

*(repeatedly repeated)* 

MASON'S MARKS