

I.

NOTICE OF THE RECENT DISCOVERY OF FRAGMENTS OF ANCIENT  
SCULPTURED CROSSES AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH, ST  
ANDREWS. BY ALEXANDER HUTCHESON, ARCHITECT, BROUGHTY  
FERRY, F.S.A. SCOT.

On 14th August last year, on the occasion of the visit of the Royal Archæological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland to St Andrews, considerable interest was manifested in the supposed discovery that day of certain fragments of early sculptured crosses, which had been built into the foundation of the east gable of the Cathedral Church at St Andrews.

Having been somewhat intimately acquainted with the whole circumstances of the discovery of these fragments, it has occurred to me that it would be well to put on record a notice of these circumstances as well as a description of the various cross-fragments, so far as that can be given from what of them can be seen from their exposed edges in the foundation walls.

Some six or seven years ago, while residing for a few weeks in

St Andrews, I discovered that a fragment of an old Celtic cross had been built into the walls of the "Culdee Chapel" on the Kirkhill. This fragment measures 19 inches  $\times$  13 inches by a little over 6 inches in thickness. The cross of which it formed a part had doubtless been broken up for building material. It now rests on the top of the low wall forming the northern side of the chancel, which, standing about 2 feet above the surface of the ground, is all that is left to define on that side the bounds of the structure. The upper surface of the fragment there exposed bears portions of two arms of a cross of the form known as Celtic, having rectangular spaces at the intersection of the arms. The outlines are in low relief, but are probably much worn. It is not improbable that this may be the upper portion of the fragment figured by Stuart on pl. x. vol. ii. *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*.

This discovery led me to search the ruins, as well as those of the Cathedral, with the result that I shortly discovered in the inside of the base of the east gable of the Cathedral, close to the surface of the ground, and almost covered by the turf, two beautifully-sculptured fragments of ancient crosses, or perhaps of one cross. This induced a suspicion that other fragments might possibly exist below the surface of the ground were the necessary authority got to permit of such a search being made, but beyond pointing out the discovery to a local gentleman, who caused the grass to be cut away to allow of the fragments being better seen, no effort in this direction was made.

In the end of 1890, learning from the circulars issued to Fellows of the Society that a movement was on foot to record all the existing specimens of the ancient sculptured stones of Scotland, I communicated to Dr Anderson information regarding the fragments I had discovered at St Andrews; and more recently, in the beginning of May 1891, having learned that Mr J. Romilly Allen was the actuary in the movement referred to, I wrote him regarding the St Andrews fragments, and suggested a search of the foundations for others. Mr Allen visited the Cathedral on the 8th July last, and on the earth being cleared away to permit of better rubbings being got than was otherwise possible of the two fragments at the surface, the edge of a large cross shaft, which I

shall call No. 3, was disclosed at a lower level. No further effort was made at this time to prosecute a search of the foundations, although Mr Allen strongly urged that such should be undertaken.

Happening to visit St Andrews on 12th August, two days previous to the Institute's visit, I learned from Mr D. Hay Fleming, F.S.A. Scot., who had all along taken the greatest interest in these researches, that it was his intention to procure for the inspection of the Institute the uncovering of the large cross shaft disclosed on the occasion of Mr J. Romilly Allen's visit. I then suggested to Mr Fleming that the proposed trench should be dug across the gable, which was agreed to, and almost the entire width of the gable was laid bare to a depth of about 2 feet, with the result that four other cross-fragments were disclosed, thus bringing up the total number discovered in the Cathedral wall to seven, exclusive of the fragment at the Kirkhill. It is possible that by extending the search other specimens might be discovered. I have since learned from Mr Fleming that earlier instances of similar discoveries are on record, and that some of the specimens preserved in the Museum of St Andrews were found built into the walls of the Cathedral and removed thence to the Museum for preservation. Dr Stuart, in *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, vol. ii. pp. 3, 4, mentions that two fragments illustrated by him were found "embedded in the south wall of the choir of the Cathedral, and near its base." He also refers to the discovery of fragments at the "Kirkheugh."

I learn with satisfaction that it is Mr Fleming's intention to tabulate for future reference the various discoveries of crosses and cross-fragments made at St Andrews. Such a table cannot but be useful, and may tend to show that St Andrews is entitled to take rank along with St Vigeans, Meikle, and other places in eastern Scotland as an early centre of Christian Celtic art.

I now describe the fragments still in the Cathedral wall, numbering them in the order of discovery, and it is proper to remark that it is only the edges of the cross shafts that can be seen as they lie bonded in with the building stone of the wall. Nos. 1 and 2 may be portions of the same cross-shaft. No. 1 measures 2 feet long by 4 inches thick. No. 2 is 4 feet 3 inches long, of which about 1 foot 4 inches is plain, and may

have been the portion originally inserted in the ground when the cross stood upright. The ornamentation is the same or similar on both pieces, and as it corresponds with Nos. 4 and 6, I give their dimensions here, leaving No. 3, as the most important, to be last mentioned:—

No. 4 measures 1 foot 11 inches long by 5 inches thick.

No. 6 is 2 feet long by about 6 to 7 inches thick.

These, as I have said, all bear a similar ornamentation. It is of the description usually termed “key” ornament; it is not interlaced, is much more open in the pattern than the ordinary key pattern common to the sculptured crosses of Scotland, and might be described as a kind of Grecian fret worked at an angle, but with a regularly recurring obtuse projection backward, and seems to be characteristic of the St Andrews crosses. [See examples of the ornament on these crosses in Stuart, vol. ii. pl. x.]

No. 7 is a small but very beautiful fragment measuring 12 inches long by 8 inches thick, bearing a similar ornament; but in this case it is relieved by being hollowed out in the centre so as to give the effect of the pattern being shown by a double line. No. 5 measures 1 foot 5 inches in length by from 6 to 7 inches thick; a small portion of it is plain, the remainder shows a plain sunk panel enclosed by double lines, one end of which exists, but the top of the panel is wanting.

I come now to No. 3, disclosed on Mr Allen’s visit in July. This is by far the most important cross-fragment ever discovered at St Andrews. It measures 8 feet long and is 10 inches thick at the base end, which is unornamented for a length of about 2 feet. Beyond that the edge of the shaft is richly covered in a flowing foliaceous ornament, regularly repeated right and left, enclosed on the edges by a double ridge or bottle moulding. This flowing or running foliaceous ornamentation is in its treatment and details more characteristic of the North of England crosses than of the same ornament which occurs so sparingly on the Scottish stones; and then mainly on the later examples of them. It is noteworthy, however, that, so far as visible, no animal forms occur on the St Andrews example, which are so common a feature on other Scottish examples of foliaceous treatment. The stone is of a reddish hue, different from any of the building stones of the neighbourhood, and this,

taken in connection with its differing and distinctively southern suggestiveness, may point to its having been brought to St Andrews from some southern centre of Christian influence. Tradition in various places points to the transport of crosses over long distances. A local tradition in Fowlis Wester states that the fine cross there was transported from Iona by some one of the early Evangelists of Scotland; and while it must be allowed that the Fowlis Wester cross differs entirely from any example now existing in Iona, still the tradition may not be without value as pointing to a belief that in early times crosses were transported from one place to another, either as a means of extending the influence of the special centre which sent them out, or as a method of providing for a district what there did not exist local talent for providing. But there is more than mere theory for supposing that this fine St Andrews cross may have been brought from a distance, for we read in the Chronicles of the Picts and Scots, as quoted by Skene (*Celtic Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 265), that St Regulus with the relics of St Andrew, and accompanied by holy men, arrived on the eve of St Michael at the land of the Picts, at a place once called Muckros, but now Kylriment (the ancient name of St Andrews), and his vessel being wrecked, he erected a cross he had brought from Patras. Furthermore, the Chronicle goes on to state, that after travelling to other parts of Scotland and establishing churches, St Regulus having met King Hungus, returned "with the holy men to Chilriment, and making a circuit round a great part of that place, immolated it to God and St Andrew for the erection of Churches and Oratories. King Hungus and Bishop Regulus and the rest proceeded round it seven times, Bishop Regulus carrying on his head the relics of St Andrew, his followers chanting hymns, and King Hungus following on foot, and after him the Magnates of the Kingdom. Thus they commended that place to God and protected it with the King's peace; and in commemoration the holy men surrounded it with twelve stone crosses."

Whether or not any reliance can be placed on these traditions, there can be no doubt that the special character of the ornamentation, peculiar as I have said it appears to be to St Andrews, points to a common origin for these crosses. As to the large cross-shaft, whether there was any

truth in the legend quoted by Skene, there cannot, I think, be any doubt as to the desirability of having this fine cross removed from the walls so that the ornament which doubtless covers its sides can be seen.

Into the question of the practicability of removing these fragments from the walls I do not enter. This is not the place to discuss such a question. But as to the desirability of minutely examining and recording every specimen or fragment of a specimen of the Early Sculptured Stones of Scotland there cannot be a question.

So long as so many problems as to the meaning of the symbols carved upon these stones wait for solution, no fragment, however small or apparently insignificant, can be regarded as unimportant. One such fragment may provide the key to what has hitherto baffled the ingenuity of the learned. Here I will meanwhile let the matter rest by quoting a remark made to me by Mr J. Romilly Allen when the practicability of removing the fragments was being discussed in the *Scotsman* and other newspapers:—"Surely a nation and an age which has underbuilt the spire of Peterborough Cathedral and has erected the Forth Bridge should be equal to the task of removing a few stones from the base of a gable without endangering the safety of the structure!"

[It is expected that illustrations of these interesting Sculptured Stones will be given in Mr J. Romilly Allen's forthcoming *Survey of the Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, for which the materials are now in preparation.]