

## V.

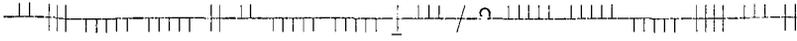
NOTICES OF A SCULPTURED STONE WITH OGHAM INSCRIPTION, FROM LATHERON, PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM BY SIR FRANCIS TRESS BARRY, BART., M.P., HON. F.S.A. SCOT., KEISS CASTLE, CAITHNESS; AND OF TWO SCULPTURED STONES, RECENTLY DISCOVERED BY REV. D. MACRAE, B.D., AT EDDERTON, ROSS-SHIRE. BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, LL.D., ASSISTANT-SECRETARY AND KEEPER OF THE MUSEUM.

*The Latheron Stone.*—This stone was found last year in the wall of an old byre in Latheron, and brought to Sir Francis Tress Barry at Keiss Castle, where I saw it in August last. I had previously received photographs and squeezes of the stone, and I had ample opportunity, during my stay there, of studying the stone itself and endeavouring to determine the more obscure portions of the inscription.

The stone (fig. 1) is a rectangular slab from the greyish beds of the Caithness sandstone, measuring 3 feet in extreme height by 17 inches in breadth and about 4 inches in thickness. The top and bottom are broken away, the fracture at the top passing obliquely across the stone, while that at the bottom is more nearly straight across. The stone appears to have had a marginal moulding along both sides, but that on the right hand side has been chipped away. The Ogham inscription runs the whole length of the stone on the left hand side, the stem line being drawn in a rude way parallel to the sunk line of the marginal moulding, and about an inch and a half inside of it. The whole face of the stone between the inscription and the right hand side is occupied with sculpture, partly in relief and partly incised.

The inscription is probably incomplete at both ends, owing to the breaking away of the stone at the top and bottom. What remains of it extends to 2 feet 8 inches in length and shows eighteen complete

characters, and possibly part of a nineteenth. Read from the bottom to the top in the usual way they appear to be—



D U N N O D N N A T M (?) Q Q N E T O

A single digit remaining of the nineteenth letter shows that it had been on the upper side of the stem-line. The characteristics of the inscription are chiefly normal, and northern. The A with the cross bar at the lower end occurs on the Lunnasting stone, Shetland, on that from the Broch of Burrian, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, on the sculptured slab at Golspie, and on the sculptured slab from Formaston, Aboyne, Aberdeenshire. The letter after the M, which assumes the form of a semi-circle, appears in some lights to have a tail sloping to the right, but this seems to me to be an accidental score or flaw in the stone. A semicircular letter on the Lunnasting stone has been read as O, and on the Formaston stone a letter which is a full circle bisected by the stem-line has been read as OI. The usual formula seems to demand that some equivalent of the key-word MAQI should come here, and

#### DUNNODNNAT MAQQ NETO

Dunodnat son of Neto . . . . is obviously suggested, supposing that the inscription really begins at the break at the bottom.

This ogham is the second found in Caithness, and the seventeenth now known in Scotland. Of these, five are from Shetland, one from Orkney, two from Caithness, one from Sutherland, one from Nairnshire, four from Aberdeenshire, one from Kincardineshire, one from Fifeshire, and one from the island of Gigha, Argyleshire.

With regard to the sculpturings on the face of the stone, the double rectangular figure in relief on the upper part, with its prolongation of a narrower rectangle below, is not quite like any other form of the rectangular symbol, variable as it is. The upper and wider rectangle is filled with double spiral ornament arranged in C-shaped scrolls placed back to back. The lower and narrower rectangle is filled with an interlaced pattern.



Fig. 1. Sculptured Slab with Ogham Inscription from Latheron, Caithness. (1.)

The figures below this are merely incised, the lines being, as usual, picked out by a pointed tool. The bird is the raptorial bird represented on the sculptured monuments at Nigg, Strathpeffer, Monymusk, Birnie, Inveravon, Fyvie and St Vigean. It has the beak and the tail rendered in much the same manner as at Inveravon. The Fyvie bird is in better drawing, but has the same exaggerated spread of the upper part of the leg and the same rendering of the talons. At St Vigean the bird is represented as having the fish in its talons and stooping as if in the act of fixing its beak in the head of the fish. The bird occurs altogether eleven times on the monuments, ranging from Forfarshire to Caithness.

The fish here is of the usual form, the median line, the gill-cover, the eye, and the line of the mouth boldly rendered, and showing one dorsal and one caudal fin above, and a pectoral, ventral and caudal fin below, while the tail is rather exaggerated. The lower part of the outline of a fish, showing the three fins, is visible on the stone with an ogham inscription, which was found on the south side of Keiss Bay in 1896, and presented to the National Museum by Sir Francis Barry. A fish also occurs on the Ulbster sculptured slab, now at Thurso Castle. It occurs on the sculptured slab with an ogham inscription at Golspie, and in a slightly varied form on a small slab with incised symbols at Dunrobin, and on the pillar-stone called the *Clach Bhiorach* at Edderton. It occurs altogether fourteen times on the monuments, ranging from Perth to Caithness.

The group of the bird and the fish, representing the fish as the prey of the bird, however, only occurs twice on the monuments, viz., in this instance, and on the inscribed stone at St Vigean in Forfarshire. In both cases there can be no doubt that the bird is meant for the eagle. The group occurs also in the illuminated manuscripts of the early Celtic church—as in the Book of Armagh, written in the first half of the ninth century, where there is a page giving the symbols of the four evangelists, the symbol of St John being an eagle with a fish in its talons; and in the codex known as the *Grammatica Prisciani*,

which was added to the library of St Gall in the middle of the ninth century. It occurs also in ecclesiastical sculpture on the doorways of early churches.

Below this group, at the bottom of the stone and partly broken away, is a group of two horsemen, which recalls the similar group of horsemen at the base of the cross-stone at Edderton, Ross-shire. This part of the stone has suffered some defacement, and the lines of the figures are difficult to make out, but the foremost rider seems to hold a spear over his shoulder, and the neck and head of the horse of the second rider are fairly visible.

*The Edderton Stones.*—I first heard of the discovery of these stones in August last, from Rev. Dr Joass, and I have to thank the Rev. D. Macrae, B.D., the minister of Edderton, their discoverer, for the trouble he has taken in supplying me with the photographs, rubbings, measurements, and descriptive notes from which this paper is compiled.

The two stones were found in a part of the churchyard that has not been used for many years, about twelve paces southwards from the erect cross-stone with the three horsemen at its base. They were lying in line, at a depth of from 3 to 4 inches under the turf. They are both of the dark chocolate-coloured red sandstone of the district, but are evidently parts of two different monuments, as the margins do not correspond.

Stone No. 1 is a slab 39 inches in length by  $22\frac{1}{2}$  inches in breadth and 3 inches in thickness, rather rudely sculptured in low relief (as shown in fig. 2), with an equal-armed cross of Celtic form, and figures of animals above, below, and in the spaces of the background between the arms of the cross. These spaces are slightly sunk, and the parts between the outlines of the cross and the other figures are picked out by a pointed tool. The cross has a circle of the width of the arms in the centre, and has the usual semicircular hollows at the intersections. The central circle has a marginal moulding, and the interior has been filled with ornamentation now so much decayed as to be quite indeterminable,

though it is suggestive of diverging spirals. The arms of the cross have also been filled with ornament which is now indistinguishable, but gives a suggestion of interlaced work. Below the cross is the figure of a bird of the usual raptorial form, with a hooked beak, like that on the stone from Latheron and other places, as described above. The lower part of the bird's figure is broken away by the fracture of the lower part of the

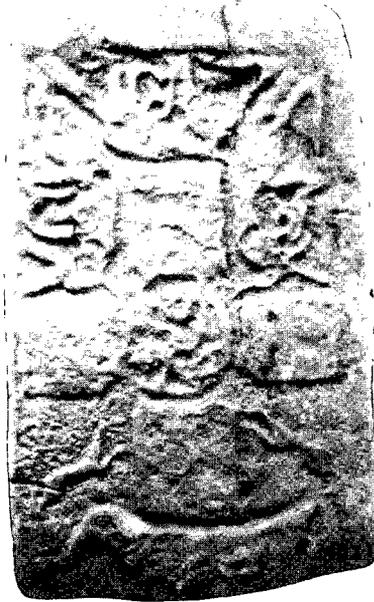


Fig. 2. Edderton Stone (No. 1).

stone. If there were any plumage lines on the body of the bird, as there generally are in other cases, they have all disappeared, but the eye remains visible. In the spaces to right and left of the lower arm of the cross are two hounds at speed facing towards each other, and placed obliquely in the angles of the cross. A pair of beasts are similarly placed in the angles of the cross on the Ulbster stone. In each of the spaces above the horizontal arms of the cross is a four-footed

animal placed with its feet towards the side of the stone, the line of its back parallel with the side of the upper arm of the cross. Over the upper arm of the cross is a beast, apparently of the same character, and placed in the same way with its feet towards the upper margin of the stone and its back parallel with the upper line of the cross. These animal figures are so crude and so much decayed, that it is impossible

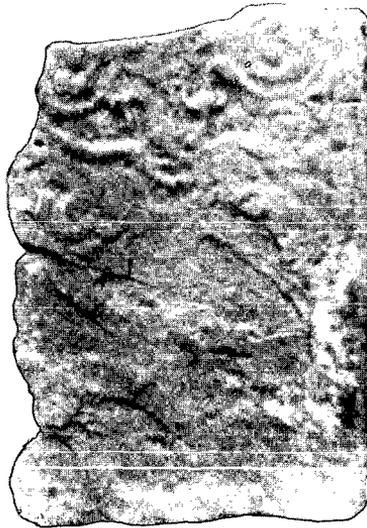


Fig. 3. Edderton Stone (No. 2.)

to say more about them than that they do not in the least resemble any of the sculptures on the Ross-shire stones, or indeed on any of the stones in the northern districts. But they have a strong suggestion, both in form and character, of the nondescript beasts on the fragment of a cross-shaft from Borthwick, Midlothian.<sup>1</sup>

The stone appears to be the complete upper part of the slab, having on three of its sides a marginal moulding, that on the top being much

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. xxiii. p. 350; *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, part iii. p. 422.

broader than the others ; the part broken away at the bottom in all probability did not extend much further.

Stone No. 2 (shown in fig. 3) is part of a sculptured slab of red sandstone, 33 inches in length by 23 inches in breadth and about 3 inches thick. It has a marginal moulding on two sides, the other two being broken away. The greater part of the surface has scaled off, and is crossed by cracks, so that the sculpture is mostly obliterated. What remains shows two scrolls of foliaceous ornament, from which a trefoil proceeds, and a suggestion of a small dragonsque creature, such as is often placed in the scrolls of foliage, as in the borders of the stones from Hilton of Cadboll and from Tarbat in Ross-shire.