

IV.

SOME ANCIENT CROSSES IN DUMBARTONSHIRE AND ADJOINING COUNTIES. BY A. D. LACAILLE, F.S.A.Scot.

INCISED CROSS ON ROCK, CRAIGMADDIE MUIR.

Instances occur in Scotland of incised cruciform figures associated with other markings on living rock-surfaces. These are chiefly found in caves, the Fifeshire and Arran examples being well known. Such scribings belong to the early Christian period. Sculpturings of a similar class were found a few years ago in Tiree, near ecclesiastical remains,¹ but the Tiree markings differ from those in the Fife and Arran caves in that they are cut on rock-surfaces exposed to the open air.

Pre-Christian crosses have been found in Scotland; probably the finest example is at Cochno, Dumbartonshire.² The sculpturing is set within an oval, and is accompanied by cups and rings sculptured on a prepared rock-surface. Roughly, or somewhat irregularly-shaped, cruciform figures occur on Craigmaddie Muir, in the parish of Baldernock, a few miles north of Glasgow. One found by Mr Ludovic M'L. Mann, F.S.A.Scot., forms part of a complicated assemblage of carvings on a rock platform north-west of "The Auld Wife's Lift." Another good example exists on the muir, and was detected by the writer while walking in company of Mr Mann and Mr Thomas Cree in April 1924. Near the easternmost limit of the same stretch of ground we came on a small irregular cross sculptured on an outcrop of indurated carboniferous sandstone. We bared the turf in its proximity, and found additional markings. The complete group consists of the cruciform figure, a small cup-shaped hollow, a small serpent-like carving, and another like the impression of the right foot of an adult above the medium height, all fairly well preserved.

A footprint in conjunction with cup-marks is not of uncommon occurrence in Scottish prehistoric sculpturings. Footprints are found with the cross at Cochno, already referred to. An example of an incised cross associated with other markings was recently found cut on the wall of St Kieran's Cave, near Campbeltown. The serpent occurs in the Campbeltown group, but it is thought that the sculpturings, which are enclosed in a rough circle, belong to the early part of this era.

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. lvi. pp. 118-26.

² John Bruce, *History of Kilpatrick*, p. 323.

THREE CROSSES AT LUSS, DUMBARTONSHIRE.

The present church of Luss was erected in 1875. It succeeds a building opened for public worship in 1771. The older structure was built on the site of a pre-Reformation Chapel, which, from an old print in the manse, shown me by the Rev. Alex. Slater Dunlop, B.D., was a rectangular building with Gothic features of a very plain nature. A few yards from the eastern end of the church are the remains of a wall of rough stone masonry. It is impossible to say with any certainty to what period the ruins belong. The 6-inch Ordnance Survey Chart (Dumbartonshire X., S.-E.) merely refers to the remains as "Church ruins." The sacredness of the site—a ridge on the north bank of the River Luss, close to where it flows into Loch Lomond—goes back to an early phase of Christianity, and is further indicated by some relics to which I shall refer.

St Kessog, the tutelar saint of the parish, is supposed to have suffered death, and to have been buried, at Luss in the early part of the sixth century.¹ His reputed effigy is preserved at Rosdhu House, Luss.²

In the churchyard are interesting sepulchral monuments, some sculptured and of mediæval and early post-Reformation times. In the older category are two stone coffins.³ Near the west gate is one of the rare recumbent stones termed "hog-backed." The Luss example is richly ornamented with sculptured work.⁴

So far as can be ascertained, the most ancient Christian monuments in the churchyard at Luss are three crosses. Two of these are carved slabs. The larger slab (fig. 1) was found at the south-eastern end of the churchyard, its existence being revealed by cutting away the thick brushwood beneath the old lime trees crowning the ridge near the river. It is a plain slab of whinstone, 4 feet 1 inch by 1 foot 2 inches, in thickness varying from 1 inch at the broken and rough ends to 7½ inches about the middle. The face, on which is incised to the depth of ¼ inch a plain and much weathered Latin cross, has been dressed. The smaller slab (fig. 2), of red sandstone, measures 2 feet 5 inches in length; its maximum breadth is 18 inches, and its thickness, which is practically uniform, does not exceed 3½ inches. The arms of the incised Latin cross (¼ inch deep) which the slab bears are almost equal in length. In the space between each arm is a cup cut to the depth of ½ inch. All the markings on this stone are well preserved.

¹ *Old Statistical Account*, vol. xvii. p. 264.

² *New Statistical Account*, vol. viii. p. 161.

³ *Old Statistical Account*, vol. xvii. p. 264, and Joseph Irving, *History of Dumbartonshire*, p. 379.

⁴ *Proceedings*, vol. xix. p. 418.

The third, of grey sandstone, is a cross of a very peculiar type. When first seen by me it lay near the ruins referred to. After the monument had been propped up and cleared of lichen and moss, it was noticed that it was sculptured on both sides and more profusely than was expected. It has been a free standing cross, and now measures 2 feet 11 inches in length. The shaft, rectangular in section, with bevelled edges, tapers slightly from the base, where it is 13 inches across by 7 inches, to 12 inches by 6 inches at the lower part of the head. On one side, centrally situated, 10 inches from the base of the

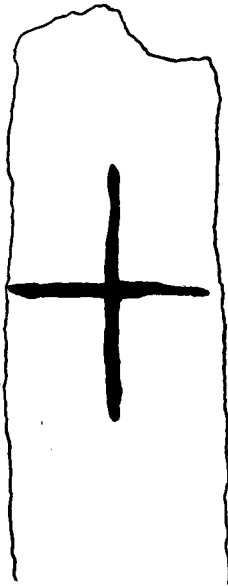


Fig. 1. Cross-slab at Luss.
($\frac{1}{2}$.)

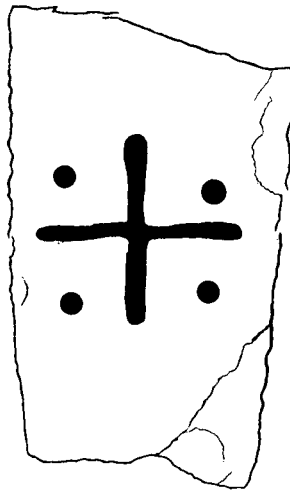


Fig. 2. Cross-slab at Luss.
($\frac{1}{2}$.)

stone, is a cup $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep. From the base of the head to the top, where it is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, the head measures 1 foot 3 inches; across, it is but half an inch more. In the centre of the head is a diamond-shaped perforation, the sides being about 3 inches in length. The cross is equal-armed. In the interspaces between the arms are counter-sunk circular areas from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 inches in diameter and varying from $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in depth. One of these bears on its surface a semicircular gutter. There are also traces of narrow gutters near the edges of the hollows. Small sculpturings exist near the centre of the lower part of the head. Two clearly-defined but shallow channels lead into the central perforation from a point near the top of the cross. The peripheral

edging of the head consists of nine hemispherical crenelations. The other face has a shallow, medial, vertical gutter, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad, running from the perforation to within 4 inches of the base.

One of the upper interspaces between the arms differs from its companions. Its centre is raised, and instead of a general counter-sinking there is only a narrow semicircular gutter. The three hollows vary in depth from $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch.

To Lieut.-Colonel Donald C. Cameron, R.A.S.C., F.S.A.Scot., much praise is due for having drawn the attention of the Society to the existence of the early crosses in Luss churchyard. In recording these monuments I received valuable assistance from the Rev. Alex. Slater Dunlop and Mr Henry Lamond, Luss.

TWO SCULPTURED SLABS AT ROSENEATH.

Roseneath, as an ecclesiastical site, is extremely ancient. St Modan, who came from Ardhattan, is said to have died here in the sixth century. In the Aberdeen Breviary the Commemoration of St Modan is on 4th February.¹

The Parish Church of Roseneath, in Dumbartonshire, is situated about 100 yards east of the old cemetery where are the ivy-covered ruins of the eighteenth-century place of worship which succeeded a pre-Reformation structure. In the graveyard was found, some forty years ago, a cross-slab with interlaced sculpturings. A description of this monument is in the *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xvi. pp. 72-3, and it is illustrated in *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, p. 453. The relic is placed in an erect position on the sill of one of the windows of the ruined church, and is supported at the back by an iron bar. In the next window to the west are two hitherto unrecorded slabs of grey sandstone. They are securely held up in the same manner as the first. Like it, being in so exposed a position, they are becoming weathered.

The larger slab is 5 feet 4 inches in length and 1 foot $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in width at the top, tapering to 1 foot $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the base. The stone is of the uniform thickness of $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The edges are bevelled 5 inches at the top, and taper to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the base, and are decorated with plain rope moulding.

The smaller slab measures 4 feet 6 inches in length by 1 foot 6 inches in breadth at the top, and tapers to 11 inches at the base; it is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick. In the upper part is sculptured an incised simple cross cut $\frac{3}{8}$ inch deep. At the base of the cross is the sculpturing of a sword cut to the depth of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. The carving of the discoidal pommel of the

¹ Rev. R. H. Storey, D.D., *St Modan of Roseneath*, p. 51.

weapon impinges on the left-hand corner of the base of the shaft of the cross, and the blade extends to the bottom of the slab. Under the straight cross-guards of the sword, which extend to the edges of the stone, on either side of the blade, and near the edges of the stone, are a large D and traces of another letter. These markings are modern, and somewhat impair the appearance of this interesting monument.

The sword, in form, partly resembles the Sword of Battle Abbey, now in the Royal Scottish Museum.¹

SCULPTURED STONE AT DUMGOYACH, STRATHBLANE, STIRLINGSHIRE.

In June 1923 I spent an afternoon with Mr Ludovic M'L. Mann examining some antiquities near Duntreath Castle, Strathblane.

In conversation with Mr Paul, Dumgoyach, we were shown a stone, measuring 2 feet by 1 foot 4 inches by 10 inches, which was used as a cobble under a tap fixed to the wall of an outhouse near the back door of the dwelling-house, but upon its surface are two small and regular Latin crosses graduated in size, the longer arm in each case being placed along the longer axis of the stone. The larger, which is nearest the top of the slab, measures only $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches in length and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch across the arms, and the other, which is almost in alignment, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch farther down the stone, measures $1\frac{5}{8}$ inch in length and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in breadth. On scrutinising the surface closely, eight small, shallow cup-marks were detected.

Since visiting the place, I have been told that the stone was originally near a well which was covered in some years ago. Water from the well is now drawn off by the tap referred to. At Blanefield, two miles east of Dumgoyach, there is a spring called St Kessog's Well.

Built in at the corner of a building opposite the water-tap are two small stones, each of which bears small cup-marks very similar to those on the cross-stone.

CROSS NEAR BARNAKILL, ARGYLL.

Half a mile north of Dunardry Locks, Crinan Canal, and a few yards to the east of the rough track leading to the farm of Upper Barnakill, in the parish of Kilmartin, a granite pillar, 3 feet 11 inches in height, 16 inches broad, and $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, stands loosely between two boulders of a ruined drystone wall. The west face bears a cross with small transverse channels at the ends of the arms (fig. 3). This symbol is cut to the depth of nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. It was noted that at the

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. x. p. 462.

base of the cross were other carvings, which, on being cleared of lichen, were seen to be Hiberno-Saxon minuscules. The cross and the last three letters (reading from the left) are in excellent preservation, but the first three letters seem incomplete. In 1921 a very similar cross was found on a slab at Hynish House, Tiree.¹ It is doubtful whether the Barnakill monument occupies its original position, but there are some ancient sites in the vicinity. About 200 yards south of the cross-stone, a little to the west of the roadway, is a small mound, 5 feet high and 15 feet in diameter at the base, which is doubtless a burial cairn. To the north-east of the cairn are the grass-covered ruins of a small circular building, 10 feet in diameter, apparently of great antiquity.

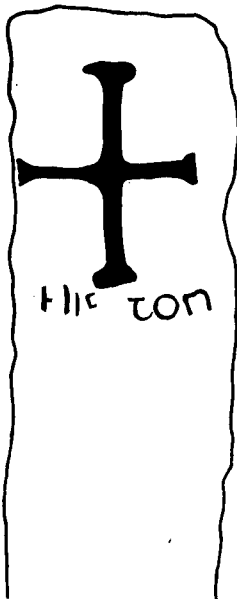


Fig. 3. Cross-slab at Barnakill. (†.)

MONUMENTS AT ACH-NA-CILLE, OIBMORE, LOCH SWEEN, NORTH KNAPDALE, ARGYLL.

On the wooded peninsula formed by Loch Sween and Caol Scotnish is the ruined steading of Oibmore, or Oibmore Campbell, as it figures on an estate map dated 1828. Not far to the south, at a part not more than a quarter of a mile in width, and about 80 feet above sea-level, is an irregular setting of stones of green schist, some erect, but the greater number prostrate. This is the old burial-place, Ach-na-Cille.

From its appearance the site seems to be of a greater antiquity than indicated by the symbol of Christianity sculptured on some of the stones. Tree-felling and dragging operations have done much to destroy the outline of the place. A survey is impracticable, as near at hand is an old well or spring, which, no longer finding a ready outflow, has formed a morass now extending to a part of the burial-place. Here, as at so many places, is the association of a sacred site with a spring of water.

Ach-na-Cille is about 25 yards east of the track, and the site could be traced by an erect stone at the side of the path.

Captain T. P. White, R.E., writing in 1875, *Archæological Sketches, Knapdale*, pp. 102-3, pl. xlvi. Nos. 3 and 4, says that "This most interesting relic is almost lost where it is, yet it is so far useful in its present position as marking the site of what is supposed to have been a very ancient burying-ground, the spot being named Ach-na-Cille. This is the

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. lvi. p. 125.

only stone left; indeed, all trace of the 'Kil' was ploughed up, I heard, before the ground was put under wood."

Captain White was evidently misinformed, as the site of Ach-na-Cille could never have been an arable one. The misapprehension, under which he laboured, doubtless arose through the fact that the remains of the burial-ground are at some distance from the bridle-path, from which they are hidden by a few trees.

This stone and two other relics, which were found on the occasion of my first visit to Oibmore, were in certain danger of destruction from tree-felling operations about to be renewed.

Through the generosity of the proprietors, Colonel E. D. Malcolm, C.B., of Poltalloch, and Sir Ian Malcolm, K.C.M.G., to whom was suggested the advisability of removing the three stones to a place of safety, these were presented to the Corporation of Glasgow Art Galleries at Kelvingrove.

The monument, which stood beside the roadway, measures 3 feet 8 inches in length, its maximum width and thickness being 1 foot 10½ inches and 3½ inches respectively. On one face is incised a cross within a double circle, while there are cut circular hollows at the intersection of the arms and also small bosses. On the other face, which is not so well preserved, can be traced a large and much weathered cross, two small Latin crosses, and symbols of different designs, all incised, as well as circular cavities, two raised bars and nine large bosses. These sculpturings present the rare combination of raised and incised symbols. Both sides of this stone are well figured by Captain White.

The second stone is a plain slab, 2 feet 4 inches long, 1 foot 2½ inches wide, and 4 inches thick, with a deeply cut out and perfectly preserved Latin cross (fig. 4). The cross much resembles one found on a slab at Luss (fig. 1).

The third stone is a fragment of a small monument. Incised designs are sculptured on one side. The markings are those of a cross, the head within a circle, and triangular figures cut along the shaft. The drawing, reproduced from a rubbing (fig. 5), shows the carvings, a suggested symmetrical restoration of the stone with complete scheme of sculpturings being delineated by dotted lines.

Many visits were made to Ach-na-Cille, and all the stones were carefully examined after the earth and mossy growth had been removed from them. The long search resulted in the finding of three additional

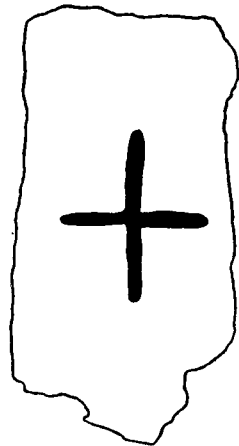


Fig. 4. Cross-slab at Oibmore. ($\frac{1}{2}$.)

slabs, each bearing an incised cross. Only the actual sculptured face in each case is prepared.

The finest and largest of these stones is 4 feet 6 inches in length and 1 foot 7½ inches in breadth at its widest part (fig. 6). In thickness it varies from 2 inches at the base to 9 inches at the top. The incised cross is nearly ¼ inch deep, and is in perfect preservation. Each arm has a T-shaped ending, in this respect resembling crosses found in the

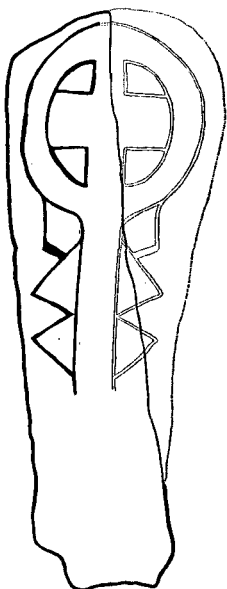


Fig. 5. Cross-slab at Oibmore, Argyll. (½.)

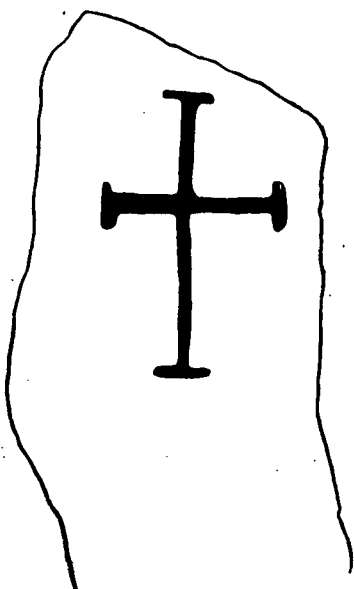


Fig. 6. Cross-slab at Oibmore. (½.)

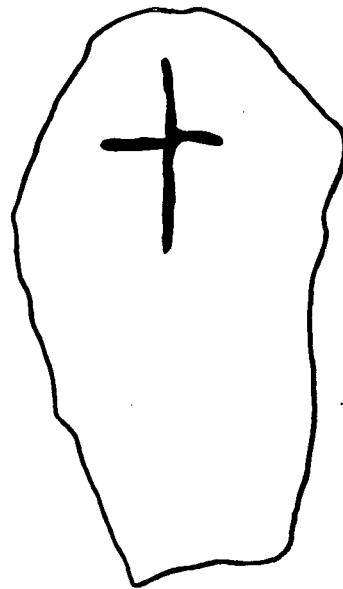


Fig. 7. Cross-slab at Oibmore. (½.)

Isle of Man¹ and Tiree.² This type of cross occurs carved on a slab from Eilean Mór, and now in the National Museum, Edinburgh.³

Another monument, 3 feet 8 inches in length, 1 foot 9½ inches in breadth, and 8 inches thick, bears a small and rude Latin cross on one face cut to the depth of ¼ inch (fig. 7).

The remaining slab measures 1 foot 11½ inches in length, 13½ inches in width, and 5 inches in thickness. No attempt seems to have been made by the sculptor to make symmetrical the Latin cross roughly cut on it to the depth of ¼ inch.

The type of small incised cross on the two stones last referred to

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. lv. p. 257.

² *Ibid.*, vol. lvi. p. 125.

³ *Early Christian Monuments*, p. 402, fig. 419.

I had already found, in April 1923, on a slab near the ruins of St Fillan's Chapel, Strathfillan, Perthshire.¹

Mr J. G. Mathieson, the factor of the Poltalloch estates, tells me that Ach-na-Cille, with its remaining monuments, will now be protected by fencing. I understand, too, that it will be scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

About 200 yards east of Ach-na-Cille, on the shore of Loch Sween,

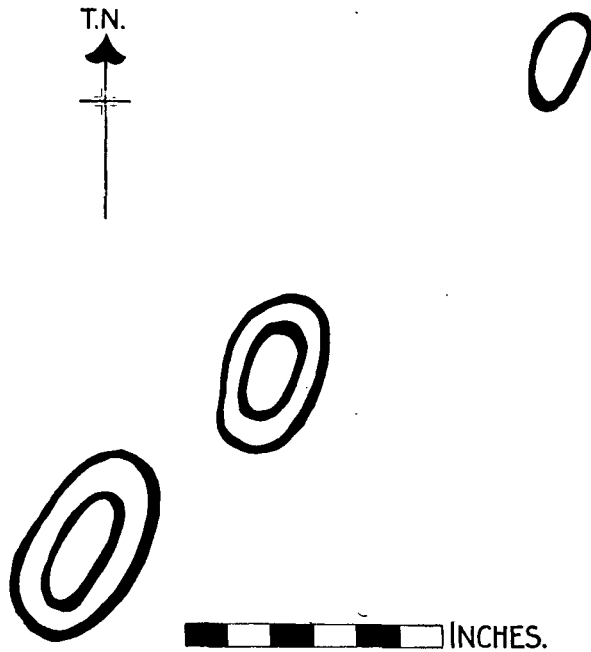


Fig. 8. Ring-marked Boulder at Oibmore.

below the vertical cliff, is a quadrate granite boulder 7 feet long, 4 feet broad, and 4 feet high. Its longer axis is almost due north and south. On its somewhat table-like top, which is almost submerged at high tide, Mr Donald Campbell, Poltalloch, saw the carvings of two ovals twenty years ago. On clearing away the seaweed overgrowing the northern end of the boulder a third oval was noticed (fig. 8). These ovals are graduated in size, the middle one being of intermediate dimensions. An odd feature of the two larger figures is that each encloses a smaller one of precisely the same shape.

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. lviii. p. 124.

Mr Campbell told me that the markings, although well preserved, were more distinct when he first saw them.

I wish to record that I am indebted to Mr Campbell for the assistance given me while engaged in research in the Poltalloch district.

SCULPTURED STONE AT KILMUN, ARGYLL.

In early Christian times Kilmun was a place of so much importance that its influence was felt in all the Cowal district of Argyll.

Some controversy exists as to the derivation of the name "Kilmun," but I am informed by Professor W. J. Watson that the name implies the cell or church of Mundu or Munnu or Munna for Mo-Fhindu, an affectionate form of Fintén or Fintán.

Of a Celtic chapel no vestige remains, but there stands at the western end of the Parish Church, erected in 1841, a square tower of considerable height. In the *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. vii. p. 611, it is stated that this tower formed part of a collegiate church founded in 1442.

A few feet to the south of the present church can be traced the foundations of the old building. Surrounding the church, to the north of which is attached the well-known mausoleum of the Argyll family, is the old cemetery, the eastern limit of which is the small stream, Allt-na-Struthlaig.

I examined the stones in the graveyard. It would seem that, as in the case of the burial-ground at St Fillan's Chapel, near Crianlarich, slabs or flagstones from the floor of the ancient church have been used to cover some of the graves.¹ On clearing away the heavy growth of grass and moss on one of these, which is broken in two, I noticed the carving of a long sword with short depressed quillons.

Three yards from the south-east corner of the church a schistose stone attracted my attention. Vegetation had overgrown the greater part of the stone to such an extent as to make the task of clearing away the growth a difficult one. On the accumulation of vegetable matter and soil being removed, interesting markings were revealed. Those consist of a rudely incised Latin cross with traces of a small cup at the lower end of the cross and a channel on the other side, near the edge of the stone, and parallel to the longer arm of the cross, which is placed along the longer axis of the stone. A feature of the cross is that the terminals of the shorter arm are not the same, one being square and the other rounded, thus showing a similarity to an incised cross found on a rock outcrop near Kirkapoll Chapel in Tiree. With the Tiree example also occur cup-marks and a

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. lviii. p. 124.

channel, but the channel in this case is placed on the opposite side of the cross.¹

The stone in Kilmun churchyard measures 3 feet in length, 1 foot 2 inches in width, and 6 inches in thickness. The sculpturings are all badly weathered, but it is gratifying to learn that the Rev. A. B. Harper, to whom I reported the find, has promised to have the relic, the only one of this nature heard of in the district, removed to cover, inside the church.
